

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 1

1. Dhritarashtra said: On the field of dharma at Kurukshetra, what did my sons and the sons of Pandu do when they assembled there seeking battle, O Samjaya.
2. Samjaya said: On seeing the battle array of the Pandava host, King Duryodhana approached the *acharya* and spoke these words.
3. “Behold this mighty army of the sons of Pandu, *acharya*, that has been arranged in battle array by the son of Drupada, your intelligent disciple.
4. There are heroes and great bowmen in that host, the equals in battle of Bhima and Arjuna: Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada that great chariot warrior.
5. Then there are Dhrishtaketu, Chekitana and the heroic King of Kashi; Purujit, Kuntibhoja and Shaibya who is a bull amongst men;
6. The mighty Yudhamanyu, the heroic Uttamaujas, the son Subhadra and the sons of Draupadi; all of them are great chariot warriors.
7. Now learn about those who are most prominent on our side, O best of Brahmins. For your understanding I will inform you about the captains leading my army.
8. There is yourself, and then Bhishma, Karna, the all-conquering Kripa, Ashvatthaman, Vikarna and the son of Somadatta as well.
9. And many other heroes are willing to lay down their lives for my sake. They carry many different types of weapon and all of them are skilled in the arts of warfare.
10. Guarded by Bhishma, our strength is unlimited but their strength, guarded by Bhima, is limited indeed.
11. Situated in each of your allotted stations, all of you must give protection to Bhishma.”
12. The senior member of the Kuru house, Duryodhana’s mighty grandfather, then blew his conch shell, which vibrated loudly like the roar of a lion. This sound brought joy to Duryodhana.
13. Conch shells, kettledrums, *panava* drums, *anaka* drums and horns then immediately resounded all together making a tumultuous sound.
14. Mounted on a mighty chariot yoked to white horses, Madhava and Pandava then blew their celestial conch shells.
15. Hrishiksha sounded the Panchajanya and Dhananjaya blew on the Devadatta. Vrikodara, the performer of formidable deeds (*bhima-karma*), blew the great conch shell known as Paundra.

16. King Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, blew the Anantavijaya, Nakula blew the Sughosha and Sahadeva sounded the Manipushpaka.
17. That mighty bowman the King of Kashi, Shikandin the great chariot warrior, Dhrishtadyumna, Virata, the unconquerable Satyaki,
18. Drupada and all the sons of Draupadi, O lord of the earth, as well as the mighty son of Subadhra then blew their respective conch shells.
19. That sound shattered the hearts of the sons of Dhritarashtra for the tumult resonated across both the sky and the earth.
20. Seeing the sons of Dhritarashtra gathered there and the weapons starting to fly, the Pandava with a monkey on his banner took up his bow.
21. He then spoke the following words to Hrishikesha, O lord of the earth. “Kindly position my chariot in the space between the two armies, Acyuta,
22. So that I can look upon all those who have assembled here seeking battle. Let me see those with whom I will have to fight in this warlike endeavour.
23. I see them assembled here intent on battle, seeking to please the ignorant son of Dhritarashtra by fighting on his behalf.”
24. Addressed in this way by Gudakesha, O Bharata, Hrishikesha positioned that wonderful chariot in the space between the two armies.
25. In the presence of Bhishma and Drona and all the kings of world, he said, “Behold, O Partha, the Kurus gathered here together.”
26. Partha could see fathers and grandfathers standing there, as well as the teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, allies,
27. Fathers-in-law and friends who were present in the two armies. On seeing all his family members standing nearby, Kaunteya
28. Was overwhelmed with profound compassion and spoke these words in a mood of dejection, “On seeing these relatives here, Krishna, standing ready and seeking battle,
29. My bodily limbs are failing me, my mouth is drying up, there are tremors all over my body and its hairs are standing erect.
30. The bow named Gandiva has fallen from my hand and my skin is burning. I can no longer stand up for my mind has become dizzy.
31. I can see unfavourable omens, Keshava, and I cannot see how anything good can come from killing my own kinsmen in this battle.
32. I have no desire for victory, Krishna, or for a kingdom or pleasure. What is the point of our gaining a kingdom, Govinda, or objects of enjoyment or even maintaining our lives,
33. When all those for whom we might desire a kingdom, objects of enjoyment and the pleasures of life are taking part in this war, giving up their lives and their wealth?

34. By that I mean our teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives.
35. Though they are ready to attack us, still I have no wish to kill these men, Madhusudana, not even if we could gain dominion over the three worlds thereby, how much less then for acquiring this earth?
36. After killing the sons of Dhritarashtra what pleasure would there be for us, Janardana? Sin alone would come to us by killing these men who seek to kill us.
37. Therefore we have no right to kill the sons of Dhritarashtra for they are our own relatives. How could we ever be happy again after destroying our family, Madhava?
38. Even if their consciences have been obliterated by greed and they cannot see the evil inherent in causing the destruction of their family or the sin involved in betraying a friend,
39. How can we fail to have wisdom enough to turn away from such a sin, for we can certainly see what a crime it is to bring about the destruction of the family, Janardana.
40. When a family is devastated in this way, the eternal forms of dharma relating to the family also perish. And when such dharma perishes, *adharma* predominates over the entire family.
41. And as a result of the predominance of *adharma*, Krishna, the women of the family become degraded; and when the women are thus degraded, a mingling of the *varnas* arises.
42. Such a mingling leads both the destroyer of the family and the family itself to hell. Deprived of the ritual offerings of *pinda* and water, the ancestors of such families fall from their position.
43. As a result of the wicked acts of those who harm the family, acts which lead to a mingling of the *varnas*, the eternal forms of dharma rooted in caste and family are destroyed.
44. And we have heard, Janardana, that there is undoubtedly an abode in hell for any men who are destroyers of family dharma.
45. Alas! Alas! We are bent on performing a greatly sinful deed by slaying our family members in battle due to our greed for the pleasure of sovereignty.
46. If the sons of Dhritarashtra, weapons in hand, were to slay me in battle unresisting and unarmed that would bring me greater happiness.”
47. After speaking in this way on the field of battle, Arjuna sat down on the seat of the chariot and cast aside his bow and his arrows, his mind agitated by sorrow.

Chapter 2

1. Samjaya said: Madhusudana then spoke the following words to Arjuna who was filled with compassion, whose eyes were agitated and full of tears, and who was lamenting.
2. The Lord said: Whence could such faintheartedness have come upon you at this time of trial? This is not proper for a civilised man, it does not lead to heaven and it will bring dishonour upon you.
3. Do not give up your up manhood in this way, Partha! Such a mood ill becomes you. Giving up this pathetic weakness of heart; arise, O destroyer of the foe.
4. Arjuna said: O Madhusudana, how can I employ my arrows in fighting with Bhishma and with Drona on the field of battle? They are worthy of my worship, O slayer of the foe.
5. It would be far better to refrain from killing such noble-minded teachers and to live in this world by begging for our food. Our teachers are desirous of wealth, but if we kill them the rewards we would then enjoy would be tainted with blood.
6. Nor do we know which would be better for us, defeating them or being defeated by them, for after killing the sons of Dhritarashtra who are now positioned before us, we would have no wish to live.
7. My very existence is afflicted by problems caused by weakness and my mind is confused about dharma. So now I am asking you which is the best course to adopt. Answer me clearly for I am now your student. Instruct me for I am surrendering to your guidance.
8. I cannot see anything that will dispel the grief that is drying up my senses, not even attaining a prosperous kingdom on earth without any rival, nor even gaining lordship over the gods.
9. Samjaya said: After speaking in this way to Hrishikesha, Gudakesha said to Govinda, "I will not fight." He then fell silent, O destroyer of the foe.
10. With a slight smile, Hrishikesha then spoke these words to the lamenting Arjuna in the space between the two armies.
11. The Lord said: Grieving for that which should not be lamented over, you speak words that appear wise. But learned men grieve for neither the living nor the dead.
12. There was never a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor these lords of men; nor shall any of us cease to exist in the future.
13. For the embodied soul present in this body there is childhood, youth and then old age and in the same way it then acquires a different body. One who is wise is not confused about this.

14. It is contact with the senses, Kaunteya, which leads to sensations of heat and cold and pleasure and pain. Being impermanent, these sensations appear and then disappear and you must learn to endure them, Bharata.
15. If these sensations do not distract a person, O best of men, and he can remain equal in sorrow and happiness, then such a wise person gains the state of immortality.
16. That which is unreal never comes into being and that which is real never ceases to be. Those who perceive the truth can recognise this conclusion concerning these two.
17. You must understand the indestructible principle that pervades this whole world. No one can bring about the destruction of this unchanging principle.
18. This embodied soul is eternal, indestructible and unlimited. The bodies it inhabits, however, must come to an end. Therefore fight, O Bharata.
19. Neither the person who thinks that this is the killer nor one who thinks it is killed properly understands it, for it does not kill and it cannot be killed.
20. It is never born and it never dies. It is existing now and it will never cease to exist. It is unborn, eternal, everlasting and most ancient. It is not killed when the body is killed.
21. How can a person who properly understands it as indestructible and eternal cause the death of anyone or kill anyone. What will he cause the death of? What will he kill?
22. Just as a man casts aside old clothes and puts on other ones that are new, so the embodied soul casts aside old bodies and accepts other new ones.
23. Weapons cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot make it wet and wind cannot dry it.
24. This cannot be cut, it cannot be burned, and it cannot be moistened or dried. It is eternal, all-pervasive, fixed, immovable and everlasting.
25. It is said that it is imperceptible and inconceivable and it is not subject to transformation. Understanding it in this way, you should lament no more.
26. And even if you think that it is born repeatedly and repeatedly dies, still you should not lament over it, O mighty one.
27. For one who has been born death is certain and for one who has died birth is certain. Therefore you should not lament over something that cannot be avoided.
28. In the beginning living beings are not manifest. They become manifest in the interim stage, Bharata, but at their end they become non-manifest again. Why should there be lamentation over this?

29. By some wonder a person may see it, by some wonder another person may speak of it and by some wonder yet another person may come to hear about it. But another person may not understand it even after hearing about it.
30. It is impossible to kill this embodied soul that is always presents within the bodies of all beings. Therefore you should not lament over any living being.
31. Considering the nature of your own personal dharma, you should not hesitate. For a *kshatriya* there is nothing superior to fighting for the sake of dharma.
32. *Kshatriyas* who encounter a war of this type become joyful, Partha; it comes unsought and yet opens the door to heaven.
33. And if you do not engage in this dharmic battle then both your personal dharma and your honour will be destroyed and you will accumulate sin.
34. People will then speak of your everlasting dishonour and for a person who has achieved renown, dishonour is worse than death.
35. The great chariot warriors will think that you have left the battle due to fear. Those who had previously thought highly of you will now hold you in contempt.
36. Your enemies will speak many insulting words about you, condemning your prowess. What could be more painful than that?
37. Either you will die and reach heaven or else you will conquer and rule the earth. Therefore arise, Kaunteya, with your resolve set on battle.
38. Become equal-minded towards happiness and distress, gain and loss, victory and defeat and then engage yourself in battle. You will never acquire sin by acting in this way.
39. I have spoken so far on the basis of Samkhya but now listen to this concerning Buddhi Yoga, the Yoga of the intellect. When you engage in action on the basis of this understanding (*buddhya*) you will free yourself from the bondage of action.
40. There is nothing to lose in this attempt and neither can there be any failure for even a slight engagement in this dharma frees one from great danger.
41. Here the resolute intelligence becomes fixed on one point, O child of the Kurus, but the understandings of those who are irresolute have many branches and diversify without limit.
42. Persons lacking in insight who are attached to the religion of the Vedas speak in flowery language. "There is nothing more than this", they say.
43. Filled with desires and seeking the heavenly worlds they advocate many different types of rituals, which lead to a higher birth as the result of the action. Pleasure and power are the goals they seek.

