

Srimad Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 7
Jnaana Vijnaana Yogah:
Yoga of Knowledge and Wisdom

Transliterated Sanskrit Text

Free Translation

&

Brief Explanation

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Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 7 (Part-1)
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Yoga of Knowledge and Wisdom
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Preamble

The following are the four *Mahavakyas* (Great Truths) taken out from each of the four Vedas all indicating the same Truth.

GREAT TRUTHS

Sr.No.	Mahavakya	Meaning
1	<i>Prajnanam Brahma</i>	Consciousness is Brahman
2	<i>Tat Twam Asi</i>	That You Are
3	<i>Ayam Atma Brahma</i>	This Atman is Brahman
4	<i>Aham Brahma Smi</i>	I am Brahman

We have seen earlier that the eighteen chapters of Gita can be divided into 3 sets of 6 Chapters each explaining the Truth of the Mahavakya - 'You Are That'. This sentence summarizes the entire vedic law and philosophy. The first 6 Chapters of Gita explain the significance of the term 'You' (Twam). The next 6 Chapters from the 7th to 12th explain the term 'That' (Tat). The last 6 Chapters give the meaning of the term 'Are' (Asi) and explain the message of the entire Mahavakya i.e. how the individual can blend with Parabrahman or attain Liberation. This Division does not mean any compartmentalization but implies a close relationship between the verses as also a logical thoughtflow from one Chapter to another.

Sri Krishna ended the previous Chapter by describing the supreme yogi as one who, with his inmost self abiding in Him, adores the Lord. We were told about the technique of meditation for obtaining Self-Realization and that a meditator is superior to a Tapasvi or Gnani. It declared that the one who has successfully merged his mind in the nature of Pure Consciousness through single-pointed meditation is the highest and the dearest to The Lord.

Arjuna still doubts how a limited and mortal mind and intellect of a finite entity like man could ever understand the limitless Infinite with all its virtues and glory. Sri Krishna therefore clarifies this doubt in this Chapter by describing the nature of the Lord Himself, who is the point of concentration of the yogi's unwavering devotion.

Sri Krishna uses the first person singular pronoun 'ME' to mean the supreme Reality or *brahman* or God. He tells Arjuna that the supreme Godhead has to be realized in both its transcendent and immanent aspects. The Yogi who has reached this summit has nothing more to know.

This complete union with the Lord is difficult of attainment. Among many thousands of human beings, very few aspire for this union, and even among those who aspire for it, few ever reach the pinnacle of spiritual realization.

The Lord gives a clear description of the all-pervading static and infinite state of His Being. He then proceeds to explain His manifestations as the universe and the power behind it.

He speaks of these manifestations as His lower and higher Prakritis. The lower Prakriti is made up of the five elements, mind, ego and intellect. The higher Prakriti is the life-element which upholds the universe, activates it and causes its appearance and final dissolution.

Krishna says that whatever exists is nothing but Himself. He is the cause of the appearance of the universe and all things in it. Everything is strung on Him like clusters of gems on a string. He is the essence, substance and substratum of everything, whether visible or invisible. Although everything is in Him, yet He transcends everything as the actionless Self.

Prakriti or nature is made up of the three Gunas or qualities—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. These three qualities delude the soul and make it forget its true nature, which is one with God. This delusion, termed Maya, can only be removed by the Grace of the Lord Himself.

‘Jnana’ means consummate knowledge of the formless and attributeless aspect of the Lord. ‘Vijnana’ means experiencing that knowledge. Awareness of the Lord comprises of both such knowledge and experience. The present Chapter deals with such Integral Divinity and with practices which lead to its knowledge and the fortunate souls who possess such knowledge. In simple terms the Chapter tells us about

- the concept of God or Brahman or Soul
- examples of manifestation of God in the universe and
- how to perceive God within oneself.

It is therefore named as ‘The Yoga of Jnana and Vijnana’

The Text

sri bhagavaan uvaacha

mayyaasaktamanaah paartha yogam yunjanmadaashrayah

asamshayam samagram maam yathaa jnaasyasi tacchrinu // 7.1 //

Sri Bhagavan said

Hear, O Partha, how, with your mind intent on Me, and taking refuge in Me and practicing Yoga, you will without doubt know Me in full.

A Yogi’s mind is attached to the Lord alone setting aside all the disciplines and worships the Lord with complete concentration. The Lord alone is the whole basis of the yogi’s being and the goal of his action. Practicing yoga means being united with the Lord in contemplation. Knowing the Lord in full implies knowing all His six attributes viz., infinite greatness, strength, power, grace, knowledge and detachment. As Arjuna has the necessary qualifications, Sri Krishna assures that He will give him a complete or integral knowledge of the Divine, not merely the Pure Self but also its manifestations in the world.

**jnaanam te'ham savijnaanam idam vakshyaamyasheshatah
yajjnaatwaa neha bhooyo'nyaj jnaatavyamavashishyate // 7.2 //**

I shall teach you in full both knowledge and experience, which having been known, nothing more remains to be known by you.

Jnana means knowledge, the direct spiritual illumination and Vijnana is the detailed rational knowledge of the principles of existence. We must have not merely the knowledge of the relationless Absolute but also of its varied manifestations.

The awareness that the Lord exists and that He is the inmost spirit of all is knowledge. This knowledge can be acquired by study of the scriptures, and reasoning about their contents. But to realize the Lord in oneself and in all other beings and to act according to that realization is experience, *vijnana*. For example, to know that one can obtain fire from wood is knowledge. But to kindle fire in the wood and feel its heat and light in a dark winter night is experience, *Vijnana*. In Hinduism knowledge of God is inseparable from experience.

Because the Lord is everything, when He is fully known everything else is automatically known. The Lord as *Sat-chit-ananda* (existence-knowledge-bliss absolute) forms the real essence of all objects. Names and forms are mere illusory superimposition.

**manushyaanaam sahasreshu kaschidyatati siddhaye
yatataamapi siddhaanaam kaschinmaam vetti tattwatah // 7.3 //**

Among thousands of people, one by chance aspires for perfection; even among those successful aspirants, one by chance knows Me in essence.

The question why the Self-Realized masters are so rare and why such a realization is not within the reach of everyone is answered.

‘Knowing Me in essence’ - The Being of the Lord and His diverse manifestations are incomprehensible to the human mind. He is the Impersonal Reality, the Personal God, and many other things besides. Of all living beings on earth, man alone can inquire about his self and its relationship with the Lord. Among innumerable human beings, only a few develop a desire for such an inquiry. Among those who show such desire, only a few know the means of attaining knowledge and strive after it. Among those who strive, only a fortunate few succeed in acquiring the true knowledge of the Lord. Hence knowledge of God is rare on this earth.

Thus far Ajuna has been taught the highest form of devotion, which leads to union with God in its static aspect as also with His dynamic Prakriti. Krishna tells him that there are also other forms of devotion which are inferior as they are performed with various motives. The distressed, the seeker of divine wisdom, and he who desires wealth, worship Him, as also the wise. Of these the Lord deems the wise as dearest to Him. Such a devotee loves the Lord for the sake of pure love alone. Whatever form the devotee worships, the ultimate goal is the Lord Himself. The Lord accepts such worship, knowing that it is directed to Him only.

TWO KINDS OF NATURE OF THE LORD

**bhoomiraaponalo vaayuh kham mano buddhireva cha
ahamkaara iteeyam me bhinnaa prakritirashtadhaa // 7.4 //**

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason and ego - such is the eightfold division of My nature.

**apareyamitastwanyaam prakritim viddhi me paraam
jeevabhootaam mahaabaaho yayedam dhaaryate jagat // 7.5 //**

O Mighty Armed, this is my lower nature. But different from it, you know My higher nature, the indwelling spirit by which the universe is sustained.

