

Srimad Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 18

Moksha Sannyasa Yogah:

Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation

Transliterated Sanskrit Text

Free Translation

&

Brief Explanation

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Published

In

Esamskriti.com

&

Medhajournal.com

Nagpur

September 2010

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Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 18(Part-1)
Moksha Sannyasa Yogah:
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Preamble

The closing Chapter is a summary of the entire Gita. If the 2nd Chapter is its Profile, the 18th is its Review. This is the longest Chapter in the Gita having 78 Verses.

Moksha consists in securing lasting freedom from the bondage of mundane existence in the form of birth and death and realizing God who is no other than Bliss. Summing up the substance of all the previous Chapters, the present one discusses in detail, under the terms of ‘Sannyasa’ and ‘Tyaga’ respectively the paths of Knowledge and Action, both of which are the means to the attainment of *Moksha*.

It was explained that there are three types of personalities depending on their temperaments or Gunas. They are Sattwic-good, Rajasic-passionate and Tamasic-dull. This Chapter discusses how these Gunas create differences among individuals in their capacity to sacrifice, in their wisdom, in their actions, fortitude and happiness.

The teaching of the Gita has been wound up in Verse 66 of this Chapter with an exhortation to offer all actions to God who is the same as Moksha. It is for these reasons that this Chapter has been entitled “Moksha Sannyasa Yoga” or Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation.

The Text

RENUNCIATION IS TO BE PRACTISED NOT TOWARDS WORK BUT TO THE FRUITS OF WORK

arjuna uvaacha
sannyasaasya mahaabaaho tattvam icchaami veditum
tyaagasya cha hrishikesha prithak keshinishoodana // 18.1 //

Arjuna said

I desire to know the true nature of sannyasa and tyaga as distinguished from each other, O mighty Hrishikesa, O Slayer of Kesi.

This Chapter begins with Arjuna's question seeking the precise definition of Sannyasa - renunciation and Tyaga - relinquishment. These terms are used in many places in different contexts in the Gita with apparent varying meanings. Sri Krishna replies this question exhaustively.

The central theme of this discourse revolves around the meanings of these two words. It guides us what types of tendencies, urges, impulses and motives are to be relinquished or abandoned so that true renunciation of the non-divinity in oneself can take place.

**sri bhagavaan uvaacha
kaamyanaam karmanaam nyaasam sannyasam kavayoviduh
sarvakarmaphalatyaagam praahustyaagam vichakshanaah // 18.2 //**

Sri Bhagavan said

The renunciation of works induced by desire is understood by the sages to be Sannyasa while the surrender of the fruits of all works is called tyaga by the wise.

Total giving up all desire-prompted activities is renunciation while giving up of the fruits of actions is relinquishment. On the face of it these two statements appear to have the same implication because desires are always for the fruits of actions. Although both mean giving up of desire, Sannyasa is giving up of desire motivated action while Tyaga is giving up of desire for the fruits of actions.

Action is the effort put forth at present to attain its fruit in future. The fruit is a culmination in future of the present action. A desire-prompted action relates to the present while anxiety to enjoy its reward which is a mental disturbance relates to the future in the time-frame. A disturbed mind cannot execute any action with efficiency. Thus renunciation is the goal to be reached through abandoning the anxiety for the enjoyment of the fruits of actions.

Both Sannyasa and Tyaga are disciplines in our activities. These terms do not indicate that work should be ignored. On the other hand Gita insists that we must always work. But work can be executed with efficiency if these two factors viz. desire prompted action and desire for its reward are eliminated in which case the work becomes an inspired and noble action.

Inertia or non-action is not the ideal. Action without any selfish desires or expectation of gain, performed in the spirit that 'I am not the doer, I am surrendering myself to the Universal Self' is the ideal set before us. The Gita does not teach the complete renunciation of works but the conversion of all works into *nishkama karma* or desireless action.

**tyaajyam doshavadityeke karma praahurmaneeashinah
yajnadaanatapahkarma na tyajyamiti chaapare // 18.3 //**

Some philosophers declare that all works should be relinquished as evil; others declare that acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be given up.

As against the principles of work stated in the previous verse, some philosophers (Sankhyas) declare that action itself should be abandoned as an evil because they produce Vasanas obstructing the realization of the Self while some others say that acts of sacrifice (Yajna), charity (Dana) and austerity (Tapas) should never be given up.

However the imports of Sri Krishna's teachings in the Gita is that only evil activities are to be renounced and that all the spiritual activities and one's own duties should be

pursued in a spirit of dedicated selfless devotion and thus transform the work itself as a homage to the Supreme.

RELINQUISHMENT

**nishchayam shrinu me tatra tyage bharatasattama
tyago hi purushavyaaghra trividhah samprakeertitah // 18.4 //**

Hear from Me the conclusion or the final truth about this relinquishment, O Best of the Bharatas ; relinquishment verily, O Best of Men, has been declared to be of three kinds.

Sri Krishna promises Arjuna that He will explain what constitutes Tyaga or spirit of relinquishment and its various kinds.

**yajnadaanataph karma na tyajyam kaaryameva tat
yajno daanam tapashchaiva paavanaani maneeshinaam // 18.5 //**

Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be given up, but should be performed; for verily sacrifice, gift and also austerity are the purifiers of the wise.

The Lord says that practice of worship, charity and austerity should not be given up because these activities bring about a discipline in the mind and its inner peace and equilibrium which are necessary for spiritual unfoldment and final experience of the Infinite.

**etaanyapi tu karmaani sangam tyaktvaa phalaani cha
kartavyaaneeti me paartha nischitam matamuttamam // 18.6 //**

But even these actions should be performed leaving aside attachment and the desire for rewards, O Partha, this is My certain and conclusive conviction.

Even these actions viz. sacrifice (Yajna), charity (Dana) and austerity (Tapas) should be performed without any attachment i.e. without any sense of egoism and desire for its rewards. Ego and its desires are the components of attachment. When ego tries to satisfy its desires it develops a relationship with the outside world of things and beings. This relationship is attachment. If any action is performed with attachment, the expectations of its fruits affect the efficiency in the action undertaken.

To be rid of attachment and to be free from anxieties regarding the fruits of actions that will accrue at a future time are the roots of the Krishna doctrine in the Gita. Detachment is not a matter of outward action or inaction; it is the possession of the impersonal outlook and inner renunciation of ego while performing action.

THREE KINDS OF RENUNCIATION

**niyatasya tu sannyaasah karmano nopapadyate
mohaattasya parityaagas taamasah parikeertitah // 18.7 //**

Verily the renunciation of obligatory action is not proper; the relinquishment of the same from delusion is declared to be Tamasic.

Relinquishment of obligatory duties is considered as the worst. Obligatory duties mean unavoidable duties such as daily worship and special duties such as certain rituals on special occasions both individually and from the view point of the society in which one lives. As the performance of these duties makes the aspirant's heart pure, giving up of such duties is considered as Tamasic.

**duhkhamityeva yat karma kaayakleshabhayaat tyajet
sa kritwaa raajasam tyaagam naiva tyaagaphalam labhet // 18.8 //**

He, who abandons action from the fear of bodily trouble because it is painful, does not obtain the merit of renunciation by doing such Rajasic renunciation.

If anyone gives up his obligatory duties because they are painful or on account of fear of bodily suffering such Tyaga is considered as Rajasic because for a man of action to perform his duties only so long as they are not risky to his person is no heroism at all. Hence The Lord says that such a person shall not attain any fruit of his renunciation.

**kaaryamityeva yatkarma niyatam kriyate'rjuna
sangam tyaktwaa phalam chaiva sa tyaagah saatwiko matah // 18.9 //**

Whatever obligatory action is done, O Arjuna, merely because it ought to be done, abandoning attachment and also the fruit, that renunciation is regarded as Sattvic.

A man of pure nature performs actions that have fallen to his lot in accordance with his capacity and inherent nature. He is not filled with pride in performing action nor does he hope to gain any reward therefrom. When a man performs his obligatory duties without the spirit of doership and selfishness, his mind is purified and becomes fit for Self Realization. This kind of renunciation of attachment in performing action as also the expectation of the rewards of such action is considered Sattvic.

It will be noted from the above three verses that the discussion is not so much about what is to be renounced as to how and where one should act. Thus the concept of Tyaga in the Gita is a subjective renunciation of selfishness and desire in the field of activity and not giving up the world and one's duties and actions in it. Acting in the outside world, renouncing ego and egocentric desires, an individual grows in inward purity.

**na dweshtyakushalam karma kushale naanushajjate
tyaagi sattvasamaavishto medhaavee chhinnasamshayah // 18.10 //**

The man of renunciation, intelligent and pervaded by purity, with his doubts dispelled, has no aversion to disagreeable work and no attachment to agreeable action.

The question how does such a person, purified through Sattvic Tyaga, gains the highest spiritual experience is answered here.

A man of Sattvic relinquishment never hates any disagreeable work and environment nor gets attached to any agreeable fields of action and favorable scheme of things. He does his duties under all circumstances, agreeable or disagreeable, without getting elated when successful or dejected when faced with obstacles.

He is not overwhelmed by joy or sorrow; he is always equanimous. He is independent of the happenings around him. Even the low impulses like jealousy, anger, passion, greed etc. do not influence him. He does not become a victim of his own mental impressions, Vasanas.

Such a man is considered to be pervaded by purity. He is said to be educated, cultured and with clear vision of his goal without getting hampered by all sorts of doubts. He is termed a man of understanding, a *Medhavi*.

He knows his field of activity and his own divine nature. He is fully aware of the instruments of action and his relationship with the world outside. But a majority of people identify themselves with doership and live in the world conditioned by the happenings around. Such an average man who works with an ego and attachment must learn to work at least renouncing the fruits of his action which is explained in the next verse.

**na hi dehabhritaa shakyam tyaktum karmaanyasheshatah
yastu karmaphalatyaagee sa tyaaageetyabhidheeyate // 18.11 //**

Verily it is not possible for an embodied being to renounce actions entirely; but he who relinquishes the rewards of actions is verily called a man of renunciation.

Since all of us are embodied and therefore cannot abandon all activities so long as the body is alive, the only way is to direct all our actions in such a way as to bring harmony in our inner lives.

If Tyaga of Sattva type is not possible due to attachment to the world, relinquishment of attachment or anxiety to the fruits of actions which will materialize at a future time is advised by The Lord. A man who abandons his longing to enjoy the rewards for his action is called a Tyagi.

THREE TYPES OF FRUITS OF TYAGA

**anishtamishtam mishram cha trividham karmanah phalam
bhavatyatyaaginaam pretya na tu sannyaasinaam kwachit // 18.12 //**

The threefold fruit of action - desirable, undesirable and mixed - accrues after death to those who have no spirit of renunciation, but never to the relinquishers.

Earlier three types of Tyaga were discussed. Now three types of fruits of Tyaga are explained. The fruits of action mean not only the results of actions accruing at a future date but also the changes that take place at the mental plane or in the thought process itself. Such changes or reactions in the mind are of three types viz. the disagreeable - those that are positively bad, the agreeable - those that are positively good and the mixed - those that include both good and bad.

As the present determines the quality of the future, after death, the next embodiment and its environment would depend upon the type of vasanas produced in the present actions. This is called the Theory of Re-incarnation.