44. The resolute form of intelligence existing in the state of *samadhi* can never arise for such persons who remain attached to pleasure and power and whose minds are carried away by such desires.
45. The Vedas are permeated by the three *gunas* but you must become free of the three *gunas*, Arjuna. One who is self-possessed transcends duality, always adheres to the quality of Sattva and has no interest in gain or protection of property.
46. All the purposes served by a small reservoir of water can be fulfilled by a lake. In the same way the purposes served by all the Vedas are fulfilled for a Brahmin who is enlightened by knowledge.
47. You have a right to perform prescribed action but you are not entitled to the fruits of that action. Do not make the rewards of action your motive and do not develop any attachment for avoiding action.
48. Situated in Yoga, perform your actions giving up all attachments, Dhanamjaya. Remain equal in success and failure for such equanimity is what is meant by Yoga.
49. Action (*karma*) is greatly inferior to Buddhi Yoga, Dhanamjaya. Seek shelter in the intellect (*buddhau*); those motivated by the fruits of action are petty-minded.
50. By engaging the intellect (*buddhi-yukto*) one sets aside both righteous and unrighteous deeds. Therefore engage yourself in this Yoga for Yoga is the true art of performing action.
51. Wise men who engage in the Yoga of the intellect abandon the fruits that are born of action. Free from the bondage of rebirth, they attain a position that has no blemish.
52. When your intellect breaks free of the dense thicket of illusion you will reach a state of indifference for what should be heard and what has been heard in the past (*shruta*).
53. Your intellect becomes perplexed by the Shruti, but when it remains steady and fixed in concentration without any wavering, you will then have achieved success in Yoga.
54. Arjuna said: What is the defining feature of a person whose realisation is steady and who remains firm in his concentration, Keshava? How does such a steady-minded person speak? How does he sit? How does he move?
55. The Lord said: When a person sets aside all the desires running through his mind, Partha, and satisfies himself in the self alone he is then described as one whose wisdom is steady.
56. When the mind does not grieve over life's sorrows, when a person remains untouched by the joys of life and free of passion, fear and anger he is described as a sage whose understanding is steady.

57. When a person has no affection for any object at all and feels neither joy nor loathing when he gains desirable and unwanted results, then his wisdom is firmly established.
58. When a person withdraws all his senses from their objects, like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs, then his wisdom is firmly established.
59. The objects of pleasure do not touch the embodied soul who abstains from them. In this way one restricts one's inclination although the inclination remains, but after perceiving the Supreme one completely renounces such desires.
60. The agitating senses can forcibly carry away the mind of even a perceptive person who makes the proper endeavours, Kaunteya
61. Restraining all these senses, one engaged in this practice should remain dedicated to me. When he has his senses under control then his wisdom is firmly established.
62. When a person thinks about the objects of the senses, attachment for them inevitably arises. Due to that attachment desire appears and from desire anger comes into being.
63. From anger comes delusion and as a result of that delusion one's memory is lost. When memory is lost one's intelligence is destroyed and when intelligence is destroyed a person is lost.
64. But one who possesses self control can move amongst the sense objects using senses that are free of desire and loathing and are directed by his will alone. Such a person attains a state of absolute tranquillity.
65. In that state of tranquillity all his sufferings disappear. And when one's mind is thus at peace the realisation then becomes steady.
66. But there can be no realisation for one who does not engage in this practice and indeed no higher knowledge. Without that higher knowledge there is no peace and how can there be happiness without peace?
67. Whichever of the roaming senses the mind becomes attached to will carry away a person's understanding, just as the wind carries away a boat on the ocean.
68. Therefore, O mighty one, only if a person completely draws back his senses from their objects is his wisdom firmly established.
69. One who practices this restraint is awake when it is night for all living beings. And that period in which living beings are awake is night for the perceptive sage.
70. Just as rivers flow into the sea, which is never filled and remains steady and immovable, so all these desires flow into such a person. It is he who attains peace, not one who seeks to fulfil those desires.

71. Giving up all desires such a person moves through life without attachment. He has no sense of 'mine' or 'I'; it is he who attains peace.
72. This is the transcendental state, Partha, and on reaching such a position one is no longer deluded. If one can remain situated in this state of consciousness even at the time of death then one attains Brahma Nirvana.

Chapter 3

1. Arjuna said: If you regard realisation as being superior to action then why are you urging me to engage in a form of karma that is so dreadful?
2. It seems that you are confusing my understanding by this equivocal instruction. Please tell me conclusively of the one course by which I can obtain the greatest benefit.
3. The Lord said: I have already explained, O sinless one, that in this world the path one should follow is twofold. For Samkhyas it is by the Yoga of knowledge and for Yogins it is by the Yoga of action.
4. A person does not gain freedom from action simply by ceasing to act and he cannot reach the ultimate state of perfection by renunciation alone.
5. No one can remain still without performing any action, not even for a moment. Everyone is helplessly engaged in some form of action by the *gunas* that are born out *prakriti* (matter).
6. One who restricts his organs of action but continually dwells on the objects of the senses within his mind is a deluded soul. Such a person is referred to as a hypocrite.
7. But one who continues to act whilst controlling the senses within the mind, Arjuna, using his organs of action to perform Karma Yoga without any attachment, is certainly superior.
8. You should continue to perform your prescribed duties, for performing action is superior to refraining from action. You cannot even sustain your bodily functions without acting.
9. Except where action is performed in the execution of *yajña*, this world remains in the bondage of action. Remaining free of attachment, Kaunteya, you should therefore perform action for that purpose alone.
10. In the beginning, after creating living beings along with *yajña*, Prajapati said to them, “You will flourish by means of this ritual; this will be the cow that grants all your desires.
11. The gods are sustained in this way and those gods will then sustain all of you. Sustaining each other in this way, you will all achieve the highest benefit.
12. Sustained by *yajña*, the gods will bestow upon you all the food you may desire. One who consumes the foods given by the gods without making offerings to them is certainly a thief.”
13. Righteous people who consume food left after a *yajña* are freed from all blemishes. But wicked people who cook just for themselves eat food that is impure.
14. Living beings exist on food and food is produced due to rain. The rain comes as a result of *yajña* and *yajña* is performed by ritual action.

15. You should understand that ritual action is derived from the Veda (Brahma) and the Veda appears from the *akshara* (undecaying). Hence the all-pervasive Brahman is always present within the *yajña*.
16. In this world, a malicious person who delights only in the senses and does not perpetuate the cycle thus established certainly lives a worthless life.
17. But for a person who seeks pleasure in the self, finds contentment through the self and is fulfilled by the self there is no prescribed duty to perform.
18. There is nothing for him to gain by either performing or renouncing such duty. Nor is there any reason for him to be dependent on another living being.
19. Remaining always unattached, you should therefore perform your prescribed duty, for a person who performs such duty without attachment attains the highest goal.
20. It was through the performance of action that Janaka and others remained situated in a state of complete perfection. Just by considering the welfare of the world you should be inspired to act.
21. Whatever course of action a superior man pursues, lesser persons will follow and the world will accept the standard he sets.
22. There is no action that I am bound to perform anywhere in the three worlds, nor anything I might need that I have not already attained, and yet still I am engaged in action.
23. For if ever I was to cease from the actions I so diligently perform, all people would follow my path, Partha.
24. If I did not perform these duties then these worlds would fall into ruin. I would then be the creator of children of mixed *varnas* and thereby cause harm to living beings.
25. People devoid of knowledge perform actions on the basis of worldly attachment, Bharata, and the wise should act in the same way, but without attachment—just for the welfare of the world.
26. The wise man should not cause any breach in the understanding of ignorant people who act on the basis of attachment. By acting whilst engaging in his Yoga discipline he should encourage them to perform all their duties.
27. All actions are ultimately performed by the *gunas* inherent in *prakriti* (matter), but a person whose mind is deluded by the sense of ‘I’ thinks, “I am the doer.”
28. But one who understands the truth about the distinction between *guna* and action understands that it is just one set of *gunas* acting on other *gunas*. By understanding action in this way he remains unattached.

29. Those who are confused about the *gunas* inherent in *prakriti* have attachment for the action generated by the *gunas*. But one who understands all this should not disturb such ignorant persons who know nothing about it.
30. Casting off all your deeds onto me by fixing your mind on an understanding of the self and remaining free of desire and free of any sense of 'mine', you should now fight with your fever banished.
31. Persons who are faithful and devoid of envy and always adhere to the view I have just expounded are released from the effects of action.
32. But those who despise this teaching of mine and do not adhere to it are deluded in all their wisdom. You should know that they are lost souls who are completely dull-witted.
33. Even one who possesses knowledge conducts himself in accordance with his nature. Living beings must conform to nature so what will repression of one's nature achieve?
34. Desire and aversion are the conditions of the senses in relation to the objects they perceive. A person must not fall under the control of either of these tendencies for both are obstacles to him.
35. Even though it may have faults, one's own dharma is still superior to accepting the dharma of another, even if it is perfectly observed. Death in the pursuit of one's own dharma is better, for another's dharma is a source of danger.
36. Arjuna said: What is it that impels a person so that he acts sinfully even though he has no desire to do so, Varshneya, compelling him to act in that way as if by force?
37. The Lord said: It is desire, it is anger; this arises from the *guna* known as Rajas. You should know this as a mighty devouring force, a great source of sin; it is the enemy in this world.
38. As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dirt and as an embryo is covered by its membrane, so is this world covered by desire.
39. Knowledge is covered by this desire, which is therefore the great enemy of one who possesses knowledge. This enemy has the form desire, Kaunteya, and blazes like an insatiable fire.
40. The senses, the mind and the intellect are said to be its abode. Covering the true knowledge of the embodied being, it then places it in a state of delusion.
41. Therefore you must first regulate the senses, O best of the Bharatas, and then conquer this source of sin, which destroys both spiritual and practical knowledge.

42. They say that the senses are in a superior position and that the mind is superior to the senses. The intellect stands above the mind, but this is superior even to the intellect.
43. Thus understanding that which is superior to the intellect and making yourself steady by your own means, you must defeat this enemy in the form of desire, O mighty one, for it is difficult to overcome.

Chapter 4

1. The Lord said: I instructed this unfading Yoga to Vivasvan. Vivasvan instructed it to Manu and Manu taught it to Ikshvaku.
2. The Raja-Rishis (royal saints) thus understood this Yoga, receiving it one from the other in succession. After a long time had passed in this world, knowledge of this Yoga was lost, Paramtapa.
3. This same ancient Yoga has today been instructed by me to you. You are my devotee (*bhakta*) and my friend. Therefore this most profound mystery (is revealed to you).
4. Arjuna said: Your birth was later than the birth of Vivasvan, which was earlier. So how can I accept that you taught this to him in the beginning?
5. The Lord said: There are many births of mine that have passed and of yours also, Arjuna. I know about them all but you do not know of them, Paramtapa.
6. Although I am unborn and my identity is unchanging, although I am the controller (*ishvara*) of all beings, still I resort to my *prakriti* energy and I appear by means of my own power.
7. Whenever there is a decline in dharma, O Bharata, and whenever there is an increase in adharma, then I manifest myself.
8. For the protection of the righteous (*sadhus*), for the destruction of the wrongdoers and for the purpose of establishing dharma, I appear age after age.
9. One who fully understands this truth about my divine birth and activity does not take birth again after giving up his body. He goes to Me, Arjuna.
10. Free of desire, fear and anger, wholly dedicated to me and dependent upon me, many persons purified by knowledge and austerity have attained my state of existence.
11. To the degree that they become dependent upon me so I devote myself to them. In all circumstances people follow the path I set for them, Partha.
12. Seeking success through ritual action they worship the gods. In the human sphere, is quickly attained through ritual acts.
13. I created the system of four *varnas*, based on the *gunas* and types of action. And although I am the creator of this system, you should understand that I am still the one who does not act, the one who does not decay.
14. Actions cannot leave a mark on me and I am unaffected by the fruits of action. One who understands this truth about me is not bound by the actions he performs.

15. In the past this truth was well known to people who sought liberation from rebirth and hence they performed action. So you should also perform your designated actions, just as people in the past fulfilled their duties.
16. What is action? What is inaction? Even learned scholars are confused about this. I will now explain to you what action is; when you understand this you will be freed from everything that is impure.
17. One must understand about action and one must understand about forbidden action. One must also understand what inaction is; the course of action is indeed hard to comprehend.
18. One who perceives inaction in action and action in inaction is intelligent amongst men. He is properly engaged and he performs all his designated actions.
19. When all a person's endeavours are devoid of any inclination towards desire, his action is burned by the fire of knowledge. The wise ones describe such a person as a learned *pandit*.
20. When a person gives up attachment for the fruits of action, is always satisfied and is not dependent on any other, he performs no action at all even though he is engaged in action.
21. By remaining free of expectations, controlling his thoughts, practising self-control, giving up all desire for acquisitions and acting only for the maintenance of the body, a person remains free of contamination.
22. If he is satisfied with whatever befalls him, transcends duality, is free of envy and is equal in success and failure, then even though he engages in action he is not bound by it.
23. For a liberated person whose attachments have vanished, whose mind is absorbed in higher knowledge and who acts only in the form of *yajña*, any action he performs dissolves away completely.
24. The sacrificial offering is Brahman. The oblation is Brahman; it is offered by Brahman into the fire that is also Brahman. Brahman alone is reached by a person who absorbs his mind completely in the ritual act that is Brahman.
25. Some practitioners make *yajña* offerings dedicated to the gods alone but others make their offerings into the fire of Brahman, performing *yajña* for its own sake.
26. Then there are some who offer hearing and the other senses into the fires of restraint and others who offer sound and the other objects of the senses into the fires of the senses themselves.
27. Others offer the actions performed by the senses and the movements of the breath into the fire of Yoga practice based on self-control, which is lit by means of true knowledge.

