

*Protrepics to Devotional Love
in the Bhagavad Gita*



If anyone shall study these sacred dialogues held between us two, I shall consider that I am worshiped by him with the sacrifice of knowledge; this is my resolve.

— *Bhagavad Gita*, 18 vs. 70

Selections from W.Q. Judge's 1890 recension of *The Bhagavad Gita: The Book of Devotion*, prepared in collaboration with James Henderson Connelly, with "Antecedent Words" and footnotes.

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¹ Frontispiece by Mrs. Neeraj Parswal

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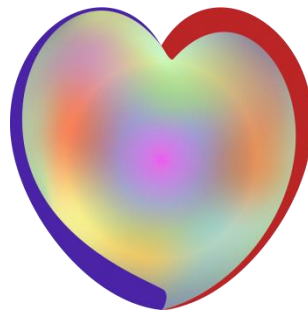


Approach

In whatever way men approach me, in that way do I assist them; but whatever the path taken by mankind, that path is mine, O son of Pritha.¹

But for those who, thinking of me as identical with all, constantly worship me, I bear the burden of the responsibility of their happiness.² And even those also who worship other gods with a firm faith in doing so, involuntarily worship me, too, O son of Kuntī, albeit in ignorance.³ Those who devote themselves to the gods go to the gods; the worshipers of the pitris go to the pitris; those who worship the evil spirits go to them, and my worshipers come to me.⁴

In whatever form a devotee desires with faith to worship, it is I alone who inspire him with constancy therein,⁵ and depending on that faith he seeks the propitiation of that God, obtaining the object of his wishes as is ordained by me alone.⁶



1. Qualifications

My devotee who is free from enmity, well-disposed towards all creatures, merciful, wholly exempt from pride and selfishness, the same in pain and pleasure, patient of wrongs, contented, constantly devout, self-governed, firm in resolves, and whose mind and heart are fixed on me alone, is dear unto me.

Godlike nature [Qualifications]

Krishna: Fearlessness, sincerity, assiduity in devotion, generosity, self-restraint, piety, and alms-giving, study, mortification, and rectitude;⁹ harmless, veracity, and freedom from anger, resignation, equanimity, and not speaking of the faults of others, universal compassion, modesty, and mildness;¹⁰ patience, power, fortitude, and purity, discretion, dignity, unrevengfulness, and freedom from conceit — these are the marks of him whose virtues are of a godlike character, O son of Bhārata.¹¹

Demoniacal nature [Hindrances]

Krishna: Those, O son of Pritha, who are born with demoniacal dispositions are marked by hypocrisy, pride, anger, presumption, harshness of speech, and ignorance.¹² Those who are born with the demoniacal disposition — of the nature of the Asuras — know not the nature of action nor of cessation from action, they know not purity nor right behaviour, they possess no truthfulness.¹³ They deny that the universe has any truth in it, saying it is not governed by law, declaring that it hath no Spirit; they say creatures are produced alone through the union of the sexes, and that all is for enjoyment only.¹⁴ Maintaining this view, their souls being ruined, their minds contracted, with natures perverted, enemies of the world, they are born to destroy.¹⁵ They indulge insatiable desires, are full of hypocrisy, fast-fixed in false beliefs through their delusions.¹⁶ They indulge in unlimited reflections which end only in annihilation, convinced until death that the enjoyment of the objects of their desires is the supreme good.¹⁷ Fast-bound by the hundred cords of desire, prone to lust and anger, they seek by injustice and the accumulation of wealth for the gratifica-

The destiny of those whose attributes are godlike is final liberation, . . .

Being free from these three gates of hell, O son of Kuntī, a man worketh for the salvation of his soul, and thus proceeds to the highest path.²⁸

Therefore, in deciding what is fit and what unfit to be done, thou should'st perform actions on earth with a knowledge of what is declared in Holy Writ.³⁰

tion of their own lusts and appetites.¹⁸ This today hath been acquired by me, and that object of my heart I shall obtain; this wealth I have, and that also shall be mine.¹⁹ This foe have I already slain, and others will I forthwith vanquish; I am the lord, I am powerful, and I am happy.²⁰ I am rich and with precedence among men; where is there another like unto me? I shall make sacrifices, give alms, and enjoy.²¹ In this manner do those speak who are deluded. Confounded by all manner of desires, entangled in the net of delusion, firmly attached to the gratification of their desires, they descend into hell.²² Esteeming themselves very highly, self-willed, full of pride and ever in pursuit of riches, they perform worship with hypocrisy and not even according to ritual, but only for outward show.²³ Indulging in pride, selfishness, ostentation, power, lust, and anger, they detest me who am in their bodies and in the bodies of others.²⁴ Wherefore I continually hurl these cruel haters, the lowest of men, into wombs of an infernal nature in this world of rebirth.²⁵ And they being doomed to those infernal wombs, more and more deluded in each succeeding rebirth, never come to me, O son of Kuntī, but go at length to the lowest region.²⁶

. . . while that of demoniacal dispositions, born to the Asuras' lot, is continued bondage to mortal birth; grieve not, O son of Pandu, for thou art born with the divine destiny.²⁷

The gates of hell are three — desire, anger, covetousness, which destroy the soul; wherefore one should abandon them.²⁹

2. Devotion

Through Brahman

This Supreme, O son of Pritha, within whom all creatures are included and by whom all this is pervaded, may be attained by a devotion which is intent on him alone.³¹

Others with the sacrifice of knowledge in other ways worship me as indivisible, as separable, as the Spirit of the universe.³²

I am he who is the Lord of all sacrifices, and am also their enjoyer, but they do not understand me truly and therefore they fall from heaven.³³ I accept and enjoy the offerings of the humble soul who in his worship with a pure heart offereth a leaf, a flower, or fruit, or water unto me.³⁴ Whatever thou doest, O son of Kuntī, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever mortification thou performest, commit each unto me.³⁵ Thus thou shalt be delivered from the good and evil experiences which are the bonds of action; and thy heart being joined to renunciation and to the practice of action, thou shalt come to me.³⁶ I am the same to all creatures; I know not hatred nor favour; but those who serve me with love dwell in me and I in them.³⁷ Even if the man of most evil ways worship me with exclusive devotion, he is to be considered as righteous, for he hath judged aright.³⁸ Such a man soon becometh of a righteous soul and obtaineth perpetual happiness. I swear, O son of Kuntī, that he who worships me never perisheth.³⁹ Those even who may be of the womb of sin, women, vaisyas, and sudras, shall tread the highest path if they take sanctuary with me.⁴⁰ How much more, then, holy Brāhmins and devotees of kingly race! Having obtained this finite, joyless world, worship me.⁴¹ Serve me, fix heart and mind on me, be my servant, my adorer, prostrate thyself before me, and thus, united unto me, at rest, thou shalt go unto me.⁴²

I am the origin of all; all things proceed from me; believing me to be thus, the wise gifted with spiritual wisdom worship me;⁴³ their very hearts and minds are in me; enlightening one another and constantly speaking of me, they are full of enjoyment and satisfaction.⁴⁴ To them thus always devoted to me, who worship me with love, I give that mental devotion by which they come to me.⁴⁵ For them do I out of my compassion, standing within their hearts, destroy the darkness which springs from ignorance by the brilliant lamp of spiritual discernment.⁴⁶

Those who worship me with constant zeal, with the highest faith and minds placed on me, are held in high esteem by me.⁴⁷ But those who, with minds equal toward everything, with senses and organs restrained, and rejoicing in the good of all crea-

tures, meditate on the inexhaustible, immovable, highest, incorruptible, difficult to contemplate, invisible, omnipresent, unthinkable, the witness, undemonstrable, shall also come unto me.⁴⁸ For those whose hearts are fixed on the unmanifested the labour is greater because the path which is not manifest is with difficulty attained by corporeal beings.⁴⁹ But if thou should'st be unable at once steadfastly to fix thy heart and mind on me, strive then, O Dhananjaya, to find me by constant practice in devotion.⁵⁰

Through faith

The faith of mortals is of three kinds, and is born from their own disposition; it is of the quality of truth — sattva, action — rajas, and indifference — tamas; hear now what those are.⁵¹

Born from Sattva Truth

The faith of each one, O son of Bhārata, proceeds from the sattva quality; the embodied soul being gifted with faith, each man is of the same nature as that ideal on which his faith is fixed.⁵²

Those who are of the disposition which ariseth from the prevalence of the sattva or good quality worship the gods;

Born from Rajas Action

those of the quality of rajas worship the celestial powers, the Yakshas and Rakshasas;

Born from Tamas Indifference

other men in whom the dark quality of indifference or tamas predominates worship elemental powers and the ghosts of dead men.⁵³

Know that food which is pleasant to each one, as also sacrifices, mortification, and alms giving, are of three kinds; hear what their divisions are.⁵⁴

The food which increases the length of days, vigour and strength, which keeps one free from sickness, of tranquil mind, and contented, and which is savoury, nourishing, of permanent benefit and congenial to the body, is that which is attractive to those in whom the sattva quality prevaieth.⁵⁵

The food which is liked by those of the rajas quality is over bitter, too acid, excessively salt, hot, pungent, dry and burning, and causeth unpleasantness, pain, and disease.⁵⁶