The Lord explains that for a man of renunciation (Sannyasa) there cannot be any response to the actions done in the past or in the present; he realizes the Bliss. The pleasant, unpleasant and mixed reactions - Karma Phalam- are applicable only to those who have an ego-centric identification with actions as well as their results. Relinquishment of the sense of ego and the anxiety for the results and serving the world as a service to The Lord is Tyaga.

WORK IS A FUNCTION OF NATURE

**panchaitaani mahaabaaho kaaranaani nibodha me
saankhye kritaante proktaani siddhaye sarva karmanaam // 18.13 //**

Learn from Me, O mighty-armed Arjuna, these five factors, as declared in the Sankhya doctrine, for the accomplishment of all actions.

**adhishtaanam tathaa kartaa karanam cha prithagvidham
vividhaashcha prithakcheshtaa daivam chaivaatra panchamam / 18.14 /**

(Body) the seat of action, (ego) the doer, the various sense organs of perception ,the different functions of organs of actions and the presiding Deity also, the fifth

**shareeravaangmanobhiryat karma praarabhate narah
nyaayyam vaa vipareetam vaa panchaite tasya hetavah // 18.15 //**

Whatever action a man performs by his body, speech and mind, whether right or the reverse, these five are its causes.

The concept of work is analyzed in these verses. When it was told that action can be done without egocentric desires and attachments to fruits the consequential question is what constitutes action or work. Sri Krishna says that there are five aspects of action or five-fold division of work which are already laid down in the Sankhyan philosophy.

The five components of action are

1. The body -*Adhishtaanam* -the gateway for the entrance and existence of stimuli
2. The ego -*Karta*- which seeks fulfillment of the action through the body

3. the organs of perception - *Karanam* - through which the inner personality comes into contact with the field of enjoyment and satisfaction
4. The organs of action and
5. the presiding deities of the organs of perception which make them work properly.

The deities represent an unseen power other than the human factors. Each of the sense organs is controlled by a reflection of Consciousness called Presiding deity.

It is this non-human factor that interferes and disposes of human effort. It is the wise, all-seeing will that is at work in the world. In all human actions, there is an unaccountable element which is commonly called luck, destiny, fate or the force accumulated by the acts of one's past lives. It is called here *daiva*.

The task of man is to drop a pebble in the ocean of time and he may not see the ripple reach the other distant shore; he may plant the seed but he may not see the harvest which lies in the hands higher than his own.

As all the items listed above will have to function in a coordinated manner for the accomplishment of any task undertaken, be it by the body, speech or mind or whether they are right or wrong, they are called the causes of all actions.

**tatraivam sati kartaaram aatmaanam kevalam tu yah
pashyatyakritabuddhitwaan na sa pashyati durmatih // 18.16 //**

Such being the case, the man of perverse mind who, owing to his untrained understanding, looks upon the Pure Self as the doer, he does not see.

The Self is always actionless. It is always the silent witness. But a man of perverted understanding attributes agency to the pure Self as the doer because of misapprehension of the facts. He equates the body with the Self because of his lack of knowledge of the pure, actionless Self. Though he sees with his physical eyes, he does not behold the one eternal essence which is the substratum of everything.

**yasya naahankrito bhaavo buddhiryasya na lipyate
hatwaapi sa imaam lokaan na hanti na nibadhyate // 18.17 //**

He who is free from the egoistic notion, whose understanding is not tainted (by good or evil), though he slays these people, he slays not, nor is he bound (by the action).

The realm of matter is the field of activity and the life's sorrows and agitations belong to it. Although the Spirit is independent of the field, because of Its identification with the field It feels happy or unhappy according to the condition of the field at any given moment. Similarly ego which is the result of man's self projections and unhealthy contacts with the outside world is the cause of man's sufferings. Therefore Sri Krishna says that those who have no sense of egoism and whose intelligence is not vitiated by false values of possession, acquisition etc. perform no action although they act.

The statement 'performing no action while acting' means that even while a man of above mentioned temperament is acting in the world, such actions leave no mental impressions (Vasanas) in him and he remains detached. An egoless man of wisdom while working in any field is an expression of the Infinite Will and in that attitude of surrender and dedication actions performed by him leave no vasanas in him. Hence The Lord says 'though he kills he does not kill'.

Thus Arjuna is told that if he can act in the world without identifying with things around him and does his duty in the consciousness of the Divine, even if he kills his kith and kin, teachers etc. he would not be committing any crime and the killings would not leave any murderous impressions in him.

In a way we can say that the teachings of the Gita are concluded here. At the beginning Sri Krishna stated the proposition: "The self slays not nor is slain" (2.19) and gave the immutability of the Self as the reason (2.20). He also briefly introduced the idea (2.21) that an enlightened person is not compelled to engage in action and explained it in detail through the treatise. Now He concludes His discourses by saying that "the wise man slays not nor is he bound".

The essence of the teaching is this: A sannyasi is free from ego and identification with the body. He renounces all actions because it is brought about by ignorance of the true nature of the Self. Therefore the threefold fruit of action – desirable, undesirable and mixed – does not affect him. It is only the unenlightened man that is affected by it.

In the following verses Sri Krishna explains why different people act differently under different impulses and keep different basis for their actions. Each one of these factors is divided under three categories of human nature viz. Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION

**jnaanam jneyam parijnaataa trividhaa karmachodanaa
karanam karma karteti trividhah karma sangraha // 18.18 //**

Knowledge, the known (the object of knowledge) and the knower form the threefold incitement to action; the instrument, the object and the agent form the threefold basis of action.

The threefold impulse that propels activity (*Karma Chodana*) and also the basis of action (*Karma Sangraha*) are explained here.

The impulse to action is made up of Knowledge (*Jnanam*), the Known (*Jneyam*) and the Knower (*Parijnata*). They indicate the experience, the experienced and the experiencer respectively. No action is possible without these three constituents. From the experiencer the impulse for action comes out as a desire, from the experienced as a temptation and from the experience as a memory of enjoyment.

The basis of action comprises of the instruments of action in the form of organs of perception, mind and understanding. The object of action is that which is sought for and reached through action by the doer. The doer is in the form of ego that sets the organs going.

Thus an activity consists of

- an agent having a desire
- who maintains in his mind a clear picture of the end or the goal and
- who possesses all the necessary instruments to act.

The performance of an action, either to obtain or to avoid a thing, is possible only when there is conjunction of these three; if any one of these items is absent no activity can take place. All actions inhere in these three: the instrument, the object and the doer; hence, they form the bases of action.

**jnaanam karma cha kartaa cha tridhaiva gunabhedatah
prochyate gunasankhyaane yathaavacchrinu taanyapi // 18.19 //**

Knowledge, action and the doer (agent) are declared in the science of the Gunas to be of three kinds, according to the distinction of the Gunas ; hear them also duly.

Knowledge, action and the actor or the doer fall under three categories because of differences in the temperaments or Gunas in an individual at any given time. These classifications are exhaustively discussed in the following verses.

Since knowledge, action and the doer are characterized by the three Gunas, they fall into the nature of Prakriti or Nature or Matter. They have no connection with the Atman or the Self.

THREE KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

**sarvabhooteshu yenaikam bhaavamavyayameekshate
avibhaktam vibhakteshu tajjnaanam viddhi saatwikam // 18.20 //**

The knowledge by which one sees the one indestructible Reality in all beings, undivided in the divided - know that knowledge to be Sattvic.

**prithaktvena tu yajjnaanam naanaabhaavaan prithagvidhaan
vetti sarveshu bhooteshu tajjnaanam viddhi raajasam //18.21 //**

But that knowledge through which one sees multiplicity of beings in different creatures by reason of their separateness - know that knowledge to be Rajasic.

**yattu kritsnavadekasmin kaarye saktamahaitukam
atatwaarthavadalpam cha tattaamasamudaahritam // 18.22 //**

But the knowledge which is confined to one single effect as if it were the whole, without concern for the cause, without grasping the real and narrow - that is declared to be Tamasic.

Sattvic:

That knowledge which can recognize the flux of things, which can feel the harmony underlying the unity in the diversity of forms and behaviors, which can live in the awareness of the One Life that pulsates in every living being i.e. Brahman or the Supreme Reality is the genuine achievement of a Sattvic intellect. Through this knowledge one Imperishable Being is seen in all existences. Though the body, mind and intellect equipments take different forms in different living creatures, the Sattvic knowledge recognizes all of them as the expressions of one and the same Non-dual Truth, Atman, which is the Essence in all of them.

Rajasic:

That knowledge which looks upon other living entities as different from one another is passionate or Rajasic. An intellect to which the world is an assortment of various types, behaving under various moods differently, an intellect that recognizes the world as made up of an endless incomprehensible plurality has Rajasic knowledge. Finding creatures happy or unhappy, wise or ignorant, ugly or beautiful, a man endowed with Rajasic knowledge thinks that different souls dwell in different bodies.

Tamasic:

That knowledge which regards without any reason and understanding a particular path or view as the sole end and sticks to that opinion with arrogance and egoism, that knowledge which considers the entire world of things and beings as meant for its owner and his pleasures alone and which does not recognize anything beyond its ego is Tamasic. This knowledge is of the lowest type of spiritual seekers which ignores totally the Divine Presence.

Thus the knowledge of the Sattvic perceives oneness underlying the universe, that of the Rajasic recognizes the plurality of the world and that of the Tamasic is egoistic with a perverted view of the world.

It has to be noted that this categorization and that which will follow in this Chapter is not for judging others but to evaluate oneself and take corrective steps for self-improvement when wrong tendencies are observed

THREE KINDS OF WORK

**niyatam sangarahitam araagadweshatah kritam
aphalaprepsunaa karma yattat saatwikamuchyate // 18.23 //**

An action which is obligatory, which is free from attachment, which is done without love or hatred by one who is not desirous of any reward - that action is declared to be Sattvic.

**yattu kaamepsunaa karma saahankaarena vaa punah
kriyate bahulaayaasam tadraajasamudaahritam // 18.24 //**

But that action which is done by one longing for the fulfillment of desires or gains, with egoism or with much effort - that is declared to be Rajasic.

**anubandham kshayam himsaam anavekshya cha paurusham
mohaadaarabhyate karma yattat taamasamuchyate // 18.25 //**

That action which is undertaken from delusion, without regard to the consequence, loss, injury and one's own ability- that is declared to be Tamasic.

The threefold nature of action (Karma) is described.

Sattvic:

Sattvic actions are those that are one's own obligatory duties towards the society, performed without any attachment to the fruits thereof and that are not motivated by likes and dislikes. These duties are just performed spontaneously. Fulfillment and joy are sought in the very work itself. Such Sattvic actions are undertaken only by men who possess Sattvic knowledge. A Sattvic action is the purest producing peace and harmony in the field of activity. It is an obligatory action undertaken for its own sake in an attitude that work itself is worship. Such inspired activities are undertaken without any attachment and any anxiety for the rewards. They are not guided by likes or dislikes of the performer. Action itself is fulfillment.

Rajasic:

Rajasic activities are those that are propelled by desires waiting for their fulfillment that are performed in a self-centered vainglorious attitude of 'I'ness and which are undertaken with great strain and labor on the part of the doer. They are undertaken by men of Rajasic knowledge. Rajasic action is undertaken to satisfy one's desire in a spirit of arrogance, egoism and vanity. Such actions involve considerable effort and strain.