28. Some sages, strictly adhering to their vows, perform *yajña* through certain objects, some through religious austerity, some through Yoga and some through recitation and knowledge of sacred texts.
29. Others offer the *prana* breath into the *apana* and the *apana* into the *prana*, dedicating themselves to the practice of *pranayama* by restricting the movement of the *prana* and the *apana*.
30. Others restrict their eating and make offerings of the *prana* breaths into the *prana* breaths themselves. All such persons who have knowledge of *yajña* have their contaminations destroyed by means of *yajña*.
31. Consuming the nectar or immortality in the form of the leftover offerings at the end of a *yajña*, they proceed to the eternal region of Brahman. There is nothing in this world for a person who performs no *yajña*, O best of the Kurus, but this is even truer of the other world.
32. Thus many different types of *yajña* are expanded within the mouth of Brahman. You must understand that all of them are based on action, for when you understand this you will be liberated.
33. The *Jñana Yajña* consisting of knowledge is superior to the *Dravya Yajña* consisting of physical objects, O destroyer of the foe. Without any exception, Partha, all action finds its proper conclusion in knowledge.
34. You should gain this knowledge through submission, inquiry and service. Those who have knowledge and perceive the truth will then impart knowledge to you.
35. And when you have acquired this knowledge, you never again fall prey to illusion, Pandava, for you will see that all living beings are within your own self and moreover within me.
36. Even if you perform sinful acts more heinous than those of all other sinners, still you can cross beyond all such wickedness by means of the boat of knowledge.
37. Just as a blazing fire turns fuel to ashes, Arjuna, so the fire of knowledge turns all actions to ashes.
38. In this world there is nothing as purifying as knowledge. In due time, a person who is successful in Yoga practice will find this knowledge within himself through himself alone.
39. One who has faith will acquire this knowledge if he devotes himself to the quest and gains mastery over the senses. And when he has acquired this knowledge he very soon attains supreme peace.
40. A doubting soul, devoid of faith and knowledge, meets with destruction. Neither this world nor the world to come is for the doubting soul and he can never be happy.

41. When his action is given up to the practice of Yoga, when his doubts are destroyed by knowledge and when he is in full control of his existence, a person's actions cannot bind him, Dhanamjaya.
42. Therefore, using the sword of knowledge, cut through this uncertainty of yours that has arisen due to ignorance and is now situated in your heart. Take up this Yoga and arise, Bharata.

Chapter 5

1. Arjuna said: Krishna, you advocate both the renunciation of action and the yoga of action as well. But which of these is the better course? Tell me this definitively.
2. The Lord said: Renunciation and Karma Yoga both lead to the highest result. But between the two, Karma Yoga is superior to the renunciation of action.
3. One who neither loathes nor hankers after anything is to be known as a constant renunciator. Remaining free of duality, O mighty one, he easily breaks free of bondage.
4. Foolish children say that Samkhya and Yoga are different, but not learned *pandits*. A person who properly adheres to one of these paths gains the fruit of both.
5. The position achieved by the followers of Samkhya is also attained by those who adhere to the path of Yoga. One who sees that Samkhya and Yoga are one and the same truly sees.
6. But without engaging in Yoga practices, renunciation is very difficult to achieve. The sage who engages in Yoga practice quickly attains Brahman.
7. One who engages in Yoga and has purified his very being, who has gained self-mastery and control of the senses, whose own self has become the self of all beings, is not besmirched even though he engages in action.
8. One who is engaged in Yoga practice and sees the truth thinks, "I never perform any action." He thinks in this way even whilst seeing, hearing, touching, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing,
9. Speaking, evacuating, seizing, opening his eyes or closing them. He considers, "It is just the senses engaging with their objects."
10. One who deposits his actions on Brahman and abandons attachment is not smeared by sin when he acts, as a lotus leaf is not touched by water.
11. Abandoning attachment, *yogins* then act with body, mind and speech, or just with the senses, in order to purify themselves.
12. Abandoning the fruits of action, the practitioner of Yoga attains enduring peace. But one who does not engage in Yoga and is motivated by desire remains in bondage, attached to the fruits of action.
13. Giving up all actions within the mind, the embodied being remains joyful and in full control within the city of nine gates, neither acting nor causing action to be performed.
14. The Lord generates neither the means by which action is performed nor the actions themselves as performed by the people of the world. Nor does he create the conjunction between action and its result; it is a person's inherent nature that does this.

15. The mighty Lord does not assume anyone's sin or indeed their virtue. But knowledge is covered over by ignorance and so living beings become deluded.
16. But for some people, the ignorance shrouding the inner self is destroyed by knowledge. For such persons, knowledge acts like the sun and illuminates the higher reality.
17. Their intelligence, their life and their conviction are devoted to that goal, for they are fully dedicated to it. Purged of contamination by means of knowledge, they go to the place from which there is no return.
18. The learned *pandit* regards with equal vision a Brahmin endowed with wisdom and good conduct, a cow, an elephant, a dog and one who eats dogs.
19. Even whilst they are still in this world, persons whose minds are fixed in this state of equanimity conquer the process of creation. Brahman is free of blemish and always the same, and so they are situated in Brahman.
20. Such persons do not rejoice when they gain what is dear to them nor are they disturbed when they experience something undesirable. Their intellect is steady, they are free of delusion, they have knowledge of Brahman and they are situated in Brahman.
21. Remaining unattached to external sensations, such a person finds joy in the self within. Absorbing himself in Brahman through Yoga practice, he experiences joy that does not decay.
22. The pleasures that arise from sensual contacts are in fact sources of misery. They have a beginning and an end, Kaunteya, and so an enlightened person (*budha*) does not delight in them.
23. Any person in this world who is able to resist the force of desire and anger before being released from the body is indeed a Yogin and a joyful man.
24. One whose happiness is within, whose pleasure is within and whose light is within is indeed a Yogin. Being situated in Brahman, he attains the state of Brahma Nirvana.
25. *Rishis* who are free of contamination gain that state of Brahma Nirvana. Their sense of duality is destroyed, they are self-controlled and they take delight in the welfare of all beings.
26. This Brahma Nirvana quickly arises for sages detached from desire and anger whose minds are controlled and who have knowledge of the inner self.
27. Setting aside external perceptions and fixing his vision between the eyebrows, bringing the *prana* and *apana* breaths into a state of equilibrium as they move within the nostrils,

28. And controlling the senses, mind and intellect, the sage who constantly dedicates himself to liberation from rebirth, giving up desire, fear and anger, is indeed a liberated person.
29. Understanding me to be the enjoyer of *yajña* and acts of austerity, the supreme lord of the all the worlds and the friend of all beings, he attains a state of absolute tranquillity.

Chapter 6

1. A person who performs the action he is duty-bound to perform, remaining detached from the fruit of action, is a true renunciant and a Yogin, not one who never lights the sacrificial fire and does not perform the ritual.
2. You should know that that which they call renunciation is in fact Yoga, Pandava. One who has not given up the inclination for pleasure can never become a Yogin.
3. For the sage who is a beginner in Yoga, action is said to be the means, but for one who is advanced in Yoga tranquillity is said to be the means.
4. When he has no attachment for the objects of the senses or for performing action and he gives up all material inclinations, he is said to be advanced in Yoga.
5. One should elevate oneself by oneself alone and one should never degrade oneself. One is indeed one's only friend and one's own enemy as well.
6. The self is the friend to one who is self-controlled by means personal commitment. But when one has lost his self, then the self acts with hostility like an enemy.
7. For a person who has self-control and possesses inner tranquillity, the supreme self is realised, whether it be in heat or cold, happiness or distress, honour or dishonour.
8. Satisfied by his knowledge and realisation alone, situated in a higher position, mastering his senses, one who engages in this way is said to be a Yogin. He regards lumps of earth, stones and gold equally.
9. When considering friends, allies, enemies, those who are indifferent, neutrals, those who hate one, relatives, righteous persons and the wicked, an equal mind is superior.
10. The Yogin should engage himself constantly, staying in a secluded place. He should remain alone, controlling his mind and himself, without any aspiration and without any sense of ownership.
11. He should prepare a firm seat for himself in a pure place, not too high and not too low, covered with cloth, animal hide and kusha grass.
12. Sitting there on his seat, fixing his mind on a single point, controlling the movements of his thoughts and senses, he should engage in Yoga practice in order to purify himself.
13. Holding his body, head and neck in a straight line, steady and without moving, he should concentrate on the point of his nose whilst not looking in any direction.
14. With his whole being in a state of tranquillity, free of fear, accepting the vow of celibacy, controlling his mind, with his thoughts concentrated on me, the practitioner should sit there, dedicating himself to me.

15. Constantly engaging himself in this way, the Yogin who controls his mind attains tranquillity, the ultimate Nirvana, which is my state of being.
16. Yoga cannot be practised if one eats excessively or does not eat at all, nor if one sleeps too much or remains constantly awake.
17. The Yoga that destroys suffering can be practised if one properly engages one's eating, leisure pursuits, performance of action, sleeping and wakefulness.
18. When a person fixes the controlled mind on the *atman* alone, untouched by any desires, he is then said to be properly engaged.
19. Yogins who have controlled their minds and practise Yoga in relation to the *atman* have been compared to a lamp in a windless place that never flickers.
20. When the restrained mind ceases from its activities due to the practice of Yoga and when the *atman* is perceived by means of one's own faculties, then a person finds satisfaction within the *atman*.
21. When one experiences that limitless joy, which is grasped by the intellect but is beyond the range of the senses, one remains fixed on it and never wavers from that truth.
22. After attaining this state one realises that there is no level of achievement superior to it. When situated in this state of being, one cannot be disturbed even by terrible suffering.
23. One should understand that what is known as Yoga amounts to the breaking of the connection with suffering. Yoga must be performed with firm resolve and with a state of mind free of despondency.
24. This should be done whilst giving up all the desires that arise from one's material inclinations and restraining the entire group of senses by means of the mind alone.
25. One should undertake this withdrawal little by little, using the resolutely focussed intellect. Fixing the mind in conjunction with the *atman*, one should not think of any other object.
26. One must withdraw the wavering, unsteady mind from wherever it wanders and bring it back under control, fixed on the *atman* alone.
27. The highest joy comes to that *yogin* whose mind is tranquil, whose passions are quieted, who exists as Brahman and who has no blemish.
28. Engaging himself constantly in this pursuit, the *yogin* who is free of blemish easily makes contact with Brahman and acquires endless joy.
29. One who engages in Yoga practice sees the *atman* within all beings and all beings within the *atman*, maintaining this equal vision everywhere.
30. For one who sees me everywhere and who sees everything as existing within me, I am never lost and nor is he ever lost to me.

31. Regardless of the way he lives, one who adheres to this sense of oneness and worships me as being situated within all beings is a *yogin* who exists in me.
32. One who sees everything in relation to the self, Arjuna, and thus regards pleasure and suffering as the same, is considered to be the highest *yogin*.
33. Arjuna said: I see no firm status for the Yoga you have explained in relation to equal-mindedness, Madhusudana, because of this unsteadiness.
34. The mind is unsteady, Krishna, it is dominating, powerful and harsh. I think controlling the mind is harder to achieve than controlling the wind!
35. The Lord said: Without doubt, O mighty one, the mind is flickering and difficult to restrain. But it can be restrained through constant endeavour and renunciation, Kaunteya.
36. In my opinion it is difficult for a person who lacks self-control to follow the path of Yoga. But one who makes this endeavour after achieving self-mastery is able to do so by employing the proper means.
37. Arjuna said: A person who does not endeavour enough but is endowed with faith may be distracted from Yoga by the fluctuations of the mind and so fail to gain the goal of Yoga. What result does he achieve, Krishna?
38. With both his aims unachieved, is he not lost like a divided cloud without any real position, O mighty one, deluded from the path to Brahman?
39. You should completely dispel this doubt of mine, Krishna. Except for yourself there is no one who is able to dispel it.
40. The Lord said: Neither here nor in the next world, Partha, is such a person ever lost. No one who does good ever attains a bad result thereby.
41. After reaching the worlds enjoyed by the righteous and residing there for innumerable years, the failed *yogin* takes birth in the house of pure-hearted, fortunate people.
42. Or he may be born into a family of *yogins*, possessed of wisdom. In this world a birth of that type is very rarely attained.
43. In that family he regains the state of consciousness he achieved in his previous body and once more endeavours for perfection, O child of the Kurus.
44. He is helplessly drawn in that direction due to the regulated practice he previously undertook. Even a person who merely attempts to gain an understanding of Yoga transcends the teachings of the Veda.
45. Due to his endeavour, the *yogin*, engaged in his practice and purified of faults, gains perfection after several births and then goes on to the highest destination.