Whatever food is such as was dressed the day before, that is tasteless or rotting, that is impure, is that which is preferred by those in whom predominates the quality of tamas or indifference.⁵⁷

Through sacrifice

The sacrifice or worship which is directed by Scripture and is performed by those who expect no reward but who are convinced that it is necessary to be done, is of the quality of light, of goodness, of sattva.⁵⁸

But know that that worship or sacrifice which is performed with a view to its results, and also for an ostentation of piety, belongs to passion, the quality of rajas, O best of the Bhāratas.⁵⁹

But that which is not according to the precepts of Holy Writ, without distribution of bread, without sacred hymns, without gifts to Brāhmins at the conclusion, and without faith, is of the quality of tamas.⁶⁰

Those who practice severe self-mortification not enjoined in the Scriptures are full of hypocrisy and pride, longing for what is past and desiring more to come.⁶¹ They, full of delusion, torture the powers and faculties which are in the body, and me also, who am in the recesses of the innermost heart; know that they are of an infernal tendency.⁶²

Honouring the gods, the Brāhmins, the teachers, and the wise, purity, rectitude, chastity, and harmlessness are called mortification of the body.⁶³ Gentle speech which causes no anxiety, which is truthful and friendly, and diligence in the reading of the Scriptures, are said to be austerities of speech.⁶⁴ Serenity of mind, mildness of temper, silence, self-restraint, absolute straightforwardness of conduct, are called mortification of the mind.⁶⁵

But that austerity which is practised with hypocrisy, for the sake of obtaining respect for oneself or for fame or favour, and which is uncertain and belonging wholly to this world, is of the quality of rajas.⁶⁶

Those austerities which are practised merely by wounding oneself or from a false judgement or for the hurting of another are of the quality of tamas.⁶⁷

Through gifts

Those gifts which are bestowed at the proper time to the proper person, and by men who are not desirous of a return, are of the sattva quality, good and of the nature of truth.⁶⁸

But that gift which is given with the expectation of a return from the beneficiary or with a view to spiritual benefit flowing therefrom or with reluctance, is of the rajas quality, bad and partaketh of untruth.⁶⁹

Gifts given out of place and season and to unworthy persons, without proper attention and scornfully, are of the tamas quality, wholly bad and of the nature of darkness.⁷⁰

OM TAT SAT: these are said to be the threefold designation of the Supreme Being. By these in the beginning were sanctified the knowers of Brahman, the Vedas, and sacrifices.⁷¹ Therefore the sacrifices, the giving of alms, and the practising of austerities are always among those who expound Holy Writ preceded by the word OM.⁷²

Among those who long for immortality and who do not consider the reward for their actions, the word TAT precedes their rites of sacrifice, their austerities, and giving of alms.⁷³

The word SAT is used for qualities that are true and holy, and likewise is applied to laudable actions, O son of Pritha.⁷⁴ The state of mental sacrifice when actions are at rest is also called SAT.⁷⁵

Whatever is done without faith, whether it be sacrifice, alms giving, or austerities, is called ASAT, that which is devoid of truth and goodness, O son of Pritha, and is not of any benefit either in this life or after death.⁷⁶

Through renunciation

The bards conceive that the forsaking of actions which have a desired object is renunciation or Sannyāsa, the wise call the disregard of the fruit of every action true disinterestedness in action.⁷⁷ By some wise men it is said, “Every action is as much to be avoided as a crime,” while by others it is declared, “Deeds of sacrifice, of mortification, and of charity should not be forsaken.”⁷⁸

Among these divided opinions hear my certain decision, O best of the Bharatas, upon this matter of disinterested forsaking, which is declared to be of three kinds . . .⁷⁹

Deeds of sacrifice, of mortification, and of charity are not to be abandoned, for they are proper to be performed, and are the purifiers of the wise.⁸⁰ But even those works are to be performed after having renounced all selfish interest in them and in their fruits; this . . . Pritha, is my ultimate and supreme decision.⁸¹ The work which is performed . . . because it is necessary, obligatory, and

The refraining from works because they are painful and from the dread of annoyance ariseth from the quality of rajas which belongs to passion, and he who thus leaves undone what he ought to do shall not obtain the fruit which comes from right forsaking.⁸⁴

The abstention from works which are necessary and obligatory is improper; the not doing of such actions is due to delusion springing from the quality of tamās.⁸⁵

proper, with all self-interest therein put aside and attachment to the action absent, is declared to be of the quality of truth and goodness which is known as sattva.⁸² The true renouncer, full of the quality of goodness, wise and exempt from all doubt, is averse neither to those works which fail nor those which succeed.⁸³

It is impossible for mortals to utterly abandon actions; but he who gives up the results of action is the true renouncer.⁸⁶ The threefold results of action — unwished for, wished for, and mixed — accrue after death to those who do not practice this renunciation, but no results follow those who perfectly renounce.⁸⁷

Learn, O great-armed one, that for the accomplishment of every work five agents are necessary, as is declared.⁸⁸ These are the substratum, the agent, the various sorts of organs, the various and distinct movements and with these, as fifth, the presiding deities.⁸⁹ These five agents are included in the performance of every act which a man undertaketh, whether with his body, his speech, or his mind.⁹⁰ This being thus, whoever because of the imperfection of his mind beholdeth the real self as the agent thinketh wrongly and seeth not aright.⁹¹ He whose nature is free from egotism and whose power of discrimination is not blinded does not slay though he killeth all these people, and is not bound by the bonds of action.⁹²

Through action

The three causes which incite to action are knowledge,
and threefold also is the totality of the action in the act,
Knowledge,

the thing to be known,

and the knower,

the instrument,

and the agent.⁹³

the act,

and the agent are also distinguished in three ways according to the three qualities; listen to their enumeration after that classification.⁹⁴

Know that the wisdom which perceives in all nature one single principle,

The knowledge which perceives different and manifold principles as present

But that knowledge, wholly without value, which is mean, attached to one ob-

indivisible and incorruptible, not separate in the separate objects seen, is of the sattva quality.⁹⁵

The action which is right to be done, performed without attachment to results, free from pride and selfishness, is of the sattva quality.⁹⁸

The doer who performs necessary actions unattached to their consequences and without love or hatred is of the nature of the quality of truth — sattva.¹⁰¹

in the world of created beings pertains to rajas, the quality of passion.⁹⁶

That one is of the rajas quality which is done with a view to its consequences, or with great exertion, or with egotism.⁹⁹

The doer whose actions are performed with attachment to the result, with great exertion, for the gratification of his lusts and with pride, covetousness, uncleanness, and attended with rejoicing and grieving, is of the quality of rajas — passion and desire.¹⁰²

ject alone as if it were the whole, which does not see the true cause of existence, is of the nature of tamas, indifferent and dark.⁹⁷

And that which in consequence of delusion is undertaken without regard to its consequences, or the power to carry it out, or the harm it may cause, is of the quality of darkness — tamas.¹⁰⁰

The doer who is ignorant, foolish, undertaking actions without ability, without discrimination, with sloth, deceit, obstinacy, mischievousness, and dilatoriness, is of the quality of tamas.¹⁰³

Hear now, O Dhananjaya, conqueror of wealth, the differences which I shall now explain in the discerning power and the steadfast power within, according to the three classes flowing from the divisions of the three qualities.¹⁰⁴

The discerning power that knows how to begin and to renounce, what should and what should not be done, what is to be feared and what not, what holds fast and what sets the soul free, is of the sattva quality.¹⁰⁵

That power of steadfastness holding the man together, which by devotion controls every motion of the mind, the breath, the senses and the organs, partaketh of the sattva quality.¹⁰⁸

That discernment, O son of Pritha, which does not fully know what ought to be done and what not, what should be feared and what not, is of the passion-born rajas quality.¹⁰⁶

And that which cherisheth duty, pleasure, and wealth, in him who looketh to the fruits of action is of the quality of rajas.¹⁰⁹

That discriminating power which is enveloped in obscurity, mistaking wrong for right and all things contrary to their true intent and meaning, is of the dark quality of tamas.¹⁰⁷

But that through which the man of low capacity stays fast in drowsiness, fear, grief, vanity and rashness is from the tamas quality, O son of Pritha.¹¹⁰

Now hear what are the three kinds of pleasure wherein happiness comes from habitude and pain is ended.¹¹¹

That which in the beginning is as poison and in the end as the waters of life, and which arises from a purified understanding, is declared to be of the sattva quality.¹¹²

That arising from the connection of the senses with their objects which in the beginning is sweet as the waters of life but at the end like poison, is of the quality of rajas.¹¹³

That pleasure is of the dark tamas quality which both in the beginning and the end arising from sleep, idleness, and carelessness, tendeth both in the beginning and the end to stupefy the soul.¹¹⁴

There is no creature on earth nor among the hosts in heaven who is free from these three qualities which arise from nature.¹¹⁵ The respective duties of the four castes, of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, are also determined by the qualities which predominate in the disposition of each, O harasser of thy foes.¹¹⁶ The natural duty of a Brahman compriseth tranquillity, purity, self-mastery, patience, rectitude, learning, spiritual discernment, and belief in the existence of another world.¹¹⁷ Those of the Kshatriya sprung from his nature are valour, glory, strength, firmness, not to flee from the field of battle, liberality and a lordly character.¹¹⁸ The natural duties of the Vaisya are to till the land, tend cattle and to buy and sell; and that of the Sudra is to serve, as is his natural disposition.¹¹⁹

