

Sādhanās In Bhagavad Gita

SRI SWAMI SHANTANANDA PURI



SĀDHANĀS IN BHĀGAVAD GĪTĀ

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PREFACE

There is, perhaps, no other religious text or philosophical treatise which has been interpreted or misinterpreted, commented upon, lectured upon and handled by so many thousands of Acharyas, Masters, both old and modern, Scholars and Savants, as BHAGAVAD GITA. The author is a humble sanniyasi with no pretensions either to scholarship or any spiritual height. With all diffidence he has tried to limelight in this book the types of spiritual practices or Sādhanās delineated in the text either directly or indirectly as understood by him from his Master's own life and the few revelations which came up in his studies and austerities. These are all Sādhanās befitting all stages of spiritual growth - from the L.K.G. class to the Ph.D (Doctorate). Except on two or three occasions, the author has steered clear of all controversial issues and sectarian interpretations.

Srimad Bhagavad Gita mainly means the ‘‘song sung by SRI BHAGAWAN’’. It is rarely that people sing their own compositions. In the Gita Mahātmya, it is told ‘‘GITA ME HRDAYAM PĀRTHA’’ i.e., GITA is the heart of the Lord. Lord Krishna has opened his heart and gave the Gita of his heart to Arjuna. The entire Gita is a conversation from heart to heart between two companions.

‘‘SAMVĀDAMĪMAM ASROUSHAM ADBHUTAM ROMAHARSHANAM’’

The truths of the GITA can be understood only if one gives one's heart to it. It can never be mastered through intellect and scholarship alone. The entire Gita which was always clamouring inside the heart of the Lord came up by itself without any effort when once the Lord opened his mouth.

‘‘YĀ SWAYĀM PADMANĀBHASYA MUKHAPADMĀDVINISRĪTA’’

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated
with veneration to

the Lotus Feet of my Revered Guru
Swami Purushottamanandaji
of Vasishtha Guha, U.P., Himalayas,
and

**all the Spiritual aspirants
all over the World**

who inspired me to write this book

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If we want to understand the GITA, some friendship or companionship with Lord Krishna will also be necessary. Finally, we have to become identified with Lord Krishna himself. You can never remain separate from him and claim to understand the Gita. Just before the start of the Gita, Krishna sends a message through Sanjaya to Dhrtarashtra thus-

“KṚSHNO DHANANJAYASYĀTMA KRISHNASYĀTMA DHANANJAYA”

Krishna is the soul of Arjuna and vice versa too. As Gita is the Sakti (Power) of the Lord, she is to be approached reverently as the DIVINE MOTHER herself manifested for annihilating our Sansara (phenomenal world) -

“AMBĀ TWĀMANUSANDADHĀMI BHAGAVADGĪTE BHĀVADWESHINĪEM”.

Any of the few slokas quoted in this booklet is alone worthy of meditation for hours together and its benefit will be immense. Here, there are various types of Sādhanās suited for various Sādhakas with diverse tastes irrespective of the path he chooses. Even for people who are not concerned with any Sādhanās but want to live a simple, happy, harmonious life without any hankering after MOKSHA or God, there are peace-capsules and happiness-capsules which will go a long way in ameliorating their tensions, anxieties, mental depressions, hardships and sufferings with occasional glimpses of real happiness. It is not necessary that one should do all the Sādhanās prescribed in the Gita. Pick up whatever appeals to you, hold fast to it and develop it with the fire of desire for the final goal burning fiercely. Rest will all follow. The gravitational force of Lord’s mercy will catapult you to your goal. The book has been written based on Lord’s inspiration mainly for “SWĀNTAS SUKHAYA” (स्वान्तरे सुखाय) . Even if a single reader is benefited from this book, it is a bonus. HARI OM.

- *Swami Shantananda*

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AUM
SRI MAHA GANAPATAYE NAMAH
SRI KRISHNAYA NAMAH

INTRODUCTION

Srimad Bhagavad Gita which forms part of the great epic *Mahabharata* authored by Maharshi Vyasa is one of the foremost among the classical texts of spiritual instructions. It is one of the triple canons (Prasthanas) of our Sanatana Dharma and Indian Philosophy and is also considered as the quintessence of the Upanishads (Part of the Vedic scriptures dealing with Self-knowledge).

Mankind throughout the world is facing crisis after crisis everyday. This divine ode of Krishna is of great relevance even today when, everywhere, both at the individual and collective national levels, fear, hatred, violence, greed, jealousy and other negative factors, are ruling the world. Gita has been rightly baptised by some scholars as a *Crisis Hand Book* (vade mecum). It gives us methods akin to psycho-therapy by following which man can learn to extract maximum happiness, avoid stress and strain and, in due course, attain Self knowledge leading to permanent bliss and release from all sufferings and hardships.

The purpose of this booklet is not to go into the dialectics or the exegesis of abstruse philosophy but is two fold:-

- (i) to enable the common man living in the modern world to cope with situations of stress and inner conflicts which he has to face every day.
- (ii) to guide the seeker at all stages (from the neophyte to the highly evolved aspirant) to find his path towards God-realisation which will bestow absolute happiness forever. The various spiritual practices envisaged in each chapter, to be followed by the aspirants, are being highlighted in this booklet.

CHAPTER I

LIFE IS AS SWEET AS YOU MAKE IT

The Gita was spontaneously conceived in the battle-field to guide Arjuna who was baffled about the rights and wrongs of the war he was about to embark upon with his own cousins- the Kauravas. The visual impact of the sight of all his kith and kin, friends, preceptors and others arrayed on either side with intent to kill and be killed shocked Arjuna into a sense of hypocritical morality that he was embarking on a sinful deed with devastating repercussions. As a result of his deeply entrenched attachment to his own people, he lost his sense of discrimination and could not see as to where lay his duty. If only the people actively involved in the battle were not related to him, Arjuna would have had no compunction at all to fight and kill his enemies.

It is the grief of Arjuna which formed a pretext for our getting such a profound text on spirituality, like the Gita, which is applicable for all times and for all people irrespective of country, race, creed or religion.

The historical battle background of the Gita is symbolical. The battle-field of Kurukshetra represents our own body-mind complex which is the field (Kshetra) of action (Kuru-to do or act). The Pandavas (including Arjuna) represent the divine modalities (Sanskaras) while the Kauravas indicate the demoniacal tendencies in us. The conflict is between the good and the bad tendencies in us which dictate our action. This is the Mahabharata war which goes on in the mind of every individual. Dhrtarashtra,

the blind king and father of the Kauravas, as his very name suggests (*Dhrtam Rāshtram Yena Sah*) is not only attached firmly to his earthly kingdom but is also attached to the kingdom of his body. Naturally, the attachment has made him blind to all justice and he refuses to concede the rightful share of the kingdom to the Pandavas.

The Bhagavad Gita starts at the very outset by depicting a picture of Arjuna, a hero of unparalleled might and proved valour who is reduced psychologically to a pulp on account of his deep attachment to his people. It is attachment which leads one into delusion (Moha) which clouds one's vision of right and wrong. **No action is right or wrong by itself and no action has the power to bind a man leading him to misery and unhappiness. It is the attachment to the action and its results which culminates in delusion with disastrous consequences.** This is one of the main messages of the Gita.

The solution to all problems in this life lies within one's own self. **The Lord who is the solution to all problems is the perennial guide seated in the heart as a divine spark-the *Sadguru*.** His Gita is always flowing and whoever has the ears can hear it. When Arjuna was overwhelmed with grief and despondency on the battle-field, the divine thermostat in him forced him to surrender himself at the feet of Lord Krishna and seek his succour and counsel. Thus, even this grief and despondency became a Yoga, a path to spirituality by opening himself and all posterity too, to the profound revelations of the Bhagavad Gita which can be considered as the heart-beat of the Absolute. The first chapter of the Gita has been rightly described as Vishada Yoga (the spiritual path of despondency).

The entire Bhagavad Gita consisting of 18 Chapters can be divided into a three-fold discipline of six chapters each, representing the significance of one of the greatest Vedic aphorisms 'TAT TWAM ASI' ('THAT THOU ART' OR 'YOU ARE THAT'). An elaboration in this order, viz., Tat, Twam and Asi would have been difficult for the ordinary aspirant to comprehend as TAT (GOD) is an unknown factor. So the Gita deals with the situation in a practical manner and takes up first the TWAM i.e., the aspirant himself.

The first six chapters deal with the spiritual discipline of perfection for the individual (TWAM). The second six chapters delineate the glory and universality of the Absolute (TAT). It is the YOGA of Universalisation. The last six chapters deal with the paths, methods, techniques and disciplines needed to attain right and proper identification of the aspirant (TWAM) with the Absolute Universal (TAT). This equation is 'Asi' - i.e., a Yoga of right identification.

CHAPTER II

YOU ARE NOT THE BULB ; YOU ARE ELECTRICITY SUPREME

The instructions of the Lord start from verse 2 of this chapter. He starts by cutting at the very root of our ignorance by distinguishing the soul or spirit as apart from the body. All Sādhana presupposes a basic conviction that the body is the self and this causes all the sorrows and sufferings in this world. A Zero watt bulb in a room is unhappy and feels miserable that it has been born as a lowly insignificant bulb, while the other bulbs of 60W, 200W and 1000W are all very brilliant, more attractive and popular. The Zero watt bulb is ignorant that it is the same electricity from the same source that illumines it as also the other bulbs of 60W, 200W or 1000W. The day it realises that it is not the inert bulb with its limitations but the Electricity Supreme of infinite Wattage, it is freed from its sorrows and becomes self-realised. The bulb has a date of manufacture and it could be smashed to pieces one day and die but the Electricity illumining the bulb was never born nor will it die. The electricity never even gets bruised when the bulb is smashed to pieces. It is the same electricity which goes into all the bulbs and makes them function. If the bulb gets fused (dies), we may just throw it off and replace it with another bulb of either the same power or a higher one. One may call it as re-birth. Who is re-born? Death is a mere occasion when one discards the old worn-out clothes and wears a new one. The soul or self remains the same.

VĀSĀMSI JĪRNĀNI YATHĀ VIHĀYA
NAVĀNI GRHṆĀTI NARO' PARĀNI
TATHĀ ŚARĪRĀNI VIHĀYA JĪRNĀNY
ANYĀNI SAMYĀTI NAVĀNI DEHĪ ||

(II-22)

It was never born and it can never die. It cannot be pierced by weapons, or consumed by fire nor can it be corroded by air or water.

NAINĀMI CHINDANTI ŚĀSTRĀNI
NAINĀMI DAHAṬI PĀVAKAḤ
NA CAINĀMI KLEDAYANTYĀPO
NA ŚOŚAYATI MĀRUTAḤ ||

(II-23)

One may be an engineer, another a doctor and yet another a clerk. It is the same Self or God which goes into all these bodies and makes them function, irrespective of their ages, race, caste, country, qualifications and character. Who then can be your foe and who be your friend?

One principal Sādhana is to constantly contemplate on this and repeat to oneself again and again that "I am not the body which is subject to changes, old age and death. I am the Soul - the pure consciousness". For such a contemplation, Sankara's

वासोस जीर्णो न यथा वेहाय नवो न गुहोत नसिस्त्रिण ।
तथा शरीरेण वेहाय जीर्णो अन्यो न संयोत नवो न दहि ॥ (II-22)
नैनं छन्दन्ति शस्त्रोण नैनं दहेत विवकल ।
न चैनं लुदियन्त्याग्निं न शाषियेत मारुतल ॥ (II-23)

verses called "NIRVANA ŚĀTKAM" are excellent. The first verse is :-

Mano buddhyhankāra chittāni nāham
Na ca srotra jihve na ca ghrāna netre
Na ca vyoma bhūmih na tejo na vāyuh
Chidānanda rūpah Śivoham Śivoham.

(I am not the mind, intellect, ego or chitta
I am not the ear, tongue, nose or eyes
I am not the space, earth, fire or air
I am of the form of consciousness and Bliss
I am SIVA, I am SIVA)

The body of a man undergoes various changes from birth to death. From childhood he grows into boyhood, from boyhood to manhood and thence into old age. Every few years, a man's features change beyond recognition and all his constituent cells/tissues, skin etc. get renewed/replaced again and again. Nothing remains the same. Still the man has always been responding to the same name say Mr. X. What is it that has remained unchanged when the entire body-mind complex has been undergoing numerous transformations? It is only the I-thought or I-consciousness which has been remaining unchanged all through the years and responding

मनस्त्वेदं हंकारं चेतो न हं
न च शस्त्रि जलानि च घ्राण नानि
न च व्यापि भूमल न तजिनि वायुल
चेदानंदं रूहिलं शवाडिहं शवाडिहम्

to the name of Mr. X. Again this I - thought of Mr. X is not separate and distinct as it is the same consciousness which has inhabited the various bodies of Mr. Y, Mr. Z and others also.

Till such time as one does not recognise that one is not the body but is the Spirit or Soul which is aware of its own existence (hence it is in itself the very Awareness and Existence) and this is the one undifferentiated spirit which pervades all the bodies of all beings, one will continue to be involved in a series of births and deaths and consequently subject to all miseries and sorrows.