The relationship between spirit and matter which is the source of creation is explained here. The vedantic technical terms for these words are 'Purusha' for the indwelling spirit and 'Prakriti' for the matter. Matter is inert, insentient while spirit is sentient, dynamic. A combination of these two ingredients causes things to be born and function. In a steam engine, steam is the spirit-factor which makes the iron and steel assemblage of the engine which are matter-envelopments to function. The iron and steel components which are manufactured by somebody cannot function by themselves unless steam is made to pass through them. When the steam passes through the iron and steel assemblage we say that a steam engine is born or created.

CREATION

Let us understand the process of creation from the Vedantic angle in more details.

“First before understanding the topic of creation, we should clearly know that the very word creation is a misnomer because nothing can be created on account of the law of conservation of matter and energy. Then if at all we use the word Creation, it only refers to the manifestation of something which was potentially, un-manifestly existent. So only that which is un-manifestly, potentially existent in dormant form can come to manifestation.

MANIFEST VS UNMANIFEST

What is meant by the words manifest and unmanifest? By the word unmanifest, we mean *Pramanam Agocharam*. Unmanifest is that which is existent but is not available for perception or transaction like the butter in the milk. Butter is there in the milk, but we cannot see it in the milk. But we know that milk has butter. So what can we say about butter being existent or not? It is existent technically but for all practical purposes, since it is neither available for perception nor available for transaction we assume that butter is non-existent. But we know butter is there.

We can extend this analogy to everything in the creation. Nothing in the creation is non-existent. It was existent in potential manner. Later it becomes manifest, which means it is available for transaction. Our scriptures point out, before the origination of this cosmos, it should have existed because of this simple law of conservation. And if this creation existed before, it should have existed in un-differentiated and unmanifest form or potential form or dormant form which we can call as the seed of the creation. In Sanskrit we use the word *Bijam* for this or Causal form of matter.

Matter in its causal form is the source of all forms of energy and all forms of matter. The causal matter is called *Maya*. This means that before the creation originated, one thing was there which is called Maya.

We have to include one more thing that existed before creation. That is *Atma* which is the consciousness principle, the non-material spirit. It does not come under matter and therefore it does not come within time and space. This means that as consciousness is beyond time and space it has to be eternal which implies that before the creation, consciousness also existed.

So now we had arrived at two things that were existing before creation -

- Principle 1: Consciousness which is called Atma which is unconditioned, un-influenced, un-circumscribed by the time and space.
- Principle 2: Whole creation in causal matter form called Maya

To put it in simple words, we can now conclude that Consciousness and Maya existed in causal form before creation.

In the context of cosmology or creation, consciousness is given another name. At the Micro level i.e., with reference to an individual, consciousness is given the name of Atma. The very same consciousness at the Macro level is called Brahman. Therefore Atma and Brahman are synonymous meaning the same thing i.e., consciousness.

Atma means *Apanoti Sarvam Iti Atma* – the boundless all pervading one. The word Brahman means infinite derived from the root Bruh – to be big – therefore Brahman means the Big One, the Absolutely Big One.

Thus the study of cosmology begins with two beginning-less principles known as Brahman and Maya or Consciousness (Spirit) + Matter.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MAYA AND BRAHMAN

The common features of Brahman and Maya are both have no beginning, no origin. But differences are several as given in the Table below.

BRAHMAN & MAYA

Sr.No.	Brahman	Maya
1	Non-material Principle called Consciousness.	Material principle.
2	Does not have physical properties. It is called <i>Nirguna</i> , propertyless principle because it is non-material in nature.	It is full of potential properties because it is matter. Hence it is called <i>saguna</i> .
3	It is beyond Time & Space. It is never subject to change. It is changeless.	Because it is matter principle, it can never remain the same.
4	It is <i>nirvikalpa</i> , not subject to spatial division. Consciousness is one and not many. It is divisionless.	Maya, the material, is subject to multiplication and division.

These are the basic similarities and differences between Brahman and Maya and out of their blending alone this universe comes into manifestation for our recognition like we churn and bring out the butter which is then available tangibly for our transaction.

STAGES OF MANIFESTATION

In the scriptures the evolution or manifestation of the cosmos is presented in two stages. Like a seed becoming a plant in the middle stage, and then the plant becoming a full fledged tree in the final stage.

Therefore Maya is a seed stage containing the causal universe which comes to the level of subtle universe comparable to that of a plant and then the subtle universe evolves or manifests to become the gross universe fully available for all forms of transactions and engagement.

If you have to understand the difference between the subtle and gross creation you can compare your body and mind. Mind is also a creation or manifestation. Body is also a manifestation. But mind is a subtle manifestation not available for a physical vision because it is not tangible. But the body is gross visible to the eye.

SUBTLE AND GROSS ELEMENTS

The scriptures point out that first, out of the causal universe five subtle elements is born. These are called *Pancha Bhuta*. These are 1.*Akasa* or space 2.*Vayu* or air 3.*Agni* or fire 4.*Jalam* or water 5.*Bhumi or Prithvi*: the earth. In the initial stages, they are in subtle form, which means they are not available for our transaction. They are not even visible.

Māyā is defined as *Tri Gunatmika* i.e. endowed with threefold feature which is seen in the universe. They are *Sattva Guna*, *Rajo Guna* and *Tamo Guna*. These three Gunas or features or attributes inhere the five elements also. Thus we have got Sāttvika component of space, Rājasik a component of space and Tāmasik component of space. Similarly we have Sāttvika component of air, Rājasik component of air and Tāmasik component of air. Same applies for Fire, Water and Earth. Therefore we have fifteen items. Hence the first form of creation is *Sūkshma Bhūta Srushti* – the creation or manifestation of the subtle elements.

STAGE 1 – SATTVA GUNA AS GENERATOR:

From the Satvic portion of subtle elements are born the organs of perception (*jnana indriyas*), Ear is born from the Satvic aspect of Space, Skin from Air, Eye from fire, Tongue from water and Nose from earth.

From the total Satvic content of the five elements are born the *Antahkarana* or inner instrument. Antahkarana consists of four aspects, *manas*, Mind (doubting nature), *buddhi*, intellect (deciding nature), *ahankar*, ego ("I am the doer" nature) and *chitta*, memory (thinking faculty)

STAGE 2 – RAJO GUNA AS GENERATOR

From the Rajasic portion of subtle elements are born the organs of action (*karma indriyas*). From the rajasic aspect of space is born the speech, hands from air, legs from fire, genitals from water and anus from earth.

From the total Rajasic content of the five elements are born the five vital airs or *pancha prana*..

Each of the subtle elements is endowed with the property of its own. Space (*akasa*) has the property of producing sound; air (*vayu*) of producing touch; fire (*agni*) of visibility; water (*ap*) of flavor; and earth (*bhumi*) producing smell (*sabda, sparsa, rupa, rasa, gandha*). These are the five ways in which a man, through his five sense organs becomes aware of the *prakriti* or matter. Hence Hindu philosophers have divided matter into five elements. It is to be noted that mind or *manas* (the inner organ that creates doubt), intellect or *buddhi* (the inner organ that decides) and I-Consciousness or Ego belong to the realm of *prakriti* or matter.

The entire *Sūkshma Shariram* is born out of Sattva Guna and Rajo Guna of the five subtle elements. Therefore we have seen *Sukshma Bhuta Srushti* and *Sukshma Sharira Srushti* – in short the entire subtle universe.

STAGE 3 –TAMO GUNA AS GENERATOR

From the Tamasic portion of the subtle elements are born the gross elements. The gross elements are formed through combination of tamasic portion of subtle elements in which each of the subtle elements combines with the remaining four subtle elements under a peculiar formula to produce a gross element. This process of combination is called *panchikaranam*.