Men being contented and devoted to their own proper duties attain perfection; hear now how that perfection is attained by devotion to natural duty.¹²⁰ If a man maketh offering to the Supreme Being who is the source of the works of all and by whom this universe was spread abroad, he thus obtaineth perfection.¹²¹ The performance of the duties of a man's own particular calling, although devoid of excellence, is better than doing the duty of another, however well performed; and he who fulfils the duties obligated by nature, does not incur sin.¹²² A man's own natural duty, even though stained with faults, ought not to be abandoned. For all human acts are involved in faults, as the fire is wrapped in smoke.¹²³ The highest perfection of freedom from action is attained through renunciation by him who in all works has an unfettered mind and subdued heart.¹²⁴

Learn from me, in brief, in what manner the man who has reached perfection (? sattva) attains to the Supreme Spirit, which is the end, the aim, and highest condition of spiritual knowledge.¹²⁵ Imbued with pure discrimination, restraining himself with resolution, having rejected the charms of sound and other objects of the senses, and casting off attachment and dislike;¹²⁶ dwelling in secluded places, eating little, with speech, body, and mind controlled, engaging in constant meditation and unwaveringly fixed in dispassion;¹²⁷ abandoning egotism, arrogance, violence, vanity, desire, anger, pride, and possession, with calmness ever present, a man is fitted to be the Supreme Being.¹²⁸ And having thus attained to the Supreme, he is serene, sorrowing no more, and no more desiring, but alike towards all creatures he attains to supreme devotion to me.¹²⁹ By this devotion to me he knoweth fundamentally who and what I am and having thus discovered me he enters into me without any intermediate condition.¹³⁰

And even the man who is always engaged in action shall attain by my favour to the eternal and incorruptible imperishable abode, if he put his trust in me alone.¹³¹ With thy heart place all thy works on me, prefer me to all else, exercise mental devotion continually, and think constantly of me.¹³² By so doing thou shalt by my divine favour surmount every difficulty which surroundeth thee; but if from pride thou wilt not listen to my words, thou shalt undoubtedly be lost.¹³³ And if, indulging self-confidence, thou sayest “I will not fight,” such a determination will prove itself vain, for the principles of thy nature will impel thee to engage.¹³⁴ Being bound by all past karma to thy natural duties, thou, O son of Kuntī, wilt involuntarily do from necessity that which in thy folly thou wouldst not do.¹³⁵

But further listen to my supreme and most mysterious words which I will now for thy good reveal unto thee because thou art dearly beloved of me.¹³⁶ Place thy heart upon me as I have declared myself to be, serve me, offer unto me alone, and bow down before me alone, and thou shalt come to me; I swear it, for thou art dear to me.¹³⁷ Forsake every other religion and take refuge alone with me; grieve not, for I shall deliver thee from all transgressions.¹³⁸ Thou must never reveal this to one who doth not practice mortification, who is without devotion, who careth not to hear it, nor unto him who despiseth me.¹³⁹ He who expoundeth this supreme mystery to my worshipers shall come to me if he performs the highest worship of me;¹⁴⁰ and there shall not be among men anyone who will better serve me than he, and he shall be dearest unto me of all on earth.¹⁴¹ If anyone shall study these sacred dialogues held between us two, I shall consider that I am worshiped by him with the sacrifice of knowledge; this is my resolve.¹⁴²

And even the man who shall listen to it with faith and not reviling shall, being freed from evil, attain to the regions of happiness provided for those whose deeds are righteous.¹⁴³ Hast thou heard all this, O son of Pritha, with mind one-pointed? Has the delusion of thought which arose from ignorance been removed, O Dhananjaya?¹⁴⁴

Through spiritual knowledge

All these sacrifices of so many kinds are displayed in the sight of God; know that they all spring from action, and, comprehending this, thou shalt obtain an eternal release.¹⁴⁵ Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee, and knowing which thou shalt never again fall into error, O son of Bhārata.¹⁴⁶ By this knowledge thou shalt see all things and creatures whatsoever in thyself and then in me.¹⁴⁷ Even if thou wert the greatest of all sinners, thou shalt be able to cross over all sins in the bark of spiritual knowledge.¹⁴⁸ As the natural fire, O Arjuna, reduceth fuel to ashes, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all actions to ashes.¹⁴⁹ There is no purifier in this world to be compared to spiritual knowledge; and he who is perfected in devotion findeth spiritual knowledge springing up spontaneously in himself in the progress of time.¹⁵⁰ The man who restraineth the senses and organs and hath faith obtaineth spiritual knowledge, and having obtained it he soon reacheth supreme tranquillity;¹⁵¹ but the ignorant, those full of doubt and without faith, are lost. The man of doubtful mind hath no happiness either in this world or in the next or in any oth-

er.¹⁵² No actions bind that man who through spiritual discrimination hath renounced action and cut asunder all doubt by knowledge, O despiser of wealth.¹⁵³ Wherefore, O son of Bhārata, having cut asunder with the sword of spiritual knowledge this doubt which existeth in thy heart, engage in the performance of action. Arise!¹⁵⁴

Unto thee who findeth no fault I will now make known this most mysterious knowledge, coupled with a realisation of it, which having known thou shalt be delivered from evil.¹⁵⁵ This is the royal knowledge, the royal mystery, the most excellent purifier, clearly comprehensible, not opposed to sacred law, easy to perform, and inexhaustible.¹⁵⁶

I will explain further the sublime spiritual knowledge superior to all others, by knowing which all the sages have attained to supreme perfection on the dissolution of this body.¹⁵⁷ They take sanctuary in this wisdom, and having attained to my state they are not born again even at the new evolution, nor are they disturbed at the time of general destruction.¹⁵⁸

Thus, O sinless one, have I declared unto thee this most sacred science; he who understandeth it, O son of Bhārata, will be a wise man and the performer of all that is to be done.¹⁵⁹



3. Devotion's True Path

It hath before been declared by me, O sinless one, that in this world there are two modes of devotion: that of those who follow the Sāṅkhya, or speculative science, which is the exercise of reason in contemplation; and that of the followers of the Yoga school, which is devotion in the performance of action.¹⁶⁰

Head learning

Some regard the indwelling spirit as a wonder, whilst some speak and others hear of it with astonishment; but no one realises it, although he may have heard it described.¹⁶¹

Those enlightened in the three Vedas, offering sacrifices to me and obtaining sanctification from drinking the soma juice, petition me for heaven; thus they attain the region of Indra, the prince of celestial beings, and there feast upon celestial food and are gratified with heavenly enjoyments.¹⁶² And they, having enjoyed that spacious heaven for a period in proportion to their merits, sink back into this mortal world where they are born again as soon as their stock of merit is exhausted; thus those who long for the accomplishment of desires, following the Vedas, obtain a happiness which comes and goes.¹⁶³

Heart doctrine

When thy heart shall have worked through the snares of delusion, then thou wilt attain to high indifference as to those doctrines which are already taught or which are yet to be taught.¹⁶⁴ When thy mind once liberated from the Vedas shall be fixed immovably in contemplation, then shalt thou attain to devotion.¹⁶⁵



4. Fight Arjuna, fight!

I am Time matured, come hither for the destruction of these creatures; except thyself, not one of all these warriors here drawn up in serried ranks shall live.¹⁶⁶ Wherefore, arise! seize fame! Defeat the foe and enjoy the full-grown kingdom! They have been already slain by me; be thou only the immediate agent, O thou both-armed one. Be not disturbed.¹⁶⁷ Slay Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna, and all the other heroes of the war who are really slain by me. Fight, thou wilt conquer all thine enemies.¹⁶⁸

5. He and She

Earth, water, fire, air, and ākāśa, Manas, Buddhi, and Ahamkāra is the eightfold division of my nature.¹⁶⁹ It is inferior; know that my superior nature is different and is the knower; by it the universe is sustained;¹⁷⁰ learn that the whole of creation springs from this too as from a womb; I am the cause, I am the production and the dissolution of the whole universe.¹⁷¹ There is none superior to me, O conqueror of wealth, and all things hang on me as precious gems upon a string.¹⁷² I am the taste in water, O son of Kuntī, the light in the sun and moon, the mystic syllable OM in all the Vedas, sound in space, the masculine essence in men,¹⁷³ the sweet smell in the earth, and the brightness in the fire. In all creatures I am the life, and the power of concentration in those whose minds are on the spirit.¹⁷⁴ Know me, O son of Pritha, as the eternal seed of all creatures. I am the wisdom of the wise and the strength of the strong.¹⁷⁵ And I am the power of the strong who in action are free from desire and longing; in all creatures I am desire regulated by moral fitness.¹⁷⁶

6. Liberation

From re-birth

[Liberation is near] The hungry man loseth sight of every other object but the gratification of his appetite, and when he is become acquainted with the Supreme, he loseth all taste for objects of whatever kind.¹⁷⁷