46. The *yogin* is superior to one who undertakes austerity. He is also regarded as being superior to one who possesses knowledge and to one performs ritual action. Therefore, Arjuna, become a *yogin*.
47. And of all *yogins*, he who has faith and who worships me with his inner self absorbed in me is engaged in the best practice. That is my opinion.

Chapter 7

1. The Lord said: Now hear, O Partha, how you can have full knowledge of me without any doubts by fixing your mind upon me and practising Yoga dedicated to me.
2. I shall explain to you in full both the *lāna* and the *vijāna*. When this is understood there is nothing else remaining that should be known.
3. Amongst thousands of men only one will endeavour for perfection, and amongst those who do endeavour for perfection only one will come to know me in truth.
4. Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect and the sense of ego, comprise the eight components of my energy known as *prakṛiti*.
5. This is the inferior *prakṛiti*, but you should also know about my higher *prakṛiti*, which is distinct from it. This is the *jīva bhūta*, O mighty one, by means of which this world is held in place.
6. You should understand that these two are the origin (womb) of all living beings. I am the source of the entire world and its passing away as well.
7. There is no other thing that is superior to me, Dhanamjaya. This whole world rests on me just as jewels rest on their thread.
8. I am flavour in water, Kaunteya. I am the effulgence of the moon and the sun. I am Pranava (Om) in all the Vedas, I am sound in space and manliness in men.
9. And I am the primal aroma in earth; I am the heat in fire. I am life in all living beings; I am the religious austerity of those who undertake such austerities.
10. You should know me as the eternal seed of all beings, Partha. I am the intelligence of those who are intelligent; I am the energy of all energetic sources.
11. And I am the power of the powerful when it is devoid of desire and passion. I am desire in living beings, O best of the Bharatas, when it does not transgress dharma.
12. You should understand that the states of existence based on Sattva, Rajas and on Tamas come into being from me. But I am not in them; they are in Me.
13. Being deluded by these three states of being, which are based on the three *gunas*, the whole world cannot understand me, for I am beyond all three states and I am undecaying (*avyaya*).
14. This divine *maya* of mine, consisting of the *gunas*, is difficult to go beyond. Only those who surrender to me cross beyond this *maya*.

15. The wrongdoers, the foolish, the lowest of men, persons whose knowledge is taken away by illusion (*maya*) and those who take to the asuric form of existence do not surrender to Me.

16. Four types of righteous person worship Me, Arjuna: one who is in distress, one who wishes to understand, one who seeks prosperity and the *jñānin* who possesses knowledge, O best of the Bharatas.

17. The one possessing knowledge (*jñānin*) who is always properly engaged and has one-pointed devotion is the best of these. I am very dear to such a *jñānin* and he is dear to me.

18. They are all noble persons, but I regard the *jñānin* as my very self (*atma*). He is situated so as to dedicate himself to me as his ultimate goal.

19. At the end of many births, one who possesses knowledge surrenders to me, realising, “Vaasudeva is all things.” Such a *mahatma* is very rarely found.

20. Pursuing this or that desire, those who lack knowledge surrender to other gods, accepting the appropriate discipline for worship as dictated by their own inner nature.

21. Whatever the divine form that the devotee wishes to faithfully worship, I bestow upon him the firm faith that enables him to do so.

22. When he is endowed with that faith, he then engages in the worship of that god and as a result attains what he desires. These desired objects are, however, granted by me.

23. But the results of the worship performed by such unintelligent persons are all temporary. The worshippers of the gods go to the gods; my devotees go to me.

24. Those who lack intelligence think of me as being a non-manifest entity taking a manifest form. They do not know my higher nature, which is unfading and unsurpassed.

25. Being covered by *yogamaya*, I am not manifest to all. So this deluded world does not comprehend me, the one who is unborn and unfading.

26. I know the living beings of the past, the present and the future, Arjuna, but there is no one who knows me.

27. Through the illusion of duality, Bharata, arising from desire and loathing, all living beings pass into a state of ignorance in this created world, Paramtapa.

28. But persons whose wickedness has reached an end and who are engaged in virtuous acts become free from the illusion of duality. They worship me and remain firm in their vows.

29. Those who resort to me and thereby endeavour for liberation (*moksha*) from old age and death fully understand Brahman, and have complete knowledge of *adhyatma* and of action (*karma*).

30. Those who also know me in relation to the *adhibhuta*, the *adhidaiva* and the *adhiyajña* can, with their consciousness fixed, know me even at the time death.

Chapter 8

1. Arjuna said: What is that Brahman? What is *adhyatma*? What is *karma*, O Purushottama? And what is it that is referred to as *adhibhuta*? What is it that is called *adhidaiva*?
2. What is *adhiyajña*, O Madhusudana, and how is it present within this body? And how are you to be known at the time of death by those who have attained self-mastery?
3. The Lord said: That which decays not (*akshara*) is the Supreme Brahman; it is one's inherent nature (*sva-bhava*) that is referred to as *adhyatma*. The creative force producing the existence of living beings is known as *karma*.
4. *Adhibhuta* is the existence that decays, and *adhidaiva* is the soul within (*purusha*). I alone am the *adhiyajña* here in this body, O best of embodied beings.
5. And one who leaves the body at the time of death whilst remembering me attains my existence. There is no doubt about that.
6. Whatever the state of being a person's mind is fixed upon at the time of death as he leaves his body is the state he then attains, Kaunteya, for a person develops into the type of existence he constantly exists as.
7. At all times therefore you should think of me and engage in battle. If your mind and intellect are fixed on me, you will undoubtedly come to me.
8. It is through the consciousness being absorbed without deviation in the disciplined practice of Yoga that a person goes to the Supreme Divine Being upon whom his thoughts are fixed.
9. One should absorb the mind in him, thinking of him as the ancient seer, the controller who is smaller than the smallest thing, the ordainer of all that comes to pass, whose form is inconceivable, who is like the sun in colour and who is beyond all darkness.
10. At the time of death a person should absorb himself in devotion (*bhakti*) with an unwavering mind, using the power of Yoga practice. Placing the life air between the eyebrows in the proper way, he thus attains that original Supreme Person.
11. I shall now fully explain to you that position which those who know the Vedas speak of as the *akshara* (undecaying) and which sages who are devoid of passion enter into. It is due to their desire for this position that they take vows of celibacy.
12. It is by sealing all the entrances of the body, by holding the mind steady on the heart and keeping the air of life at the top of the head that a person becomes fixed in Yoga concentration.

13. A person who gives up his body and departs this world whilst reciting 'Om', which is the one imperishable (*akshara*) Brahman, and remembering me attains the highest destination.
14. For a person who always sets his mind on me and never allows his concentration to wander, who is a *yogin* constant in his practice, I am very easy to attain, Partha.
15. Rebirth is miserable and temporary, but after attaining me the *mahatmas* never take birth again, having achieved the highest state of perfection.
16. Repeated birth occurs in all the worlds from Brahmaloaka downwards, Arjuna. But after attaining Me, Kaunteya, there is no more rebirth.
17. Those persons who understand his day and his night recognise the limit of Brahma's day as one thousand *yugas* (ages) and they understand his night as also lasting for a thousand *yugas*.
18. When the day commences, all beings emerge from their non-manifest state and become manifest. When the night comes, they merge once more into that which is known as the non-manifest.
19. Coming into being time and again, this host of living beings is helplessly merged back once more when the night comes. And at the coming of the day they appear again.
20. Beyond that state of non-manifestation, however, there is another non-manifest state of existence, which is eternal. When all living beings are destroyed that state is not destroyed.
21. They describe this supreme destination as non-manifest and non-decaying (*akshara*). On reaching this position one does not return. It is my supreme abode.
22. That Supreme Being, Partha, is attained by undivided devotion. The living beings are situated within him and he pervades the whole world.
23. Now, O best of the Bharatas, I shall speak of the time of departing in which the *yogins* do not return to this world and the time in which they do return.
24. Persons who have knowledge of Brahman (or the Vedas) and depart during the fire, the light, the day, the moon's light fortnight, or the six months when the sun is in the north go to Brahman.
25. But a *yogin* who departs during the smoke, the night, the dark fortnight of the moon or the six months when the sun is in the south come back to this world after entering the light of the moon.
26. Thus it is believed there are two paths from this world, the light and the dark. By following one there is no return, but by following the other one comes back once more.

27. Understanding these two paths, Partha, the *yogin* is never bewildered. So engage yourself in Yoga practice at all times, Arjuna.

28. A specific reward is ordained as the fruit of the merit (*punya*) acquired through study of the Vedas, sacrifice (*yajña*), religious austerity (*tapa*) or acts of charity, but the *yogin* goes beyond all of that. Completely understanding the wisdom I have revealed, the *yogin* goes to the original, supreme position.

Chapter 9

1. But now, O non-envious one, I will reveal to you this greatest of mysteries, which includes both *jñāna* and *vijñāna*. When this is understood you will be liberated from unwanted things.
2. This teaching is the king of knowledge, the king of mysteries. This is the purest of all things. It can be understood by direct perception, it is based on dharma, it is very easy to perform and it is unfading.
3. Persons who have no faith in this dharma do not attain Me, Paramtapa. They return to the path of death and rebirth.
4. This whole world is pervaded by me in my non-manifest form. All beings are situated in me but I am not present in them.
5. And yet the living beings are not situated in me; you should see this as my magical opulence. My identity is what causes living beings to exist; it sustains the living beings but is not situated within them.
6. The great wind that always moves through all places is situated in space. You should understand that it is in this sense that all living beings are situated in me.
7. At the end of the period of creation (*kalpa*), Kaunteya, all beings enter into My *prakṛiti* energy and at the beginning of a *kalpa*, I manifest them again.
8. Making use of my own *prakṛiti* energy, I repeatedly create this entire host of living beings. They are powerless for they are under the control of *prakṛiti*.
9. And these actions do not bind me, Dhanamjaya. I am situated in a position of apparent neutrality, unattached to these actions.
10. It is through me alone that *prakṛiti* brings the moving and non-moving beings into existence, for I am the Controller. This is the designated cause by means of which the world proceeds on its course.
11. Fools despise me when I accept this human form. They do not understand my higher identity as the Supreme Lord of the living beings.
12. The hopes, deeds and understanding of these unintelligent persons are futile. Falling prey to delusion they adopt the nature of *asuras* and *rakshasas*.
13. But the *mahatmas* resort to the divine nature, Partha. Having understood that I am the origin of all beings, they worship me with undeviating minds.
14. Constantly singing my praises, engaging in resolute vows and bowing before me with devotion, they are always engaged in acts of worship.