It is this one immortal spirit of Infinite power, unlimited in its scope, which pervades all the bodies and beyond them too (immanent as also transcendental) which is called the Self or God. When once a person ceases to identify himself with the limited, evanescent, inert and unreal body and realises his oneness with the all-pervasive and Infinite Overself (called also God) he is freed from all unhappiness and miseries and becomes all Bliss. This is known as Liberation (Mukti or Moksha) and is called by the terms Self-realisation or God-realisation. Due to ignorance (which is attributed to the deluding power of God termed as Māyā) man forgets his real form, limits himself to the tiny body full of limitations and becomes the individual soul (JIVA). The moment he wakes up to this reality and recognises his own true Self by surrendering the individual ego (I-sense) to the Overself or God (Paramatma) he gets liberated even while alive (not after death). He becomes a perfect man (STHITA PRAJNA) established in self-poise and in constant communion with God.

The aforesaid aspects do not constitute some mere philosophical theories for an intellectual appreciation. These are to be read again and again and constantly meditated upon. An unceasing meditation on the following Mantra alone is capable of leading us to liberation. **“I am not the body; I am the Self; I am all BLISS. I am SATCHIDANANDA”**. For attaining this state **one essential Sādhana is forbearance** i.e., to remain unaffected by either joy or sorrow, heat or cold, praise or censure and other pairs of opposites. The rest of this chapter and all the other chapters give the various types of Sādhana's to suit aspirants of different capabilities, tastes and proclivities.

Initially, no doubt, our scriptures enjoin us to perform actions categorised as good and to abstain from bad actions, the good deeds earning us merits (punyas) leading to enjoyment of pleasures and the bad deeds resulting in sins (pāpa) leading to experience of sorrows. Such a course, if followed for long, will lead us to interminable rounds of births and deaths to enable encashing the fruits of our merits and sins. The Gita, therefore, exhorts one to perform one's own duties which naturally fall to one's lot by virtue of his birth, environment, the station in life and other circumstances but with a difference as explained below. Such duties are termed as Swadharmā. All actions including Swadharmā have inbuilt reactions in the form of rewards for good deeds and punishment (sufferings) for bad deeds for reaping which one has to be embodied and reborn. Thus, all actions bind us to this phenomenal world as the fruits of actions are distributed only in subsequent births.

Thus, both good and bad actions entangle us in this world of misery. This can be avoided only if we cease to bother about the results of our actions and face with equanimity both success and failure, victory and defeat or gains and losses. In addition, we should develop tolerance and forbearance by not reacting to the pairs of opposites (DHWANDWĀS) like pleasure and pain. We can develop this mental attitude by contemplating and realising that pleasure, pain etc. are not permanent features. All these sensations are temporary, arise out of contact of our senses (eye, tongue etc.) with worldly objects and disappear in due course. So long as we do selfish actions (including Vedic rituals) for pursuit of our own material happiness and consider the enjoyment of worldly pleasures and power as the be-all and end-all of our life, our mind will never be steady but will be subject to waves of depression, despondency, despair etc. Many spiritual Sadhakas complain that when they sit for meditation the mind remains restless, full of various thoughts and refuses to do Japa (chanting of sacred syllables of God) or think of God continuously. So long as we remain slaves of desires for worldly enjoyments, wealth, power etc., our mind can never concentrate on God or get established in any type of meditation.

BHOGAISVARYA-PRASAKTĀNĀM-TAYĀ-PAHRTA CETASĀM
VYAVASĀYĀTMIKĀ BUDDHIḤ SAMĀDHOU NA VIDHIYATE
(II-44)

भोगीश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयाहितचतिसाम् ।
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिश्च समाधौ न वेधीयती ॥ (II-44)

Desires are all due to latent predilections or tendencies i.e., a pre-conditioning (Vasanas) which lie embedded in our computer-memory called Chitta. These can be quelled by exercise of our Will Power, strengthened by invoking God's help through prayers. Vasanas are not the unavoidable destiny. The unavoidable reactions to past deeds in previous births are called PRĀRABDHA and express themselves as good or bad events or happenings. These are generally infallible and cannot be prevented. Vasanas which are impressions of past actions (good or bad) taking the form of tendencies (good or bad) are aggressive advisers guiding our desires and consequent fresh actions which in their turn involve us in future births. These are capable of being overcome by exercise of our will power or other means. The main Sādhana prescribed by the Gita in the very beginning is as follows:-

Perform all actions but with an attitude of utter indifference to their returns (results). Do not be attached either to the action or to its results. Such an action will be rendered powerless to bind you. You rise above both good and bad. No sins will ever accrue to you.

This does not, however, mean that one should abandon all actions whatsoever and sit apparently quiet. One should not fall into inaction and try to escape from the duties which naturally befall one's lot.

KARMANYEVAĀDHĪKĀRASTE MĀ PHALEṢU KADĀCĀNA
MĀ KARMA-PHALA-HEṬUR-BHŪR-MĀ TE SAṄGOṢṬVA-KARMANI
(II-47)

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ति मा फलात्तु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा त्वास्तिस्त्वकर्मणे ॥ (II-47)

Performance of those duties which fall naturally to one's lot is necessary for purification of the mind (Chitra Suddhi) and for spiritual development. **But it should be done with the special technique of mentally detaching oneself from attachment to the results (failure or success) and by being indifferent towards the returns accruing from the actions.** Then the entire chemistry of the action is changed and its poisonous fangs rendered harmless. This is the secret of the path of action (KARMA YOGA) and this is also termed as BUDDHI YOGA (yoga of wisdom).

Lastly, in this chapter, Lord Krishna delineates the main qualities to be developed by a Sadhaka in order to become perfect, a STHITA PRAJNA - a man of steadfast mind (verses 55 to 71).

(i) Nip all materialistic ambitions and desires in the bud, in their very source even while they arise in the heart. Have no expectations or wants to be fulfilled from any external objects but be completely happy in remaining absorbed in the contemplation of the Self.

PRAJAHĀTI YADĀ KĀMĀN SARVĀN PĀRTHA MANOGATĀN
ĀTMANYEVĀTMANĀ TUṢṬĀH STHITA PRAJÑAS TADOCYATE

(II-55)

(ii) Do not react with fear, anger, unhappiness, joy etc. to any external stimulus or happening. Do not be overwhelmed by sorrows. Have no attachment to comforts and pleasures. Do not jump with joy when some good thing befalls you nor get overwhelmed and depressed when something bad happens.

प्रजहते यदा कामान्सर्वानीर्थं मनागितान् ।
आत्मन्यवितात्मना तुष्टह स्स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदाच्यिती ॥ (II-55)

This attitude can be cultivated by sheer persistent practice and a confidence that whatever happens is by GOD's will which is always for your ultimate good.

(iii) Turn away from and refuse to be attracted by any sense object. Whenever you find yourself attracted by any sense object - say a beautiful woman, a delicious dish, a haunting melody or an inebriating fragrance etc., deliberately withdraw your eyes, tongue, ears, nose etc. from those tempting objects with the ease of the tortoise which withdraws its limbs into its shell as soon as it apprehends an assault by men, animals, external objects, etc.

By repeated practice on each occasion, by tutoring your mind just like persuading a child and by discriminative enquiry (Vichara) about self and non-self (body, world etc.) the states mentioned above can be achieved.

This practice should be pursued deliberately. For instance whenever you get a favourite dish of yours - say Ice cream, say 'No' to it and abstain from taking it on a few occasions and later on permanently. Extend it to reading newspapers or fiction, smoking a cigarette, seeing T.V. etc. Innovate your own methods to control the senses. There are several more methods explained in later chapters like (1) Prayers to the Lord (2) surrendering oneself to the Lord by abandoning all sense of doership etc.

The importance of the control of senses for spiritual progress can never be over emphasised. In order to master the senses one should constantly think of God who is seated in one's heart as one's real Self.

CHAPTER III

ACT BUT NO ATTACHMENT PLEASE

(iv) Control the mind too. It is not enough if the senses are controlled. The mind may continue to brood over the worldly objects even after the senses have been physically withdrawn.

Sustained and continued thinking of worldly objects leads to attachment. Such an attachment will lead to anger and loss of rational thinking and ultimately to utter ruin. Turn the direction of the mind from the objects by restraining the senses of perception and action and keep the mind ever fixed on the Self (God).

Lastly, Lord Krishna sums up his recipe for peace of mind and absolute bliss in the following formula:-

VIHĀYA KĀMĀN YAH SARVĀN PUMĀMŚ CARATI NĪSPRĪHĀH
NIRMAMO NIRAHĀMIKĀRĀH ŚA ŚĀNTIM ADHIGACCHATI

(II-71)

Abandon all desires and accept all happenings. Be free from attachment (including to your own body). Remember you are not the doer. All events happen; you are a witness to and not a participant in all the happenings and actions which take place. Thus the ego is removed. Have no sense of possession. Just as you came into the world with no possession, so also you go out of it without taking any object with you. It is the sense of possession which creates attachment. If you practise this, all peace and bliss will be yours. What the Lord advocates in this very significant chapter is not inaction or absence of Karma but the practice of Nishkāma Karma i.e., action without attachment to results. This, in other words, has been described as “YOGAH KARMAŠU KAUSĀLAM”. (II-51) i.e., this type of KARMA YOGA is the expert way of doing action without the latter catching and binding us.

वहाय कामान्यह सर्वान्मिश्रत नहसुहिन ।
नर्मामि नरहकारह स शान्तिमेषगच्छत ॥ (II-71)

Gīta is a unique blessing for the modern world as it bestows on us a beautiful psychotherapy-like a device through which one can continue with one's worldly actions, say those of a householder. Here, simple psychological trick is involved i.e., renouncing one's attachment to the results of actions. It is not necessary for people to renounce all actions altogether and to take up monkhood (Sannyāsa) in order to succeed in the spiritual path. This idea given in the seed form in Chapter II is being expanded in Chapters III to V.

Neither abandoning all actions and resorting to inaction nor taking up formal Sannyāsa (renunciation) will lead to salvation. Absolute inaction is impossible for even a second as man's natural instinct (Guna) will compel him willy nilly to some action or the other. If a person were to restrain his senses of action viz. hands, legs etc. and sitting quietly goes on thinking of worldly objects, he will be called a 'hypocrite'. Hence restraining the senses in coordination with mind control is essential.

The secret of performing action successfully without being bound by it lies in dedicating all actions to the Lord and performing them for His sake. **One should divinise all day to day actions by offering them to the Lord.**

Perform your duties without attachment, for the sake of God, as a duty to the Lord. Such an action is a sacrifice (Yajna). This generous extension of the term 'Yajna' is an innovation of

the Gita. Whenever an action is shorn of any selfish interest and is offered to the Lord, it redounds to the good of the society and hence it is termed as Yajna. The Supreme Lord is verily present in all such yajnas and is thus realisable through them.

All benefits and enjoyments stem from the Divine who is pleased by the yajna and the one who revels in them without routing it back to the Divine through dedication of all actions to God will be considered as a thief. Such people become sinners.

However, those whose minds have already been purified by this Karma Yoga and have attained steadfastness of the mind by practice of the yoga of discriminative knowledge remain contented with the Self and have no duty to perform. Those knowers of the Self who are freed from the false identification of the Self with the body have no duty to perform except to remain established in Self awareness. They are not concerned about performing any action nor with non-performance. Despite their non-concern, such knowers of Self do continue to do actions in order to set an example to others and in the interests of mankind. Thus, as God himself is ever engaged in working for the welfare of the world, the enlightened persons also follow His example and perform actions for the welfare of the mankind. They are also careful not to unsettle the minds of those people who believe in Karma Yoga but on the contrary, encourage them to do their duties.

While all actions of a common man are being done by the senses of perception and the senses of action forming part of the body-mind complex, a creation of nature, he deludes himself into thinking “I am the doer of action”. This is because

of the fact that the false I (ego) appropriates the doership. **The sādhanā is to remain uninvolved in all actions by discriminating thus ‘I do not do any actions. All actions happen and I am only aware of them. The eye sees, the ear hears, the legs carry me and thus the respective senses are engaged in their respective actions. I do nothing’.** Such a repeated contemplation quells the ego and in the absence of the ego there cannot be any attachment. This is a method for cultivating non-attachment to the actions and their results.

To illustrate the aforesaid point, it is the legs which carry a person to the dining table, it is the hands which contact the plate and put the food in the mouth and it is the gullet which gulps down the food and catapults it into the stomach. The person has no right to say “I went to the dining room and took my lunch”. All beings act according to their nature, being impelled by likes and dislikes i.e., love and hatred. One should control these likes and dislikes. Otherwise they will give rise to desire (for action) and anger (if frustrated in one’s efforts to achieve one’s desire). Desire and anger are two great enemies of man, which cloud his wisdom and compel him to commit sinful deeds. The senses, mind and intellect are the abodes (source) of desire and anger. One should establish oneself by being absorbed in the Self by controlling the mind and the senses. This is the way to annihilate the two great enemies viz. desire and anger. One should free oneself from the tyranny of the senses, mind and intellect by taking complete refuge in the contemplation of the Self which is the supreme most.