I will now declare to thee, O best of the Bhāratas, at what time yogis dying obtain freedom from or subjection to rebirth.¹⁷⁸ Fire, light, day, the fortnight of the waxing moon, six months of the sun's northern course — going then and knowing the Supreme Spirit, men go to the Supreme.¹⁷⁹ But those who depart in smoke, at night, during the fortnight of the waning moon, and while the sun is in the path of his southern journey, proceed for a while to the regions of the moon and again return to mortal birth.¹⁸⁰ These two, light and darkness, are the world's eternal ways; by one a man goes not to return, by the other he cometh back again upon earth.¹⁸¹ No devotee, O son of Pritha, who knoweth these two paths is ever deluded; wherefore, O Arjuna, at all times be thou fixed in devotion.¹⁸² The man of meditation who knoweth all this reaches beyond whatever rewards are promised in the Vedas or that result from sacrifices or austerities or from gifts of charity, and goeth to the supreme, the highest place.¹⁸³

From the fruits of action

For knowledge is better than constant practice, meditation is superior to knowledge, renunciation of the fruit of action to meditation; final emancipation immediately results from such renunciation.¹⁸⁴ (1) Renunciation of the fruit of action, (2) meditation, (3) Knowledge, (4) Constant practice.¹⁸⁵

From the pairs of opposites

The subject of the Vedas is the assemblage of the three qualities. Be thou free from these qualities, O Arjuna! Be free from the “pairs of opposites” and constant in the quality of Sattva, free from worldly anxiety and the desire to preserve present possessions, self-centred and uncontrolled by objects of mind or sense.¹⁸⁶

Outward looking senses disturb the soul.

The senses, moving toward their appropriate objects, are producers of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, which come and go and are brief and changeable; these do thou

endure, O son of Bhārata!¹⁸⁷ For the wise man, whom these disturb not and to whom pain and pleasure are the same, is fitted for immortality.¹⁸⁸

He is confirmed in spiritual knowledge, when, like the tortoise, he can draw in all his senses and restrain them from their wonted purposes.¹⁸⁹ The tumultuous senses and organs hurry away by force the heart even of the wise man who striveth after perfection.¹⁹⁰

But the wise man also seeketh for that which is homogeneous with his own nature. All creatures act according to their natures; what, then, will restraint effect?¹⁹¹ In every purpose of the senses are fixed affection and dislike. A wise man should not fall in the power of these two passions, for they are the enemies of man.¹⁹²

Unaffected by pain or pleasure, self is content within Self. When at one with the Supreme, self experiences the imperishable bliss of Self.

Those whose souls are in the Spirit, whose asylum is in it, who are intent on it and purified by knowledge from all sins, go to that place from which there is no return.¹⁹³ The illuminated sage regards with equal mind an illuminated, selfless Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and even an outcaste who eats the flesh of dogs.¹⁹⁴ Those who thus preserve an equal mind gain heaven even in this life, for the Supreme is free from sin and equal-minded; therefore they rest in the Supreme Spirit.¹⁹⁵ The man who knoweth the Supreme Spirit, who is not deluded, and who is fixed on him, doth not rejoice at obtaining what is pleasant, nor grieve when meeting what is unpleasant.¹⁹⁶ He whose heart is not attached to objects of sense finds pleasure within himself, and, through devotion, united with the Supreme, enjoys imperishable bliss.¹⁹⁷ For those enjoyments which arise through the contact of the senses with external objects are wombs of pain, since they have a beginning and an end; O son of Kuntī, the wise man delighteth not in these.¹⁹⁸ He who, while living in this world and before the liberation of the soul from the body, can resist the impulse arising from desire and anger is a devotee and blessed.¹⁹⁹ The man who is happy within himself, who is illuminated within, is a devotee, and partaking of the nature of the Supreme Spirit, he is merged in it.²⁰⁰ Such illuminated sages whose sins are exhausted, who are free from delusion, who have their senses and organs under control, and devoted to the good of all creatures, obtain assimilation with the Supreme Spirit.²⁰¹ Assimilation with the Supreme Spirit is on both sides of death for those who are free from desire and anger, temperate, of thoughts restrained; and who are acquainted with the true Self.²⁰²

Those great-souled ones who have attained to supreme perfection come unto me and no more incur rebirths rapidly revolving, which are mansions of pain and sorrow.²⁰³ All worlds up to that of Brahman are subject to rebirth again and again, but they, O son of Kuntī, who reach to me have no rebirth.²⁰⁴

Whosoever knoweth me to be the mighty Ruler of the universe and without birth or beginning, he among men, undeluded, shall be liberated from all his sins.²⁰⁵

Equal-minded, fearless, just, pure, unexpected, contend with whatever come to pass, full of faith is my beloved.

He also is my beloved of whom mankind is not afraid and who has no fear of man; who is free from joy, from despondency and the dread of harm.²⁰⁶ My devotee who is unexpected, pure, just, impartial, devoid of fear, and who hath forsaken interest in the results of action, is dear unto me.²⁰⁷ He also is worthy of my love who neither rejoiceth nor findeth fault, who neither lamenteth nor coveteth, and being my servant hath forsaken interest in both good and evil results.²⁰⁸ He also is my beloved servant who is equal-minded to friend or foe, the same in honour and dishonour, in cold and heat, in pain and pleasure, and is unsolicitous about the event of things;²⁰⁹ to whom praise and blame are as one; who is of little speech, content with whatever cometh to pass, who hath no fixed habitation, and whose heart, full of devotion, is firmly fixed.²¹⁰ But those who seek this sacred ambrosia — the religion of immortality — even as I have explained it, full of faith, intent on me above all others, and united to devotion, are my most beloved.²¹¹

Final steps.

Those who are free from pride of self and whose discrimination is perfected, who have prevailed over the fault of attachment to action, who are constantly employed in devotion to meditation upon the Supreme Spirit, who have renounced desire and are free from the influence of the opposites known as pleasure and pain, are undeluded, and proceed to that place which endureth forever.²¹² Neither the sun nor the moon nor the fire enlighteneth that place; from it there is no return; it is my supreme abode.²¹³

It is even a portion of myself which, having assumed life in this world of conditioned existence, draweth together the five senses and the mind in order that it may obtain a body and may leave it again.²¹⁴ And those are carried by the Sovereign Lord to and from whatever body he enters or quits, even as the breeze bears the fragrance from the flower.²¹⁵ Presiding over the eye, the ear, the touch, the taste, and the power of smelling, and also over the mind, he experienceth the objects of sense.²¹⁶ But those who have the eye of wisdom perceive it, and devotees who industriously strive to do so see it dwelling in their own hearts; whilst those who have not overcome themselves, who are devoid of discrimination, see it not even though they strive thereafter.²¹⁷

7. Mansion of death

Death is certain to all things which are born, and rebirth to all mortals; wherefore it doth not behoove thee to grieve about the inevitable.²¹⁸ This spirit can never be destroyed in the mortal frame which it inhabiteth, hence it is unworthy for thee to be troubled for all these mortals.²¹⁹

Whoever, O Arjuna, knoweth my divine birth and actions to be even so doth not upon quitting his mortal frame enter into another, for he entereth into me.²²⁰ Many who were free from craving, fear, and anger, filled with my spirit, and who depended upon me, having been purified by the ascetic fire of knowledge, have entered into my being.²²¹

The man whose devotion has been broken off by death goeth to the regions of the righteous, where he dwells for an immensity of years and is then born again on earth in a pure and fortunate family;²²² or even in a family of those who are spiritually illuminated. But such a rebirth into this life as this last is more difficult to obtain.²²³ Being thus born again he comes in contact with the knowledge which belonged to him in his former body, and from that time he struggles more diligently towards perfection, O son of Kuru.²²⁴ For even unwittingly, by reason of that past practice, he is led and works on. Even if only a mere enquirer, he reaches beyond the word of the Vedas.²²⁵ But the devotee who, striving with all his might, obtaineth perfection because of efforts continued through many births, goeth to the supreme goal.²²⁶

Whoever at the hour of death abandoneth the body, fixed in meditation upon me, without doubt goeth to me.²²⁷ Whoso in consequence of constant meditation on any particular form thinketh upon it when quitting his mortal shape, even to that doth he go, O son of Kuntī.²²⁸ Therefore at all times meditate only on me and fight. Thy mind and Buddhi being placed on me alone, thou shalt without doubt come to me.²²⁹

Those who are unbelievers in this truth, O harasser of thy foes, find me not, but revolving in rebirth return to this world, the mansion of death.²³⁰



8. Meditation

The anchorite who shutteth his placid soul away from all sense of touch, with gaze fixed between his brows; who maketh the breath to pass through both his nostrils with evenness alike in inspiration and expiration,²³¹ whose senses and organs together with his heart and understanding are under control, and who hath set his heart upon liberation and is ever free from desire and anger, is emancipated from birth and death even in this life.²³² Knowing that I, the great Lord of all worlds, am the enjoyer of all sacrifices and penances and the friend of all creatures, he shall obtain me and be blessed.²³³