15. Others make offerings through the *jñana-yajña*, the sacrifice of knowledge, and worship me as He who is one and yet many and whose manifold faces turn in every direction.
16. I am the ritual, I am the sacrifice, I am the oblation offered to the ancestors and I am the herbs. I am the *mantras*, I alone am the ghee, I am the sacred fire and I am the offering made into the fire.
17. I am the father of this world, the mother, the ordainer and the grandfather. I am the object of knowledge, I am that which is pure, I am the syllable *om*, and I am the Rig, the Sama and the Yajus.
18. I am the goal, the sustainer, the lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge and the friend. I am creation, destruction and maintenance, I am the treasury and I am the unfading seed.
19. I bring forth warmth, I hold back the rain and I then release it. I am immortality and I am death. I am both being and non-being, Arjuna.
20. Drinking Soma, purged of sin (*papa*), those who follow the three Vedas seek the heavenly destination after worshipping me with *yajñas*. Acquiring piety (*punya*) in this way they attain the world of the lord of the gods and in that heaven they enjoy the celestial pleasures enjoyed by the gods.
21. But after enjoying the delights of that wonderful heavenly domain, they must re-enter the mortal world when their stock of piety (*punya*) becomes exhausted. So by adhering to the dharma of the three Vedas, persons who seek to fulfil their desires gain only a temporary reward.
22. Then there are persons who worship me with undeviating concentration. For those who engage constantly in this way I bring both prosperity and security.
23. Those who are devoted to other gods and worship them with faith actually worship me alone, Kaunteya, but not in the manner that is properly ordained.
24. I am the enjoyer and also the master of all *yajñas*. Such persons do not know me as such and so fall down from the position they attain.
25. Devotees of the gods go to the gods, devotees of the ancestors go to the ancestors, those who worship spirits go to the spirits but those who worship me go to me.
26. When it is presented in a mood of devotion I will accept the devotional offering of a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water from one who possesses self-mastery.
27. Make whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice, whatever charity you give, and whatever austerities you undertake into an offering to Me, Kaunteya.

28. In this way you will be liberated from the auspicious and inauspicious results, the bonds of action. Engaged in this Yoga of renunciation, you will become liberated and you will come to me.

29. I am equal towards all living beings; no one is hated by me and no one is beloved. Those who worship me with devotion, however, are in me and I am in them.

30. Even if a person who worships me as his only object is a performer of the most wicked deeds, still he is to be considered a *sadhu* for his resolution is correct.

31. He quickly becomes a *dharmatma*, committed to dharma, and attains enduring peace. Make it known, Kaunteya, that my devotee does not perish.

32. Having sought shelter with me, Partha, even those of evil births as well as women, *vaisyas* and *shudras* go to the highest destination.

33. How much more so then in the case of the Brahmins, the righteous (*punyah*), the devotees and the religious kings (*raja-rishis*). So having reached this temporary world that is devoid of happiness, you should engage in worshipping me.

34. Fix your mind on me, become my devotee, worship me and bow down to me. By engaging yourself in such acts and dedicating yourself to me, you will surely come to me.

Chapter 10

1. The Lord said: Listen again, O mighty one, to the excellent words I will speak to you. You have love for me and I desire your welfare.
2. The gods cannot comprehend my origin and neither do the great *rishis*. Indeed it is I who am the source of all the gods and all the great *rishis*.
3. One who knows me as unborn and without beginning, the great Lord of the worlds, is the one who is not deluded amongst mortal beings. He is liberated from all sins.
4. Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from illusion, tolerance, truthfulness, self-control, tranquillity, joy, misery, existence, non-existence, fear, fearlessness,
5. Not harming, equanimity, satisfaction, austerity, charity, fame and infamy are states of existence for living entities and these varied categories of being arise from me alone.
6. In the beginning the seven great *rishis* and the four Manus come into being from me by means of my thoughts, and the living beings existing in the world are all produced by my thoughts as well.
7. One who properly understands this glory and mystical power of mine engages in unwavering Yoga discipline. There is no doubt about this.
8. I am the origin of all things; everything comes into being from out of me. When they understand this, the enlightened ones worship me, filled with loving attachment.
9. Their minds are absorbed in me, their lives are given over to me, and they enlighten one another about me. Talking constantly about me, they find satisfaction and delight.
10. To those who engage constantly in this way, worshipping in a mood of love, I give that yoga of the intellect by means of which they come to me.
11. I am situated in their own existence and due to my compassion I destroy the darkness that arises from ignorance with the blazing torch of knowledge.
12. Arjuna said: You are the Supreme Brahman, the supreme abode and the most pure. You are the eternal divine *purusha*, the original Deity, unborn and almighty.
13. All the *rishis* speak of you in this way, including Narada the divine *rishi*, Asita, Devala and Vyasa. Now you yourself are declaring it to me.
14. I accept everything you have said to me as true, O Keshava. Neither the gods nor the Danavas (*asuras*) can understand your manifestation, O Lord.

15. You alone can understand your own Self by your own power, O Supreme Person, for it is through you that living beings exist. You are the Lord of all beings, the god of gods, the Lord of the world.
16. You should now fully explain your own divine glories. Tell me about those glorious attributes through which you pervade these worlds and remain present within them.
17. How are you to be thought of, O *yogin*, when I constantly fix my mind upon you? In what forms of existence can I think of you, O Lord?
18. Speak to me again, Janardana, about your extensive Yoga and glorious power (*vibhuti*). When hearing this nectar I am never fully satiated.
19. The Lord said: Very well, I will speak about my own divine attributes, but only those that are most prominent, O best of the Kurus, for there is no end to my extent.
20. I am the *atman*, Gudakesha, situated in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning of the living beings and I am their middle and end as well.
21. Amongst the Adityas I am Vishnu, amongst luminous objects I am the radiant sun. Amongst the Maruts I am Marichi and amongst stars I am the moon.
22. Of the Vedas I am the Sama Veda, amongst the gods I am Vasava (Indra). Amongst the senses I am the mind and amongst living beings I am consciousness.
23. Amongst the Rudras I am Shankara, amongst the Yakshas and Rakshasas I am Vittesha. Amongst the Vasus I am fire (Agni) and amongst mountain peaks I am Meru.
24. Amongst priests know me to be Brihaspati, the foremost of them. Amongst generals I am Skanda and amongst lakes I am the ocean.
25. Amongst the great *rishis* I am Bhrigu, amongst sounds I am the one syllable (*om*). Amongst *yajñas* I am the Japa Yajña and of things that move not, I am Himalaya.
26. Amongst all the trees I am the Ashvattha (fig) tree, amongst the divine *rishis* I am Narada. Amongst the Gandharvas I am Chitraratha and amongst those who have achieved perfection I am Kapila Muni.
27. Amongst horses, know me to be Uchhaihshravasa who appeared from the nectar. Amongst the lords of the elephants I am Airavata and amongst men I am the king.
28. Amongst weapons I am the thunderbolt, amongst cows I am the *kamadhuk*. Amongst progenitors I am Kandarpa and amongst serpents I am Vasuki.

29. Amongst the Nagas I am Ananta, amongst those who inhabit the waters I am Varuna. Amongst the ancestors I am Aryama and amongst those who subdue others I am Yama.

30. Amongst the Daityas I am Prahlada, amongst those who calculate I am time. Amongst beasts I am the king of the beasts and amongst birds I am Vainateya (Garuda).

31. Of purifiers I am the wind, amongst those who bear weapons I am Rama. Amongst the fish I am the Makara and amongst rivers I am Jahnavi (Ganga).

32. Amongst creations I am the beginning and end and I am the middle as well, Arjuna. Of all forms of knowledge I am knowledge of the *atman* and amongst debaters I am the ultimate conclusion.

33. Amongst letters I am the letter 'a', amongst compound words I am the dual word. I am time that has no end and I am the Ordainer whose faces turn in all directions.

34. I am death who carries everyone away, I am the origin of all things yet to be. Amongst women I am fame, good fortune, speech, memory, intelligence, endurance and forgiveness.

35. Of the Sama hymns I am the Brihat Sama, of the hymns of the Veda I am the Gayatri. Of the months I am Margashirsha and of the seasons I am that which brings the flowers.

36. Amongst cheats I am dicing, I am the energy of those who possess energy. I am victory, I am resolution and I am the existence of all that exists.

37. Amongst the Vrishnis I am Vaasudeva (Krishna), amongst the Pandavas I am Dhananjaya (Arjuna). Amongst sages I am Vyasa and amongst seers I am the seer named Ushanas.

38. Amongst those who chastise I am punishment, amongst those who seek victory I am good policy. Amongst secrets I am silence and I am the knowledge of those who possess knowledge.

39. And I am that which is the seed of all living beings, Arjuna. There is no living being, moving or non-moving, which exists except through me.

40. There is no end to my divine glories and attributes, O Paramtapa, but I have revealed this much just as an indication of the extent of my glory.

41. You should understand that whenever a glorious form of existence displays its opulence or power it arises from a small part of my energy.

42. But what is the need for you to understand it to such an extent, Arjuna? Just know that I am present here, sustaining the whole world with just a part of myself.

Chapter II

1. Arjuna said: For my benefit you have explained the ultimate mystery, which is known as the *adhyatma*. Through this explanation my illusion is now gone.
2. I have heard from you at length about the beginning and end of the living beings, O lotus-eyed one, and about your unfading power.
3. You are certainly what you have described yourself to be, O Parameshvara, and I now wish to behold that glorious form of yours, O Purushottama.
4. If you think it is possible for me to see it, O Lord, then reveal to me your unfading Self, O Yogeshvara.
5. The Lord said: Behold, O Partha, My hundreds and thousands of divine forms; they are of various different types, of many colours and forms.
6. Behold the Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Ashvins and Maruts, numerous things that have never before been seen. Behold these wonders, O Bharata.
7. Today behold the entire world with its moving and non-moving creatures here in one place, O Gudakesha, and whatever else you wish to see.
8. But you are not able to see this with your own eyes, and so I give to you divine vision. Now behold my glorious Yoga!
9. Samjaya said: When he had spoken these words, O king, Hari the great lord of Yoga revealed to Partha His supreme, glorious form.
10. It had many mouths and eyes and many features wonderful to behold. It had many divine ornaments and many divine weapons raised aloft.
11. It was adorned with celestial garlands and garments and was anointed with celestial perfumes. This limitless Deity was entirely wondrous and his faces turned in all directions.
12. If a thousand suns were to rise in the sky, each with a blazing effulgence, it might then resemble the brilliant radiance of that great being.
13. The Pandava then saw the entire world, undivided and yet manifold, situated there in one place within the body of the god of gods.
14. Thereupon Dhanamjaya became filled with wonder and the hairs on his body stood erect. Bowing his head to that Deity and placing his palms together, he then said,
15. Arjuna said: I see all the gods in your body, O Lord, and the entire host of living beings. I see Brahma, the lord, who remains seated on a lotus, and all the *rishis* and celestial serpents.

16. With so many arms, bellies, mouths and eyes, I see you with this unlimited form that is everywhere. There is no end, no middle and no beginning as I behold you, for you are the Lord of the world and the world is your body (*vishva rupa*).

17. I see you with a crown, club and disc and your fiery effulgence illuminates all directions. I see you everywhere though you are so difficult to look upon for the blazing light of fire and sun spreads beyond measure.

18. You are to be known as the Supreme Akshara (undeteriorating), You are the ultimate abode of this world. You are unfading (*avyaya*), the eternal guardian of dharma and I regard You as the eternal *purusha*.

19. You are without beginning, middle or end and have limitless power. You have unlimited arms and the sun and moon are your eyes. I see you with blazing fire coming from your mouth as you heat this entire world with your own energy.

20. The heavens, the earth and the sky are pervaded by you alone and so are all the directions. After seeing this wonderful and yet terrible form of yours, the three worlds are trembling, O Mahatma.

21. These hosts of celestial beings are entering into you; some are afraid and praise you with folded palms. The hosts of *rishis* and perfect beings proclaim the sound *svasti*, (let it be good) and glorify You with hymns and words of praise.

22. The Rudras, Adityas, Vasus, Sadhyas, Vishva-devas, Ashvins, Maruts, ancestors, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras and Siddhas are all beholding you in astonishment.

23. This great form of yours has many mouths and eyes, O mighty one, and has many arms, thighs and feet. It has many bellies and many fearsome teeth. After seeing this form the worlds tremble in fear and so do I!

24. Your multicoloured effulgence reaches the limit of the sky, your gaping mouths are wide open and your wonderful eyes are blazing. Seeing you thus, my inner self is trembling with fear; I cannot maintain my steadiness or composure, O Vishnu.

25. Seeing your faces with their terrible teeth, which are like the fire at the end of the world, I can no longer recognise the directions or understand my position. Become my refuge and show your grace, O Lord of the gods who is the abode of the world.

26. All these sons of Dhritarashtra along with this host of kings, as well as Bhishma, Drona, the *suta's* son and the great warriors of our army as well

27. Are all rushing forth and entering your mouths with those terrible teeth that are a cause of fear. Some of them can be seen caught between those teeth with their heads being crushed.

28. As the many currents of the rivers rush with force and flow towards the ocean, so these heroes amongst men enter your blazing mouths.

29. As insects meet with destruction by rapidly entering a burning lamp, so the worlds rush forward and meet with destruction by entering your mouths.