Thus the gross elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth are produced which we are able to see with our eyes. The five subtle elements are therefore the causes for the five gross elements. The scriptures point out that the Tamas components of the five elements alone get grossified to become the five gross elements – *Pancha Sthula Bhuta*.

The scriptures say that until grossification, each element was isolated and pure. One element was not adulterated or mixed with others. But when grossification takes place, the Tamo Guna of these five elements gets intermixed. This is just like eating a salad. *Sukshma Prapancha* is like eating grapes separately, bananas separately etc. Grossification means eating all together. Once we come to five grossified elements, each element has got a mixture of all the five. So Earth has got five elements, space has got five elements. Same way for Air, Fire and Water. This process of “salad making” is called Panchi Karanam or Grossification.

Once the five gross elements are born, out of that the entire cosmos including all our physical bodies are created. This is called *Sthula Srushti* or *Sthula Abhivyakti*.

Thus Maya is causal universe. And out of that comes subtle universe called *Sukshma Abhivyakti*. And out of that comes gross universe which is called *Sthula Abhivyakti*. Thus the entire creation comes out.

Therefore causal universe to subtle universe to Gross universe. This is the creation. Of these, the causal universe is beginning-less, but the subtle and gross have a beginning and an end.

Once it has become fully gross and moved about for some time, what happens to the whole creation? Again it collapses, condenses or contracts; evolution will later end up in involution or dissolution. The gross becomes subtle and subtle again becomes gross. Thus unmanifest to manifest and manifest to Unmanifest, the universe undergoes this cycle always. But the Universe will always be there. The difference is

only a question of degree but not substance. There is no increase or decrease in matter but there is only change in its condition or state – manifest condition to unmanifest condition and unmanifest to manifest.

*Avyaktadini Bhuaani Vyaktamadhyani Bharata
Avyakta Nidhananyeva Tatra Ka Paridevana*

Krishna will tell us in the Bhagavad Gita later – why are you talking about death? Death is nothing but body going out of shape. Nothing is lost, Arjuna, but for whom are you crying? The problem is that we have got attached to shape and lost sight of the substance.

The creation will last for some time and again collapse to Maya. What will be Brahman doing? Consciousness remains. When the appropriate conditions come forth, it manifests in the form of life. When the manifesting conditions are not there, consciousness remains unmanifest. This is Vedic Cosmology”. (Adopted from Swami Paramarthananda’s Discourses on ‘Tattva Bhodha’)

Let us turn back to the Gita.

Once the individual understands the distinction between matter and spirit, he will know that the cause of all our sufferings is due to spirit identifying with matter. When spirit is detached from all its identifications, it rediscovers for itself its own essential nature as Perfection and Bliss Absolute. The spirit identifying with matter or *apara prakriti* is called ego. This is also called super imposition on the Truth through ignorance. It is *apara prakriti* which is the cause of the world and by which the ego or Jiva gets bound. It is the ego that rediscovers itself to be nothing other than the spirit or *para prakriti* that presides over the matter. In order to make it clear Sri Krishna tells that the matter-aspect is distinct from the spirit-aspect in each individual.

The five elements are represented by the sense-organs by which the individual lives and gathers experiences in the world of sense objects as we have seen above. The sense organs are the channels through which the world of stimuli reaches the mind. The impulses received in the mind are classified and systematized as knowledge by the intellect. During all these assimilation the ego falsely identifies the body with the Spirit and the sense of ‘I’ or ‘My’ is produced.

Sri Krishna says that the equipments referred to in Verse 4 are not all that the Self possesses. The Self has, besides them, equipments of a higher nature which are Pure Consciousness or Awareness i.e., *para prakriti* (Verse 5). It is this spiritual aspect in everybody that makes it possible for the body, mind and intellect which are inert matters to function as if they are very cognizant and intelligent.

The spiritual factor is the entity with whose contact the body equipment works and without which it becomes dull and insentient. Without this spiritual spark man will be no more than a stone and he will not be able to experience the world outside or within him. The world of objects, the world of feelings and the world of ideas that we experience constitute in their totality the *Jagat* or universe which is supported by the principle of consciousness.

**etadyoneeni bhootaani sarvaaneetyupadhaaraya
aham kritsnasya jagatah prabhavah pralayastathaa // 7.6 //**

Know these two - My higher and lower natures - form the womb of all beings. Therefore, I am the origin and dissolution of the whole Universe.

The above mentioned higher and lower natures together cause the manifestation of the world of plurality. If there is no matter, the latent dynamic energy of the Spirit will not have a field for its expression. The matter by itself is dormant and it cannot function unless the Spirit is there to activate it, to enliven it. An example of this principle is electricity and the bulb. The bulb is the inert matter and the electricity is the dynamic spirit. It is obvious that one is of no use without the other. When the spirit functions through the five layers of the matter it finds a place to express itself.

The combination of the higher and lower natures (prakritis) is the womb of all beings i.e., these two are the cause for the origin of all creatures or manifestation. The lower nature manifests itself as the material body and the higher nature as the enlivening soul, the experiencer.

At the time of evolution, names, forms and life arise from prakriti and at the time of dissolution they go back into it. But prakriti, independent of the Lord (Consciousness or Brahman or Spirit) cannot generate anything. Prakriti is the Lord's instrument of creation, preservation and dissolution. Hence the Lord is the ultimate cause of the Universe; as we have seen under the topic "Creation" above Brahman (the Lord) + Maya or Consciousness (Spirit) + Matter is the ultimate cause of the evolution and dissolution of the Universe or Creation or Manifestation.

These ideas constitute the nucleus of the knowledge about Brahman, Maya, Manifestation or Creation all of which are dealt with elaborately in the subsequent Chapters of the Gita especially in Chapters 8, 9, 13, 14 and 15. Hence these concepts and ideas should be thoroughly grasped and kept in mind for a fruitful study of the latter Chapters of the Gita.

**mattah parataram naanyat kinchidasti dhananjaya
mayi sarvamidam protam sootre maniganaa iva // 7.7 //**

There exists nothing whatsoever higher than Me, O Dhananjaya. All this is strung on Me, as a row of gems on a thread.

There exists no other cause of the universe except the Lord. To show that the Self is one and the same in all created beings on the earth it is stated here that The Lord is the supporter of the Universe just as the string is of the gems on a garland. Without the string the gems will be scattered.

The substance with which gems and thread are made is different. Similarly the world is constituted of infinite variety of names and forms which are held together by the Spiritual Truth into a complete whole. Even in an individual, the body, mind and intellect are different from one another but they work in harmony and in unity because of the same spiritual Truth, the principle of consciousness. Hence Sri Krishna says that there is no other cause of the Universe but Him; He alone is the cause of the Universe.

The Lord is the support of the universe, as the string is of the gems on a garland. Without the string the gems will lie scattered; without the Lord, the planets, the stars and all else will be dispersed. The Lord, manifesting Himself through the physical and

moral laws, sustains the relative world. He is also the Unity that underlies the diversity of names and forms.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE LORD'S MANIFESTATIONS

**raso'hamapsu kaunteya prabhaasmi shashisooryayoh
pranavah sarva vedeshu shabdah khe paurusham nrishu // 7.8 //**

O Son of Kunti, I am the savor of waters, the radiance of the sun and moon, the syllable OM in all the Vedas, the sound in ether and the manliness in man.

**punyo gandhah prithivyaam cha tejashcha'smi vibhaavasau
jeevanam sarvabhooteshu tapashchaasmi tapaswishu // 7.9 //**

I am the sweet fragrance in earth and brilliance in the fire, the life in all beings and I am the austerity in the ascetics.