Raise self by Self

Action is said to be the means by which the wise man who is desirous of mounting to meditation may reach thereto; so cessation from action is said to be the means for him who hath reached to meditation.²³⁴ When he hath renounced all intentions and is devoid of attachment to action in regard to objects of sense, then he is called one who hath ascended to meditation.²³⁵ He should raise the self by the Self; let him not suffer the Self to be lowered; for Self is the friend of self, and, in like manner, self is its own enemy.²³⁶ Self is the friend of the man who is self-conquered; so self like a foe hath enmity to him who is not self-conquered.²³⁷ The Self of the man who is self-subdued and free from desire and anger is intent on the Supreme Self in heat and cold, in pain and pleasure, in honour and ignominy.²³⁸ The man who hath spiritual knowledge and discernment, who standeth upon the pinnacle, and hath subdued the senses, to whom gold and stone are the same, is said to be devoted.²³⁹ And he is esteemed among all who, whether amongst his friends and companions, in the midst of enemies or those who stand aloof or remain neutral, with those who love and those who hate, and in the company of sinners or the righteous, is of equal mind.²⁴⁰ He who has attained to meditation should constantly strive to stay at rest in the Supreme, remaining in solitude and seclusion, having his body and his thoughts under control, without possessions and free from hope.²⁴¹ He should in an undefiled spot place his seat, firm, neither too high nor too low, and made of kuśa grass which is covered with a skin and a cloth.²⁴² There, for the self's purification he should practice meditation with his mind fixed on one point, the modifications of the thinking principle controlled and the action of the senses and organs restrained.²⁴³ Keeping his body, head, and neck firm and erect, with mind determined, and gaze directed to the tip of his nose without looking in any direction.²⁴⁴ with heart at peace and free from fear, the Yogi should remain, settled in the vow of a Brahmachārin, his thoughts controlled, and heart fixed on me.²⁴⁵ The devotee of controlled mind who

thus always bringeth his heart to rest in the Supreme reacheth that tranquillity, the supreme assimilation with me.²⁴⁶ This divine discipline, Arjuna, is not to be attained by the man who eateth more than enough or too little, nor by him who hath a habit of sleeping much, nor by him who is given to overwatching.²⁴⁷ The meditation which destroyeth pain is produced in him who is moderate in eating and in recreation, of moderate exertion in his actions, and regulated in sleeping and waking.²⁴⁸ When the man, so living, centres his heart in the true Self and is exempt from attachment to all desires, he is said to have attained to yoga.²⁴⁹ Of the sage of self-centred heart, at rest and free from attachment to desires, the simile is recorded, “as a lamp which is sheltered from the wind flickereth not.”²⁵⁰ When regulated by the practice of yoga and at rest, seeing the self by the self, he is contented;²⁵¹ when he becometh acquainted with that boundless bliss which is not connected with objects of the senses, and being where he is not moved from the reality;²⁵² having gained which he considereth no other superior to it, and in which, being fixed, he is not moved even by the greatest grief;²⁵³ know that this disconnection from union with pain is distinguished as yoga, spiritual union or devotion, which is to be striven after by a man with faith and steadfastly.²⁵⁴ When he hath abandoned every desire that ariseth from the imagination and subdued with the mind the senses and organs which impel to action in every direction,²⁵⁵ being possessed of patience, he by degrees finds rest; and, having fixed his mind at rest in the true Self, he should think of nothing else.²⁵⁶ To whatsoever object the inconstant mind goeth out he should subdue it, bring it back, and place it upon the Spirit.²⁵⁷ Supreme bliss surely cometh to the sage whose mind is thus at peace; whose passions and desires are thus subdued; who is thus in the true Self and free from sin.²⁵⁸ He who is thus devoted and free from sin obtaineth without hindrance the highest bliss — union with the Supreme Spirit.²⁵⁹ The man who is endowed with this devotion and who seeth the unity of all things perceiveth the Supreme Soul in all things and all things in the Supreme Soul.²⁶⁰ He who seeth me in all things and all things in me looseneth not his hold on me and I forsake him not.²⁶¹ And whosoever, believing in spiritual unity, worshipeth me who am in all things, dwelleth with me in whatsoever condition he may be.²⁶² He, O Arjuna, who by the similitude found in himself seeth but one essence in all things, whether they be evil or good, is considered to be the most excellent devotee.²⁶³

The man of meditation as thus described is superior to the man of penance and to the man of learning and also to the man of action; wherefore, O Arjuna, resolve thou to become a man of meditation.²⁶⁴ But of all devotees he is considered by me as the most devoted who, with heart fixed on me, full of faith, worships me.²⁶⁵

Hear, O son of Pritha, how with heart fixed on me, practising meditation and taking me as thy refuge, thou shalt know me completely.²⁶⁶ I will instruct thee fully in this knowledge and in its realisation, which, having learned, there remains nothing else to be known.²⁶⁷ Among thousands of mortals a single one perhaps strives for perfection, and among those so striving perhaps a single one knows me as I am.²⁶⁸

The man whose heart abides in me alone, wandering to no other object, shall also by meditation on the Supreme Spirit go to it, O son of Pritha.²⁶⁹ Whosoever shall meditate upon the All-Wise which is without beginning, the Supreme Ruler, the smallest of the small, the Supporter of all, whose form is incomprehensible, bright as the sun

beyond the darkness;²⁷⁰ with mind undeviating, united to devotion, and by the power of meditation concentrated at the hour of death, with his vital powers placed between the eyebrows, attains to that Supreme Divine Spirit.²⁷¹ I will now make known to thee that path which the learned in the Vedas call indestructible, into which enter those who are free from attachments, and is followed by those desirous of leading the life of a Brahmachārin labouring for salvation.²⁷² He who closeth all the doors of his senses, imprisoneth his mind in his heart, fixeth his vital powers in his head, standing firm in meditation,²⁷³ repeating the monosyllable OM, and thus continues when he is quitting the body, goeth to the supreme goal.²⁷⁴ He who, with heart undiverted to any other object, meditates constantly and through the whole of life on me shall surely attain to me, O son of Pritha.²⁷⁵

In what particular form shall I meditate on thee?

Arjuna: How shall I, constantly thinking of thee, be able to know thee, O mysterious Lord? In what particular forms shall I meditate on thee?²⁷⁶ O Janardana — besought by mortals — tell me therefore in full thine own powers and forms of manifestation, for I am never sated of drinking of the life-giving water of thy words.²⁷⁷

Krishna: O best of Kurus, blessings be upon thee. I will make thee acquainted with the chief of my divine manifestations, for the extent of my nature is infinite.²⁷⁸ I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all existing things.²⁷⁹ Among Ādityas I am Vishnu, and among luminous bodies I am the sun. I am Marīchi among the Maruts and among heavenly mansions I am the moon.²⁸⁰ Among the Vedas I am the Samaveda and Indra among the Gods; among the senses and organs I am the Manas, and of creatures the existence.²⁸¹ I am Śamkara among the Rudras; and Vittesa, the lord of wealth among the Yakshas and Rakshasas. I am Pāvaka among the Vasus, and Meru among high-aspiring mountains.²⁸² And know, O son of Pritha, that I am Brihaspati, the chief of teachers; among leaders of celestial armies Skanda, and of floods I am the ocean.²⁸³ I am Bhrigu among the Adept Kings; of words I am the monosyllable OM; of forms of worship, the silent repetition of sacred texts, and of immovable things I am the Himalaya.²⁸⁴ Of all the trees of the forest I am Aśvattha the Pippala tree; and of the celestial Sages, Nārada; among Gandharvas I am Chitraratha, and of perfect saints, Kapila.²⁸⁵ Know that among horses I am Uchchaisrava, who arose with the Amrita out of the ocean; among elephants, Airavata, and among men their sovereigns.²⁸⁶ Of weapons I am the thunderbolt; among cows, Kamadhuk, the cow of plenty; of pro-creators, the God of love, and of serpents, Vasuki, their chief.²⁸⁷ I am Ananta among the Nāgas, Varuna among things of the waters; among the ancestors, Aryarman, and of all who judge I am Yama.²⁸⁸ Among the Daityas I am Prahlada, and among computations I am Time itself; the lion among beasts, and Garuda among the feathered tribe.²⁸⁹ Among purifiers I am Pavana, the air; Rama among those who carry arms, Makara among the fishes, and the Ganges among rivers.²⁹⁰ Among that which is evolved, O Arjuna, I am the beginning, the middle, and the end; of all sciences I am the knowledge of the Adhyatma, and of uttered sounds the human speech.²⁹¹ Among letters I am the vowel A, and of all compound words I am the Dvandva; I am endless time itself, and the Preserver whose face is turned on all sides.²⁹² I am all-grasping death, and the birth of those who are to be; among feminine things I am fame, for-

tune, speech, memory, intelligence, patience, and forgiveness.²⁹³ Among the hymns of the Samaveda I am Brihat-Saman, and the Gāyatrī among metres; among months I am the month Margashirsha, and of seasons spring called Kusumakara, the time of flowers.²⁹⁴ Of those things which deceive I am the dice, and splendour itself among splendid things. I am victory, I am perseverance, and the goodness of the good.²⁹⁵ Of the race of Vrishni I am Vasudeva; of the Pāndava I am Arjuna the conqueror of wealth; of perfect saints I am Vyasa, and of prophet-seers I am the bard Usana.²⁹⁶ Among rulers I am the rod of punishment, among those desiring conquest I am policy; and among the wise of secret knowledge I am their silence.²⁹⁷ I am, O Arjuna, the seed of all existing things, and there is not anything, whether animate or inanimate which is without me.²⁹⁸ My divine manifestations, O harasser of thy foes, are without end, the many which I have mentioned are by way of example.²⁹⁹ Whatever creature is permanent, of good fortune or mighty, also know it to be sprung from a portion of my energy.³⁰⁰ But what, O Arjuna, hast thou to do with so much knowledge as this? I established this whole universe with a single portion of myself, and remain separate.³⁰¹