30. Devouring the worlds from all sides, you lick them all up with your blazing mouths. Having filled the entire universe with its energy, this terrible effulgence of yours is scorching everything, O Vishnu.

31. Tell me who you are with this fearful form. I bow down to you, be merciful, O greatest of the gods. I wish to know your original identity. I cannot comprehend this activity of yours.

32. The Lord said: I am the time that matures and brings destruction to the world. My activity is to draw in the worlds. Except for yourselves none of these warriors drawn up in ranks will survive.

33. Therefore arise and win renown. Having defeated your enemies you may enjoy a prosperous kingdom. These warriors are already slain by me and you should be my instrument, Savyasachin.

34. Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna and the other heroic warriors have been killed by me. You will conquer so do not waver. Wage war and you will defeat your enemies in the battle.

35. Samjaya said: After hearing Keshava's words, Kiritin joined his palms and paid his respects whilst trembling in fear. He then addressed Krishna again in stuttering tones, paying his respects in a mood of awe and fear.

36. Arjuna said: As is appropriate, Hrishiksha, the world is delighted by your glorification and becomes joyful. Whilst the terrified *rakshasas* will flee in various directions, the hosts of perfect beings will bow down before you.

37. Why should they not bow before you, O Mahatma, for you are greater even than Brahma the original creator of the world. You are the unlimited lord of the gods, the abode of the world; you are the *aksharam*, (that which does not deteriorate) and you are that which lies beyond both being and non-being.

38. You are the original Deity, the primeval *purusha*. You are the final resting place of this world. You are the knower and the known, the supreme, the abode. This entire world is pervaded by You, O You of limitless form.

39. You are Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, the Moon, Prajapati and the grandfather. I bow to you, I bow to you a thousand times over and then still I bow to you once again.

40. I bow to you from the front, I bow from behind and I bow from all sides, for you are everything. Your power is unlimited and your might cannot be measured. It is you alone who can achieve all things and therefore you are all things.

41. Thinking of you as a friend, I spoke presumptuously, saying 'O Krishna, O Yadava, O my friend.' I was unaware of your greatness and I did this out of folly or perhaps out of affection.

42. Making jokes, I behaved improperly towards you whilst we were passing time together, resting, sitting or eating, sometimes when we were alone and sometimes in the sight of others, Achyuta. Now I beg your forgiveness for you are beyond all measure.

43. You are the father of the moving and non-moving world, you are the object of worship for the world and you are the greatest teacher. No one is your equal and no one is greater than you in all the three worlds, for your power is unrivalled.

44. Therefore I bow down to you and prostrate my body. I seek your grace for you are the worshipful Lord. Please tolerate my conduct, O Lord, as a father to a son, a friend to a friend, or a lover to his beloved.

45. I am pleased to have seen this form that was never previously seen but my mind has been disturbed by fear. Now show me that other form, O Lord. Show me mercy, O lord of the gods, abode of the world.

46. I now wish to see you with a helmet, a club and a disc in your hand. O thousand-armed one, O Vishva Murti, please now assume that four-armed form.

47. The Lord said: It is with pleasure, Arjuna, that this supreme form has been displayed by me by means of my own Yoga. It is filled with energy, it is the world, it is unlimited and original. It has never been displayed by me to anyone but yourself.

48. Not through the Veda, *yajña*, recitation, charity, ritual or harsh austerity can I be seen in this form in the world of men by anyone other than you, O hero of the Kurus.

49. Do not tremble with fear and do not be bewildered after seeing this form of mine, which is so fearful. Let your fears be dispelled and let your mind be contented once more; now behold that form of mine.

50. Samjaya said: After speaking to Arjuna in this way, Vasudeva again displayed his own form. The Mahatma stilled Arjuna's fear by again assuming his benign form.

51. Arjuna said: Seeing this benign human form of yours, Janardana, my mind is now at peace and I have regained my normal condition.

52. The Lord said: This form of mine that you have seen is very hard to gain a vision of. Even the gods are always longing for a vision of this form.

53. Not through the Vedas, austerity, charity or sacrifice is it possible to see me in the way that you have seen me here.

54. But through devotion to me alone, Arjuna, it is possible to know me and to see me in this form and indeed to enter into me, Paramtapa.

55. One who performs his deeds for me, dedicates himself to me as my devotee, remains free of attachments and has no hatred for any living being will come to Me, Pandava.

Chapter 12

1. Arjuna said: Between those devotees who dedicate themselves to you, being constantly engaged in the way you have described, and those who revere the non-manifest *akshara* feature, who are superior in Yoga?
2. The Lord said: In My opinion, those who fix their minds on me, who constantly engage in serving me and who possess absolute faith are engaged in the best way possible.
3. But those who dedicate themselves to the non-deteriorating (*akshara*), indeterminate, non-manifest feature, which is present everywhere, is unknowable, and is situated in the transcendent realm, unmoving and constant,
4. Who regulate all their senses and who have the same attitude towards everyone also attain me, delighting as they do in the welfare of all beings.
5. But there is greater difficulty involved for those whose thoughts adhere to the non-manifest feature. The way to the non-manifest feature is one of suffering for embodied beings.
6. But for those who are devoted to me, who dedicate all their actions to me, who meditate on me and worship me through single-pointed Yoga,
7. I become without delay the Uplifter from the ocean of death and rebirth, for their consciousness is absorbed in me.
8. Set your mind on me alone; let your intellect enter into me. You will then dwell in me alone, of this there is no doubt.
9. If you are not able to hold your consciousness steadily upon me, then you should seek to attain me by means of regulated Yoga practice, O Dhanamjaya.
10. If you are unable even to perform this regulated practice, then dedicate yourself to working on my behalf. By performing acts on my behalf, you will still achieve the goal.
11. And if you are unable to undertake the practice of Yoga dedicated to me, then gain self-control and perform the renunciation of the fruits of all action.
12. Knowledge is better than regulated practice and meditation is superior to knowledge. Renouncing the fruits of action is better than meditation and unending tranquillity is superior to renunciation.
13. Having no hatred for any living being, goodwill, compassion; having no sense of possession, no pride, remaining equal in misery and joy, and being merciful;
14. Being always satisfied, being a *yogin* who possesses self-control, who is firm in his commitment and who has absorbed his mind and intelligence in me: such a devotee is loved by me.

15. From whom the world has no fear and who does not fear anyone in the world, who is free from elation, distress, fear and passion; such a person is loved by me.

16. Who has no hankerings, is pure, expert, indifferent, free of anxiety and who has renounced his material endeavours; such a devotee is loved by me.

17. Who does not rejoice or hate, lament or hanker, and who has renounced both pleasing and vile objects; such a devoted one is loved by me.

18. Who is equally disposed toward an enemy and a friend, who regards respect and contempt as the same, who is the same in heat or cold and in joy and misery and who has given up all attachment to the world,

19. Who is unmoved by condemnation or praise, who is silent and satisfied with whatever comes his way, who has no permanent abode, and is steady in his understanding; such a devoted one is loved by me.

20. Those who venerate the nectar of the dharma I have spoken of here and who have full faith and are dedicated to me are my devotees and they are certainly loved by me.

Chapter 13

1. The Lord said: This body, Kaunteya, is referred to as the *kshetra* (field) and those who possess this wisdom know that which has knowledge of the field as the *kshetrajña*, the knower of the field.
2. You should also understand that I am the *kshetrajña* present within all the *kshetras*, Bharata. In my opinion, knowledge of the *kshetra* and *kshetrajña* is knowledge indeed.
3. So listen to me now as I explain briefly about the *kshetra* and what it is like, about the transformations it undergoes and about which one of them comes from the other. I will also explain who he is and what his powers are.
4. This subject has been sung about by the *rishis* in many ways in the various hymns of the Veda. It has also been explained with reasoned conclusions in the aphorisms of the *Brahma Sutra*.
5. The great elements, the sense of ego (*ahamkara*), the intellect, matter in its non-manifest state, the eleven senses and the five objects they perceive,
6. Desire, loathing, joy, misery, the aggregate of all faculties, consciousness and resolve; this is what is known as the *kshetra*, outlined in brief, along with the transformations it undergoes.
7. Avoiding pride and deceit, not harming, patience, honesty, serving the *acharya*, purity, steadfastness, self-control,
8. Detachment from the objects of the senses, being free of the sense of ego, perceiving the problem inherent in the misery of birth, death, old age and disease,
9. Being unattached and without affection for sons, wife and home, always maintaining an equal disposition whatever happens, be it desirable or undesirable,
10. Maintaining undeviating devotion to me through Yoga that is fixed on no other point, living in a deserted place, taking no pleasure in other people's company,
11. Constant dedication to the knowledge designated as *adhyatma*, perceiving the true object of knowledge; this is said to be *jñana* (knowledge) and everything else is said to be *ajñana* (ignorance).
12. I shall now speak about the *jñeya*, the object we must strive to know, for when this is known one attains immortality. It is without beginning, it is the Supreme Brahman (or; it is without beginning and dependent on me); it is said that it is neither existent nor non-existent.
13. Its hands and feet are everywhere, its eyes, heads and mouths are everywhere, its ears are everywhere in the world; thus it remains pervading all things.

14. It appears to have the attributes of senses and yet in truth it is devoid of senses. It is without attachment but it supports all things, it is free of the *gunas* and yet it experiences the *gunas*.
15. It is both outside and within the moving and non-moving beings. Because of its subtle nature it is hard to know, it is far away but very close as well.
16. It appears to be divided up within different living beings and yet it remains undivided. That *jñeya*, which must be known, sustains living beings, it devours them and it brings them into being as well.
17. It is the light of luminous objects and is said to be beyond the darkness. It is knowledge, the object that should be known, and it is accessible through knowledge; it is situated within the heart of all beings.
18. Now *kshetra*, *jñana* and *jñeya* have all been briefly explained. After realising this truth, my devotee attains my state of existence.
19. You should understand that both *prakriti* and *purusha* have no beginning. You should also know that all transformations and the *gunas* have their origin in *prakriti*.
20. In terms of the enactment of the process of cause and effect, *prakriti* is said to be the ultimate cause whilst in the experiencing of joy and misery, *purusha* is said to be the cause.
21. Whilst situated within the domain of *prakriti*, the *purusha* experiences the attributes that are born of *prakriti*. Attachment to these attributes is the cause of the *purusha*'s birth in both auspicious and inauspicious wombs.
22. He is the witness and the one who grants permission, the sustainer, the enjoyer, the great Lord (*maheshvara*). He is referred to as *paramatman* (the higher self) and within the body he is the supreme *purusha*.
23. One who thus understands *purusha* and *prakriti* along with its *gunas* never takes birth again even, even though he is active in many different ways.
24. By means of the self, some perceive the self within themselves through meditation. Others do this through the Yoga of Samkhya and others again through Karma Yoga.
25. Then there are still others who do not gain knowledge by any of these means but devote themselves to the self after hearing from other people. Dedicating themselves to learning in this way, they too cross beyond death.
26. Every form of existence, moving or non-moving, that comes into being should be understood as arising from a combination of *kshetra* and *kshetrajña*, Bharata.
27. The supreme Lord is equally present in all living beings. When the body is destroyed he is not destroyed. One who perceives this existence truly sees.

28. A person who perceives the same Lord situated everywhere will not harm the self by means of the self. As a result of this realisation he goes to the supreme abode.
29. All types of action are performed by *prakṛiti* alone. One who thus sees that the *atman* is not the performer of action truly sees.
30. When a person sees the manifold existence of living beings situated as one entity and that they expand from out of that one entity, he then attains Brahman.
31. Because it is without beginning and is untouched by the *gunas*, even though it is situated within the body this unchanging *paramatman* does not act and is not contaminated.
32. Just as the all-pervasive space is never contaminated due to its subtle nature, so the *atman* situated everywhere within the body is not contaminated.
33. And just as the sun alone illuminates this whole world, so the dweller in the field illuminates the entire *kshetra*, Bharata.
34. Persons who possess the eye of knowledge can comprehend the distinction between *kshetra* and *kshetrajñā* and the liberation of living beings from *prakṛiti*. Such persons reach the supreme.