CHAPTER IV

NON-ACTION IN ACTION

As it is difficult for a man to conceive of and contemplate on a formless and all-pervasive God, the Eternal Supreme Being manifests itself in a special way by taking birth among human beings as Rama, Krishna, Yamana and so on. This is called AVATAR (Incarnation) and it takes place whenever there is decline in righteousness, for re-establishing Dharma. Merely contemplating and trying to understand the secret behind the deportations (Leelas) of these incarnations of the Lord will lead us to salvation. Lord with form in the shape of incarnations and the formless Eternal being are both two sides of the same coin. It is easy to build up our faith on these embodied incarnations of the Divine whose Leelas could be a source of inspiration in our progress towards spirituality.

Sri Krishna Prem has quoted from Madame Blavatsky's 'The Voice of the Silence' that the Lord's incarnation is "the ladder whose feet rest deep in the deep mire of the disciples' sins and failings but whose summit is lost in the glorious light of Nirvana". The one who knows the secret of the Supreme being's incarnation and his sporting in the world does not have re-birth after casting off the body.

Thus, even the Lord has been engaged continuously in various actions for the benefit of mankind but has no hankering after the fruit of His actions. Naturally He is not touched by those actions.

This apparently new technique of Karma Yoga propounded in previous chapters is not an innovation of Lord Krishna but is a renovation of a hoary tradition of the past.

The one who has given up attachment to the results of action, even if he is engaged in action, should be considered as doing nothing. This is known as Non-action/Inaction in action. Even the enlightened man who may perform actions merely for the maintenance of the body or selflessly for the welfare of mankind, is to be considered as doing nothing. All his actions are only inactions as they are devoid of attachment and motive and are burnt away by the fire of his wisdom. The enlightened man is always aware that he is only the Self which is bereft of all actions.

YASYA SARVE SAMĀRAMBHĀH KĀMA-SAMKALPA-VARJITĀH
JĀNĀGNI-DAGDHA-KARMĀṆĀM TAMĀHŪH PANDITĀM BUDDHĀH

(IV-19)

Whenever any project is undertaken or action is performed for the sake of the Lord, dedicating it to Him, such action takes the form of a sacrifice or Yajna. It is considered as inaction. On the contrary, even when a person is apparently sitting quiet but in his ego is having the idea "I am happily seated quietly, without doing anything", that inaction is to be considered as action, as it has the capacity to bind him. **When once we do all actions for the sake of the Lord, we do them with perfection and love.** Whether a housewife, a professional, a businessman,

_____।
यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाह कामसंकल्पविरजिताह ।

ज्ञानोपदेशकर्मणि तमाहुह ण्डितं शुधाह ॥ (IV-19)

a clerk or someone else, he will never have job dissatisfaction nor feel his work a drudgery as he no longer works to satisfy his wife, children, bosses or others, but works for the Universal Master, who is his own.

A real dedication of every action to the Lord is when one does it with the full knowledge that the performance of the sacrifice, the act of offering, the oblation offered by the self into the fire of the self, are all manifestations of the Supreme Being (Brahman), with the goal being also that Brahman, the Eternal Self. In the ultimate, Eternal Self alone exists as the only reality and the vision of the entire world of beings and objects is an eternal cosmic drama where the entire stage, the seers, the actors, the drama script — all remain as His play of imagination just like our dreams. The seeker is the sought and also constitutes all the means of equipment with which he seeks. **Treat the entire life as a play or a drama where the Supreme Being itself plays all the roles, is the Director who guides the play and forms the audience too.** Then no desires, disappointments, grief or sufferings can ever assail you so long as you are constantly conscious of the Presence of God, the only truth behind all the Drama. This is a supreme technique which will lead one to salvation.

BRAHMĀRPAṆĀMĪ BRAHMA HAVĪR BRAHMĀGNAU BRAHMAṆĀ HUTAM
BRAHMAIVA TENA GANTAVYĀM BRAHMA-KARMA-SAMĀDHINĀ

(IV-24)

ॐ स्वाभिषं ॐ स्व हेर्वै स्वाग्नौ ॐ स्वाणा हुतम् ।
ॐ स्वैव तनि गन्तव्यं ॐ स्वकर्मसमोधना ॥ (IV-24)

This is a powerful Mantra which is recited daily in all Ashramas in the dining hall before taking food. The entire food becomes purified and becomes a Prasada, a gift from God.

In actual practice, all the following actions done selflessly constitute a sacrifice which washes off one's sins:-

1. **Restraining and controlling outgoing senses and vital breath (Pranayama).**
2. **Offering of Charity to the needy.**
3. **Undertaking austerities and meditative practices undertaken as an offering to the Lord.**
4. **Dedicating the entire life in pursuit of spiritual knowledge.**
5. **Sacrificing comforts by eating in moderation.**

The practice of such spiritualised actions wipes off earthly inclinations and temptations and the aspirant becomes fit for Self-realization. It is the only way to peace of mind. All actions done in this way lead one to the ultimate knowledge. The best among all types of sacrifices (including the vedic ritualistic sacrifices) is JNANA YAJNA i.e., dedicating the entire life in pursuit of the knowledge of the Self.

“ŚREYĀN-DRĀVYA-MAYĀD-YAJ-ĀJ-J-ĀNA-YAJ-AḤ PARAMTĀPA”

(IV-33)

श्रियान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञानज्ञानयज्ञह रिती ॥ (IV-33)

It is the Absolute knowledge which is pure consciousness and the only Reality. It masquerades as the world and individual souls (JIVA). On attaining this knowledge of the Self, all the inevitable reactions of Karmas (actions) of the past namely the rewards and punishments for the good and bad deeds committed and awaiting to be allotted in further births get burnt up i.e., become sterile.

One should seek this knowledge by approaching those self-realised seers who are established in the Self knowledge, with all humility and after prostrating and rendering service to the Guru, by enquiring about knowledge and ignorance, bondage and liberation etc.

TAD-VIDDHI PRANIPĀTENĀ PARIPRAŚNENĀ SEVAYĀ
UPADESKSYANTI TE JNĀNĀMĪ JĀNINĀS-TATVA-DARŚINĀḤ

(IV-34)

One has to strive for knowledge with full faith in Scriptures and Guru's words and with discipline.

When for once the ignorance is dispelled, actions will no more have the power to bind him. The one whose doubts have been cut asunder by the sword of knowledge, who has renounced his attachment to all actions mentally and who has self control remains immune to all bondage.

तेदं च प्रेणीतनि प्रियप्रश्ननि सविद्या ।
उदक्षिञ्चन्ति तं ज्ञानं ज्ञानस्तत्त्वदर्शनात् ॥ (IV-34)

15

It is not easy to separate “Sādhana’s” alone from the Gita as **a lot of portions which apparently look like theoretical philosophy are meant for contemplation and meditation which is the main sadhana.** One should not develop an intellectual approach to the wisdom revealed in the Gita. One has to develop an intuition, a feeling from the heart which alone can help one to grasp these profound truths which are beyond the capacity of the senses and mind to perceive.

DIVINISE DAILY ACTIONS

There are two methods of approach in the spiritual path:

(1) **Karma Yoga** : Performance of actions without attachment to the results dedicating them to the Lord with an implicit sacrificial attitude.

(2) **Sankhya Yoga** : Abandonment of all actions including obligatory duties and taking up monkhood (this is Sannyasa or Renunciation). In the former, the mind remains equipoised and peaceful, while the body is active. It is a beautiful synthesis of Action and Renunciation. Here one learns to remain at the storm centre while, all around, the storm rages. The one who is free from all likes and dislikes should be considered as a man of constant renunciation.

The ultimate goal of both the aforesaid paths is one and the same

Still the former (KARMA YOGA) is easier to practise than Sannyasa.

It is the false ego in the feeling of a separate ‘‘I-I’’ which is the centre of all attachments and all conditioning in the form of likes and dislikes. It flourishes by imagining that it is the doer of all actions and thus invites bondage. As already discussed in the previous chapter **one should strive to shake off the feeling of doership by remaining uninvolved as a mere witness. One**

should learn to look at all the actions done by the respective senses without a feeling of like or dislike. All actions are nature’s show and just happen. You are neither the actor nor the agent for any action. If you are travelling by train from Calcutta to Delhi, it is the train which moves and not ‘you’. If one adopts this attitude, one shall not be bound by the results of either good or bad actions which the body performs. One then rises beyond good and bad and ultimately gets freed once and for all from the interminable cycle of birth and death.

One should always contemplate that one is the Self. One’s intellect should be ever engaged in the contemplation of the Self. One should keep the realisation of the Self as one’s supreme goal in life and should be established in meditating on it. Such a person will never again associate the self with his body as he attains Self knowledge.

TADBUDDHAYAS-TADĀTMĀNAS-TANNIṢṬHĀS-TAT-PARĀYANĀH
GACCHANTYA-PUNARĀVRUTTIM JĀNA-NIRDHĪTAKALMAṢĀH

(V-17)

Every aspirant should cultivate the following characteristics of those who have attained self knowledge and given up all actions (i.e., monks):-

1. **Look upon all** - whether a dog, a learned scholar or a person of inferior caste - **with the same vision of equality.**
2. Do not jump with joy on getting something desirable or favourable nor get dejected with something unfavourable. **Let**

तदुद्भयस्तदात्मानस्तेनष्टास्तरीयणाह
गच्छन्त्युनिशवृत्तिं ज्ञानेनर्धृतकल्मषाह (V-१७)

MEDITATE AND REALISE

the mind ever remain steadfast in the contemplation of the Supreme being.

3. Detach your mind from all external objects and attach it **only to the Supreme being** (i.e., constantly meditate on the Supreme being and its attributes to the extent and in the manner described in the Upanishads and Gita). Contemplate on the fact that all enjoyments which one experiences from the external objects through one's senses are of a temporary nature and often result only in miseries.

4. While alive, **exercise your free will and restraint and withstand the impulsive surges of desire and anger**. Do not allow yourself to be overwhelmed by them. This is also a formula for getting happiness and liberation

ŚAKNOTĪ-HAIVA YAḤ SODHUMĪ PRĀK ŚARĪRAVIMOKṢANĀT
KĀMAKRODDBHAVĀM VEGAM SA YUKTAHĒ SA SUKHI NARAH
(V-23)

Those seers who keep the senses under control and are engaged in actions redounding to the welfare of all beings attain liberation.

5. One should always meditate on the Lord as the controller of all the worlds, the enjoyer of fruits of all selfless sacrificial actions done by the aspirants and the benefactor and friend of all creatures. This leads one to ultimate peace when once he is able to realise these attributes of Lord through spiritual experience.

श०नतिरिहैव यन्न सादृिं प्राक्शरीरेवमाक्षिणात् ।
कामक्राधिद्विवं वणिं स युक्तन्न स सुखी नरन्न ॥ (५-२३)

According to certain commentators, the entire Gita is an exposition of the great aphorism (TAT TWAM ASI) 'You are that'. This chapter is the transition from the yoga of purification of the aspirant (TWAM) to the Yoga of illumination or revelation of that (TAT). It starts with Meditation as a technique of mental discipline in order to raise the consciousness to the higher levels leading to enlightenment. Actions like daily obligatory rites and other duties are necessary preliminaries to the yoga of meditation. Action without attachment to its fruit is essential in the early stages of Sādhana, for the purification of the mind from the accumulated negative tendencies. Then only he gets **established in detachment** and can forsake all planning for actions without any thoughts of desires motivating him to action. At this stage, a complete withdrawal from all actions (i.e., inaction) is necessary as a means for remaining poised in the state of meditation.

Another essential quality necessary for being established in meditation (Dhyān) is to give up likes and dislikes, preferences and prejudices etc., and to treat all men alike. One's mind should **remain equipoised** without likes or dislikes towards friend or foe, joy or sorrow, heat or cold, praise or censure, etc. So long as the mind is swayed by desires, feelings of hatred, hostility, comfort, discomfort and selfish attachment to those who are one's favourites or other external objects, it will not settle down and concentrate on God. The thoughts will again and again veer round to those to whom we are attached or those whom we hate. One should, therefore, **seek solitude**, keep his mind under control and should be freed from desires, greed, attachment and sense of possession.

One should choose a clean place for meditation, neither too high nor too low and cover the place for seating by spreading KUSA grass, deer skin and a cloth - one over the other. This is necessary in order to avoid dissipation of the energy by getting earthed, the Kusa grass etc., serving the purpose of insulation. **One should keep the body, neck and head upright to ensure free activity of Heart, Lungs and Pranic energy (Vital breath).** This type of posture without being tense is necessary for guiding the mind inwards. **One may direct his eyes mentally to the tip of the nose and concentrate on the Lord, keeping the body firm** (free from shaking or any such movement). The mind should be **free from tension, agitation and lustful thoughts.** He should be **firm in his vow of celibacy and avoid dissipation of sensual energy.**

As food and sleep are factors which influence our mind and meditation, **moderation** in both is advocated. **Extremes in either taking too much food or resorting to fasting and either sleeping too much or keeping awake most of the night are to be avoided.** One should keep to the middle path. This applies to engagement in activities and movements too.

