

SrImad bhagavad gItA

(Volume 1)



Dr.Saroja Ramanujam M.A, Ph.D
SîromaNî in Sanskrit



Sincere Thanks To:

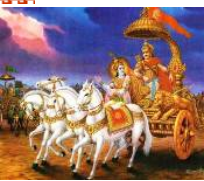
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SrI pArthsArati perumAl - tiruallikENi



FOREWORD BY THE EDITOR

'SrI nrsimha seva rasikan'

Oppiliappan koil SrI VaradAcAri SaThakopan



INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST HEXTAD

Dr.Saroja Ramanujam is a distinguished Sanskrit scholar, teacher, connoisseur of Carnatic music. She has performed kAlakshaEpam of SrI bhAshyam of AcArya rAMAnuja from a SrI VaishNavite AcAryan. In view of her many talents and skills in making the difficult texts of prakaraNa grnatams easy to understand, adiyEn requested her to write her own commentary on SrImat bhagavad gItA.

She consented graciously and the outpourings of that beloved effort are before you in the form of three volumes of annotated commentaries on the 700 sLOkams housed in 18 chapters of gItOpanishad. On this special day of SrI Jayanti, adiyEn is pleased to release on behalf of the SrIhayagrivan likhita kaimkarya ghOshTi the first volume of this three part series.

Dr.Saroja Ramanujam's commentaries bear testimony to her erudition and originality in the absorption of sampradAyic bhAshyams and recasting them into simple language that can benefit readers of all levels of familiarity with SrImat bhagavat gItA. Our sincere thanks are to Dr.Saroja Ramanujam for the completion of the mahaa yajn~am of creating an annotated commentary on bhagavat gItA in such a short span of time. It was her intention to offer her commentaries as samarpaNam to gItAcAryan on this SrI Jayanti day and we are pleased to be able to release the First Part of the three parts. We are all indebted to her for her distinguished kaimkaryam to gItA students.

We are grateful to SrImathy Jayashree Muralidharan, a dear student of



Dr.Saroja Ramanujam, for the assembly of this voluminous first part and the other two parts with great care and affection as AcArya vandanam.

Dr.Saroja Ramanujam asked me to write a foreword to her informative commentaries and adiyEn nervously accepted the invitation and here is the outcome.

Traditionally, the 18 chapters are divided in to three hextads (1-6, 7-12 and 13-18) and these three hextads are being released by us as Volumes I, II and III. adiyEn thought it will be easy to write three seperate introductions (one for each of the three hextads) since it will be thematically coherent. The 18 chapters of gItA have been described as an organic whole by bhagavAn Himself to mahA lakshmi this way: the first 5 chapters are My five vaktrams (mukhams/faces), the chapters 6 to 15 are My ten hands and the 17th as well as the 18th chapters are My two feet.

For SrI VaishNavAs, the source commentary for bhagavat gItA is by swAmy Alavandar known as gItArtha sangraham. This is the quintessence of gItArthams in 32 sLOkams, which is an unparalleled accomplishment in its terseness and clarity. AcArya rAmAnuja blessed us with "gItA bhAshyam", which is a more elaborate commentary. swAmy deSikan was the next AcAryan, who blessed us with his brilliant commentary known as tAtparya candrikai. swAmy deSikan also blessed us with a Tamil prabhandham known as gItArtha sangraham (book #30 in the Sundara Simham series of ebooks: <http://www.sundarasimham.org>).The most recent scholarly commentaries on the essence of gItA are by 9 erudite VaishNavite scholars housed in volume I of the satAbhishEkam souvenir for prakrutam 45th pattam Azhagiya Singar released during November 2006 at SrIranga kshEtram.

The titles of the First Six Chapters (First Hextad) of Srimad Bhagavd gItA

The titles of the First six chapters are:

(1) arjuna-vishADa-yOga (the despondency of arjuna leading to his spiritual



enlightenment),

(2) sAnkhyā yOga (the theory of Atman and the theory of Yoga),

(3) karma yOga (the theory of disinterested performance of prescribed deeds),

(4) jñāna-karma-sanyāsa yOga (Theory of karma yOga and its relation to jñāna yOga),

(5) sanyāsa yOga (Theory of renunciation of karmAs) and

(6) dhyāna yOga ("Theory of meditation on Atman").

adiyEn will focus on the commentaries for the first hextad by U.Ve. VidvAns thayyAr LaskhminarasimhAcchAr, PaadhUr RangarAjAcchAr and PeyampAdi Venakta VaradAcchAr Swamy to highlight the essence of the first six chapters of Srimad Bhagavath gItA!

First Chapter: The dejection of arjuna and the Lord's upadeSa Aarambham to arjuna to overcome his "moral crisis" are covered here. The upadeSam was initiated by the Lord for the entire world using arjuna as a vyAjam (excuse). arjuna was overwhelmed by his misplaced love and compassion for his relatives and AcAryAs, who might be killed during the war. arjuna was confused over his own dharma as a kshatriyan and foresaw no good in killing his kinsman. He was overwhelmed by the prospect of the destruction of his relatives and teachers and threw away his weapons and sat down on the seat of his ratham with profound sorrow.

Second Chapter: swAmy AlavanthAr summarizes the second chapter beautifully. "The knowledge of sankhya and yoga, which comprehend in their scope the eternal self and disinterested activity respectively, leading to the state of steady wisdom, is taught in the second chapter for removing arjuna's delusion".

Our Lord saw the misplaced sorrow of arjuna and instructed arjuna to overcome



his unmanliness and to chase away his faint-heartedness and engage in the battle through pursuit of his kshatriya dharmam. arjuna was totally confused on what to do and begged the Lord to instruct him on what was good for him to do. arjuna declared that he is the Lord's sishyan and has taken refuge at the sacred feet of the Lord and begged to be shown the way out of his crisis.

Our Lord instructed arjuna that he should comprehend clearly the true svarUpam (inherent nature) of the Aatma and thereafter perform karmAs without expecting any phalan (nishkAma karma mArgam). The attachment to phalan should be abandoned but never the karmaas. Our Lord instructed arjuna further that he should engage in fighting without expecting phalans and treat it as bhagavat kaimkaryam and practise karma yOgam and gain moksham ultimately.

This type of karma yogam gets the mind under control and meditate on the svaroopam of Aatma, which is the body of the paramAtmA and progress to jn~Ana yogam. That jn~Ana yOgam will lead to the visuualization of the Aatma and thereby overcome the confusion that the sareeram (body) and the jIvAtma, which is eternal and changeless as opposed to the body that is perishable and full of changes. The false knowledge that body is the same as the soul is destroyed. Jn~Anam is also acquired about both jIvAtmA and paramAtmA and their distinct svaroopams. sankhyaA means buddhi (knowledge) and since jeevatmaa is commanded by the buddhi, it is known as sAnkhyam. Earlier our Lord talked about on karma yogam. The second chapter is therefore called sAnkhyA yogam to recognize the focus on the two subjects (sAnkhyam and yogam).

Third Chapter: karma yoga is elaborately discussed in this chapter. The need for the engaging in nishkAma karmAs (karmAs without expectation of fruits other than the pleasure of the Lord) is stressed. By abandoning karmAs, one does not gain jn~Ana yOgam. If one does not have the jn~Anam that the body is distinctly different from the individual soul (AatmA), he comes to believe that the activities initiated by guNams of prakrti (sattva-rajas-tamas) are done



by himself alone! Lord points out that one should understand the guNams and their karmAs and ascribe agency to them and then place the fruits of his karma at the sacred feet of the Lord, the real doer. Lord instructed arjuna to perform his svadharmam of fighting in the war with a clear knowledge of the true nature of body and the Aatma and dedicate the fruits of his actions to Him.

Fourth Chapter: The six aspects of the avatAra rahasyam of the Lord is explained here. Lord also describes the different parts of karma yogam and points out that the aspect of jn~Anam (jn~Amsam) is an important aspect of karma yogam. The elements of karma yogam (devatArcanm, conductance of yaagam/homam, control of senses, prANAyAmam, vedAdhyayanam, vedArtha vicAram, krcram, upavAsam and sAndrAyaNam) are covered here. Lord exhorts arjuna to cut to shreds the doubts arising from dehAtma bramam, adopt karma yogam and be liberated.

The Fifth Chapter: Three topics are covered here:

- (1) the ease and quick efficiency (saukaryam and saigryam) of karma yogam (2) the mode of knowledge of brahman/paramAtma (brahma jn~Ana prakAram) and
- (3) the elements of karma yogam.

The sixth Chapter: The topics covered here are:

- (1) yOgAbhyAsa vidis: the ways to perform yogam, the physical steps, the Aasanams et al
- (2) Four kinds of equanimity (sama darSanam) arising from the practise of yogam
- (3) growth in vairAgyam due to the practise of yogam dealing with the Aatma
- (4) The phalans arising from the practise of yogam (yoga siddhi) and
- (5) the supermacy of bhakti yogam (pAramyam) focused on dhyAnam about the





Lord, who incarnated as the son of vasudEvan and devaki.

On this SrI Jayanti day, when the Lord incarnated to bless us with His celestial song, adiyEn bows low before Him and seek His anugraham on all jIvarAsis of the world.

lOkA: samastA: sukhinO bhavantu,

dAsan,

Oppiliappan Koil VaradAchAri Sadagopa





॥ श्रीः ॥

श्री कृष्णाय तुभ्यम् नमः

श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता

(प्रथम भागः)

SrImad bhagavad gItA

(Volume 1)



AN INTRODUCTION:

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् ।

देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वंदे जगद्गुरुम् ॥

vasudevasutam devam kamsacANUramardanam |

devakIparamAnandam krshNam vande jagad gurum ||

Salutations to KrshNa, the son of Vasudeva, the destroyer of Kamsa and cANUra, the source of joy for Devaki and the great preceptor of mankind.

Lord nArAyaNa incarnated as KrshNa, as the son of Vasudeva and Devaki, not only to destroy the evil minded ones like Kamsa and cAnura and several others during His incarnation which ended only after the MahAbhArata war, but He showed the humanity the way to immortality through His discourse on the Gita. There are few other GitAs found in the purANAs such as Ramagita, uddhavagita etc., dealing with the self knowledge but the Gita said by KrshNa alone gets the name Bhagavad-Gita.

The Gita discourse was not an accidental happening impelled by the intention of KrshNa to dispel the confusion in the mind of Arjuna because the confusion itself was the divine will of the Lord. In fact nothing happens by accident in

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this world, but only by the will of the Lord. The purpose of creating confusion in the mind of Arjuna by the deliberate stationing of the chariot in front of Bhishma and droNa , was to give out the Gita to the world.

But why should the Lord choose the battle field to do so? It is the mercy of the Lord to uplift the humanity from the ills of samsAra by bringing down the teachings of the Upanishads to the level of the common man. The Upanishads were taught by the rshis to those who were already aware of the transitory nature of the world and its pleasures and wished to have the divine wisdom. Hence the texts of these are in a higher level which only those who have learned the Vedas and the SaastrAs could understand. But Bhagavad-Gita is for all like the milk of the cow. The gopAlanandana, the cowherd boy, who knows well how to milk the cow, has milked the cows called Upanishads and gave out the milk to all.

Hence Bhagavad-Gita is the gospel of mankind. It is not only for the recluse but for the man right in the middle of the world, which is the battle field, the Kurukshetra. The body is called kshetra , a field of activity and hence it is a Kurukshetra, where the good and evil thoughts are always at war. The way to attain peace is to enlist the help of the Lord as Arjuna did, so that the PArthasArati becomes 'nAm pArtta sArati,' the one whom we could see and the one who will lead our chariot, namely the mind and body.

It is a myth to think that the Gita is for old age. Help is needed for a man while he is fighting and not when he retires from the battle of life exhausted when both his mind and body become weak. Therefore the wisdom of Gita must be imparted while being young, so that the seed is sown, which will grow into a tree that gives fruits later.

Gita is essential in all walks of life. Whether one is a student, or an executive or a householder, he will be more efficient in his work if he has mastered the principles of Gita. It was said in the battle field to make Arjuna do his duty efficiently. A proper study of Gita can help a man throughout his life and also



after.

Bhagavd-gIta is extolled in MahA bhArata as follows:

गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या किमन्यैः शास्त्रसङ्ग्रहैः ।

या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्यमुखपद्मात् विनिःसृता ॥

gItA sugItA kartavyA kim anyai: SAstrasangrahai: |

yA svayam padmanAbhasyamukhapadmAt vini:srtA ||

Meaning:

Why do we need other SaastrAs when Bhagavad-Gita that sprang from the lotus- faced Lord PadmanAbha Himself?

सर्वशास्त्रमयी गीता सर्वदेवमयो हरिः ।

सर्वतीर्थमयी गङ्गा सर्ववेदमयो मनुः ॥

sarvaSAstramayI gItA sarvadevamayo hari: |

sarvatirthamayI gangA sarva vedamayo manu: ||

Meaning:

Gita is the epitome of all SaastrAs. Lord Hari is the abode of all devAs. GangA is the essence of all sacred waters and manusmrti is the summary of the Veda.

गीता गङ्गा च गायत्री गोविन्देति हृदि स्थिते ।

चतुर् गगार सम्युक्ते पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥



gItA gangA ca gAyatrI govindeti hrdis thite |

catur gagAra samyukte punarjanma na vidyate ||

Meaning:

To one in whose heart these four 'ga'kArAs, namely, gItA, gangA, gAyatri and govinda are found, has no rebirth.

भारतामृत सर्वस्यगीतायाः मथितस्य च ।

सारम् उद्धृत्य कृष्णेन अर्जुनस्य मुखे हुतम् ॥

bhAaratAmrta sarvasyagItAyA: mathitasya ca |

sAram uddhrtya krshNena arjunasya mukhe hutam ||

--MahabhAratA - BhIshmapArva

KrshNa churned the nectarine ocean of MahA bhArata, (which is known as fifth vedam, pancamo vedA:) and took its essence and fed Arjuna as Bhagavad-Gita gItA. In the GIItA dhyAnasloka of Bhagavad-Gita we have the same idea expressed differently and more poetically.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।

पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

sarvopanishado gAvo dogdhA gopAlanandana: |

pArtho vatsa: sudhIrbhoktA dugdham gItAmrtam mahat ||

Meaning:

All the Upanishads, (the essence of the VedAs) are the cows, the one who



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kRshNa - the cowherd boy! - mannArguDi SrI rAjagopAla swamy



milked them being the son of a cowherd, KrshNa, the calf is Partha (Arjuna) and the milk, gItamrta and the consumers of the milk were sudhI:, the people with right thinking, who seek the wisdom of the scriptures. Arjuna was the calf to induce the cow to give the milk.

An effort is made, by the grace of the Lord, to bring out the profound wisdom of the Gita in a lucid manner, to the best of my ability, for the benefit of all and I am indebted to Dr. Sadagopan for his kind encouragement in bringing out this as an e-book and to all the others who have participated to make this a memorable work. This is my humble likhitakainkarya at the feet of the Lord.

We shall now enjoy the nectar of GIta drop by drop by taking the slokAs one by one.

-Dr Saroja Ramanujam M.A, Ph.D

SiromaNi in Sanskrit

Slokams and Commentaries



arjunA's despondency



॥ श्रीः ॥

CHAPTER 1

ARJUNA VISHADAYOGA - ARJUNA'S DESPONDENCY

SLOKAM 1

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।

मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥

dhrtarAshTra uvAca

dharmakshetre kurukshetre samavetA yuyutsava: |

mAmakA: pANDavA: ca eva kim akurvata sanjaya ||

Meaning:

dhrtarAshTra said -

In the field of Kurukshetra, which is also a dharmakshetra, assembled with the desire to fight, what did my people and PaaNDavAs do, Sanjaya?

Comments:

mAmakA: - dhrtarAshTra refers to the kauravAs, his hundred sons and all those who have gathered in support of kauravAs. It is to be noted that he refers to his side of the warriors as **mAmakA:** thus identifying himself with kauravAs only and mentions PaaNDavAs by name thus separating them as not belonging to him. It shows his partiality towards Duryodhana, fully well knowing that he was unrighteous in calling PaaNDavAs to battle.



pANDavA: - refers to the five sons of PaaNDu and all those who were on their side.

ca eva - means 'and' my people and PaaNDavAs. 'eva' is for emphasis though 'ca' itself is enough to mean 'and'.

samavetA: - assembled together.

yuyutsava: - wishing to fight. (yoddhum icchava:)

dharmakshetre - in the holy field of

kurukshetre - Kurukshetra.

Kurukshetra is extolled in MahA BhArata and is known by another name Samanta pancaka. This is the place where Agni, Indra and Brahma did penance and also king Kuru. It is said that those who die here go to higher planes.

kim akurvata - What did they do?

sanjaya- dhrtarAshTra asks Sanjaya

When the war was inevitable, Sage VyAsa asked dhrtarAshTra whether he wanted to see it and if so he would be given divine eyesight to see what was happening on the battle field. But dhrtarAshTra did not want to see it and said that nevertheless he wanted to hear about it in detail. Thereupon Sage VyAsa gave divine eyesight to Sanjaya and said that he would see everything that happened and would be able to give a detailed account of it to dhrtarAshTra.

After ten days of war, BhIshma fell and dhrtarAshTra became upset and asked Sanjaya to tell him all that had happened so far on the battle field.



SLOKAM 2

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।

आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥

drshTvA tu pANDavAnIkam vyUDham duryodhana: tadA |

AcAryam upasangamya rAjA vacanam abravIt ||

Meaning:

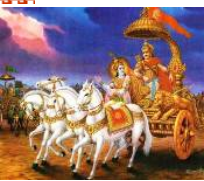
The king Duryodhana seeing the army of PaaNDavAs arrayed in battle, went to his guru DroNa and said thus

Comments:

duryodhana: - He is the eldest son of DhrtarAshTra and who was solely responsible for the outbreak of war against PaaNDavAs by refusing to give them their rightful share of the kingdom. The word means 'one who could not easily be fought against, 'duhkhena yoddhum Sakya:' He is also known as suyodhana, 'one who fights with ease', **sukhena yudhyate iti**, denoting his valour.

pANDavAnIkam vyUDham - the array of battle of PaaNDavAs. **vyUha** is the particular arrangement in battle though the word also means broad or wide Duryodhana saw the wide army of PaaNDavAs arranged for battle and got frightened. The army of PaaNDavAs was not as big as his own but the arrangement was made skillfully so as to make it appear wider than it was. Moreover Duryodhana knew that he was adharmik and hence on seeing the PaaNDava army face to face he was unnerved as the thought of dharma winning in the end must have lurked at the back of his mind.

dhrrshTvA - seeing



Acaryam upasangamya - Went near his guru (approached DroNacArya). Sanjaya refers to Duryodhana as rAjA to denote that he is the master of the whole army yet he approached DroNa instead of calling him because of respect for his guru and also because once the army is assembled under the respective leaders they should not be disturbed from their assigned places which will create confusion in the army.

vacanam abravIt - said these words

Whole of the first chapter forms the background of Bhagavad-Gita, which actually starts only in the second chapter.





SLOKAM 3

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।

व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥

paSyA etAm pAnDuputrANAm AcArya mahatIm camUm |

vyUDhAm drupadaputreNa tava SishyeNa dhImatA ||

Meaning:

AcArya! See this huge army of PaaNDavAs arrayed by the skilled drshTadyumna, your disciple and the son of drupada.

Comments:

Duryodhana, who is clever in political intrigues, brings to the notice of DroNa the army of PaaNDavAs which was arranged in a skilful manner by DhrshTadyumna. He refers to DhrshTadyumna as the son of Drupada and the disciple of DroNa. This is to anger DroNa and make him fight with vigour because Drupada was his enemy.

DroNa and Drupada studied together in gurukula and Drupada promised him half the kingdom and when DroNa went to him at the time when he was in poverty Drupada insulted him. Angered with that, DroNa taught Arjuna all the skills of archery with the intent of making use of him to vanquish Drupada, which alone he wanted from Arjuna as his gurudhakshiNa. Arjuna marched against Drupada and his army and defeated him and brought him to DroNa, tied in his chariot. DroNa let him go because his purpose was fulfilled which was only to teach a lesson to Drupada but the latter wished to take vengeance and did penance and got DrshTadyumna who would kill DroNa and also Draupadi to marry Arjuna, whose valour he appreciated. DroNa also knew this and that is why Duryodhana now mentioned the name of Drupada and also that DrshTadyumna was his





disciple who now opposes him in battle.

PaaNDavAs were also the disciples of DroNa but Duryodhana knew that he had a soft heart for PaaNDavAs and was serving in the army of Duryodhana only to discharge his debt of being in the service of the KaurvAs. Thus Duryodhana had some fear whether DroNa would fight with PaaNDavAs with all his might. That is why he chose his words carefully thus.

AcArya - DroNa is addressed thus.

paSyA etAm mahatIm camum - See this large army of PaaNDavAs. The army of PaaNDavAs was seven akshauhiNi as compared with that of kauravAs which was eleven akshauhiNi. Yet Duryodhana calls it mahatIm camum because:

- the arrangement which was known as vajravyUha made it appear larger than it was,
- Duryodhana was awed perhaps by the quality rather than quantity which was enhanced by the fact that they were all fighting for the right cause.

vyUDhAm - arranged

drupadaputreNa - by DhrshTadyumna, the son Drupada your former enemy.

tava sishyeNa dhImatA - Not only that but he is also your sishya whom you have accepted and taught all skills of archery naively, fully knowing who he was. Now he is skilled and uses it against you.





SLOKAMS 4, 5 & 6

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनस्मा युधि ।

युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥ ४ ॥

धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।

पुरुजित् कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥ ५ ॥

युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।

सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥ ६ ॥

atra SUrA maheshvAsA bhImArjunasamA yudhi |

yuyudhAno virATaSca drupadaSca mahAratha: || 4 ||

dhrshTaketu: cekitAna: kASirAjaSca vIryavAn |

purujit kuntibhojaSca SaibyaSca narapungava: || 5 ||

yudhAmanyuSca vikrAnta uttamaujASca vIryavAn |

saubhadro draupadeyASca sarva eva mahArathA: || 6 ||

Meaning:

There in that army of PaaNDavAs, are heroes great bowmen equal to BhIma and Arjuna in battle. YuyudhAna, ViraTa, and Drupada, a mighty warrior, DhrshTaketu, CekitAna, and the valiant king of KaaSi, Purujit and Kuntibhoja and Saibhya, a bull among men, YudhAmanyu, the valiant, uttamaujas, the strong, and also the son of Subhadra, and the sons of Draupadi, all mighty



warriors.

Comments:

Duryodhana points out to DroNa the heroes who have assembled to assist the PaaNDavAs in battle in these three slokaS.

atra - there, refers to the army of PaaNDavAs about which he was speaking in the previous sloka.

maheshvAsA - ishu means arrow and maheshvAsA: means great bowmen.

yudhi - in battle,

bhImArjunasamA - all these are equal to BhIma and Arjuna.

yuyudhAna: - refers to Satyaki, a yAdava, who was the disciple of Arjuna and a companion of KrshNa.

virATa - king of the country of Matsya. PaaNDavAs lived in his country incognito during their 13th year of exile. Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna and Subhadra married his daughter Uttara.

drupada - king of PaancAla and father of Draupadi and DrshTadyumna.

dhrshTaketu - King of Cedi, son of SiSupAla, cousin of KrshNa, whom KrshNa killed during the rajasUyayAgam of YudhishThira. After his father's death he became a friend of PaaNDavAs and KrshNa. (SiSupAla was rAVaNa in his next and last janma.)

cekitAna: - a commander of one of the seven akshauhiNi of the PaaNDava army.

kASirAja: - King of KaaSi

purujit kuntibhoja: ca - Purujit and Kuntibhoja



Saibhya - father in law of YudhishThira

yudhAmanyu and uttamaUja:- sons of Drupada

saubhadra: - Abhimanyu, son of Subhadra.

draupadeyA: - the five sons of Draupadi

sarve eva mahArathA: - all are skilled in astra and Sastra. A mahAratha is one who can command ten thousand soldiers in an army.





SLOKAM 7

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम ।

नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान् ब्रवीमि ते ॥

asmAkam tu viSishTA ye tAn nibodha dvijottama |

nAyakA mama sainyasya samj~nArtham tAn bravImi te ||

Meaning:

Oh best among Brahmins! Now know those who are important on our side, the commanders of my army. I shall name them to refresh your memory.

Comments:

Duryodhana now tells DroNa about the heroes on his side. Though DroNa must have known them already, Duryodhana says he mentions them for refreshing his memory, **samj~nArtham**. It is actually to reassure himself, after seeing the army of PaaNDavAs.

asmAkam tu visishTA ye - who are all eminent among us. The particle '**tu**' is used in the sense 'among us also', **asmAkam tu**. He wanted to emphasize that even in his army there are great warriors.

tAn nibodha - know them from me

dvijottama - best among Brahmins referring to DroNa out of respect for the AcAryA

nAyakA: - commanders

mama sainyasya - of my army

tAn bravImi - I am mentioning them

samj~nArtham te - for your attention.





SLOKAM 8

भवान् भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिञ्जयः ।

अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च ॥

bhavAn bhIshmaSca karNaSca krpaSca samitinjaya: |

aSvatthAmA vikarNaSca saumadatti: tathA eva ca ||

Meaning:

Yourself, BhIshma, KarNa, KrpA, who always wins in battle, aSvatthAmA, VikarNa and the son of SomadattA.

Comments:

Duryodhana mentions the name of DroNa first to show respect and to please him.

BhIshma the great grandfather of PaaNDavAs and KauravAs, who was called BhIshma because of his formidable vow that he would not ascend the throne and would forever serve the throne of HastinApura, though he was the crown prince of king Santanu, in order to fulfill the wish of the father of Satyavati whom Santanu wanted to marry. The PaaNDavAs and Kauravas were the descendents of Santanu and Satyavati.

Karna - though he was the son of Kunti, he was abandoned by her for fear of ridicule from the society since she had him by the grace of the Sun, playfully using the mantra the sage DurvAsa instructed her when she was a young girl. The charioteer of DhrtarAshTra found him and KarNa came to be known as his son. He learnt the skill of archery from ParasurAma and seeing his valour Duryodhana made him his close friend, to use him against PaaNDavAs. KarNa, though he came to know later about his true identity remained with the side of



Duryodhana out of loyalty.

krpA - Brother in law of DroNa, patronized by king Santanu. He was the former AcAryA of the princes before DroNa and taught them archery and other battle skills.

aSvatthAmA - the son of DroNa, a great warrior and student of his father

vikarNa - one of the hundred sons of DhrtarAshTra and the only son who followed dharma.

saumadatti - son of SomadattA, named BhUriSravas also a great warrior.





SLOKAM 9

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।

नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥

anye ca bahava: SUrA madarthe tyaktajIvitA: |

nAnASastra praharaNA: sarve yuddhaviSAradA: ||

Meaning:

There are many others who are ready to give up their lives for my sake. All of them are skilled in warfare and in the use of missiles.

Comments:

Duryodhana included all those who were not mentioned in the last verse saying that there are many others as skilled as the ones mentioned and they all have assembled here ready to give up their lives for my sake, *madarthe tyakta jIvitA:*.

Here Duryodhana inadvertently hits upon the fate of Kaurava army in saying *tyaktajIvitA:*. What he meant was, that they are ready to give up their lives but the word *tyaktajIvitA:* may also be construed to mean *tyaktA: jIvitA: yai:*, those who have given up their lives, that is as good as dead.

Sastra denotes the various missiles or weapons while *astra* means those used with the power of mantras like *BrahamAstra*, *AgneyAstra* etc.

yuddhaviSAradA: - *viSArada* means skill or expertise.

SUrA: - those who have valour as well as knowledge





SLOKAM 10

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।

पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥

aparyAptam tat asmAkam balam BhIshmabhirakshitam |

paryAptam tu idam eteshAm balam bhImAbhirakshitam ||

Meaning:

Unlimited is our army protected by BhIshma while limited is the army protected by BhIma.

Comments:

Duryodhana says that his army is unlimited consisting of eleven akshauhinIs while that of PaaNDavAs is only seven akshauhinIs.

tat means Kaurava army and idam means 'this' - denotes that of PaaNDavAs. idam meaning this is used with respect to PaaNDava army because he was talking about that only at the outset and 'that' (tat) refers to his own army.

paryAptam - the word has the meaning 'adequate' or 'competent also' and hence even though Duryodhana meant that PaaNDava army was limited by the word paryAptam it also conveys a sense quite contrary to what is meant and aparyAptam used to denote that which is not limited has the contrary meaning of being not adequate or incompetent through the choice of words fatefully adopted as a foreboding of the events to come.

It was not the intention of Duryodhana to say so because earlier in the udyogaparva of MahA BhArata, Duryodhana reassures his father that the victory is surely his by saying,





गुणहीनं परेषां च बहु पश्यामि भारत ।

गुणोदयं बहुगुणमात्मनश्च विशां पते ॥

guNahInam pareshAm ca bahu paSyAmi bhArata |

guNodayam bahuguNam AtmanaSca viSAm pate ||

--MahA BhAratam, udyoga parva - 55.67

Meaning:

The army of the enemies, oh king of bharata clan, is without merit mostly and our army is full of merit which will grow.

He also tells DroNa before the war in MahA BhAratam,

एकैकशः समर्था हि यूयं सर्वे महारथाः ।

पाण्डुपुत्रान् रणे हन्तुं स सैन्यान्किमु संहताः ॥

ekaikaSa: samarthA hi yUyam sarve mahArathA: |

pANDduputrAn raNe hantum sa sainyAt kimu samhatA: ||

-- MahA BhAratam, BhIshma parva - 51.5

Meaning:

All of you the great warriors are able to destroy the army of PaaNDavAs singly. What more can be said when you are all together.

Comments:

Hence it is the unfortunate choice of words now or purposefully chosen by Sage VyAsa in the scene which is the prelude to gItopadesam because later in 11th



chapter, Arjuna says that he could see all the kauravAs and warriors from his own side also enter the mouth of the viSvarUpa of the Lord. Hence as in the previous sloka here also there is a foreboding of the future turn of events!

This is the beauty of the Sanskrit language, when used by ingenuous poets like Sage VyAsa and VaalmIki, lends itself to different interpretations which is not prohibited because a word can have different implications, with direct (mukhya), indirect, (gauNa), and hidden (vyangya) meanings. As the great masters never use any word wrongly or without intention the words must be construed to give all the meanings relevant to the context. That is why we have so many bhAshyas for the scriptures.

Even in the other languages we see that a different meaning can be got by mere fluctuations of the tone and expression of the speaker. As we can understand the meaning only by reading a work we have no way of knowing the real expression or tonal variations etc. So the possible implications cannot be avoided. It is all allowed in the rules of poetics.





SLOKAM 11

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।

भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥

ayaneshu ca sarveshu yathA bhAgam avasthitA: |

bhIshmam eva abhirakshantu bhavanta: sarva eva hi ||

Meaning:

All of you on all fronts, stationed in your respectful places protect only BhIshma at all cost.

Comments:

Duryodhana told them to be alert in protecting BhIshma not because BhIshma was unable to protect himself being the most formidable warrior of all, but he was afraid only on one score.

BhIshma had resolved to put down his arms if SikhanDi the younger son of Drupada, stand in front of him to fight. This was because SikhanDi was a girl and was changed into a man by the grace of a yaksha. BhIshma knew this and hence like a true warrior refused to fight against SikhanDi, which intention he had proclaimed to all. Hence Duryodhana was apprehensive and asks all his men to surround BhIshma to prevent SikhanDi from coming in front of BhIshma.





SLOKAM 12

तस्य सञ्जनयन् हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।

सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥

tasya sanjanayan harsham kuruvrddha: pitAmaha: |

simhanAdam vinadya uccai: Sankham dadhmau pratApavAn ||

Meaning:

BhIshma, the oldest of the Kurus, and their great grandfather, raised a sound as that of a lion and blew his conch in order to make Duryodhana happy.

Comments:

BhIshma saw Duryodhana speaking to DroNa and sensed his fear and anxiety out of which he made much of his army to DroNa. Hence in order to encourage him, BhIshma blew his conch and roared like a lion. He was the chief commander of the army and hence he blew the conch to signify the start of war. Normally the aggressor takes the first step in battle and by blowing the conch BhIshma made it appear as though the kauravas are the aggressors.

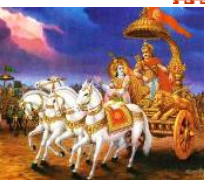
tasya - in the heart of Duryodhana, Hence the usage tasya (genitive case) and not tasmai meaning 'to him'

sanjananyan - creating,

harsham - joy

kuruvrddha: - The old man of the Kurus. BhIshma, who is the pitAmaha, the great grandfather of both PaaNDavAs and Kauravas. BhIshma was only vayovrddha, old by age and not by valour. This is denoted by his simhnAdam, the roar of a lion, which was loud, uccai:.

Sankham dadhmau - sounded his conch.





SLOKAM 13

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।

सहस्रैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥

tata: SankhaSca bheryaSca paNavAnakagomukhA: |

sahasraiva abhyahanyanta sa Sabda: tumulobhavat ||

Meaning:

Then there was a tumultuous sound as all the instruments of war like conch, drums, and horns sounded simultaneously.

tata: - then, after BhIshma blew his conch.

Sankha - conch,

bherya: - drums,

paNava- another instrument,

Anaka - trumpet and

gomukha - horn

sahasra eva - thousands indeed

abhyahanyanta - were sounded

sa Sabda: tumula: abhavat - that sound was tumultuous.



SLOKAM 14

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।

माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥

tata: Svetai: hayai: yuktai: mahati syandane sthitau |

mAdhava: pANDava: ca eva divyau Sankhau pradadhmatu: ||

Meaning:

Then KrshNa and Arjuna stationed in their great chariot drawn with white horses blew their divine conches.

Comments:

The chariot of Arjuna was divine and given by the god of fire Agni, when he burnt the kANDava vanam as an offering to Agnideva. The four white horses were given to him by Citrarata, king of GandarvAs out of his ever replenished stock of hundred and both the chariot and the horses



are capable of traveling on earth and in the sky. KrshNa as the charioteer of Arjuna blew His conch and Arjuna also did likewise.

Both Duryodhana and Arjuna went to see KrshNa before the war to enlist His help and KrshNa gave them a choice. He said that He will be on one side without fighting and He will send His army to the other side. Duryodhana opted for the



latter while Arjuna chose KrshNa himself. When Duryodhana left, Arjuna said that without the help of KrshNa what was the use of army and he requested KrshNa to become his charioteer so that when KrshNa is in forefront, victory would be his. This is how the Lord became PaarthasArati.

Svetai: hayai: - by white horses

mahati syandane sthitau - the two on the great chariot.

mAdhava: - Consort of Lakshmi, **mAdhava:** from **mAyA:** **dhava:** - signifying prosperity to Arjuna.

pANDava: means Arjuna. Though this word means all the sons of PaaNDu, here it is Arjuna who is with KrshNa in the chariot.





SLOKAM 15

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनंजयः ।

पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥

pAncajanyam hrshIkeSa: devadattam dhananjaya: |

pauNDram dadhmau mahASankham bhImakarma vrkodhara: ||

Meaning:

KrshNa sounded his conch Paancajanya, Arjuna blew his conch devadatta and BhIma of fierce actions sounded the big conch, PauNDra.

Comments:

pAancajanyam hrshIkeSa: - The Lord is called hrshIkeSa meaning 'one who has the senses under his control, hrshIkANAm ISa:'. He is the one who controls the senses and make them function being the inner-self of all.

The word can be split in two ways, namely, hrshIka + ISa or hrshi + keSa. In the latter form it means that He gives joy, hrshi with His rays, keSa, that envelop the whole world. KeSa also means hair and hence it refers to KrshNa who has abundant hair.

pAncajanyam - KrshNa killed the asura Pancajana and the conch was made from the asura's bones and hence it is called Paancajanyam.

dananjaya - The name of Arjuna because he collected a lot of wealth for YudhishThira when he did rAjasuyayAga, by conquering all the kings, danam jayati iti danajaya

devadattam - the conch of Arjuna was called devadattam because it was given to him by Indra, devena dattam.





bhImakarmA vrkodara: - refers to BhIema who was called **vrkodara** because he used to eat a lot and digest the same like a wolf. **vrkasya udaram iva udaram yasay sa:**, one who has a stomach like that of a wolf. He is also referred to as **bhImakarma** because his actions were terrifying to his enemies. The word **BhIma** means fearful.

The conch of BhIma was known as **PauNDra** and it was described as **mahaaSankham** as it was big in size and also in sound.

pAncajanyam hrishIkeSa: - Lord KrshNa sounded His conch which was music to His followers but sounded the death knell to His foes. The one who played the flute in Brindavan enchanting the whole world with His music, blew His conch in Kurukshetra, stunning the Kaurava forces into silence.