The consciousness of suffering, the sense that we are doing something disagreeable, that we are passing through grim suffering and toil takes away value from the act. To feel consciously that we are doing something great, that we are sacrificing something vital is a failure of the sacrifice itself.

But when the work is undertaken for the cause, it is a labor of love and sacrifice itself is not felt as a sacrifice. Doing unpleasant things from a sense of duty, feeling the unpleasantness all the time is Rajasic. Doing it gladly in utter unself-consciousness, with a smile on the lips is Sattvic. It is the difference between an act of love and an act of law, an act of grace and an act of obligation.

Tamasic:

Tamasic actions are those that are undertaken without any regard for the consequences thereof and that bring disaster and sorrow to all including the performer. They emanate in

an individual out of his misconception about the goal of life. They are undertaken by men of Tamasic knowledge.

THREE KINDS OF DOER

**muktasango'nahamvaadi dhrityutsaahasamanvatah
siddhyasiddhyor nirvikaarah kartaa saatwika uchyate // 18.26 //**

He who is free from attachment, non-egoistic, endowed with fortitude and enthusiasm and unaffected by success or failure is called Sattvic.

**raagee karmaphalaprepsur lubdho himsaatmako'shuchih
harshashokaanvatah kartaa raajasah parikeertitah // 18.27 //**

Passionate, desiring to obtain the fruits of actions, cruel, greedy, impure, easily elated or dejected, such an agent is said to be Rajasic.

**ayuktah praakritah stabdhah shatho naishkritiko'lasah
vishaadee deerghasootree cha kartaa taamasa uchyate // 18.28 //**

Unsteady, vulgar, unbending, cheating, malicious, dejected, lazy and procrastinating - such an agent is called Tamasic.

Sattvic:

A doer who has no attachment to the field in which he is acting, who is not egoistic, who is full of persistence and zeal unmindful of obstacles on the path, who is not perturbed by the results of his actions, be they success or failure, is considered a *Sattvic-Karta*. He is ever conscious of the power of the Infinite Light in all his activities at all times.

Rajasic:

A doer who yields to passions, desires and attachments, who eagerly seeks the fruits of his work, who is selfish, greedy and insatiable, whose acts cause harm to others, who is not pure in his means, who is tossed between joys and sorrows of life is considered *Rajasic Karta*.

Tamasic:

A doer who has no control over his own base mental impulses and instincts, who is arrogant, vulgar and obstinate in his own wrong conclusions, who is unsteady, despondent, deceitful, indolent, procrastinating and malicious is considered *Tamasic Karta*.

THREE KINDS OF UNDERSTANDING

**buddherbhedam dhriteshchaiva gunatastrividham shrinu
prochyamaanamasheshena prithaktvena dhananjaya // 18.29 //**

Hear the threefold division of the intellect and fortitude according to the Gunas, as I declare them fully and distinctly, O Dhanajaya.

**pravrittim cha nivrittim cha kaaryaakaarye bhayaabhaye
bandham moksham cha yaa vetti buddhih saa paartha saatwikee // 18.30 //**

That which knows the path of work and renunciation, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation - that intellect is Sattvic, O Partha.

**yayaa dharmamadharmam cha kaaryam cha akaaryam eva cha
ayathaavatprajaanaati buddhih saa paartha raajasee // 18.31 //**

That by which one incorrectly understands Dharma and Adharma and also what ought to be done and what ought not to be done - that intellect, O Partha , is Rajasic.

**adharmam dharmamiti yaa manyate tamasaavritaa
sarvaarthaan vipareetaamshcha buddhih saa paartha taamasee // 18.32 //**

That which, enveloped in darkness, regards Adharma as Dharma and views all things in a perverted light - that intellect, O Partha , is called Tamasic.

Three types of understanding (Buddhi) are explained. Understanding or Buddhi means the intellectual capacity in the individual to grasp what is happening around.

Sattvic:

The understanding that can readily judge things that are to be done (*Pravritti*) and things that are to be avoided (*Nivritti*), that can readily discriminate the beings and situations in its field of activity, that can distinguish between the right field of pursuit and wrong field of false ideas, that understands fear and fearlessness is considered as the *Sattvic Buddhi*, an understanding of purity.

Rajasic:

The understanding that erroneously judges both the right and the wrong that makes faulty conclusions about what should be done and what should not be done due to inaccurate egoistic pre-conceived notions is considered *Rajasic Buddhi*.

Tamasic:

The understanding that deems the wrong as the right, reversing every value due to ignorance, sees all things in a perverted way, always against the truth is considered as the *Tamasic Buddhi*. In fact this is no understanding at all; it can only be a perpetual misunderstanding.

THREE KINDS OF STEADINESS OR FORTITUDE

**dhritiyaa yayaa dhaarayate manah praanendriyakriyaah
yogenaavyaabhichaarinyaa dhritih saa paartha saatwikee // 18.33 //**

The unwavering fortitude by which, through Yoga, the functions of the mind, the life-force and the senses are restrained - that fortitude O Partha, is Sattvic.

**yayaa tu dharmakaamaarthaan dhrityaa dhaarayate'rjuna
prasangena phalaakaangkshee dhritih saa paartha raajasee // 18.34 //**

But the fortitude, O Partha, by which, one holds fast to duty, pleasure and wealth, and craves for the fruits of action from attachment, that fortitude is Rajasic.

**yayaa swapnam bhayam shokam vishaadam madameva cha
na vimunchati durmedhaa dhritih saa paartha taamasee // 18.35 //**

That by which a stupid man does not give up sleep, fear, grief, despair and also arrogance - that fortitude , O Partha , is Tamasic.

The three kinds of Fortitude (*Dhriti*) is explained. Fortitude is consistency of purpose and self-application with which every individual pursues his field of endeavor chosen for him by his Buddhi to achieve a set goal without allowing himself to be distracted by the obstacles on the way. Its power is proportional to the detachment from regrets over the past and anxieties for the future.

Sattvic:

The fortitude by which one controls the activities of the mind, organs of perception and organs of action is the *Sattvic Dhriti*. The consistency with which one steadily controls one's mind and sense organs and their activities through single-pointed concentration upon a given goal is of the Sattvic type.

Rajasic:

The consistency with which one firmly holds on to duty, pleasure and wealth, ever desirous of enjoying the fruits of his action is of *Rajasic Dhriti*. He follows Dharma-duty-only to gain the heavens, pursues wealth to gain power in life and works for pleasure to achieve sensual satisfaction.

Tamasic:

The steadiness of purpose with which one does not abandon one's dreams and imaginations, fear and agitation, grief and sorrow, depression and arrogance is of *Tamasic Dhriti* and such a person is called *Durmedha*, a fool.

THREE KINDS OF HAPPINESS

**sukham twidaaneem trividham shrinu me bharatarshabha
abhyaasaadramate yatra duhkhaantam cha nigacchati // 18.36 //**

And now hear from Me, O Best among the Bharatas, of the threefold pleasure in which one rejoices by practice and by which one comes to the end of sorrow.

**yattadagre vishamiva parinaame'mritopamam
tatsukham saatwikam proktam aatmabuddhi prasaadajam // 18.37 //**

That which is like poison at first but in the end like nectar - that pleasure is declared to be Sattvic, springing from a clear understanding of the Self.

**vishayendriya samyogaad yattadagre'mritopamam
parinaame vishamiva tatsukham raajasam smritam // 18.38 //**

That pleasure which arises from the contact of the sense-organs with the objects, which is at first like nectar and in the end like poison is declared to be Rajasic.

**yadagre chaanubandhe cha sukham mohanamaatmanah
nidraalasyapramaadottham tattaamasamudaahritam // 18.39 //**

That pleasure which at the beginning and at the end deludes the Self, which arises from sleep, indolence and heedlessness is declared to be Tamasic.

Happiness is the universal aim of life. Only it is of different kinds according to the Gunas which dominate our nature. If Tamas predominates in us, we are satisfied with violence and inertia, blindness and error. If Rajas prevails, wealth and power, pride and glory give us happiness. True happiness of human beings lies not in the possession of outward things but in the fulfillment of the higher mind and spirit, in the development of what is most inward in us. It may mean pain and restraint but it will lead us to joy and freedom. We can pass from the happiness of knowledge and virtue to the eternal calm and joy, *Ananda* of the Spirit, when we become one with the Highest Self and one with all beings.

Sattvic:

The joy arising out of the inner self-control and consequent self-perfection which looks though painful and arduous in the beginning, is enduring in the long run, in contrast with the fleeting joys of sensual satisfaction. It is the result of inner discipline and contemplation. This brings about tranquility in the intellect and from this tranquility of the intellect emerges Sattvic happiness. This happiness that arises from consistent effort lasts long and yields greater sense of fulfillment which is the result of an individual's balanced and self-disciplined life of high ideals and divine values of life.

Rajasic:

This pleasure arises only when the sense-organs are directly in contact with the sense-objects. In the beginning it is alluring but it creates a sense of exhaustion and dissipation in the enjoyer in the long run. It is also vitiated by the anxiety about its diminution and ultimate loss. Therefore the temporary happiness provided by the sense-objects is termed Rajasic.

Tamasic:

This type of happiness arises from 1. sleep - not the physiological every day sleep but the non-apprehension of Reality and the incapacity to perceive the goal of life- 2.indolence -

the incapacity of the intellect to think correctly about the problems that it faces to arrive at a correct judgment - and 3. Heedlessness - ignoring the values of higher ideals.

These topics are concluded.

Next time we will proceed from the Verse 18.40

HARIH OM

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 18(Part-2)
Moksha Sannyasa Yogah:
Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation
T.N.Sethumadhavan

Preamble

Sattva, rajasika and tamasika gunas in different combinations form the basis for the fourfold classification of human beings in a society into Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra.

The Lord gives a brief resume of the three spiritual disciplines to reach Brahman - Karma Yoga, path of action for the body, Bhakti Yoga, path of devotion for the mind and Jnana Yoga, Path of knowledge for the intellect.

Pursuing the path of action a seeker drops the bulk of the vasanas, desires. His mind becomes purified. His intellect becomes sharp. He rises to the path of knowledge and acquires spiritual values. He develops commitment to God and thus enters the path of devotion. The three disciplines prepare the seeker for concentration, meditation upon the Supreme through which he realizes Brahman.

Krishna appeals to Arjuna to drop his ego and seek the supreme Self within. Every person functions helplessly according to one's own nature. Krishna assures Arjuna that He has imparted the knowledge necessary to take the plunge, leaving the choice to him to reflect and decide his course of action.

The Text

ONE'S NATURE (SWABHAVA) AND STATION IN LIFE (SWADHARMA)

**na tadasti prithivyaam vaa divi deveshu vaa punah
sattwam prakritijairmuktam yadebhih syaat tribhiringunaih // 18.40 //**

There is no being on earth or again in heaven among the Devas , who is free from these three Gunas born of prakriti (nature).

This verse concludes the discussion so far made about the three Gunas influencing the personality and the behavioral pattern of the living organisms. Sri Krishna says that there is no creature either on the earth or among the Gods in the heaven who is free from the influences of these three Gunas. The play of these three Gunas is the very expression of Prakriti. Put together they are the manifestations of Maya which make the individuals differ from each other.