The divine form includes all forms

Arjuna: Among those of thy devotees who always thus worship thee, which take the better way, those who worship the indivisible and unmanifested, or those who serve thee as thou now art?³⁰²

Krishna: Behold, O son of Pritha, my forms by hundreds and by thousands, of diverse kinds divine, of many shapes and fashions.³⁰³ Behold the Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras, Āśvins, and the Maruts, see things wonderful never seen before, O son of Bhārata.³⁰⁴ Here in my body now behold, O Gudakesa, the whole universe animate and inanimate gathered here in one, and all things else thou hast a wish to see.³⁰⁵ But as with thy natural eyes thou are not able to see me, I will give thee the divine eye. Behold my sovereign power and might!³⁰⁶



9. Mind control

Arjuna: O slayer of Madhu, on account of the restlessness of the mind, I do not perceive any possibility of steady continuance in this yoga of equanimity which thou hast declared.³⁰⁷ For indeed, O Krishna, the mind is full of agitation, turbulent, strong, and obstinate. I believe the restraint of it to be as difficult as that of the wind.³⁰⁸ What end, O Krishna, doth that man attain who, although having faith, hath not attained to perfection in his devotion because his unsubdued mind wandered from the discipline?³⁰⁹ Doth he, fallen from both, like a broken cloud without any support, become destroyed, O strong-armed one, being deluded in the path of the Supreme Spirit?³¹⁰ Thou, Krishna, should'st completely dispel this doubt for me, for there is none other to be found able to remove it.³¹¹

Krishna: Without doubt, O thou of mighty arms, the mind is restless and hard to restrain; but it may be restrained, O son of Kuntī, by practice and absence of desire.³¹² Yet in my opinion this divine discipline called yoga is very difficult for one who hath not his soul in his own control; yet it may be acquired through proper means and by one who is assiduous and controlleth his heart.³¹³ Such a man, O son of Pritha, doth not perish here or hereafter. For never to an evil place goeth one who doeth good.³¹⁴

10. Nature's three qualities

Mankind was created by me of four castes distinct in their principles and in their duties according to the natural distribution of the actions and qualities. Know me, then, although changeless and not acting, to be the author of this.³¹⁵

Know also that the dispositions arising from the three qualities, sattva, rajas, and tamas, are from me; they are in me, but I am not in them.³¹⁶ The whole world, being deluded by these dispositions which are born of the three qualities, knoweth not me distinct from them, supreme, imperishable.³¹⁷ For this my divine illusive power, acting through the natural qualities, is difficult to surmount, and those only can surmount it who have recourse to me alone.³¹⁸

The three great qualities called sattva, rajas, and tamas — light, or truth, passion or desire, and indifference or darkness — are born from nature, and bind the imperishable soul to the body, O thou of mighty arms.³¹⁹ The fruit of righteous acts is called pure and holy, appertaining to sattva; from rajas is gathered fruit in pain, and the tamas produceth only senselessness, ignorance, and indifference.³²⁰ From sattva wisdom is produced, from rajas desire, from tamas ignorance, delusion and folly.³²¹ Those in whom the sattva quality is established mount on high, those who are full of rajas remain in the middle sphere, the world of men, while those who are overborne by the gloomy quality, tamas, sink below.³²² But when the wise man perceiveth that the only agents of action are these qualities, and comprehends that which is superior to the qualities, he attains to my state.³²³ And when the embodied self surpasseth these three qualities of goodness, action, and indifference — which are coexistent with the body — it is released from rebirth and death, old age and pain, and drinketh of the water of immortality.³²⁴ The sattva quality attaches the soul through happiness and pleasure, the rajas through action, and tamas quality surrounding the power of judgement with indifference attaches the soul through heedlessness.³²⁵

Sattva

Of these the sattva quality by reason of its lucidity and peacefulness entwineth the soul to rebirth through attachment to knowledge and that which is pleasant.³²⁶ When wisdom, the bright

Rajas

Know that rajas is of the nature of desire, producing thirst and propensity; it, O son of Kuntī, imprisoneth the Ego through the consequences produced from action.³²⁸ The love of gain,

Tamas

The quality of tamas, the offspring of the indifference in nature, is the deluder of all creatures, O son of Bhārata; it imprisoneth the Ego in a body through heedless folly, sleep, and idle-

light, shall become evident at every gate of the body, then one may know that the sattva quality is prevalent within.³²⁷

activity in action, and the initiating of works, restlessness and inordinate desire are produced when the quality of rajas is prevalent . . .³²⁹

ness.³³⁰ whilst the tokens of the predominance of the tamas quality are absence of illumination, the presence of idleness, heedlessness, and delusion, O son of Kuntī.³³¹

After death

If the body is dissolved when the sattva quality prevails, the self within proceeds to the spotless spheres of those who are acquainted with the highest place.³³²

When the body is dissolved while the quality of rajas is predominant, the soul is born again in a body attached to action; and so also of one who dies while tamas quality is prevalent, the soul is born again in the wombs of those who are deluded.³³³

Overcome the three qualities

When, O son of Bhārata, the qualities of tamas and rajas are overcome, then that of sattva prevaleth; tamas is chiefly acting when sattva and rajas are hidden; and when the sattva and tamas diminish, then rajas prevaleth.³³⁴

He, O son of Pandu, who doth not hate these qualities — illumination, action, and delusion — when they appear, nor longeth for them when they disappear;³³⁵ who, like one who is of no party, sitteth as one unconcerned about the three qualities and undisturbed by them, who being persuaded that the qualities exist, is moved not by them;³³⁶ who is of equal mind in pain and pleasure, self-centred, to whom a lump of earth, a stone, or gold are as one; who is of equal mind with those who love or dislike, constant, the same whether blamed or praised;³³⁷ equally minded in honour and disgrace, and the same toward friendly or unfriendly side, engaging only in necessary actions, such an one hath surmounted the qualities.³³⁸ And he, my servant, who worships me with exclusive devotion, having completely overcome the qualities, is fitted to be absorbed in Brahman the Supreme.³³⁹

By disconnecting the bonds of action . . .

Men say that the Aśvattha, the eternal sacred tree, grows with its roots above and its branches below, and the leaves of which are the Vedas; he who knows this knows the Vedas.³⁴⁰ Its branches growing out of the three qualities with the objects of sense as the lesser shoots, spread forth, some above and some below; and those roots which ramify below in the regions of mankind are the connecting bonds of action.³⁴¹ Its form is not thus understood by men; it has no beginning, nor can its present constitution be understood, nor has it any end. When one hath hewn down with the

strong axe of dispassion this Ásvattha tree with its deeply-imbedded roots,³⁴² then that place is to be sought after from which those who there take refuge never more return to rebirth, for it is the Primeval Spirit from which floweth the never-ending stream of conditioned existence.³⁴³

11. Origin of perfections

Subtle perception, spiritual knowledge, right judgement,³⁴⁴ patience, truth, self-mastery; pleasure and pain, prosperity and adversity; birth and death, danger and security, fear and equanimity, satisfaction, restraint of body and mind, alms-giving, inoffensiveness, zeal and glory and ignominy, all these the various dispositions of creatures come from me.³⁴⁵

12. Primacy of personal duty

It is better to do one's own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than to perform another's duty well. It is better to perish in the performance of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger.³⁴⁶



13. Restrain thy senses!

Let a man, restraining all these, remain in devotion at rest in me, his true self; for he who hath his senses and organs in control possesses spiritual knowledge.³⁴⁷ He who attendeth to the inclinations of the senses, in them hath a concern; from this concern is created passion, from passion anger,³⁴⁸ from anger is produced delusion, from delusion a loss of the memory, from the loss of memory loss of discrimination, and from loss of discrimination loss of all!³⁴⁹ But he who, free from attachment or repulsion for objects, experienceth them through the senses and organs, with his heart obedient to his will, attains to tranquillity of thought.³⁵⁰ And this tranquil state attained, therefrom shall soon result a separation from all troubles; and his mind being thus at ease, fixed upon one object, it embraceth wisdom from all sides.³⁵¹ The man whose heart and mind are not at rest is without wisdom or the power of contemplation; who doth not practice reflection, hath no calm; and how can a man without calm obtain happiness?³⁵² The uncontrolled heart, following the dictates of the moving passions, snatcheth away his spiritual knowledge, as the storm the bark upon the raging ocean.³⁵³ Therefore, O great-armed one, he is possessed of spiritual knowledge whose senses are withheld from objects of sense.³⁵⁴ What is night to those who are unenlightened is as day to his gaze; what seems as day is known to him as night, the night of ignorance. Such is the self-governed Sage!³⁵⁵ The man whose desires enter his heart, as waters run into the unswelling passive ocean, which, though ever fall, yet does not quit its bed, obtaineth happiness; not he who lusteth in his lusts.³⁵⁶ The man who, having abandoned all desires, acts without covetousness, selfishness, or pride, deeming himself neither actor nor possessor, attains to rest.³⁵⁷ This, O son of Pritha, is dependence upon the Supreme Spirit, and he who possesseth it goeth no more astray; having obtained it, if therein established at the hour of death, he passeth on to Nirvana in the Supreme.³⁵⁸