When the mind is free from all desires being restrained through the practice of YOGA and rests on Self alone, the mind becomes concentrated and steady like a lamp in a windless place and free from the blasts of wind. Attaining this state is the greatest of all gains. When once established in this state, no sorrows, hardships or sufferings, however great, will be capable of assailing him.

In this yogic path, perseverance in bringing the mind which goes towards various objects or incidents back to the Self again and again is very essential.

The yogi who is established in his Self through the aforesaid practice will have an equal vision and will be able to identify himself with all beings. He will see his own self in all beings and will see all beings in the Lord (Self).

The question arises as to how to control the mind (which is the main base for Sadhana). As per Lord Krishna, the mind can be completely subdued only by repeated practice of remembering God's name (bringing the mind again and again to the Lord as many times as it goes astray) and through detachment i.e., abandoning all desires for enjoyment of worldly objects.

Arjuna asks a very relevant question as to what happens to an aspirant who lacks in perseverance and sustained effort and whose mind gets deflected from the path of yoga. Lord Krishna assures him that to the extent the aspirant had done Sadhana, it will be carried over to his credit and will never be lost. After residing in several celestial regions of enjoyment, such a fallen aspirant will after several births be born in the house of the pious and the prosperous. Otherwise, he could be born in the family of yogis. He will be endowed with the wisdom acquired by yoga in the previous births and will automatically strive for perfection.

CHAPTER VII

HE IS ALL

While the 3rd to 5th chapters opened the doorway of KARMA-YOGA (Action) for God-realisation, the 6th chapter opened the doorway for meditation (DHYĀNA). In the current chapter, the third door viz. the path of Devotion and surrender is being opened. Even though so many paths exist, it is only one among several thousands who begins to strive for reaching the Lord and out of those who strive, it is a rare one who perseveres till he succeeds in God realisation.

All the creation in the universe is constituted of two things - the indivisible Atman (Self) and the eightfold forms of Prakṛti the divine dynamic power of the Lord called also as Māya. The eightfold forms are earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect and ego ('I' sense). The Lord is the Alpha and Omega of all things in the universe and the ultimate source. It is this Universal Self which has also become the individual soul called JĪVA. The effulgence of the Sun and the Moon, the essence of the five elements, the intellect of the wise, the strength of the strong, the life-breath in all beings, the austerity of the ascetics, etc., - all these are but the play of the Lord who is pure consciousness. The desideratum of all things in this universe is this one Consciousness. In this context it will be relevant to quote the following from the Gospel, according to Thomas, discovered in NAG HAMMADI cave in EGYPT in 1945.

“I am the light which is over everything. I am the All. From me the All has gone forth and to me the All has returned. Split the wood, I am there. Lift the stone and you will find me.”

It is because of the play of Māya - the projecting power of the Lord which is made up of three modes (gunas) - Satwa, Rajas and Tamās that we see so much variety and difference between object and object and get conditioned into liking or disliking these objects. Such likes and dislikes propel us into actions which bind us, resulting in sorrows and sufferings. **If we want to escape from the clutches of Māya, unconditional surrender with devotion to the Lord, accepting whatever happens through His will as supreme is the only way.**

“DAIVI HYĒṢA GUṆAMAYĪ MAMA MĀYĀ DURATYAYĀ
MĀMEVA YE PRAPADYANTE MĀYĀM-ETĀM TARANTI TE”

(VII-14)

Surrender is annihilation of the ego by unconditionally subjugating oneself to the universal self who should be seen in all forms and objects. Devotion is completely channelising all emotions of the heart towards God. This is the main base for all Sādhanaṣ.

We may approach the Lord in any one of the four attitudes given below:-

- (i) **considering Lord as the saviour** after having been afflicted by distress, sorrows and sufferings.
- ii) **seeking Lord** out of a scientific curiosity.
- iii) **seeking fulfillment** of desires.
- iv) **seeking wisdom.**

All these categories are considered as devotees.

दैवी शक्ति गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामत्रि यत्रि प्रीष्टन्त्रि मायामतिं तत्रेत् त्रि ॥ (VII-14)

Even the habit of seeking material desires from God will, in due course, strengthen our faith in and devotion to God and ultimately lead us to the supreme goal.

In Lord's eyes, the seeker of wisdom (JNĀNI) is the perfect devotee as he is deemed the very self of the Lord. But the JNĀNI has to slog for many births before he could realise that all this is verily Krishna - the Self and thus attain the Lord.

All the various gods which people worship in order to get material gains are but the limited editions of the one unlimited Infinite being. It is the supreme Lord who kindles the devotion in the worshippers of these gods and also grants the desires in the form of those gods. Such worshippers gain limited results. The devotees who worship Him as the unlimited pure Consciousness reach their supreme goal of perennial happiness, while others get only limited and temporary benefits. Even when a person worships gods like SIVA, RAMA, KRISHNA etc. he should do it with the attitude that he is worshipping the Supreme Brahman only through all those forms or names.

One should realise that it is the Supreme Being who has become the world as well as the individual soul (JĪVA). The appearance of manifold objects is a sheer illusion due to the projective power of His Maya. **Those who strive by taking refuge at the Lord's feet will ultimately realise, at the time of death, Brahman as being all the individual entities, all actions and as the Reality underlying the individual self and the entire world.** This is one type of meditation suitable to those who are unable still to develop full dispassion towards the world and its objects.

CHAPTER VIII

OH DEATH! WHERE IS THY STING?

The fear of death is the most overwhelming and frightening sensation in the minds of most of the people especially when they grow older.

This chapter gives the technique of realization at the last moments of life so that we could attain bliss, peace and immortality.

But one cannot afford to be careless and complacent till the last moments of one's life. Unless this technique is practised diligently all through one's life, it cannot be wielded at the death bed.

All manifestation springs from the limitation of Brahman, the Supreme being who is beyond all and stands alone as imperishable. He is neither the subject (seer) nor the object (seen). He, by his power of Maya, becomes the subject and sees himself as the objects. The Brahman which projects itself as the transcendent subject (called ADHYĀTMA) manifesting as the individual soul (JĪVA) residing in each body, stands in another aspect as the eternal object (MOOLA PRAKṚTI) also, which becomes the unmanifest source of the manifest world of forms which goes on changing all the time (called the physical entity i.e., Adhi Bhutam). On the other hand, Brahman also remains the witnessing consciousness in all the beings, as the indweller (ADHI DAIVĀTAM) Purusha. The universal self, the subtle centre from which all beings get their sense power is the (Adhi Daivatam) DIVINE ENTITY.

Because of this two fold nature of Brahman manifesting as the consciousness (Chaitanya) and the insentient (jada) body

(which is part of the world of forms), even at the critical hour of death one identifies oneself with the mortal form called body and not with the immortal. It is the imagination that we are the body which has involved us in disasters and it is again through the imagination identifying ourselves with the immortal that we can get out of this mess. As a man thinketh so he becomes.

Remembering the Lord at the time of death is the surest way to reach Him. But only he who strives all through his life with continuous practice of meditating on the Lord with an one pointed mind will be able to remember God at death bed. Otherwise, the remembrance of all the worldly activities and relatives to whom we were attached all through our life will only come before the mind's eye. Whatever thoughts come to the mind at the time of death, they alone will influence the nature of subsequent life and rebirth. Constant and one pointed remembrance of the God till death is the key to liberation.

All through life, an aspirant has to fight against all negative tendencies (accumulated as Vāsanas) inherited as a legacy from previous births but if he constantly remembers Him and invokes His presence while fighting, success is assured.

“TASMĀT-SARVEṢU KĀLEṢU MĀM ANUSMARA YUDHYA CA”
(VIII-7)

Bhakti or devotion expressing itself as constant remembrance of the Lord is the best way to reach the Lord. One can meditate on the Lord as the Omniscient, the Ancient, the Over-ruler of all beings, the one who is subtler than the minutest particle, the sustainer of all, one of inconceivable form, self-luminous and beyond all darkness:-

तस्मान् सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च । (VIII-7)

KAVIM PURĀṆAM-ANU-ŚĀSITĀRAM
ANORANĪYĀMŚAM-ANUSMARED-YAḤ
SARVASYA DHĀTĀRĀM ACINTYA-RŪPAM
ĀDITYA-VARṆAM TAMASAḤ PARASTĀT.

(VIII-9)

This is a beautiful verse to meditate upon.

OM is the nearest symbol of the Supreme being. **Close the gates of senses by withdrawing the consciousness and keep the mind merged in thoughts of the Lord, while concentrating on the heart centre, at the time of death. Chant OM and leave the body.** Thus one could reach the highest state wherefrom there will be no return to Samsāra.

Loving devotion with an anguishing heart towards the beloved who is the higher Self is a great force which can take one to the supreme abode of peace and bliss wherefrom there is no return.

There are two paths by one or other of which all souls go forth - the path of light and the path of darkness. The soul of the one who has practised remembrance of the Lord all his life will go through the bright path of consciousness from light to light to the ultimate abode of Brahman. The one who has been involved in activities (sacrifices etc.) throughout his life and has not practised constant devotion to the Lord goes through the smoky and dark path and has to come back and experience the cycles of birth and death again and again.

कविं शृणुमनुशोसतारम् अणारिणीयांसमनुस्मरद्विह ।
सर्वस्य धातारमेचन्त्यस्मि ओदत्य वर्णं तमसह रिस्तात् ॥

(VIII-9)

CHAPTER IX LORD, UNTO YOU I DEDICATE ALL I DO

This chapter has been labelled as RAJA YOGA - the royal path leading to the Supreme. The main message of this chapter is to dedicate all actions to the Lord and to surrender oneself to Him. For instance if we eat food for the satisfaction of the palate, for its taste, it becomes a latent impression in the mind, motivating the future actions remaining as latent tendencies (Vāsanas). It results in rebirth with another body to satisfy these latent desires. Instead, **if we dedicate our food, mentally offering it to the Lord seated in our hearts, it becomes a gift (Prasada) from the Lord** and its effect is something unique and it purifies our body. Similarly when a housewife cooks and does odd jobs for the husband and children, if she dedicates such acts to the Lord and lovingly performs them as an offering to Lord Krishna in the form of her children and husband, she will never get tired or disgusted with her job. Whether you are in Government service or in private employment you should consider all the activities as Projects of the Lord, the only master and as products of his Divine Will. Dedicate all the fruits to Him and do not bother about recognition, increment, promotion, etc., Such acts will cease to cause job dissatisfaction and disgust. You will continue to do them with a divine fervour and an attitude of love and perfection.

“YAT-KAROṢI YAD AŚNĀSI YAJUHOṢI DADĀSI YAT
YAT-TAPASYASI KOUNTEYA TAT-KURUṢWA MADARPAṆAM”

(IX-27)

यत्करोषि यदश्रोस यजुहोषि ददोस यत् ।
यत्तपस्येस कौन्तेयि तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ (IX-27)

“Whatever be your activity, whether it be eating, a sacrificial act, giving charity or austerities, dedicate them all to me”.

This is one of the Sādhana capsules where Lord compresses certain effective methods for God-realisation. Gita abounds in such capsules.

It is the Lord who has pervaded the whole world in his unmanifest form. He has created the world through his power of Māya called PRAKṚTI and is also its sustainer.

When once we understand this, it becomes easier to dedicate all our acts to Him. When the Lord takes a human form as Krishna or Rama etc. foolish people full of demoniacal tendencies tend to disregard him.

The devotees (Bhaktas) worship the Lord by singing His glory, surrendering themselves to Him with constant devotion and striving to please Him with firm vows helpful in controlling the senses. Even such formal worship of the personal God (SAGUNA) is quite easy as the Lord is not concerned with big costly offerings but with the attitude and intensity of devotion of the devotee. He is well satisfied with the offering of a mere leaf, a flower, a fruit or water even.

“PATRAMI PUSHPAMI PHALAM TOYAM YO ME BHAKTYĀ PRAYACCHATI
TAD AHAM BHAKTYUPAHRĪTAM-AŚNĀMI PRAYATĀTMANAḤ”

(IX-26)

Even the other gods whom ignorant persons worship as different from the Supreme one, are in reality the limited editions of the one Supreme. But so long as people worship them without

त्रिं ऋषिं फलं तायिं यामि भो●त्या प्रयच्छेत् ।
तदहं भो●त्युहितमश्रोम प्रयतात्मनह ॥ (IX-26)

proper knowledge of the reality, they will get only limited and temporary fruits. All dedication and worship is to be done to that formless one Supreme Being only.

Lord Krishna guarantees in no uncertain terms that he looks after and secures the material welfare of all those devotees who worship the Lord everywhere (in all objects) as an all pervasive infinite Reality, and thus ceaselessly think of the Lord without harbouring any other thought being ever zealously engaged in His worship. In other words if one is to be engaged completely with the Lord, he need not bother about taking care of his body or of those dependent on him. Lord himself will see that all the needs of such aspirant are met from time to time.

“ANANYAS - CINTAYANTO MAM YE JANAH PARYUPASATE
TESAM NITYABHIYUKTANAM YOGAKSEMAM VAHAMY AHAM”
(IX-22)

Lord Krishna holds out hope even for people with extremely bad conduct that if only they were to worship the Lord with one pointed devotion, soon enough they develop a virtuous mind and will ultimately attain everlasting peace.