Paancajanya, the conch of the Lord, is **praNavasvarUpa**, represents **OmKara**, and hence synonymous with nadabrahmam, as praNava, the syllable **Om** is the source of all sound. **Om ityekaksharam brahma**, - Brahman the Absolute Reality is synonymous with syllable **Om**, - says the sruti. When the Lord touched the face of the boy druva with the Paancajanya he became eloquent. Such was the power of Paancajanya.



SLOKAM 16

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।

नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥

anantavijayam rAjA kuntIputro yudhishThira: |

nakula: sahadevaSca sughosha maNipushpakau ||

Meaning:

The king YudhishThira, son of Kunti, blew his conch anantavijayam and nakula and Sahadeva blew their conches, sugohsha and maNipushpaka respectively.

Comments:

YudhishThira is referred as the king, rAjA, because even though he lost his kingdom he became a cakravarti by performing rAjasUya yAga and conquering all the kings.

He is also referred to as kuntiputra, son of Kunti, to show that Nakula and Sahadeva mentioned next are not the sons of Kunti, being the sons of Madri, co-wife of Kunti. Though Arjuna and BhIma were also Kunti putrAs they have been mentioned already and hence here the epithet denotes YudhishThira only.





SLOKAM 17

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।

धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥

kASyaSca parameshvAsa: SikhanDI ca mahAratha: |

dhrshTadyumno virATa: ca sATyaki: ca aparAJita: |

Meaning:

The king of kaaSi who is a great archer, SikhanDI, a mahAratha, Dhrshtadyumnan, ViraTa and sATyaki, the unconquerable,



SLOKAM 18

द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।

सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान् दध्मुः पृथक् पृथक् ॥

drupado draupadeyA: ca sarvaSa: prthivIpate |

saubhadra: ca mahAbAhu: SankhAn dadhmu: prthak prthak ||

Meaning:

Drupada, the sons of Draupadi, and Abhimanyu, son of Subhadra, - all blew their conches one by one.

Comments:

In saying that all blew their conches one by one, **prthak prthak**, meaning all the warriors including those mentioned blew their conches respectively.





SLOKAM 19

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।

नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो व्यनुनादयन् ॥

sa ghosho dhArtarAshTrANAm hrdayAni vyadArayat |

nabha: ca prthivIm ca eva tumulo vyanunAdayan ||

Meaning:

That tumultuous sound reverberating through the heaven and earth broke the hearts of the sons of DhrtarAshTra.

sa tumulo ghosha: - that tumultuous sound.

vyadArayat - tore apart, with fear.

dhArtarAshTrANAm hrdayAni - the hearts of the sons of DhrtarAshTra.

vyanunAdayat - reverberated

nabha: ca prthivIm ca eva - the sky and the earth.

Comments:

Sanjaya is telling DhrtarAshTra that the tumultuous noise rent asunder the hearts of his sons, implying that their cause is as good as lost.





SLOKAMS 20 & 21

अथ व्यवस्थितान्दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।

प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसम्पाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥ २० ॥

हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते ।

अर्जुन उवाच

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥ २१ ॥

atha vyavasthitAn drshTvA dhArtrAshTrAn kapidhvaja: |

pravrtte SastrasampAte dhanurudyamya pANDava: || 20 ||

hrshIkeSam tadA vAkyam idam Aha mahIpate |

arjuna uvAca

senayo: ubhayo: madhye ratham sthApaya me acyuta || 21 ||

Meaning:

Then Arjuna, who had Hanuman on his banner, seeing the sons of DhrtarAshtra, took up his bow when the missiles were about to fly.

Oh king, he then spoke these words to KrshNa.

Arjuna said, - "acyuta, place my chariot between the two armies."

Comments:

vyavasthitAn dhArtarAshTrAn drshTvA - seeing the sons of DhrtarAshTra assembled there. This shows that Arjuna when he asked KrshNa to take his





chariot between the two armies,



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kRshNa drives the chariot to the middle of the battlefield!

senayo: ubhayo: madhye, saw only Duryodhana and his brothers and people like BhIshma and DroNa were far from his mind.

This is explicit from his words in the next sloka. But what he wanted to see and what he actually saw were entirely different, as per the will of the Lord.

Arjuna is referred to as kapidhvaja, because he had Hanuman as a flag of his chariot. Hanuman when BhIsha met him without knowing his identity and challenged him and later knowing who he was requested him to help them in the battle; he agreed to be on the flag of the chariot of Arjuna, to give him victory. Sanjaya here reminds Dhrtarastra of this.



pravrte Sastra SampAte, when the warriors were about to discharge their missiles,

dhanurudyamya - raising his bow, which shows his eagerness to fight which was later changed by the will of the Lord to make him say, gANDIvam sramsate hastAt, my bow is slipping from my hand.

hrshIekeSam - The Lord is the HrshIkeSa, who controls our senses and hence he brought about the transformation in Arjuna out of His krpA because he wanted to give the gospel of the Gita to humanity and the context was apt because we all need Gita only when we are at the brink of war or of taking an important decision of our life. This will be elaborated later at the end of the chapter.





SLOKAM 22

यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।

कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥

yAvat etAn nirIkshe aham yoddhukAmAn avasthitAn |

kai: mayA saha yoddhavyam asmin raNasamudyame ||

Meaning:

So that I will see all those who have come with a desire to fight and with whom I have to fight in this war!

yAvat - by which manner, referring to the positioning of the chariot as he said

etAn nirIkshe aham - I will see these

avasthitAn - who are stationed here

yoddhukAmAn - desirous to fight

kai: mayA saha yoddhavyam - with whom I have to fight

asmin raNa samudyame - in this forthcoming war





SLOKAM 23

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।

धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥

yotsyamAnAn avekshe aham ya ete atra samAgatA: |

dhArtrAshThrasya durbuddhe: yuddhe priyacikIrshava: ||

Meaning:

I wish to see those who have assembled here wishing to please the evil minded Duryodhana in this battle.

Comments:

These two slokAs makes the intention of Arjuna explicit showing that he was ready to fight and thought only of the misdeeds of Duryodhana and his brothers towards PaaNDavAs and he expresses his anger towards all those kings who have come here to fight for Duryodhana to please him though they all knew that he was doing adharma.

aham avekshe - I will see

yotsayamAnAm - those who wish to fight

ya ete atra samAgatA: - these who have assembled here

yuddhe priyacikIrshava: - wishing to do what pleases in the battle,

dhArtarAshThrasya durbuddhe: - the evil minded Duryodhana





SLOKAMS 24 & 25

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥

भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।

उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान् समवेतान् कुरूनिति ॥ २५ ॥

sanjaya uvAca

evam ukto hrshIekeSo guDAkeSena bhArata |

senayo: ubhayo: madhye sthApayitvA rathottamam || 24 ||

bhIshma droNa pramukhatha: sarveshAm ca mahIkshitAm |

uvAca pArtha paSyA etAn samavetAn kurUn iti || 25 ||

Meaning:

Sanjaya said

KrshNa thus addressed by Arjuna placed the chariot in between the two armies in front of all the kings with BhIshma and DroNa in front, said,"Arjuna, see the kauravas assembled here".

Arjuna addressed KrshNa in sloka 21 as acyuta but Sanjaya refers to him as hrshIkeSa throughout to denote that He is the master of all feelings and emotions. (Feelings - sensual, emotions - mental)





The name acyuta means He neither swerves from His assurances nor from His devotees, **na cyuta: iti**. KrshNa never swerved from His status as the ParamAtma and Arjuna was also aware of it though he forgot it at times due to familiarity as a child towards its illustrious father.

Arjuna is referred to as **guDAkeSa**, which means 'the one who has conquered sleep'. This shows that Arjuna was always fully aware of himself and his prowess and not given to negligence any time. Sanjaya said this perhaps to remind to DhrtarAshTra of the glory of Arjuna.

bhIshma DroNa pramukhata: - in front of BhIshma and DroNa

sarveshAm ca mahIkshitAn - and all the kings.

KrshNa purposely stood the chariot at the place where Arjuna could see BhIshma and DroNa because it was the Lord's intention, being HrshIkeSa, to create confusion in the mind of Arjuna by kindling the attachment for his great grandfather and guru, the real purpose being not to induce Arjuna to fight, which he would have definitely done so anyway but to give out the gItAmrta for the world. It is the will of the Lord whose krpA makes the dumb eloquent and the cripple to climb the mountain,

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिम् ।

यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्दमाधवम् ॥

mUkam karoti vAcAlam pangum langhayate girim |

yat krpA tam aham vande paramAnanda mAdhavam ||

--Gita dhyAna Slokam

Arjuna getting perturbed is of no consequence because the Lord could have got him out of it by a mere nod of His head and it does not require eighteen





chapters of Gita. But He was also **paramAnanda mAdhava**, one who gives the supreme bliss and hence through Arjuna, like a mere calf to the cows of the Upanishads, the milk which was the essence of the Upanishads was given to the world and the people with pure minds, **sudhI:**, were the beneficiaries. Arjuna was not given brahmaj~nAna but as the Lord Himself says later, '**yAvAn artha udapAne sarvata: samplutodake**' one takes only as much as he could as the well does when there is flood everywhere (the real meaning of this sloka will be explained later), Arjuna took as much as was needed at the time and was ready to do his duty as a kshatriya.



SLOKAMS 26 & 27

तत्रापश्यत्स्थितान्पार्थः पितृनथ पितामहान् ।

आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातृन् पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ॥ २६ ॥

tatra apaSyat sthitAn pArtha: pitRn atha pitAmahAn |

AcAryAn mAtulAn bhrAtRn putrAn pautrAn sakhIn tathA || 26 ||

श्वशुरान् सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ।

तान् समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्बन्धूनवस्थितान् ॥ २७ ॥

SvaSurAn suhrda: ca eva senayo: ubhayo: api |

tAn samIkshya ca kaunteya: sarvAn bandhUn avasthitAn || 27||

Meaning:

There Arjuna saw standing before him the fathers, grandfathers, gurus, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and friends, fathers-in law, close friends on both armies and seeing them all relatives stationed there,



SLOKAM 28

कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥ २८ ॥

krpayA parayAvishTo vishIdan idam abravIt |

arjuna uvaacha

drshTvA imam svajanam krshNa yuyutsum samupasthitam ||

Meaning:

Overwhelmed by pity, said as follows:

Arjuna said - "KrshNa! Seeing these, my own people, who have come to fight --"

Comments:

Since the war was between cousins, all the relatives were present on both sides. Arjuna not only saw his grandfather, uncles etc. among the kaurava forces but also saw them on his side also and he was overcome by pity that all these would have been killed as the result of war.

krpayA parayA AvishTa: - Arjuna was possessed by great pity, says Sanjaya, as the one possessed, AvishTa. The word parayA, great, means that the pity induced fear uncharacteristic of a hero like Arjuna



SLOKAM 29

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥

sIdanti mama gAtrANi mukham ca pariSushyati |

vepathu: ca sarIre me romaharsha: ca jAyate ||

Meaning:

My limbs have become weak, mouth is parched, my body trembles and hairs stand at ends.



'arjuna became weak!'



SLOKAM 30

गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ।

न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥

gANDIvam sramsate hastAt tvak ca eva paridahyate |

na ca Saknomi avasthAtum bhramati iva ca me mana: ||

Meaning:

My bow gANDIva slips from my hand, my skin is burning and I cannot stand any longer. My mind is reeling.

Comments:

When Arjuna asked KrshNa to move his chariot between the array of the two armies, KrshNa deliberately drove to the place where BhIshma and DroNa were standing and not where Duryodhana was with his brothers, as Arjuna expected. If it were so, Arjuna would have had no hesitation to fight. But facing his elders he realized that to win the battle he had to fight against his revered guru and beloved grandfather. This upset him. His mental unrest communicated to his body and he explains the various symptoms such as my limbs have become weak etc.

He seemed to have been so overwhelmed by pity and sorrow to the extent that he said gANDIvam sramsate hastAt. His great bow slipped from his hand and he was covered with sweat all over. Such was the condition of the great hero not out of fear but due to misplaced compassion and anxiety at the crucial moment of his life. The symptoms exhibited were that of anxiety neurosis that overwhelms at the time of great mental anxiety.

imam svajanam drshTvA - seeing my own people.





yuyutsum samupasthitam - who have come with the desire to fight.

sIdanti mama gAtrANi - my limbs have become weak

In the forthcoming slokAs, not being able to face this unavoidable situation he resorted to escapism saying that he had no heart to kill his own kith and kin. He reeled out arguments seemingly valid to support his decision all of which Kṛṣṇa totally dismisses later as being irrelevant,.

mukham ca pariSushyati- mouth becomes dry

vepathu: - sweat

romaharsha: - hairs stand on edge

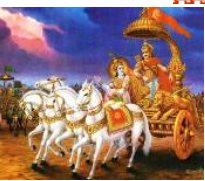
sramsate hastAt - slips from hand.

tvak - skin,

paridahyate - feel as though it is on fire.

avasthAtum na Saknomi - I am not able to stand even (knees trembling)

me mana: bhramati iva - it seems as though my mind is reeling.





SLOKAM 31

निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ।

न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥

nimittaAni ca paSyAmi viparItAni keSava |

na ca Sreyo anupaSyAmi hatvA svajanam Ahave ||

Meaning:

I see bad omens, Oh KeSava and I do not see any good in killing our own people in the war.

Comments:

There were bad omens Arjuna says but when the mind is turbulent everything appears ominous. Moreover the bad omens may indicate the defeat of his enemies and not of him.

keSava - Arjuna calls KrshNa as KeSava, which means the one who has **ka**, Brahma, the creator and **ISa**, the annihilator in his power, that is, He is the Lord of creation as well as annihilation. Also **keSa** means hair as well as rays. KrshNa had a luxurious hair which may be the meaning that was present in the mind of Arjuna. But it also means the one whose rays are everywhere - that is, **sarvavyapI**, who is present inside and outside all beings. Thus He knows the mind of Arjuna only too well. Another meaning is that He has a luxurious mane denoting Narasimha, who appeared as a man-lion to protect His devotee which is exactly what he was doing in KrshNavatAra also.

nimitthaAni - omens,

viparItAni - indicating contrary happenings than one would expect.





"keSavA!" - SrI AhobileSar - SrI Ahobilam



na anupaSyAmi - I do not see further

Sreya: - welfare.

hatvA - by killing,

svajanam - own people,

Ahave - in the war.





"govindA!"



SLOKAM 32

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।

किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥

na kAnkshe vijayam krshNa na ca rAjyam sukhAni ca |

kim no rAjyena govinda kim bhogai: jIvitena vA ||

Meaning:

I do not wish to win the war, nor to get the kingdom or enjoyments from it. What is the use of the kingdom, Oh Govinda, or of enjoyments and even of living!

na kAnkshe - I do not wish

vijayam rAjyam sukhAni ca - for victory and the kingdom that comes as a result of it and the pleasure from it

kim na: rAjyena - what good will come out of the kingdom.

kim bhogai: - what use is of the pleasures of getting the rAjya

kim jIvitena vA - or even by living

Govinda as the name of KrshNa has several meanings according to the different meanings of the word 'go' such as indriyas, speech, cattle etc., and it refers to all His avatArAs. Here VyAsa must have used the term to indicate that not only He is the Lord who had taken avatArAs to protect the good and destroy the wicked, paritrANaya sAdhUunAm vinASaya ca dushkrAm but also He is the master of speech as he was going to give out the Gita.

The words of the great masters like VaalmIki, VyAsa and the like are never without purpose and it is VyAsa who says that Arjuna said and hence we should perceive the implied meaning of all words used.

Why there is no use of all this? The answer is given next.



SLOKAM 33

येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।

त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥

yeshAm arthe kAnkshitam no rAjyam bhogA: sukhAni ca |

ta ime avasthitA yuddhe prANAn tyaktvA dhanAni ca ||

Meaning:

For whose sake we desire the kingdom and the pleasures and welfare those are standing here in battle ready to give up their lives and wealth.

Comments:

We desire the kingdom for the sake of our people who will be a happy as a result. But they are all standing here about to sacrifice their lives and belongings for the same reason.

Who are 'they'?





SLOKAM 34

आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ।

मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः संबन्धिनस्तथा ॥

AcAryA: pitara: putrA: tathA eva ca pitAmahA: |

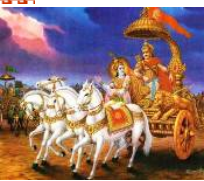
mAtulA: svaSurA: pauTrA: SyAlA: sambandhina: tathA |

Meaning:

They are the gurus, fathers, sons, grandfathers, uncles, fathers in law, grandsons, brothers in law and other relatives.

Comments:

Arjuna here enumerates the same people who are relatives as he did in slokas 26 and 27.





SLOKAM 35

एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।

अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥

etA na hantum icchAmi ghnato api madhusudana |

api trailokya rAjyasya heto: kim nu mahIkrtē ||

Meaning:

I do not wish to kill these even if I get killed as a consequence, Oh Madhusudana, even for the sake of the sovereignty of all the three worlds, why mention the kingdom on earth?

na icchAmi- I do not wish

etA hantum - to kill these people,

Arjuna expecting the retort that if he did not kill them they were going to kill him and gives the reply.

ghanato api- even if I get killed in the process.

trailokya rAjyasya heto: api - even for the sake of the kingdom of all the three worlds, (I do not want to kill them)

kim nu mahIkrtē - why (should I do so) for the sake of the kingdom on earth?

madhusudana - the destroyer of the demon Madhu, implying that He killed only fierce demons like Madhu, HiraNya etc, but these are only relatives and ordinary humans with failings.





SLOKAM 36

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ।

पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान्हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥

nihatya dhArtarAshTrAn na: kA prIti: syAt janArdana |

pApam eva ASrayet asmAn hatvA etAn AtatAyina: ||

Meaning:

What will be the satisfaction of killing these sons of DhrtarAshtTa, Oh JanArdana, we will incur only sin by killing these sinners.

Comments:

This sloka clearly show the mental conflict that Arjuna was undergoing.

dhArtarAshTrAn nihatya - by killing the sons of DhrtarAshTra,

kA prIti: syAt na: - what pleasure will be for us?

asmAn pApam eva ASrayet - Only sin will come to us.

hatvA etAn AtatAyina: - by killing these worst sinners

This is the sign of the mental conflict or the confusion of Arjuna.

AtatAyI is the one who commits any one of the six heinous sins.

अग्निदः गरदः चैव शस्त्रपाणिः धनापहः ।

क्षेत्र दारापहर्ता च षटेते हि ह्याततायिनः ॥

agnida: garada: ca eva SastrapANi: dhanApaha: |





kshetra dArapahartA ca shaTete hi AtatAyina: || --VasishTa smrti 3-19

agnidha: - one who burns with fire

garada:- one who gives poison

SastrapANi: - advances with a weapon to kill

dhanApaha: - confiscates wealth

kshetra dAra apahartA- one who takes away the land or the wife

These six are called AtatAyins and they can be killed without any compunction according to Manu neeti and no sin will accrue by doing so.

आततायिनमायान्तं हन्यादेवाविचारयन् ।

नाततायिवधे दोषो हन्तुर्भवति कश्चन ॥

AtatAyinam AyAntam hanyAt eva avicArayan |

na AtatAyivadhe dosha: hantu: bhavati kaScana ||

--Manusmrti 8:350, 351

Duryodhana and his brothers have committed all the six crimes and it is not sin to kill them. Arjuna is well versed in SaastrAs like Manusmrti but got confused because there is another rule elsewhere which says that one who destroys his clan is the worst sinner.

स एव पापिष्ठतमः यः कुर्यात् कुलनाशनम्

sa eva pApishTatama: ya: kuryAt kulanASanam

This is the principle Arjuna quotes throughout the rest of the chapter.





janArdana: - This means the one who destroys those who are antagonistic, the forces that oppose protection - **janNn-durjanAn ardayati-hinasti**

It also means the one who is prayed by people for their welfare. **janai:ardiyate**

So this means that the Lord has the responsibility to punish those who harm His devotees and provide the welfare of His devotees. Hence it is suggestive that KrshNa was going to punish the kauravas who were aatAtAyins.



SLOKAM 37

तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान्स्वबान्धवान् ।

स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥

tasmAn na arhA vayam hantum dhArtarAshTrAn sva bAndhavAn |

svajanam hi katham hatvA sukhina: syAma mAdhava ||

Meaning:

Therefore we should not kill these sons of DhrtarAshTra who are our relatives. How could we live happily after killing our own kith and kin, Madhava?

Comments:

The confusion of Arjuna is reflected in his first calling the kauravAs as AtatAyins and then expressing his anguish in killing them saying that they will not be able to live happily after killing them while the fact is that the PANDavas would not be able to live happily as long as the KauravAs were alive.





SLOKAM 38

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।

कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥

yadyapyete na paSyanti lobhopahatacetasa: |

kulakshayakrtam dosham mitradrohe ca pAtakam ||

Meaning:

Even though these AtatAyins do not see the sin of destroying one's own clan and the betrayal of friendship because their intellect is clouded by avarice,

yadyapi - even though

lobhopahata cetasa: - these kauravas whose mind is covered with greed

na paSyanti - do not see

dosham - the defect, here means sin

kulakshaya krtam - out of destroying one's own clan

mitradrohe ca pAtakam - and the sin in betrayal of friendship



SLOKAM 39

कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।

कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्विजनादन ॥

katham na j~neyam asmAbhi: pApAt asmAt nivartitum

kulakshayakrtam dosham prapaSyadbhi: janArdana ||

Meaning:

How can it be not known by us, who see the sin of destroying our clan, to turn away from such a deed, JanArdana?

Comments:

katham na j~neyam asmAbhi: - do we not know

nivartitum asmAt pApAt- to turn away from this sin because

prapaSyadbhi: kulakshayakrtam dosham- we see the sin of committing kulakshaya

janArdana - Arjuna addresses KrshNa thus meaning that He is resorted to by people in trouble and He alone should show the way out of this.

Comments:

dharma is of two kinds, sAdhAraNa dharma and viSesha dharma.

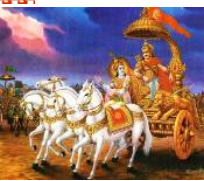
It is adharma to kill any being which is a sAdhAraNa dharma but that one can kill even a cow if it attacks is the viSesha dharma. Here the dharma, Arjuna quotes is the sAdhAraNa dharma and one can kill the AtatAyins without hesitation is the viSesha dharma which takes precedence over sAdhAraNa dharma.



Arjuna replies to an anticipated question 'when they are intent on fighting with you and they are **AtatAyins** why are you talking about **kulakshaya krtam dosham** etc.,' by saying that their intellect is clouded by greed which prevents them from seeing the sin but we who are of better knowledge should not do so.

Arjuna proceeds to explain to KrshNa about dharma and the results of adharma. It is said that '**acAraprabhavo dharmo dharmasya prabhu: acyuta:**'. dharma consists in right conduct and the Lord is the master of dharma. When He Himself is standing in front controlling the activities, Arjuna needs no other authority than His words! But like carrying coal to Newcastle, Arjuna speaks about dharma to Him. Here we cannot help recalling the incidents when the Lord Himself as a human obeyed the words of his guru, VisvAmitra and killed a woman without compunction and similarly in ParsaurAmavatAra, He killed His mother obeying the order of His father. To show to the world that viSesha dharma is to be followed in special circumstances. Moreover dharma consists in denouncing even your close relatives if they go against it, as VibhIhsaNa left RavaNa.

In the subsequent slokAs Arjuna elaborates on the effects of **kulakshaya**.



SLOKAM 40

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।

धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥

kulakshaye praNaSyanti kuladharmA: sanAtanA: |

dharme nashTe kulam krtsnam adharmo abhibhavati uta ||

Meaning:

When the clan is ruined the ancient dharma of the clan is destroyed. When the dharma is lost adharma takes over the whole clan.





SLOKAM 41

अधर्माभिभवात्कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।

स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥

adharmAbhibhavAt krshNa pradushyanti kulasriya: |

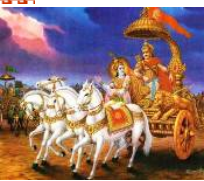
strIshu dushTAsu vArshNeya jAyate varNasankara: ||

Meaning:

When adharma prevails the women of the clan are corrupted and when they become corrupt the intermixture of castes results.

Comments:

KrshNa is called **VarshNeya** as he was born in the VrishNikula. Probably Arjuna reminds him of his kula to emphasize the importance of preserving the kula.



SLOKAM 42

सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।

पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥

sankaro narakAya eva kulaghnaAnAm kulasya ca |

patanti pitaro hi eshAm luptapiNDodakakriyA: ||

Meaning:

The mixture of castes leads to hell the clan as well as its destroyers. Their pitrs deprived of the offerings of food and water also fall.





SLOKAM 43

दोषैरैतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।

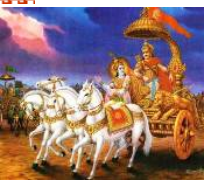
उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥

doshai: etai: kulaghnaAnAm varNasankaraArakai: |

utsAdyante jAtidharmaA: kuladharmA: ca SaaSvatA: ||

Meaning:

By these faults of the destroyers of the clan who cause the admixture of castes, the varNAsramadharma is destroyed.



SLOKAM 44

उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।

नरके नियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥

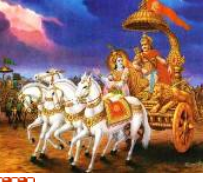
utsannakuladharmANAm manushyANAm janArdana |

narake niyatam vAsa: bhavati iti anuSuSruma ||

Meaning:

We have heard that for men whose Kula dharma is thus destroyed, residence in hell is ordained.





SLOKAM 45

अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।

यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥

aho bata mahat pApam kartum vyavasitA vayam |

yat rAjya sukha lobhena hantum svajanam udyatA ||

Meaning:

Alas! We have decided on committing a great sin by killing our own people for the desire of kingdom and the pleasures of it.





SLOKAM 46

यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः ।

धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥

yadi mAm apratIkAram aSastram SastrapANaya: |

dhArtrAshTrA raNe hanyu: tat me kshemataram bhavet ||

Meaning:

If these sons of DhrtarAshTra armed with weapons kill us who are unresisting and unarmed it will only be better for me.

Comments:

What Arjuna wanted to convey by these slokAs is that the traditional values and code of conduct are communicated by the elders of a community and the law givers of a country. If the war destroys them all, there would be no guidance available to the next generation and lawlessness and licentiousness will result. He says that the women will become corrupt because in a patriarchal society women are guided by men. When the women become misguided the next generation will also become corrupt as the mother is the first teacher of a child. When the tradition is no more followed such malpractices like admixture of varNa and Asrama will result. When the varNASramadharma is not practiced the people will lose the faith in dictates of sAstrA and give up the ritualistic action like srAddhA etc., which will effect the degradation of the pitrs who depend on the offering of food during the srAddhAs. Thus those who perpetrate such evil will be confounded in hell. So Arjuna said that he did not want to be the cause of the chaos that will result by fighting with one's own kith and kin. He went to the extreme of saying that not only he would not fight but if the sons of DhrtarAshTra continue to attack him even when seeing that he was unarmed and unresisting it is better he gets killed.





Thus Arjuna was lecturing on dharma to the one, who said later

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

paritrANaya sAdhUnAm vinASaya ca dushkrtAm |

dharma samsthApanArthAya sambhavAmi yuge yuge ||

The Lord who incarnates in every yuga to protect dharma and also who said,

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

sarvadharmAn parityajya mAmekam SaraNam vraja |

aham tvA sarva pApebhyo mokshayishyAmi mA Suca: ||

That He will save those who surrender to Him from all sins.





SLOKAM 47

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्तवार्जुनः सङ्ख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।

विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ॥

sanjaya uvAca

evam uktvA arjuna: sankhye rathopastha upAviSat |

visrjya saSaram cApam Soka samvignamAnasa: ||

Meaning:

Sanjaya said,

Thus saying on the battlefield, Arjuna sat on the seat of the chariot putting aside his bow and arrow with heart full of sorrow.

Comments:

Thus ends the first chapter of the Gita known as 'the despondency of Arjuna'. From the next chapter, the real essence of the Gita is found, spooned out by the Lord for the sake of Arjuna and the whole humanity.

The battle of MahAbhArata signifies the fight between the evil and the good impulses in man that ever goes on within. The good impulses are fewer in number like the PANDava army while the bad impulses are comparatively greater in number. But with divine grace good always triumphs over the wicked. When the mind is turned towards God, man hears the sound of the Paancajanya, which becomes divine music that rouses the sAtvik, noble, quelling the rajasic, dynamic and tamasic, lower impulses.. The power of music in restraining the animal passions and evoking finer sentiments in the listener is due to the

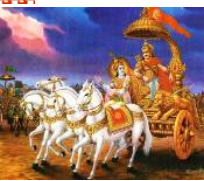




manifestation of divinity through music. The inner self rises in its pristine purity above the sense experience to merge with the divine.

But to reach that state one has to become aware of the divinity within and invoke the Lord, the true self of all beings. Arjuna requested Lord KrshNa to become his charioteer and the Lord consented. Similarly one has to ask for His help to be saved from disaster. When He becomes our sArati as He did for Arjuna, with PaarthasArati on our side the victory is ours.

THUS ENDS THE FIRST CHAPTER OF SRI BHAGAVAD GITA ON
VISHADAYOGA





bhagavAn imparts transcendental knowledge



CHAPTER 2

SANKHYA YOGA - TRANSCENDENTAL KNOWLEDGE

SLOKAM 1

सञ्जय उवाच

तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम् ।

विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥ २-१ ॥

Sanjaya uvAca

tam tathA krpayA AvishTam aSrupUrNa Akula IkshaNam |

vishIdantam idam vAkyam uvAca madhusUdana: ||

Meaning:

Sanjaya said

To Arjuna thus filled with pity and with eyes filled with tears, KrshNa said these words.

Comments:

Here for the first time the Lord starts to speak and the real essence of the Gita starts only from the 11th sloka.

krpayA AvishTam - possessed by pity, the Avesa is used in the sense of some external force taking possession of an individual. Here it shows that the pity for his enemies is not something natural but had taken possession of Arjuna which in fact is confirmed by the words of KrshNa.



aSru pUrNa - filled with tears and Akula - disturbed,

IkshaNam- eye, refers to Arjuna with tear-filled eyes

tam- him, Arjuna

vishIdantam - who was grieving. vishAda is grief.

madhusUdana: - the killer of the demon Madhu, KrshNa.

uvAca - said,

idam vAKyam - these words.





SLOKAM 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।

अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥

SrI bhagavAn uvAca

kutastvA kaSmalam idam vishame samupasthitam |

anAryajushTam asvargyam akIrtikaram arjuna ||

Meaning:

The Lord said -

From where did you get this despondency Arjuna, at a time most inappropriate. It is not proper for a noble person. It is not conducive to attainment of heaven and also will bring only disgrace.

Comments:

All the lofty arguments of Arjuna have been summarily dismissed by KrshNa as being **kaSmalam**, rubbish or ignominious, more so because this attitude has come to him, at the most inopportune moment, **vishame samupasthitam**.

The thoughts expressed by Arjuna were ignominious because they were not based on sound judgment and inappropriate because it was like looking after one leaped. The war was well thought out by both parties especially PaaNDavAs who tried their level best to avoid it but had it thrust on them. Now when they were at the brink of war the only way out is to fight. Arjuna was known for his valour and hence to get this attitude is most unfitting for him, **anAryajushTam**. Arya is the term used for a noble man, here, a hero. So KrshNa says it is **anArya**, not



noble to have such emotions at the moment when the war was about to start any moment.. The words **asvargyam** and **akIrtikaram**, mean, neither conducive to attainment of heaven nor to acquire fame. That is, this attitude is beneficial neither in this world nor in the next.





SLOKAM 3

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्तवोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥

klaibyam mA sma gama: pArtha na etat tvayi upapadyate |

kshudram hrdaya daurbalyam tyaktvA utthishTha parantapa ||

Meaning:

Do not give way to this unmanly emotion, Arjuna, this does not suit you. Throw away this weakness of heart which is demeaning and rise, oh scorcher of foes!

Comments:

klaibyam means unmanly as the word klIba denotes an eunuch.

hrdaya daurbalyam - weakness of heart which is found only in cowards and not for Arjuna whom KrshNa calls parantapa, the one who scorched his foes - parAn tApayati iti parantapa:.

Hence give up, tyaktvA, this weakness and rise up, utthishTha, says KrshNa, because you are a great hero.

KrshNa could see that the pity that has come over Arjuna was not due to mercy towards his relatives in general, especially towards kauravas but it was prompted by his reluctance to fight against BhIshma, DroNa, Krpa, etc. who were his respected elders. That was why KrshNa calls it hrdaya daurbalyam and not krpA, which it was not. This was made explicit by the words of Arjuna in the next few slokAs. It is to be noted that the term krpA was used only by Sanjaya, who perhaps thought that Arjuna was refusing to fight because of pity.





SLOKAM 4

अर्जुन उवाच

कथं भीष्ममहं सङ्ख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन ।

इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥

arjuna uvAca

katham bhIshmam aham sankhye droNam ca madhusudana |

ishubhi: pratiyotsyAmi pUjArhau arisUdhana ||

Meaning:

How can I oppose BhIshma and DroNa, who are revered, with arrows, MadhusUdana, who is the slayer of foes.

Comments:

Here the real reason for the despondency of Arjuna is revealed. He is hesitant to fight with BhIshma and DroNa, whom he respects as being worthy of worship. Arjuna uses two epithets to denote KrshNa, namely, **madhusUdana** and **arisUdana**. He was the killer of demon Madhu and of his foes. What Arjuna means here is that BhIshma and DroNa were neither demons like Madhu nor the enemies. Hence how could KrshNa expect Arjuna to fight with them!

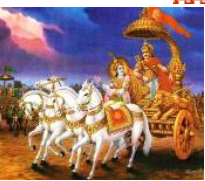
sankhyam - battle.

ishubhi: - by arrows.

yotsyAmi means I will fight.

pratyotsyAmi means to oppose in battle.

arIn sUdayati iti arisUdana: - one who kills (**sUdayati**), his foes, (**arIn**)





SLOKAM 5

गुरूनहत्वा हि महानुभावान्

श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।

हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरूनिहैव

भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥

gurUn ahatvA hi mahAnubhAvAn

Sreyo bhoktum bhaikshyam api iha loka |

hatvA arthakAmAn tu gurUn iha eva

bhunjIya bhogAn rudhirapradigdhAn ||

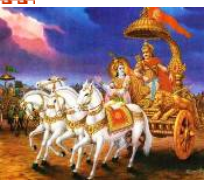
Meaning:

It is better to live a beggar's life in this world rather than to kill the revered elders. By killing them we will only enjoy the pleasures and wealth and other objects of desire of this world which will be stained with blood.

Comments:

Arjuna says that instead of attaining the kingdom and wealth and enjoy the riches and the pleasures of it he would rather live without wealth and go begging. It is better than killing the revered elders and getting the kingdom because their enjoyment will be stained with their blood if they do so.

Kshatriyas are not supposed to take alms even if they are about to die. But Arjuna was prepared even for that in order not to kill BhIshma, DroNa and other respected elders. This shows that Arjuna had misunderstood dharma for



adharma and vice versa due to utter confusion in his mind and had not understood the words of KrshNa in the previous slokAs.

He calls BhIshma and others as gurUn and mahAnubhAvAs, those venerable and his teachers. If so they should have known better than coming to fight with the PaaNDavAs whose cause was righteous. But the fact that they have done so shows that they had no confusion in their minds about dharma and adharma and having chosen their role to playing the battle they had no compunction to do their duty.

bhaikshyam - alms.

hatvA gurUn - after killing the elders.

arthakAmAn bhogAn bunjIya - will enjoy the wealth and desired objects, here, the kingdom.

rudhirapradigdhAn - stained with blood.





SLOKAM 6

न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो

यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।

यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषामः

तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥

na ca etat vidma: kataran na: garIya:

yat vA jayema yadi vA no jayeyu: |

yAneva hatva na jijIvishAma:

te avasthitA: pramukhe dhArtarAshTrA: ||

Meaning:

We do not know which of the two alternatives is better for us, whether to win the war or to be vanquished by them. The sons of DhrtarAshTra, killing whom, we would not wish to live, are standing in front.

Comments:

na vidma: - we do not know,

kataran - of the two,

garIya: - better. This word is the comparative form of guru meaning big, here meaning better.

jijIvishAma: - we will not wish to live.

pramukhe avasthitA: - stand in front.



Arjuna shows his mental confusion by saying that he would not wish to live by killing the sons of DhrtarAshTra, which was not his dilemma but only to kill BhIshma, DroNa etc. The next sloka proves that he himself had become aware of this.





SLOKAM 7

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः

पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः ।

यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥

kArpaNya dhoshopagatasvabhAva:

prcchAmi tvAm dharma sammUDhacetA: |

yat Sreya: syAt niScitam brUhi tat me

Sishya: te aham SAdhi mAm tvAm prapannam ||

Meaning:

With my nature affected by the defect of weakness, I ask you with a mind confused about what is dharma, please tell me which is good for me. I am your disciple and please advise me.