Arjuna: By what, O descendant of Vrishni, is man propelled to commit offences; seemingly against his will and as if constrained by some secret force?³⁵⁹ Krishna: It is lust which instigates him. It is passion, sprung from the quality of rajas; insatiable, and full of sin. Know this to be the enemy of man on earth.³⁶⁰ As the flame is surrounded by smoke, and a mirror by rust, and as the womb envelops the foetus, so is the universe surrounded by this passion.³⁶¹ By this — the constant enemy of the wise man, formed from desire which rageth like fire and is never to be appeased — is discriminative knowledge surrounded.³⁶² Its empire is over the senses and organs, the thinking principle and the discriminating faculty also; by means of these it cloudeth discrimination and deludeth the Lord of the body.³⁶³ Therefore, O best of the descendants of Bhārata, at the very outset restraining thy senses, thou should'st conquer this sin which is the destroyer of knowledge and of spiritual discernment.³⁶⁴ The senses and organs are esteemed great, but the thinking self is greater than they. The discriminating principle is greater than the thinking self, and that which is greater than the discriminating principle is He.³⁶⁵

Thus knowing what is greater than the discriminating principle and strengthening the lower by the Higher Self, do thou of mighty arms slay this foe which is formed from desire and is difficult to seize.³⁶⁶



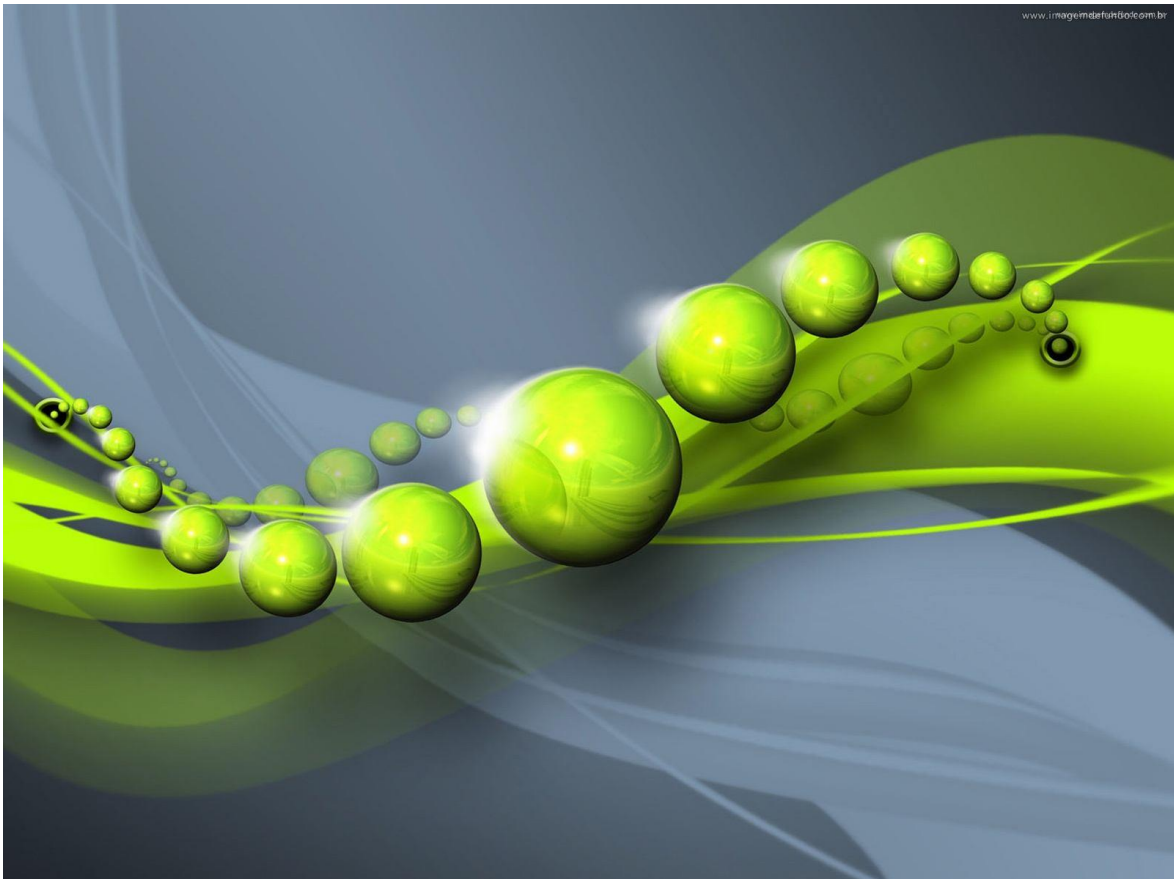
14. Spirit, when clothed in matter, experiences the qualities of matter

Know that prakriti or nature, and purusha the spirit, are without beginning. And know that the passions and the three qualities are sprung from nature.³⁶⁷ Nature or prakriti is said to be that which operates in producing cause and effect in actions; individual spirit or purusha is said to be the cause of experiencing pain and pleasure.³⁶⁸ For spirit when invested with matter or prakriti experienceth the qualities which proceed from prakriti; its connection with these qualities is the cause of its rebirth in good and evil wombs.³⁶⁹ The spirit in the body is called Mahesvara, the Great Lord, the spectator, the admonisher, the sustainer, the enjoyer, and also the Paramātmā, the highest soul.³⁷⁰ He who thus knoweth the spirit and nature, together with the qualities, whatever mode of life he may lead, is not born again on this earth.³⁷¹ Some men by meditation, using contemplation upon the Self, behold the spirit within, others attain to that end by philosophical study with its realisation, and others by means of the religion of works.³⁷² Others, again, who are not acquainted with it in this manner, but have heard it from others, cleave unto and respect it; and even these, if assiduous only upon tradition and attentive to hearing the scriptures, pass beyond the gulf of death.³⁷³ Know, O chief of the Bhāratas, that whenever anything, whether animate or inanimate, is produced, it is due to the union of the Kshetra and Kshetrajña — body and the soul.³⁷⁴ He who seeth the Supreme Being existing alike imperishable in all perishable things, sees indeed.³⁷⁵ Perceiving the same Lord present in everything and everywhere, he does not by the lower self destroy his own soul, but goeth to the supreme end.³⁷⁶ He who seeth that all his actions are performed by nature only, and that the self within is not the actor, sees indeed.³⁷⁷ And when he realises perfectly that all things whatsoever in nature are comprehended in the ONE, he attains to the Supreme Spirit.³⁷⁸ This Supreme Spirit, O son of Kuntī, even when it is in the body, neither acteth nor is it affected by action, because, being without beginning and devoid of attributes, it is changeless.³⁷⁹ As the all-moving ākāśa by reason of its subtlety passeth everywhere unaffected, so the Spirit, though present in every kind of body, is not attached to action nor affected.³⁸⁰ As a single sun illuminateth the whole world, even so doth the One Spirit illumine everybody, O son of Bhārata.³⁸¹ Those who with the eye of wisdom thus perceive what is the difference between the body and Spirit and the destruction of the illusion of objects, go to the Supreme.³⁸²

Bodies are the envelopes of the Soul

These finite bodies, which envelop the souls inhabiting them, are said to belong to Him, the eternal, the indestructible, unprovable Spirit, who is in the body: wherefore, O Arjuna, resolve to fight.³⁸³ The man who believeth that it is this Spirit which killeth, and he who thinketh that it may be destroyed, are both alike deceived; for it neither killeth nor is it killed.³⁸⁴ How can the man who believeth that it is incorruptible, eternal, inexhaustible, and without birth, think that it can either kill or cause to be killed?³⁸⁵

This perishable body, O son of Kuntī, is known as Kshetra; those who are acquainted with the true nature of things call the soul who knows it, the Kshetrajña.³⁸⁶ What the Kshetra or body is, what it resembleth, what it produceth, and what is its origin, and also who he is who, dwelling within, knoweth it, as well as what is his power, learn all in brief from me.³⁸⁷ It has been manifoldly sung by the Rishis with discrimination and with arguments in the various Vedic hymns which treat of Brahman.³⁸⁸ This body, then, is made up of the great elements, Ahamkāra — egotism, Buddhi — intellect or judgement, the unmanifest, invisible spirit; the ten centres of action, the mind, and the five objects of sense;³⁸⁹ desire, aversion, pleasure and pain, persistency of life, and firmness, the power of cohesion. Thus I have made known unto thee what the Kshetra or body is with its component parts.³⁹⁰



15. The object of wisdom is me

Know also that I am the Knower in every mortal body, O son of Bhārata; that knowledge which through the soul is a realisation of both the known and the knower is alone esteemed by me as wisdom.³⁹¹

I will now tell thee what is the object of wisdom, from knowing which a man enjoys immortality; it is that which has no beginning, even the supreme Brahman, and of which it cannot be said that it is either Being or Non-Being.³⁹² It has hands and feet in all directions; eyes, heads, mouths, and ears in every direction; it is immanent in the world, possessing the vast whole.³⁹³ Itself without organs, it is reflected by all the senses and faculties; unattached, yet supporting all; without qualities, yet the witness of them all.³⁹⁴ It is within and without all creatures animate and inanimate; it is inconceivable because of its subtlety, and although near it is afar off.³⁹⁵ Although undivided it appeareth as divided among creatures, and while it sustains existing things, it is also to be known as their destroyer and creator.³⁹⁶ It is the light of all lights, and is declared to be beyond all darkness; and it is wisdom itself, the object of wisdom, and that which is to be obtained by wisdom; in the hearts of all it ever presideth.³⁹⁷

What is wisdom?