With these three measuring rods Sri Krishna classifies the entire humanity under four distinct types. The criterion of this classification of man is the quality of his inner equipments responsible for achievements in the field of his activities.

The fourfold division of society is based on this principle. Certain well defined characteristics determine these four classes in the community. They are never determined by birth. This classification of society is as follows:

- Brahmanas - who have major portion of Sattwa and a little Rajas with minimum Tamas.
- Kshatriyas - who have mostly Rajas with some Sattwa and very little Tamas.
- Vaishyas - who have more Rajas, very little Sattwa and some Tamas.
- Sudras - mostly Tamas, very little Rajas and negligible Sattwa.

**braahmanakshatriyavishaam shoodraanaam cha parantapa
karmaani pravibhaktaani swabhaavaprabhavaairgunaih // 18.41 //**

Of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, as also the Sudras, O Arjuna, the activities are distinguished in accordance with the qualities born of their own nature.

Sri Krishna applies the characteristics of various Gunas to the social fabric and classifies the entire mankind under four different heads viz. Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras.

Different kinds of duties are assigned to each of these categories of individuals depending on their nature (*Swabhava*) which in turn depends on the Gunas predominating in them. This classification is based on the quality of the inner personality of the individuals and not on the accident of their birth.

The fourfold order is not peculiar to Hindu society. It is of universal application. The classification depends on types of human nature. Each of the four classes has certain well defined characteristics though they are not to be regarded as exclusive. They are not always determined by heredity.

The Gita cannot be used to support the existing social order with its rigidity and confusion. The Gita enlarges the scope and meaning of the theory of the fourfold order. Man's outward life must express his inward being; the surface must reflect the depth. Each individual has his inborn nature-Swabhava- and to make it effective in his life is his duty-Swadharma. Each individual is a focus of the Supreme, a fragment of the Divine. His destiny is to bring out in his life this divine possibility. The Gita lays the utmost emphasis on Swadharma – the dharma or duty of an individual – as determined by his Swabhava, his inner nature formed as a result of his own past actions.

The one Spirit of the universe has produced the multiplicity of souls in the world, but the idea of the Divine is our essential nature, the truth of our being, our Swabhava and not the apparatus of the Gunas, which is only the medium of expression. If each individual does what is appropriate to him, if he follows the law of his being, his Swadharma, then God would express Himself in the free volitions of human beings. All that is essential for the world will be done without a conflict.

But men rarely do what they ought to do. When they undertake to determine events believing that they know the plan of the whole, they work mischief on the earth. So long as our work is done in accordance with our nature, we are righteous and if we dedicate it to God, our work becomes a means of spiritual perfection. When the divine in the individual is completely manifested, he attains the eternal, imperishable status. The problem that human life sets to us is to discover our true self and live according to its truth; otherwise we would sin against our nature.

The emphasis on Swabhava indicates that human beings are to be treated as individuals and not as types. Arjuna is told that he who fights gallantly as a warrior becomes mature for the peace of wisdom. There are four broad types of nature and answering to them are four kinds of social living. The four classes are not determined by birth or colour but by psychological characteristics which fit us for definite functions in society.

**shamo damanastapah shaucham kshaantiraarjavameva cha
jnaanam vijnaanam aastikyam brahmakarma swabhaavajam // 18.42 //**

Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness and also uprightness, knowledge, realization and belief in God are the duties of the Brahmanas, born of their own nature.

The duties of the *Brahmanas* are enumerated:

- Serenity (*Shama*) - Controlling the mind from running after the world of objects in pursuit of sensual enjoyment.
- Self restraint (*Dama*) - Controlling the sense organs from conveying the external stimuli to the mind.
- Austerity (*Tapas*) - Conscious physical self denial to save human energy from sense indulgence and directing such energy towards spiritual awakening.
- Purity (*Shaucham*)- External cleanliness and internal purity.
- Forgiveness or Forbearance (*Kshanti*)- To be patient and forgiving even against wrongs committed against oneself.
- Uprightness (*Arjavam*)- A quality that makes the individual straightforward in all his dealings and thus becoming fearless.
- Cultivating and practicing these six qualities are the life-long duty of a Brahmana. Three more duties are added by The Lord as a code of conduct or duties in the spiritual side of a Brahmana. They are :
- Knowledge (*Jnanam*) - Knowledge of all that Upanishads deal with.
- Wisdom (*Vijnanam*) - Personal experience of the knowledge so acquired. Knowledge is that which is imparted while wisdom is that which is experienced within oneself. Wisdom is living the knowledge gained by studies.
- Faith (*Astikyam*) - Conviction to live what one has learnt and understood.

**shauryam tejo dhritirdaakshyam yuddhe chaapyapalaayanam
daanameeshwarabhaavashcha kshaatram karmaswabhaavajam // 18.43 //**

Prowess, splendor, firmness, dexterity and also not fleeing even in a battle, generosity and leadership are the duties of Kshatriyas, born of their own nature.

The qualities of a Kshatriya are enumerated:

- Prowess and splendor - Vigor to meet challenges in life.
- Firmness or fortitude - Zeal and consistency of purpose.
- Dexterity - Alertness and foresight.
- Not fleeing even from a battle - Not to accept defeat in any field of activity.
- Generosity - Compassion to those in need of help.
- Lordliness - Self confidence in one's own ability and possessing leadership qualities.

These are the duties of the Kshatriyas, the men of action.

**krishigaurakshyavaanijyam vaishyakarma swabhaavajam
paricharyaatamakam karma shoodrasyaapi swabhaavajam // 18.44 //**

Agriculture, cattle rearing and trade are the duties of the vaishya class born of their own nature; action consisting of service is the duty of the Sudra class born of their own nature.

The duties of Vaishyas and Sudras are stated in this verse.

Thus the mental temperament of a man determines what class he belongs to and each class has been given a set of duties to perform in the world. If a man does a type of work for which he is not fit temperamentally, chaos follows.

Each class of people mentioned here has to work with a spirit of dedication for their own evolution and sense of fulfillment. When each one works according to Vasanas in him and fully devotes himself to the prescribed duties, he develops within himself and attains gradually the State of Perfection.

It is not a question of identical opportunities but equal opportunities for all men to rise to the highest station in social life, for men differ in their powers. Each one should have the opportunity of achieving his human fullness, the fruits of wisdom and virtue, according to his effort and condition.

The Varna rules recognize that different men contribute to the general good in different ways. Society is a functional organization and all functions which are essential for the health of society are to be regarded as socially equal. Individuals of varying capacities are bound together in a living organic social system; the process is not an attempt to achieve uniformity, which is impossible, but at an integrated variety. All men are not equal in their capacities but all men are equally necessary for society and their contributions from their different stations are of equal value.

**swe swe karmanyabhiratah samsiddhim labhate narah
swakarmaniratah siddhim yathaa vindati tacchrinu // 18.45 //**

Each man, devoted to his own duty, attains perfection. How he attains perfection while being engaged in his own duty, hear now.

Within the power of our nature, we must live up fully to our duty. By thus working in the field ordered by one's own vasanas, renouncing ego and its desires and with a spirit of dedication and total surrender to the Infinite, mind's evolution starts. How this is achieved is explained in the following verses.

PERFECTION THROUGH PERFORMANCE OF DUTY

**yatah pravrittirbhootaanaam yena sarvamidam tatam
swakarmanaa tamabhyarchya siddhim vindati maanavah // 18.46 //**

He from whom all the beings have evolved and by whom all this is pervaded, by worshipping Him through the performance of his own duty, man attains perfection.

When a man acts according to his Swabhava and Swadharma he can attain joy and relief only when he learns to work and achieve in a spirit of total self-surrender.

From whom all beings evolved and by whom all is pervaded: Body, mind and intellect are by themselves inert. They can discharge their functions only if they are prompted by Consciousness. To remember constantly that Consciousness - the Atman - which makes the activities to happen through the body equipments is to become a witness to all the agitations in life without getting agitated.

Work becomes worship, by aligning the mind through the performance of activity, to the consciousness of the Self. This change of attitude towards work removes drudgery in work situations converting dreariness into meditation. Sri Krishna says by so performing one's own duties one can attain the highest Perfection. Apart from yielding the reward work itself becomes a fulfillment and the doer becomes an integrated personality.

**shreyaanswadharmo vigunah paradharmaat swanushthitaat
swabhaavaniyatam karma kurvannaapnoti kilbisham // 18.47 //**

Better is one's own duty though imperfectly carried out than the duty of another well performed. He who does the duty ordained by his own nature incurs no sin.

This theme was discussed in Ch.3.35 also. It is no use employing our minds in tasks which are contrary to our nature. Every one has his place and everything has a purpose in the scheme of things for each can do something which the others cannot do so well. In each of us lies a principle of divine expression. It is our real nature, Swabhava, finding partial expression in our various activities. By following its guidance in our thought, aspiration and endeavor, we progressively realize the intention of the Spirit for us.

**sahajam karma kaunteya sadoshamapi na tyajet
sarvaarambhaa hi doshena dhoomenaagnirivaavritaah // 18.48 //**

One should not abandon, O Kaunteya, the duty suited to one's nature, though it may be defective, for all undertakings are clouded by defects, as the fire by smoke.

The factors that determine our actions are the temperaments and the environment that bring forth new tendencies in us. Sri Krishna indicates that a spiritual seeker must constantly strive to stand apart from the effects of environments as the man is a master of his circumstances.

The statement that all actions are clouded by defects as fire by the smoke means that actions are always blended with 'I am the doer sense' which creates new vasanas and therefore they are full of defects. This defect is as much unavoidable as the smoke in fire. As ventilation reduces the impact of the smoke the more we concentrate on the Consciousness Divine, the less will be the assertion of ego and egocentric desires in us and therefore the work we undertake will be purified to that extent.

KARMA YOGA AND ABSOLUTE PERFECTION

**asaktabuddhih sarvatra jitaatmaa vigatasprihah
naishkarmyasiddhim paramaam sannyaasenaadhigacchati // 18.49 //**

He whose intellect is unattached everywhere, who has subdued his self, from whom desire has fled, he, by renunciation, attains the supreme state of freedom from action.

The Gita is not tired of repeating that restraint and freedom from desire are essential to spiritual perfection. Attachments to objects, a sense of ego, are the characteristics of our lower nature. If we are to rise to knowledge of our true Self, we must conquer our lower nature with its ignorance and inertia, its love of worldly possessions, etc.

The state of actionlessness or transcending all work does not mean complete withdrawal from all work. Such a question is not possible so long as we live in the body. The Gita insists on inner renunciation. As the ego and nature are akin, the liberated soul becoming Brahman, the Pure Self, described as silent, calm, and inactive, acts in the world of Prakriti, knowing what the latter is.

The highest state is here described, not positively as entering into The Lord but negatively as freedom from *Kama*, Desire.

PERFECTION AND REALIZING BRAHMAN

**siddhim praapto yathaa brahma tathaapnoti nibodha me
samaasenaiva kaunteya nishthaa jnaanasya yaa paraa // 18.50 //**

Learn from Me in brief, O Kaunteya, how he who has attained perfection reaches Brahman (The Eternal), that supreme state of knowledge.

When our intellect becomes free from its attachments and thus controls our mind and body, then alone we are fit for renunciation of the lower ego-sense and reach for the Infinite Self which is the process of meditation.