Comments:

kArpaNya - weak mindedness, poor mental state in which I, one is unable to decide.

upahatasvabhAva: - which has affected my character.

Arjuna had understood that the feeling that has overcome him was not something natural to his character.

dharmasammUDhacetA: - mind covered with confusion about dharma.



Sreya: means that which is good for all times as opposed to **preyas**, which is good at the moment, being what is desired.

niScitam brUhi- tell me for certain by dispelling the doubt and confusion in my mind. I surrender to you.

SAdhi- command.

mAm prapannam- me who, surrender to you

This sloka sows the seed for the gItopadesam.

Arjuna exhausted himself and seemed to be at crossroads and said "I am utterly confused please tell me what is good for me." He uses the word **Sreyas**. So long he had been talking about what was **preyas** to him, what he wanted to do. Now he was asking what he should do. Then and then only the Lord started talking. In our life too we go on telling the Lord what to do and never ask Him what we should do. When we do ask, He starts telling us what to do. Similarly when Arjuna said **sishyaste aham SAdhimAm tvAm prapannam**, I am your disciple I surrender to you, only then KrshNa starts giving him the advice because advice given unasked will not be taken well! Now only KrshNa starts speaking as the jagatguru.





SLOKAM 8

न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्यात्

यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।

अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं

राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥

na hi prpaSyAmi mama apanudyAt

yat Sokam ucchoshaNam indriyANAm |

avapya bhUmau asapatnam rddham

rAjyam surANAm api ca Adhipatyam ||

Meaning:

I do not feel that even the sovereignty over the devas or to enjoy the kingdom free of enemies will remove the sorrow in heart, that dries up my senses.

apanudyAt - will remove

ucchoshaNam - that which dries up.

asapatnam - free of enemies. sapatna means enemy.

rddham - prosperity, here kingdom

Adhipatyam - sovereignty

Comments:

Arjuna requests KrshNa to tell him a means to remove the sorrow which is eating his heart due to the thought of killing his kith and kin.





SLOKAM 9

सञ्जय उवाच ।

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तप ।

न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥

Sanjaya uvAca

evam uktvA hrshIkeSam guDAkeSa: parantapa |

na yotsya iti govindam uktvA thUshNIIm babhUva ha ||

Meaning:

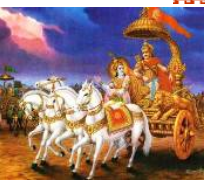
Sanjaya said

Ok King! Saying thus to HrshIkeSa, the master of indriyAs, Arjuna, the conqueror of sleep, said to Govinda, "I will not fight".

Comments:

Here the terms used to denote Arjuna and KrshNa are significant. The one who asked was guDAkeSa, meaning one who conquered sleep, that is, he is capable of controlling his senses and this weakness is only temporary. The names hrshIkeSa and govinda, both denote that the one who is going to advise is the master of the senses. Also Govinda as already mentioned means the Lord in all His avatArs, and the master of speech, senses etc. The various meaning of Govinda are given below.

The word 'go' has several meanings in Sanskrit such as earth, indriya, svarga, or moksha, astra, cow, veda etc. Based on these, the scholars explain the name thus:





gAm (second case singular of 'go'), svargam or moksham vindayati- secures iti govinda:. He is govinda because He bestows mukti.

gAm, ishum, meaning astras vindati - He acquired the astras from VisvAmitra in RamAvatAra.

gA: (accusative plural of 'go', pasu.) vindati. He knew the cows, that is, He knew them to be the rshis of daNDakArANya in His KrshNavatAra. BalarAma is also implied by the word cow as He went with KrshNa for gorakshaNam.

gobhi: (instrumental plural of 'go' meaning veda.) vindyate. He is known through the vedas.

gAm, vajram, vindayati - He made it possible for indra to get vajrAyuda by instructing him to approach dhadIci and beg him to give his backbone.

gavA (instrumental singular of 'go' meaning drk, look) drSA vindati. He knows all by His drk or appropriate kaTaaksha. He knows how to look at every one and when.

gA: netrANi vindati - He has trinetra, three eyes as nrsimha, and also eyes everywhere, 'sahasrAksha: sahasrapAat'

gA:, jvAlA: vindati, has fiery form, being sUryamaNDala madhya varti. ChAndogya upanishad describes Brahman as -

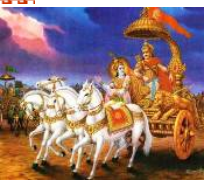
य एषोऽन्तरादित्ये हिरण्मयः पुरुषो दृश्यते

हिरण्यश्मश्रुर्हिरण्यकेश आप्रणखात्सर्व एव सुवर्णः ॥

ya esha hantarAditye hiraNmaya: purusha: drSyate |

hiraNyaSmaSru: hiraNyakeSa ApraNakhAt sarva eva suvarNa: ||

The purusha seen inside the orb of the Sun with golden beard, golden hair an



exceedingly effulgent even to the very tips of His nails. The purusha here is paramAtman or nArAyaNa. This is the passage where the famous 'kapyAsam puNDarIkam' occurs referred to in the caritra of Raamanuja.

gAm, bhUmim vindati, brought the earth from the depth of the ocean, VarAhavatAra and also ParasurAma as He wandered all over the earth and trivikrama as He measured the earth with His feet.

gAm, jalam vindati - resorts to the waters, Matsya and KUrma.

gAm vedam vindati - He alone knows the real purport of the vedAs. Refers to HayagrIvAvatAra.

gAm, indriyam vindati - The Lord of the indriyAs, HrshIkeSa:. Makes the indriyAs enter into appropriate vishaya.





SLOKAM 10

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥

tam uvAca hrshIkeSa: prahasan iva bhAratha |

senayo: ubhayo: madhye vishIdantam idam vaca: ||

Meaning:

Oh King! KrshNa told these words with a semblance of a smile to Arjuna, who was grief-stricken between the two armies.

Comments:

KrshNa seeing the pitiable state of Arjuna who, having decided to fight and advancing to the battle field and asking KrshNa to move the chariot so that he could see the sons of DhrtarAshTra, calling them evil minded, and who else have come to support them, felt disheartened the moment he saw BhIshma and DroNa. That was the emotion exactly what KrshNa wanted him to have when he moved the chariot and placed it in front of BhIshma and DroNa. It was necessary at that time to make the will of Arjuna strong so that he would do his duty without hesitation because if he developed pity later when he came face to face with BhIshma and the rest in battle it would have been disastrous. Of course the whole drama was directed by the Lord who was the script writer, director and also played a role in it.

prahasan iva - Sanjaya says that KrshNa looked as though he was smiling. The reason for this was:

This was what exactly the Lord intended to happen,

It was the smile of the father to his child who talks as an adult to impress him.



It is a derisive smile of the wise to an ignorant who talks like the wise.

senayo: ubhayo: madhye vishIdantam - meaning that Arjuna was affected with grief at the most inappropriate time when the two armies are arrayed ready to fight.

Here a doubt may arise that it was only the will of the Lord that this should happen and therefore why should he laugh at Arjuna? The answer is the mental confusion was created by the Lord, but the words Arjuna spoke to justify himself were his own. We also do that when we want to justify our actions which are not directed by our intellect but only by our desire. What we think or say then are nothing but praj~nAvAda, as KrshNa terms the arguments of Arjuna in the next sloka. Then also the Lord smiles at us and if we surrender to Him like Arjuna did He will start to speak to us clearing our mental confusion but if not, He will simply smile and allow us to reap the result of our actions.

From the next sloka the introduction to the sAstrA begins for the sake of Arjuna and also for the posterity.





SLOKAM 11

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।

गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥

SrI bhagavAn uvAca

aSocyAn anvaSoca: tvam praj~nAvAdAn ca bhAshase |

gatAsUn agatAsUn ca na anuSocanti paNDitA: ||

Meaning:

The Lord said -

You are worrying about those who need not be worried about. You also give arguments like a man of wisdom. A real man of wisdom grieves over neither the dead nor the living.

Comments:

Now starts the real discourse of Bhagavad gIta. KrshNa says 'aSocyAn anvaSoca: tvam praj~nAvAdAn ca bhAshase' - 'You are grieving over those who need not be grieved about.' What KrshNa means here is that BhIshma and DroNa had no compunction to fight against their own grandson and pupil respectively, not because they were heartless but because they had no confusion about their duty, svadharma like Arjuna. Further KrshNa says that Arjuna had tried to conceal his confusion under his arguments as though they were words of wisdom praj~nAvAdAn ca bhAshase. The arguments of Arjuna are ridiculed by KrshNa, because if he were really wise paNDita, he would not have worried over life and death. Then KrshNa starts giving Arjuna the divine



wisdom.

If he were a real paNDita or a man of wisdom as he was trying to profess, he would not have grieved over the living or the dead. What KrshNa means here is that, Arjuna was expressing his anxiety over the ptrs not getting their food and water and also about the elders and other whom he was about to kill and about the posterity etc. A man who knows the SAstrAs would also know that the self is unattached and infinite and it is only the body that dies. And he would have known that the inner self of all is the Lord who controls the whole universe and one has to do his duty offering everything to God by surrendering himself. All this KrshNa was going to elaborate in the coming chapters.





SLOKAM 12

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।

न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥

na tu eva na aham jAtu na Asam na tvam na ime janAdhipA: |

na ca eva na bhavishyAma: sarve vayam ata: param ||

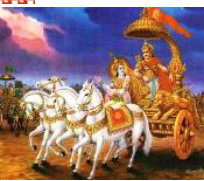
Meaning:

Never was the time when I or you or these kings ceased to exist nor will be a time when all of us will cease to exist.

Comments:

Here KrshNa starts telling Arjuna about who the real 'I' is! The self is permanent and only the bodies change. There was never a time when you, I, and all these men in front ceased to be nor will there be a time when we all will cease to be. This is the answer to the question who am I? You are not what you think you are, says the Lord. The anxiety about living and dying comes only through identifying yourself with the body. Death is not the end of you but it is only a change of circumstance. When KrshNa says "there never was a time I ceased to exist or will cease to exist". He is not only talking as an individual self but also as the supreme self, who is the inner self of all.

This idea of the permanency of the self is elaborated in the subsequent slokAs.





SLOKAM 13

देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।

तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥

dehina: asmin yathA dehe kaumAram yauvanam jarA |

tathA dehAntaraprApti: dhIra: tatra na muhyati ||

Meaning:

The individual self assuming a body, passes through childhood, youth and old age. Similarly it acquires a different body after death. Wise never get worried about this.

Comments:

You are not overly worried about changing from boyhood to youth or to old age which you consider a natural occurrence. So too death is only natural change about which you need not worry. The relations and attachment to them and grief over losing them, all this pertains only to the particular body the self is occupying at the time.

There is a story in MahA bhArata to illustrate this. Citrarata, a king lost his son because his other wives gave the child poison and the mother of the child and Citrarata were grieving when nArada came there. The King told him about the cause of his sorrow and nArada said he would bring his dead son in front so that he could get solace. When the son came, nArada told him that his parents are aggrieved over losing him and asked him that whether he would like to come back to life to console them. The son replied, I had so many births with so many fathers and mothers. Whom should I satisfy? Then the king understood about the karma and its effects and that everything happens with a cause and with the divine will. This happened to him because he was destined to become a great





baktA of the Lord and it was he who took birth again as Gajendra and got mukti.

This is what KrshNa means by saying dhIra: tatra na muhyati, the wise never worry about death and this was the reason why wise people like BhIshma were not anxious like Arjuna and were not swayed by attachments, resolved to do their duty.

But even to the wise the contact with senses will bring pleasure and pain. This point is answered in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 14

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।

आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥

mAtrAsparSA: tu kaunteya SItoShNa sukha du:khadA: |

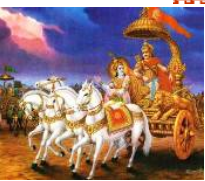
AgamApAyino anityA: tAn titikshasva bhArata ||

Meaning:

The feelings of hot, cold, joy and sorrow are due to the contact of the senses with the sense objects. They will be only fleeting and temporary. Learn to bear them, Arjuna.

Comments:

The word mAtra has a meaning of element. The gross elements are the cause or conveyors of the sensations through the contacts of the sense organs with them, as the whole world of sense objects, which includes your kith and kin, is made up of the five elements. So the sukha dukkha as well as the physical sensations like heat and cold are only through the contact of sense organs with the sense objects. They are not permanent and they change. Heat changes into cold and vice versa. Similarly what gives you happiness today may itself become the cause of sorrow tomorrow. This is what is meant by AgamApAyina: anityA:, they just come and go and thus transitory. So how to face them? KrshNa says just tolerate them and do not get affected by them. It is like waiting for the bus when the bus does not seem to come or going through the hot summer days when there is power cut. No amount of fretting and fuming will solve the problem nor getting upset about it! Just wait patiently till the situation changes or think about some thing else you can do to improve the situation. What is said for the dukkha also holds good for sukha, in the sense that it would help one to remember that even the sukha does not last long. The words SItoShNa and





sukha duhkha all the pairs of opposites are referred to.

KrshNa refers to Arjuna by two epithets, kaunteya and bhArata. Kaunteya means the son of Kunti and also a son of soil. bhArata means the descendent of the clan of bharata, both terms indicating his nobility of birth and valiant spirit.





SLOKAM 15

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।

समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥

yam hi na vyathayanti ete purusham purusharshabha |

samadu:khasukham dhIram so amrtatvAya kalpate ||

Meaning:

Only that whom these do not affect, and who maintains equanimity on occasions causing sorrow or joy, that wise man alone is worthy of attaining immortality.

Comments:

A wise man who is not affected by the pairs of opposites and remains the same on the occasions which gives joy or sorrow to an average man. This state equanimity is further explained later in the chapter. By calling Arjuna **purusharshabha** meaning 'a bull among men', KrshNa conveys the meaning that being above the ordinary men, Arjuna should not feel as he did.

vyathA means pain, **vyathayanti** is used in the sense of being affected.

purusharshabha - **purushANAm rshabha: iva** - like a bull among men.

dhIram - **dhI** means wisdom and **dhIra** denotes a wise man.

amrtatva- immortality meaning mukti.





SLOKAM 16

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।

उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥

na asato vidyate bhAva: na abhAvo vidayte sata: |

ubhayo: api drshTa: anta: anayo: tattvadarSibhi: ||

Meaning:

Unreal can never come into being. The real can never cease to be. The wise know the real truth of this.

Comments:

asat - unreal which has no real existence

sat - that which is real

bhAva - existence,

abhAva - non existence

drshTa: anta: - understood in its entirety

tattvadarSibhi: - those who know the reality.

By the term **asat** the body, mind and intellect, to be exact, everything that is not self, Atman, is meant. asat has no being in the sense that its existence is not permanent and always changing. **sat** is that which exists always, that is the self. In other words, nonexistence means perishable nature and existence is imperishable. Hence KrshNa says, what exists can never cease to exist and what does not exist can never come into existence. This sounds like high philosophy but this can be applied to our everyday life.



Most of our problems arise because we imagine something to be real when it is not. We identify ourselves with our body, mind, and intellect while the real 'I' is different from all these. This can be verified through a simple exercise by trying to answer the question Who am I? The obvious answer would be 'I am so and so'. But that is only your name. You may say that I am father of so and so or husband of so and so. But it is only your relationship. Even when you say I am a professor or I am an intellectual, it only denotes your professional and intellectual status. So, who are you in reality? We commonly speak about our body as when we say "My body aches all over". This proves that you are not your body. Similarly when we use expressions like "My mind is upset" or "My intellect has failed to grasp this" it is obvious that we are separate from our mind and intellect.

That the real self must be something different from our body, mind, and intellect we are able to perceive with no difficulty at all. But there is another 'I' which we have to reckon with, and that is our ego, which is the consciousness that I am. Even this is absent when we are in deep sleep because we are not aware of ourselves then. But there is some entity who is aware of our existence even at that stage which makes us say that we had a sound sleep. This is the real 'I' which is even different from our ego. This is what KrshNa calls **avinASi** or **sarIri**. Except that, everything else can be termed as transitory or **antavanta**; as brought out in the subsequent slokAs.





SLOKAM 17

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥

avinASi tu tat viddhi yena sarvam idam tatam |

vinASam avyayasya asya na kaScit kartum arhati ||

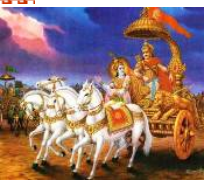
Meaning:

That by which all this is pervaded is indestructible. Understand this and that none can destroy this immutable self.

Comments:

The self which alone is real pervades all, this **sarvam idam tatam** which is unreal. That self is **avinASi**, indestructible, It is **avyaya**, immutable. This is elaborated in the next few slokAs.

The term **sat**, actually means the Brahman, the supreme reality. In advaita, the individual self is identical with Brahman and hence the word **sat** means the self which is Brahman. It is immutable and indestructible. In visishTadvaita, Brahman is synonymous with nArAyaNa, the inner self of all beings, sentient and insentient, which form His sarIra, and the knowledge about reality is the knowledge about Brahman. The individual self is immortal and real while the non-self is also real but not immutable or indestructible, being subjected to change. For instance the pot is made of clay and the clay alone is real and the pot is not real in the sense that it is destructible. In this meaning it is unreal. The clay is real in the sense that even when the pot is destroyed the clay remains. So **asat** means that which is mutable and destructible. The self is said to pervade, **tatam**, the non-self which is meant by 'all this', **sarvam idam**, when the self identifies itself with the non-self instead of the inner self, that is Brahman.





SLOKAM 18

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।

अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥

antavanta ime dehA: nityasya uktA: SarIriNa: |

anASina: aprameyasya tasmAt yudhyasva bhArata ||

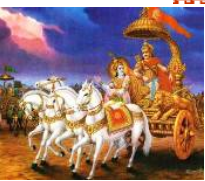
Meaning:

These bodies of the self, which is immortal, indestructible and incomprehensible, have an end, that is, destructible. Hence fight on Arjuna.

Comments:

This means, whom you think as BhIshma, DroNa etc., they are mere bodies and the self inside is not destructible. Only the bodies will end and not the self. The self is immortal and is indestructible. Anticipating the question that, 'if I am the self and not the body, why am I not aware of myself and think that I am the body', KrshNa says that the self is incomprehensible. It means that the self cannot be known by the usual means of knowledge, like perception etc. because it is beyond the comprehension of the senses and intellect. It is the seer who cannot be seen by the eyes, by whose power the eyes are able to see.

Hence KrshNa says "you fight, Arjuna". By saying that the bodies have an end KrshNa refers to the whole world which is the body of the supreme self, who is the inner self of the individual self, which is part and parcel of the supreme self and not identical as in aviate. If the individual self is also the Sari ram of the Lord, would it not also have an end, the aviating may question. But according to Ramanuja philosophy, nothing is unreal but everything only changes its form and hence said to have an end, like the pot ends when it is broken but continues to exist as clay and when it is broken one does not wail about it but get another.





Just as the clay persists in all pots broken or unbroken, the self also persists in all embodiments and hence it is indestructible and immortal because it is ensouled by Brahman, its inner self. Hence it is known only by the knowledge of Brahman which the Gita teaches in all its eighteen chapters.

The delusion of Arjuna regarding the killing of Bhishma and Drona etc. is because of his identification with the body, mind and intellect. If he identifies himself with his self which is controlled by the supreme self, he would not have any compunction to do his duty which he would consider as the bidding of the Lord within. This is the transformation brought about by Krishna in Arjuna by the discourse of Gita.

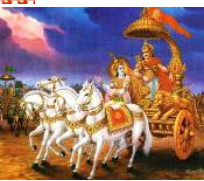
antavanta: - those which have an end, **antam**.

SarIriNa: - of the self inside the body. **SarIram asya asti iti SarIrI**, the self which has a body, **tasya**, **SarIriNa:** - of the self

nityasya, of the self which is immortal, **nitya** means ever existing

anASina: - not destructible, **na nASina:** = **anASina:**

aprameya - immeasurable or incomprehensible. **meya** is measurable, here, that which could be understood.



SLOKAM 19

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।

उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥

ya enam vetti hantAram ya: ca enam manyate hatam |

ubhau tau na vijAnIta: na ayam hanti na hanyate ||

Meaning:

One who thinks that this self is the killer, hantAram, and one who thinks that this self is killed, hatam, both of them, ubhau, thou do not know the truth, na vijAnIta, that this self, ayam, neither gets killed na hanyate, nor kills, na hanti.

Comments:

Continuing the idea of the previous sloka, KrshNa here says that being immortal and indestructible the self can neither be killed nor kill anyone and those who think so are ignorant. What is killed and gets killed is only the body and not the self. It is said that the self cannot kill anyone because there is no action for the self and all actions pertain to the body, mind and intellect. This truth will be elaborated later in the Gita.





SLOKAM 20

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचित्

नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो

न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

na jAyate mriyate vA kadAcit

na ayam bhUtvA bhavitA vA na bhUya: |

aja: nitya: SaaSvata: ayam purANa:

na hanyate hanyamAne SarIre ||

Meaning:

The self is never born and never dies. Having been in existence it never ceases to be. It is unborn, eternal, ever existing and ancient and it is not killed when the body gets killed.

Comments:

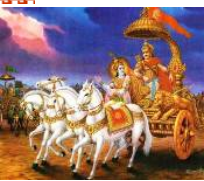
Any thing that is born has to undergo six changes of state which are:

jAyate - Born,

asti - exists,

vardhate - grows,

vipariNamate - transformed,



kshIyate, - decays and

naSyati- destroyed.

To say that the self has none of these changes, which is indicated by na jAyate, na mriyate (birth-the beginning and the death - the end are not for the self) automatically dismisses the other four changes as well. Hence it is nitya, eternal and SaaSvata, ever existent. Therefore the self is not something which has come into being, bhUtvA, having not existed before, na bhavitA. As such, the self is not killed, na hanyate, when the body gets killed, hanyamAne SarIre. Being eternal and ever existent it is purANa:, ancient.

When it could simply be termed as permanent or eternal why does KrshNa employs so many epithets? In Sanskrit literature not a single word is a tautology but carries different implications. A thing may be unborn but it may have an end. A classical example given for this in VedAnta is that of prior non-existence or prAgabhAva. Before something, say, a pot, is created, there was its non-existence which is known as its prAgabhAva. This can be termed as unborn as it has no beginning. But it has an end when the pot comes into existence. So it is not eternal or everlasting. An example of something which has a beginning but no end is what is known as posterior non-existence or dvamsa. When the pot is destroyed it is dvamsa or destruction which has a beginning but no end! So it is said to be born but deathless. nitya: is eternal while SaaSvata means without decay. The self which is the real 'I' remains always as it is. But it is also purANa ancient.

Not only the self does not get killed but also the self does not kill. This is explained in the next sloka.



SLOKAM 21

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम् ।

कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥

veda avinASinam nityam ya enam ajam avyayam |

katham sa purusha: pArtha kam ghAtayati hanti kam ||

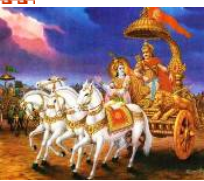
Meaning:

When one comes to know that this self is eternal, unborn and immutable, how and whom does he kill or cause to be killed?

Comments:

When one has the knowledge of the real nature of the self to be eternal and immutable and indestructible he identifies himself not with the body but with the self. Neither does he identify others with their body. So even if he had to kill others in circumstances such as war he does not attach the agent-ship to himself. This is because a man of knowledge does all his actions as the instrument of the Lord who is inside his self as the inner self. He is without rAga and dvesha and hence the act of killing done as a duty does not affect him.

This should not cause one to wonder whether the terrorists are justified because they also kill because they think that it is the command of God. But it is only mistaken identity because they identify themselves with the body only and also consider others as bodies and not the self. To cite an example in the worldly sense one might say that the soldiers who had to kill for the sake of protecting the country, do so without passion and as a duty. This is the spirit of a kshatriya though the knowledge of self may not be there.



SLOKAM 22

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय

नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।

तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णानि

अन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥

vAsAmsi jIrNAni yathA vihAya

navAni grhNAti nara: aparANi |

tathA SarIrANi vihAya jIrNAni

anyAni samyAti navAni dehI ||

Meaning:

Just as the men throw away the old clothes and take new ones, the self discards the old bodies and attains new ones.

Comments:

Even though it may be true that the real 'I' is the self and not the body, nevertheless the loss of life when the body dies is felt by all. How to explain this? The answer is given in this sloka. Death is something like discarding old clothes and putting on new ones.

yathA - Just as

vihAya - throwing away

vAsAmsi - clothes



jIrNANi- which are old or used ones.

nara: grhNAti - a man who puts on

navAni aparANi - other new ones

tathA - likewise

dehI - the self

vihAya SarIrANi jIrNANi - discarding the old bodies

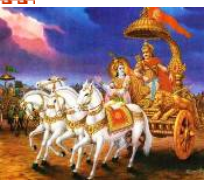
anyAni navAni samyAti - attains other new bodies.

This sounds alright if death occurs at old age when the body has become jIrNa or old and becomes a burden. But how can this analogy of discarding old clothes and putting on new ones be applied when death occurs at young age or childhood when the body cannot be termed as old?

jIrNa here means that it had served its purpose. A body is acquired for the purpose of exhausting a particular karma and when the result of that karma has been experienced, that body has served its purpose and becomes jIrNa. The residue of karma cannot be exhausted in that body and hence it is shed to acquire a different one suited for the purpose. So death is not something to be feared or grieved about at any age.

To leave the old body and go to new one is a matter of grief only for an ignorant man and not for the wise. The mother changes the dirty cloth of the child putting on new one or puts on a different one suited to the occasion even if the child does not like to do so and cries. But it is for the benefit of the child the mother does it. Similarly the Lord takes off our existing body when it is time to enter a new one according to our karma.

The word samyAti means to attain or move to. But the self is said to be eternal and ever existing and immutable. So how does it move from one place to another? The self - Atman is not the one which moves but the individual self,





jIvA consisting of subtle body of mind and intellect and ego is that which moves from one gross body to another. When we take a pot from one place to another, the space inside does not move because it is all pervading but it is only the pot that moves. Similarly the self is not moving anywhere but only the conditioning of mind and intellect and ego seem to move. That is why it is said that the self assumes new bodies, in plural, meaning gross body, subtle body, mind and intellect, and the causal body, ego - the effect of karma. When the causal body also undergoes change according to karma the subtle body also acquires a new one.





SLOKAM 23

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।

न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥

na enam chindanti SastrANi na enam dahati pAvaka: |

na ca enam kledayanti Apa: na Soshayati mAruta: ||

Meaning:

The weapons do not destroy the AtmA. The fire does not burn it, the waters do not wet it nor does the wind dry it.

Comments

Anything that is created and the product of the four elements can be destroyed or modified. The four elements, earth, water, fire and air cannot destroy the self (AtmA). The Sastra denotes the earth element, meaning the weapons, which is the grossest form of destruction. Anything that has a body, has earth as its component and can be cut by the weapons. But the AtmA has no body, it being subtler than the earth! Similarly the fire cannot burn anything subtler than it like air or space. Atman is subtler than both air and space. Water can wet only a thing which has space in between so that the water can enter into it. But the self being all pervading and without parts as the Upanishad says, one only without a second, water cannot wet it. For the same reason air cannot dry it. These four elements have no effect on the space which is subtler than them and hence the self which is subtler even than the AkASa, is not affected by the elements.





SLOKAM 24

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।

नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥

acchedyo ayam adAhyo ayam akledyo aSoshya eva ca |

nitya: sarvagata: sthANu: acalo ayam sanAtana: ||

Meaning:

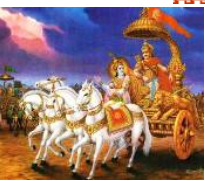
Hence the self (AtmA) cannot be cut, nor can it be burned, nor becomes wet nor gets dried up, being eternal, all pervading firm and immovable and ancient.

Comments:

Reiterating what has been said in the previous sloka, KrshNa gives the reason why the self is not affected by the action of the four elements. It is because the self is **nitya:**, eternal. It has already been said in the foregoing slokAs that the self never ceased to exist. '**na tu eva na aham jAtu nAsam**', and '**avinASinam nityam ajam avyayam**' etc.

It is also **sarvagata:**, all pervading, meaning that the elements do not pervade it but the self pervades the element being subtler than the subtlest.

sthANu: means firm because being all pervading naturally it has to be firm and hence **acala:**, immovable. The two words **sthANu:** and **acala:**, though seeming to denote the same thing, are different in meaning. For instance a thing which is firm, meaning, stays in one place need not be immovable, **acala**. A tree is **sthANu** but not **acala** as its branches and leaves are moving, though it stays in one place. But the self cannot move because when a thing is all pervading there is nowhere it can move to. It is eternal and hence **sanAtana:**, ancient.





SLOKAM 25

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।

तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥

avyakto ayam acintyo ayam avikAryo ayam ucyate |

tasmAt evam viditvA enam na anuSocitum arhasi ||

Meaning:

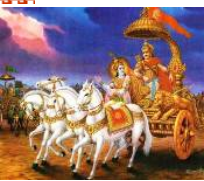
The self is unmanifest, inconceivable and unchanging. Therefore knowing the self to be such, you should not grieve.

Comments:

avyakta: ayam - the self is unmanifest. To have manifestation it is necessary to have a body which is made up of the elements. As the self is subtler than the elements it is not manifest. That is, it could not be cognized by the sense organs.

acintya: ayam - the self is inconceivable. Something that is not manifest or cognizable by the senses could be the object of cognition through mind and intellect like the feelings and ideas. But the self is beyond mind and intellect as the Upanishad declares that 'yato vAco nivartante aprApya manasA saha', the speech and mind are not able to reach that reality which is beyond the senses, mind and intellect. This is because the senses, mind and intellect are able to function because of the presence of the self. As the eye cannot see itself but only objects outside, the senses, mind and intellect are not able to perceive that by which they get the power of perception.

avikAryo ayam - The self is unchanging because it is nitya, sarvagat, sthANu and acala.



Hence KrshNa tells Arjuna not to grieve over killing the bodies as the self cannot be destroyed.

Bhagavad Gita is like milk which is easily digestible for infants while Upanishads are like food for adults which is not so easy to digest, which is why the former is called **dugdham gitAmrtam mahat**. Highest vedAnta is administered in easy doses by mixing it with brutal commonsense. For instance, after describing the nature of Atman now, KrshNa comes down to the mundane affairs and talks in terms of everyday experience in the next three slokAs.





SLOKAM 26

अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।

तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैवं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥

atha ca enam nitya jAtam nityam vA manyase mrtam |

tathA api tvam mahAbAho na evam Socitum arhasi ||

Meaning:

Even if you identify yourself with the body, even then you should not grieve.

Comments:

This view is according to those who do not understand the existence of a permanent entity as Atman. This is rather a materialistic philosophy told by KrshNa perhaps seeing the blank expression on the face of Arjuna who did not quite get at the idea of the eternal self. KrshNa says that even if Arjuna thinks that the self is identical with the body and is born, **nityajAtam**, and dies, **nityam mrtam**, with the body, he should not grieve because,





SLOKAM 27

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।

तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥

jAtasya hi dhruvo mrtyu: dhruvam janma mrtasya ca |

tasmAt aparihArye arthe na tvam Socitum arhasi ||

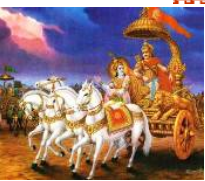
Meaning:

Death is certain for those who are born and birth is certain for those who die. Hence you should not grieve over the inevitable.

Comments:

Death is inevitable when one is born. And those who die are certain to be born. This is absolutely from the point of view of materialism. It is normally said, when some one dies, that, when people are born they have to die one day. The death comes only when the life ends. So unless the people have come to the end of their lives and are destined to die they cannot be killed by man or by accident. This we see in everyday life. Whenever there is a disaster, due to natural calamities or accident like plane crash etc., or even killings by men, or otherwise, there are always some who escape however great the magnitude of the disaster. This means that for them the time of death had not come then. So KrshNa says that who dies when and how is not in our hands. So it is no use grieving over death. Those die are not lost forever because they do take birth again whether you believe in an eternal soul or not.

An entity which is created is sure to be annihilated but origination and annihilation are only different states of an entity. Clay exists before the pot and pot exists before the potsherds and potsherds again become clay and later originate as another pot. Similarly all beings get annihilated and originate which





is a continuous process. KrshNa mentions this process as **aparihArya**, inevitable and hence need not be grieved for.



"Do not grieve over death!"

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SLOKAM 28

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।

अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥

avyaktAdIni bhUtAni vyaktamadhyAni bhArata |

avyaktanidhanAni eva tatra kA paridevanA ||

Meaning:

Nothing is known about the beginning of existence of all beings and only the intermediate existence is known and the end is also not seen hence why lament about all this?

Comments:

What we perceive as life and the world existed even before we took this particular manifestation. We do not know the beginning nor the end! When a baby is born, for instance, we do not know what it was before its birth and how many births it has gone through and similarly when a man dies we do not know where he goes and how many more births he had to undergo. So what is visible to us of the whole universe and all beings in the universe is only a small portion compared to the whole existence as such. So Kṛṣṇa says, why should there be any grief over the loss of lives or entities in this world. No one knows when the creation started and when it is going to end. It is like a flowing stream in the dark out of which we see only a small portion that comes to light which again goes back to darkness.

avyaktAdIni bhUtAni - all beings have unmanifest beginning and

avyaktanidhanAni - unknown end or their end is not manifest.

vyaktamadhyAni - they become manifest only for the time they are in this particular embodiment.

paridevanA- lamenting





SLOKAM 29

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेनं

आश्चर्यवद्ब्रूति तथैव चान्यः ।

आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति

श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥

AScaryavat paSyati kaScit enam

AScaryavat vadati tatha eva ca anya:

AScaryavat ca enam anya: SrNoti

SrutvApi enam veda na ca eva kaScit ||

Comments:

In accordance with the trend of the Gita, KrshNa again ascends the pinnacle of wisdom and says:

Someone, kaScit, sees, paSyati, this, enam, (Atman) as something wonderful, AScaryavat; another, kaScit, speaks of it, vadati, as something wonderful and yet another kaScit, hears of it, SrNoti, as something wonderful. But even after hearing about it, SrutvA api, no one knows as such, na veda kaScit.

KrshNa explains that the self is incomprehensible. Some see it as something of a wonder, some speak of it as a wonder, others hear about it as something wonderful, but even after hearing about it no one understands. The rare ones who have experienced Atman or Brahman view it as a great wonder in the sense that it is something beyond perception, being beyond the comprehension of the sense organs. Among those, only few are able to tell others about it, and when



they do, they refer to it as something wonderful because it exceeds verbal description. Those who listen about it are also wonder-struck on hearing about it and it is still more difficult to find one who understands this as it really is.

'Some one perceives this', means the yogic perception as the self cannot be perceived by the senses. Only those who have realized the self can have the experience of the self and to them it appears as something wonderful being outside the realm of sensory perception. Even among those who have had the experience of the self, it is rare to find someone who tries to communicate the experience. Anything that is seen, heard and felt or cognized is of limited content. The self is beyond all limits of perception, feelings and thoughts. But the sages of lore have tried to explain that which cannot be explained, out of mercy to the humanity. Hence to those who hear about the self it is something of a wonder because they could not conceive of anything beyond the body, mind and intellect. Hence no one understands it through hearing because the truth of the supreme reality could be understood only through experience. **Sruto api** refers not only the hearing but also the knowledge of the Srutis, that is, VedAs. Even one who has learnt the VedAs could not know the self, because mere learning is not enough which KrshNa is going to elaborate later in the chapter.





SLOKAM 30

देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।

तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥

dehI nityam avadhyo ayam dehe sarvasya bhArata |

tasmAt sarvANi bhUtAni na tvam Socitum arhasi ||

Meanings:

This self, **dehI**, cannot be killed, **avadhya**; because it is eternal, **nitya**:. This is the case of all beings in all bodies, **dehe sarvasya** and hence you should not grieve over any being.

Comments:

KrshNa had described the self so far as that which could not be destroyed and by the previous sloka he had made it clear that since the self is uncognizable by senses, mind and intellect, nothing could destroy that. Hence in this sloka KrshNa tells Arjuna that he should not grieve over all beings including BhIshma and DroNa because they are not mere bodies. Then he goes on to talk in the worldly sense reminding Arjuna about his duty as a kshatriya.





SLOKAM 31

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।

धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥

svadharmam api ca avekshya na vikampitum arhasi |

dharmyAt hi yuddhAt Sreya: anyat kshatriyasya na vidyate ||

Meaning:

Even considering your own duty you should not swerve from it. For Kshatriya there is nothing more preferred than a righteous war!