In these two verses the doubt as to what is the eternal factor which is common in all and yet not readily perceptible to anybody is cleared.

That which remains always from beginning to end and without which the thing cannot be identified as such is declared to be its essence, its Dharma - the law of its being. All examples given here by The Lord like savor in water, radiance in the sun and the moon, syllable OM in the Vedas, the principle of sound in Space, manliness in man, brilliance in the fire, life in all beings etc. indicate that the Lord is that factor or subtle principle which gives the individual creatures different characteristics of their own..

**beejam maam sarvabhootaanaam viddhi paartha sanaatanam
buddhir buddhimataamasmi tejastejaswinaamaham // 7.10 //**

Know Me, O Partha, as the eternal seed of all beings that exist; I am the intelligence of the intelligent and the splendor of the splendid (things and beings).

**balam balavataamasmi kaamaraagavivarjitam
dharmaaviruddho bhooteshu kaamo'smi bharatarshabha // 7.11 //**

Of the strong, I am the strength - devoid of desire and attachment and in all beings, I am the desire unopposed to Dharma, O Best among the Bharatas.

The Lord continues to indicate the same truth by means of some more analogies. Sri Krishna tells that He is the strength among the strong but devoid of desire and attachment.

The terms desire and attachment are not synonymous. Desire is for what is absent at present in the scheme of life and attachment or affection is for what one has already obtained. These two emotions are generally the cause of conflict between individuals, communities and countries assisted by their respective strength.

Another concept is brought in here - Desire unopposed to Dharma. All actions, thoughts and ideas entertained by an individual which are not contrary to his own nature of Divinity make up his Dharma. Such actions, thoughts etc. which lead him to discover his nature of Divinity are considered righteous actions. Those actions which

remove him from his inherent nature of Divinity are called unrighteous implying that The Lord is all the desires that are not wrongful to a living being.

**ye chaiva saatvikaa bhaavaa raajasaas taamasaashcha ye
matta eveti taanviddhi natwaham teshu te mayi // 7.12 //**

Whatever things there be that are pure (pertaining to Sattva), active (pertaining to Rajas) and inert (pertaining to Tamas), know them to proceed from Me alone; yet I am not in them, they are in Me.

This verse concludes the discussion started with the statement “all this is strung in Me as a row of pearls on a thread”. All things (including the different states of mind) are in The Lord but He is not in them just as all waves are in the ocean but the ocean is not in them. The universe is only an appearance superimposed by illusion (Maya) on the Lord. It is like a mirage in the desert. From the standpoint of the onlooker, the illusory water exists in the desert; but the desert does not depend upon or exist in the mirage. Likewise this universe, apparently superimposed on the Lord, exists in the Lord, but the Lord is not in the universe. None of the properties of the universe touches the Lord, just as the waters of the mirage cannot soak a single grain of the desert sand.

The gunas constitute prakriti or nature which is the lower manifestation of the Lord. Therefore the Lord is their ultimate cause. But the Lord is not, as in the case of worldly men, under the control of the gunas. The gunas, on the contrary, are subject to Him.

GUNAS

A reference to the gunas was made by Krishna in the Gita earlier vide Chapter 2 verse 45. In the beginning of this Chapter we have seen the Lord is of two kinds of nature viz, Purusha and Prakriti. The former denotes the Soul or Consciousness and the latter Nature or matter, which is dull and insentient. Prakriti consists of three gunas namely, sattva, rajas, and tamas. Rajas denotes restlessness or active principle. Tamas is the principle of inertia and Sattva, serenity and harmony, is the equilibrium between rajas and tamas. As prakriti consists of the three gunas, every object in prakriti is compounded of these three gunas. Samsara is the realm of the gunas. Freedom is beyond these gunas.

Prakriti is not independent of the Lord. Everything constituted by the three gunas is in no sense a self-dependent essence independent of God but springs from Him alone. While He contains and comprehends all, they do not contain and comprehend Him. This is the distinction between God and His creatures. They undergo changes because of the divine but their changes do not touch the integrity of the Divine. The lord is not subject to any one else, while all things are subject to Him.

Matter exists because of Spirit and Spirit is never restrained or regulated by the finite matter. The three Gunas - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas - which are temperaments or nature of the head and heart, by which the instruments of feeling, thinking and action come to play their role everywhere, rise from the Self.

MODES OF NATURE CONFUSE MEN

**tribhirgunamayair bhaavairebhih sarvamidam jagat
mohitam naabhijaanaati maamebhyah paramavyayam // 7.13 //**

Deluded by these threefold Gunas (modes of nature) of Prakriti the whole world does not recognize Me as distinct from them and imperishable.

The people of this world are deluded by the three gunas or qualities of nature. Affection, attachment and infatuated love, hatred are all the characteristics of the gunas. On account of delusion created by these qualities they are not able to break worldly ties and turn their minds towards the Supreme Lord though the Lord is the inmost Self of all beings and the object of direct and immediate perception.

The Lord in His purest essence is untouched by the gunas which belong only to His prakriti. The Self is the essence which does not have the six modifications of the body viz. birth, growth, existence, old age, decay and death.

This verse answers the question as to why the ordinary mortals are not able to understand at least the presence of the great truth about the spirit and matter. The answer in short is that deluded by the modifications of the three Gunas the living beings become blind to the divine possibilities in themselves. So long as a ghost is seen in the post, the vision of the post will not be available to the perceiver. Thus deluded, the ego does not realize the Supreme as different from it.

Dr.S.Radhakrishnan comments: “According to Sankara the Supreme expresses His regret that the world does not know Him, the Supreme Lord who is, by nature, eternal, pure, enlightened and free, the Self of all beings, devoid of attributes (*gunatheetha*) by knowing whom the seed of the evil of *samsara* is burnt up. We see the changing forms and not the Eternal Being of which the forms are the manifestations. We see the moving shadows on the wall whereas we must see the Light from which the shadows emanate”.

WHO CAN REALIZE THE SUPREME?

**daivee hyeshaa gunamayee mama maayaa duratyayaa
maameva ye prapadyante maayaametaam taranti te // 7.14 //**

Verily, this divine illusion of Mine (Maya), consisting of the gunas, is hard to overcome. But those who take refuge in Me alone shall cross over this illusion.

Maya or illusion is divine because it is a part of the Lord's nature and inscrutable to human reason as we have seen earlier. It is hard to overcome by self-effort if unaided by divine grace. Although Sri Krishna Himself admits that it is not easy for any egocentric individual to transcend this illusion which is caused by His Maya, the Lord says that those who devote themselves to Him alone can overcome this obstacle which creates sorrows and imperfections in the objective world.

How to do this was already explained under 'Meditation' in the previous Chapter.

IF MAYA CAN BE OVERCOME BY DEVOTION WHY DO NOT ALL WORSHIP HIM?

**na maam dushkritino moodhaah prapadyante naraadhamaah
maayayaapahritajnaanaa aasuraam bhaavamaashritaah // 7.15 //**

The evil-doers and the deluded and the vilest among men, deprived of knowledge by Maya and following the ways of demons do not worship Me.

In the previous verse Sri Krishna talked of those who can successfully transcend their own subjective delusion. In this verse He gives the negative nature in those who cannot overcome this delusion for realizing the Divinity in themselves.

He says that low men because of their delusion and indulgence in evil actions, follow the path of the devil (*Asura*) and get themselves deprived of their discrimination. The difference between man and animal is his rational intellect by which he can distinguish between the good and the evil, the high and the low, the moral and the immoral etc. This rational discriminative capacity alone helps the man to cast off his imperfections and become aware of his essential nature of Absolute Divinity.