The aspirant who sacrifices his self for the beloved Lord by keeping his mind solely fixed on him as the supreme goal and surrenders himself with devotion reaches his goal.

MANMANA BHAVA MADBHAKT0 MADYAJEE MAM NAMASKURU
MAME VAISHYASI YUKTVAIVA-MATMANAM MAT-PARAYANANA
(IX-34)

अनन्योश्चन्तयन्तां मीं यी जनाह रिगिसती
ताषीं ेन्त्योभयु०तानां यागिक्षिमीं वहाम्यहम् (IX-22)

ममना भव मद०तां मद्याजी मीं नमस्कुरु ।
मामवैश्येस यु०त्वैवमान्मानं मतरियणह ॥ (IX-34)

CHAPTER X SEEK HIM IN ALL CREATION AND REALISE HIS GLORY

This chapter provides us with a method of contemplation on the Supreme Lord as pervading all the countless objects of the Universe, by learning to see His august presence in all the gross objects at first. **Through such constant contemplation day and night one comes to feel that the entire world is one's own self.** This technique will make dedication and surrender to the Lord easier. **Learning to recognise the Lord in the entire world around us is the first step towards developing the vision of unity of all souls.** (EKĀTMA BHĀVA).

God is the ultimate source and life of all and all the world revolves around Him. All beings come forth from Him and finally return into Him. All the positive and negative modifications of the mind, for example, happiness, unhappiness, tolerance, truth, austerity, fear, fearlessness etc. all originate from the Lord because they are all visible only through the reflection of His light. When we meditate in this way on the Lord with loving consciousness constantly and with intense devotion, spend all the time talking about the Lord, and revel in recounting to each other Lord's glories, the wisdom dawns in the intellect which perceives the one thread passing through all the objects of the Universe. Then the entire perception changes in an astonishing manner.

“MACCHITTA MADGATA-PRĀNA BÓDHAYANTAH PARASPARAM,
KATHAYANTAS CA MĀMI NITHYAM TUŠYANTI CA RAMANTI CA”
(X-9)

मेच्यता मदतप्राणा ेधियन्तह रिसीम् ।
कथयन्तश्च मीं ेत्सं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥ (X-9)

The reflection of the Lord's glory is best evident in all those objects which are pre-eminent in their category - for example, Mind among all the senses, Sun among the luminaries, Mount Meru among the various peaks, the ocean among the vast expanses of water, the sacred syllable 'OM' among all the words, chanting of Mantra (Japa) among all sacrificial acts, Himalaya among the immovables, Lion among animals, Ganges among the rivers and so on. He is the beginning, end and middle of all creation. There is nothing moving or non-moving which can exist without Him.

He is death, destroyer of all. He is speech, beauty, memory, intelligence, courage and forbearance.

In all things pre-eminent among gods, men or sages, animate or inanimate objects and various modifications of the mind, one can see the divine glory shining forth as beauty, bliss or other excellence. In whichever field we see somebody outstanding or excelling all others eg. the best cricket player, the best singer, etc., God's manifestation is more prominent in him. The Lord is immanent in every particle of the world and transcendent too. A meditation on the whole of the creation on the lines indicated above will lead to God Realisation.

CHAPTER XI

OH ! WHAT A COSMIC VISION

In this chapter, Lord Krishna showers His grace on Arjuna and reveals his visible cosmic form fit for contemplation. The person who has practised with diligence and faith all the Sadhanas contemplated in earlier chapters reaches a stage where he is graced with a glimpse of the vision of the cosmic form of God. It is a form which can only be seen with the inner eye developed through a lot of spiritual Sādhana and more especially through the Grace of God.

It burst upon the gaze of Arjuna as a dazzling splendour as though ten thousand suns were blazing simultaneously.

“DIVI SŪRYA-SAHASRASYA BHAVED-YUGAPAD-LTTHITĀ”

(XI-12)

Arjuna saw the entire universe though diversely differentiated into groups of gods, human beings, animals etc. but united in that cosmic form. He was in rapture mixed with terror. All forms were seen to pass. All the humans who were attached to their form and body were getting pulverised in the Divine form and all vanished in the void. It was a boundless form without beginning or end with thousands of all consuming mouths and thousands of all seeing eyes. All the hundred sons of Dhrtarashtra, and the mighty warriors like Bhishma and Drona who were all clinging to materialistic ideals were all swallowed up in the grinding

देव सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवद्भृगुदृष्टिता (XI-12)

wheels of time. Arjuna beholds the omnipresent Lord who pervades all time (past, present and future) and all space above, below and everywhere. It is an all embracing vision of God which included all good and evil, beautiful and ugly, pleasant and frightening. Arjuna looks at the form with a reverent attitude and hymns of praise come out of his mouth, while he remains in ecstasy.

“Oh Lord, Salutations to you on all sides indeed. You are all. Your strength and glory is infinite. You interpenetrate and pervade everything.”

NAMAḤ PURAŚTĀD-ĀTHA PRṢṬHĀTAS-TE
NAMOŚTUTE SARVĀTA EVA SARVAM
ANANTĀVĪRYĀMITĀVIKRAMAS-TWAM
SARVAM SAMĀPNOŚI TATOŚI SARVAH”

(XI-40)

This is a beautiful hymn helpful for meditation and invoking the presence of the Lord all around us.

Such a vision is possible only when an aspirant links every object with the Lord and establishes a link of all consuming and unswerving love with God.

This chapter is not to be approached intellectually. After being established in the Sādhana (spiritual practices) envisaged in

नमह्ं रुरिस्तादथ्ं षुष्रितस्तां
नमांरिस्तु त्ति सर्वत एव सर्वं
अनन्तवीर्योमतेवक्रमस्त्वम्
सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोसि सर्वह्ं (XI-40)

the earlier chapter, we should identify ourselves with Arjuna, get into his mood and state, and recite all the hymns of praise sung by him. We shall be able to see then the cosmic form of God with tears flowing from our eyes. The entire mind becomes pure.

According to ŚANKARA, the last verse of this chapter is the very essence of GĪTĀ. Here is summed up all the Sādhana to be practised for realisation of GOD:

- 1) **Perform all actions for my sake by dedicating them to me and by surrendering the fruits to me.**
- 2) **Ceaselessly think of the Lord and concentrate all love, devotion and desires towards the Lord.**
- 3) **Do not have any attachment to any other objects of the world or forms or persons.**
- 4) **Entertain no hatred or enmity towards anybody. Freely forgive them for their offences and lapses, if any, and pray for their welfare. External harmony is a must for internal harmony. So long as attachment or hatred exists, the mind will remain in agitation and meditation on the Lord will not be possible.**

“MATKARMAKRN-MATPARMO MADBHAKTAḤ SAṄGAVARJITAḤ
NIRVAIRAḤ SARVABHŪTESU YAḤ SA MĀMETI PĀNDAVA”.

(XI-55)

मत्कर्मकृन्मतरिमांि मद्भ्र०तह्ं सवेर्जितह्ं
नेर्वैरह्ं सर्वभूताषु यह्ं स मामते णिण्डव (XI-55)

LORD, I WANT YOU ALONE

A normal aspirant finds it easier to start his Sadhana with a personal God—a God endowed with all excellent attributes in an imagined corporeal form. It is **difficult for many to conceive** of a formless Absolute as the Supreme God. The Absolute Supreme being is the only Reality which is immanent in all manifestations and in the unmanifest state. He responds also to any name and form through which we seek and worship him. **The personal God (Saguna) worship is easier but it needs the impersonal Absolute (Nirguna) to complete it.** The Saguna and Nirguna aspects of the Lord are the two sides of the same coin. Personal God is the formless Absolute reflected through Prakriti, the power of Lord's Maya.

Both the paths ultimately lead to the same goal. The one Overself is manifest in the hearts of all. In Saguna worship we use all the senses towards God while in the Nirguna we start by exercising control over the senses.

Now that Lord Krishna after having spoken of the formless God pervading the entire world showed Arjuna His cosmic form, the latter raises the question as to which path is better—meditating on the form of the Lord or meditating on the unmanifested Absolute.

Love is the key lying in men's hearts which can open the door of God's Grace. According to Lord Krishna, those who meditate constantly on the Lord's form with steadfast devotion and deep faith are the most perfect Yogis. Those men of knowledge who worship the Immutible Absolute also reach the

same goal as other devotees but they have to struggle harder and it is with difficulty that they reach the goal.

The devotees perform all actions not for themselves but for the sake of the Beloved. Those who meditate on the formless Supreme are always engaged in selfless activities relating to the welfare of all the beings (SARVA BHUTA HITE RATAH).

One should offer the mind united with the intellect to the Lord. In other words one should stop intellectual cogitations and allow both mind and intellect to sleep on the lap of the Lord. One would then begin to live in Lord Himself.

“MAYYEVA MANA ADHATVA MAYI BUDDHIM NIVEŚAYVA
NIVASIṢṬYASI MAYYEVA ATA ŪRDHVAM NA SAMŚAYAH”

(XII-8)

If the aspirant finds it impossible to quieten the mind and intellect, again and again he should train up the mind till it learns to live in the Lord alone. If this repetitive practice is also found to be difficult, all actions should be done for Lord's sake. This will result in purification of the mind. In case this performance of action for Lord's sake is also found to be impossible, all activities or duties should be done without any expectation of results or returns.

The knowledge relating to the Lord with forms resulting in dedication of the mind and intellect is greater than repeated practice. But continued meditation on that Lord is superior to

मय्यवि मन आधत्स्व मेयुद्धं नवशिय ।
नवेस्यसे मय्यवि अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयह ॥ (XII-8)

this knowledge. Abandoning the desire for fruits of actions is even superior to meditation. Thus Lord Krishna has emphasised that abandoning the fruits of actions is in no way inferior, though having been given as the fourth alternative earlier, but it is superior even to the knowledge (of personal God) and meditation and this can lead one to permanent peace. According to Sankara, the path of action is not suitable for the meditator on the formless (as he is aware that God is the same as self) and similarly meditation on the immutable is not possible for a Karma yogi engaged in action. Karma Yoga presupposes perception of duality and is not associated with full enlightenment.

Lord Krishna recounts here all the virtues which are the direct means for immortality to those monks who meditate on the immutable Absolute (this is according to Sankara). Many, however, consider them as the characteristics required of those devotees (BHAKTAS) who adopt the path of devotion. We will find that most of these qualities are identical with those enumerated for persons of steady wisdom (STHITA PRAJNA) as given in chapter-II and those who have transcended the three modes (GUNAS) - i.e., GUNĀTTRĀS as given in chapter 14. So, whoseover wants to have God realisation, irrespective of the path he adopts, should develop all these qualities.

1. **Do not have hostility or ill-will towards anybody but be friendly towards all. Show compassion to the distressed but remain without attachment and possessiveness.**
2. **Leave off ego.**
3. **Be unaffected by joy and sorrow and remain even minded.**
4. **Develop forbearance and contentment.**

5. **Be firm and persevere in your efforts.**
6. **Keep your mind and intellect always on the Lord.**
7. **Never cause any offence to anybody and do not also get disturbed by or take offence from others.** Remember that nobody can disturb you except yourself.

“YASMĀN-NODVĪATE LOKO LOKĀN-NO DWĪATE CA YAH
HARṢĀ-MARṢĀ-BHAYODWEGAIR-MUKTO YAH SA CA ME PRIYAH”

(XII-15)

8. **Never have any expectations from any external sources.**
As everybody wants to proceed towards perfection, be perfect in every action.
9. **Be indifferent towards all events and happenings taking them all as part of the cosmic drama.** Taking all events as motivated by Lord's will, never feel pain or sorrow at any time. Whatever happens by Lord's will is for our ultimate good.
10. **Never start any project by yourself.** God has not given you any contract for uplifting or instructing other people. Let you be concerned with your own spiritual progress and when once you are enlightened, the welfare of all the beings becomes your concern.
11. **Rise above good and evil, joy and sorrow, desires and disappointments.**

यस्मान्नाद्विजती लोकाणि लोकिनाद्विजती च यः ।
हर्षामर्षभयाद्विनिर्मुक्तो ति यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ (XII-15)

12. Have an equal attitude towards friends or foes, honour or dishonour, heat or cold, praise or censure, joy or sorrow.

13. Do not have any attachment (except towards the Lord). Keep silent. Be content with whatever you get. Do not strive to have better things or more quantity. Have the Lord as your only refuge and keep your mind firmly on the goal.

Such devotees as possess any of these qualities are extremely dear to the Lord. These qualities have been termed as the Divine nectar of virtuous living (Dharmyāmṛitam). Even if one acquires and gets firmly established in any one of these, others will all follow automatically.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PLAYGROUND OF THE SELF

Gita can be divided into 3 stages of six chapters each as described by Sri KRISHNAPREM (RONALD NIXON).

1st to 6th Chapter - The way of purification i.e., refining the antenna to enable it to grasp the subtlest knowledge.

7th to 12th Chapter - The way of illumination of the Eternal.

13th to 18th Chapter - The way of Unity. (Merging of the individual in the Universal).