Chapter 14

1. Once more I will speak to you about the highest knowledge, which is supreme amongst all types of knowledge. All those sages who comprehend this wisdom depart from here and achieve the highest perfection.
2. Devoting themselves to this knowledge, they come to my own state of being. Hence they are not born at the time of creation and at the time of destruction they are not disturbed.
3. My womb is the great Brahman and I deposit an embryo therein. The origin of all beings arises from out of this union, Bharata.
4. Different forms appear in all the various wombs, Kaunteya, but the great Brahman is the womb for them all and I am the father who bestows the seed.
5. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are the *gunas* arising from *prakriti*. They bind the changeless, embodied entity that exists within the body, O mighty one.
6. Due to its being free from blemish, wherever Sattva exists there is illumination and no contamination. It is through attachment to happiness and attachment to knowledge (*jñana*) that it causes bondage, O sinless one.
7. You should understand that Rajas is of the nature of passion; it becomes prominent due to hankering and attachment. It binds the embodied entity through attachment to action, Kaunteya.
8. And you should know that Tamas, which is delusion for all embodied beings, appears due to ignorance. It causes bondage through negligence, idleness and sleep.
9. Sattva causes one to adhere to happiness whilst Rajas causes adherence to action, Bharata, and by obscuring a person's wisdom Tamas creates adherence to negligence.
10. Sattva prevails by subjugating Rajas and Tamas, Bharata; Rajas prevails by subjugating Sattva and Tamas, and Tamas prevails by subjugating Sattva and Rajas.
11. When the illumination of knowledge appears in all the doorways in this body, you should realise that Sattva has become dominant.
12. Greed, endeavour, engagement in activities, agitation, hankering; these appear when Rajas becomes dominant, O best of the Bharatas.
13. Dullness, inaction, misunderstanding, delusion; these appear when Tamas becomes dominant, O child of the Kurus.
14. When the embodied soul encounters death whilst Sattva predominates, it then moves on to the pure worlds obtained by those who possess higher knowledge.

15. If he meets with death whilst Rajas predominates, he takes birth amongst those attached to action and if he dies whilst Tamas predominates he is reborn within the wombs of those who deluded.
16. They say that the fruits of righteous deeds are Sattvic and without blemish. But suffering is the fruit of Rajas and ignorance is the fruit of Tamas.
17. Knowledge arises from Sattva and greed arises from Rajas. Negligence, delusion and ignorance arise from Tamas.
18. Those who adhere to Sattva move upwards, those who adhere to Rajas remain in between, whilst those who adhere to Tamas and follow the ways of the lowest *guna* go downwards.
19. When the observer sees that there is no actor other than the *gunas* and gains knowledge of that which is beyond the *gunas*, he attains my state of being.
20. Transcending these three *gunas* that cause the body to exist, the embodied entity is liberated from the misery of birth, death and old age and attains immortality.
21. Arjuna said: What are the characteristics of one who has transcended these three *gunas*, O Lord? How does he behave? How does he go beyond the three *gunas*?
22. The Lord said: He does not hate illumination, activity or delusion when they appear, Pandava, and neither does he long for them when they disappear.
23. He is one who remains indifferent and is not disturbed by the *gunas*, who thinks, 'It is the *gunas* alone that are active'. He thus remains steady and does not waver.
24. He is equally disposed in distress and happiness, he is self-contained, and he views a lump of earth, a stone and gold as the same. He is firmly resolved and he is equally disposed towards dear ones and strangers, towards criticism and glorification.
25. Whether honoured or condemned he is still the same, and he is equally disposed towards friends and foes. He has abandoned all his worldly endeavours. Such a person is said to be beyond the *gunas*.
26. And one who reveres me through undeviating Bhakti Yoga also transcends the *gunas* and becomes fit to attain the Brahman existence.
27. For I am the foundation on which the immortal, unchanging Brahman exists. I am also the foundation of the eternal dharma and of absolute joy.

Chapter 15

1. The Lord said: They speak of an unfading Ashvattha tree with its roots above, its branches below and the Vedic hymns as its leaves. One who understands this tree has knowledge of the Vedas.
2. Its branches spread out above and below, nourished by the *gunas*. The objects of the senses are its shoots. Its roots also spread down below where they become combined with action in the human domain.
3. Its form cannot be identified for it has no end and no beginning and no foundation either. Using the strong weapon of detachment, one should cut down this Ashvattha tree with its fast sprouting roots.
4. One should then seek that position from which, once it is attained, there is no return, thinking, "I surrender to that original being (*purusha*) out of whom the primeval creative impulse flowed forth."
5. Without pride or folly, conquering the problem of attachment, constantly absorbed in knowledge of the *atman*, with desires restrained, free from the duality identified as pleasure and suffering, those who are free of illusion then progress to that changeless state of being.
6. The sun does not illuminate that place, neither does the moon or fire. Having gone there one does not return; that is my supreme abode.
7. In the world of living beings (*jiva-loka*), the eternal living element is nothing but a part of me. It draws to itself the five senses and the mind, which is the sixth, all of which rest on *prakriti*.
8. When the Lord (*ishvara*) takes on a body and then moves on from it, he holds on to these six in the way the wind carries aromas from their original place.
9. Making use of the senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell, as well as the mind, he then experiences the objects of the senses.
10. Whether he is departing or remaining, or whether he is experiencing the world by association with the *gunas*, those who are deluded do not perceive him. Those, however, who possess the eye of knowledge can perceive him.
11. *Yogins* who pursue their endeavours perceive him situated within their own being, but those who are unintelligent and fail to achieve self-mastery will never perceive him despite making the endeavour.
12. The energy centred in the sun, which illuminates the entire universe, and that of the moon and fire as well—that energy is mine alone.
13. Entering into the earth, I sustain the living beings through my potency. Becoming the moon, which is imbued with liquid potency, I nourish all the plants.

14. I become the Vaishvanara energy, the digestive heat, and reside in this form within the bodies of the living beings. By combining with the *prana* and *apana* breaths, I digest the four types of food.
15. And I am situated in the hearts all; memory, knowledge and the loss of knowledge arise from me. It is I who am to be understood from all the Vedas. I am the creator of Vedanta and it is I who understands the Vedas.
16. In the world there are these two *purushas*, the *kshara* (decaying) and the *akshara* (non-decaying). The *kshara* is all living beings, whilst that which is in a higher position is referred to as *akshara*.
17. But the highest *purusha* is different again and is designated as the *paramatman*. This is the unfading Lord who enters the threefold world and sustains it.
18. And because I am beyond the *kshara* and superior to the *akshara* as well, I am therefore celebrated in both the world and in the Veda as 'Purushottama'.
19. One who is not deluded and knows me thus as *purushottama*, knows all things. He then worships me with his entire existence, O Bharata.
20. I have now proclaimed this most secret of teachings, O sinless one. One who comprehends this doctrine is wise indeed and has fulfilled his responsibilities, O Bharata.

Chapter 16

1. Fearlessness, purification of one's nature, remaining resolute in the pursuit of knowledge through Yoga practice, charity, self-control, performing sacrifices, recitation of the Vedas, austerity, honesty;
2. Not harming, truthfulness, avoiding anger, renunciation, tranquillity, never maligning others, compassion for other beings, being free of greed, kindness, modesty, never wavering;
3. Energy, patience, resolve, purity, the absence of malice and of arrogance; these constitute the *daivi sampad*, the godly disposition, of one who is born with this nature, Bharata.
4. Deceit, arrogance, pride, anger, harshness and ignorance are the *asuri sampad*, the asuric disposition, of one who is born with that nature, Partha.
5. The *daivi sampad* leads to liberation but the *asuri sampad* is regarded as a cause of bondage. Do not be concerned, you have been born with the *daivi sampad*, Pandava.
6. There are two manifestations in this world, the *daiva* and the *asura*. I have described the *daiva* at some length so now hear from me about the *asura* disposition, Partha.
7. Asuric persons know nothing about the performance of ritual action or about the renunciation of action. Neither purity nor good conduct are ever found in them, nor indeed is truthfulness.
8. They say, 'The world has no permanent truths, it has no absolute basis and no presiding Deity. It comes into being without any causal sequence. Where is there any causal factor apart from lust?'
9. Those who have destroyed their souls and have little intelligence adhere to views of this type. Inimical to all, they then engage in cruel deeds that bring destruction to the world.
10. Pursuing desires that are difficult to fulfil, filled with deceit, pride and passion, they adhere rigidly to their false conceptions and proceed on the basis of impure resolve.
11. Right up to the point of death they are beset by limitless anxieties, devoting themselves to the fulfilment of sensual desires, convinced there is nothing more.
12. Bound by hundreds of ropes in the form of their aspirations, dominated by desire and anger, they accumulate wealth by immoral means in order to fulfil their desires.
13. "I have obtained this much today and I will obtain more to satisfy my desire. This much wealth is mine now and this much will come to me in the future.

14. I have slain this enemy and I will kill the others as well. I am the Lord, I am the enjoyer, I am successful, powerful and happy.
15. I am wealthy and born into a good family. Who is there who can be my equal? I will perform sacrifices, I will give charity and thus I will rejoice.” Such are the ideas of those deluded by ignorance.
16. Being distracted by so many different notions, entangled in the net of delusion and addicted to the enjoyment of their desires, they fall down into an impure state of hell.
17. Being full of self-importance, stubborn, and dominated by wealth, pride and passion, they perform rituals that are *yajña* in name only, deviating from the prescribed method due to their deceitful nature.
18. Absorbing themselves in egotism, strength, arrogance, desire and anger, they display hatred and envy towards me, present as I am in their own bodies and in the bodies of others as well.
19. Those cruel persons are filled with hatred and are the lowest of men. I perpetually cast such impure beings into *asura* wombs in the cycle of rebirth.
20. Entering an asuric womb birth after birth, such fools never attain me, Kaunteya, and so they move on to the lowest state of being.
21. This doorway to hell that destroys the soul is threefold, consisting of desire, anger and greed. You should therefore renounce these three.
22. A man who frees himself from these three gateways of Tamas, Kaunteya, can act for his own welfare and then proceed to the highest abode.
23. One who abandons the rules ordained by scripture and acts according to his own desire can never attain perfection, happiness or the highest abode.
24. Therefore scripture should be your authority in establishing what should and should not be done. And when you understand the rules revealed by scripture, you should act in accordance with your duty.

Chapter 17

1. Arjuna said: There are some people who faithfully make spiritual endeavours but ignore scriptural rules. What is their position, Krishna? Is it said to be in Sattva, Rajas or Tamas?
2. The Lord said: The faith of embodied beings arises from their inherent nature and is of three types. It can be based on Sattva, Rajas or Tamas. Now hear about this.
3. For all beings, the faith they have corresponds to their nature, Bharata. A person is pervaded by his faith, for the nature of that faith shapes what he is.
4. Those who are Sattvic worship the gods, those dominated by Rajas worship *yakshas* and *rakshases* and persons under the influence of Tamas worship spirits and ghosts.
5. Some people who undertake acts of austerity perform ferocious deeds not prescribed by scripture. They are motivated by hypocrisy and egotism and are beset by the power of desire and passion.
6. Such fools simply cause the elements of the body to waste away and they harm myself as well for I am also present in the body. You should understand them as having the conviction of the *asura* nature.
7. Now the food that all beings find pleasing is also of three types, as is *yajña*, austerity and charity. Listen to this analysis of those categories.
8. The foods liked by Sattvic persons are those that bring long life, vigour, strength, health and which cause happiness and delight. Such foods are very tasty, juicy, crisp and pleasing.
9. Foods that are liked by persons predominated by Rajas are bitter, sour, salty, very hot, pungent, strong-tasting and burning. Such foods cause suffering, sorrow and ill-health.
10. The food liked by those predominated by Tamas is generally stale, tasteless, rotten, left over, dirty and foul.
11. When *yajña* is performed without desire for any result, in strict accordance with the proper rule, and with the mind absorbed in the thought, 'It is a duty to make this offering,' then it is of the nature of Sattva.
12. But when it is performed with some result in mind or out of hypocrisy, O best of the Bharatas, that *yajña* is of the nature of Rajas.
13. And when it is performed without regard for the proper rules, without food offerings, chanting of the hymns, payment to the priests, or any real faith in the process, they say that *yajña* is of the nature of Tamas.
14. Austerity of the body is said to consist of worship of the gods, Brahmins, teachers and wise men, cleanliness, honesty, celibacy and not harming (*ahimsa*).