The evil doers cannot attain to the Supreme, for their mind and will are not instruments of the Spirit but of the ego. They do not seek to master their crude impulses but are a prey to the Rajas and Tamas in them. If they control their crude tendencies by the Sattva in them, their action becomes orderly and enlightened and ceases to be the outcome of passion and ignorance.

To go beyond the three gunas, first, we have to submit ourselves to the rule of Sattva. We have to become ethical, before we can become spiritual. At the spiritual level, we cross the dualities and act in the light and strength of the Spirit in us. We do not act then to gain any personal interest or avoid personal suffering but only as instrument of the Divine.

Concepts and Issues

The Lord says that He is of two kinds of nature viz. Lower nature (*Apara Prakriti*) and Higher Nature (*Para Prakriti*). The lower nature is divided eightfold. They are 1.earth 2.water 3.fire 4.air 5.space 6.mind 7.intellect and 8.egoism. The higher nature is the fundamental factor, the substratum the very life-principle with which the entire universe is sustained- The Atman, The Self, Consciousness.

The lower nature is Matter and the higher is Spirit. The Universe has manifested from these two kinds of nature only. The Lord says that in His higher nature He is the sole cause and ultimate support of the entire creation. The universe is His manifestation and is pervaded by Him. He is the essence that is running through everything, holding them together into this world pattern, as a string keeps the pearls together in a necklace.

To make this idea very clear to Arjuna, The Lord gives several examples like He is the light in the Sun and the Moon, sacred symbol of 'OM' in the scriptures, manliness in man, life-breath in all living creatures etc. He declares that He is present in all things in the universe, visible and invisible, and is the root cause for the entire creation. He is the all Sustaining and ever Surviving Substratum of everything.

The Lord embraces Matter only to express Himself, His glory, His strength and His greatness. All the beings - pure, active and inert - are only His creations. He guides them and they don't guide Him. He does not take refuge in them but they take refuge in Him. The naked eye sees the Spirit encased in the matter but once the vision improves through knowledge, it sees and apprehends that the Spirit envelops everything. Matter depends on the Spirit. But the Spirit does not depend upon the Matter.

In all beings the three Gunas - Sattva (pure attitude), Rajas (active attitude) and Tamas (inert attitude) are found in varying degrees. The blending of these three qualities of nature in the thought mechanism of man constitutes ignorance or Avidya due to which the whole world gets deluded. Because of this total ignorance or Maya the world fails to recognize His presence - the Eternal, the Imperishable, the Spirit as distinct from the gross Matter.

The ignorant believe that the world and the visible objects alone are real and do not seek The Lord at all. They follow the ways of demons and suffer through the series of births and deaths. It is very difficult to remove ignorance and get enlightened. But inspite of this difficulty those who take refuge in Him can overcome the predicament.

Live as the Gita Teaches You to Live

The following concepts have to be clearly understood.

1. Creation
2. Three Gunas
3. Maya
4. The Lord permeates every thing in the universe.
5. Means to go beyond the Gunas
6. How to realize the self?

Points to Ponder

1. What are the eightfold divisions of Prakriti?
2. Describe the higher and lower nature of The Lord.
3. Describe the mechanism of creation.
4. How the Lord permeates the entire universe?
5. Why people are not aware of the substratum of the universe?
6. How one can come out of this delusion?
7. How one can realize the Self despite difficulties?

N.B. A few charts are given in the Annexure to facilitate easy comprehension of the concepts discussed in this Chapter.

Next time we will proceed from the Verse 7.16

HARIH OM

ANNEXURE
VEDANTA CAPSULES

1. INSTRUMENTS OF KNOWLEDGE

PRAMANA					
INSTRUMENTS OF KNOWLEDGE					
Pratyaksa (Direct Perception)	Anumana (Inference)	Upamana (Analogy)	Sabda (Scriptural Statements) ▼	Arthapatti (Presumption)	Anupalabdhi (Non-apprehension)
Prasthan Traya: 1.Upanishads 2.Brahma Sutra 3.Bhagavad Gita					
Kinds of Knowledge: 1. Scriptural 2. Logic & Reasoning 3. Experiential					

2.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURAL TEXTS

ANUBANDHA CHATUSHTAYA			
FOUR PRELIMINARIES			
Adhikaarin (Competent Student)	Visaya (Subject Matter)	Sambandha (Relation)	Prayojana (Utility)

2.2 REQUIREMENTS EXPECTED OF A STUDENT

Sadhana Chatushtaya					
Vairagya	Viveka	Shad Sampatti	Mumukshuta		
		▼↓▼			
Sama	Dama	Uparati	Titiksha	Sraddha	Samadhana

3.1 VEDANTIC ANATOMY OF THE HUMAN BODY

SARIRA TRAYA THE THREE BODIES		
Sthula Sarira Gross Body	Sukshma Sarira or Linga Sarira Subtle Body	Karana Sarira Causal Body

3.2 STHULA SARIRA (GROSS BODY)

CONSISTS OF PANCHA MAHABHUTAS (FIVE GREAT ELEMENTS)

PANCHA MAHABHUTAS FIVE GREAT ELEMENTS			
NO.	Name	Guna or Quality	Characteristics
1	Akasa Space or Ether	Sabda Sound	Can only be heard Cannot be seen, smelt, felt or tasted
2	Vayu Air	Sparsha Touch	Can be heard & felt by touch Cannot be smelt, seen or tasted
3	Tejas Or Agni Fire	Rupa Form	Can be seen, heard & felt Cannot be smelt or tasted
4	Apah Water	Rasa Taste	Can be seen, heard, felt & tasted Cannot be smelt
5	Prithvi Earth	Gandha Smell	Can be seen, tasted, felt, heard and smelt

3.3 SUKSHMA SARIRA OR LINGA SARIRA OR SUBTLE BODY

CONSISTS OF SEVENTEEN COMPONENTS				
Pancha Jnana Indriyas Five Organs Of Perception	Pancha Karma Indriyas Five Organs Of Action	Pancha Pranas Five Types Of Breaths	Manas Mind	Buddhi Intellect

3.4 FIVE ORGANS OF PERCEPTION

JNANENDRIYAS			
ORGANS OF PERCEPTION			
No.	Name	Fields of Experience	Presiding Deities
1	Srotra Ear	Sabda Reception of Sound	Dig Devata Space
2	Tvacha Skin	Sparsha Cognition of Touch	Vayu Air
3	Chakshu Eyes	Roopa Perception of Forms	Surya Sun
4	Jihva Tongue	Rasa Cognition of Taste	Varuna Water
5	Ghraana Nose	Gandha Cognition of Smell	Aswini Kumars Twins

3.5 FIVE ORGANS OF ACTION

KARMENDRIYAS			
ORGANS OF ACTION			
No.	Name	Fields of Experience	Presiding Deities
1	Vaak Speech	Bhasanam To Speak	Agni Fire
2	Paani Hands	Vastu Grahanam To grasp things	Indra Lord Indra
3	Paada Legs	Gamanam Locomotion	Vishnu Lord Vishnu
4	Paayu Anus	Maalatyaaga Elimination of waste	Mrityu Lord Yama
5	Upastha Genitals	Ananda Pleasure & Procreation	Prajapati Prajapati

3.6 PANCHA PRANAS OR THE FIVE VITAL AIRS

PANCHA PRANAS THE FIVE VITAL AIRS			
No.	Name	Functions	Located In
1	Prana	Respiration	Nose
2	Apana	Evacuation or Excretion	Anus Genitals
3	Vyana	Circulation	Entire Body
4	Udana	Reaction or Throwing Out Upwards	Throat
5	Samana	Assimilation or Digestion	Central Region of the Body