The 13th Chapter starts by distinguishing the self from the non-self, the body from the spirit, the unmanifest power of God (Prakriti) from the soul (Purusha), the knower from the known. Such a discrimination of self from the non-self is absolutely essential in order to cultivate detachment from the world and to enable abandoning the desire for fruits of all actions. This chapter finally delineates twenty basic values of life which are essential for day to day living for any common man. Unless such values are developed and a continuous spiritual practice established, one will not be able to get rid of the demoniacal tendencies of mind in order to reach the heights of realisation. These basic virtues for a common man are designed for self-improvement, to improve his inner life, to unfold his potential and to put his inter-personal relationships in society on a better footing. The entire Gita is a way of life leading to permanent happiness.

Body is the field (Kshetra) where by sowing the right seeds, viz. the divine qualities (to be enunciated in chapter XVII), one can overcome the defects leading to sorrows and suffering. The individual soul is the gardener who knows all about the field (Kshetraina). The body as also the objective world are all non-self while the spirit functioning inside is the Self. In a workshop, there are various machines (likened to the body and objective world). It is the one electricity running through all the machines, which does all the functions in the diverse machines (like the Kshetraina). The body is different and it is an object of knowledge. The individual soul is God Himself. The Lord as the material cause of all objects is called Prakriti or Māya. As the intelligent cause, He is called PURUSHA.

We are not the body. The Body is only an instrument. It is not an end but the means.

The field, the content of our experience, has been analysed into 24 constituent principles (TATWA) - the five great elements like earth, water and air, the five contents of sense experience viz. smell, taste, form, touch and sound, eleven senses of action and perception including the mind, the ego centre, the intuitive intellect and the great unmanifested matrix of all forms (Moola Prakriti) on which the entire universe is built. Desires, enmity or hatred, joy, sorrow, intelligence, body with the organs and fortitude are all termed as field (Kshetra) - the playground of the Self.

The basic values necessary for everyday living are:-

1. Humility :- It is because of our ego that we get hurt and often come into conflict with others.

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- 2. Absence of Hypocrisy :-** If we perform some actions only for showing off and impressing others, we won't be successful in achieving our purpose.
- 3. Non-Violence :-** Through mind, body and speech.
- 4. Forbearance :-** One should bear no illwill or grudge against anybody and one should freely forgive those who give offence. Otherwise, such feelings of hostility will result in psychosomatic diseases and the mind will never have any peace.
- 5. Straight Forwardness :-** Any insincere or crooked act of ours will fail to endear us to anybody.
- 6. Service to the Teacher.**
- 7. Cleanliness :-** One should keep himself clean externally by washing, taking bath etc., and internally by avoiding negative tendencies like anger, hostility etc.
- 8. Steadfastness :-** Persevering in any task without a wavering mind is a sure way to success.
- 9. Self Control :-** One should never become a slave to the temptations of senses as any immoderation in sleep, food etc. will produce physical ailments besides becoming a barrier to spiritual progress.
- 10. Absolute Dispassion** towards objects of senses.
- 11. Renunciation of Ego :-** The ego mainly plays the part of the doer and experienter. To remain unconcerned while doing an act and to think again and again "I am not the doer. I am not the experienter. Things just happen due to the will of God and the respective senses do their job" ensures peace of mind.

12. One should **repeatedly reflect** on the evils of the life in this phenomenal world - e.g., birth, death, decrepitude and miseries.
13. **Non-attachment** to children, wife, house etc.
14. **Non-involvement** and **non-identification** with children, wife and house.
15. **Constant equanimity** of mind irrespective of whether the events or happenings are to one's liking or not.
16. **Unswerving devotion** to the Lord with undivided concentration.
17. Once a while, even householders engaged in worldly activities **should retire into solitude** in some lonely place. This act will take away all the built up tension and the person becomes better fitted for carrying out his activities more efficiently.
18. One should **develop a distaste** for a crowd of people, which is not conducive to acquisition of knowledge.
19. **Steadfastness** in the knowledge of the Self.
20. A clear understanding of the **knowledge of Reality** which is the only goal for an aspirant.

The aforesaid path of acquiring these qualities is the path to mastery of the world. Further, all these qualities will create a perception of the fact that all the objects of the world are all lit up by the light of the Pure Consciousness and they constitute the non-self.

The aforesaid qualities would thus finally lead us to the ultimate knowledge of the Supreme Brahman who is neither being nor non-being. As He is the material cause of all beings and as it is His presence which makes them perform acts, He can be considered as having hands, feet, eyes, heads and ears everywhere and pervades all beings and space. He shines through the functions of all the organs of all beings but Himself is possessed of no organs. He is unattached but is the sustainer of all. He stands enveloping all. He is the light of lights. It is He who activates the functions of all senses Himself possessing no senses. He is everywhere both inside and outside of all creations moving and un-moving (mountains etc.) but is not capable of our perception because He is too subtle for the human mind or the senses to grasp. He is the unity in all diversity.

“BAHIRANTAŚCA BHŪTANĀMACHARĀM CARĀM EVA CA
SUKSMĀTĀT-TAD-AVINĒYAM DURĀSTHĀM CĀNTIKE CA TĀT”

(XIII-15)

The individual soul (PURUŠHA) as well as His illusive power (Prakṛti) are both without any beginning. The bodies of beings along with the senses as also their qualities (happiness, sorrow, attachment etc.) are all born of Prakṛti. Being in contact with Prakṛti, the individual soul has imbibed all the Gunas of Prakṛti (Sathwa, Rajas etc.) which becomes the cause for its rebirth in good and inferior wombs (i.e., animals, worms etc.), through desires motivating actions. Thus, it is our identification with and attachment to the body which causes rebirth with the attendant sufferings and unhappiness. By constant contemplation (VICHĀRA)

“इदन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमवि च ।
सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदेवज्ञयिं दूरस्थं चान्तिर्क च तत् ॥ (XIII-15)

on this truth and by separating oneself from the body sense, one can attain liberation. Alternatively, people can reach this goal through meditation through the Sankhya Yoga (discriminative knowledge) as explained in the second chapter or through the path of action (KARMA YOGA) enunciated in chapters III, IV and V.

All the creation (moving or non-moving) is the result of the association of the Field (Kshetra) and the Knower of the Field (Kshetrjina). It is actually the Lord, who is the subject as the knower of the Field, that objectifies Himself as the Field. Thus the one who realises that it is the Supreme Lord who equally exists in all beings as the unchanging principle as also among the changing phenomena is the real seer.

“SAMAM SARVEṢU BHŪTEṢU TIṢṬHANTAM PARAMEṢVARAM
VINASHYATSVAVINASHYANTAM YAH PAŚYATI SA PAŚYATI”

(XIII-27)

Such a person will never have the idea of doership as he knows that all actions happen through Prakṛti and himself is not the doer. Thus the immutable Supreme Self remaining as the witnessing consciousness in the body does not act but remains uninvolved and undetached. With this knowledge one should be able to separate the self from the body which will ultimately result in the realisation of the Lord. This is one of the methods of Sādhana.

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं रिमखिवरम् ।

वनश्यत्स्ववनश्यन्तं यन्न श्येत स श्येत ॥ (XIII-27)

CHAPTER XIV THREE FOLD BUILDING BLOCKS

This chapter is supplementary to 13th chapter. We are all made up of three types of building blocks of modalities, called Gunas. They govern our nature and the inner constitution. They are the binding forces responsible for the differences from man to man though all of them have the same body-mind complex presided over by pure consciousness. They are:-

Satwa Guna:- It promotes light, harmony & goodness.

Rajo Guna:- Promotes activities (for fulfilment of desires), anger etc.

Tamo Guna:- Binds people through attachment to negligence & laziness.

Even though the Self remains untouched, a mixture of the aforesaid Gunas in the body-mind complex seem to bind the self. To examine the nature of these Gunas and conquer them is a way to separate the Self from the body. If one is able to separate the self from the Gunas and then from the body, one can reach the state which is beyond all the Gunas and finally the Eternal Self. If one is able to conquer one's body-mind complex, one can rule over the universe. The three Gunas are the constituents of Prakṛti which is the projective power of the Lord. All creatures emanate from Prakṛti.

Even though Satwa Guna is harmless, it binds through attachment to happiness which is non-self. It makes one think that he is happy even though he is not. It also binds one through attachment to scriptures (involving arguments with others) and

pride of knowledge. Rajo Guna binds one through attachment to action for fulfillment of various desires. Tamo Guna binds one through laziness, sleep and negligence. At any one time, one of these Gunas will be prominent in a person.

HOW TO RECOGNISE WHICH GUNA IS PREDOMINANT

When the entire body becomes resplendent with the light of knowledge, which pours through every pore of the body, it means that SATWA is predominant. Wherever there is greed, desire-impelled activity and restlessness, Rajas is prominent there. Wherever there is Inertia, stagnation, negligence and delusion, Tamo Guna is predominant. Results: Rajas and Tamas lead to misery and ignorance respectively. Satwa results in pure and good works and leads to knowledge too. Those who conform to Tamas will go down i.e., they will be born in lower categories like animals.

When once a person considers these Gunas only as the doers of actions, he transcends the Gunas and becomes free from birth, death, old age and sorrows. Such a person who transcends the Gunas will neither long for knowledge, activity etc., nor will he dislike them when they appear. Such a self-realised soul will be alike in joy and sorrow, friend and foe, praise and censure, honour and dishonour, favourable and unfavourable. He will not be distracted by the Gunas and will not undertake any enterprise. He is called a Gunāṭīta.

MĀNĀPAMĀNAYOS-TULYAS-TULYO MITRĀRĪPAKṢAYOḤ
SARVĀRAMBHA PARITVĀGĪ GUNĀTĪTAḤ SA UCYATE

(XIV-25)

मानामीनयान्स्तुल्यस्तुल्यामित्रापरिक्षयाहि ।
सर्वरम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतह स उच्यते ॥ (XIV-25)

Thus by knowing the characteristics of each Guna one will be able to liberate himself from its bondage.

HOW TO GET RID OF THESE GUNAS

Tamas can be cured by being always alert without giving place to laziness. Ceaseless work should be given to the body-mind complex.

Rajas can be cured by doing KARMA YOGA i.e., performing actions without thought of returns.

SATWA:- It is a gold chain. Even though it looks attractive, it leads one to bondage.

One should not be attached to Satwa Guna too, i.e., one should remove one's identification with it. Desires for name, fame and success should be renounced. One should be free of ego. Give up desire for fruits of actions by dedicating them all to GOD. In the end, Grace of God is essential.

Unswerving Devotion (BHAKTI) is the only means which can qualify us for His Grace and for identification with the Eternal Brahman.

CHAPTER XV

I AM THE SUPREME SELF

All the Sādhana and Philosophy of Gita find their fulfilment in this chapter. 16th and 17th chapters are its supplements while 18th is a conclusion. In this chapter the Supreme truth - the essence of Vedas which would awaken our awareness of our ultimate goal is revealed. **To read and contemplate on this chapter is a Sadhana by itself.** In almost all the Ashramas, this chapter is invariably chanted just before having food.

For the sake of arousing dispassion, the phenomenal world is symbolised as an inverted Ashvatha (Peepul) tree. The root of the tree, which is the unmanifested Brahman is upwards. Lord is the origin or root of the world. The tree sends down its branches downwards at various levels of objectivity to form the world of manifested beings, where actions follow. The SAP of the tree is attachment and desire for sense objects. The tree is strengthened by the three Gunas and its shoots are ensnaring sense-objects. Here is a beautiful analysis of the Pure Consciousness in its aspect of Trinity as Individual self (JIVA), Self of the cosmos as the Moola Prakriti and the absolute Supreme Reality. This is a synthesis of the Lord, the formless and undifferentiated, with this creation, the world which includes all beings. It is the Lord who became the world too through His power of Māya called Prakriti. **The only way to get rid of the bondage of Samsara is to fell this inverted tree with the sword of detachment.**

One has to be free from ego, detached-having renounced all desires-solely devoted to spirituality and free from the pairs of dualities like joy and sorrow.

NIRMĀNAMOHĀ JITASANĠGADOṢĀ
ADHYĀTMANTYĀ VINIVRUTTAKĀMĀH
DVANDVAIRVIMUKTĀH SUKHADUHKHA SAMNĀIR
GACCHANTYĀMŪDHĀH PADAMAVYAYAMĪ TAT

(XV-5)

It is such people that can reach the Supreme Abode of Brahman.

Only when we know Him as the Changeless Reality behind the constantly changing world, love for God and a volcanic yearning to realise Him will be roused. It is God who has manifested through Prakriti also. But the one whose mind is distorted through attachment to the body fails to see God.

It is the same Formless, Eternal, Absolute God who becomes an individual soul (Jiva). This Jiva is reborn again and again leaving the earlier body and assuming another body. During this transmigration from body to body, the soul takes with it all the senses of perception including the mind. It is this Jiva which enjoys the objects of the world through the senses (eye, ear, nose etc.) with mind as their base. It is only the yogis who are diligent that see the Supreme Lord as their own self seated inside the heart.