True wisdom of a spiritual kind is freedom from self-esteem, hypocrisy, and injury to others; it is patience, sincerity, respect for spiritual instructors, purity, firmness, self-restraint,³⁹⁸ dispassion for objects of sense, freedom from pride, and a meditation upon birth, death, decay, sickness, and error;³⁹⁹ it is an exemption from self-identifying attachment for children, wife, and household, and a constant unwavering steadiness of heart upon the arrival of every event whether favourable or unfavourable;⁴⁰⁰ it is a never-ceasing love for me alone, the self being effaced, and worship paid in a solitary spot, and a want of pleasure in congregations of men;⁴⁰¹ it is a resolute continuance in the study of Adhyatma, the Superior spirit, and a meditation upon the end of the acquirement of a knowledge of truth; — this is called wisdom or spiritual knowledge; its opposite is ignorance.⁴⁰²

16. The ignorant cannot see me

The ignorant, being unacquainted with my supreme condition which is superior to all things and exempt from decay, believe me who am unmanifested to exist in a visible form.⁴⁰³ Enveloped by my magic illusion I am not visible to the world; therefore the world doth not recognise me the unborn and exhaustless.⁴⁰⁴ I know, O Arjuna, all creatures that have been, that are present, as well as all that shall hereafter be, but no one knows me.⁴⁰⁵ At the time of birth, O son of Bhārata, all beings fall into error by reason of the delusion of the opposites which springs from liking and disliking, O harasser of thy foes.⁴⁰⁶ But those men of righteous lives whose sins have ceased, being free from this delusion of the “pairs of opposites,” firmly settled in faith, worship me.⁴⁰⁷ They who depend on me, and labour for deliverance from birth and death know Brahman, the whole Adhyatma, and all Karma.⁴⁰⁸ Those who rest in me, knowing me to be the Adhibhuta, the Adhidaiva, and the Adhiyajna, know me also at the time of death.⁴⁰⁹

Adhibhuta is the Supreme Spirit dwelling in all elemental nature through the mysterious power of nature’s illusion. Adhidaiva is the Purusha, the Spiritual Person, and Adhiyajna is myself in this body, O best of embodied men.⁴¹⁰



17. The wicked despise me

The wicked among men, the deluded and the low-minded, deprived of spiritual perception by this illusion, and inclining toward demoniacal dispositions, do not have recourse to me.⁴¹¹ Four classes of men who work righteousness worship me, O Arjuna; those who are afflicted, the searchers for truth, those who desire possessions, and the wise, O son of Bhārata.⁴¹² Of these the best is the one possessed of spiritual knowledge, who is always devoted to me. I am extremely dear to the wise man, and he is dear unto me.⁴¹³ Excellent indeed are all these, but the spiritually wise is verily myself, because with heart at peace he is upon the road that leadeth to the highest path, which is even myself.⁴¹⁴ After many births the spiritually wise findeth me as the Vasudeva who is all this, for such an one of great soul is difficult to meet.⁴¹⁵ Those who through diversity of desires are deprived of spiritual wisdom adopt particular rites subordinated to their own natures, and worship other Gods.⁴¹⁶ But the reward of such short-sighted men is temporary. Those who worship the Gods go to the Gods, and those who worship me come unto me.⁴¹⁷

The deluded despise me in human form, being unacquainted with my real nature as Lord of all things.⁴¹⁸ They are of vain hopes, deluded in action, in reason and in knowledge, inclining to demoniac and deceitful principles.⁴¹⁹

The deluded do not see the spirit when it quitteth or remains in the body, nor when, moved by the qualities, it has experience in the world.⁴²⁰

18. The wise worship me

But those great of soul, partaking of the godlike nature, knowing me to be the imperishable principle of all things, worship me, diverted to nothing else.⁴²¹ Fixed in unbroken vows they worship, everywhere proclaiming me and bowing down to me.⁴²²

He who being not deluded knoweth me thus as the Supreme Spirit, knoweth all things and worships me under every form and condition.⁴²³



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247 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 16
248 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 17
249 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 18
250 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 19
251 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 20
252 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 21
253 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 22
254 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 23
255 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 24

DEVOTIONAL LOVE IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA
ENDNOTES

256 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 25
257 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 26
258 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 27
259 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 28
260 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 29
261 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 30
262 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 31
263 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 32
264 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 46
265 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 47
266 *Bhagavad Gita*, 7 vs. 1
267 *Bhagavad Gita*, 7 vs. 2
268 *Bhagavad Gita*, 7 vs. 3
269 *Bhagavad Gita*, 8 vs. 8
270 *Bhagavad Gita*, 8 vs. 9
271 *Bhagavad Gita*, 8 vs. 10
272 *Bhagavad Gita*, 8 vs. 11
273 *Bhagavad Gita*, 8 vs. 12
274 *Bhagavad Gita*, 8 vs. 13
275 *Bhagavad Gita*, 8 vs. 14
276 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 17
277 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 18
278 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 19
279 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 20
280 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 21
281 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 22
282 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 23
283 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 24
284 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 25
285 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 26
286 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 27
287 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 28
288 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 29
289 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 30
290 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 31
291 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 32
292 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 33
293 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 34
294 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 35
295 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 36
296 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 37
297 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 38
298 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 39

299 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 40
300 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 41
301 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 42
302 *Bhagavad Gita*, 12 vs. 1
303 *Bhagavad Gita*, 11 vs. 5
304 *Bhagavad Gita*, 11 vs. 6
305 *Bhagavad Gita*, 11 vs. 7
306 *Bhagavad Gita*, 11 vs. 8
307 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 33
308 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 34
309 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 37
310 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 38
311 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 39
312 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 35
313 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 36
314 *Bhagavad Gita*, 6 vs. 40
315 *Bhagavad Gita*, 4 vs. 13
316 *Bhagavad Gita*, 7 vs. 12
317 *Bhagavad Gita*, 7 vs. 13
318 *Bhagavad Gita*, 7 vs. 14
319 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 5
320 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 16
321 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 17
322 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 18
323 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 19
324 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 20
325 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 9
326 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 6
327 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 11
328 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 7
329 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 12
330 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 8
331 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 13
332 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 14
333 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 15
334 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 10
335 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 22
336 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 23
337 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 24
338 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 25
339 *Bhagavad Gita*, 14 vs. 26
340 *Bhagavad Gita*, 15 vs. 1
341 *Bhagavad Gita*, 15 vs. 2

342 *Bhagavad Gita*, 15 vs. 3
343 *Bhagavad Gita*, 15 vs. 4
344 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 4
345 *Bhagavad Gita*, 10 vs. 5
346 *Bhagavad Gita*, 3 vs. 35
347 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 61
348 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 62
349 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 63
350 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 64
351 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 65
352 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 66
353 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 67
354 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 68
355 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 69
356 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 70
357 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 71
358 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 72
359 *Bhagavad Gita*, 3 vs. 36
360 *Bhagavad Gita*, 3 vs. 37
361 *Bhagavad Gita*, 3 vs. 38
362 *Bhagavad Gita*, 3 vs. 39
363 *Bhagavad Gita*, 3 vs. 40
364 *Bhagavad Gita*, 3 vs. 41
365 *Bhagavad Gita*, 3 vs. 42
366 *Bhagavad Gita*, 3 vs. 43
367 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 19
368 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 20
369 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 21
370 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 22
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373 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 25
374 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 26
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380 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 32
381 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 33
382 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 34
383 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 18
384 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 19

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- 385 *Bhagavad Gita*, 2 vs. 21
386 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 1
387 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 3
388 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 4
389 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 5
390 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 6
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392 *Bhagavad Gita*, 13 vs. 12
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403 *Bhagavad Gita*, 7 vs. 24
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409 *Bhagavad Gita*, 7 vs. 30
410 *Bhagavad Gita*, 8 vs. 4
411 *Bhagavad Gita*, 7 vs. 15
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418 *Bhagavad Gita*, 9 vs. 11
419 *Bhagavad Gita*, 9 vs. 12
420 *Bhagavad Gita*, 15 vs. 10
421 *Bhagavad Gita*, 9 vs. 13
422 *Bhagavad Gita*, 9 vs. 14
423 *Bhagavad Gita*, 15 vs. 19