Comments:

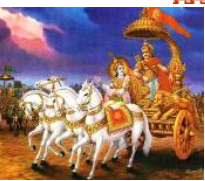
kshatAt trAyati iti kshatriya: - A Kshatriya is the one who protects from harm. That is, it is the dharma of a kshatriya is to fight for the right cause. A war which was not started for selfish reasons and out of greediness and is unavoidable and fought as a duty is a blessing for a Kshatriya. The PaNDavAs were fighting only for what was rightfully theirs.

svadharma - the duty which comes to one in accordance with his propensities under the circumstance. This term will be explained fully later in the Gita.

avekshya- perceiving. Making sure what is his svadharma.

vikampitum- wavering.

Sreya: - that which is of perennial good as against that which is desired as being good., preya:





SLOKAM 32

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।

सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥

yadrcchayA ca upapannam svargadvAram apAvrtam |

sukhina: kshatriyA: partha labhante yuddham IdrSam ||

Meanings:

A war that comes to a fortunate kshatriya like this of its own accord, opens the gates of heaven.

Comments:

What KrshNa means here is that the war was thrust upon the PaaNDavAs and it was not of their own making. yadrcchayA means something which happens of its own accord. Hence as made out in the last sloka it is the best that could happen to a kshatriya giving him an opportunity to right the wrong done by the unrighteous. KrshNa calls Arjuna as Partha, which the commentators attribute to the intention of KrshNa to remind Arjuna the message of his mother PrtA, who is Kunti, sent to her sons when KrshNa returned from HastinApura confirming the war, she said:

एतद्धनञ्जयो वाच्यो नित्योद्युक्तो वृकोदरः

यदर्थं क्षत्रिया सूते तस्य कालोऽयमागतः

etat dhananjayo vAcyo nityodhyukto vrkodara:

yadartham kshatriyA sUte tasya kAlo ayam Agata:

--MahA BhArata:udyogaparva





Meaning:

This should be said to Arjuna and BhIma, who is always waiting to fight, that the moment for which a kshatriya mother gives birth to sons, have come now.

Hence KrshNa says that only blessed kshatriyas get this opportunity to fight a righteous battle which opens the gates of heaven for them, **svargadvAram apAvrtam**, living or dead.





SLOKAM 33

अथ चेत्त्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।

ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥

atha cet tvam imam dharmyam sangrAmam na karishyasi |

tata: svadharmam kIrtim ca hitvA pApam avApsyati ||

Meaning:

But if you do not fight this righteous war, then only you will incur sin by discarding your duty and you will also lose your fame.

Comments:

KrshNa, after showing Arjuna that his svadharma lies only in fighting a righteous battle (dharmyam sangrAmam), now elaborates on the possible consequences of his not fighting. He will not only incur sin by relinquishing his duty as a kshatriya but also lose the fame he has acquired so long.





SLOKAM 34

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।

संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥

akIrtim ca api bhUtAni kathayishyanti te avyayAm |

sambhAvitasya ca akIrti: maraNAt atiricyate ||

Meaning:

Further the people will speak ill of you forever and for one who is in an honourable position the ill-fame is worse than death.

Comments:

When he is no longer looked upon as a hero by the people they will talk ill of him and to sin into ill-fame is worse than death for one who has been an illustrious warrior.

avyayAm here means that the ill-fame will be forever. The fact that Arjuna put to flight the whole army of Kauravas single handed during their attack on the herd of cattle of ViraTa and his fight even with Lord Siva, his exploits which earned him the name of dhanajaya, all will be forgotten and he would be remembered only for his cowardly act of turning away from battle. It is a sad fact that the world remembers only the drawbacks of the great people because it is a human tendency to pull the great to our level to get the satisfaction that they are no better than us.





SLOKAM 35

भयाद्रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।

येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥

bhayAt raNAt uparatam mamsyante tvAm mahArathA: |

yeshAm ca tvam bahumata: bhUtvA yAsyasi lAghavam ||

Meaning:

The valiant will think that you have run away from the battle in fear. Those who have high opinion of you so far will think lightly of you.

Comments:

Other valiant warriors on both sides may think that Arjuna has been afraid of the might of BhIshma and others and decided to run away from facing them on war while those who hold him in high esteem like BhIshma and DroNa will think that he was not worthy of it.

raNa means battle

uparatam - withdrawing.

yeshAm tvam bahumata: - by whom you are held in high esteem. Here it refers to the persons revered by Arjuna like BhIshma and because of his unwillingness to kill whom he wants to withdraw from battle. KrshNa says that those who he did not desire to kill the very same persons would have a low opinion of him for it.

bahumata: bhUtvA - having earned the high opinion of himself.

lAghavam - smallness or insignificance



SLOKAM 36

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून्वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।

निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥

avAcyA vAdAmSca bahUn vadishyanti tava ahitA: |

nindanta: tava sAmarthyam tata: du:khataram tu kim ||

Meaning:

Your enemies will utter unspeakable words about you belittling your prowess. What could be more painful than that?

Comments:

The enemies of PaaNDavAs, Duryodhana and his brothers, though they would like nothing better than Arjuna withdrawing from battle, will speak derisively of him and insult him humiliating words.

Thus whipping up the sense of honour of Arjuna, KrshNa emphasizes the importance of fighting in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 37

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।

तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥

hato vA prApsyasi svargam jitvA vA bhokshyase mahIm |

tasmAt uttishTha kaunteya yuddhAya krtaniScaya: ||

Meaning:

If you get killed you will go to heaven and if you win you will enjoy the kingdom. Therefore get up, Oh son of Kunti, and fight with determination.

Comments:

After convincing him that by withdrawing from battle would not be right for a hero like him, now KrshNa says that either he kills or get killed it will be for good only. By doing his duty and losing his life in battle he will go to heaven as already said that to fight such a righteous battle will open the gates of heaven. If he wins the war, he will get the kingdom. Hence he need not worry about the outcome of the war and must go ahead to do his duty.

It will be interesting to note that both the wise and the wicked have no doubts about what they want to do. Only the average man who is averse to wickedness but lacks the courage to do good is perpetually in doubt! Arjuna represents an average human being, that is, people like us! So what KrshNa tells next applies to all of us whenever we are in a dilemma, to do or not to do anything.



SLOKAM 38

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥

sukhadu:khe same krtvA lAbhAlAbhau jayAjayau |

tata: yuddhAya yuddhyasva na evam pApam avApsyasi ||

Meaning:

Fight for the sake of war, considering joy and sorrow equally and also gain and loss. Thus you will not incur any sin.

Comments:

Thus fighting the war as a duty which could not be avoided and which is inevitable, whether Arjuna wishes to get the kingdom or does not wish to kill his relatives and thus incur sin, KrshNa says, he will not incur any sin. What is done as a duty without attaching importance to the result is karma yoga which KrshNa is going to elaborate in the subsequent chapter and which he hints in the following slokAs. Sukha and duhka: relate to the mind and are the effects of lAbha and alAbha, loss and gain which pertain to the body level.





SLOKAM 39

एषा तेऽभिहिता साङ्ख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु ।

बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥

eshA te abhihitA sAnkhye buddhi: yoge tu imam srNu |

budhyA yukto yaya pArtha karmabandham prahAsyasi ||

Meaning:

So far you have been told about the knowledge of the self. Now listen to yoga (karma yoga) by following which, you will be freed from the bondage of karma.

Comments:

sAnkhyA here means intellect and the truth which should be understood through the intellect is sAnkhyam, meaning the knowledge of the real nature of the self. This relates to the theory of self knowledge and now KrshNa says that Arjuna will be imparted the means of attaining it by practicing Karma yogA. Thus sAnkhyA denotes the theory of AtmavidyA while the Karma yogA shows the practical side of it.

karmabandham - the bondage due to karma which results in the cycle of births and deaths. As already mentioned, this discourse of Gita was meant for the whole mankind and the fight here implies the fight that goes within every individual due to the ignorance born out of karma, which obscures the truth and creates confusion as to what to do and what not to do. So here it is meant that by knowing the teachings of the Gita one would be able to shake off the shackles of karma and will be released from the transmigration of the soul causing embodiment.





SLOKAM 40

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥

nehAbhikrama nASo asti prtyavAyo na vidyate |

svalpam api asya dharmasya trAyate mahatho bhayAt ||

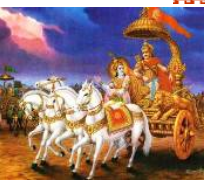
Meaning:

Here (in the practice of Karma yoga) there is no loss of effort nor is there any fear of evil. Even a little practice of this dharma (Karma yoga) releases one from the great fear.

Comments:

A karma when started and left off in the middle will result in loss of effort as one has to do it again from the beginning. In some karma evil result will ensue when stopped in the middle as in the case of ritualistic action. This is inevitable with desire-motivated actions.

But when the same action is done as karmayoga with no desire for result but performed only as a duty these ill effects do not occur. The path of Karma yoga is praised by KrshNa as being without pitfalls by saying nehAbhikramanASo asti, there is no loss of effort, and, pratyavAyo na vidyate, no contrary result will occur, because even a little of Karma yoga practiced diligently produces result in the form of freedom from the perils of samsArA.





SLOKAM 41

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।

बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥

vyvasAyAtmika buddhi: eka iha kurunandana |

bahuSAkha hi anantA: ca buddhya: avayavasAyinAm ||

Meaning:

The intellect of those with unshakable conviction is single pointed. That of others who lack conviction is branched out in all directions and limitless.

Comments:

KrshNa said in the 39th sloka, that those whose intellect is established in karma yogA will be freed from bondage due to karma. That buddhi is referred to here as **vyavasAyAtmika buddhi**. The resolve of such persons is only to get rid of the bondage and hence the goal is to realize the truth. So their intellect is steadfast which KrshNa is going to elaborate in his description of **sthitapraj~nA** later.

On the other hand one, **avyavasAyina:**, whose intellect is riddled with infinite number of desires finds that his mind is not steady on any one objective but goes on wavering due to the lack of conviction which gives rise to numerous doubts and fears. So the intellect or mind of such a man is describe as **bahuSAkha**, branching out everywhere and the thoughts as a result are **ananta**, infinite or innumerable.

This refers to the desire-motivated actions, either those allowed by sAstrAs or those undertaken by ordinary desires. Even those sanctioned by sAstrAs like yaj~na etc., if done expecting result are desire motivated only and result in bondage. These kind of actions are mentioned in the next few slokas.





SLOKAMS 42, 43, & 44

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।

वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ॥ ४२ ॥

कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।

क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥ ४३ ॥

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥ ४४ ॥

yAm imAm pushpitAm vAcam pravadanti avipaScita: |

vedavAdarata: pArtha nAnyat asti iti vAdina: || 42 ||

kAmAtmAna: svargaparA janmakarma phalapradAm |

kriyAvisesha bahulAm bhogaiSvarya gatim prati || 43 ||

bhogaiSvryaprasktAnAm tayA apahrta cetasaAm |

vyavasayAtmika buddhi: samAdhau na vidhIyate || 44 ||

Meaning:

Oh Arjuna! The ignorant speak all flowery words to discuss about the Vedas that their view alone is the right view,

They are all hankering after their desire for heaven and indulge in the actions that lead them to birth and more karma, and towards enjoyment of pleasures and wealth and power in this world.





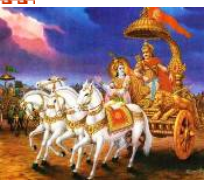
Their mind, engaged in the enjoyment of wealth and power and hankering after that never becomes steady in meditation.

Comments:

Here KrshNa talks about those who have learnt the VedAs but use the knowledge only to further their own ends which are desire motivated. Even if it is to attain svarga, says KrshNa, it is leading to transmigration as he says later, **kshINe puNye martyalokam viSanti**, as soon as their merit acquired to deserve heaven is exhausted, they revert back to the world to do more karma to go to heaven. Thus performing yAgAs and other ritualistic karma in order to reach heaven or to get a better life in next birth goes on and on. Such people are addicted to the karma kANDa of the VedAs, called **pUrvamImAmsa**, while the latter portion of VedAs which is about Brahman and moksha is called **uttaramImAmsa** or VedAnta.

To prove that their view alone is right they put forth arguments which KrshNa calls as flowery speeches because of their learning which give them mastery of language. Karma unless done as Karma yoga, as **nishkAmakarmA** will never secure release from bondage, may it well be spiritual or secular. Even the Vedic rites sanctioned by the VedAs could only lead to heaven or a better life in this world but not to the attainment of release from bondage. It should not be taken to mean that KrshNa is against all ritualistic action because he is extolling the importance of yaj~na later but says that all should be done without desire for fruit and as an offering to God. We have seen this in the case of rshis who were described to do yAgAs all the time. They did not have any desire for heaven or for a better life on earth but they did it without any expectation of fruit and as an offering to God for the welfare of the world.

Those who believe that the VedAs are important only for the ritualistic portion of it are called **mImAmsakAs** and their school of thought is the school of mImAmsa, one of the **shaD darSanAs** of Hinduism. It is opposed to **VedAnta darSana** in as much as they hold that the subject matter of the



Upanishads, which form the uttaramImAmsa, being Brahman, is not necessary as all the teachings of the VedAs must be inductive of action only. This is a major topic in VedAnta which is refuted by all the AcAryAs of VedAnta.

As to why the VedAs, which form a major part of our culture, is to be taken as not conducive to moksha, is explained by Kṛṣṇa in the next sloka. It should however be remembered that it is only the karma kANDa which is under criticism here and not the Upanishadic part of the VedAs called VedAnta.





SLOKAM 45

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥

traiguNyavishayA vedA nistraiguNyo bhava arjuna |

nirdvandvo nityasattvastho niryogakshema AtmavAn ||

Meaning:

The VedAs belong to the realm of three guNas. Therefore Arjuna, you transcend the three guNas.

Comments:

The essential condition for practicing karma yoga is an intellect directed towards one ideal with determination. Otherwise thoughts run in all directions dragged by desires towards innumerable goals. Such people even if they are well versed in Vedas look upon the scriptural texts only as the gateway to heaven or to a better life on this earth and exhaust their intellectual skills in flowery speeches to prove their ends. That is why KrshNa calls the VedAs, meaning the karma kANDa, as being **traiguNyavishayA**: and asks Arjuna to transcend the three guNas.

traiguNyavishayA: - The VedAs have the three guNas as their objective because they prescribe desire oriented rituals for those who are influenced by three guNas. Veda is beneficial to mankind and is not misleading. That is not what is meant here. But the VedAs do good to humanity by teaching them the right actions suitable for the respective guNas that influence humans. They provide the directive for righteous action without which those under the influence of rajas and tamas will indulge in unrighteous action to satisfy their desires. Hence KrshNa says that the VedAs are concerned with guNas.



nistraiguNyo bhava - transcends the guNas.

Everyone has all the three guNas of which the body, mind and intellect is made of. Even the ego is the product of the three guNas and hence to transcend the guNas means not to identify one self with body, mind and intellect and transcend the ego. First step towards transcending the guNas would be to increase sattva so that rajas and tamas will be reduced to minimum and then the sattva should be purified so that the ego shrinks to nothing. This is what is advised by KrshNa in the next line.

nityasattva: - KrshNa advises Arjuna to acquire sattva in abundance so that the activities of the other two guNas are reduced to a minimum. Suddhasattva is described as white in colour, while rajas is red and tamas is black. Hence the word Arjuna is used here instead of pArtha, kaunteya etc., as the word means white.

nirdvandva: - to be free from the pairs of opposites, viz. joy and sorrow, loss and gain, love and hatred etc. These arise from desire motivated actions. To be free from desire is to get free from the dvandvAs. How this is achieved is by being,

niryogakshema - not worrying about acquiring anything or to protect them. Yoga is acquisition and kshema is the protection of what was acquired. This could only be done by being,

AtmavAn - by being established in the self. How this can be achieved is the subject matter of the rest of the chapter.



SLOKAM 46

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।

तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥

yAvAn artha udapAne sarvata: samplutodake |

tAvAn sarveshu vedeshu brAhmaNasya vijAnata: ||

Meaning:

The VedAs are of as much use to a brAhmaNa who has the knowledge of reality as the water in a reservoir when all the sides are flooded with water.

Comments:

To one who has the brahmaj~nAna, there is nothing to be gained by any action either spiritual or secular as he has no desires to be fulfilled. Hence the VedAs are not of any use for him as there is no happiness to be gained by the fruits of actions prescribed by the VedAs either in this world or the next. He is filled with the bliss absolute and all the other joys are like baubles when compared with that. Hence KrshNa compares the VedAs, meaning the fruits accruing from them to the water in a small reservoir like a well or pond when the whole area was flooded with water.

This can be construed in two ways. To an enlightened one the karma kANDa of the Veda which is the ritualistic portion that secures enjoyment in this world is like water in the well when the whole area is flooded. But if we take Veda to mean the entire scripture including wisdom of Upanishads, it may be interpreted thus: Even when the entire land is flooded, the well can contain only as much water as it can hold. So too one can comprehend only as much as his intellect can grasp, which fact has been proved by the controversies in interpreting the upanishadic passages without comprehending their real purport



which is Brahman. This may very well be the meaning of the term **yAvAnartha:**.

yAvAn artha - how much benefit as.

udapAna- small reservoir

sarvata: - on all sides

samplutodake - filled with water

tAvAn sarveshu vedeshu - only that much use in all the VedAs

brAhmaNasya vijAnata: - to a learned BrAhmin who has not only mastered the VedAs but also comprehended their real purport. Here the word brAhmaNa is meant to indicate one who has the knowledge of Brahman and not by birth.

brahmaNa: ayam brAhmaNa:

It is like this. When a child learns arithmetic, he is taught to count with his fingers or by the counting beads. But later he has no more use for this. This however as already mentioned should not be taken as a dismissal of all the injunctions of the VedAs but it means that even though the wise may continue to do the acts prescribed by the VedAs they are not result -oriented but done as an offering to the Lord.





SLOKAM 47

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

karmaNyeva adhikAra: te mA phaleshu kadAcana |

mA karma phalahetu: bhU: mA te sango astu akarmaNi ||

Meaning:

You have right over action only and not the fruit of action. Your action should not be motivated by desire for fruit, nor should you be attached to inaction.

Comments:

mA karma phalahetu: bhU: - your action should not be result-oriented.

Acts done with an expectation of result cause bondage because they are done with desire. But the same act done as an offering to God releases one from bondage. As all beings are bound to act it is not possible to desist from action. If you stop doing any action physically you may be doing the same mentally or do some other action involuntarily. So karma yoga consists in not stopping from action but do the same without longing for the result as the result is not under your control.

Swami Vivekananda said "work for work's sake; duty for duty's sake" meaning that one should do work for its own sake and not out of desire to get the result. But the question is, will anyone do anything unless he wants the result? Certainly not! There is nothing wrong in starting a work with a specific result in mind but Karma yoga consists in not getting attached to the result. This is not as pessimistic as it seems to be but sheer common sense. When we begin a work we cannot help fixing a goal to achieve as otherwise we would not have started



at all. But once started we should concentrate on the action only without worrying about the result constantly as the anxiety will reduce our efficiency. On the other hand, if we put our heart and soul into the work we are doing, the result will automatically follow, and even if it does not, due to some factor on which we have no control, we will not feel frustrated as we have already had the satisfaction from the work itself. This is what Swami Vivekananda meant by "work for work's sake". To give up the attachment to the fruit of action is Karma yoga as advised in the Gita. It applies not only to the mumukshu, one who aims for realization but also to the man of the world, wherein lies the value of Gita! The work which is assigned to you in this birth in accordance with your karma is your duty that has to be discharged. This is what Kṛṣṇa means when He says *mā te sango astu akarmaṇi*, "You should not give up work altogether". This provides the answer to the question "If I should give up the result why should I act in the first place?"

Karma here, which one is supposed to be doing and not relinquish it, means the svadharma the acts according to his varṇāśrama, sanctioned by dharma and not those prohibited because they are motivated either by desire or aversion and thus one gets attached to them which leads to bondage. The elucidation of svadharma would follow in the subsequent chapter on karma yoga. Anything done as a duty, without attachment to result, does not result in bondage.

Let us examine what I meant by the above statement. When we start a work, we have definitely an idea of the possible result. It may appear to be good or bad from common standards such as that in war. When a soldier is fighting to defend his country for instance, the expected result may be killing or get killed. But he does not think of either once he goes to the battlefield and discharges his duty without attachment to the result. Similarly a judge who gives a judgment either favourable or unfavourable to the accused is not worried about the result of his act but merely does it as his duty. This is an example of doing an act without attachment to the result.

On the other hand if we get attached to the result, our mind will be riddled



with doubts and anxiety about the future and fear and regret about the past which will prevent us from concentrating on the work at hand. We tend to react according to our impressions gathered from our past karma thus accumulating more karma for which we have to experience the result later on. Thus acting with attachment leads to bondage.

If you send an important mail for instance, you have the power only to send it and not over its being replied. It may never reach the recipient or he may never answer it but that is not in your control. If you worry about the possibility of not getting a reply the chances are that you will never send it. This is what is meant by **mA karmaphalahetu: bhU: mA te sango astu akarmaNi.**

On the other hand if you do everything with an attitude that you are doing what should be done and the rest is in the hands of God, you will not worry about the result at all.

mA karma phalahetu: bhU: can also be understood as follows. An artist or a musician may expect a reward for his work but when he actually at his work, singing or painting he enjoys what he is doing and the idea of remuneration is far behind in his mind. This attitude could be seen in any walk of life with respect to a dedicated worker in any field. So the work, karma, of such an individual is not **phalahetu** - for the sake of result alone. Even if there is no reward such a person will not and could not desist from his work.





SLOKAM 48

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।

सिद्धयसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥

yogastha: kuru karmANi sangam tyaktvA dhananjaya |

siddhyasiddyo: sama: bhUtvA samatvam yoga ucyate ||

Meaning:

Perform your actions without attachment with your mind established in yoga, being nonchalant about success and failure. Evenness of mind is yoga.

Comments:

The term yoga, as said earlier is karma yoga. To give up attachment one should be free from desire and aversion. Then success and failure do not affect him. Whatever comes is accepted with equanimity. Then he concentrates only on the work at hand and this is implied by saying, 'yogastha: kuru karmANi', do your work established in yoga. The phrase sangam tyaktvA is used in the adverbial sense modifying the previous sentence, yogastha: kuru karmANi. What is meant here is that one should have evenness of mind even before starting the work. Then only the attachment will go. Karma yoga is nothing but attaining the evenness of mind, samatvam.





SLOKAM 49

दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय ।

बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥

dUreNna hi avaram karma buddhiyogat dhananjaya |

buddhAu SaraNam anviccha krpaNA: phalahetava: ||

Meaning:

The work which is done with an expectation of result is far inferior to that done as karmayoga. Hence you take refuge in evenness of mind. Those who do anything with a desire for result are to be pitied.

Comments:

dUreNa avaram- far inferior. The difference between karma done as karma yoga and that done desiring result, is great.

buddhiyoga here means karma yoga.

buddhau - in evenness of mind which is karma yoga

Saranam anviccha- means, it is the only resort for freedom from bondage

krpaNA: - miserable ones

phalahetava: - those who act for the result.

These are to be pitied because they accumulate more and more karma by their desire motivated actions and get into bondage.





SLOKAM 50

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।

तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥

buddhiyukto jahAti iha ubhe sukrta dushkrte |

tasmAt yogAaya yujyasva yoga: karmasu kauSalam ||

Meaning:

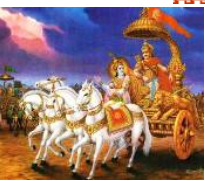
One who is established in yoga casts off both good and evil here and now. Therefore endeavour for yoga. The skill in action is called yoga.

Comments:

When one does all actions as karma yoga, without attachment to the result, it means that his mind is free from desires and his actions are not desire motivated. Thus he attains the evenness of mind, **buddhiyukta**, as described earlier. Then he does not accumulate fresh karma by his actions. His past karma which has not yet started giving result is demolished by his shedding off his ego as a result of evenness of mind. He does not consider himself as the actor or the enjoyer, offering all his actions to the Lord. Only the karma which has started to give result already causing this particular birth continues but the yogi is not affected by it.

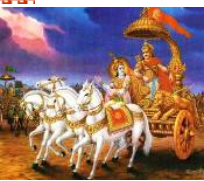
Hence it is said that he casts off, **jahAti**, here itself, **iha**, both good and evil, **ubhe sukrta dushkrte**, meaning, both good and bad effects of his karma become null and void as he is doing it as his duty only and acts as an instrument of the Lord. Therefore KrshNa asks Arjuna to be a yogi when the merit and demerit of his actions will not adhere to him. This is what is meant by **yogAaya yujyasva**.

yoga: karmasu kauSalam, has a very important implication. If one is not





attached to the result of the action he may end up by giving up the action altogether or if he has to, may do it indifferently. Kṛṣṇa says that by karma yoga not mere giving up of attachment to result is indicated but doing the action to the best of one's ability and with full concentration. Then only it is called karma yoga. This is what is implied by **yoga: karmasu kauSalam**.





SLOKAM 51

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।

जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥

karmajam buddhiyuktA hi phalam tyaktvA manIshiNa: |

janmabandhavinirmuktA: padam gacchanti anAmayam ||

Meaning:

Those, who are evolved, being established in karma yoga, by giving up the result of their karma, become free from the bondage that causes birth and reach the supreme state of eternal bliss.

Comments:

As explained in the previous sloka, by karma yoga one gets freed from karma and there is no more birth for him. There are three kinds of karma, **sancita**, **prArabdha** and **AgAmi**. **sancita karma** is that which has been accumulated over the past lives and results in the future lives. **PrArabdha** is that part of karma which has already started giving result and has caused this particular birth. **AgAmi karma** is that which is done now and will start giving result in future. Now by karma yoga, present karma ceases to give result. PrArabdha karma lasts only till this body lasts. Sancita karma is destroyed like the seed which is scorched and is not capable of sprouting due to the removal of ego-centric desires.

Hence it is said that those who are established in karma yoga, **buddhiyuktA**: by giving up the result of karma, **karmajam phalam tyaktvA**, become free from the bondage of karma causing birth, **janmabandha vinirmuktA**:, and reach the state beyond all evil, **padam gacchanti anAmayam**, meaning the eternal abode or mukti. These are called **manIshiNa**:, wise.





SLOKAM 52

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।

तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥

yadA te mohakalilam buddhi: vyatitarishyati |

tadA gantAsi nirvedam Srotavyasya Srutasya ca ||

Meaning:

When your intellect crosses over the mire of delusion then you will get detachment from both what is heard and what is to be heard.

Comments:

It is the ignorance of one's real nature that creates the identification with the body mind and intellect and he is deluded into believing the sense experiences as real and gets affected by the joy and sorrow through them. When the intellect is cleared of this delusion through knowledge one gets detachment from the sense experience which is indicated by **Srotavya** and **Sruta**. This means what is heard and what is to be heard which includes the seen and unseen and likewise all sense experiences, that were already experienced and that to be experienced.





SLOKAM 53

श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।

समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥

Srutivipratipanna te yadA sthAsyati niScala |

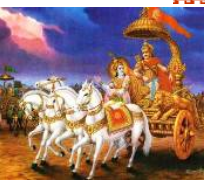
samAdhau acalA buddhi: tadA yogam avApsyasi ||

Meaning:

You will attain yoga when your intellect which has been perplexed by what you have heard so far, now becomes clear and firm by right knowledge and concentrates on the absolute.

Comments:

When the mind gets free from delusion which is the cause of joy and sorrow by wrong identification of oneself with the body there is no more confusion of conflicting thoughts and the intellect comes to rest, steady, and with no distractions, in the absolute reality and one attains samAdi, realization. KrshNa has thus skillfully maneuvered the conversation to a point in order to make Arjuna ask the question sthitapraj~nasya kA bhAsha. Then He starts the description of the man of realization.





SLOKAM 54

अर्जुन उवाच

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।

स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत ब्रजेत किम् ॥

arjuna uvAca -

sthitapraj~nasya kA bhAshA samAdhisthasya keSava |

sthitadhI: kim prabhAsheta kim AsIta vrajeta kim ||

Meaning:

Arjuna said -

What is the sign of one who has firm wisdom and who is established in the Self and how does he speaks, sits and moves about?

Comments:

Having heard of the state when the intellect becomes firmly established in Brahman or Atman, Arjuna now asks the question already created in his mind by KrshNa. He wants to know the definition of sthitapraj~na.

Arjuna wants to know the signs by which he can identify the man of realization and asks KrshNa to tell him the way such a person speaks, sits and walks. This is not as absurd as it looks when translated literally. One may ask - what will be the difference between the way an ordinary man of the world speaks, sits and the man of stable mind sthitapraj~na? He will also walk with two legs, speak in the same language of the human beings, and sit as we do. But what Arjuna means exactly is as follows:



The **sthitapraj~na** has no interest in things which matter most to people in general. So what will he talk about? Where will he reside? Will he stay amidst others or will he go away to some solitary place? How will he carry on his life in general? These questions are answered by KrshNa in detail.





SLOKAM 55

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान् ।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥

SrI bhagavAn uvAca -

prajahAti yadA kAmAn sarvAn pArtha manogatAn |

Atmani eva AtmanA tushTa: sthitapraj~na: tadA ucyate ||

Meaning:

The Lord said -

When one gives up all desires born out of his mind, Arjuna, and revels within himself by himself, he is said to be a **sthitapraj~na**, a man of firm wisdom.

Comments:

One is known as **sthitapraj~na** when he gives up all desires that arise in his mind and rejoices in his own self. Let us see what this means.

tushTa: means happy and contented. When does a man become so? Let us take, for example an instance where one learns that he has become a father of a boy. He has been desirous of getting a child so long and now the desire is satisfied. So he is happy but only until he starts desiring for some other thing, like providing for his son etc. Hence the joy lasted only as long as no other desire has started in its stead. This proves that happiness comes not out of satisfying a desire but only in the absence of any other desire. Therefore if one wants to remain happy he should lengthen the gap between one desire and the next.





"stithapraj~na:!" - swAmi deSikan - thUppul



Swami Chinmayananda used to give an equation for happiness as follows:

Number of desires fulfilled

_____ = the quotient of happiness.

Number of desires entertained

When the denominator becomes zero the value of the quotient is infinity. So it follows that only the absence of desire will result in infinite happiness. This can be verified through experience. Generally one's childhood is always remembered as the happiest part of our lives except for some unfortunate beings. If we analyze as to why it was so, we could see that in our childhood we had very few simple desires which were mostly fulfilled. As we grow older we multiply our desires so fast that it becomes impossible to satisfy all of them even during the whole span of life.

Atmani eva AtmanA tushTa:, reveling in the joy of one's own self. Man runs after sense objects expecting them to provide happiness which is a myth. If so, the same object will not be the source of happiness for one and give sorrow to another and the same source of happiness will not bring sorrow at a different time. External object does not bring joy or sorrow but our joy or sorrow depends on the way we react to it. Hence happiness must come from within, which explains the reason why the man of realization is always happy. He is experiencing the bliss, which is the real nature of the Self. He is happy within because he has given up all his desires.





SLOKAM 56

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥

duhkheshu anudvignamanA: sukheshu vigatasprha: |

vItarAga bhayakrodha: sthitadhI: muni: ucyate ||

Meaning:

He whose mind is not perturbed by sorrow nor he has any clinging attachment for pleasure and who is free from desire, fear and anger, is called the man of wisdom.

Comments:

The man of stable wisdom does not react to the circumstances that give joy or sorrow to the ordinary man. He has neither attachment nor repulsion for sukha or dukha, joy or sorrow because he is devoid of passion, fear and anger. So he, whose mind neither rejoices with nor recoils from good and evil, is a sthitapraj~na the one whose mind is stable.

Now the question is, how does he manage to become detached so as not to be affected by sukha or dukha or by good or evil? The answer is given in the next sloka.

sthitapraj~na: and sthitadhI: both mean the same - one of stable or firm wisdom.





SLOKAM 57

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्त्रेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।

नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

ya: sarvatra anabhisneha: tat tat prApya SubhASubham |

na abhinandati na dveshti tasya praj~nA pratishThitA ||

Meaning:

The wisdom of one, who is detached to all things which when experienced gives good result or bad and hence does not rejoice nor feel depressed on contacting them, is firm.

Comments:

This is the continuation of the idea expressed in the previous sloka. When contacting the sense objects one gets happiness or sorrow depending on his reaction to it, which again depends on his likes and dislikes, rAga and dvesha. The pleasure and pain comes not from the contact of the sense organs with the sense object alone but because the mind gets identified with the sense organ and feels pleasure or pain. That is why when we are engrossed in something, say, a book, we are not at all aware of the sense experience even though the sense organs contact the sense objects. For instance when children are watching their favourite programme on TV, they can be made to eat the food which they despise normally. The **sthitapraj~na** on the other hand has no desire or aversion and hence he is not at all affected by anything that normally gives pleasure or pain. How he does this is explained in the next sloka.



SLOKAM 58

यदा संहरते चायं कघर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

yadA samharate ca ayam kUrma: angAnIva sarvasa: |

indriyANi indriyArthebhya: tasya praj~nA pratishThitA ||

Meaning:

When one withdraws his senses from sense objects on all sides like the tortoise withdraws its limbs, his wisdom is firm.

Comments:

A tortoise withdraws his limbs inside his shell when it suspects any danger. Likewise the sthitapraj~na withdraws his senses from the sense objects. This means as said earlier, the senses are in contact with sense objects as one cannot even if he is a sthitapraj~na, prevent the sense from functioning, as the eye will see and the ear will hear even for him. But as the mind is not in contact he is not affected by them. This is what is meant by withdrawing senses as the word sense organs is not used here. The senses mean the subtle indriyas which function through the mind which is also included as the sixth indriya by the upanishads.

Thus the four states of j~nAnishTha, firmness of intellect that makes one a sthitapraj~na are described in the four slokAs from 55 to 58 in the reverse order. The state of withdrawal of senses is the lowest state when a man acquiring the knowledge of the supreme reality and about the transitory nature of all experience of the world withdraws his senses from the sense objects. This is what is outlined in the above sloka.



Secondly he develops detachment towards people and things when pleasant or unpleasant occurrences do not bring him joy or aversion. This is the essence of sloka 57.

Thirdly, he is no more affected by pleasure or pain, because he is free from desire, fear and anger. This is the stage mentioned in sloka 56.

Lastly and finally, the final state of sthitaprajña is achieved when he becomes *Atmani eva AtmanA tushTa:*, revels in the experience of the self when all desires have been thrown out from his mind which has become pure and experiences the *AtmasAkshAtkara*.

samharate - the verb 'hr' with the prefix 'sam' means to collect or draw together. It is usually used in the other sense of the verb meaning 'to destroy' as in samhAra. Here it means to draw the senses from the sense objects and collect them in one place within the mind and direct them towards the meditation of the supreme self.

The one sure way of redirecting the senses towards the divine is through devotion as Kulasekhara AzhvAr says in MukundamAlA.

जिह्वे किरतय केशवं मुररिपुं चेतो भज श्रीधरं

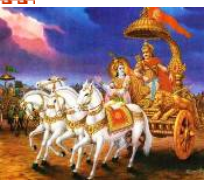
पाणिद्वन्द्व समर्चयाचुतकथाः श्रोत्रद्वय त्वं शृणु ।

कृष्णं लोकय लोचनद्वय हरेर्गच्छाङ्घ्रियुग्मालयं

जिघ्र घ्राण मुकुन्दपादतुळसीं मूर्धन् नमाधोक्षजम् ॥

jihve kirtaya kesavam muraripum ceto bhaja SrIdharam

pANidvandva samarcaya acuta kathA: Srotradvaya tvam SrNu |





krshNam lokaya locanadvaya hare: gacchAnghriyugma Alayam

jighra ghrANa mukunda pAda tuLasIm mUrdhan nama adhokshajam ||

-- MukundamAlA, Sloka 16

AzhvAr gives injunction to his senses to become engaged in the worship of the Lord.

"Oh tongue, sing about KeSava. the slayer of Mura. Oh mind, think of SrIdhara. Two hands, you worship Him, Two ears, you hear the stories about acyuta. Oh eyes, look at KrshNa. Pair of feet, you go to the temple of Hari. Oh nose, you smell the tuLasI leaves from the feet of Mukunda. Oh head, bow down to adhokshaja (VishNu)."

When all the senses are thus engaged in the service of the Lord they will cease to be attracted by the worldly sensual pleasures. This reminds one, of the KuraL of the famous Tamil sage Thiruvalluvar, who has given to the world maxims with deep meaning in short sentences.

பற்றுக் பற்றற்றான் பற்றினை அப்பற்றை

பற்றுக் பற்று விடற்கு

PaRRuga paRRaRRAn paRRinai appaRRai

paRRuga paRRu viDaRrku.

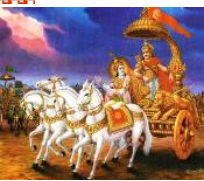
It means that in order to relinquish the attachment of the world one has to develop attachment towards the Lord. If we want to give up something it is easier to do so by shifting our attachment to something else which is more desirable.