**buddhyaa vishuddhayaa yukto dhrityaatmaanam niyamy cha
shabdaadeen vishayaamstyaktwaa raagadweshau vyudasya cha // 18.51 //**

Endowed with pure intellect, firmly restraining oneself, turning away from sound and other objects of sense and abandoning both hatred and attraction.

**viviktasevee laghwaashee yatvaakkaayamaanasah
dhyaanayogaparo nityam vairaagyam samupaashritah // 18.52 //**

Dwelling in solitude, eating but little, with speech, body and mind subdued, always engaged in meditation and concentration taking refuge in dispassion.

**ahamkaaram balam darpam kaamam krodham parigraham
vimuchya nirmamah shaanto brahmabhooyaaya kalpate // 18.53 //**

Having abandoned egoism, strength, arrogance, desire, anger and covetousness, free from the notion of 'mine' ness and tranquil in mind, he becomes worthy of becoming one with Brahman.

The process of meditation and attaining the Supreme - Brahman - is discussed. The prerequisites or the qualities which are necessary for meditation are as follows:

- Pure intellect - An intellect without tendencies to acquire, possess and enjoy sense objects.
- Controlling the mind and senses - By receiving the external stimuli the sense organs distract the mind from concentrating on the Infinite and hence they have to be controlled.
- Renouncing sense objects - By controlling the sense organs the external stimuli such as sound, form, touch, taste or smell can be prevented from reaching the mind through the respective channels of ears, eyes, skin, tongue and nose. Once this is achieved sense objects automatically lose their value and attraction.
- Abandoning attraction and hatred - When the mind is thus protected it cannot, by itself, get agitated by recapitulating agreeable or disagreeable incidents or things.

Thus a successful meditator is one who has an intellect purified from all extrovert desires, who has brought the mind and sense organs under the control of the intellect, thereby preventing them from running after sense objects and who has given up the ideas of likes and dislikes.

- Dwelling in solitude - seeking a place where there will be least disturbance.
- Eating but little - Temperate eating habits.

- Subduing body, mind and speech - Elimination of egocentric attitude in all our thinking, action and relationship with others.
- Ever engaged in meditation and concentration - After the mind is quietened it has to be kept continuously busy by contemplation on The Lord in an attitude of complete identification with Him.
- Taking refuge in dispassion - It is a state where the mind finds no attraction for the objects of the senses. This attitude of dispassion or *vairagya* is necessary for the spiritual growth.

Thus a true seeker of a higher life must seek solitude, live in temperance, subdue his body, mind and speech and must live in a spirit of dispassion.

The qualities that are to be renounced for meditation are:

Although Sri Krishna lists out these qualities, they are in fact basically only one which is the sense of 'I-ness'. When this sense of doership develops, egocentric vanity takes over the individual claiming a false sense of power, pride and arrogance. For an individual working under the influence of power and arrogance, lust and anger are natural while he tries by any means to acquire more and more wealth and protects what has already been acquired.

The Lord advises to abandon the following six qualities and thus become egoless and tranquil.

- egoism
- strength
- arrogance
- desire,
- anger
- covetousness

This is the peace arising out of wisdom and satisfaction experienced in the Realm of Perfection. When the sense of agency and the endless chase of sense gratifications have been renounced the seeker experiences a relative quietitude within him.

This verse does not say that such an individual has reached Perfection but it only says that he is worthy of becoming one with Brahman. Thus what has so far been discussed is only the preliminary preparation for the final Realization.

THE HIGHEST DEVOTION

**brahmabhootah prasannaatmaa na shochati na kaangkshati
samah sarveshu bhooteshu madbhaktim labhate paraam // 18.54 //**

Having become one with Brahman, being serene in the Self, he neither grieves nor desires. Regarding all beings as alike he attains supreme devotion to Me.

After eliminating egoism and its manifestations in the form of power, pride, lust, passion and sense of possession the seeker experiences greater peace within as he becomes free from all false evaluations of life.

**bhaktyaa maamabhijaanaati yaavaanyashchaasmi tattwatah
tato maam tattwato jnaatwaa vishate tadanantaram // 18.55 //**

By devotion he knows Me in essence, what and who I am ; then having known Me in My essence, he forthwith enters into Me, the Supreme.

The knower, the devotee, becomes one with the supreme Lord, the Perfect Person, in Self-knowledge and Self-experience. Jnana, supreme wisdom and bhakti, supreme devotion, have the same goal. To become Brahman is to love God, to know Him fully and to enter His being. Entering Him means that when the ego is replaced by God Consciousness the individuality vanishes. The conception of individuality or 'I-ness' ends and he attains Brahmanhood.

By devotion he knows Me in essence, what and who I am:

The devotee knows that the Lord is devoid of all names and forms caused by *maya* and is of the nature of the Absolute. He knows that the Lord alone is the essence of the diverse manifestations caused by His maya.

Then having known Me in My essence, he forthwith enters into Me, the Supreme:

Having known that the Lord is non-dual, unborn, undecaying, unchanging and of the nature of spirit and Consciousness, he attains Brahmanhood. The acts of knowing and entering are not two separate and consecutive actions. To know the Lord truly is to be completely absorbed in Him.

APPLICATION OF THE TEACHING TO ARJUNA'S CASE

**sarvakarmaanyapi sadaa kurvaano madvyapaashrayah
matprsaadaadavaapnoti shaashwatam padamavyayam // 18.56 //**

Doing all actions, always taking refuge in Me, by My grace, he obtains the eternal, indestructible state or abode.

Performing all actions and taking refuge in Him mean rendering selfless service in society which should be without the sense of agency and with a sense of dedication to Him. In an individual to the extent his mind and intellect are available for the spiritual truth, he is under the grace or blessings of The Lord. An individual thus working in the field of activity reaches the Immortal State, the state of Perfection.

The above three verses indicate that the ultimate goal of the paths of knowledge, devotion and action is the realization of the seeker's oneness with the Supreme. This is the Integral *Sadhana* synthesizing the methods of Devotion, Work and Knowledge through disciplining body, mind and intellect.

All disciplines pursued from the body level to control the mind and make it turn towards the Ideal are called KARMA YOGA.

All methods to canalize the emotions for controlling the mind and make it contemplate on the Higher are called BHAKTI YOGA.

All the study and reflection, detachment and meditation practiced at the intellectual level whereby the mind is enabled to experience the Infinitude is called JNANA YOGA.

Practicing all these three Yogas is disciplining the human personality in all its three layers of body, mind and intellect which transforms the perceiver, feeler and thinker in the man. This is the outstanding contribution of Gita to the Hindu culture.

**chetasaa sarvakarmaani mayi sannasya matparah
buddhiyogamupaashritya macchittah satatam bhava // 18.57 //**

Mentally renouncing all actions in Me, having Me as the highest goal, resorting to the Yoga of discrimination you ever fix your mind on Me.

**macchittah sarvadurgaani matprasaadaat tarishyasi
atha chet twam ahamkaaraan na shroshyasi vinangkshyasi // 18.58 //**

Fixing your mind on Me, you shall by My grace overcome all obstacles; but if from egoism you will not hear Me, you shall perish.

Mentally renouncing all actions in Me and having Me as the highest goal: Both the ego and egocentric anxieties for enjoying the rewards are to be renounced and then actions are to be performed keeping The Lord as the goal.

Resorting to the Yoga of discrimination: To discriminate the right from the wrong and pursuing the path of selfless action is the Buddhi Yoga.

Ever fix your mind on Me: One who surrendered himself before The Lord and serves all his creatures can alone fix his attention constantly on Him. A devotee who carries out all his activities in dedication to Him experiences the Immutable State of the Self.

Most of our obstacles in life are imaginary due to false fears and anxieties. By constantly remembering The Lord and through His grace all the obstacles on the path can be overcome. But because of ego and egocentric desires if the path shown by The Lord is not to be followed by the seeker then he will by his own ideas and emotions become incapable of achieving anything worthwhile; he will perish, says Sri Krishna.

In the following verses Sri Krishna tries to go over the philosophical ideas to Arjuna to solve the problem of his despondency and motivate him to accomplish his immediate task ahead.

**yadahamkaaram aashritya na yotsya iti manyase
mithyaisha vyavasaayaste prakritistwaam niyokshyati // 18.59 //**

If filled with egoism, you think 'I will not fight', vain is your resolution; for your nature will compel you.

**swabhaavajena kaunteya nibaddhah swena karmanaa
kartum necchasi yanmohaata karishyasyavasho'pi tat // 18.60 //**

O Kaunteya, bound by your own karma (action), born of your own nature, that which from delusion you wish not to do, even that you shall do helplessly against your will.

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that if he is under the impression that he would not fight due to self-importance, self-conceit and the temporary illusion of escapism, it would merely be an exercise in futility because being a Kshatriya, his Rajasic temperament will dominate and force him to fight.

The Lord continues that in spite of his determination not to wage war Arjuna will be compelled to fight by the power of his own nature ordered by his Karma or vasanas existing in him at that moment. This is the law of life.

**eeshwarah sarvabhootaanaam hriddeshe'rjuna tishthati
bhraamayana sarvabhootaani yantraaroodhaani maayayaa // 18.61 //**

The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His illusive power, to revolve, as if caught in a machine.

The relations of our inborn nature and its fateful compulsion are regulated by the Divine who dwells in our hearts and guides our development. The power that determines events is not a blind, unthinking will which we call fate or destiny. The Spirit that rules the cosmos, The Lord who presides over the evolution of the cosmic plan, is seated in the heart of every being and will not let him rest.

The Supreme is the inmost self of our existence. All life is a movement of the rhythm of His life and our powers and acts are all derived from Him. If, in our ignorance, we forget this deepest truth, the truth will not alter. If we live consciously in His truth, we will resign all actions to God and escape from our ego. If we do not, even then the truth will prevail. Sooner or later we will yield to the purpose of The Lord. The Supreme desires our free co-operation. When we become the media for the light of God, He uses us for His work.

As puppets are moved by a string-puller seated behind the scene, so also the created beings move and act on the stage of the world under the control of the Lord seated in the hearts of all. Compare this with 9.10.

**tameva sharanam gaccha sarvabhaavena bhaarata
tatprsaadaatparaam shaantim sthaanam praapsyasi shaashwatam // 18.62 //**

Take refuge in Him alone with all your soul, O Bharata. By His grace you will gain Supreme Peace and the Everlasting abode.

We must be conscious of the Divine on all the planes of our existence. Arjuna is called upon to understand the will of God and do his duty. He must change the whole orientation of his being; give up self-conceit, for all creatures are under the control of the Supreme Lord. He must put himself at the service of the Supreme. His illusion will then be dispelled; the bond of cause and consequence will be broken. He will attain shadowless light, perfect harmony and Supreme Blessedness.

**iti te jnaanamaakhyaatam guhyaad guhyataram mayaa
vimrishyaitadasheshena yathechchasi tathaa kuru // 18.63 //**

Thus has the wisdom more profound than all profundities been declared to you by Me. Reflect on it fully, and then do as you choose.

This verse can be considered as the conclusion of The Lord's discourses to Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Sri Krishna says that he has declared to Arjuna (through him to the entire humanity) all the essential features of the right way of living and its noble endeavors for which there is nothing more to add.