3.6 ANTHAHKARANA CHATUSHTAYA OR FOURFOLD ASPECTS OF MIND

ANTHAHKARANA CHATUSHTAYA FOURFOLD ASPECTS OF MUND				
No.	Name	Functions	Nature	Presiding Deity
1	Manas	Receives Stimuli through organs of perception from external sources	Indecision or doubt	Moon
2	Buddhi	Analyses situations or stimuli received & determines - Cognition faculty	Decision making	Brahma
3	Ahamkara	Sense of doership & enjoyership	Ego	Rudra
4	Chitta	Recollection of past experiences or events	Storehouse or Memory	Vasudeva

3.7 MODIFICATIONS OF GROSS BODY

GROSS BODY IS SUBJECT TO SHAT VIKARA OR SIX MODIFICATIONS					
Astitva Existence	Janma Birth	Vardhana Growth	Viparinama Maturity	Apakshaya Decay	Vinasa Death

HARIH OM

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 7 (Part-2)
Jnaana Vijnaana Yogah:
Yoga of Knowledge and Wisdom
T.N.Sethumadhavan

Preamble

Thus far Arjuna has been taught the highest form of devotion, which leads to union with God in its static aspect as also with His dynamic Prakriti. Krishna tells him that there are also other forms of devotion which are at a lower level as they are performed with various motives.

Four kinds of virtuous people worship God. They are seekers of wealth, the distressed, seekers of knowledge, and jnani or the wise. The first three approach God only for gaining limited goals in the world. Distinct from these three types of worshippers, the jnani stands out with his self-oblivious, non-utilitarian worship. He has no desires for any worldly reward. His worship is wholly directed to Self-Realization, to reach Brahman. Krishna expresses His deep love and admiration for the Jnani. Whatever form the devotee worships, the ultimate goal is the Lord Himself. The Lord accepts such worship, knowing that it is directed to Him only.

The deluded, having lost sight of the transcendental Reality, entertain a variety of desires in this world. They seek and earn the fruits of their desires. The Reality, personified as Lord Krishna (Vasudeva) functions in every being as Atman. Atman enlivens all activities, be they material or spiritual. Hence Krishna says that He supports all actions of individuals pursuing their manifold desires.

Speaking as Brahman, the pure Consciousness, Krishna declares that He knows the past, present and future. Living Beings, deluded by the pairs of opposites which bind this world, do not recognize the underlying Reality. The wise, striving for liberation, free themselves from this delusion and reach the supreme Brahman. They realize the whole truth – the play of Brahman, the individual soul and the world, *jiva, jagat and jagadeesvara*

The Text

DIFFERENT KINDS OF DEVOTION

**chaturvidhaa bhajante maam janaah sukritino'rjuna
aarto jijnaasurartharthee jnaanee cha bharatarshabha // 7.16 //**

Four types of virtuous men worship Me, O Arjuna; the man in distress, the seekers of knowledge, the seekers of enjoyment and those endowed with wisdom, O the best among the Bharatas.

Prayer is the effort of man to reach God. It assumes that there is an answering Presence in the world to whom the prayer is addressed. Through the exercise of Prayer, we kindle a light in our consciousness which shows up our pride, greed, fears and hopes. It is a means to build up an integrated personality, a harmony of the body, mind and Spirit.

The previous verse stated that sinful men possessed of demonic nature do not worship God. The question then who actually worships God is answered in this verse.

The Lord calls all the persons who offer prayers to Him as virtuous and classifies them in the following four categories. They are virtuous because anyone seeking the Lord, whatever is his motive, is a fortunate and righteous soul.

1. The distressed - They pray for fighting against and gaining total relief from the distress that is troubling them.
2. The seekers of knowledge – They pray for understanding the knowledge of the Self or the knowledge of God.
3. The seeker of enjoyment- They pray for satisfying their desires and attain enjoyment here and hereafter.
4. The Wise - They pray demanding nothing, expecting nothing. They carry with them as their offerings only themselves. They offer themselves in total surrender. Their only demand is that they should become one with The Lord. Their attitude is one of self-oblivious non-utilitarian worship of God for His own sake. He is the one who has renounced all desires born of maya.

It is also to be noted that not all people belonging to the first three categories stated above worship the Lord; only those who are fortunate among them take refuge in Him although they are desirous of rewards (*phalakama*).

**teshaam jnaanee nityayukta eka bhaktirvishishyate
priyo hi jnaanino'tyarthamaham sa cha mama priyah // 7.17 //**

Of them the wise man, ever in constant union with the Divine, whose devotion is single minded, excels; for I am exceedingly dear to the wise and he is dear to Me.

The wise (Gnani) who with a single pointed mind surrenders himself to the Self with an integrated devotion, which is not distracted by other compelling desires represents the Best. The unbroken aspirations of the Seeker to reach his own real nature of the Self are called single pointed devotion or steadfast mind - *Ekabhakti*.

Single pointedness of the mind is possible only when one withdraws oneself totally from all other extrovert demands of the lower nature in him. In the case of a Gnani the spirit is invoked not for acquisition of any sensual enjoyments but for elimination of all the self-destructive desires. Therefore, Sri Krishna who is the personification of the Self says the wise are the best and the highest in the category of those who invoke Him.

Such a Gnani because of his selfless love is dear to The Lord and in turn He is dear to him. The Lord is regarded as the very Self of the wise. So long as we are seekers, we are still in the world of duality but when we have attained wisdom, there is no duality. The sage unites himself with the One Self in all.

**udaaraah sarva evaite jnaanee twaatmaiva me matam
aasthitah sa hi yuktaatma maamevaanuttamaam gatim // 7.18 //**

Noble indeed are all these; but I deem the wise man as My very Self, for steadfast in mind, he is established in Me alone as the Supreme goal.

All devotees are noble because of the very fact that they are approaching the Self. But the wise is exceedingly dear to Him because he has a steady mind, with a single pointed concentration on Him. He does not desire any worldly objects except the Supreme Being. He seeks Him alone as the goal. He practices meditation on Him as the Self of all. He tries to realize that he is identical with the Supreme Self. So The Lord regards him as His very Self.

While the first three types attempt to use God according to their ideas, the Wise belong to God to be used according to His will. Therefore they are the best among them all.

By calling the man of wisdom His own self, the Lord shows that there is no difference between Himself and the man of wisdom. Such a devotee is the same as God, and God is the same as the devotee. There is absolute identity between the two.

**bahoonaam janmanaamante jnaanavaanmaam prapadyate
vaasudevah sarvamiti sa mahaatmaa sudurlabhah // 7.19 //**

At the end of many births the wise-man takes refuge in Me, realizing that Vaasudeva (the innermost Self) is all ; such a great soul (Mahatma) is very difficult to find.

It is rare to find in a community of men people of rational thinking and diviner emotions. Even among those who have fully developed mental and intellectual capacities it is only a rare few that take up study of scriptures seriously. All those who study scriptures do not try to live up to them, but feel satisfied in understanding their contents. Only the rarest of the few reach the goal of their evolution and discover their true nature of divine perfection.

This process of evolution takes place during several lives in different births. However, it does not mean those who strive hard in this birth have no chance of realizing the goal of life. The very fact that the seeker has found disappointment with his present state of existence and finds attracted towards Upanishadic literature itself means that he has reached the threshold of the Self.

A little more faithful pursuit of the higher life will take him to the highest state of evolution. At the end of his efforts spread over several births the seeker attains the Inner Self and realizes that everything is Vaasudeva (Self) only in the ultimate analysis. ‘All’ implies that the whole Universe with its sentient and insentient beings is nothing but the manifestation of Vaasudeva and that there is nothing apart from Him.

It is indeed very difficult to find such a great soul. None is equal to him. “Association with great souls is not only rare but hard to obtain, though unfailing in its effect”. *Narada Bhakti Sutra.*

N.B. Vaasudeva means the Lord, the innermost Self of all beings, Sri Krishna. Vasudeva means Sri Krishna’s father and husband of Devaki.