This calls to the mind an episode in the life of Sri Ramanuja. There was a man in Srirangam who had a beautiful wife and he was much enamored with her and use to spread an umbrella on her head to shield her from the Sun much to the





ridicule of others. Ramanuja saw him and took pity on him and asked him what is that he found so attractive in his wife. He replied that she had beautiful eyes. Ramanuja told him that if he finds a pair of eyes more attractive will he switch his devotion to that. When the man asked who has more beautiful eyes, Ramanuja took him inside the temple of RanganAtha and showed him the Lord and asked him whether has he ever seen a pair of more beautiful eyes? Due to past merit, and due to the grace of the acArya, the man along with his wife became a great devotee of the Lord and a great disciple of Ramanuja, renouncing all that he had. This illustrates well the Kural quoted above.





SLOKAM 59

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।

रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥

vishayA vinivartante nirAhArasya dehina: |

rasavarjam raso api asya param drshTvA nivartate ||

Meaning:

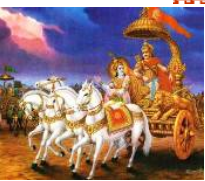
The sense objects cease to bother him whose senses are not in contact with them. But the aptitude for the sense experience stays till he has the perception of the supreme self.

Comments:

The sense objects do not tempt him who is not attracted towards them but still the propensity to enjoy the sensual pleasures remains, though not encouraged, until the final consummation with the Supreme.

The first stage of withdrawing the senses from the indriyAs, that is, sense objects, is what is referred to here. When the senses are controlled as in the case of the sick or one undergoing a religious discipline etc., the sense objects like prohibited food are not temptations for him. But the desire for them is not gone but only suppressed. So when the condition for prohibition is removed the sense objects may attract the person again. This is what is meant by **rasavarjam**, the taste remains, meaning the taste for the sense experience.

nirAhAra - not fed. The senses are not getting their food in the form of sense objects and thus enriched in their experience. So they become emaciated like the body of a starving man, **nirAhArasya dehina:**, only to get nourishment again if the sense control is not permanent. The aspirant of spiritual progress will be



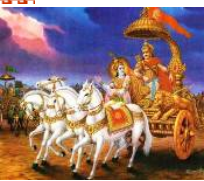


able to attain permanent control of indriyAs only when the desire for the sense objects are absent so that he does not feel elated or depressed by pleasant or unpleasant effects of sense contacts. This come only when he reaches the last state of **sthitapraj~nan** which means he has had the experience of the Supreme self, the bliss experienced by which makes all the other worldly joys appear trivial. This state of the experience of the absolute bliss is denoted by **param drshTvA**.

vishayA vinivartante means that the sense objects, **vishayA**; turn away. The sense objects come only to him who desires them. That is, only those who desire them go and get them. This is implied by the word **vinivartante**, they turn away.

rasa: api nivartate - even the desire goes away when the aspirant has become a **sthitapraj~na** after experiencing the supreme self, **param drshTvA**.

The reason for this is given in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 60

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥

yatato hi api kaunteya purushasya vipaScita: |

indriyANi pramAthIni haranti prasabham mana: ||

Meaning:

The senses of an aspirant till he reaches the final stage remain strong and carry his mind unaware even if he is striving, yatata: api, to control them.

Comments:

The mind due to the accumulated propensities through several births has become the slave of the senses and to control and withdraw it from the attraction of the senses is not at all easy. This aspect, KrshNa mentions again in the sixth chapter and advises Arjuna how to control the mind. Here KrshNa cautions against the force of indriyAs, pramAthIni, which have the power to carry the mind off, haranti prasabham mana: if one is not vigilant. The risk of falling back into the trap of the senses is great till one reaches the ultimate state mentioned in the previous sloka as param drshTvA.





SLOKAM 61

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।

वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

†Ani sarvANi samyamyukta AsIta matpara: |

vaSe hi yasya indriyANi tasya praj~nA pratishThitA ||

Meaning:

Having controlled all the indriyAs one should be engrossed in Me. The one whose senses have become fully controlled he is the sthitapraj~na, a man of firm wisdom.

Comments:

As explained in sloka 58, KrshNa indicates the sure way of sense control namely, contemplating on the divine. When the mind is engrossed in the higher joy of the divine experience the lower sensual pleasures have no attraction. Controlling the senses by sheer will is not the yoga advised by KrshNa. It is by directing the mind above; the lower desires are eradicated once for all. This has been explained in sloka 58 in detail.

If one is not aware of the power of the indriyAs and follow the steps outlined above what will be the outcome, is explained in the next two slokAs, which describe the descent of man.





SLOKAMS 62 & 63

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ ६२ ॥

क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंशात् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥ ६३ ॥

dhyAyato vishayAn pumsa: sanga: teshu upajAyate |

sanghAt sanjAyate kAma: kAmAt krodho abhijAyate || 62 ||

krodhAt bhavati sammoha: sammohAt smrtivibhrama: |

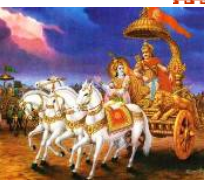
smrtibhramSA+ buddhinASa: buddhinASAt praNasyati || 63 ||

Meaning:

By the mind dwelling upon the sense objects, attachment is created for them and from that the longing desire to possess them springs up and the desire gives way to anger. From anger delusion arises and the delusion causes loss of memory which results in destruction of reasoning power and as a result the man is destroyed.

Comments:

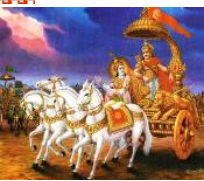
KrshNa now traces the descent of man from the state of infinite bliss which is his real nature. dhyAyato vishayAn pumsa: sanga: teshu upajAyate. This is the first step by which one descends from his mansion of bliss. When we think about an object continuously, dhyAyata:, we get attached to it. This is sanga. Then we start desiring it sangAt sanjAyate kAma:, which, when thwarted, results in anger kAmAt krodho abhijAyate. Then comes sammoha delusion.





When the intellect is clouded with anger one is not able to think straight. That is, we imagine something which is not there and that is delusion - 'sammohAt smrti vibrama:'. From sammoha arises confusion of memory. When angry, we forget whom we are talking to, and what they have been to us in the past. In the Sundara kANDa of the VaalmIiki RaamayaNa, HanumAn says krddho hanyat gurUn api. Angry man will not hesitate to kill even his elders or even his preceptor. This will happen because he forgets everything except the cause of his anger, not caring whom he hurts. The confusion of memory results in the loss of reason buddhinASa: due to which he comes to ruin. As KrshNa elaborates later, kAma or desire is the principal enemy of man followed by the other forces of destruction, namely, anger, delusion pride, avarice and jealousy.

So what is the way out? That the only way is to cultivate the equanimity of mind.





SLOKAM 64

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।

आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥

rAgadhvesha viyuktai: tu vishayAn indriyai: caran |

AtmavaSyai: vidheyAtmA prasAdham adhigacchati ||

Meaning:

The one who contacts the sense objects with his senses fully controlled due to the absence of likes and dislikes is disciplined and self-controlled and attains equanimity of mind.

Comments:

A man of discrimination, *sthitapraj~na*, enjoys the sense objects through his senses but does not cling to them, being free from likes and dislikes. He sees a beautiful thing or hears a beautiful music and enjoys it as everyone else but his mind is not running after such sensual pleasures. This idea is well brought out by Sankara in his hymns of 'bhajagovindam', where he says,

योगरतो वा भोगरतो वा

सङ्गरतो वा सङ्गविहीनः ।

यस्य ब्रह्मणि रमते चित्तं

नन्दति नन्दति नन्दत्येव ॥

yogarato vA bhogarato vA





sangarato vA sangavihIna: |
yasya brahmaNi ramate cittam
nandati nandati nandatyeva ||

Whether he is seen practicing yoga or seemingly indulgent in bhoga his inner bliss remains unalloyed. He is always happy because his mind revels ever in Brahman. This is what is meant by **prasAdam adhigacchati**. This is made clear in the next sloka.





"Establish your mind in brahman!"





SLOKAM 65

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।

प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥

prasAde sarvaduKhAnAm hAni: asya upajAyate |

prasannacetasa: hi ASu buddhi: paryavatishThate ||

Meaning:

When the serenity of mind is achieved all sorrow of the samsAra come to an end because the mind is established in Brahman.

Comments:

All sorrows are only due to the agitation of mind concerned with acquiring the objects of desire and preservation of them and the grief on losing them. All experiences whether joyous or painful bring only sorrow, former because of their fleeting nature and the latter because of their being unpleasant. When the mind is in equanimity neither the pleasure nor the pain affects the person. Then the mind becomes established in Brahman immediately.





SLOKAM 66

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।

न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥

na asti buddhi: ayuktasya na ca ayuktasya bhAvanA ||

na ca abhAvayata: Santi: aSAntasya kuta: sukham ||

Meaning:

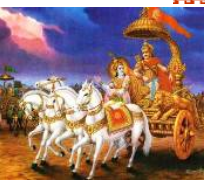
One who has no control over his senses and the mind will not have steadiness of mind nor is he able to contemplate on the Lord. Therefore for him there is no peace of mind and without peace of mind there is no happiness.

Comments;

As explained in the previous two slokAs, equanimity of mind can be achieved only when the mind and the indriyAs through the mind are under control. This could be achieved only by the contemplation of the supreme self. This is denoted as bhAvanA. The mind of one who has no control over it, is agitated and runs after the sense objects. Hence his buddhi is not steady. Thus no contemplation on the Absolute is possible because the mind always wanders. Hence there is no peace and consequently no happiness.

Ramanuja defines ayukta as "mayi sannyasta manorahitasya svayatnena pravrttasya", meaning, one who has not fixed his mind on Me but tries to control his senses by will. This has been explained in sloka 58 as the sure way of controlling the mind is to turn it towards the Lord.

So what happens to one who is unable to fix his mind in contemplation? The answer is:





SLOKAM 67

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।

तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ॥

indriyANAm hi caratAm yat mano anuvidhIyate |

tat asya harati praj~nAm vAyu: nAvam iva ambhasi ||

Meaning:

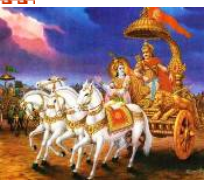
The senses moving towards sense objects followed by the mind carries away the discrimination of one like the ship on waters by the wind.

Comments:

KrshNa reiterates the idea stressed in sloka 60 where he said, **indriyANi pramAthIni haranti prasabham mana:** in a more poetic expression here. As the ship on the waters, which is not controlled properly, is carried away by the wind and wanders aimlessly here and there, so too the mind is carried away by the senses which makes it run after the sense objects.

The simile expressed above can be explained as follows:

The intellect of one who has not controlled his senses and the mind, is the ship. The wind is the sense to which the mind is attached. The waters are the ocean of samsAra consisting of the streams of sense enjoyments. The goal of man is to reach the Supreme. But the sense experience draws him away from the goal and makes him get entangled in the whirlpool of desire and without realizing, he is carried far away from his destination. On the other hand when the same ship is steered by a capable helmsman it reaches the destination without obstacles. When the intellect is fixed on the Lord, He Himself becomes the Helmsman and guides us in the right direction





SLOKAM 68

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

tasmAt yasya mahAbAho nigrhItAni sarvaSa: |

indriyANi indriyArthebhya: tasya praj~nA pratishThitA |

Meaning:

So the intellect of one, whose indriyAs are restrained from running in all directions after the sense objects, is established or firm.

Comments:

KrshNa had now answered the questions of Arjuna in full about sthitapraj~na.

Sloka 55 'prajahAti yadA kAmAn', gives the definition of sthitapraj~na which is the answer to the question 'sthitapraj~nasya kA bhAshA', what is the sign of one who has firm wisdom. But all the slokAs from 55 to the end of the chapter serve as the answer for this question because the other three are included in the first. The second question 'sthitadhI: kim prabhAsheta', how does a man of firm wisdom speaks, is answered by slokAs 56 and 57, 'duhksheshvanudvignamanA:', and 'ya: sarvatra anabhisneha:', the man of firm wisdom does not entertain likes and dislikes and treat all in the same manner and his speech will be the reflection of his mind

The third question 'kim AsIta', how will he sit, is answered by the 58th sloka 'yadA samharate', that is, the man of firm wisdom will withdraw his senses from sense objects and will appear unaffected by the world around. Here 'seated' means the general disposition.

The fourth question 'vrajeta kim' how will he behave, is answered from slokAs 64 till 70 and distinctly in sloka 71.





SLOKAM 69

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥

yA niSA sarvabhUtAnAm tasyAm jAgarti samyamI |

yasyAm jAgrati bhUtAni sA niSA paSyato mune: ||

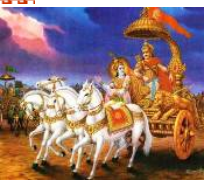
Meaning:

The one who has self-control, (as portrayed in the previous sloka a sthitapraj~na,) keeps awake (to the knowledge of the self) when it is night, (of ignorance) for all beings. It is night, (as good as night) for him when all beings are awake, (the worldly experience).

Comments:

The literal translation of the above sloka may make it appear as though the yogi or sthitapraj~na sleeps in the day and keeps awake in the night! This does not mean that a sthitapraj~na is a night owl! The state of Divine Knowledge and Supreme Bliss is like night to the ignorant whereas it is as clear as the day to a j~nAni. On the other hand the ever changing, transient worldly happiness or sorrow does not mean anything to him and it is as though he is sleeping as far as the worldly experience of joy or sorrow is concerned.

The meaning of the sloka is that the state of a sthitapraj~na and that of a worldly person is extremely opposite like the day and night. The ignorance of the reality which creates a world of dream where the experience of joy and sorrow are not permanent is described as aj~nAna timira by the philosophers and the one who is ignorant is blind to reality. This blindness due to andakAra of ignorance can be removed only by j~nAna. This is the night described above for all beings! For the yogi the j~nAna shines like the sun 'teshAm Adityavat



j~nAnam prakASayati tat param', when he acquires the brAhmI sthiti which is mentioned later in the chapter! As the world of joy and sorrow due to the sense experience is absent in a j~nAni, it is described as the night for him.



"j~nAni!"
nammAzhwaR



SLOKAM 70

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं

समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।

तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे

स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥

ApUryamANam acalapratishTham

samudram Apa: praviSanti yadvat |

tadvat kAmA yam praviSanti sarve

sa SAntim Apnoti na kAmakAmI ||

Meaning:

The one, in whom all the desires (objects of desire) enter as the waters enter into the sea which remains full and undisturbed by them, he alone acquires peace and not one who longs for the fulfillment of desires.

Comments:

When the waters, **Apa:**, of the rivers enter, **praviSanti**, into the sea they do not create any change either in the content or in the form of the sea which remains always full, **ApUryamANam**, and undisturbed, **acalapratishTham**. Similarly, **kAmA:**, the objects of desire, the sense objects, enter into the mind of a sthitapraj~na, meaning that, the sight, smell etc do exist in him and his senses do contact the sense objects but he is unperturbed and unchanged like the ocean by the waters entering into it. He remains calm, **sa SAntim Apnoti**, while enjoying the sense experiences without being affected by them. In him all





enjoyments merge themselves like the rivers entering the ocean. But the man who is agitated by desires never gets peace.

In this sloka the word **kAmA:** is not used in the meaning of desire but means the objects of desire. **kAmyate iti kAmA:**, that which is desired.

Sankara says in Bajagovindam about such a sthitaprajana:

योगरतो वा भोगरतो वा

सङ्गरतो वा सङ्गविहीनः ।

यस्य ब्रह्मणि रमते चित्तं

नन्दति नन्दति नन्दत्येव ॥

yogarato vA bhogarato vA

sangarato vA sangavihiNa: |

yasya brahmaNi ramate cittam

nandati nandati nandatyeva ||

Whether he is seen practicing yoga or seemingly indulgent in bhoga his inner bliss remains unalloyed. He is always happy because his mind revels ever in Brahman. On the other hand it is only the man who has not controlled his mind gets agitated by the desires.

This and the next slokAs answer the question of Arjuna, **sthitadhI: kim vrajeta**, how does a sthitapraj~na behave.





SLOKAM 71

विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निस्स्पृहः ।

निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥

vihAya kAmAn ya: sarvAn pumAn carati nissprha: |

nirmamo nirahankAra: sa SAntim adhigacchati ||

Meaning:

The one who moves about giving up all desires, without ego and sense of possessions attains peace.

Comments:

The description of a sthitapraj~na comes to a close with a portrait of the man of wisdom, one whose senses are completely restrained from their objects and who, having given up all desires moves freely without attachment, ego and possessiveness. This reflects the sloka at the outset of the description of sthitapraj~na, 'prajahAti yadA kAmAn', which has given the reason for his peace mentioned here. He is Atmani eva AtmanA tushTha:, reveling in the bliss of the self.

nissprha: - with out desire of any sort. This is achieved by being nirmama: - giving up the sense of possession, the concept of 'mine'. Only the feeling of my body, my wife, my house etc. creates desire for the sense objects. This arises because of ego, the concept of 'I' - ahankAra, arising from the identification with body, mind and intellect, which is the root cause of all evil. The sthitapraj~na is nirahankAra:, with out ego. Hence he gets peace, Saantim adhigacchati, says the Lord.





SLOKAM 72

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।

स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥

eshA brAhmI sthiti: pArtha na enAm prApya vimuhyati |

sthitvA asyAm antakAle api brahma nirvANam rcchati ||

Meaning:

This is the state of Brahman consciousness on attaining which one does not lapse back into delusion. Staying in this till the end of his life he attains Brahman.

Comments:

The delusion comes only from the identification of oneself with body, mind and intellect. When the real nature of the self is known, there is no more delusion as in the case of Arjuna. The man of real wisdom, sthitapraj~na, moves about in the world as described in the previous sloka until he leaves his body and staying in this brAhmI state till the end he then attains mukti. Staying in this state till the end of his life is possible only when the detachment from desires and freedom from ego is hundred percent because if the aspirant slips he is carried away by the senses as mentioned earlier. But when his intellect is established firmly in the Supreme Being, there is no more lapses.

Ramanuja explains the word anta kale api as, even if one attains this state at the end of his life. This meaning is in keeping with the words of KrshNa later 'kshipram bhavati dharmAtmA sasvat SAntim nigacchati'.

THUS ENDS THE SECOND CHAPTER OF SRI BHAGAVAD GITA ON
SANKHYAYOGA





CHAPTER 3

KARMA YOGA - YOGA OF ACTION

SLOKAM 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।

तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥

arjuna uvAca

jyAyasI cet karmaNaste matA buddhi: janArdana |

tat kim karmaNi ghore mAm niyojayasi keSava ||

Meaning:

Arjuna said

Oh KrshNa, if you deem that knowledge, **buddhi:** is superior, **jyAyasI**, to action, **karmaNa:**, why do you insist, **niyojayasi**, on my doing this terrible deed, **ghore karmaNi?**





"Please guide me to the proper path, O kRshNA!"



SLOKAM 2

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।

तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥

vyAmiSreNeva vAkyena buddhim mohayasi iva me |

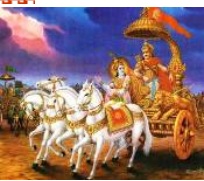
tat ekam vada niScitya yena Sreyo aham avApnuYAm ||

Meaning:

You seem to confuse me with contradicting statements. Tell me for certain which will fetch me the highest good.

Comments:

KrshNa told Arjuna to fight and do his duty without attachment, which itself is baffling to Arjuna in his present state of mind, and in the same breath, KrshNa explains the path of renunciation by describing the state of the sthitapraj~na. Arjuna now raises a legitimate doubt about the real intention of KrshNa and says "vyAmiSreNeva vAkyena buddhim mohayasi iva me" meaning, "I don't think that this is your intention but it looks as though you want to confuse me, by extolling about the path of knowledge after insisting the importance of doing my duty". He asks KrshNa that if the path of j~nAna is superior, why KrshNa should goad him to fight, which is dreadful, tat kim karmaNi ghore mAm niyojayasi KeSava. Then Arjuna asks KrshNa not to beat around the bush and tell him, ekam vada niScitya, which is good for him, sankhya the path of knowledge or yoga the path of action.





SLOKAM 3

श्री भगवानुवाच

लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ ।

ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानं कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥

SrI bhagavAn uvAca

loke asmin dvividhA nishThA purA proktA mayA anagha |

j~nAnayogena sAnkhyAnAm karmayogena yoginAm ||

Meaning:

The Lord said -

In this world there are two ways of reaching the ultimate good that have been taught by Me, Arjuna, one is yoga of knowledge for the contemplative and other is karma yoga for those who are bent on action.

Comments:

Like an eminent physician, KrshNa has given Arjuna a shot in the arm to bring down the fever of despondency by describing to him the state of realization in which one attains peace. This has brought him out of his delusion about dharma 'dharma sammUDhacetA:', but he is now confused as to what is good for him, the path of knowledge or that of action. Anyway, confusion is better than delusion! Now the doctor is ready to treat the patient by milder doses of medicine and KrshNa gave Arjuna a glimpse of the ideal to be attained in order to take his mind away from his dilemma, namely, **katham bhIshmam aham sankhye droNam ca ishubhi: pratiyotsyAmi**, "How can I fight BhIshma and DroNa". Now Arjuna is ready to take normal advice as he is out of his delirium.





There are two courses of spiritual discipline says KrshNa -

- The path of knowledge and
- The path of action

This is not left to the choice of the individual. One cannot decide that from tomorrow onwards he will give up all actions and follow the path of renunciation unless he is capable of doing so. Here it should be noted that KrshNa has not repudiated the superiority of knowledge to action but what He means is that the two are to be practiced by different agents.

sAnkhyA means buddhi; intellect and those who follow the path of intellect for attainment of self realization are called sAnkhyA-s in this context. For this they should have achieved cittaSuddhi, purification of mind by following the disciplines of self control which has been described in the previous chapter about the sthitapraj~na, with a mind free from desires and attachments. Even to reach that, it is said that the mind should be focused on the Divine 'tAni sarvANi samyamyA yukta AsIta matpara:' (Ch.2-61). This has been explained in the commentary on the sloka 58 of the last chapter.

Those who are not fit to follow this path of knowledge are qualified for karma yoga, acting without attachment to the result and doing everything as an offering to the Lord. Thus the two ways are for different adhikAris and there is no contradiction.

Who is an adhikAri? It is explained by Ramanuja thus:

The adhikAri is one who has arthitvam, wish for a particular method of action and also has sAmarthyam, capacity to do it. The one who worships the Supreme without attachment of the fruits of karma gets his mind purified and he then becomes qualified for j~nAna yoga. Thus both are complementary and not contradictory. So to the unenlightened, karma mArga is the best and KrshNa is going to elaborate on it in this chapter.





SLOKAM 4

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।

न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥

na karmaNAm anArambhAt naishkarmyam purusha: aSnute |

na ca sannyasanAt eva siddhim samadhigacchati ||

Meaning:

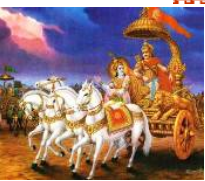
Mere non-performance of action does not result in freedom from action nor does the renunciation of action bring attainment of perfection.

Comments:

Unless one is ready for renunciation, it is not possible to give up action. If KrshNa has confirmed that the path of knowledge is superior, Arjuna would have been delighted because it is exactly what he wanted. The path of karma which involved fighting is what he detested. KrshNa is not going to help him to take an easy way out and tells him that mere abstention from work is not renunciation.

naishkarmyam - The state in which one gets freedom from works even though he goes on acting. That is, freedom from work means freedom from the bondage from karma. This is achieved by nishkAma karma, acting without attachment which is denoted by naishkarmyam.

karmaNAm anArambhAt - When it is said that one has to do karma without expecting result the usual alternative appears to be not doing the work at all. This is what is referred to as **karmaNAm anArambha**, not beginning any work, which has already been forbidden in chapter 2 by the sloka 'karmaNyeVAdikAraste', (2.47) where KrshNa said 'ma te sango astu



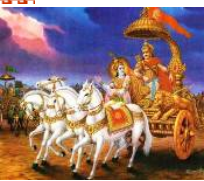


akarmaNi' , "you should not resort to inaction." The same is reiterated here.

sannyasanAt eva - by mere renunciation of work

Both the above phrases seem to mean the same thing but it is not so. The first refers to karma yoga and the second to jñāna yoga. To do karma yoga it is essential to do karma without attachment. Through nishkama karma one reaches the state of sthithprajñā gradually when the next phrase applies. That is, even a sthitaprajñā does not desist from karma but the karma does not create any bondage for him as he has attained siddhi.

The reason why one should not give up karma is explained in the next two slokAs.





SLOKA 5

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥

na hi kaScit kshaNam api jAtu tishThati akarmakrt |

kAryate hi avaSa: karma sarva: prakrtijai: guNai: ||

Meaning:

No one can even for a moment stay without doing any work. He is made to act by the guNAs that are inherent in him which is not in his control.

Comments:

It is impossible for anyone to give up work altogether because everything, like eating, walking, sleeping etc. is working only. The motivation for action is the guNAs which are the natural constituents of mind and body, and everyone acts according to the texture of the guNAs within him. So unless one reaches the state of **gunAtIta**, in other words sthitaparj~na, he cannot escape the influence of the guNAs over his actions. A **gunatIta** is not affected by the action as the sense of agency, that is, the feeling that 'I am the doer', is absent in him. This will be explained in detail later.





SLOKAM 6

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।

इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥

karmendriyANi samyamyaya ya Aste manasA smaran |

indriyArthAn vimUDhAtmA mithyAcAra: sa ucyate ||

Meaning:

One who controls his indriyAs of action but dwells on the sense objects with his mind is a hypocrite and is deluded.

Comments:

Man does not attain freedom from karma by giving it up because it is virtually impossible to remain inactive. How a man acts depends upon his propensities and if he controls his senses and refrain from action he will be mentally dwelling on the sense objects. Such a man is vimUDhAtmA and mithyAcAra, says KrshNa, he is a deluded person and a hypocrite. Therefore action is superior to inaction.

It is easier to control the indriyAs than to control the mind. If one stops his indriyAs from contacting the sense objects as for instance one desists from food on an ekAdaSI day, not as a spiritual discipline but only because it is traditional will be dwelling on the food which he could enjoy the next day and he may even tell his folks to keep the food which he could not eat that day, for him to consume the next day. This is dwelling on the sense object with the mind. That is, physically stopping the indriyAs. This is not sense control which precedes mind control as a spiritual discipline. Such a man is called a hypocrite who deludes himself and others that he has achieved self control.



SLOKAM 7

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।

कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥

ya: tu indriyANi manasA niyamyA Arabhate arjuna |

karmendriyai: karmayogam asakta: sa visishyate ||

Meaning:

Oh Arjuna, One who controls the indriyAs with his mind and starts karma yoga with his organs of action he excels all.

Comments:

Since it is not possible to stop doing action one should act, but the same actions must be transformed into karma yoga. Whatever one has been doing, according to his nature and position, as his duty, should now be done giving up attachment. This is the karma yoga and the first step towards the final freedom from bondage.

We should remember that the Gita is meant for the man of the world and not for the recluse. Arjuna wanted to abandon karma which is impossible because he was not mentally ready for it and hence KrshNa tells him how to transform the same karma into nishkAmakarma.

Control of the senses must come from within through the mind. When the indriyas are controlled it means that the indriyAs will be functioning as before but the impact of the sense objects is not there. When one sees something desirable the eye receives the sensation but it does not affect the mind. This is what is meant by controlling the indriyAs by the mind.

One who does the karma yoga with his karmendriyAas with detachment is the



karma yogi. But this includes jñānendriyAs as well as karmendriyAs cannot function without the former. jñānendriyAs, namely, eyes, ears, tongue, skin and nose receive the sensations from the sense objects and the karmendriyAs, hands, feet, organs of procreation and excretion, and the tongue (which is both because we speak as well as taste with the tongue) act accordingly.





SLOKAM 8

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।

शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥

niyatam kuru karma tvam karma jyAyo hi akarmaNa: |

SarIrayAtrApi ca te na prasiddhyet akarmaNa: ||

Meaning:

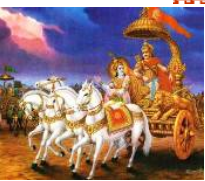
You do your obligatory duties because action is better than inaction. Even the sustenance of life and body will not be possible for one who does not act.

Comments:

KrshNa rounds up the answer to the question of Arjuna in the first sloka here. He extols karma and says that karma is unavoidable and hence it should not be abandoned. It is not what you do that matters but how you do it. Even a j~nAni has to act as explained in the previous slokAs. Hence KrshNa advises Arjuna to go on doing the work which is his svadharma according to his varNa and Asrama but do it without attachment. How to do this is explained in the subsequent slokAs.

niyatam karma is what is ordained by one's nature and station in life. For Arjuna as a kshatriya, fighting for the right cause is the svadharma, the karma natural to his disposition. Hence he could not avoid it. This was explained in the sloka 5 as kAryate hi avasa: karma sarva: prakrtijai: guNai:.

The word akarma here means merely abandoning action and not in the sense it is used in the next chapter. In Gita the words are to be understood according to the context because the terms such as yoga and brahma are used in different sense in different contexts.





SLOKAM 9

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥

yaj~nArthA: karmaNa: anyatra loko ayam karmabandhana: |

tadartham karma kaunteya muktasanga: samAcara ||

Meaning:

This world is bound by karma when not done as sacrifice. Hence Arjuna, you must do your work with this attitude giving up attachment.

Comments:

Now what is Karma yoga? One who controls his senses through his mind and does his allotted duty with detachment is a karma yogi. This is not as easy as it seems to be. KrshNa gives a clue. Do everything with the spirit of sacrifice, because, man is bound by his action except when it is performed for the sake of sacrifice. The word yaj~nA is translated as sacrifice which normally taken to mean the ritual of yAga as enjoined in the VedAs. But it is the spirit with which it is done is meant here and not the mere ritual.

The next question is what is yaj~nA and how far does it apply to the present times? This will be explained in the subsequent slokAs.

All the other works done not a yaj~nA here means those which are done to satisfy selfish desires. The yaj~nA is supposed to be done for the sake of the welfare of the world and if the yaj~nA prescribed by the scriptures is performed out of selfish desires they will also be binding and cause the cycle of births and deaths. So the word yaj~nA should not be taken in the literal sense of all vedic rituals. This will be made clear in the following slokAs.





SLOKAM 10

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।

अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥

sahayaj~nA: prajA: srshTvA purovAca prajApati: |

anena prasavishyadhvam yesha va: astu ishTakAmadhuk ||

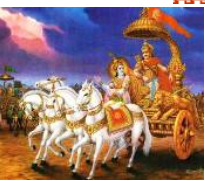
Meaning:

Creating the yaj~nAs in the beginning along with the people the creator said, "May you prosper with this which will be like kAmadhenu to you giving all you want".

Comments:

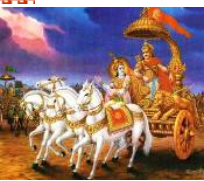
Yaj~nA was created along with man, says, KrshNa, so that man can prosper by it. Yaj~nA as elaborated in the karma kANda of the VedAs are supposed to yield the fruit for which they were performed. The same done without attachment brings about release from the bondage of karma. To understand this one has to know something about the way yaj~nAs are performed.

Yaj~nA in those days was a cooperative endeavor undertaken for the welfare of the society. It was done by the people from all the varNas, which were formed on the basis of the division of labor and not birth. BrahmaNas were so called because they were the custodians of the knowledge of the VedAs which culminates in the realization of Brahman. The word Brahman in Sanskrit denotes the Absolute Reality, veda and yaj~nA. Hence they were in charge of conducting the yaj~nA, or the priests. KshatriyAs were those who protect the people from enemies and maintain law and order. The king, a kshatriya was usually the yajamAna, the master of the ceremony, as he had the authority to organize. VaisyAs were the men of trade who supplied the commodities needed





by the society and they were in charge of providing the materials for the yaj~nA. SudrAs were the unskilled laborers doing the manual work. All contributed their share towards the success of the yaj~nA and what was left over as the result of the yaj~nA was distributed equally to all.





"yaj~nAs please Gods!"



SLOKAM 11

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।

परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥

devAn bhAvayata anena te devA bhAvayantu va: |

parasparam bhAvayanta: Sreya: param avApsyatha ||

Meaning:

By this (yaj~nA) please the devAs who will in turn please you! Thus supporting each other you will attain the highest good.

Comments:

Apart from the ritualistic sacrifice by which the term yaj~nA, is understood commonly, scripture has enjoined five yaj~nA for a householder.

brahma yaj~nA - study or listening, sravaNam, of the scriptures to get knowledge of the reality and to expound the same to others

deva yaj~nA - worship of the divine, yAga yaj~nAdi to propitiate the devAs

pitṛ yaj~nA - propitiating the pitṛs through SrAddhA, tarpaNa etc.

mAnushya yaj~nA - helping others and hospitality.

bhUta yaj~nA - service and kindness to other beings.

Hence all these which are varNAsramadharma and also svadharma which includes all these and the duties according to one's nature and station in life are denoted by the word yaj~nA. If we please the devAs they will please us - means that if we do our duty, the devAs, which are the powers that yield good results will also do their duty.





SLOKAM 12

इष्टान्भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।

तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥

ishTAn bhogAn hi va: devA dAsyante yaj~nabhAvitA: |

tai: dattAn apradAyebyo yo bunkte stena eve sa: ||

Meaning:

The devAs thus propitiated by yaj~nA will give you all you desire. He who enjoys the gift of the devAs without sharing it is a thief.

Comments:

Now, if we examine the words of KrshNa, ishTAn bhogAn hi va: devA: dAsyante yaj~nabhAvitA: posterred by sacrifice, the gods will give all the desired results, which only mean that if we do our duty towards devAs - the powers behind the natural elements - they will be kind to us and bestow their bountiful blessings. We seem to be learning this the hard way, judging by the state of affairs at present.

The purpose of life is to do all the actions that are expected of you in this world as a responsible, considerate, well meaning individual without selfish motive, as your duty, not being affected by their success or failure. KrshNa says that one who does all his work not as a yaj~nA but with the desire to enjoy the result without sharing it with others is a thief. All the blessings in life are given by God and no one has the right over them by himself. So all the work must be done without attachment to the result and with the spirit of sacrifice!

This can be achieved through j~nAna but more easily with bhakti. Do all your





actions as an offering to God thinking He is the agent and not you, and accept whatever comes as His prAsada. He promises that He will look after you 'yogakshemam vahAmayaham' and 'aham tvAm sarva pApebhya: mokshayishyAmi mA suca:', which holds good whether He is the nirguNa brahman of advaita or Lord nArAyaNa of VisishTAdvaita.

Ramanuja explains that the word prajApati or creator means only the Lord as He is the creator of all. So also He is the power behind the devAs and ordain them to do their respective duties. KrshNa says in the 9th chapter, "I am the only enjoyer and only Lord of sacrifice". The devAs form His SarIra as He is the inner self of all.





SLOKAM 13

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।

भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥

yaj~naSishTASina: santa: mucyante sarvakilbishai: |

bhunjate te tu agham pApA: ye pacanti AtmakAraNAat ||

Meaning:

The good, who partake what remains of yaj~nA is freed from all sins but the one who cooks for himself consumes sins only.

Comments:

This has reference to the five yaj~nAs specified for the householders as it is tantamount to discharging the debt to the creations and the creator. The Lord has created the world of sentient and insentient beings and provided everything for men who are supposed to live in perfect coordination. As nothing is created by man, he is indebted to the world and nature for what he enjoys through sense gratification. Hence he has to discharge his duty to the world of beings and nature which is denoted by the five yaj~nAs mentioned in the commentary of the 11th sloka. After performing these without attachment as an offering to God, the householder has to enjoy what is left over.

All worldly activities like agriculture, business and arts and crafts besides the Vedic karmAs of performing sacrifice etc. are riddled with faults. Even in the daily activities of the house, the usage of mortar, grindstone, stove, water tank, broomstick etc involve some himsa and we incur sin, not to speak of killing mosquitoes, cockroaches etc. The one who does the five yaj~nAs without selfish motive but for the welfare of all, being grateful for the gifts of nature and the divine, partakes whatever is left over as the blessing of the Lord, is

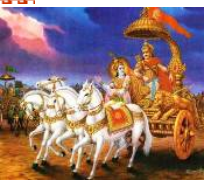




freed from all sins of this sort.

On the other hand, one who earns and accumulates money and possessions for himself and appropriates what is not due to him by right is the one mentioned here as 'ye **pacanti AtmakArANAt**', one who cooks for himself. He is called sinner who eats sin by his actions.

Why should one do these yaj~nAs? It is to preserve the wheel of creation. KṛshNa explains this in the subsequent slokAs.