This knowledge is more secret than all the secrets because it is not easy for one to understand the Gita way of life and its vision of the goal in all their implications unless one is initiated into them. Even the very sharp intellect will fail to feel the presence of the subtle, eternal and infinite Self. Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to think and reflect over what all He had declared and thereafter take such decision as he thinks proper without blindly accepting what has been told to him. Teaching is not indoctrination. Thus The Lord leaves the decision to act and lead a higher life to Arjuna's own free and sweet choice after considering all the points brought to his notice.

There is no compulsion involved and free choice is the characteristic of Hinduism as the human personality cannot grow morally and ethically through coercion. The Supreme does not impose His command; we are free at any moment to reject or accept the Divine call. The integral surrender should be made with the fullest consent of the seeker. God does not do the climbing for us but supports us whenever we stumble, comfort us when we fall. He is prepared to wait till we turn to Him. Thus The Lord's approach is counseling but not commanding. The scriptures serve the purpose of telling man what he should do and what he should not. It is up to man himself to choose the right and to reject the wrong

Next time we will proceed from the Verse 18.64

HARIH OM

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 18(Part-3)
Moksha Sannyasa Yogah:
Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation
T.N.Sethumadhavan

Preamble

Thus Sri Krishna helps out Arjuna, indicating what is good for him i.e., to rise above this world of perception, emotion and thought and reach the Supreme Being. The lord assures his teaching will liberate his devotees. The Lord emphasizes the importance of communicating His message to mankind thereby both the teacher and the taught will evolve spiritually. Free from delusion, with faith and dedicated effort they would reach the ultimate state of Enlightenment.

Arjuna understands Sri Krishna's message and decides to pursue the higher objectives enunciated by the Lord. Sanjaya glorifies Sri Krishna and His wonderful dialogue. Sanjaya is in ecstasy having heard the wonderful dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna.

He bows in gratitude to Vyasa whose grace enabled him to hear the holy dialogue. He pronounces to King Dhritarashtra his immense joy beholding the divine form of Krishna and remembering His great message over and over again. Finally, he declares that the Lord's firm principles will bless this world with success, prosperity and peace.

The Text

FINAL APPEAL

**sarva guhyatamam bhooyah shrinu me paramam vachah
ishto'si me dhridhamiti tato vakshyaami te hitam // 18.64 //**

Listen again My supreme word, most secret of all; because you are dearly beloved of Me, I will tell you what is good for you.

Although Arjuna was given a free choice to make his independent decision he gave an impression that still some doubts and misgivings were lurking in his mind. Therefore Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that He will again confide in him the profoundest wisdom, the supreme secret because he is His dearest friend. This secret is revealed in the following two verses.

**manmanaa bhava madbhakto madyaajee maam namaskuru
maamevai'shyasi satyam te pratijaane priyo'si me // 18.65 //**

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship to Me, bow down to Me, you shall even come to Me ; truly this is my pledge to you, for you are dear to Me.

Sri Krishna repeats the salient features of the philosophy of the Gita for the benefit of Arjuna and through him for all of us.

The Lord lays down four conditions for the success of a seeker. To the one in whom these are present an assurance of reaching Him is given. In order to avoid anybody taking His words lightly He adds that this is His true promise and specifically conveys this secret to Arjuna because he is dear to Him and The Lord loves him.

These conditions are:

- Fix the mind on The Lord, ever remembering Him.
- Regard Him as the sole refuge.
- Ever devotedly identify with Him through the process of performing selfless activities and
- Dedicate them to Him in an attitude of reverence and sacrifice.

The ultimate mystery, the supreme teaching with which The Lord wound up Chapter 9.34 is repeated here. Thought, worship, sacrifice and reverence, all must be directed to The Lord. We must surrender ourselves to God. Our spiritual life depends as much on our going to Him, as on His coming to us. It is not only our ascent to God but His descent to man. He is waiting only for our trustful appeal to Him.

**sarva dharmaan parityajya maamekam sharanam vraja
aham twaa sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami maa shuchah // 18.66 //**

Abandoning all Dharmas (of the body, mind and intellect), take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate you from all sins, do not grieve.

This is the noblest of all the verses in the Gita having brilliant import and yet this is the most controversial. Philosophers, translators, reviewers, critics and commentators have put forward several interpretations of this verse each maintaining their own point of view.

To Sri Ramanuja, this is the final verse (*Charama-Shloka*) of the whole Gita.

It is the answer given by The Lord to the question put by Arjuna in Chapter 2.7 – ‘My heart is overpowered by the taint of pity, my mind is confused as to duty. I ask you. Tell me decisively what is good for me, I am your disciple. Instruct me who has taken refuge in You’.

Leaving aside all these divergent opinions we can understand this verse as follows.

This essential property of a substance is called its *Dharma*. Therefore, the "essential *Dharma*" of man is the Divine Spark of Existence, the Infinite Lord, and the Atman. With this understanding of the term *Dharma*, we can appreciate that it differs from mere ethical and moral rules of conduct, all duties in life, all duties towards relations, friends, community, nation and the world, all our obligations to our environment, all our affections, reverence, charity, and sense of goodwill etc. Thus to live truly as the *Atman*,

and to express Its Infinite Perfection through all our actions and in all our contacts with the outer world is to rediscover our *Dharma*.

In this Verse, the Lord wants us to accomplish three distinct adjustments in our inner personality. They are: (1) Renounce all Dharmas through meditation; (2) surrender to My refuge alone; and while in the state of meditation, (3) stop all worries. And as a reward He promises: "I shall release you from all sins". This is a promise given to all mankind.

Abandoning all *dharma* (*Sarva-Dharman Parityajya*) - As a mortal, finite ego, the seeker is living with the *Dharmas* of his body, mind and intellect, and exists in life as a mere perceiver, feeler, and thinker. The perceiver-feeler-thinker personality in us is the "individuality" which expresses itself as the "ego." These are not our 'essential' *Dharmas*. And since these are the 'non-essentials,' "renouncing all *dharmas*" means "ending the ego." "To renounce" therefore means "not to allow ourselves to fall again and again into this state of identification with the outer envelopments of matter around us". Extrovert tendencies of the mind are to be renounced. "Develop introspection diligently" is the deep suggestion in the phrase "renouncing all *dharmas*."

Come to me alone for shelter (*Mam-ekam Sharanam Vraja*) - Self-withdrawal from our extrovert nature will be impossible unless the mind is given a positive method of developing its introvert attention. By single-pointed, steady contemplation upon Me, the Self, which is the One-without-a-second, we can successfully accomplish our total withdrawal from the misinterpreting equipments of the body, mind and intellect. Lord Krishna commands His devotees to come to His shelter whereby they can accomplish the renunciation of all their false identifications.

I shall release you from all sins (*aham twaa sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami*) - That which brings about agitations and causes dissipation of the energies is called "sin". The actions themselves can leave their "foot prints" upon the mental stuff, and these marks are called *vasanas*. To erase all *vasanas* completely is to stop all thoughts - the total cessation of thought-flow viz. "mind". Transcending the mind-intellect-equipment is to reach the plane of Pure Consciousness, the Krishna-Reality.

Be not grieved (*Maa shuchah*) - When both the above conditions are accomplished, the seeker reaches a state of tranquility in meditation. Lord Krishna wants the seeker to renounce all his "anxieties to realize." Even a desire to realize is a disturbing thought that can obstruct the final achievement. Arjuna was perturbed by the various duties, ritualistic and ethical, that the war will result in the confusion of castes and indifference to the ancestors as well as in the violation of sacred duties of reverence for the teachers etc. Sri Krishna tells him not to worry about these laws and usages, but to trust Him and bow down to His will. If he consecrates his life, actions, feelings and thoughts, and surrenders himself to God, He will guide him through the battle of life and he need have no tears or fears. Surrender is the only way to self-transcendence. This is the Lord's assurance to all humanity.

The stanza is important inasmuch as it is one of the most powerfully worded verses in the Gita wherein the Lord undertakes to do something helpful for the seeker in case he is ready to obliterate his ego and put forth his best efforts.

“We should willingly yield to His pressure, completely surrender to His will and take shelter in His love. If we destroy confidence in our ego and replace it by perfect confidence in God, He will save us. He asks us of total self-giving and gives in return the power of the Spirit which changes every situation.

When we turn to Him and let Him fill our whole being, our responsibility ceases. He deals with us and leads us beyond all sorrow. It is an unreserved surrender to the Supreme who takes us up and raises to our utmost possible perfection. Though the Lord conducts the world according to the fixed laws and expects us to conform to the law of right action based on our nature and station in life, if we take shelter in Him, we transcend all these. A seemingly outer help must come to man, for his soul cannot deliver itself from the trap in which it is caught by his own effort”. Dr.S.Radhakrishnan.

The teachings of the Gita are concluded here.

HOW TO FOLLOW THE DOCTRINE?

**idam te naatapaskaaya naabhaktaaya kadaachana
na chaashushrooshave vaachyam na cha maam yo'bhyasooyati // 18.67 //**

This is never to be spoken by you to one who is devoid of austerities or devotion, nor to one who does not render service, or who does not desire to listen, nor to one who talks ill of Me.

Having elaborated the entire doctrine of Gita and re-stated its philosophy, Sri Krishna prescribes the rule that should be followed for imparting this knowledge to others. The Lord enumerates the necessary qualifications which are in the nature of adjustments in the inner personality that are necessary for a sincere student of the Gita.

In other words the following types of people cannot be benefited by the study of Gita.

- Those who do not live an austere life i.e. those who do not have control over their body and mind.
- Those who do not have any devotion i.e. those who do not have any capacity to identify themselves with the ideal that they want to reach.
- Those who do not render service, i.e. those who are not able to serve others and who are selfish having no sympathy for others and
- Those who criticize The Lord i.e. those who do not have any respect or desire even to listen the philosophy of Gita.

Only those who are disciplined, loving and have a desire to serve are capable of understanding the message; others may listen to it and abuse it.

**ya imam paramam guhyam madbhakteshwabhidhaasyati
bhaktim mayi paraam kritwaa maamevaishyatyasamshayah // 18.68 //**

He who with the highest devotion to Me will teach this supreme secret to My devotees, shall doubtless come to Me.

**na cha tasmaanmanushyeshu kashchinme priyakrittamah
bhavitaa na cha me tasmaadanyah priyataro bhuvi // 18.69 //**

There is none among men who does dearer service to Me than he; nor shall there be another on earth dearer to Me.

It is an Upanishadic commandment that not only one should study the scripture himself but must pass on the benefit of such knowledge to others in the society according to the best of his ability. If the knowledge is not so conveyed to others there cannot be any mobility of intelligence or fluidity of inspiration in him.

Sri Krishna promises the highest reward of reaching Him to the one who is capable of conveying the truths of Gita to others. The Lord also suggests that such a teacher who spreads the knowledge of Gita is dearest to His heart as there is none equal to him in the world either at present or in times to come. Sri Krishna says that there can be none else more dearly to Him than such a preacher for he is doing the greatest service to Him by earnestly and devotedly trying to spread the immortal principles expounded in the Gita.

It is not necessary that one should become first a master of the entire Gita. Whatever one has understood one must immediately learn to give it out to those ignorant of even that much.

The great ones who have crossed the ocean of Samsara and help others to cross are the dearest to The Lord. More important than this is that one must honestly try to live the eternal principles of the Gita in one's own life so that he becomes eligible to be the dearest to The Lord.