It is the same Lord who pervades the entire world lending light to the Sun and the Moon and nourishing all the beings. It is He who is seated inside the beings as the digestive fire

ॐ नमो नमो हि ॐ जतसदाणि
अध्यात्मो नत्या ॐ वेनवृत्तकामाह ।
दन्द्दैर्वमुक्ताह सुखदुःखसंश्रै-
र्गच्छन्त्यमूढाह दिमव्ययं तत् ॥ (XV-5)

digesting all the food taken by them, with the help of the vital breath (Prāna) which is also pervaded by the Lord's power only. It is the Lord who is seated in the hearts of all beings and lights up the three states of consciousness viz. the waking, dream and sleep. The entire philosophy of the Vedas based on self-experience is a revelation by the Lord Himself.

“SARVASYA CĀHAM HRDI SAMNIVISTHO
MATTĀH SMṚTĪR JĀNAM APOHĀṆĀM CA
VEDAIŚCA SARVAIR AHAM EVA VEDYO
VEDĀNTAKRD VEDAVID EHA CĀHAM”

(XV-15)

In the 13th chapter, Lord Krishna described the Lord (Purusha) and his power of Māya (Prakruthi) as the Knower of the field and the Field respectively. Here Krishna gives another two-fold description of the Lord as the consciousness behind the beings in the form of the perishable body of all beings (Kshara) and as the immutable Consciousness behind the Jiva (Akshara). (Note:- As per Sridhara, Akshara is Jiva while Sankara has taken it as unmanifest. One has taken it as Kārya (effect) and the other as Kāraṇa (cause) and ultimately it is the same). Different and standing apart from His creation (Kshara and Akshara) is the Eternal Supreme Self who permeates the entire universe and upholds them. Though immanent in the world, He transcends it too. The one who frees himself from the involvement with the non-self i.e., the entire world which is seen (DRSYA) and

सर्वस्य चाहं ह्येदं सेनेवष्टामि
मत्तन् स्मृतार्त्तान्ममीहिनं च ।
वदिष्व सर्वैरहमवि वशिष्मि
वदिान्तकृद्वदिवदीहं चाहम् ॥ (XV-15)

gets out of the Māya adores the Lord with his whole being as he sees the Lord only everywhere.

Here in this chapter is the Holistic Sādhana synthesising the Supreme Self, the world and the individual self. This chapter is traditionally known as the path of unity with the Supreme Being (PURUSHOTTAMA YOGA).

THE DIVINE VERSUS THE DEVIL

This chapter is a supplement to chapter XV where the Yoga of union with the Eternal Absolute (Purushottama Yoga) has been explained. Before the final union with the Absolute takes place, the light of certain divine qualities (26 in number) begin to shine forth in the aspirant. An aspirant has to avoid the demoniacal qualities which rank materialists tend to develop when they go after a life based on limitless gratification of the senses and satisfaction of their base desires. These are the tendencies we have to battle against before we emerge in the full light of the Divine.

The divine qualities listed below and which develop with Sādhanā can be considered as a measuring rod to assess one's own progress or spiritual development. A war always wages in a man between the two sets of qualities which determine the way of living. This is the Mahābhārata War.

The Divine qualities which emerge from intense Sādhanā are:-

1. **Fearlessness.**
2. **Purity of heart**-the stage where one completely renounces telling lies, deceit etc.
3. **Being established in knowledge** (JNĀNA YOGA) and in YOGA (the path of action).
4. **Charity.**
5. **Control of the mind** which is useful in withdrawing the mind from worldly objects.

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6. **Sacrifice** (Yajna) i.e., doing action for the sake of others and in a sacrificial attitude. Whenever somebody feeds the poor, clothes the naked or fulfils some dire need of others, it is called YAJNA.
7. **Study of scriptures.**
8. **Austerity** (as explained in Chapter XVIII)
9. **Straightforwardness.**
10. **Non-injury or non-violence.**
11. **Truthfulness.**
12. **Absence of anger.**
13. **Renunciation of desires and all actions.**
14. **Keeping the mind quiescent.**
15. **Not giving attention to other's faults.**
16. **Compassion** towards all creatures in distress.
17. **Absence of longing** for worldly objects.
18. **Gentle behaviour**
19. **Modesty** (i.e., avoiding shameful actions).
20. **Absence of unrest.**
21. **Vigour.**
22. **Forgiveness** - one should be prepared to forgive any crime or offence perpetrated by others.
23. **Fortitude** i.e., a capacity to withstand any opposition or impediments and forge ahead.
24. **Purity** i.e., Keeping the body externally clean with bathing etc., and internal cleanliness of the mind by eliminating cunning, deceit, attachment etc.
25. **Absence** of malicious illwill against others.
26. **Not feeling too much proud** of one's attainments OR qualifications.

The cultivation of these DIVINE qualities will lead to liberation. We have to make efforts deliberately to cultivate them and the Grace of God completes the process.

A life of hypocrisy, pride of attainments, haughtiness, anger, rude behaviour and ignorance i.e., inability to discriminate right from the wrong are demoniacal traits. Such materialists have insatiable desires and believe that there is no truth in the Universe and there is no controller thereof. Their lack of perception of the underlying harmony in the diversity of the Universe seems to justify their self-indulgence and their desires. Such people with demoniacal tendencies neither believe in purity or good conduct. They abandon themselves to the gratification of their desires and are beset with interminable and innumerable cares. Enjoyment of worldly objects is the be-all and end-all of life for these people. For that purpose, they are prepared to resort to all crooked means for accumulating money. They will enter the hells of unsatisfied desire through the triple gates of lust, anger and greed having been deluded by the net of Māya. They exult over the foes slain and proclaim with glee ‘‘I am wealthy, well born: I give in charity, who else is there equal to me? I shall simply enjoy’’ Such people who are highly proud of themselves on account of their immense wealth or position sometimes do sacrifices and perform sacrificial acts with a hypocritical attitude just for name’s sake ignoring traditional procedures. They become envious by nature and refuse to recognise the divinity in other men and in incarnations of God. Such cruel men of despicable nature are made to be reborn repeatedly in the demoniacal classes like tigers, lions etc. with little chance of spiritual progress.

All movements to hell and heaven which take place are all different levels of consciousness and take place within the one over-self. It will take a long time before the divine thermostat

in them wakes up. Desires, anger and avarice are the three doors to hell which destroy the Self. One should eschew them.

‘‘TRIVIDHAM NARAKSYEDAM DVĀRĀM NĀŚANAMĀTMANAH
KĀMAH KRODHAS-TĀTĪHĀ LOBHAS-TĀSMĀD-ETĀT-TRAYAM TŪYĀET’’
(XVI-21)

The one who struggles and succeeds in freeing himself from these demoniacal tendencies becomes fit to enter the door of the Heaven.

Lord Krishna concludes this chapter with a well needed warning of momentous import to modern men.

So many modern masters have arisen nowadays who either distort the methods of spiritual sādhanā given in the traditional scriptures or invent their own methods for earning money and fame. Many people get attracted into such methods, lured into these bye lanes with a dead-end and get exploited generously. Krishna sounds a note of warning that such aspirants who ignore the well tested traditions of scriptures founded and handed over to us by the wise sages as a result of their severe austerity and intense devotion to God will neither get happiness nor succeed in reaching the highest goal.

YAH ŚĀSTRA-VIDHIMUTSRĪYA VARTATE KĀMAKĀRATAH
NA SA SIDDHIM-AVĀPNOTI NA SUKHAM NA PARĀM GATIM
(XVI-23)

नेवैधं नरकस्यार्दिं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनह ।
कामहं क्राधिस्तथा लाभिस्तस्मादतित्रयं त्यजति ॥ (XVI-21)

यह शास्त्रेवधमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतह ।
न स सेद्धमवान्नाति न सुखं न रिं गेत् ॥ (XVI-23)

OH YE OF LITTLE FAITH !

This chapter gives us a unique contribution the like of which we cannot come across in any other spiritual literature. Many aspirants are complacent and under an illusion that they are undertaking austerities, acts of charity and moderation in food and have reached purity of mind. Krishna categorises each of these spiritual sādhanas into three levels based on the three Gunas which constitute the nature of a man. Even celibacy, austerity, purity of heart, serenity of mind and inner silence of the mind can be of a useless Tāmasic category (Based on TAMO GUNA) or RAJASIC OR SĀTŪIK.

The basic inner attitude essential for an aspirant is FAITH (SRADDHĀ) in scriptures and the Guru's instructions. Faith can move mountains.

The Tamasic aspirants tend to worship the spirits and ghosts. The Rajasic men have faith in demi-gods and worship them. Those who are established in Satwa Guna are superior and worship those gods as are recognised in scriptures including Mantra Sastras and Puranas. The people who perform austerities of a severe nature not enjoined in scriptures by subjecting their body as also the Lord residing in it to untold hardships and sufferings are demoniacal in their nature and can never hope to reach the Lord.

All austerities can be divided as follows:

1. **Austerities Physical (of the body)** : They consist of honouring gods, spiritually evolved scholars and the Guru. Without their Grace, one cannot succeed in any effort.

2. **Austerities Vocal (of the speech)** : A speech which causes no vexation or offence indirectly to others, based on truth and which is always beneficial to others as also study of scriptures is categorised as vocal austerities.

ANUDEVĀKARĀM VĀKYĀM SATYĀM PRIYAHITĀM CA YAT
SVĀDHYĀYĀBHĀSANĀM CAIVA VĀNMĀYĀM TAPA UCYATE
(XVII-15)

3. **Austerities Mental (of the mind)** : Serenity of the mind under all trying conditions, kindness, inner silence bereft of thoughts, withdrawal of mind from all external objects and purity of heart i.e., eliminating cunning, deceit, trickery etc. are all mental austerities.

“MANAḤPRASĀDAḤ SOUNMYĀTVĀM MAUNAMĀTMA-VINIGRAHAḤ
BHĀVA-SAMŚUDDHIR-ITY ETAT-TĀPO MĀNASAM UCYATE”
(XVII-16)

Even each of these three types of austerities (Physical, Vocal and Mental) are again sub-divided as follows:-

1. The aforesaid threefold austerities (Physical, Mental and Vocal) are termed satwik if undertaken with supreme faith and devotion, surrendering the results to God without expecting any returns.

अनुद्वैगिकरं वा●यं सत्यं प्रयेहतं च यत्।
स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं ती उच्यते ॥ (XVII-15)

मनहप्रसादह सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मेवेनग्रहह
भावसंशुद्धपरत्यतितीणि मानसमुच्यते ॥ (XVII-16)

2. Austerities undertaken only for earning name, fame and honour or just to impress others are worldly and not spiritual at all. They yield temporary results, they are termed as Rajasic.

3. The austerities undertaken either with a foolish intent without a proper power of discrimination by causing hardship to oneself or just for the destruction of the world (people), are Tamasic. The austerities (TAPAS) performed by Ravana and Hiranyakasipu are examples of this inferior variety.

Moderation in food alone is not sufficient. The type of food to be taken has to be satwik if one wants to progress spiritually.

As is food, so is mind.

Only **nourishing, healthy, tasty, agreeable and substantial** foods beneficial for both the mind and the body which will contribute to firmness of the mind, strength and health are considered as satwik. Onions and Garlic though declared to be very beneficial to the health of the body are aphrodisiac in nature and will cause agitation in mind and increase passion. They are to be normally avoided by serious aspirants.

Foods that are extremely bitter, sour, salty, very hot, pungent, dry and those which cause burning in the stomach are Rajasic. It means that extremity in bitterness, sourness, salt etc., is to be avoided and moderation in these tastes is necessary.

Food which is kept for more than three hours (Yāma) after cooking, with the essence having been dried up, impure, defiled by contact with others' mouth, decomposed or giving out bad smell is Tāmasic. (A serious aspirant should avoid pickles as they are either too sour or kept for more than three hours.)

Similarly, even charity (DĀNA) (दण) can be divided into the following categories:-

1. Satwik:- Charity (दण) done without any expectation of *quid pro quo* at the proper place (holy places like Kāsi), at the proper time (say, sacred days like RAMANAVAMI, CHRISTMAS) and to the deserving persons is satwik.

Whenever a charity is done grudgingly and in expectation of some return or results, it is Rajasic.

Charity done without reference to the propriety of the place, time or receiver or with disdain and contempt is Tāmasic. Such an act bears no fruit.

At the end of this chapter Lord Krishna gives us a beautiful MANTRA, the repetition and contemplation of which with the full understanding of its meaning will lead us to the goal. It is “**OM TAT SAT**”.

As per tradition followed by our forefathers, all our spiritual acts like austerities and charity start with the chanting of “**HARIH OM**” or “**HARIH OM TAT SAT**”. The meaning of the Mantra is as follows:-

OM :- The nearest symbol of the Supreme God, both the personal and impersonal. It includes all the world too.

TAT :- That Supreme Eternal Being who is unattached to the creation. It is like the dreamer who is apart from his dream world.

SAT :- This has three meanings. Primarily it represents the Supreme Lord who is pure Existence (Being). It also means cultivating goodness as also auspicious acts like sacrifice, austerity and charity.

In order to realise the truth of the great Vedic declaration

“YOU ARE THAT”, SAT points out the way of purification of “YOU”, the aspirant in order to make him fit. “OM” purifies all the acts like austerities etc. i.e., the sadhana done to realise “TAT” (the Supreme Lord).