TOLERATION

**kaamaistaistairhritajnaanaah prapadyante'nyadevataah
tam tam niyamamaasthaaya prakrityaa niyataah swayaa // 7.20 //**

Those, whose discrimination has been distorted by desires, resort to other gods, observing various rituals, led by their own natures.

Desire for sense objects and their gratification is the greatest cause which separates the discriminating faculty from human intellect. It is discrimination which makes man conscious of his Self. But when the discriminative capacity is deprived of, the deluded individuals engage themselves in some ritualism, dictated by their inborn tendencies to propitiate some Deity or the other. The Deity referred to here means various joys contained in the different sensuous fields which are sought due to intense desires for getting complete satisfaction from them.

The chain of 'Desires - Thoughts - Actions' disturbs the mental equanimity resulting in loss of discrimination. With the loss of discrimination he propitiates the productive potential of the given fields of activity which is called a Devata. As the invocation is required to be done in a particular manner to achieve specific results he follows ritualistic practices. In this process each man follows his own way because each individual acts according to his mental impressions gathered in his earlier moments of activity and thought.

In short this verse implies that a deluded entity strives hard through various rituals, goes after the mirage of sensuality hoping to gain satisfaction therein that it will be everlasting while a man of discrimination finds out the pointlessness of sensuous pursuits and withdraws himself from all the unprofitable fields and seeks the path of the Real.

**yo yo yaam yaam tanum bhaktah shraddhayaarchitum icchati
tasya tasyaachalaam shraddhaam taameva vidadhaamyaham // 7.21 //**

Whatever may be the form a devotee seeks to worship with Sraddha (Faith), in that form alone I make his faith unwavering.

Sri Krishna declares that wherever and in whatever form any devotee seeks to worship with belief, He makes that faith unshakable. Faith here implies unmitigated belief in the existence of divine intelligence, in their glory and virtues and in the methods of their worship and its rewards. The more we think in a particular fashion the more we become so. Faith alone brings success in worship. All deities are only minor forms of the all pervading Supreme Lord.

The deepening of the devotee's faith in every form of worship comes only from the Lord. Through this intense faith the devotee obtains the result of his worship, even though he has set before himself a limited goal. It is the Lord alone who bestows the fruit of worship.

“All worship elevates. No matter what we revere, so long as our reverence is serious, it helps progress. Every surface derives its soil from the depths even as every shadow reflects the nature of the substance”. - Dr.S.Radhakrishnan.

**sa tayaa shraddhayaa yuktastasyaaraadhanameehate
labhate cha tatah kaamaan mayaiva vihitam hi taan // 7.22 //**

Endowed with that faith, he worships that form and from it attains his desires, which are in reality, granted by Me (alone).

The seeker, equipped with that kind of faith as described in the previous verse, invokes the Devata of his choice and gains his desires. These desires are all nourished by Him alone. The Self is the source of all activities. The sense of joy or sorrow out of these activities is a mental-wave. We will not be aware of this experience of joy or sorrow but for the principle of consciousness.

Faithful activity in any field of action brings about success. But the capacity to act, the existence of the field of action, the consistency and zeal with which action is performed, are all due to the Self alone. Sri Krishna identifies Himself with this Spiritual Centre - The Self- and declares that He alone is the One who confers faith in all activities and when the actions are over He alone provides the results thereof.

The Supreme and Omniscient Lord alone knows the precise relationship between an action and its rewards. He is the dispenser of the fruit of action.

All forms are forms of the One Supreme; their worship is the worship of the Supreme; the giver of all rewards is the Supreme - Sridhara Swami.

**antavat tu phalam tesham tadbhavatyalpamedhasaam
devaan devayajo yaanti madbhaktaa yaanti maamapi // 7.23 //**

Verily, the fruit that accrues to those men of small minds is finite. The worshipers of the Deities go to the Deities, but My devotees come to Me.

Since the deluded ones desire for finite sense objects they do not come to the all-satisfying peace and hence their results are also temporary and finite. They are called men of small minds because they take petty objects of enjoyment as the Supreme Goal.

Even if satisfaction is achieved after attaining the desired sensuous objects, it is ineffectual because after some time such satisfaction will end followed by sorrows. Any enjoyment in the world of time and space invariably has to come to an end.

The statement worshippers of Deities go to the Deities means that those who invoke a desired manifestation of the Lord in the relative world or aspect of the Supreme, gain only that particular result sought for and nothing else, for the Supreme accepts our prayers and answers them at the level we approach Him. No devotion goes in vain.

As against this those who devote themselves to The Lord go to Him since people through right living come to discover their identity with the Eternal Absolute and realize the transcendental and eternal aspect of the spirit. Those who rise to the worship of the Transcendental Godhead which embraces and transcends all aspects realize and attain the highest state, integral in being, perfect in knowledge, absolute in love and complete in will. All other deities are only partial and limited and have a meaning only at lower level of development.

The same exertion is needed for the worship of the Lord or the minor deities; but the results are totally different. Yet men, deluded by transitory desires, do not seek the Lord Himself, who is the source of all peace, happiness and knowledge.

POWER OF IGNORANCE

**avyaktam vyaktimaapannam manyante maamabuddhayah
param bhaavamajaananto mamaavyayamanuttamam // 7.24 //**

The foolish think of Me, the Unmanifest, as endowed with manifest form, not knowing My supreme, immutable and transcendent nature.

That which is available for the perception of the sense organs or for the feelings of the mind or for the understanding of the intellect is called the 'manifest'. That which is not available for any one of these instruments of cognition, feeling or understanding is considered as 'unmanifest'.

The ignorant think that the Lord, too, like an ordinary mortal, comes down from the unmanifested state and assumes a body, impelled by His past karma. This belief is due to their ignorance of His real nature, which is unchanging and ever luminous. Thus disregarding the Lord, the foolish worship the minor deities for the fulfillment of their selfish desires.

The misunderstood men come to the conclusion that physical glory of an incarnation is all the eternal truth. Although the form of an incarnation can be the focus of concentration, it cannot by itself be the Truth. The forms we impose on the Formless are due to our limitations. We turn away from the contemplation of the Ultimate Reality to concentrate upon imaginative reconstructions.

All Gods except the One Unmanifest Eternal are forms imposed on Him. God is not one among many. He is the One behind the ever changing many, who stands beyond all forms, the immutable centre of mobility.

CAUSE OF IGNORANCE

**naaham prakaashah sarvasya yogamaayaasamaavritah
moodho'yam naabhijaanaati loko maamajamavyayam // 7.25 //**

Veiled by My Maya born of the gunas, I am not revealed to all. This deluded world does not know Me as the unborn and eternal.

The Lord says this deluded world does not know Me, the Unborn and the Immortal because of their own illusion, born out of the three Gunas which veil Me from them. Maya is the illusion born out of the three Gunas through which the Non-dual expresses itself. The principle of Maya functioning in an individual is termed ignorance. By the play of the three Gunas or temperaments one gets confused and hence the Self is not available for direct experience.

For a person without any knowledge of electricity, it is unmanifest in a glowing bulb. Once he comes to have the knowledge of the principle of electricity, it becomes manifest to him in the very same bulb. Similarly, when through self-control, listening, reflection and meditation, the agitations of the mind are controlled and quietened and thereby when the veiling is removed, the seeker rediscovers 'Me, the unmanifest, the unborn, the Immutable'.

As long as the agitations of the mind veil the intellect from its awareness of the Self, the limited ego will continue to wander about among the sensual desires and cannot experience Pure Consciousness even for a moment. Hence The Lord says 'the deluded

world knows Me not as they are steeped in the illusion born out of threefold Gunas' just as the waves shield the ocean from the visionary perception.