**adhyeshyate cha ya imam dharmyam samvaadamaavayoh
jnaanayajnaena tenaaham ishtah syaamiti me matih // 18.70 //**

And he who studies this sacred dialogue of ours, by him I would be worshipped through the Yajna of Knowledge; such is My conviction.

After glorifying the teachers who spread the wisdom of Gita, even those who study this sacred text are applauded. The philosophy of life as given out in Gita in the form of a dialogue between Sri Krishna, the Infinite and Arjuna, the Finite Man, will attract a student to its profundity and transform him to the highest through what The Lord calls as Gyan Yagna.

Just like the Fire God is invoked in a sacrifice and then oblations are offered into it, the study of Gita and regular contemplation on its significance ignites the Fire of knowledge in the student into which he offers his own false values and negative tendencies as oblations. This is what is implied in the phrase Gyan Yagna. Sri Krishna says that such students are the greatest devotees of the Infinite.

**shraddhaavaan anasooyashcha shrinuyaadapi yo narah
so'pi mukta shubhaamllokaan praapnuyaat punyakarmanaam // 18.71 //**

Even the man who listens to it with faith and without malice, he too, being liberated, shall attain to the happy worlds of the righteous.

The Lord suggests that even listening to the Gita discourses is immensely useful. Sri Krishna indicates two conditions by fulfilling which alone one can gain the maximum joy and perfection out of the discourses on Gita viz.

- Full Faith: One should have the capacity to discover, understand and live upto the ideals contained in the subtle meanings of the spiritual declarations and
- Free from Malice: One should not have any prejudice against the very philosophy of Gita; otherwise its teachings will never appeal to the listener.

To the extent we learn and live the principles of right living as propounded in the Gita, to that extent we can live a life of achievement.

**kacchidetacchutam paartha twayaikaagrena chetasaa
kacchid ajnaanasammohah pranashtaste dhananjaya // 18.72 //**

Has this been heard by you, O Partha, with an attentive mind? Has the delusion caused by your ignorance been dispelled, O Dhananjaya ?

Sri Krishna enquires Arjuna whether he has understood what has been expounded by Him all along and whether his distraction of thought, caused by false values and judgment of affairs, has been dispelled. The implication is to hear from Arjuna to what extent these discourses benefited him.

CONCLUSION

**arjuna uvaacha
nashto mohah smritirlabdhaa twatprasaadaanmayaachyuta
sthito'smi gata sandehah karishye vachanam tava // 18.73 //**

Arjuna said

Destroyed is my delusion, as I have gained my memory (knowledge) through your grace, O Achyuta. I stand firm with my doubts dispelled. I shall act according to your word.

Arjuna confesses that his confusions have ended as if he were woken up from a state of unconsciousness. This statement of Arjuna is not a mere meek acceptance of the arguments of Sri Krishna.

It is an affirmation of re-gaining and re-cognizing his own real nature on account of the awakening of the hero in him as well as his confirmation that the neurosis which conquered his mental make up temporarily has vanished. The awakening of wisdom is the end of ignorance. In this state all vacillations of the mind, doubts and despairs, dejections and hesitations, fears and weaknesses disappear.

With such a rejuvenated mind Arjuna declares that he will do according to the word of The Lord who is nothing but Pure Existence. This is the surrendering of oneself to one's own inner personality. To surrender oneself and declare that he would do The Lord's bidding is the beginning and the end of all spiritual life. There is no more sense of separate existence for the declarer apart from the Godhead. This evolution means shedding of all pretences and evasions.

“Arjuna turns to his appointed action, not with an egoistic mind but with Self-Knowledge. His illusions are destroyed, his doubts are dispelled. The chosen instrument of God takes up the duty set before it by The Lord of the world. He will now do God's bidding. He realizes that He made us for His ends, not our own. Arjuna had the onset of temptation and won his way to a liberating victory. He now feels that he will fulfill the command of The Lord. It is our duty to live in the spirit of this verse and remember that we seek not our own will but the will of Him who sent us. To will what God wills is the secret of Divine Life”. Dr.S.Radhakrishnan.

When Arjuna uttered the words “*karishye vachanam tava*” (“thy will be done” as a Westerner would say) he gave up his separate existence and identified himself with the work of the Lord. This evolution means a great shedding of all pretences, assumptions and evasions. It is a kind of *vastrapaharana*, a stripping-off of the mind and intellect.

sanjaya uvaacha

ityaham vaasudevasya paarthasya cha mahaatmanah

samvaadam imam ashrausham adbhutam romaharshanam // 18.74 //

Sanjaya said

Thus have I heard this wonderful dialogue between Vaasudeva and the high-souled Partha causing my hair to stand on end.

Earlier, Arjuna proclaimed that he will not fight and became despondent. It is the same Arjuna now entirely revived who declared that all his doubts were cleared and he shall abide by 'His Will'. Thus the Arjuna disease has been cured by the Krishna Therapy.

Sanjaya concludes his running commentary in the last five verses of the Gita. They contain his expressions of the glory of the Gita, the revival of Arjuna, his own reaction as he listened to the dialogue between The Lord and Arjuna and the affirmation of his faith in the true culture of the Hindus.

The conversation between Vaasudeva and Arjuna is a dialogue between the 'Higher' and the 'Lower' in man. It is between the Spirit and the Matter.

Vaasudeva is a symbolism that stands for the Consciousness that illumines the concept of time projected by the intellect of man. Vaasudeva is the Atma, the Self. Partha represents the matter. The act of understanding oneself as the matter vesture is the art of unveiling the Infinite through the finite, the technique of which is the theme of the Gita.

Sanjaya describes the philosophy of the Gita so far heard by him as marvelous and wonderful because it revealed the real personality of Arjuna. Arjuna is referred as high souled because of his great achievement in understanding the philosophy of the Gita and shedding all his confusions which is something worthy of appreciation. This is also a warning to Dhritarashtra about the consequences of war with the rejuvenated Arjuna.

**vyaasaprasaadaacchhrutavaan etad guhyamaham param
yogam yogeshwaraat krishnaat saakshaat kathayatah swayam // 18.75 //**

Through the grace of Vyasa, I heard this supreme and most secret Yoga taught by Krishna Himself, the Lord of Yoga, in person.

In this verse Sanjaya expresses his gratitude to Sage Veda Vyasa who had given him the special faculty to see and hear from a distance all that transpired in the battlefield of Kurukshetra so that he might report the events to the blind king, Dhritarashtra.

He terms what had been heard by him from Sri Krishna as the supreme and the most profound Yoga. His joy is more due to his hearing the philosophy of Gita directly from the Lord than listening to the discourse itself and hence Sri Krishna is referred to as the Lord of all Yogas. This is also an indirect reminder to the blind king about the futility of war with Pandavas.

**raajan samsmritya samsmritya samvaadamimam adbhutam
keshavaarjunayoh punyam hrishyaami cha muhurmujuh // 18.76 //**

O King, as I recall again and again this wonderful and holy dialogue between Kesava and Arjuna, I am thrilled with joy again and again!

Sanjaya describes the deep impression created in his mind by listening to the Gita Philosophy. He says the discourse between Sri Krishna and Arjuna - between God and Man, between the Perfect and the Imperfect, between the Higher and the Lower - is at once wonderful and holy. The response in Sanjaya is so powerful that he says it had given him the utmost thrill of joy again and again.

The implication is that the Gita should be studied and reflected upon continuously until we are re-educated in the way of life as expounded in It. The reward for such a study is to know the very purpose of our existence and to activate the power in us to tackle intelligently the chaotic happenings around us.

**taccha samsmritya samsmritya roopamatyadbhutam hareh
vismayo me mahaan raajan hrishyaami cha punah punah // 18.77 //**

And as often as I recall that most wonderful form of Hari, great is my astonishment, O King! And I thrill with joy again and again!

Sanjaya confesses that he had been enchanted not only by the philosophy of the Gita but also even by the memory of The Lord's magnificent form as the total manifested Universe.

The dialogue of Sri Krishna and Arjuna and the fact of God are not philosophical propositions but are spiritual facts. We do not learn their meaning by simply recounting them but by dwelling upon them in a spirit of prayer and meditation.

**yatra yogeswarah krishno yatra paartho dhanurdharah
tatra shreervijayo bhootirdhruvaa neetirmatirmama // 18.78 //**

Wherever there is Krishna, The Lord of Yoga and wherever there is Partha, the Archer, I think, there will surely be prosperity, victory, welfare and morality.

In this concluding verse of the Song Divine Sanjaya summarizes the assessment of his total experience of hearing the conversation between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.

Sri Krishna, The Lord of Yoga - All through the Gita Sri Krishna represented the Self, the Atman, the substratum upon which everything happens. He can be invoked within us by means of any one of the techniques of Yoga taught in the Gita.

Arjuna, ready with the bow - Partha represents in the Gita a confused, limited, ordinary mortal with all his weaknesses, agitations, fears and pairs of opposites. When he has thrown out his instruments of action i.e. bow and arrows, there can be no hope of success or prosperity for him. But when he is ready with his bow he is prepared and willing to use his faculties to face the challenges of life.

Taken these two together - Sri Krishna, the Yogeswara and Arjuna, the Dhanurdhara - they symbolize a way of life wherein man, with the spiritual understanding, gets ready to face the battle of life . For him success is assured.

The teaching of the Gita is Yoga and the teacher is Yogeswara. When the human soul becomes enlightened and united with the divine, fortune and victory, welfare and morality are assured.

Today's confusions and conflicts in society and man's helplessness against the flood of events, in spite of his achievements in science and mastery over matter, is due to his failure to invoke the Yogeswara in him. A happy blending of the sacred and the secular is what is advised in the Gita as a policy for right living.

Sage Veda Vyasa visualizes a world order in which man pursues a way of life in which the spiritual and material values are well balanced. Material prosperity without inner

peace is savagery while spirituality without material well being is madness. Spiritual vision and social service should go together.

The double purpose of human life, personal perfection and social efficiency is indicated here. Human perfection is a kind of marriage between high thought and just action where the priesthood and the kingship move together. This, according to the Gita, must be, for ever, the aim of man.

This last Chapter of the Gita is called 'The Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation' because to renounce false values in us is at once to rediscover the Divine nature in each one of us which is the essential heritage of man. To discard the animal in us (Sannyasa) is the Liberation (Moksha) of the Divine in us.

**om tat sat iti srimadbhagavadgeetaasu upanishatsu brahma vidyaayaam
yogashaastre sri krishnaarjuna samvaade moksha sannyaasa yogo naama
ashtaadasho'dhyaayah ||**

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the eighteenth discourse entitled The Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation.

Concepts and Issues

This is the last and the longest Chapter dealing with renunciation and liberation concluding the whole discourse.

Every action has five causes and it is foolish to consider the Atman, the Self, as the doer. One who does actions without the sense of doership and with an untainted mind is never bound by them.

There is nothing in the three worlds that is not free from the effect of these gunas.

Swabhava or inborn nature determines one's own duties. By worshipping The Lord through devoted performance of one's duties, one can attain spiritual perfection. That is why one should never forsake one's duties even if they appear to be imperfect or defective.