15. Austerity of speech is said to consist of speaking words that do not disturb and that are true, loving and beneficial, as well as the regular recitation of the Vedas.
16. And austerity of the mind is said to consist of mental serenity, benevolence, silence, self-control and a pure disposition.
17. When men engaged in Yoga practice undertake this threefold austerity with the highest faith and without desire for any result, that austerity is said to be of the nature of Sattva.
18. But when the austerity is undertaken for the sake of respect, reputation and worship, or with hypocrisy, it is said to be of the nature of Rajas and is wavering and unsteady.
19. And that austerity by which one inflicts pain on oneself due to foolish notions or which is intended to bring destruction to others is declared to be of the nature of Tamas.
20. Charity that is given with the thought, 'This should be given' and is presented to a suitable recipient from whom nothing is expected in return at the right time and place is of the nature of Sattva.
21. But that charity which is given with the expectation of getting something in return, for some subsequent result, or with reluctance is of the nature of Rajas.
22. And that charity which is given at the wrong place and wrong time to an unsuitable recipient, which is given improperly and with contempt, is of the nature of Tamas.
23. The words *Om Tat Sat* are understood as a threefold representation of Brahman. It was with this *mantra* that the Brahmins, Vedas and *yajñas* were established in ancient times.
24. Therefore the followers of the Veda always recite the syllable *om* when they perform ritual acts of *yajña*, charity and austerity, in accordance with the prescribed rule.
25. Without desire for the fruit of their action, persons who seek liberation from rebirth recite the syllable *tat* when they perform various ritual acts of *yajña*, austerity and charity.
26. This term *sat* is used to designate both existence and righteousness. The word *sat* is also used in the performance of sacred rituals, Partha.
27. In *yajña*, austerity and charity *sat* is spoken of as meaning perseverance. And the ritual action by which these are performed is also designated as *sat*.
28. If an act is performed without faith, be it a sacrificial offering, a gift in charity or act of austerity, it is then referred to as *a-sat*, Partha. It has no effect either in the world to come or here in this world.

Chapter 18

1. Arjuna said: I wish now to learn about the subject of *samnyasa*, O mighty one, and, Hrishiksha, about the distinction between *samnyasa* and *tyaga*, O slayer of Keshin.
2. The Lord said: Learned men understand *samnyasa* to be the giving up of action motivated by selfish desire. The wise further define *tyaga* as the renunciation of the fruits of action.
3. Some of those endowed with wisdom assert that action must be abandoned because it is inherently flawed. But others say that ritual acts of *yajña*, charity and austerity must not be abandoned.
4. Now hear my verdict on this debate over renunciation, O best of the Bharatas. Renunciation has been declared to be of three types, O tiger amongst men.
5. The ritual acts of *yajña*, charity and austerity must not be abandoned. Rather they should be performed for it is *yajña*, charity and austerity that purify men of wisdom.
6. Renouncing attachment and the fruits of action, one must perform these ritual actions. This is my ultimate conclusion, Partha.
7. The renunciation of prescribed action is improper. The renunciation of such action due to delusion is proclaimed to be of the nature of Tamas.
8. If action is given up as painful, due to fear of the suffering it might cause to one's body, that renunciation is of the nature of Rajas and one will not gain the fruit of renunciation in that way.
9. But if one thinks, 'This must be performed' and then completes his prescribed duty whilst renouncing attachment and the fruits of action, Arjuna, that renunciation is known to be of the nature of Sattva.
10. The renouncer who is predominated by Sattva does not loathe action even when it is not pleasing and neither is he attached to pleasant action. He is a wise man whose doubts are dispelled.
11. It is impossible for anyone who has a body to completely give up action, but one who renounces the fruits of action is said to be a true renouncer.
12. Undesirable, desirable and mixed are the three types of result that come from action. After death these befall those who are not renounced but never those who are renounced.
13. Now learn from me about these five causal factors, O mighty one, established by the Samkhya system as determining the results of all actions.
14. These are the place of action, the performer, the various instruments employed and the different acts performed. Destiny is then the fifth factor.

15. Whatever action is undertaken with body, words or mind, be it proper or perverse, these five are its causes.
16. As this is the case, anyone who due to his uneducated understanding sees the self alone to be the performer of action has the wrong idea and does not see at all.
17. If a person has no sense of being the performer of action and if his consciousness is not absorbed in the action, then even if he destroys all these worlds he does not kill and he is not bound.
18. Knowledge, the object that is known and the one who knows represent the threefold impulse for action. The instrument, the deed and the performer represent the three constituents of an action.
19. Knowledge, action and the performer of action are all threefold according to the *gunas*. This can be shown by analysis in relation to the *gunas* so now listen to the way these are arranged.
20. When one changeless existence is seen in all beings, undivided in their diverse forms, you should know that knowledge to be of the nature of Sattva.
21. But when knowledge displays an understanding based on distinction and recognises various types of existence of different forms, you should know that knowledge to be of the nature of Rajas.
22. And that knowledge which for no apparent reason attaches itself to a single cause as if it were everything, which is unaware of the truth and which is thus limited in scope is regarded as being of the nature of Tamas.
23. Action that is prescribed, is performed without attachment and is undertaken without passionate endeavour, hatred or desire for the fruits is said to be of the nature of Sattva.
24. But action performed due to hankering for a desired object, out of a sense of pride or with excessive endeavour is regarded as being of the nature of Rajas.
25. And action undertaken due to folly, and without regard for consequences, damage, violence or valour is said to be of the nature of Tamas.
26. When he is free of attachment, never speaks with any sense 'I', is endowed with resolve and fortitude, and is unmoved by success or failure, the performer of action is said to be of the nature of Sattva.
27. But if he is desirous and seeks the fruit of action, is greedy, violent by nature and impure, and is beset by feelings of delight and lamentation, that performer of action is regarded as being of the nature of Rajas.
28. And that performer of action who is negligent, vulgar, obstinate, deceitful, vicious, indolent, uninspired and procrastinating is said to be of the nature of Tamas.

29. Now hear about the threefold division of intelligence and of resolve in relation to the *gunas*, which I shall fully explain to show the differences between them, Dhanamjaya.
30. That which understands prescribed action, the renunciation of action, what should and should not be done, what is to be feared and what is not, as well as bondage and liberation is intelligence under the influence of Sattva.
31. But that by which dharma and adharma are not clearly understood, nor indeed prescribed duty and forbidden action, is intelligence under the influence of Rajas, Partha.
32. But that intelligence which is covered by ignorance and so thinks adharma to be dharma and has wrong conceptions on all subjects is intelligence under the influence of Tamas.
33. That resolve by means of which one sustains the activities of the mind, breath and senses in undeviating Yoga practice is of the nature of Sattva.
34. But that resolve by which a person who is attached to the world and seeks the results of action adheres to dharma, fulfilment of desire and the gaining of prosperity is of the nature of Rajas.
35. And that resolve due to which a fool does not break free from sleep, fear, grief, depression and intoxication is of the nature of Tamas.
36. Happiness is also of three types. Now hear from me, O best of the Bharatas, about how a person finds joy due to his repeated practice and thereby puts an end to sorrow.
37. That which is like poison in the beginning but at the end is like nectar is said to be happiness of the nature of Sattva. It arises due to the clarity of one's intellect.
38. But that happiness which is obtained through the contact of the senses with their objects and is like nectar in the beginning but like poison in the end is understood to be of the nature of Rajas.
39. And that happiness which is delusion for the self in both the beginning and the end, based on sleep, indolence and stupidity, is of the nature of Tamas.
40. Neither on earth nor in the heavens amongst the gods is there any form of existence that is free of these three *gunas*, which are born of *prakriti*.
41. The duties of Brahmins, *kshatriyas*, *vaishyas* and *shudras*, O scorcher of the foe, are designated in accordance with the *gunas* that arise from their inherent nature.
42. Tranquillity, restraint, austerity, purity, patience, honesty, theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge and acceptance of the Vedic revelation are the actions of a Brahmin, born of his inherent nature.

43. Heroism, energy, resolve, expertise, never fleeing from battle, charity and displaying a lordly disposition are the actions of a *kshatriya*, born of his inherent nature.
44. Agriculture, tending cows and trade are the actions of a *vaishya*, born of his inherent nature, whilst work consisting of service to others is the action of a *shudra*, born of his inherent nature.
45. A man can attain perfection by devoting himself to his own particular duty. Now hear how one who dedicates himself to his specific duty achieves that perfect state.
46. He is the one from whom ritual action arises and he pervades this whole world. By worshipping the Deity through the performance of his proper duty, a man achieves that perfect state.
47. Even though it may have faults, one's own dharma is still superior to accepting the dharma of another, even if it is perfectly observed. By performing the action prescribed in accordance with his inherent nature, a person never experiences contamination.
48. A person should never give up the action he is born to perform, Kaunteya. All endeavours are covered by some fault, as fire is covered by smoke.
49. His mind is detached from everything, he has conquered his own self, and he is free from hankering; it is by means of such renunciation that a person attains the highest success free from the results of action.
50. Now learn from me in brief, Kaunteya, how one who has achieved this success then attains Brahman, which is the culmination of realised knowledge.
51. It is by properly engaging his purified intellect, controlling himself by his resolve, renouncing the objects of the senses such as sound, and setting aside both hankering and aversion;
52. Living in a deserted place, eating only a small amount, regulating his speech, body and mind, constantly dedicating himself to the Yoga of meditation and maintaining a mood of renunciation;
53. Giving up egotism, physical power, pride, desire, anger and any sense of possession, having no conception of 'mine', and remaining always at peace; it is thus that he achieves the state of being that is Brahman.
54. Existing as Brahman, with his mind made tranquil, he neither laments nor hankers for anything. He is equal to all living beings. Such a person achieves the highest state of devotion to me.
55. And it is through this devotion that he gains knowledge of me, of my greatness and my true identity. When he thus properly understands me, he then immediately enters my being.
56. Always performing his prescribed duties whilst remaining dependent upon me, through my grace he attains the eternal, changeless position.

57. Mentally renouncing all your actions to me, dedicating yourself to me, and devoting yourself to the Buddhi Yoga, you should keep your mind always fixed on me.
58. Keeping your mind fixed on me, you will cross beyond all these difficulties through my grace. But if through pride you do not listen, you will perish.
59. If you surrender to your egotism and think, "I will not fight", this determination will be false and your inherent nature will exert its control over you.
60. Bound to your specific form action, Kaunteya, which arises from your inherent nature, you will be compelled to perform the action that because of illusion you do not wish to perform.
61. The Lord of all beings is situated in the region of the heart and he causes every being to revolve through life, mounted on the machine created by his mystical power (*maya*).
62. You should surrender to him with your entire being, Bharata, and then by his grace you will attain the highest position, which is absolute peace.
63. I have now revealed to you this wisdom, which is the deepest mystery. After fully considering what you have heard, you should then act as you see fit.
64. Now listen again to the ultimate teaching, which is the deepest mystery of all. You are very dear to me, this is certain, and therefore I will reveal this for your benefit.
65. Fix your mind on me, become my devotee, worship me and bow down to me. Then you will come to me, this is my certain promise for you are dear to me.
66. Abandoning all types of dharma take shelter with me alone. I will deliver you from all sins so do not be afraid.
67. You should not reveal these teachings to anyone who has no austerity or is bereft of devotion, nor to one who does not wish to hear it or who is envious of me.
68. But one who imparts this supreme mystery to my devotees after developing the highest devotion to me will come to me. There is no doubt about this.
69. There is no one amongst men who can perform a deed more pleasing to me than this and nor will there be any person more dear to me than he.
70. And if anyone studies this conversation between us based on dharma, then he worships me with the *yajña* of knowledge. That is my view.
71. Any man endowed with faith and free of malice who hears this discourse is liberated thereby and attains the auspicious worlds gained by those of righteous deeds.

72. Have you listened to this instruction with a focused mind, Partha? Is your confusion based on ignorance now dispelled, Dhanamjaya?
73. Arjuna said: The confusion is dispelled and through your grace I have regained my understanding. My doubts have vanished and I am now ready to act in accordance with your instruction.
74. Samjaya said: Thus I have heard this wonderful conversation between Vasudeva and the great soul who is Partha, which fills me with ecstasy.
75. It is through the grace of Vyasa that I have heard this supreme secret, this doctrine of Yoga that was revealed by Krishna himself who is the master of Yoga (*yogeshvara*).
76. O king, as I constantly recall this wonderful and sacred conversation between Keshava and Arjuna, I repeatedly experience this sense of ecstasy.
77. And as I repeatedly recall the magnificent form displayed by Hari, great is my sense of wonder, O king, and again and again I feel a thrill of delight.
78. Wherever there is Krishna, the master of Yoga, and wherever there is Partha who bears the bow, there will also be good fortune, victory, success and good judgement. That is my opinion.