SLOKAM 14

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः ।

यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥

annAt bhavanti bhUtAni parjanyaAt annasambhava: |

yaj~nAt bhavati parjanya: yaj~na: karmasamudbhava: ||

Meaning:

All beings originate from food which is produced by rain which comes from sacrifice and sacrifice is the result of activity.





SLOKAM 15

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।

तस्मात् सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥

karma brahmodbhavam viddhi brahma aksharasamudbhavam |

tasmAt sarvagatam brahma nityam yaj~ne pratishThitam ||

Meaning:

All action spring from the VedAs and VedAs have their origin in the imperishable reality, Brahman. Therefore the all pervading Brahman is ever established in yaj~nA.





SLOKAM 16

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।

अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥

evam pravartitam cakram na anuvartayati iha ya: |

aghAyu: indriyArAma: mogham pArtha sa jIvati ||

Meaning:

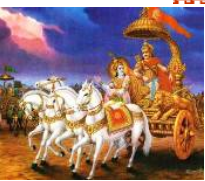
The one who does not follow the wheel of action set in motion, lives in sin, gratifying his senses and his life is in vain.

Comments:

KrshNa then sets out to describe the wheel of creation. All beings are evolved from food; production of food is dependent on rain; rain ensues from sacrifice, and sacrifice is rooted in action, which is **brahmodbhava**, has its origin in the VedAs. The fact that every action culminates in Brahman is shown by saying that all acts sprang from VedAs, and VedAs proceed from akshara, the indestructible reality, Brahman. Hence the all pervading reality, Brahman is always present in sacrifice, yaj~nA.

Ramanuja takes the word 'brahma' to mean **prkr̥ti** of which the physical body is constituted and the body is controlled by the inner self, the Lord, who is the imperishable reality. Actually the word 'brahma' has several meanings, such as vedAs, yaj~nA, etc. besides the Supreme Reality, Brahman. It also implies brahmANDa or the cosmic egg from which the whole gross Universe emerged, in other words the primordial nature of prakrti. It is in this sense Ramanuja interprets the word brahma.

annAt bhavanthi bhUtAni - The Upanishad says, **annaddhyeva khalu imAni**





bhU+Ani jAYante annena jAtAni jIvanti (taitt.Up.) All beings are produced from annam and by annam all beings live. The word annam does not mean only food like rice and grains but all that goes to make the production and sustenance of beings.

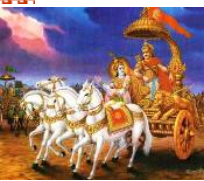
parjanyaAt annasambhava: - As water is the main factor necessary for the production of food it is said that rain, which is the main source of water is the cause of food. parjanya means rain.

yaj~nAt bhavati parjanya: - All yaj~nAs as explained above done for the welfare of the world cause the rain, apart from the ritualistic effect of the yaj~nAs ordained in the VedAs. The devAs are propitiated by yaj~nA, it is said in the earlier sloka which means that the natural elements when preserved properly by man yield their bounty, of which rain in proper time is the greatest blessing for the welfare of mankind. That is why we have the auspicious blessing, 'kAle varshatu parjanya:', uttered in the completion of all rituals. We have also the saying in Tamil, 'nallAr oruvar uLarEl avar poRuTTu ellOrkkum peyyum mazhai', if there is one good soul who does his duty as an offering to God, that is, with the spirit of yaj~nA, all will be benefited by rain.

yaj~na: karmasamudbhava: - As explained earlier the five yaj~nAs and the ritualistic sacrifice depends on performing the actions according to varNa and Asrama as ordained in the VedAs. This also explains the next line karma brahmodbhavam, the actions are based on VedAs, when the word brahma is taken to mean the VedAs, or on the prakrti as explained by Raamanuja and as mentioned earlier in this chapter, kAryate hi avasa: karma sarva: prkrtijai: guNai: (Ch.3.5)

In whichever meaning the word brahma is used, there is no doubt that it has its origin in the imperishable reality, akshara, which really implies the aksharabrahman, or the Supreme Lord.

tasmAt sarvagatam brahma nityam yaj~ne pratishThitam- VedAs originated from Brahman and yaj~nA is the product of VedAs. Hence Brahman is ever



established in yaj~nA. The Lord is yaj~nasvarUpa as He Himself says later, 'aham kratu: aham yaj~na:' (ch.9.16)

KrshNa further insists the necessity of doing one's duty and says that one who does not perform his duty with a spirit of sacrifice is aghAyu:, indriyArAma:, sinful and sensual, and his life is worthless. These words emphasizes the importance of working in harmony with the world, selfless and without attachment, which is Karma yoga, elaborated subsequently.

Last but not least, even the vedic rituals of yaj~nA like agnihotrA have their beneficial results which was seen even in our times during the Bhopal disaster when the family who was performing the agnihotrA was not affected by the poisonous gas. The smoke of the homa purifies the atmosphere, which, if continued diligently would not have destroyed the ozone layer and the environmental hazards would have been absent.





SLOKAM 17

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।

आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥

ya: tu Atmarati: eva syAt Atma trpta: ca mAnava: |

Atmani eva ca santushTa: tasya kAryam na vidyate ||

Meaning:

But to him who delights only in the self, and satisfied with the experience of the self, and who rejoices in the self there is no need for action.

Comments:

Karma yoga is to be followed by one who has not attained j~nAna. To a sthitapraj~na, however, there is no duty because he has no desire for anything as he does not depend upon anything or anyone for his happiness, being delighted in the Self alone.

Atmarati: - The enlightened one is not interested in anything else except in the experience of the Atman. All other desires have left him. This refers to the past desires.

Atmatrpta: - he has attained all that he wanted and hence he is perfectly contented not desiring anything else. This pertains to future desires.

Atmani eva santushTa: - he is perfectly happy and rejoices in his experience of the self so that no other sensual attractions have any influence over him. This has reference to the present.

Hence the sthitapraj~na has no desires fulfilled or to be fulfilled except the enjoyment of the self. Therefore he has nothing to gain by action which is



denoted by *tasya kAryam na vidyate*, he has no more work to do as he has become *krtakrtya*, one who has done everything that is to be done.

So does it mean that a *jñAni* is actionless? No. Normally one acts motivated by desire or without attachment as a karma yoga in order to become free from the bondage of karma. Desire motivated activity binds one by creating more and more karma. So one starts doing the works without attachment which makes him cast off the effects of karma that has not started to yield result and also he does not accumulate fresh karma. But the karma which has already started to yield results, *prArabdakarma*, has to be exhausted by experiencing the result. Hence even an enlightened one has to exhaust his karma as long as he is in the embodiment and once he leaves this embodiment he is free from karma and is not born again but attains mukti.

Now the *jñAni* also has to act in this world as long as he is alive because as said earlier in this chapter, *SarIrayAtrApi ca te na prasiddhyet akarmaNa:*, even the sustenance of the body will not be possible without acting. But the *jñAni* does only the minimum work that is necessary for maintaining his body and soul.





SLOKAM 18

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।

न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥

na eva tasya krtena artha: na akrtena iha kaScana |

na ca asya sarvabhUteshu kaScit arthavyapASraya: ||

Meaning:

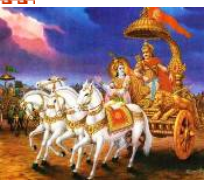
There is nothing to be gained by him (the one described above) nor by not doing any work. He does not depend on any being on earth for attaining anything.

Comments:

The idea expressed in the previous sloka is reiterated here. Since the enlightened one has everything he wants because of his contentment in reveling in the self, there is no purpose for him to do any work there is nothing necessary for him to gain from anybody or anything.

The one who has surrendered to the Lord acts in this world as the agent of the Lord and does not feel that he is doing anything. All work that he seems to be doing is done by the Lord through him.

But this state is achieved only by the one who has attained perfection through karma yoga, jñāna yoga or bhakti yoga. Till then one has to go on doing karma without attachment. This is what Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna in the following slokas.





SLOKAM 19

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।

असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥

tasmAt asakta: satatam kAryam karma samAcara |

asakta: hi Acaran karma param Apanoti pUrusha: ||

Meaning:

Therefore do what has to be done always without attachment. The man attains the supreme by doing his work with detachment.

Comments:

tasmAt - therefore- that is, there is no karma, only when one reaches the state of sthitapraj~na. Therefore till you reach that stage you have to do karma.

askata: satatam - But the karma should be done without attachment, meaning, with no desire for the fruit.

kAryam karma - one should continue the work that has to be done. This includes the activities according to varNa and Asrama and nature and situation.

samAcara - Acara means 'do'. samAcara means to do well. As it is declared in the last chapter, yoga: karmasu kausalam! To perform the work well with sincerity and involvement is part of karma yoga.

The reason for this is given as follows. Only one who does his work with detachment reaches the supreme. KrshNa gives illustration to substantiate this statement in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 20

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।

लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥

karmaNA eva hi samsiddhim Asthita: janakAdaya: |

lokasangraham eva api sampasyan kartum arhasi ||

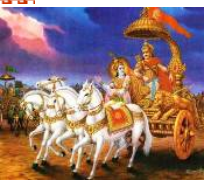
Meaning:

Janaka and others achieved the highest state of perfection through karma yoga only. You must perform action at least by having the welfare of the world in mind.

Comments:

Here KrshNa cites the example of Janaka, the father of Sita, who was an example of karma yogi. It is said that Janaka was not at all perturbed when someone told him, just to test his detachment that his palace was in flames. He seemed to have said that he owned nothing in this world as everything belongs to God. And that God's will be done. Janaka and others like him, (such as PrahlAda and Ambarisha,) says KrshNa, attained perfection without renouncing their works.

The reason they were performing their karma even though they had no purpose to be achieved for them by it, was that, they had to do so for the guidance of the world. They did their work well, though not attached to the result; to set an example to the people why should they do so is explained in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 21

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

yat yat Acarti SreshTha: tat tat eva itara: jana: |

sa: yat pramANam kurute loka: tat anuvartate ||

Meaning:

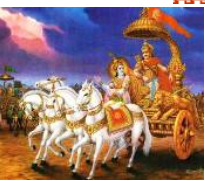
Whatever a great soul does the others do likewise. Whichever value is held up by them the world also follows him.

Comments:

The reason for which Janaka and others went on doing their duty for the welfare of the world was that the world follows the doings of the foremost man and conforms to the standards set by him.

It is human nature to look up to the one who is supposed to be an ideal, in any walk of life, more so, in spirituality. People tend to follow such ideal personalities in thought and deed. If the evolved persons like Janaka and others cease to do any karma, people will think that that is the right path and will follow them without the necessary mental attitude to do so. Hence it will result in chaos giving rise to pseudo sannyAsins, as we are very well aware of, at present!

We have an example of such a mahA purusha even in our times. RamakrshNa, Vivekananda, Ramana and Kanchi ParamacArya of recent times were all doing the worship and other ritualistic acts for the welfare of the society and to set an example to others, even though they needed no such auxiliaries to their spiritual attainment.





SLOKAM 22

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।

नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥

na me pArtha asti kartavyam trishu lokeshu kincana |

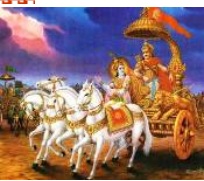
nAnavAptam avAptavyam varta eva ca karmaNi ||

Meaning:

There is nothing I must do in all the three worlds. There is nothing to be attained by Me which has not already been attained. Still I go on working.

Comments:

For an ordinary human being there are duties in this world only. But the Lord is the controller of all the three worlds. In spite of that He does not have any karma in any of these worlds because He is **satyakAma**, **satyasankalpa** and **avAptasamastakAma**. There is nothing to be gained by Him by action but still He goes on doing His work of creation, sustenance and annihilation.





"The Lord of the universe!" - Kanchi SrI Varadar



SLOKAM 23

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

yadi hi aham na varteyam jAtu karmaNi atandrita: |

mama vartmAnuvartante manushyA: pArtha sarvaSa: ||

Meaning:

If I do not act incessantly the people will follow me in all ways.

Comments

As the Lord of the universe, He had to guide and lead beings even by retribution so that they will eventually come to realize their real nature and be freed from ignorance and delusion. By saying that if He does not act the world will follow suit, KrshNa means that the mortals will not be guided towards the right path and will destroy themselves pursuing the sensual pleasure with no restraint. No one will be interested in doing anything but desire only the result without working for it. This is explained more fully in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 24

उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्या कर्म चेदहम् ।

सङ्करस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥

utsIdheyu: ime lokA: na kuryAm karma cet aham |

sankarasya ca kartA syAm upahanyAm imA: prajA: ||

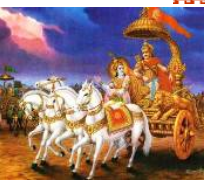
Meaning:

If I cease to act these worlds will perish and there will be chaos all around.

Comments:

It should be remembered that throughout the discourse of Gita, KrshNa was not talking as the son of Devaki but only as the Supreme Self. In the same vein He is saying "There is nothing for me to do in all the three worlds but still I am incessantly working though there is nothing to be obtained by me by doing so". KrshNa gives two reasons for doing so. First as KrshNavAsudeva, He is the leader of His times and in accordance with His own saying 'yat yat Acarati SreshTha:'. He is bound to set an example to others. Secondly, speaking as the Lord Almighty, if He stops His work, namely sustaining the world that He Himself created, there will be chaos all around. Even to a nonbeliever it is an undisputable fact that the world follows a certain order and functions in a pattern which requires some Super Intelligence, call it God or by any other name, but its existence is unquestionable. So, when KrshNa says "If I cease to act these worlds will perish", He is talking as the Supreme Self.

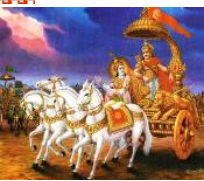
KrshNa, even as a son of Devaki, was an example of a sthitapraj~na, when we consider the exploits and behaviour, which no ordinary human being is capable of. He was portrayed in BhAgavata in exactly the same way as He Himself describes a realized soul, in Bhagavad Gita. Rama says to Kaikeyi 'rshibhi:





tulyam mAm viddhi', "Know me to be similar to a sage", to show His equanimity on being told to give up the throne and go to the forest. KrshNa lived in RamAvatAra, He later said as KrshNa. In KrshNavatAra, the Lord was described as looking after the cows, as an ordinary cowherd though He need not have taken all the trouble and by His look itself He could have accomplished all. But as He said in the previous sloka, if he did not act his part the others will also cease from work. The same principle as explained in respect of a j~nAni who goes on doing his duty even though he has nothing to gain by it, applies to the Lord also.

Later in his avatAra as KrshNa, when he was the charioteer to Arjuna, he was described to be acting the part fully, including washing the horses and relieving their itch etc.





SLOKAM 25

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।

कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥

saktA: karmaNi avidvAmso yathA kurvanti bhArata |

kuryAt vidvAn tathA asakta: cikIrshu: loka sangraham ||

Meaning:

Just as the ignorant do the actions with attachment the wise should act without attachment wishing only the welfare of the world.

Comments:

vidvAn- The normal meaning of the word is 'learned one'. But here it is not mere learning that is indicated because of the adjective **asakta:** which means one who is detached. So it means the enlightened one to whom it has been said earlier that there is no work need to be done.

avidvAmsa: - again this word meaning ignorant, refers to the one who is well versed in the sAstrAs but has attachment to the result of the actions ordained in the Vedas and do them with faith but desiring the result.

The actions of the two kinds of men described above are similar as both do them with faith and sincerity but the vidvAn does them without attachment and for the welfare of the world and the other does it and with attachment to the result of his actions.

It is partly in answer to Arjuna's question in the second chapter of the Gita, 'sthitadhI: kim prabhAsheta kim AsIta vrajeta kim', "How does a sthitapraj~nA speaks, acts and lives", Krishna now says, saktA: karmaNi avidvAmso yathA kurvanti bhArata kuryAt vidvAn tathA sakta: cikIrshu:





lokasangrahaṁ, the enlightened one would act in exactly the same way as an unenlightened but without attachment.

But should not the wise teach the unwise to be detached? The answer is no and this is explained in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 26

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।

जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥

na buddhibhedham janayet aj~nAnAm karmasanginAm |

joshayet sarva karmANi vidvAn yukta: samAcaran ||

Meaning:

The wise should not bewilder the mind of the ignorant who are attached to action. He should only guide them by doing the work himself with detachment.

Comments:

No one can be told to be detached. When the mind is filled with desire for the result of actions just by telling the person to give up desire and get detached will not fetch any result. If the person who advises is respected, the people who are ignorant may follow the advice by giving up action altogether.

There is a story told by SrI Mukkur LakshminarasimhAchAriar swami which is relevant here. A man who did not know the meaning or proper splitting up of words heard the nAmA 'padmanAbhomaraprabhu:', (the akAra in 'amaraprabhu:' being subdued in pronunciation) and thought that the Lord who is in the tree is PadmanAbha. He used to chant the nAmA and go round the tree in front of his house. One wise and pious man saw him doing that and told him that the word actually means padmanAbho amaraprabhu:, PadmanAbha, the Lord of the devAs. Then the poor man did not know how and where to worship PadmanAbha who is the lord of the devAs and left his worship of the tree and became depressed. Then the Lord appeared in the dream of the wise devotee and asked him "Why did you confuse the man? Am I not in the tree as well?" This story has different versions in different regions. But the moral of the story is that those

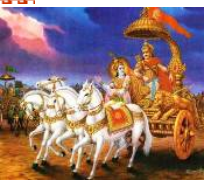




who do anything with faith even out of ignorance should not be disturbed till the ignorance is removed.

Here in the context, those who follow the varNAsramadharma and the vedic rituals even if with the desire for the fruit, should not be disturbed as it will only confuse them because they do not have the wisdom to see that the fruits of the desire motivated actions are transitory. It is better for them to continue to act in the same manner as it will eventually lead them to the truth than by giving up action by which they will be destroyed. This point is more clearly brought out in a later chapter where KrshNa describes the four kinds of devotees.

Then how should the wise guide the ignorant? Only by doing the same actions without attachment and by seeing them the others will follow them eventually.



SLOKAM 27

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।

अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥

prakrte: kriyamANAni guNai: karmANi sarvaSa: |

ahamkAra vimUDhAtmA kartA aham iti manyate ||

Meaning:

All actions are due to the guNas of prakrti in all respects. One deluded by ego thinks that he is the doer.

Comments:

In this sloka, Kṛṣṇa explains why the ignorant act with attachment. The activities of the world are due to the three guNas, sattva, rajas and tamas of which the prakrti, the evolving of the whole world of objects and beings is constituted. The evolutes of prakrti consist of the indriyAs, the elements and the mind. This includes the body which is the product of the five elements. Detailed explanation of prakrti and its evolutes will be given in chapter 7.

The three guNas sattva, rajas and tamas are in all beings in different proportions and also in the sense objects and sense organs. So when an action takes place it is the interaction of the guNas within and guNas outside. Depending on the guNas, the attachment arises with different objects. But those who are ignorant identify themselves with the guNas and consider themselves as the doer which includes enjoyer as well. This is the meaning of the sloka and it is elaborated further in a subsequent sloka.

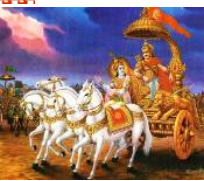
Now, when the term ignorant, aj~nA is defined as the one who does the activities according to his varNa and Asrama and other ritualistic works



ordained by the VedAs, but with attachment to the results therein, there arises a question whether a man who is not aware of the VedAs and SAstrAs and the works ordained therein, that is, a layman with no knowledge whatsoever, but acts with faith being told what to do by others or worships the Lord like the one in the example who worshipped the Lord in a tree, quoted in the previous sloka, is of no consequence.

The latter is included in the term aj~nA, but the purpose of mentioning the one who acts according to the injunction of the VedAs as aj~nA, is to emphasis that even such a one should not be disturbed but should be left to his own devices and the wise should guide only by their actions and not by words. This is known as daNDa apUpa nyAya, the maxim of the stick and cakes. When a cake is tied to a stick and it is said that the stick was pulled and bitten by the rat it goes without saying that the cake was also eaten by the rat.

Another point to be noted here is that if a person with no knowledge has faith and devotion to the Lord he need not do any karma laid down by the sAstrAs but his pure devotion is enough. As such he could not be classified at all with aj~na unless his devotion itself is desire motivated in which case it ceases to be devotion. Whatever he does with pure devotion becomes an offering to the Lord and he is already on the road to salvation. This is why all the saints and AcAryAs stressed that mere faith and devotion is enough as PurandaradAsa puts it, japavondariyenu tapavondariyenu upavAsanariyenendalaiya bhedA apAtramahima SrI purandaraviTTalana upAyadidaLi nene manave, you need not torment yourself with japa, tapa etc which you do not know but ViTTala is the only means of attaining salvation in kaliyuga where His nAmA is enough. kaliyugataLLi hari nAmava nenadare, His name will uplift you.



SLOKAM 28

तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।

गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥

tattvavit tu mahAbAho guNakarmavibhAgayo: |

guNA: guNeshu vartanta iti matvA na sajjate ||

Meaning:

But the enlightened one, who knows to distinguish the guNas and their works, is not attached, with the view that the guNas are operating on their respective counterparts.

Comments:

What is meant by distinguishing guNas and their works? The three guNas exist in every one in different proportions. Their actions will also be according to the three guNas. The wise view the guNas as being separate from them because they do not identify themselves with their body, mind and intellect and do not think "I am the doer", as the ignorant do. The j~nAni understands when he is doing anything it is the guNas in him interacting with the guNas outside and hence he is not affected and remains detached.





SLOKAM 29

प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।

तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान्कृत्स्नविन्न विचालयेत् ॥

prakrte: guAa sammUDhA: sajjante guNakarmasu |

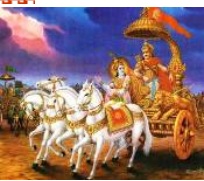
†An akrstnavida: mandAn krtsnavit na vicAlayet ||

Meaning:

Those who are deluded by the guNas get attached to them and their works.
Those who know everything should not disturb those who do not know at all.

Comments:

KrshNa reiterates what is said in sloka 26. Ignorance of the real nature of prakrti and its evolutes makes one feel that he is the doer and so he gets attached to the works. The wise as explained earlier should not disturb them because until they have the knowledge about prakrti and its guNas it is not possible to enlighten them and will result only in creating confusion in their minds.





"Offer All your actions unto Me!" - SrI Bhumi devi sameta SrI Oppiliappan PerumAL



SLOKAM 30

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥

mayi sarvANi karmANi sannasya adhyAtmacetasA |

nirASI: nirmamo bhUtvA yudhyasva vigatajvara: ||

Meaning:

By offering all actions to Me with the mind engrossed in the self, fight on without anxiety, without expectation and ego-centric impulses.

Comments:

KrshNa here starts to reply to the plea of Arjuna in the second sloka 'yena Sreyo niScitya brUhi', asking KrshNa to tell him what was good for him. In sloka 28, KrshNa said that the wise are not affected by knowing, guNA: guNeshu vartanta, that the guNas inside are interacting with guNas outside.

What is meant by 'guNA guNeshu vartanta?' When one gets anger he thinks "I am angry" and does not say that his anger is the interplay of rajas and tamas in him towards those outside. When one learns to stand apart and views his actions as an outsider he will be aware of the guNas, the constituents of his body and mind, moving among those of the sense objects outside, producing the various emotions, with which he identifies himself.

How to cultivate the attitude 'guNA guNeshu vartanta?'

KrshNa shows the way to do this.

"Dedicate all your actions to Me," He says "with your mind fixed on Me, the self of all, thus freed from desire and ego, act on in the world."



The word **yudhyasava** though meaning 'fight on', implies all actions.

By **mayi sarvaNI karmANI sannyasya**, Kṛṣṇa means that one should give up the sense of agency and desire for fruit but should do everything as an offering to God. When a servant does the work of his master he does it well to the best of his ability but is not anxious about the result and does not think that he is the doer but only executes the order of his master. What he gets out of it is the will of the master.

adhyAtmacetasA - with mind engrossed in the self, meaning, in the self of all, the inner self of the individual self, that is the Lord.

nirASI: - without expectation of the result, that is, giving up the desire for the result.

nirmama:- without egoistic impulses. When one sheds the sense of agency there is no more ego.

vigatajvara: - without anxiety for the result.

This can be illustrated by an example cited by Śrī Rāmākṛṣṇa.

A servant maid takes care of her ward in the best manner possible with involvement but she is not anxious and simply does it as her duty and once she goes back to her house she no more worries about it. Also while she was doing her work her mind is always with her child she had left behind. Like this one's mind should always be engaged in the thought of the Lord.





SLOKAM 31

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।

श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥

ye me matam idam nityam anutishThanti mAnavA: |

SraddhAvanta: anasUyanta: mucyante te api karmabhi: ||

Meaning:

Those who follow this teaching of Mine, always with full faith and without cavil, even they get freed from action.

Comments:

KrshNa gives three qualifications to attain freedom from action and bondage. It is to be noted that freedom from action is not inaction which is confirmed in the sloka 33. First, one should follow the teaching about karma yoga by KrshNa and act upon it, secondly he should have absolute faith that this is the right path and thirdly he should not cavil at it.

me matam - the word **matam** is normally understood as religion or sect of religion but it literally means the view or thought. The word is derived from the root '**man**' to think. Here it means merely "what has been said by Me"

ye nityam anutishThanti- those who follow this always.

mAnavA: - refers to men in general without distinction of varNa Asrama etc.

SraddhAvanta: - who have faith. We see that even in worldly affairs as when one wants to find his way to a destination, one must have faith in following the directions given or he gets lost. It is much more so if one aspires for spiritual progress.



anasUyanta: - who do not cavil that is, find fault or pick holes in the theory. This type of person was referred to in the second chapter as 'veda vAdaratA:, nAnyat asti iti vAdina:. These people argue that their view alone is right and will not accept anything else.

When one has Sraddha naturally he would not cavil. The atheists and materialists for instance, put forth arguments very convincingly to refute the views of the upanishats, the essence of which is the Gita. These people existed even from ancient times and were called cArvakAs, or cAruvakAs, because their speech is caru, beautiful to the worldly as it justifies the sensual indulgence. Their maxim is

'yAvajjIvet sukham jIvet rNam krtvA ghrtam pibet;

bhasmi bhUtasya dehasya punarAgamanam kuta:'

This means, one should enjoy all the pleasures as long as he lives even if it requires to get into debt in order to eat ghee (denotes luxurious life) because once this body is consumed in flames where is the return?

te api mucyante sarva karmabhi:- even they are freed from karma. Here the word 'te api, even they,' means those who are not j~nAnis but have faith in the Lord and His teachings and follow His instructions on karma yoga. Freedom from works means that they will not be affected by the actions because in due course they will cultivate detachment and give up the sense of agency. This has been explained in sloka 17 as 'tasya kAryam na vidyate'. Ramanuja classifies the persons who will be freed from karma into three categories.

ayam eva SAstrArtha: iti etat me matam niScitya tatha anutishThanti

Those who believe that what has been said by KrshNa in the Gita is the essence of Saastra, (upanishad) as the means of liberation and follow the teaching.

ananutishThanta: api asmin SAstrArthe SraddadhAna bhavanti



Even if they do not follow they have faith that this is what has been said in the SaastrAs. Such persons will soon take up the path of karma yoga because they believe in it.

aSraddadhAnA api evam SAstrArtho na sambhavati iti na abhyasUyanti

Even if they do not have faith that this is the right path to follow, may be due to their inadequacy to do so, at least they do not cavil at it saying this is not what has been said in the SaastrAs. They may sooner or later feel that this is the right path, by trial and error and follow it.

Hence all these will be freed from karma eventually as opposed to those who are faithless and cavil at the teaching of the Gita, and who are lost as described in the next sloka.



SLOKAM 32

ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् ।

सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥

ye tu etat abhyasUyanta: na anutishThanti me matam |

sarvaj~nAnavimUDhAn tAn viddhi nashTAn acetasa: ||

Meaning:

Those who cavil and do not follow my teachings, Know them to be lost, devoid of all knowledge and insensate.

Comments:

Men are of two kinds. Those who believe in the scriptural teachings and those who do not! The former may find it difficult to follow the teachings such as karma yoga but believe that it is the right path and may strive towards it. KrshNa shows sympathy on such people which is displayed in the next sloka. The latter do not believe and do not want to follow the path for salvation and indulge in sensual pleasures. Such people have lost their reasoning and are no better than animals, overpowered with rajas and tamas. KrshNa describes about them in detail in a later chapter. Thus they are lost and proceed downwards in the ladder of evolution and may not try to elevate themselves for many lives until it is time for them to see the error of their ways.





SLOKAM 33

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥

sadrSam ceshTate svasyA: prakrte: j~nAnavAn api |

prakrtim yAnti bhUtAni nigraha: kim karishyati ||

Meaning:

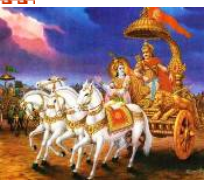
Even those who are endowed with knowledge act only according to their nature. All beings follow their natural instincts. What can a restraint do?

Comments:

This refers to the former kind of people mentioned in the last sloka. They may have the knowledge about karma yoga and also believe in it but may lack the strength to curtail their desires. KrshNa shows mercy on them and says that they cannot help acting as they do because the natural behaviour is based on the texture of the guNas and until they learn to transcend the guNas it is impossible to reach the ultimate in karma yoga.

Here the word prakrti, nature, means the attitude and behavior formed due to the impressions of past karma.

The word j~nAnavAn could also be taken to mean a man of wisdom who has no desires and is well established in yoga and to say that he also acts according to his nature, sadrSam ceshTate svasyA: prkrte:, means, even a man of wisdom though he is freed from karma, goes on acting in the world as mentioned earlier in the chapter, to exhaust his prArabdha, and the manner in which they act will be different according to their individual nature. We see that the realized masters like RamakrshNa, RamaNa etc. and also the AcaryAs like Sankara,





though they were all telling the same truth, their way of teaching and their actions in the world were different.

If everyone acts according to nature and restraint cannot be applied how can one evolve himself and what is the use of the scriptures? The way to do this is elucidated in the subsequent slokAs.





SLOKAM 34

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।

तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥

indriyasya indriyasyArthe rAgadveshau vyavasthitau |

tayo: na vaSam Agacchet tau hi asya paripanthinau ||

Meaning:

Desire and aversion is attached to each sense object through the respective sense organ. One should not come under their sway because they are his enemies.

Comments:

External restraint is of no use unless the inner equipment, consisting of mind and intellect, is trained with the discipline of discrimination and detachment, **viveka** and **vairAgya**. So, KrshNa tells Arjuna, a man should never allow **rAga** and **dvesha**, attraction and repulsion to overpower him because they are like highwaymen on the path of perfection.

The way to evolve spiritually involves the control of desires and aversion. We contact the outer world through our senses which create desire for the pleasant sense experience and aversion for the unpleasant. This desire and aversion leads one to action, either to acquire the desired object or to shun the undesired one. Thus the attachment to result through desire and aversion create further karma and one gets bound by that and goes through the cycle of birth and death.

Hence **rAga** and **dvesha**, desire and aversion are the two highwaymen who plunder the travelers on their way to spiritual progress. They lure them by the



attachment to sense objects away from their goal and finally destroy them by robbing their wealth, namely, the discrimination.

Perhaps KrshNa sensed the doubt in the mind of Arjuna that simply by not acting such as refraining from fighting he could get rid of likes and dislikes which propitiated the war and hence why should KrshNa force him to fight. So KrshNa enforces the performance of svadharma which no one can or should avoid doing, in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 35

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥

SreyAn svadharmo viguNa: paradharmAt svanushThitAt |

svadharme nidhanam Sreya: paradharmo bhayAvaha: ||

Meaning:

It is better to do one's own duty however faulty than the duty of others even if meritorious. Death is preferable in doing one's own duty, because that of others is wrought with fear.

Comments:

This is not only an oft quoted sloka but also often misinterpreted. Those who want to perpetuate the caste system quote this to suit their purpose. The meaning of the sloka, "one's own duty, though devoid of merit is preferable to that of another, though more meritorious", is often misconstrued to mean that one should stick on to the work or kind of life with which he is born and should not strive to come up in life. They quote the words **paradharmo bhayAvaha:**, another's duty is fraught with fear.

There is no other word more misunderstood in Sanskrit than the word svadharma. It really means the work suited to one's own nature, which may change as the individual changes. It is not uncommon to find that a person qualified to be an engineer, for instance, turns out to be a successful businessman because he has the inborn talents to become one or a man giving up his successful profession and choose a less lucrative one because his attitude has changed. So svadharma is what naturally comes to you and not something which others do, however tempting it may appear to be. Here in this



context, Arjuna wanted to give up his svadharma which is that of a warrior and KrshNa points out that to leave his duty as a kshatriya is dangerous as he will come to ruin as he is not fit for other life, say, that of a sanyAsi.

The varNAsrama dharma was prescribed for the people according to their aptitudes and nature as KrshNa himself says in the next chapter (4-13). Thus it is not due to birth, as we have example for this in Srimad bhAgavata (vide skandha 5, chapter 4) where it is mentioned that out of the 100 sons of Rshabha, of whom Bharata was one after whom our country came to be known as bhArata varsha, 81 of them were humble, learned and pure and became brAhmaNAs.

We also have an example in the kathAsarit sAgara of Somadeva the story about a housewife and a butcher who were more evolved than a yogi who acquired occult powers and who took advice from them to do his duty without attachment, giving up rAga and dvesha.





SLOKAM 36

अर्जुन उवाच

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

अनिच्छन्नपि वाष्ण्येय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥

arjuna uvAca

atha kena prayukto ayam pApam carati pUrusha: |

anicchan api vArshNeya balAdiva niyojita: ||

Meaning:

Arjuna Said

But impelled by what does a man commits sin against his will, KrshNa, as though compelled forcibly.

Comments:

Arjuna expresses a wish to know more about the highwaymen, rAga and dvesha so that he can avoid them. He observes that men commit sin as though impelled by some great force even though they know that it is wrong and asks KrshNa the reason for this. A sin is something which you feel guilty of doing. Everyone has an intellect which tells him what is right and what is wrong. A sinner is the one who goes and does something fully well knowing that it is wrong.





SLOKAM 37

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥

SrI bhagavAn uvAca

kAma esha krodha esha rajoguNa samudbhava: |

mahASana: mahApApma viddhi enam iha vairiNam ||

Meaning:

The Lord Said -

It is desire; it is anger, born out of rajo guNa. Know this, which is a great devourer, instigating sin, to be the enemy here.

Comments:

kAma and krodha, coupled as one, is the formidable enemy of man, says KrshNa. kAma esha krodha esha rajoguNasamudbhava:; born out of rajas. The craving for something is kAma which changes to krodha when obstructed. Hence they are not two but one, incited by which, man commits sin. The knowledge of right and wrong becomes obscured by this craving for the object of desire and hence kAma is called j~nAnina: nityavairi, the perpetual foe of man. There can arise a doubt from what the Lord has said earlier that the nature is strong and man acts accordingly and restraint will not be of any use, that it is impossible to conquer one's nature and hence there is no salvation. If the nature and the aptitude is the result of past karma man seems to be helpless. But it is not so. The karma makes one experience the result but does not propel him into sin.





The reaction of man on experiencing his karma is responsible for his future action and creates new karma. This reaction depends on the intensity of desire and aversion which could be overcome. How to do it is explained by Kṛṣṇa here. First to conquer an enemy one has to know about him. This is shown in the next sloka.



SLOKAM 38

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।

यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥

dhUmena Avriyate vahni: yathA AdarSo malena ca |

yathA ulbena Avrta: garbha: tathA tena idam Avrtam ||

Meaning;

This, **idam**, (true knowledge) is obscured by that, **tena**, (desire) as the smoke obscures the fire, **dhUmena Avriyate vahni:**, the dirt covers the mirror, **AdarSa: malena**, and the womb hides the embryo, **ulbena Avrta: garbha:**.





SLOKAM 39

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।

कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥

Avrtam j~nAnam etena j~nAnina: nityavairiNA |

kAmarUpeNa kaunteya dushpUreNa analena ca ||

Meaning:

The wisdom, j~nAna, is enveloped by this perpetual enemy of the one who aspires for knowledge, j~nAnina: nityavairiNA, called desire, kAmarUpeNa, which is an unquenchable fire, dushpUreNa analena.

Comments:

The word alam means enough. The fire is called anala because it is never quenched by adding fuel.

Wisdom becomes obscured by desire as the fire is by the smoke, mirror by dirt and the embryo by the womb the desire is insatiable like fire. This is why it is termed as a formidable and perpetual enemy of man. Desire never becomes extinguished by fulfilling it. On the other hand it only increases like fire being fed with fuel.