**vedaaham samateetaani vartamaanaani chaarjuna
bhavishyaani cha bhootani maam tu veda na kashchana // 7.26 //**

I know O Arjuna, the beings of the past, the present and the future but no one knows Me.

Because of the Consciousness Principle, only the living beings are aware of the entire field of the mind and the intellect. Consciousness or the Self is the same everywhere which illumines the respective thoughts and ideas of the individual. Thus The Lord or the Self is omniscient i.e. all-knowing. Hence He says 'I know the beings of the whole past, of the present and of the future.'

The concept of awareness is eternal because It illumined the objects before, is illumining now and will be doing so in future. It is beginningless and endless. Although the Self activates the mind and the intellect neither of them can perceive, feel or comprehend the Self. Hence The Lord says although He knows everything and everyone at all times and places 'none knows Him.'

REASONS FOR ILLUSION

**icchaadweshasamutthena dwandwamohena bhaarata
sarvabhootani sammoham sarge yaanti parantapa // 7.27 //**

By the delusion of the pairs of opposites arising from desire and aversion, O Bharata, all beings are subject to illusion right from birth, O Paranthapa (Scorcherer of foes).

Every individual, due to the instinct of self-preservation, has desire for things that contribute to existence and aversion for things that obstruct the attainment of such things desired. He suffers because of the conflict between desires and aversion and his mind and intellect are pre-occupied with chasing of objects desired as also running away from objects of aversion. This agitation due to the pairs of opposites is that which veils the truth from being grasped by an individual. In these circumstances no knowledge of the Self can be possible.

Therefore the only way we can discover our equipoise and tranquility as the eternal Self is to strike at the root i.e. to control the agitations. All spiritual practices in all religions are techniques - emotional, intellectual, and physical - that bring about mental poise at least for a moment. Such a moment of calmness is the moment of perfect mental illumination, fulfillment of re-union.

The Lord says that all beings fall into this delusion right at their very birth. To get out of this delusion and to gain right knowledge is the goal of life and the Gita provides such knowledge to the erring souls guiding them to come out of confusions and reach Perfection.

THE FORTUNATE SOULS

**yeshaam twantagatam paapam janaanaam punyakarmanaam
te dwandwamohanirmuktaa bhajante maam dridhavrataah // 7.28 //**

But those men of virtuous deeds whose sins have come to an end, who are freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites, worship Me with firm resolve.

The word 'sin' means an error of judgment in man which veils the Self from him. When the sins are renounced, when the ignorance is overcome, our life is spent in the service of the Lord, the One in all. In the process, devotion deepens and knowledge of God increases until it reaches the vision of the One Self everywhere. They are said to be free from delusion in the form of pairs of opposites who do not lose their balance of mind either in joy or sorrow. That is the life eternal, release from the cycle of birth and death.

**jaraamaranamokshaaya maamaashritya yatanti ye
te brahma tadviduh kritsnamadhyaatmam karma chaakhilam // 7.29 //**

Those who strive for deliverance from old age and death, taking refuge in Me, realize in full the Brahman - the whole knowledge of the Self and all about action as well.

Those who aim for purifying themselves from all negative tendencies for contemplating on the Self do so to gain the freedom from old age and death. This, however, does not mean physical continuity of existence in the world. Birth, growth, disease, decay and death are necessary modifications for all living creatures on the earth. What is implied here is that a spiritual seeker in his meditation on the Self is to get over all his identifications with change which is indicated by the terms 'old age and death.'

Such a meditator, concentrating on the Self, realizes his oneness with the Consciousness Principle or the Self in him. To realize the Self is to become Brahman since Self in the individual is the One Self everywhere. This non-duality of the Truth is implied in the statement that those who meditate upon Me, the Self, come to know the Brahman.

A man of realization need not lead a life away from the society in which he lives. The Perfected One not only realizes the All-Pervading Self but comprehends the working of the psychological forces (*Adhyatma*) in him and becomes proficient in all activities (Karma). He becomes a well-integrated personality, dynamic and efficient in all activities, understanding the innermost Self.

**saadhibhootaadhidaivam maam saadhiyajnam cha ye viduh
prayaanakaale'pi cha maam te viduryuktachetasah // 7.30 //**

Those who know Me 1. As the one that underlies all the elements (adhi bhootam) 2. As the One that underlies all the gods (adhi daivam) and 3. As the One that sustains all the sacrifices (adhi yajnam), will with steadfast mind, know Me even in the hour of death.

The man of perfection is he who is steadfast in mind, who has taken refuge in Him, who knows Him. We are not asked to remember at the time of death certain speculative doctrines, but to know Him in all aspects viz as that which underlies all elements, gods and sacrifices and trust Him and worship Him.

The terms used here mean that the Supreme is to be known not only in itself but also in its manifestations in nature, in objective and subjective phenomena, in the principle of works and sacrifice. The teacher explains all these terms in the next Chapter. In this connection a reference may also be made to Verses 7, 12 and 19 of this Chapter.

**om tat sat iti srimadbhagavadgeetaasu upanishatsu brahma vidyaayaam
yogashaastre sri krishnaarjuna samvaade jnaana vijnaana yogo naama
saptamo'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 seventh discourse entitled The Yoga of Knowledge and Wisdom

Concepts and Issues

The sincere seekers strive to break the limitations of the Matter and try to reach the spirit. Such virtuous people who take refuge in Him can be classified into four categories as under:

- 1) Those who are in distress and suffering in the world - *Aarta*
- 2) The lovers of knowledge of the Spirit - *Jignyasu*
- 3) The seekers of worldly riches - *Artharthi* and
- 4) The men of wisdom seeking the Spirit - *Gnyani*

Among these the man of wisdom whose devotion to The Lord is single-minded is the dearest to Him. This does not mean the other three types are condemned by Him. All the devotees are noble but the wise who has shed his ego reach Him quicker. But even these wise realize the Supreme only after a long journey of several births and deaths. Such one is very difficult to find in the world. For an average man of the world, desire is the driving force for all his activities. To fulfill his desires he worships as many deities as his desires. He wastes his time in getting his desires satisfied and obtains in return only perishable material rewards. But if the seeker's sole goal is to realize the Self he directs all his energies towards that end till he becomes one with the Pure Atman.

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that He knows about all beings - their past, present or future-but none knows Him. By the delusion of the pairs of opposites, *Raga* (attraction) and *Dweshha* (repulsion) pleasure and pain etc. born out of desire and hatred all beings come under the spell of Maya. They forget the presence of The Lord and suffer due to the cycle of birth and death. Those who fully surrender to Him come to know His Integral Being i.e. *Brahman, Adhiyajna, Adhyatma, Karma, Adhibuta and Adhidaiva*. These terms are dealt with in the next Chapter.

A human being who fails to know and remember Him through out his life will not remember Him even at the time of death. If he repeats the name of The Lord or thinks about the Divine Personality at the time of death, even then he will reach the Supreme Imperishable. But unless one remembers The Lord through out one's life, one will find it difficult to remember Him at the time of death.

Live as the Gita Teaches You to Live

The Supreme Consciousness can be invoked through any means according to one's temperament and one can merge in and attain Supreme Happiness. Those who understand that sufferings arise because of the cycles of birth and death and realize that the Self is the Supreme Goal and culmination of all human pursuits and act with faith and wisdom attain Him. Such people do not have re-birth.

Points to Ponder

- Describe the four types of worshipers. Who among them is dear to The Lord and why?
- What is Maya? What is that by which people are subjected to this Maya?
- How one can cross over the Maya and attain Self-Realization?

Next time we will take up Chapter 8

HARIH OM