One, who has controlled his body, speech and mind, lives in a secluded place and practises meditation on the Self, will become fit to attain the state of Brahman. Such a one, able to see the same Lord in all, obtains intense devotion to Sri Krishna. Through such devotion he understands Him and enters into Him.

Now Sri Krishna assures Arjuna that by doing all actions and offering them unto Him he will attain the eternal abode, after having crossed over all the difficulties. In case he does not listen to this advice, he will perish. It is egoism that is prompting Arjuna to say that

he will not fight. However, his very nature as a kshatriya will force him to fight, falsifying his resolve.

Sri Krishna declared to Arjuna that he might do as he pleased after pondering over what all He said. He urges him to be totally devoted and dedicated to Him by renouncing all Dharmas and He, the Supreme Lord, will free him from all sorrows and take care of him.

The discourse ends with an advice that this sacred knowledge should not be given to unworthy persons bereft of austerity and devotion, but only to those endowed with devotion to The Lord. Even the study of this discourse endears one to him.

Sanjaya confesses his great joy for having heard this wonderful discourse directly from Sri Krishna and seen His Cosmic Form. He declared that wherever there is Sri Krishna, the Yogeswara, the Lord of the Yoga and Arjuna, the Dhanurdhara, the wielder of the bow, success, wealth and eternal good will accrue.

Live as the Gita Teaches You to Live

Sri Krishna has laid down in very clear terms the Rules of the Game of Life in the following three verses of this Chapter. The final response of Arjuna in Verse 18.73 to Sri Krishna's advice is equally a pole-star for all of us to follow. It is for us to take advantage of the light or continue to fumble about in darkness.

*tameva sharanam gaccha sarvabhaavena bhaarata
tatprsaadaatparaam shaantim sthaanam praapsyasi shaashwatam // 18.62 //*

Take refuge in Him alone with all your soul, O Bharata. By His grace you will gain Supreme Peace and the Everlasting abode.

*manmanaa bhava madbhakto madyaajee maam namaskuru
maamevai'shyasi satyam te pratijaane priyo'si me // 18.65 //*

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship to Me, bow down to Me, you shall even come to Me ; truly this is my pledge to you, for you are dear to Me.

*sarva dharmaan parityajya maamekam sharanam vraja
aham twaa sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami maa shuchah // 18.66 //*

Abandoning all Dharmas (of the body, mind and intellect), take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate you from all sins, do not grieve.

Points to Ponder

1. What is the difference between Sannyasa and Tyaga ?
2. What are the five factors in the accomplishment of an action ?
3. What are the essential factors for realising the Self ?

4. Write short notes on:

- Knower, Known and Knowledge
- Three kinds of Jnaanam, Karma, Doer, Buddhi, Dhriti, Sukha
- Fourfold classification of society

Finale:

The Bhagavad Gita is one of the most translated religious classics of the world. The beauty and the sublimity of the work, its eternal relevance to the problem of human life and its universal approach that helps us view the whole of creation as one must have been the inspiration behind the many scholars to undertake the task of translating and interpreting it as a labor of love .

Though Gita forms part of the great epic Mahabharata it can as well stand on its own as an independent work. Notwithstanding the fact that Gita was taught on the battlefield of Kurukshetra urging Arjuna to fight, it has nothing to do with war or bloodshed, but only with discharging one's sacred duties of life, however unpleasant they may be.

Though given by Sri Krishna to Arjuna several centuries ago its declarations like 'Remember Me and fight' (8.7) can help and inspire anyone of us, torn between the problems in life, even now. The principle of unity in multiplicity as indicated by the Cosmic Form (11.9-13) and the underlying Divinity as taught in 7.7 helps us to cultivate a holistic approach to the whole universe of which the planet earth is only a small part.

If the Mahabharata is an encyclopedia of Hindu religion and culture, Srimalad Bhagavad Gita is its essence. It is, therefore, no wonder that Hindu tradition compares the Mahabharata to a lamp and the Gita to the light in it.

Gita Mahatmyam:

Greatness of the Bhagavad Gita

(It is customary to read this at the end of the day's Gita study)

The greatness of Gita is described in the Varaha Purana. Bhagavan Vishnu Himself says therein that if one is devoted to the constant practice of the Gita he would be happy in this very world in spite of his Prarabdha Karma. No evil, however great, can affect him who meditates on Gita; he will be like the lotus leaf untouched by the water.

Where there is a book of Gita, where it is studied, they are all holy places - in fact they are Prayaga and similar other places where Devas, Rishis, Yogis, etc. reside.

Where Gita is read, help comes forthwith. Where Gita is discussed, recited, taught or heard, there Sri Bhagavan Vishnu Himself invariably resides without any doubt. Gita is The Lord's abode standing on whose wisdom He maintains the three worlds.

The Gita is His Supreme Knowledge. It is inseparable from Brahman - this Knowledge is Absolute, Imperishable, Eternal, and the Essence of His Inexpressible State. It is the

Knowledge encompassing the whole of the three Vedas, supremely blissful and consisting of the realization of the true nature of the Self.

The one who recites Gita daily either wholly or partly acquires merit or attains the highest plane of human evolution. By practicing the Gita, he attains the supreme *Mukti*. Even a dying man uttering the word "Gita" attains the life's goal. Even the one who hears the meaning of the Gita is freed from sin. He who meditates on the meaning of Gita is regarded as *Jivanmukta* and after the destruction of his body he attains the highest plane of knowledge.

Finishing the reading of Gita without reading its Mahatmya as declared in the Varaha Purana is an exercise in futility and a wasted labor. On the other hand he who studies Gita followed by the reading of its Mahatmya obtains the fruit stated herein and reaches that goal which is difficult to attain.

Sage Suta confirms that he who after having finished the reading of Gita studies this eternal greatness of Gita will obtain the fruit described therein.

Thus ends in the Varaha Purana the discourse entitled The Greatness of the Gita

Note: Leaving aside the poetic liberty, it may be construed from the above that the one who assimilates the teachings of the Gita as “A User’s Manual for Every Day Living” in his practical life is an embodiment of the Gita itself. He would be a true Jnani, a *Jivanmukta*.

**om poornamadah poonamidam poornaat poornamudachyate
poornasya poornamaadaaya poornamevaa vasishyate
Om Shantih Shantih Shantih ||**

That is infinite; this is infinite; from that infinite this infinite comes.
From that infinite, this infinite removed or added, Infinite remains infinite.

Brahman is limitless, infinite number of universes come out from and go into the
Infinite Brahman; yet Brahman remains unchanged.

A Few Words of Gratitude and Prayer

By the grace of Bhagavan Sri Krishna, during the past one year, through a series of 38 parts we have studied with reverence, understanding and appreciation, the Divine Song Srimad Bhagavad Gita in its entirety all of which together communicate the very essence of knowledge, the Knowledge by knowing which everything else becomes known.

The seeds for this undertaking were sown by Shri Dwai, Shri Partha of www.medhjournal.com and Shri Sanjeev Nayyar of www.esamskriti.com. Manasi of Dimakh Consultants has painstakingly uploaded all the articles in just the way I would like it to be.

During the course of the sprouting and growing of the project, it has been effectively nurtured by the enlightened comments and appreciative response from a wide spectrum of the dedicated readers spread across the Globe. But for these strong foundations I am sure I would not have been able to see this humble effort reach its logical culmination. I bow myself with all humility before all these great souls who have made this endeavor possible.

In a work of this type there is bound to be some errors of omission and commission for which I am solely responsible and for which I seek pardon of the informed readers. If despite such shortcomings, the work has been found helpful the entire credit should go to Sage Veda Vyasa, the author of the Gita and Adi Sankaracharya who brought it out of the dark corners of the Mahabharata.

If the Bhagvad Gita can be called *Madhura Gitam* (Sweet Song), then its singer is *Madhura Murthy* (Sweetness Personified). Hence let us pray to that Lord of Sweetness through the popular poem *Madhurashtakam* by Shri Vallabhacharya and draw the curtains down.

Madhurashtakam, written in melodious lyrical Sanskrit, is easy to understand and rhythmic to recite. *Ashtakam* means a poem with eight stanzas. *Madhurashtakam* uses just one adjective, "*madhuram*", meaning sweet or beautiful etc., to describe the lovely attributes of Bhagavan Sri Krishna who is depicted as the master of Sweetness and Sweetness personified as also the Lord of Mathura (meaning both as a city and sweetness).

The Poem Madhurashtakam

**adharam madhuram vadanam madhuram
nayanam madhuram hasitam madhuram
hrdayam madhuram gamanam madhuram
madhuradi-pater akhilam madhuram**

“His lips are sweet, His face is sweet. His eyes are sweet, His smile is sweet. His heart is sweet, His walk is sweet. Everything is sweet about the Lord of sweetness.” (1)

**vacanam madhuram caritam madhuram
vasanam madhuram valitam madhuram
calitam madhuram bhramitam madhuram
madhuradi-pater akhilam madhuram**

“His words are sweet, His character is sweet. His garments are sweet, His navel is sweet. His movement is sweet, His wanderings are sweet. Everything is sweet about the Lord of sweetness.” (2)

**venur madhuro renur madhurah
panir-madhurah padau madhurai
nrtyam madhuram sakhyam madhuram
madhuradi-pater akhilam madhuram**

“His flute is sweet, His dust is sweet. His hands are sweet, His feet are sweet. His dancing is sweet, His friendship is sweet. Everything is sweet about the Lord of sweetness.” (3)

**gitam madhuram pitam madhuram
bhuktam madhuram suptam madhuram
rupam madhuram tilakam madhuram
madhuradi-pater akhilam madhuram**

“His singing is sweet, His yellow dress is sweet. His eating is sweet, His sleeping is sweet. His form is sweet, His tilaka is sweet. Everything is sweet about the Lord of sweetness.” (4)

**karanam madhuram taranam madhuram
haranam madhuram ramanam madhuram
vamitam madhuram samitam madhuram
madhuradi-pater akhilam madhuram**

“His activities are sweet, His liberation is sweet. His thieving is sweet, His loving sports are sweet. His offerings are sweet, His peacefulness is sweet. Everything is sweet about the Lord of sweetness.” (5)

**gunja madhura mala madhura
yamuna madhura vici madhura
salilam madhuram kamalam madhuram
madhuradi-pater akhilam madhuram**

“His gunja-mala is sweet; His flower-garland is sweet. Is Yamuna is sweet, His ripples are sweet. His water is sweet, His lotuses are sweet. Everything is sweet about the Lord of sweetness.” (6)

**gopi madhura lila madhura
yuktam madhuram bhuktam madhuram
hrstam madhuram sistam madhuram
madhuradi-pater akhilam madhuram**

“His Gopis are sweet, His pastimes are sweet. His meeting is sweet, His food is sweet. His happiness is sweet, His etiquette is sweet. Everything is sweet about the Lord of sweetness.” (7)

**gopa madhura gavo madhura
sastir madhura srstir madhura
dalitam madhuram phalitam madhuram
madhuradi-pater akhilam madhuram**

“His cowherd boys are sweet, His cows are sweet. His herding-stick is sweet, His creation is sweet. His trampling is sweet; His fruitfulness is sweet. Everything is sweet about the Lord of sweetness.” (8)



*Harih Om Tat Sat
Sarve janaa sukhino bhavanthu
Nagpur, Saturday, 9th July, 2011*