The three analogies given to describe the obscuration of wisdom by desire are significant. First is the fire being obscured by smoke? This denotes a nature predominant of sattva where the wisdom is slightly obscured as the fire with smoke. Once the smoke clears of its own accord the fire becomes visible. Similarly a person who is of sAtvik temperament needs only a little help from the sAstrAs or his guru to clear his ignorance which is only slight like smoke that conceals the fire. The next example of mirror covered with dust refers to



one who has more rajas and tamas due to karma accumulated in the past lives. It takes time for a mirror to become covered with dust. This can be removed only through persistent effort like cleaning a mirror with a cloth. That is, the wisdom can be acquired only through diligent spiritual discipline. The third example of the fetus being concealed in the womb is applicable to those whose nature is predominant of tamas. The ignorance is so great that it can be removed only in course of time just as the baby is born only at the appropriate time.

j~nAnina: nityavairi- the perpetual enemy of a j~nAni. Here the word j~nAni does not mean the one who has acquired wisdom but the one who is striving for it, cultivating viveka and vairAgya. Till he becomes fully detached the desire presents a hazard as it could overpower him any time if he is not alert. So it is termed as a permanent enemy always lurking in the shadow to pounce upon in a weak moment and has to be fought against. To the ignorant on the other hand, the desire is not recognized as an enemy but appears as a friend since the fulfilling of it is pleasurable.

kAma means only the sensual pleasures which take one away from the spiritual progress. The desire for attaining the Lord and to serve Him etc. is not referred to as kAma.





SLOKAM 40

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।

एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥

indriyaaNi mano buddhi: asya adhishThAnam ucyate |

etai: vimohayati esha j~nAnam Avrtya dehinam ||

Meaning;

The indriyAs, mind and intellect are the seat of this (desire). By these it deludes the embodied self by obscuring the knowledge.



SLOKAM 41

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।

पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥

tasmAt tvam indriyANi Adau niyamy bharatarshabha |

pApmAnam prajahi hi enam j~nAnavij~nAna nAsanam ||

Meaning:

Therefore, oh bull among men, by controlling the indriyAs in the very beginning kill this sinful one, pApmAnam, which destroys both knowledge and realization.

Comments:

The first step towards fighting the enemy consists in locating him. KrshNa points out that the senses, mind and intellect are abode, adhishThAnam, of desire and hence the control of these is the only way to vanquish and destroy this foe of man who hides behind the senses, mind and intellect using them as his fortress deludes the embodied soul by obstructing j~nAna and vij~nAna, knowledge and realization.

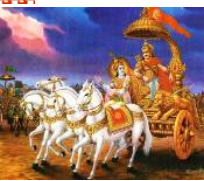
KrshNa compared the desire to a highwayman who robs the intellect of the discrimination in the earlier sloka and an enemy who overpowers the embodied soul by force. Here he describes the desire as the enemy who infiltrates into one's territory and conquers by delusion.

The individual jIva, embodied soul is like a king with a prime minister and deputy prime minister, namely, the intellect and the mind. The ten senses are the officers under them. The desire is the enemy who enters the city, the heart, disguised as a friend and first brings the officers, indriyAs, under his influence, who introduces him to the mind, the deputy prime minister, who is



fickle and easily swayed by temptation. The enemy offers bribes of sensual enjoyments. The intellect, the prime minister, though wise, lacks discrimination and yields to the temptation. Then the king is also dragged into the mire and robbed of his inherited wealth, the joy divine.

Hence KrshNa advises Arjuna to destroy this enemy by finding his hideouts, namely **indriyAs**, **manas** and **buddhi** and implies that he could do so by calling him **mahabAhu**, mighty armed. The desire will over power these only if they are not under the control of the self. Hence the indriyAs, mind and intellect should be controlled before they fall prey to desire through viveka, discrimination and vairAgya detachment. KrshNa then proceeds to show the way to control the body, mind and intellect in order to conquer desire in the next to slokAs.



SLOKAM 42

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्या=रिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥

indriyANi parANi Ahu: indriyebhya: param mana: |

manasastu parA buddhi: yo buddhe: paratastu sa: ||

Meaning:

The senses are said to be superior (to the body), the mind is superior to the senses and the intellect is superior to the mind. But the Self is superior even to the intellect.





SLOKAM 43

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥

evam buddhe: param buddhvA samstabhya AtmAnam AtmanA |

jahi Satrum mahAbAho kAmarUpam durAsadam ||

Meaning:

Thus knowing the Self to be higher than the intellect and subduing the self by the Self, destroy this enemy called desire who is unassailable, oh mighty armed.

Comments:

KrshNa then proceeds to show the way to control the body, mind and intellect in order to conquer desire. The senses are said to be greater than the body but greater than the senses is the mind. Intellect is greater than the mind but the Self is the greatest of all. Therefore the inaccessible enemy in the form of desire can only be destroyed by resorting to the support of the Atman, the Self.

This is the reflection of the Upanishad,

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परा ह्यर्था अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेरात्मा महान्परः ॥

indriyebhya: parA hi arthA: arthebhya: ca param mana: |

manasastu parA buddhi: buddhe: AtmA mahAn para: ||

-kathopanishad: 1-3-10



The Upanishad also gives the analogy that the self is the owner of the chariot called body, and the intellect is the charioteer while the mind is the rein and the senses are the horses. The sense objects are the path along which the horses proceed. If the charioteer, namely the intellect is strong with discrimination and detachment he is able to hold the mind, the reins, properly and the horses, the senses, are under his control. If the intellect is weak, the horses drag the chariot with its reins held loose, along the path of sense objects as they like. When the intellect identifies itself with the Self it develops discrimination, viveka and detachment, vairAgya.

To understand this we must examine the process by which the desire overpowers man. As explained in the analogy in sloka 41, the desire overpowers the intellect through the senses and the mind. When the intellect is armed with viveka and vairAgya it can control the mind and intellect and the desire becomes powerless.

Does KrshNa advise that one should wish for nothing in life and live like a vegetable? No! It is absolutely alright to have a wish for something or enjoy anything with which the senses come into contact. But, as already explained in the previous chapter, only when the mind dwells upon the object it becomes desire. So mind is more powerful than the senses. But even then the intellect has got the power to turn one away from the object of desire. To do this the intellect should identify itself with the self and not with the mind. This is what KrshNa means by saying, **samstabhya Atmanam Atmana**, controlling the intellect by the power of the Self, **AtmaSakti**. How to acquire this is explained by KrshNa in the subsequent chapters of the Gita.

THUS ENDS THE THIRD CHAPTER OF SRI BHAGAVAD GITA ON

KARMA YOGA



CHAPTER 4

J'NANA KARMA SANYASA YOGA - THE TRUTH ABOUT ACTION

SLOKAM 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।

विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥

SrI bhagavAn uvAca

imam vivasvate yogam proktavAn aham avyayam |

vivasvAn manave prAha manu: ikshvAkave abravIt ||

Meaning:

The Lord said

I taught this yoga to the Sun and he told it to Manu who told it to ikshvAku.



SLOKAM 2

एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।

स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥

evam paramparAprAptam imam rAjarshayo vidu: |

sa kAlena iha mahatA yoga: nashTa: parantapa ||

Meaning:

Thus the royal sages knew this yoga obtained through tradition, but it became extinct in course of time, Arjuna.





SLOKAM 3

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।

भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥

sa eva ayam mayA te adya yoga: prokta: purAtana: |

bhakta: asi me sakhA ca iti rahasyam hi etat uttamam ||

Meaning:

The same is the yoga, which is a great secret, is taught by Me to you now because you are My devotee and friend.

Comments:

The discipline of knowledge along with renunciation of result through yoga of action has been explained so far in the previous chapters. Now KrshNa sets out the authenticity of Karma yoga by tracing it back to the Sun. He says 'imam vivasvate yogam proktavAn aham avyayam'. "I taught this immortal yoga to the Sun". KrshNa further says that this yoga was known to the rAjarshis, who were the descendents of the Sun and it became extinct in course of time. The yoga is ancient and a supreme secret and KrshNa tells Arjuna that He will impart the knowledge to Arjuna as he is a devotee and a friend.

The Lord says that He taught this karma yoga to the Sun. This means, there could not be a better example of a karma yogi than the Sun. He shines to all and stands as a witness to everything that happens, good or bad and is not affected by anything. He goes on doing his duty as ordained by the Lord. This quality is imparted to the Sun by the Lord only and that is why He says 'aham vivasvate proktavAn imam yogam', I told this to the Sun.

As all beings came from Manu it is said that the Sun taught this to Manu, who





"karmayogi!"



did his karma without attachment, following the command of the Lord. IkshvAku is the descendant of the Sun and hence as the kings of the solar race were reputed to be karma yogins it is mentioned that it was paramparApraptam, handed down by tradition.

What KrshNa meant by saying that this yoga became lost in course of time is that, there was a general decline in dharma by the time the MahA bhArata war started. Hence it was rare to find karma yogis among the royal sages like IkshvAku and Janaka. BhIshma might have been the sole exemption.

The yoga is referred to as the supreme secret because it is the way to the supreme and could not be understood or followed easily without the proper guidance from a guru.

KrshNa says to Arjuna that he was instructing this yoga to him because Arjuna was his devotee and friend. To receive a upadesa one must have faith and should be close to the guru. Arjuna being the faithful follower of KrshNa and had great love for him KrshNa thought that he was the fitting recipient to the secret means of salvation.



SLOKAM 4

अर्जुन उवाच

अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।

कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥

Arjuna uvAca

aparam bhavato janma param janma vivasvata: |

katham etat vijAnIyAm tvam Adau proktavAn iti ||

Meaning:

Arjuna said,

Your birth is later and that of the Sun was earlier. Then how can I understand Your saying that You taught this yoga to the Sun.

Comments:

Now, Arjuna, who has been hitherto considering KrshNa as the son of Devaki, though with great reverence and adoration, comes out with a legitimate doubt. He expresses his disbelief that KrshNa had expounded the yoga to the Sun as the birth of KrshNa was much later than the Sun, who was of ancient origin.

But Arjuna was not totally unaware of the divinity of KrshNa. He has seen that during the rAjasUyayAga and during their exploits together before the war and also from BhIshma and others. But he simply wanted to know the real truth about the incarnation of the Lord as KrshNa, not for his own sake but for the others who may not understand it. Even though he knew who KrshNa was, he wanted it to be reiterated by KrshNa Himself.



SLOKAM 5

श्रीभगवानुवाच

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।

तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ॥

SrI bhagavAn uvAca

bahUni me vyatItAni janmAni tava ca arjuna |

tAni aham veda sarvANi na tvam vettha parantapa ||

Meaning;

The Lord said -

Many lives have passed of Me and you, Arjuna, and I know them while you do not.

Comments:

Now for the first time KrshNa reveals His true identity as the Self of all, though it was hinted at in the third chapter of the Gita 'mayi sarvANi karmAni sannyasya'. The Supreme Self is the sarvaj~na, omniscient, not being contaminated by karma and it is only the individual transmigratory self, jIva, who has limited knowledge due to karma. The pure self has no karma as KrshNa asserts in the third chapter 'na me partha asti kartavyam'. As if sensing the question in the mind of Arjuna that if KrshNa is none other than the Supreme Self why should He be born at all?

KrshNa was explaining in the second chapter that though the bodies change the self changes not. This is what is meant here by saying "you have had many lives and so have I." The embodied soul, jIva, goes on entering the cycle of birth and



death but there is no birth for the real self. And for the Lord who is the inner self of all there is no birth at all. Then what did KrshNa mean by saying that He also had many births and why?

This is explained in the next three slokAs.



"The Supreme Self!"



SLOKAM 6

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।

प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥

ajo api san avyayaAtmA bhUtAnAm ISvaro api san |

prakrtim svAm adhishThAya sambhavAmi AtmamAyayA ||

Meaning:

Though I am birthless, and immutable self, though I am the Lord of all beings, I am born by my own mAyA assuming my own nature.

Comments:

The Upanishad says that the Brahman, the Supreme Self, willed to become many, 'tat aikshata bahu syAm prajAyeya', (chAn.Up.) and we find in the purusha sUkta the words, 'ajAyamAno bahudhA vijAyate', the unborn takes many births. Here the word birth should be understood as manifesting and not being born in the usual sense.

Swamy Desika describing the birth of KrshNa, says that Devaki, the eastern direction produced the Lord, the moon, implying that He was not born in the usual way but as He says in this sloka 'sambhavAmi AtmamAyayA', He only made Himself manifest as the moon coming out in the East.

prakrtim svAm adhishThAya means employing own nature. That is, the Lord manifests in mortal form without giving up any of His innate nature such as the mastery over all beings, imperishability and birthlessness.

Sruti tells us that even a fraction of the Supreme Being is whole and complete by itself. 'om pUrNamada: pUrNamidam pUrNAt pUrNam udacyate pUrNasya pUrnamAdAya pUrNamevAvaSishyate', which means 'That is whole; This is



whole; what has come out of the whole is also whole. When the whole is taken out of the whole, the whole still remains whole'.



"The Lord is birthless!"

It sounds mind boggling! Not really. Let us examine this. We know that the Lord is everywhere. Does it mean that He fragments himself and is present in all beings? No. He is present everywhere in His complete form only. For example it is not possible to cut the AkASa into parts because it is one whole. But the space inside the pot is seen as ghaTAKASa while the space outside is



mahAkASa. But both are the same and forms one whole. Similarly the Brahman being one whole, is present everywhere as one whole.

So when the Lord comes out as an incarnation, He appears in the form in His full glory. That is all. He puts on different costumes and comes down as incarnations like an actor and He acts according to the role He assumes. The costumes are supplied by His own mAyA, **AtmamAyayA**.

Ramanuja in his commentary says that the word **mAyA** means knowledge according to the lexicon of Yaska. It is maya to others but it is the knowledge of the Lord, who is the sarvaj~na. Just because we do not understand it we call it maya, as the magic of the magician to whom it is not magic but knowledge.

Hence what KrshNa means by '**prakrtim svAm adhishThAya sambhavAmi Atma mAyayA**', is this:

Keeping His infinitely auspicious qualities in tact, He assumes a form in His incarnations through His own mAyA. By appearing in the world in mortal form and going through the functions and experiences of the humans, the Lord puts Himself under the influence of His own mAyA by His own free will. Why should He do so? This is explained in the next two slokAs.





" I manifest Myself to restore dharma!"
Kanchi SrI varadar



SLOKAM 7

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

yadA yadA hi dharmasya glAni: bhavati bhArata |

abhyutthAnam adharmasya tadA AtmAnam srjAmyaham ||

Meaning:

Whenever there is a decline in dharma and rising of adharma I manifest Myself.





"sambhavAmi yuge yuge!"



SLOKAM 8

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

paritrANaya sAdhUnAm vinASaya ca dushkrtAm |

dharma samsthApanArthAya sambhavAmi yuge yuge ||

Meaning:

For the protection of the good and the destruction of the wicked and to establish dharma, I incarnate in every yuga.

Comments:

The purpose of incarnation is explained here. When there is dearth of dharma and abundance of adharma the Lord manifests Himself to protect the good and to punish the wicked. But this is not as simple as that. It is known the Lord took the incarnations of VarAha, the Boar and nrsimha, the man-lion to punish the demons HiraNyAksha and HiraNyakaSipu and to protect the devotees like PrahlAda and to retrieve the earth from the ocean. How does this apply to the statement 'yadA yadA hi dharmasya glAni:', decline in dharma and 'abhyutthAnam adharmasya', uprising of adharma. For this we have to examine the meaning of the episodes of VarAha and nrsimha.

The mythology has it that the doorkeepers of VaikuNTha were cursed by the sanakAdi and they chose to have three births opposing the Lord rather than many as devotees because they wanted to return to the service of the Lord quickly. But the PurANAs and itihAsAs are not fairy tales but have deeper significance. Even to the believers in modern age it is necessary to show that our PurANAs and itihAsAs are not mere stories to be swallowed without thinking. Let us see what was the significance of these two avatArAs that



support the statement in the sloka 'yadA yadA hi'.

The word hiraNya means gold and aksha eyes. The one who has his eyes on the gold is a hiraNyAksha. The hiraNya buddhi in contrast with bhagavad buddhi denotes a materialistic outlook which envelopes the whole world eclipsing bhagavad buddhi, the spiritual outlook. The whole world becomes immersed in materialism. The mahAvarAha, the Big Boar is also vrishAkapi, dharma incarnate. BhAgavata purAaNa describes the VarAha as yaj~navarAha, the embodiment of yaj~na. This idea is also presented in chapter 3, where the Absolute Reality, Brahman, is said to be established in yaj~na, which means that the yaj~na signifies dharma. That was why the asuras destroyed the yaj~na activities to show their antagonism to the Lord. Thus MahAvarAha alone could save the world from hiraNya buddhi.

The earth was described as looking like a small ball on the tusk of the VarAha implying that for those with bhagavad buddhi the material world is tucca, of no value. The oceans were only knee deep for the VarAha, the wild boar, who was fierce looking for the wicked but gentle to devotees.

HiraNyAksha and his brother HiraNyakaSipu - kaSipu meaning food and clothing, stand for materialism. PrahlAda denotes bhagavad bhakti which is hindered by hiraNya buddhi. When the true devotee is persecuted by the materialistic world the Lord manifests as a man-lion for the protection of His bhaktA.

HiraNyakaSipu's boons signify the dvandva, the pair of opposites, the presence of which can never destroy the enemy within and without. The desire for gold, represented by HiraNyakaSipu can only be quelled by dvandvAtIta, the intellect that has transcended the pairs of opposites, sukha-duhka, joy and sorrow, lAbha-alAbha, gain and loss, jaya-ajaya, success and failure. nrsimha is described as na mrgam na mAnusham, which does not mean that He is half man and half lion but that He is indescribable, being the Supreme Reality.

When the two door keepers were born as asuras for three births, the Lord

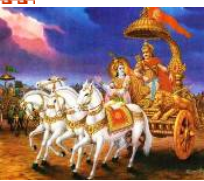


killed them both in one incarnation when they were born as RaavaNa, KumbhakarNa and as SiSupAla, dantavakra, But He needed two incarnations, namely that of VarAha and nrsimha to kill them as HiraNyAksha and HiraNyakaSipu, who personify **madha**, arrogance, and **krodha**, anger respectively. Of the six internal enemies of man, RaavaNa stands for **kAma**, desire, KumbhakarNa for **moha**, delusion and SiSupAla and dantavakra represent **mAtsarya** envy and **lobha**, avarice. This shows that it is more difficult to conquer anger and arrogance than the others.

Taken in this sense the words 'yadA yadA hi dharmasya', etc. mean that whenever there is adharma overpowering dharma the Lord manifests Himself, and His avatArAs were numerous, the ten commonly known being the most prominent ones where the manifestation is complete displaying the divinity in full.

One may doubt that when the evil is rampant at present why the Lord is not manifesting Himself. One answer given by the commentators is that the Lord is more concerned with the protection of the devotees rather than punishing of the wicked and when a devotee like PrahlAda was tormented He would appear but now there is not even one PrahlAda among us, all being HiraNyakaSipus in varied degrees! But looking at it from different angle, the incarnation is happening all the time, only we are not aware of it because we lack the devotion and faith. Whenever there is manifestation of good, may it be someone who comes to your rescue in a crisis or some pure soul saves you by right advice there you can see the manifestation of divinity.

The reason why the Lord is not appearing in a clearly manifest form is because He alone knows when the time is ripe for it. He did not come as soon as the demons started harassing the world. The karma of everyone has to be worked out and He is the **karmaphaladAtA**, one who apportions the results of karma to everyone. But the most important thing to remember is that He never ever forsakes His true devotees.



Only question that remains in this context is why the Lord should destroy the wicked?

Can He not change their nature by mere will or even without coming down as an incarnation?

The answer to the first question is that destruction is not annihilation. Only the body is destroyed as and when the karma pertaining to that particular body is exhausted. The Lord kills the asuras who are freed from evil impulses and get a better life being killed by Him. Like cutting off a decayed limb for the sake of the welfare of the body, the physical body is destroyed for the welfare of the soul.

The answer to the second question pertains not to the **dushTanigraha**, destruction of the wicked but to the anugraha, showing grace to the devotees. For instance He could have killed RaavaNa from where He was and need not have taken the trouble of going to the forest as a human being and lose his wife etc. It was to prove true the boon given by Brahma, who was also His devotee and it is an example **sishTaparipAlana** but more than that it was to bless the rishis and other devotees like Guha, Sabari and VibhIshaNa and to give joy to all by His beautiful form and qualities. Similar is the incarnation of KrshNa. The anugraha shown in these avatArAs outweigh the nigraha.





SLOKAM 9

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।

त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥

janma karma ca me divyam evam yo vetti tattvata: |

tyaktvA deham punarjanma na eti mAm eti sa: arjuna ||

Meaning:

The one who knows my divine birth and my actions as it is truly, does not get rebirth when he leaves his body but reaches Me only, Arjuna.





SLOKAM 10

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।

बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥

vItarAgabhayakrodhA manmayA mAm upASritA: |

bahavo j~nAnatapasa pUtA: madbhAvam AgatA: ||

Meaning:

Many have attained my state, purified by the austerity of knowledge, freed from desire, fear and anger, being engrossed in Me and resorting to Me.

Comments:

To understand the true nature of the Supreme Self, 'janma karma ca me divyam' is the right knowledge and one who acquires this transcends the cycle of birth and death, tyaktvA deham punarjanma neti mAMeti', and attains the mukti. This is the path of emancipation which existed from time immemorial and many have attained it by j~nAtapas, the austerity of knowledge, which consists of getting rid of desire, fear and anger, vItarAgabhayakrodhA:, through utter dependence on the Lord, perceiving Him in everything 'manmayA mAm upASritA:'. Thus they attain the status of the Lord, which signifies the state of salvation, Mukti.

Understanding the truth of the birth, which is only manifestation and actions, which are not comprehensible by all, is possible only through contemplation on the Lord and His incarnations which results in the perception of the Lord Himself. Such a yogi transcends the cycle of transmigration and reaches the ultimate.

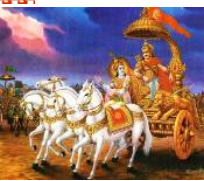
Sloka 10 outlines all the three paths to salvation, namely, karma yoga, bhakti





yoga and jñāna yoga.

vItarAgabhayakrodha, freedom from desire, fear and anger implies karma yoga, Desire for the result of action creates fear in the form of anxiety and failure to get the result provokes anger. When the same action is done as karma yoga without expectation of result, the desire, fear and anger are eradicated. **manmayA mAm upASritA**: indicates bhakti yoga. When the mind is engrossed in the Lord all other desires are automatically removed and the only desire is the union with the Lord. The devotee performs all actions as a service and as an offering to the Lord. As a result of bhakti they become purified by the knowledge of the real nature of the Lord and comprehend His manifestations and His actions fully. Thus they cross over the samsāra and attain the Lord, never to enter into embodiment again.





SLOKAM 11

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

ye yathA mAm prapadyante tAn tatha eva bajAmyaham |

mama vartmA anuvartante manushyA: pArtha sarvaSa: ||

Meaning:

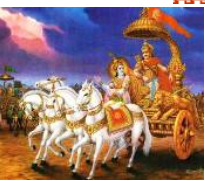
Whoever approaches me in whatever manner, I show my favour to them in the same manner. People proceed along the path only in all respects.

Comments:

In whatever form one seeks the Lord, He appears in the same form to the devotee. The criticism of Hinduism being pantheistic is proved wrong by this. There is only one God who can be called by any name or conceived in any form; provided the worshipper remembers that He is not limited to that name or form. The Lord who is everywhere, in and out of all being is naturally present also in the particular form in which one thinks of Him. So KrshNa affirms that all men follow His path only.

Not only the different forms of the Lord, Rama, KrshNa, Siva, etc. is mentioned here but also the attitude with which the people approach Him. This is further elaborated in the sloka 'caturvidhA bajante mAm', in 7th chapter (BG.7-16).

KrshNa was looked upon and loved by people in different ways. As a son by Yasoda, as a friend by uddhava, Arjuna and others, as a saviour by Draupadi, as a lover by gopis, as a husband by his wives etc. He acted and showered His grace in the same manner as they approached Him. Similarly it was in





RaamAvatAra. Even to RaavaNa, Kamsa, SiSupAla and others who considered Him as their enemy, He appeared to them in the same role and killed only their physical body and finally purifying them from their evil propensities and absorbing them into His fold.

The Brahman, the Supreme Reality is the inner self of all and the power behind all actions of all beings sentient or insentient. The electricity is everywhere but comes through each instrument in that particular form and for that particular function. When the instrument is switched off the electricity is still there but unmanifest. Similarly in some, the divinity is manifest and in others it is dormant and hidden by ignorance of different degrees.

"All follow my path only", may create a doubt whether even the evildoers follow the path of the Lord. It is like this. To go up a mountain, the path appears sometimes to go downhill but eventually it leads you to the top. Once started on the journey of life one has to go through the path chosen by the karma and sometimes it takes one away from the Lord but still it is a journey uphill only. One can reach a destination quickly by air or more slowly by other transport or one could take a circuitous route not knowing where to go. But like the mountainous path it goes one way only and finally you have to reach the top. All act only for the sake of attaining happiness, including the wicked, and the real happiness comes only on attaining the Supreme, the brahmAnanda. The embodied soul will not rest till he reaches there.





SLOKAM 12

काङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।

क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥

kAnkshanta: karmaNAm siddhim yajanta iha devatA: |

kshipram hi mAnushe loke siddhi: bhavati karmajA ||

Meaning:

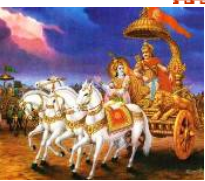
Desirous of results of action people worship minor deities. The result of actions in this world is swift.

Comments:

There are various activities prescribed in the VedAs to fulfill the worldly desires and also the desire to go to heaven, which is as transient as the rest.

For this purpose various deities are worshipped and invoked by yaj~nAs etc. All these devatAs are vested with limited power by the Lord and sanction the fruit of the action once the conditions of the ritual are followed meticulously. But they are not concerned about the outcome of the fulfillment of desires which may not be conducive to happiness as expected. But the Lord does not give what we ask for but only what is good for us. That is why the devotees who pray for something do not always get it. Here it is necessary to examine the term devatAs, minor gods.

In this world men seeking the fruition of their activities worship the minor gods, says KrshNa, Who are the minor gods referred to here? It does not mean any particular deity but imply only the limited power which men seek to fulfill their desires, and the activities undertaken for that purpose are desire motivated. It is like asking a millionaire for a few coins. But the actions that





are prescribed in the Veda for desired ends definitely bear fruit in this life itself, though transient. But the result of the desire motivated actions need not and often do not bring happiness. A man who diligently pursues a course of action in order to amass wealth is also a worshipper of a minor deity, namely, money. The action undoubtedly gives the desired result but the effect of it may turn out to be quite the reverse. Under the circumstances can a man, who is engaged in desire motivated activity, be considered as following the path of the Lord? The answer to this is given later in the seventh chapter of the Gita, in the sloka, 'udArA: sarva evaite' (Ch.7-18)





SLOKAM 13

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।

तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्वद्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ॥

cAturvarNyam mayA srshTam guNa karmavibhAgaSa: |

tasya kartAram api mAm viddhi akartAram avyayam ||

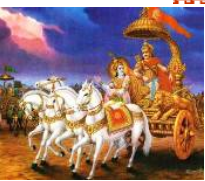
Meaning:

The four orders of society are created by Me according to the differences in their attitude and actions. Though I am the creator, know me to be a non-agent of action and immutable.

Comments:

Why should there be any difference in the activities of the people if all are following the same path? The answer is given by KrshNa that the difference is due to the propensities which differ according to the inborn qualities. "They were created by Me", says the Lord, "according to the mode of prakrti predominant in each, and apportioning corresponding duties to them", and this is the basis of classification of the four orders of society, namely, brAhmaNa, kshatriya, vaisya and sudra. So the Bhagavad Gita very clearly specifies that the caste system was man-made and does not have the authority of scriptures. cAturvarNyam mayA srshTam guNa karma vibhAgaSa:, and not by birth as already explained in the previous chapter, sloka 10.

KrshNa reiterates the same idea in the chapter 18 slokAs 41 to 44 where the different attributes of the four orders of society and their actions are elaborated which serves as the commentary on the word guNa karma vibhagaSa:.





The word 'aptitude' is very important in classifying men which is in accordance with their natural instincts and interests depending on the texture of the three guNas operating on them. This determines not only the class to which one belongs but also defines his svadharma. This aspect of svadharma is also expounded in the 18th chapter later.

The meaning of the second line seems to create ambiguity. Saying that I am the creator and yet I am not the agent of action and I am immutable sounds self contradictory. But it is not so. He is the creator in the sense that everything originates from Him. He is the **karmaphaladata** and hence He causes the birth of everyone according to their karma and in the varNa suited for exhausting their karma. But He is not the **karta** in the sense that it is not according to His whims and fancies but it is the karma of the individual that determines his birth. This idea of non-agency of the Lord is made clear by the next sloka.





SLOKAM 14

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।

इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥

na mAm karmaNi limpanti na me karmaphale sprhA |

iti mAm yo abhijAnAti karmabhi: na sa: badhyate ||

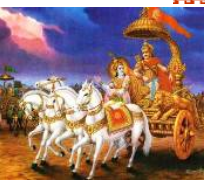
Meaning:

Actions do not affect Me nor do I have desire for the fruit of action. The one who knows Me as such is also not bound by actions.

Comments:

If the Lord is the creator, will the fruit of His action accrue to Him? No, says KrshNa.

na mAm karmANi limpanti na me karmaphale sprhA - Neither the action nor the fruit adhere to Him. This can be explained as follows: The expression 'I' actually means the Self only and taken in that sense, the agent of action is the Self because without the self the action can never take place, but the Self is only sAkshi bUta, a witness-self. And therefore the self is neither the doer nor the enjoyer. Similarly the Lord who is the inner self of all is not affected by the actions of the individual beings. The ancient seers knew this and identifying themselves with the Lord their real Self they discharged their duties with detachment and with the welfare of the world at heart.





SLOKAM 15

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।

कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥

evam j~nAtvA krtam karma pUrvai: api mumukshubhi: |

kuru karma eva tasmAt tvam pUrvai: pUrvataram krtam ||

Meaning:

Knowing this, the aspirants for mukti in the past, performed their actions. Hence you also act as the ancients did previously.

Comments:

This sloka is a sort of summary to the previous slokAs in this chapter. KrshNa cited the example of the rAjarshis like Janaka who were doing nishkAma karma and also showed that He Himself does karma for the sake of protection and sustenance of the world. Those who knew that the Lord has no agency and is not affected by the action or its result will also be freed from karma, says KrshNa. Hence he advises Arjuna to do karma yoga as those before him did.

In order to follow the path of Karma yoga the seeker must be very clear as to which actions will lead him to bondage and which will secure release from bondage. KrshNa has been insisting on the importance of doing one's duty and cited the example of the ancients in by-gone days. The reason for doing so is due to the fact that it is difficult to decide which actions are to be done and which are to be given up. This is elaborated in the next few slokAs.



SLOKAM 16

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।

तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥

kim karma kim akarma iti kavaya: api atra mohitA: |

tat te karma pravakshyAmi yat j~nAtvA mokshyase aSubhAt ||

Meaning:

Even the wise are deluded as to which is action and which is inaction. I shall tell you about that action knowing which you will be freed from evil.

Comments:

karma- action,

akarma- non-action

kavaya: - the word **kavi** is normally used in the sense of poet but here means the wise denoting one with insight and intuition.

They are also deluded, **mohitA:**, meaning that they also are under the influence of guNaS and hence fail to understand the real nature of what is karma and what is akarma.





SLOKAM 17

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।

अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥

karmaNa: hi api boddhavyam boddhavyam ca vikarmaNa: |

akarmaNa: ca boddhavyam gahanA karmaNa: gati: ||

Meaning:

The nature of action, should be understood, and also that of variegated and prohibited action. Knowledge about non-action also must be acquired. The path of action is very difficult.

Comments:

karmaNa: - (the nature) of action

boddhavyam - should be known

vikarmaNa: - (the nature) of vikarma, variegated or prohibited action

akarmaNa: - (the nature) of non-action

gahanA - difficult or unfathomable (is)

karmaNa: gati: - the path of action

Karma yoga had been explained by KrshNa in the previous chapter and here He elaborates on karma and akarma, action and inaction. In order to follow the path of Karma yoga the seeker must be very clear as to which actions will lead him to bondage and which will secure release from bondage. KrshNa has been insisting on the importance of doing one's duty and cited the example of the ancients in by-gone days. The reason for doing so is due to the fact that it is



difficult to decide which actions are to be done and which are to be given up. Even the sages are deluded in respect of the questions as to what is action and what inaction is, says KrshNa, and tells Arjuna that He will instruct him on this subject so that he can follow the path of Karma yoga without being riddled with doubt.

The average man seems to have no doubt at all in this matter because to him action is exertion of some kind and inaction is immobility. But there is not only karma and akarma, action and inaction, but also vikarma, prohibited action. What is laid out in the VedAs are karma in accordance with one's nature and position in this world. These have to be done but without attachment. At the same time one ought to know what are the actions prohibited by the VedAs and should avoid them. For example a thief may say that stealing is what comes to him naturally and demanded by his status in the society because he is not trained for any other work. This kind of activity is denoted by vikarma. On the other hand there are certain actions which need not be done and abstaining from them will be akarma.

Raamanuja however defines vikarma as **vividhatAm Apannam karma**, variegated action. Karma according to him is **moksha sAdhanabhUtam**, the action which has to be done to attain release from bondage. Vikarma is varied action, such as **nitya**, obligatory, **naimittika**, occasional and **kAmyakarma**, desire prompted. akarma on the other hand is non-action on acquiring the knowledge of the self.

nitya karma is the duty that should be done normally such as svadharma and that ordained by the VedAs like agni hotra, sandhyavandana, ArAdhana etc. **naimittika karma** is that done on special occasions like srAddha, yaj~nA, marriage, propitiating the holy men etc. The rest is desire motivated and should be given up by one aspiring for moksha.

It is variegated because different nitya naimittika karmas are prescribed for different kind of people according the rules of varNa and Asrama. For instance the food differs for people in different orders of society and also the duty



towards society and family. nitya and naimittika karma thus differs according to one's svadharma. The prohibited action also varies according to the state in life and the class of society to which one belongs. Hence to understand this clearly is very difficult. Even the sages have been known to slip from their svadharma getting confused between karma and vikarma.

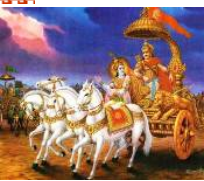
When one reaches the final state of enlightenment there is no need for him to do any karma and whatever he does becomes akarma.

To put this in a simple language, any work that brings a result that affects the doer is karma and that which does not affect the doer in any way is akarma. A man of divine wisdom, jñāni, does not think that he is doing anything because he does not identify himself with the body, mind and intellect and does not possess ahamkāra, ego. As mentioned in the last chapter he considers his actions as the interaction between the guṇas in him and those outside, guṇāneshu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate. Only the man whose intellect is clouded with ego thinks that he is the doer.

This idea can be well brought out by a story about sage Vyāsa and Kṛṣṇa.

Once Kṛṣṇa told a gopi to take food for Vyāsa, who was at the other side of river Yamuna. But she was not able to cross the river as Yamuna was in spate. Kṛṣṇa told her to pray that if Kṛṣṇa was a nitya brahmachari, ever celibate, the river should part. Probably the gopi had her own doubts but she had explicit faith in Kṛṣṇa and did as he told her and the river parted and she went to the other side and gave the food to Vyāsa. But again there was flood and she could not go back.

Then Vyāsa told her that if he was nitya upavāsi, ever fasting, the river will part. This time the girl was really perplexed because just then he ate the whole food brought by her and termed himself a nitya upavāsi. She expressed her doubt to Vyāsa and also told him what Kṛṣṇa said about Himself. Vyāsa explained that both of them being jīvanmuktas, the function of their bodies did not touch their real Self. The real 'I' which is the pure Self is neither the



doer nor the enjoyer. The same point is brought out by Sankara in Bajagovindam as

yogarato vA bhogarato vA sangarato vA sanga vihIna |

yaya brhamaNi ramate cittam nandati nandati nandati eva ||

Whether he is seen practicing yoga or seemingly indulgent in bhoga his inner bliss remains unalloyed. He is always happy because his mind is revels ever in Brahman.

The one who knows this is wise says KrshNa in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 18

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥

karmaNi akarma ya: paSyet akarmaNi ca karma ya: |

sa buddhimAn manushyeshu sa yukta: krtsnakarmakrt ||

Meaning:

The one who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, is wise, integrated and is the one who has finished all his actions (that is, he has no need of any more action).