Lord is always in the form of our own self but has to be intuitively experienced as he is beyond the scope of our senses, mind and intellect. So our Sadhana has to be based on the authority of Vedas known as “ŚABDA PRAMĀNAM”. Hence all our Sadhanas start with FAITH and end with direct experience. If any act like austerities, charity etc. is done without faith, it becomes futile and serves no purpose either here or hereafter.

“AŚRADHDHAYĀ HUTAM DATTAṀ TAPAS-TAPTAM KRTAM CA YAT
ASAD-ITYUCHYATE PĀRTHA NA CA TAT-PRETYA NO IHA”

(XVII-28)

Even if one is not well versed in scriptures, one can attain liberation by resorting to Satwa alone in all one’s activities and food by uttering OM TAT SAT and by constantly contemplating and meditating on its significance.

In the 9th chapter it was instructed that one should surrender all actions to God. In this 17th Chapter it has been emphasised that all action which is surrendered must be Satwik- for only then it will be worthy of offering.

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तस्मिन् कृतं च यत् ।

असेदत्युच्यते िर्थं न च तस्यस्यि नाि इह ॥ (XVII-28)

CHAPTER XVIII

LORD, THY WILL IS MY FILL

Here, in this chapter, is a beautiful summation of the message of the entire Bhagavad Gita.

One is apt to think that even though Karma Yoga is a useful preparation, the final stage to be reached is the renunciation of all action i.e., SANNYASA. This idea being not correct for most of the aspirants, Krishna starts this chapter by clearly distinguishing between Sannyasa and Tyaga.

Sannyasa is one way of renouncing desire-oriented actions. The mind no longer flows into the desire-oriented actions but acts from the discriminative knowledge of what is right.

There is a further stage called Tyaga where one dedicates to the Overlord all the results accruing even from desireless actions. It is not correct that all actions should be abandoned as they bind a person. Krishna firmly declares that sacrificial acts (Yajna), charity (Dāna) and austerities (Tapas) should never be abandoned.

YAGNA-DĀNA TAPAH-KARMA NA TYĀYAMĪ KĀRYAMEVA TAT
YAJ-O DĀNAM TAPŚCAIVA PĀVANĀNĪ MANISĪNĀM

(XVIII-5)

Abandoning obligatory duties either due to laziness or with a view to avoid pain and suffering serves no purpose. Performing

यज्ञदानतह्निकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमवि तत् ।

यज्ञाि दानं तश्चैव िवनोन मनीषणाम् ॥ (XVIII-5)

obligatory duties as a bounden duty without attachment and by renouncing the fruits is the real Tyaga and it is Satwik. A person who does Satwik Tyaga neither hates such duties nor does he get attached to them. For a normal person who continues to consider his body as his self, it is not possible to renounce all actions and he has to adopt the aforesaid Karma Yoga method. This is not, of course, applicable to men of discrimination who have attained steadfastness in knowledge and who are entitled to take up monkhood by renouncing all actions. (The followers of Ramanuja however believe in continuing the daily obligatory rites even after taking up monkhood). Lord Krishna divides aspirants into two classes (1) Those whose mind has not yet been purified (i.e., not got rid of Vāsanas) who are not ready for the knowledge of the Self and are not steadfast in that knowledge. (2) Those who are mature and have become STITHA PRANĀS (steadfast in the wisdom). The former have to be engaged in Karma Yoga (i.e., without attachment to results). The latter are fit for renunciation of all actions and taking up monkhood but when once they become liberated while alive (Jeevamukti) they get engaged in actions meant for the welfare of all beings “Sarva Bhoota Hite Ratāḥ”.

Whatever action a man performs with his body, speech or mind, (good or bad), there are five factors involved in it: (1) Physical Body (2) The doer (3) The sense organs of body mind complex (4) The vital energies within the body (5) The divine will connected with the forces accumulated by the acts of previous births. The result depends on all these factors.

If the self does not project the notion “I am the doer” it cannot be affected by any action.

Besides the nature of action itself, the doer and his knowledge also are factors that count. These factors can each be categorised threefold as per the predominant gunas. All these, the doer (Karta) the action (Kārya) and his knowledge (Jñāna) should be satwik if one has a spiritual goal.

That knowledge alone is Sātwik where one sees one immutable Absolute in all the diversified things, undifferentiated.

The obligatory duties, prescribed for the respective station or category of persons, performed without attachment and without any prejudice and without hankering for rewards are sātwik actions.

The agent who is free from attachment, without any ego, full of fortitude (DHRITI) and zeal and unaffected by success or failure is Sātwik.

“MUKTA-SANGŌNAHAMVĀDĪ DHRITYUTSĀHASAMANVITĀH
SIDHYASIDHYOR-NIRVIKĀRAḤ KARTĀ SĀTWIKA UCYATE”

(XVIII-26)

Even the fortitude (DHRITI) is threefold on the basis of Gunas. The infallible firmness of concentration with which one restrains the mind, the senses and the vital breath (Prana) in order to prevent them from tending towards objects prohibited by Scriptures is called Sātwik fortitude.

One should revel only in that Sātwik joy which though it may not appeal to one’s taste in the beginning (bitter) but in

मुक्तसांनिहवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितह ।
सद्ध्येसद्ध्योर्निर्विकारह कर्ता सौत्त्विक उच्यते ॥ (XVIII-26)

the end, as a result of maturity of knowledge, detachment and purity of mind tastes like nectar.

Nobody can be born in this world who is thoroughly free from the Gunas. In order to have distribution of work relating to the common weal of the society, which also helps people to develop spiritually according to the respective spiritual constitution based on Gunas naturally inherited from birth, common to a category, the duties of the four castes-Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras have been classified and these duties are called the Swa-dharma (one's own duty as prescribed) of the respective category.

It is nowhere declared that any one category is superior or inferior to another. Everyone's duty is such as to help all the other categories just as the Research department of an industry is to help all other departments, as also the industry as a whole. The various parts of the body do various functions often helping the other parts and the entire body in general but it does not mean that one part is inferior or superior to another. Further, in Simad Bhagavata examples have been given (1) of a prince (Kshatriya) who became a Vaishya by his activities (business enterprise) - 'KARMANA VAISYATAM GATAH' and (2) of 81 of the sons of King Rishaba (Kshatriya) who became Brahmins by their activities (vide Sloka 13 of Chapter 4 Skandha VI).

One of the methods of spiritual evolution is for everyone to stick to his own Swa-dharma irrespective of however alluring the other's duties are or how full of faults (in one's own opinion) one's own duty appears. All undertakings have their own faults

as they are all based on Gunas. Being devoted to his own duties, an aspirant can attain complete success by following the techniques of Karma Yoga.

“SVE SVE KARMANYABHIRATAH SAMSIDDHIM LABHATE NARAH”
(XVIII-45)

Those who remain unattached and desireless having conquered their mind and senses, attain the supreme perfection through renunciation of all their duties and taking up monasticism (monkhood). This state is attained also by those performing their own duties and they get established in discriminative knowledge gradually in stages.

Lord Krishna summarises the process of this supreme consummation of knowledge leading to the Absolute (Brahman):-

- (1) **Eliminate attachment and hatred, withdraw yourself from the alluring objects of senses (beautiful forms, delicious foods, etc.) and control yourself with fortitude.**
- (2) **Get into the habit of resorting to solitary places as often as possible.**
- (3) **Be moderate in your food (let it be light and Satwik)**
- (4) **Keep your speech, body and mind restrained and under control** and do not indulge in worldly gossips, worldly activities or in thoughts relating to objects of the world including your own house, wife, sons, profession, money, name and fame etc.,

स्वस्विकर्मण्येभरतह संसिद्धिं लभती नरह ॥ (XVIII-45)

- (5) **Do intense meditation** regularly for as long as possible and try to increase the hours progressively.
- (6) **Do not entertain any desires** or longing for any object.
- (7) **Renounce** ego, force, pride, anger and accumulation of possessions (ultimately even the body sense). Ego will go away when we cultivate non-doership and the sense of non-experiencer (**Akarta** and **Abhokta**).
- (8) **Have no sense of possession.** All are born without a single possession and nothing will go with them when they finally depart. All possessions are acquired from Prakriti and belong to the Lord.
- (9) Let the **mind be ever serene and never agitated** by any happenings.
- (10) **Never regret over past things, do not anticipate the future but remain always contented and blissful.**
- (11) **Treat all beings alike.**

If those mentioned above are practised incessantly, one attains supreme devotion to the Lord and becomes fit for becoming Brahman (the highest state of bliss).

Through intense devotion full knowledge of the Lord dawns and the aspirant gets merged (identified) with the Absolute. This yoga of devotion (Bhakti Yoga) converges into the path of knowledge and takes one to the final goal.

Similarly an aspirant who has surrendered all the actions to the Lord in the manner prescribed in Sloka 27 of

Chapter 9, being completely dependant on the Lord viewing all happenings as Lord's Will and accepting them totally and keeping the mind unswerving and at all times on the Lord, shall reach the Immutable Eternal through the grace of the Lord Himself.

It will not be possible to do a single Sadhana successfully unless the Lord bestows His grace which can be attracted through sheer devotion and surrender. It is the Lord who is seated in the heart of each aspirant who controls us all and directs our actions just like the person who directs the marionette.

“EŚVARAḤ SARVA BHŪTĀNĀM^{gh} HRD DEŚĒRYJUNĀ-TIṢṬHATI
BHRĀMAYAN-SARVA-BHŪTĀNI YANTRĀRŪDHĀNI MĀYAYĀ
(XVIII-61)

Abandoning all duties (ie renouncing all actions) surrender yourself completely to the Lord alone without depending on anything else. Let your mind be concentrated on Lord alone, be completely devoted to Him and dedicate all your acts as a sacrifice to the Lord. Bow down in all humility to the Supreme Lord. You will reach your Beloved.

“MANMANĀ BHAVVA MADBHA^{gh}KTO MADYĀĪ MĀM NAMASKURU
MĀMEVAIŚYASI SATYĀM TE PRATŪĀNE PRIYOŚI ME”
(XVIII-65)

ईश्वरं सर्वभूतानां हृदि शिञ्जुर्न ते श्रेते ।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतान् यन्त्रारूढान् मायया ॥ (XVIII-61)

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मयाजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामवैश्यसे सत्यं त्वि श्रेते जन्मैः प्रियासि मयि ॥ (XVIII-65)

The aforesaid sloka (No.66) is considered by the followers of RAMANUJA as one of the three ultimate secrets of success (Rahasya trayam). But the note of warning implied in this sloka at the very conclusion of Gita is that this ultimate surrender renouncing all duties is the last of the stages after progressing through the sadhanas mentioned in all the earlier chapters and having acquired the supreme one-pointed and unswerving devotion and the maturity of steadfast knowledge. Otherwise this unconditional and ultimate surrender will not be possible in the earlier immature stages.

In this connection Śankara raises a question “In this scripture, the Gita, has knowledge (Jnana) been established as the supreme means to liberation, or is it action (Karma Yoga) or both?”

He declares:-

“The highest good cannot be attained through mere actions, nor by a combination of knowledge and action “Knowledge alone is the means to the highest goal”

No doubt Karma Yoga is essential for most of us to begin with in order to get purification of the mind as most of the

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामर्कं शरणं ब्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वसिद्ध्यर्थि माक्षियष्यम मा शुचह ॥ (XVIII-61)

common type of aspirants, having not been thoroughly established in the state of STHITA PRAJNA are only fit for doing actions. Unconditional surrender to the Lord is not that easy. It requires intense Sadhana before one can reach that stage. Intense devotion and Intense-contemplation and meditation with deep faith on the truths enunciated in the Bhagavad Gita, side by side cultivating all the divine qualities, are certain to lead all aspirants to their goal of attaining Absolute Bliss, through the Grace of God.

“**HARIḤ OM**”

Bhagavad-gītā has been persistently popular through the ages in and outside India because of its practical value in facing the challenges of life. It is a book which provides sādhanās, suitable to all people, irrespective of age, profession, vocation, and aptitudes. The present book by Swami Shāntānanda Puri rightly focusses attention on the description and significance of each of the sādhanās to be found in the eighteen chapters of the Gītā. It emphasizes that no one can, or must, adopt all the sādhanās mentioned in the Gītā: one should follow whatever sādhanā appeals to him or her. And all sādhanās lead to the same goal: effective, meaningful and tranquil living.

This book by Swamiji is a simple but eloquent statement of the traditional belief that the corpus of the Gita in its three-fold division of six chapters in each division is a popular exposition of the great Vedāntic truth ‘Tat twam asi’. This truth is symbolic of spiritual perfection. The author translates this message of spiritual perfection to crisis-management in life. The book will guide the aspirant in solving the problems arising from stress-situations, not only outside him or her, but also within the individual. It will enable him to push his life towards happiness, which is abiding and true.

Swamiji plays here the role of a counsellor and therapist. He is at once academic and practical. There is not only reason in what he says. But deep insights are provided. One grows richer and happier, more mature and more optimistic by reading this book. Gītā appears in a new light, and one’s life also assumes a new dimension.

PROF. S.K. RAMACHANDRA RAO