Comments:

KrshNa starts elucidating the truth about action that has to be known. The wise men sees inaction in action, karmaNi akarma, and vice versa, akarmaNi ca karma ya: paSyet. The one who can do this is yukta, integrated and krtsnakarmakrt, has the real knowledge of action,

This appears to be a self contradicting statement on the surface but it is not so in reality. Seeing akarma in karma is with respect to the actions done without attachment giving up the desire for the fruit of such actions. This could be understood by the above story of VyAsa and KrshNa. Since the result of such actions do not affect the doer who identifies himself with his Self and not with his body, mind and intellect. Another example of seeing akarma in karma is the incident that happened in the life of JaDabharata cited in BhAgavatapurANAm.

Bharata, a king in ancient times left his kingdom in pursuit of knowledge and led an ascetic's life. But due to strange circumstances he became attached to a



deer cub and had to take another birth as a deer, in which due to the wisdom acquired in his previous janma he shed his body and was born as an enlightened sage in his next and last birth. Once he was asked to carry the palanquin of King RahugaNa, which he did without hesitation as he was totally devoid of ego. When his gait did not match that of others the king got irritated and seeing his well built body, sarcastically remarked that perhaps it was too much of a burden for him. Bharatha replied "I do not have any strain because I am not doing any work". When he said 'I' he meant his Self and not his body. So this is a case of seeing akarma in karma.

But more perplexing is the idea of seeing karma in akarma. The word inaction, akarma is usually understood as abstention from action or keeping still. But even when we are keeping quiet our mind is active. So it appears that inaction is when even the mind is silent or in a state of **samAdi**. But it is not as simple as that. The great sages who are found even today in HimalayAs doing meditation are in fact engrossed in great activity, namely bringing blessings to mankind. The classical example can be Lord RanganAtha who is reclining on His Seshasayana. As KrshNa Himself said in the previous chapter, **utsIdeyu: ime lokA: kuryAm karma cedaham**, if the Lord is really inactive the world will collapse. Also identifying the Lord with the **antarAtma**, the real Self, there can be no activity without the Self, which in reality is not the doer. This is karma in akarma.

This idea can be very simply verified in daily life.

When we are moving in a vehicle, provided the movement is very smooth and not felt as such, it looks as though we are still and the other objects outside are rushing in the opposite direction. Similarly when we look at a distant object it looks as though it is stationary whereas it may be moving and the movement is not visible due to the distance. The difference between a man of wisdom and a man of the world is similar to that between a man of scientific knowledge who knows that the earth is moving and an ignorant man who thinks that it does not.



The word **krtsnakaramkrt**, one who has completed all actions should be understood in the light of the sloka 22 of the previous chapter, '**na me partha asti kartavyam.....varta eva ca karmaNi**', where Kṛṣṇa says that there is nothing need be done by Him but still He continues to act. The same idea is reiterated in the sloka 14 of the present chapter as '**na mAm karmANi limpanti na me karmaphale sprhA**' This is made clearer in the subsequent slokAs of the chapter.





SLOKAM 19

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसङ्कल्पवर्जिताः ।

ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥

yasya sarve samArambhA: kAmasankalpavarjitA: |

j~nAnAgnidagdha karmANam tam Ahu: paNDitam budhA: ||

Meaning:

The one, all activities of whom are free from desire and wish and hence all his actions are burnt in the fire of knowledge is called a wise man by those who has acquired true knowledge.

Comments:

The knowledge of what is action and what is inaction resulting in the perception of action in inaction and vice versa, is like a fire. He, whose actions are devoid of desire, offers all his actions in this fire. Such a man alone can be called a paNDita, a man of wisdom.

samArambhA: means actions of a man of wisdom. Arambha is anything that is started meaning an action. The prefix 'sam' is added to denote that all his actions are free from desire and wish and therefore well done, yoga: karmasu kausalam, (Ch 2.50) the prefix 'sam' denotes the high quality of anything such as in sampasSyati, samSrNoti etc. meaning right perception and right hearing.

kAma and sankalpa-kAma is desire and sankalpa usually means the will to do something. I have translated it as wish because willing could not be avoided in all actions good or bad, that is whether they are conducive to spiritual progress or not. Wish on the other hand could be synonymous with the sanga mentioned in the second chapter in the sloka 'dhyAyato vishayAn pumsa: sanga: teshu

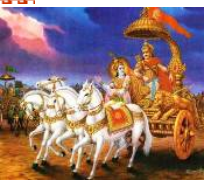




upajAyate sangAt sanjAyate kAma:'. This can be explained as follows.

When we see something tempting for instance our mind dwells on it and gets attached to the object and wish to get it is born. Then the desire for it is aroused. A typical example of this process could be seen in RamayaNa. RaavaNa having heard, only heard of not even seen, the beauty of SIIta and he constantly thought about her and the wish to have her rose in his mind. Then the desire, kAma, overpowered him which could not be controlled until he went and brought her, and finally destroyed himself illustrating the words of KrshNa in the above sloka, buddhinASaat vinaSyati. This is the case with all desire motivated activities.

But in the activities of the one who has perfect self control, both kAma and sankalpa are absent. He does all his actions as his duty appropriate for the varNa and Asrama and the situation in which he finds himself in this world. He has offered all his actions to the real self, the brahman in Him and does not identify himself with his body, mind and intellect which causes delusion and kindles desire. This is what is meant by j~nAgnidagdha karmANam, the one whose actions are burnt in the fire of knowledge. When the seed is burnt no shoots come out of it. Similarly when the desire motivated actions are burnt in the fire of knowledge, that is, when the same actions are done without selfish motive and expectation of result they do not produce more karma. Such a man alone can be said to have acquired wisdom. This idea is elaborated in the rest of the chapter.



SLOKAM 20

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।

कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥

tyaktvA karmaphalAsangam nityatrpto niraSraya: |

karmaNi abhipravrtto api na eva kincit karoti sa: ||

Meaning:

Giving up the desire for the result of action ever contented and independent, he does not do anything even if he is engaged in action.

Comments:

KrshNa elaborates on what was said in the previous sloka here by giving a picture of the wise man described therein.

He is never an agent of action, **karta**, because he has renounced the desire for the fruits of his actions. He is ever content, being dependent on nothing for his happiness and even though he may seem to work like others he is actually inactive, because of his total detachment.





SLOKAM 21

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।

शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥

nirASI: yata cittAtmA taykta sarva parigragha: |

SArIram kevalam karma kurvan na Apmoti kilbisham ||

Meaning:

Free from desire, self controlled, giving up all possessions and doing only the action physically he does not suffer from any evil effect.

Comments:

He who is free from all expectations reaps no merit, puNya, even from neither good actions nor sin as all his actions are pure. A mere act does not produce puNya or pApa but only the motive behind the act makes it sinful or otherwise. Even killing need not be a sin if it is to protect others from getting killed. At the same time even a virtue like speaking the truth may result in sin if by telling the truth someone will come to harm. Arjuna was urged to fight and it was an act of dharma. SIta did not tell the truth about HanumAn in order to protect him and it was no sin.

On the other hand we have a story of a hermit who went to hell because he told the truth.

He was sitting in his Asram when a cow fled past him to escape from its pursuers and when they asked him, he pointed out the direction the cow has taken as he had vowed to speak the truth. Thus he incurred the sin of killing a cow.

KrshNa says, nirAsI: yata cittAtma tyakta sarvaparigraha:, free from





expectations, controlling himself mentally and physically, renouncing all possessions, incurs no sin or acquires no merit, for all his actions are consumed in the fire of knowledge.





SLOKAM 22

यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वतीतो विमत्सरः ।

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥

yadrcchA lAbha santushTa: dvandvAtIta vimatsara: |

sama: siddhAvasiddhau ca krtvA api na nibadhyate ||

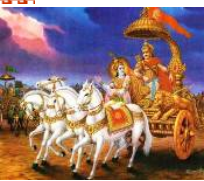
Meaning:

Contented with whatever he gets by chance, risen above the pairs of opposites, free from envy and remaining even-minded with both success and failure, he is not bound even though he is engaged in action.

Comments:

This means that his actions do not result in bondage because he is yadrcchA lAbha santushTa:, content with his lot, dvandvAtIta:, beyond dualities like gain and loss and likes and dislikes. And he is vimatsara, without envy, in short he has equanimity, sama: siddhAvasiddhau.

An ascetic who is sama: is devoid of elation and depression and takes what comes without being affected by it. He is always convinced that he is not the doer but it is his guNas which are interacting with those outside. Only other people ascribe agency to him. Thus in spite of continuing his regular activities to maintain his body and soul together he does nothing at all! All his actions get dissolved and do not produce any result that affects him.





SLOKAM 23

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।

यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥

gatasangasya muktasya j~nAnAvasthita cetasa: |

yaj~nAya Acarta: karma samagram pravilIyate ||

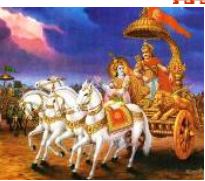
Meaning:

All the actions of one, who is without attachment and free, done in the spirit of sacrifice, are completely dissolved.

Comments:

An ascetic who is **sama:** is devoid of elation and depression and takes what comes without being affected by it. He is always convinced. That he is not the doer but it is his guNas which are interacting with those outside. Only other people ascribe agency to him. Thus in spite of continuing his regular activities to maintain his body and soul together and those necessary for his station in life, that is his varNa and Asrama, he does nothing at all. All his actions get dissolved and do not produce any result that affects him. The reason for this is given by KrshNa is that, he is **gatasangasya**, one whose attachments have vanished, **mukta:**, liberated and **j~nAnAvasthita cetasa:** one whose mind is established in knowledge. His action itself is a yaj~na.

The one who has given up attachment of his body and everything connected with it including the sensual and worldly activities is denoted as **gatasanga**. He is neither attached to the karma nor to its result, that is, a karma yogi. He is **mukta**, free because he is not affected by the karma and the result of it. This has been already brought out in sloka 20 by the word **nirASraya:**. He is said to be **nityatrpta** because his mind is ever engaged in the contemplation of the





Lord, having acquired the true knowledge. This is indicated by j~nAnAvasthita cetasa.

samagram karma prvilIyate - All his karma is dissolved. The karma which has already started to give result does not affect him because he has no attachment to his body. Since he does all karma as a duty and as an offering to the Lord with the spirit of sacrifice their results do not cause any karma in future. The karma which has not yet started to give result is also dissolved since he has the j~nAnA that prevents future birth. This is the meaning of karma samagram pravilIyate.

In the third chapter of the Gita it was said that all actions except those done with the spirit of yaj~na produce bondage. Here KrshNa elaborates on the different kinds of yaj~na to explain the meaning of yaj~na. All the actions done in accordance with varNASramadharma without selfish interest are yaj~nAs. Different types of yogis follow different means of attaining salvation which are described here as yaj~nAs in the subsequent slokAs.





SLOKAM 24

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥

brahmArpaNam brahma havi: brahmAgnau brahmaNA hutam |

brahma eva tena gantavyam brahma karma samAdhinA ||

Meaning:

Brahman is the instrument with which the offering is to put in the fire. Brahman is the oblation. It is offered by Brahman into the fire of Brahman. By the one who meditates on Brahman by his actions, Brahman alone is reached.

Comments;

Why does the action fails to produce result that affects the doer but gets dissolved? To the enlightened who have acquired the perception that **sarvam khalu idam brahma**, all this is Brahman, all their activities are done with a spirit of yaj~na. The means of a yaj~na like the ladle with which the offering is put in the fire, **brahmArpaNam**, the thing that is offered, **havi:**, the fire itself, **agni:**, the one who does the yaj~na and the yaj~na itself, everything is Brahman. The word **brahmArpaNam** is used not as a compound but as **arpaNam brahma**, the means of yaj~na is Brahman. This sacrificer who concentrates on the act that is Brahman reaches Brahman alone, **brahma eva tena gantavyam brahma karma samAdinA**. One whose intellect is established in Brahman is one having **brahmakarmasamAdi** and the goal to reach for him is Brahman. All his actions lead him to Brahman-realisation. This verse implies that the right perception of Brahman everywhere in everything is the means of emancipation. Such j~nAnA itself becomes the fire that consumes all the karma of the doer so that he experiences no more samsAra as a result of his karma.





SLOKAM 25

दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।

ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुहति ॥

daivam eva apare yaj~nam yogina: paryupAsate |

brahmAgnau apare yaj~nam yaj~nena eva upajuhvati ||

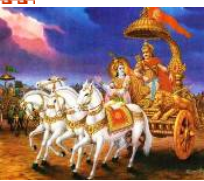
Meaning:

Some yogis offer sacrifice like worship of the Gods. Others offer sacrifice into the fire of Brahman solely by means of sacrifice.

Comments:

daivam eva apare - some yogis do the karmanushThAna like worship of the Lord in any form and other activities as laid out in the VedAs according to varNa and Asrama as yaj~na. Here the word yogi refers to the one who does all these activities with detachment and without desire, shedding the thought of 'I' and 'Mine.' The yaj~na here is deva yaj~na which includes yaga, japa and worship to deities as prescribed in the VedAs.

Of five kinds of yaj~nAs to be performed by a **grahasta**, man of the world, **brahmayaj~na**, the study of VedAs and acquiring the knowledge of Brahman, **devayaj~na**, the performance of worship like japa, homa and the other activities done to propitiate the divine, **pitryaj~na** like srAddha and others done towards the **pitrs**, manes, **manushya yaj~na** which are services of charity, hospitality and welfare of mankind and **bhUta yaj~na**, kindness and service to living beings other than humans, **deva yaj~na** has been mentioned above and **brahma yaj~na** is denoted by **brahmAgnau apare yaj~nam yaj~nena eva upajuhvati**, others offer their selves in the fire of Brahman being endowed with the awareness of their identity with Brahman.



The knowledge of their real self being nothing but Brahman as the advaita contends, or that their real Self is the Lord of whom everything including their individual self is the body or part of Him, as professed by VisishTAdvaita, gives the perception that the world is not as it appears to be but only Brahman in reality. The purpose of mentioning this kind of yogis as distinct from those described at the outset by the verse 'brahmArpaNam brahma havi:.....' is to show that while the former is an enlightened soul the latter refers to the state prior to enlightenment as the knowledge that the world is not as it appears to be leads to the awareness of Brahman everywhere.





SLOKAM 26

श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुहति ।

शब्दादीन्विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुहति ॥

SrotrAdIni indriyaNi anye samyamAgnishu juhvati |

SabdAdIn vishayAn anye indriyAgnishu juhvati ||

Meaning;

Others offer the senses ear in the fire of restraint. Some others offer the sense objects like sound etc. in the fire of senses.





SLOKAM 27

सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।

आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुहति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥

sarvANi indriya karmANi prANa karmANi ca apare |

Atma samyama yogAgnau juhvati j~nAnadIpite ||

Meaning:

Some others offer all the functions of the senses and the vital airs in the fire of the yoga of restraint kindled by knowledge.

Comments:

Here KrshNa elaborates yet another kind of discipline, namely, self control, **indriya nigraha**, which, when done as a yaj~na leads one to samAdi. When mind is integrated in Brahman it is samAdi. For that to happen the mind must turn away from the sense experience. This control of the mind from running after sense objects is described as a yaj~na of which three stages are required.

SrotrAdIni indriyAni samyamAgnishu juhvati, sacrifice the ear and other senses in the fire of restraint. Restraining the senses is described as offering them in the fire of restraint. Once the senses are restrained when they contact the sense objects it is like sacrificing the sense objects like sound, in the fire of senses,

sabdAdIn indriyANi anya indriyAgnishu juhvati. The sense objects do not create any reaction as the senses are restrained already.

The next stage is when all the activities of the senses **sarvANi indriya karmANi** and of the vital breaths **prANa karmANi** are sacrificed in the fire of **Atmasamyama**, self restraint, kindled by knowledge. **j~nAnadIpite**.





Atmasamyama is the state of samAdi when there is no activity of the senses or vital breath because the mind is integrated in Brahman consciousness. It is akin to the deep sleep state where body, mind and intellect do not exist and hence no activity can be ascribed to them, yet it is different, since it is not under the influence of ignorance as in deep sleep but it is full of awareness born out of j~nAna. This is what is implied by the word j~nAnadIpite illumined by j~nAna.



SLOKAM 28

द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।

स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥

dravyayaj~nA: tapoyaj~nA yogayaj~nA: tathA apare ||

svAdhyAyaj~nAnayaj~nA: ca yataya: samSitavratA: ||

Meaning:

Others, self controlled and firm of resolve, perform the sacrifice of material objects or austerities or yoga, while others offer their scriptural study and knowledge.

Comments:

dravyayaj~na which normally means the yaj~na as it is commonly understood, that is offering material objects in the fire chanting mantrAs, it also includes sacrifice of any material objects including money done for the purpose of charity. Spending rightfully earned money, (nyAyata: dravyANi, says Ramanuja) for worship of the Lord or for the welfare of the needy and in holy places, all this comes under dravyayaj~na. This is mostly done by householders, those who are in the grahastAsrama.

tapoyaj~na means the austerities like vratas, like ekAdaSI vrata which could be done by householders and rigorous disciplines undertaken by the ascetics, which only those in vanaprastAsrama, could perform. When any austerity is done as an offering to the Lord and not for selfish purposes it becomes a yaj~na.

yogayaj~na is differently interpreted by the AcaryAs like Ramanuja and Sankara. While Ramanuja takes it to be an aspect of karma yoga only because of the context, (iha yogaSabda: karmanishThAbhedaprakaraNA+ tadvishaya:)



namely, devoting oneself to making pilgrimages to holy places, Sankara takes it to mean ashTAngayoga. As yoga without context denotes only ashTAngayoga and also because Kṛṣṇa proceeds to talk about prANayAma etc. subsequently which is a part of ashTAnga yoga it would be relevant to examine what the term ashTAngayoga means.

It is so called because of its eight angas (limbs). They are, yama, niyama, Asana, prANayAma, pratyAhAra, dhAraNa, dhyAna and samAdhi.

yama - ahimsAsteyabrahmacaryaAparigraha yama: - This consists of ahimsa, non-violence mental and physical, satyam, truthfulness in thought, word and deed, asteya, not appropriating something that belongs to others, brahmacarya, celibacy, aparigraha, non- possession.

niyama - Sauca santosha tapasvAdhyAyesvarapranidAnAni niyamA: - Sauca, purity of body and mind, santosha, contentment and joy, tapas, spiritual disciplines like upavAsa and vrata, svAdhyAya, learning the scriptures conducive to salvation, ISvarapranidAna, worship of the Lord.

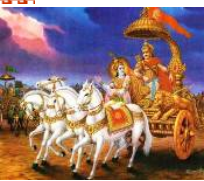
Asana - sthirasukhamAsanam - A comfortable posture, but not too comfortable to induce sleep! The yoga discipline prescribes the kind of posture in which the head, neck and spine are in a straight line and the eyes looking towards the nose, neither open nor closed.

prANayAma - svAsaprcvAsayorgativiccheda: - Breath-control exercises.

pratyAhAra - indriyaAnAm pratyAhAra: - Withdrawing the senses from the sense objects and merge them in the consciousness of the Self.

dhAraNa - desabandha: cittasya dhAraNA - Concentrating on a particular object for a long time is dhAraNA. In this context it means concentrating on Brahman.

dhyAnam - tat ra pratyayaikatAnata dhyAnam - dhAraNa continued for long duration of time with continuous meditation like the trickling of oil,



tailodhArAvat, is dhyAna.

samAdhi - When the object of meditation, the act of meditation and the meditator, all three merge into one it is called samAdhi. Here the consciousness that 'I am meditating' is absent and there is only the presence of the object of meditation and nothing else.

svAdhyAya j~nAnayaj~na refers to those who do the study of VedAs and SAstrAs and acquire knowledge as an offering to the Supreme self, meaning, only with the purpose of attaining the Lord and not for self aggrandizement.

Since most of these disciplines come under the yaj~nAs mentioned in this sloka and the prANayAma being mentioned separately, it is not irrelevant to interpret the term yoga yaj~na as Ramanuja does.

All these seekers are termed as **yataya:**, striving and **samSitavratA:**, of firm determination





SLOKAM 29

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे ।

प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥

apAne juhvati prANam prANe apAnam tathA apare |

prANapAna gatI ruddhvA prANayAmaparAyaNA: ||

Meaning:

Some sacrifice the inward breath into outgoing breath and others as vice versa.
Some intent of prANayAma, control both inward and outgoing breath.

Comments:

This sloka describes the prANayAma which is elevated to the status of yaj~na. The first type of breath control refers to **recaka**, emptying the breath, and the second to **pUraka**, filling with breath and the third to **kumbhaka**, holding breath respectively.





SLOKAM 30

अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान्प्राणेषु जुह्वति ।

सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ॥

apare niyatAhArA: prANAn prANeshu juhvati |

sarve api ete yaj~navida: yaj~na kshapita kalmashA:

Meaning:

Others with restricted diet, sacrifice the vital breath in the vital breath. All these are conversant with the mode of sacrifice and have their sins washed off by their yaj~na.

Comments:

The main idea in these last two slokAs is that even to practice prANAyAma with detachment towards the result and done as karma yoga with the sole intention of liberation, is yaj~na only.

The technique of prANAyAma cannot be explained in detail as it should be learnt through a guru. But the general meaning of the slokAs are as follows.

When the inward breath, prANa is inhaled it merges in the apAna which is situated at the base of the body. This is denoted as offering prANa in apAna, as in a fire. On the other hand when the outward breath apAna is let out fully it merges in prANa, which is mentioned as offering apAna into the fire of prANa.

When the breath is held it is the sacrifice of the prANAs into the prANAs because all the five prANAs are stopped in their respective places.

The five prANAs are, prANa, the life breath, apAna, which does the excretion, samAna, causing digestion, vyAna, which causes circulation and udAna, the





breath of evolution.

The word **niyatAhAra**, restricted diet, denotes the necessity of diet control for spiritual evolution. This is mentioned again in the fifth chapter as an important requisite of yoga.

All the different kinds of yaj~nAs mentioned so far are extolled in the second half of the sloka 30. Those who perform all these yaj~nAs are described as **yaj~navida:** and **yaj~nakshapita kalmashA:**. They all know the meaning of yaj~na and perform all their actions with the spirit of yaj~na and hence their sins are washed away through the yaj~na.





SLOKAM 31

यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।

नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥

yaj~naSishTAmrta bhuja: yAnti brahma sanAtanam |

na ayam loko asti ayaj~nasya kuta: anya: kurusattama ||

Meaning:

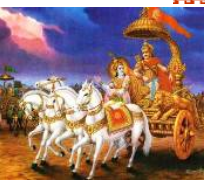
Oh the greatest of kuru! Those who partake the nectar of the remnants of a yaj~na attain the supreme self. Even this world is not for those who do no sacrifice. How could there be other world for them?

Comments:

Unless all the actions are performed with the spirit of yaj~na and the result of actions are accepted as the prasAda or grace of the Lord and shared equally there is no way to get released from the bondage. On the other hand those who follow this discipline outlined above attain salvation.

The statement that those who do not do all their activities in the spirit of yaj~na do not enjoy this world and hence also the other world should be understood properly. By 'this world' the experience as an embodied soul is meant. Unless one learns to act without selfish motive and as an offering to the Lord, all his actions are binding and will produce further births. Hence the other world, namely the freedom from bondage will not result from desire motivated actions.

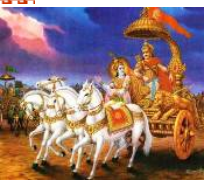
But a question arises that we normally see the people who have no devotion or spiritual outlook but are out and out materialistic do prosper and enjoy everything in this world and those who act selflessly often suffer. This is the





result of their past karma not necessarily in this birth but in the previous birth. Present karma unless done with the spirit of yaj~na is bound to yield result but again not necessarily in this birth but may be in next birth. This holds true even for those who commit sin but are not punished and on the contrary have a good life.

Those who know that all the pleasures are transitory and often followed by suffering wish to be free from the bondage of karma and for those the yaj~nAs specified in the foregoing slokAs are prescribed.





SLOKAM 32

एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।

कर्मजान्विद्धि तान्सर्वानिवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥

evam bahuvidhA yaj~nA vitatA brahmaNo mukhe |

karmajAn viddhi tAn sarvAn evam j~nAtvA vimokshyase ||

Meaning:

Thus many kinds of yaj~na are elaborated in the VedAs. Knowing them all to be born out of action you will be free from bondage.

Comments:

The word 'brahma' here means veda as the yaj~nAs are described only there. Even if the word is taken to mean the Brahman or Brahma the creator, it will not be out of context because the VedAs which are the source of all karma originated from Brahman and expounded by Brahma. As the man is supposed to act in accordance with the injunctions and prohibitions laid out in the VedAs, all the yaj~nAs which have to be done employing the body, mind and intellect are mentioned as **karmaja**, born out of action.

The statement '**evam j~nAtvA vimokshyase**' implies that by knowing the true meaning of the word yaj~na and doing all actions with the spirit of yaj~na one gets freed from bondage.

Throughout the chapter it has been stressed that karma cannot be avoided and the path to salvation consists not in giving up action but doing them as karma yoga. This is what is meant by the above statement.





SLOKAM 33

श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परंतप ।

सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥

SreyAn dravyamayAt yaj~nAt j~nAnayaj~na: parantapa |

sarvam karma akhilam pArtha j~nAne parisamApyate ||

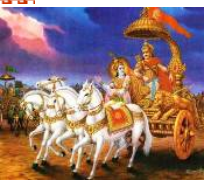
Meaning:

The yaj~na of knowledge, Oh scorcher of foes, is superior to those done with material objects. All actions, Arjuna, reach their completion in knowledge.

Comments:

KrshNa winds up the explanation about various kinds of yaj~na by claiming that j~nAna yaj~na is superior to dravya yaj~na, done by offering material things, which implies all the yaj~nAs prescribed in the VedAs in the karma kANDa. The reason for this is given by KrshNa as sarvam karma akhilam pArtha j~nAne parisamApyate. All the vedic karmas though they produce good results are nevertheless binding and cause rebirth. Only when the same karma is done without attachment and ego, shedding the thought of 'I' and 'Mine' it becomes the means of self realization, the ultimate goal of life. This is implied by the statement, all actions without exception, sarvakarma akhilam, culminate in knowledge, j~nAne parisamApyate'.

What does KrshNa means by the terms j~nAnayaj~na and j~nAna? The real knowledge, j~nAna which is the awareness of Brahman, the Absolute Reality, is termed as that, by knowing which one does not revert back into delusion such as the one Arjuna was experiencing, because that gives the insight to perceive all beings in oneself as well as in Brahman. This is the awareness that everything is in God and God is in everything. J~nAna yaj~na denotes the





way to acquire this jñāna and consists of the yogic disciplines like learning the scriptures, practicing the self control and cultivating viveka, discrimination and vairāgya, detachment.





SLOKAM 34

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

tat viddhi praNipAtena pariprSnaena sevayA |

upadekshyanti te j~nAnam j~nAnina: tattvadarSina: ||

Meaning:

Know this knowledge by prostration, repeated questioning and by service. The wise who have the knowledge of reality will impart it to you.

Comments:

praNipAta is danDavat praNAma, falling at the feet.

pariprSna is asking repeatedly to clear all the doubts with earnest desire to know.

seva- The service at the feet of the master with all humility.

These are the qualifications to acquire j~nAna from the guru.

To get this knowledge KrshNa directs Arjuna to approach a guru with full faith and humility and ask him with genuine interest. Two questions may arise with respect to this advice of KrshNa to Arjuna.

Was that a proper time and place to ask Arjuna to approach a guru in order to acquire wisdom because the intention of KrshNa in giving out the Gita was to make Arjuna fight the ensuing battle?

What was the utility of the eighteen chapters of Gita if even after hearing it Arjuna still needed a guru to acquire j~nAna?





"The wise will impart knowledge of Brahman!"
prakrtam SrImad Azhagiya singar



KrshNa, like a surgeon performing an emergency operation to remove a bullet, preached Gita in order to remove the delusion in the mind of Arjuna and gave him a glimpse of the highest knowledge which made Arjuna to rise up to the occasion and fight. As the surgeon relinquishes the post operative treatment to the physician, KrshNa advises Arjuna to approach guru to continue his learning if he so wishes.

The Gita was forgotten by Arjuna as soon as he started fighting when his natural propensity surfaced and he became a kshatriya and nothing else. Arjuna asked KrshNa after the war to tell him the Gita again but KrshNa replied that He Himself had forgotten what He said because Arjuna was not ready for j~nAna yoga and what was given to him at the outset of the war was only an emergency treatment, KrshNa did not want to impart the j~nAna Himself because the spiritual instruction should be given in a proper manner in order to culminate in self-realization. The disciple has to approach the guru in obeisance, **praNipAta**, and with humility and obedience, **seva** and learn through exhaustive questioning, **paripraSna**. Then the guru who is a j~nAni and **tattvadarSi**, a realized master, will impart the knowledge of Brahman. What is implied here is that unless the student has humility, faith and healthy enquiring mind he cannot acquire spiritual knowledge.



SLOKAM 35

यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव ।

येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥

yat j~nAtvA na puna: moham evam yAsyasi pANDava |

yena bhUtAni aSesheNa drakshyasi Atmani atho mayi ||

Meaning:

Knowing which, Arjuna, you will never lapse back into delusion again and by that knowledge you will see all beings without exception in yourself and also in Me.

Comments:

The knowledge referred to here is that which can be obtained through a guru as detailed in the previous sloka. This is the knowledge of Brahman knowing that everything is nothing but Brahman and this idea is further elaborated in the 6th chapter. When one attains the perception 'sarva khalu idam brahma, all this is brahman', he sees Brahman not only in his self but also in the inner self of his self, that is, in the Lord. This is the meaning of 'drakshyasi Atmani atho mayi'.

The delusion of Arjuna was only due to the identification with the body and not with the self, which made him feel that he was the agent of action. When all actions are dedicated to the Lord with the spirit of yaj~na, realizing that all actions are due to the interaction of the guNas within and without, the sense of agency is removed and hence there is no more delusion being armed with the knowledge 'kam ghAtayati hantikam', as mentioned in the second chapter. This comes only with the identification with the self and knowing that all the differences are due to the conditioning of the body, mind and intellect. This knowledge will arise only through the instruction from a guru.



SLOKAM 36

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।

सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं संतरिष्यसि ॥

api cet asi pApebhya: sarvebhya: pApakrttama: |

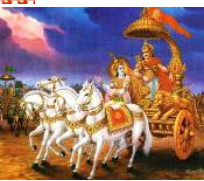
sarvam j~nAnplavena eva vrjinam santarishyasi ||

Meaning:

Even if you are worst sinner, pApakrttama, among all the sinners, With j~nAna as a boat, plava, you will cross over, santarishyasi, all sins vrjinam (as in a river).

Comments:

Then KrshNa completes the discourse on j~nAna by extolling the glory of it. The perception of all beings right from the creator to a blade of grass as nothing but Brahman becomes the raft that takes one beyond all sins. Even a worst sinner will cross over the sea of sins, says KrshNa, if he acquires j~nAna, which means that the sinner would not acquire j~nAna unless he becomes pure due to some merit acquired in his previous life like VaalmIki. The phrase 'api cet asi', meaning 'even if you are the worst sinner' does not refer to Arjuna who was not a sinner but it is to illustrate the effect of j~nAna even towards a sinner. This point is reiterated in chapter 9 by the slokAs 'api cet sudurAcaro', and 'kshipram bhavati dharmAtma', where it will be explained in detail.



SLOKAM 37

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥

yathA edhAmsi samiddha: agni: bhasmasAt kurute arjuna |

j~nAnAgni: sarvakarmANi bhasmasAt kurute tathA ||

Meaning:

As a fire, agni:, when kindled, samiddha:, reduces all fuel, edhAmsi, to ashes, bhasmasAt kurute, the j~nAna burns all karma to ashes.

Comments:

How does j~nAna destroy sin? The answer is proffered with an example; as a kindled fire reduces all fuel to ashes the fire of knowledge reduces all work to ashes. The idea is that the knowledge which gives right perception robs all karma of the power to produce result. Here 'all karma' means the karma accumulated in the past lives, sancita, which has not yet started to produce result and that which is done after the dawn of knowledge, AgAmi. The karma which has caused the present birth prArabda, has to be exhausted.





SLOKAM 38

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।

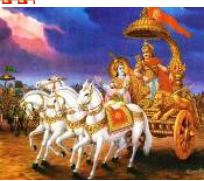
तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥

na hi j~nAnena sadrSam pavitram iha vidyate |

tat svayam yogasamsiddha: kAlena Atmani vindati ||

Meaning:

There is no greater purifying agent than the j~nAna. The one well equipped with yoga acquires this knowledge in due course.





SLOKAM 39

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।

ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥

SraddhAvAn labhate j~nAnam tat para: samyatendriya: |

j~nAnam labdhvA parAm SAntim acireNa adigacchati ||

Meaning:

The one who has absolute faith gets this knowledge being intent on acquiring it and by self control. Then having acquired the j~nAna he enjoys utmost peace very soon

Comments:

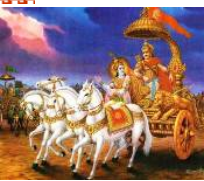
There is no greater purifier than j~nAna, which like fire burns all impurities due to karma. All the other purifying agents, internal like yama, dhAma, dhyAna, japa and the rest and external ones like visiting temples, religious austerities, bathing in the holy rivers and so on are only the means of acquiring j~nAna. 'pavitrAnAm pavitram yo mangaLAnAm ca mangaLam', says BhIshma in his discourse on VishNu sahasra nAmA. The Lord is purity in the pure and auspiciousness in the auspicious. So the knowledge of the Lord who is the Supreme Self is the purifier of all. One who practices Karma yoga and dhyana yoga, yoga of action and yoga of meditation acquires this knowledge in course of time, through Sraddha, absolute faith provided he is intent on it, tat para: and through self control, samyatendriya:, when he attains the supreme peace instantaneously.

The secret of success even in the worldly pursuits comes only to him who is SraddhAvAn, tat para: and samyatendriya:. When for instance a man aims to become a great business magnate, he requires these three qualifications. He





must have faith in his endeavour as otherwise half hearted effort will not fetch the desired result, he must be intent on his pursuit and he must have absolute control over himself and be ready to sacrifice all his other pleasures for the sake of his success in business. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, all the principles taught to the management trainees in modern days are found in Bhagavad-Gita.





SLOKAM 40

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्धानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।

नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥

aj~naSca aSraddadhAnaSca samSyAtmA vinaSyati |

nAyam loko asti na para: na sukham samSyAtmana: ||

Meaning:

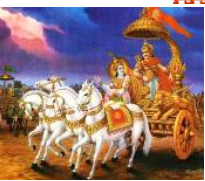
The ignorant, aj~na: and the one who has no faith, aSraddadhAna: and the one who doubts (the validity of this j~nAna) are lost forever and for them there is no happiness in this world and in the next.

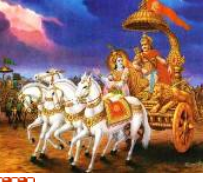
Comments:

That liberation follows from the right perception is the unshakable doctrine established in all the SAstrAs. There can be no doubt regarding this and the one who doubts this and has no faith can never hope to attain happiness either in this life or the next.

Without faith nothing can be achieved as for instance when you ask for directions to a place you have to have faith in the one who directs you. Similarly one who has no faith in scriptures or in the word of the saints will not acquire wisdom. A man who digs for water will get it only if he digs deep enough in one place and not if he tries in different places giving up each one after a little effort.

The word doubt should not be confused with enquiry. Earlier KrshNa said that one should repeatedly question the master to acquire j~nAna. This is not doubt but the earnest desire to know the truth. Normally in usage especially in vernacular, the word samsaya means a doubt about something not clear. But samsaya here means the doubt about the validity, whereas praSna means a legitimate doubt with a desire to know.





SLOKAM 41

योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् ।

आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ॥

yogasannyastakarmANam j~nAnasamchinna samSayam |

Atmavantam na karmANi nibadhnanti dhananjaya ||

Meaning:

Oh Dhanajaya, actions do not bind him who is of firm wisdom, who has renounced them through karma yoga and whose doubts are removed by j~nAna.





SLOKAM 42

तस्मादज्ञानसंभूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।

छित्त्वेन संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥

tasmAt aj~nAnasambhUtam hrtstham j~nAnAsinA Atmana: |

chittvA enam samSayam yogam AtishTha uttishTha bhArata ||

Meaning:

Therefore Arjuna, by cutting off the doubt aroused through ignorance by the sword of self- knowledge, rise up and practice this karma yoga.

Comments:

True knowledge, j~nAna cuts away all the knots of the heart created by ignorance and uncertainty and the results of his karma do not bind him who has burnt them away in the fire of knowledge through the practice of Karma yoga. The Upanishad declares:

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।

क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ।

bhidyate hridayagranthi: chidyante sarvaSamsayA: |

khsIyante ca asya karmANi tasmin drshTe parAvare ||

--muNDakopanishad 2.2.8

The knots of the heart **hridayagranthi** are the misconceptions due to non-perception which are cut asunder, all doubts vanish and all karma is destroyed





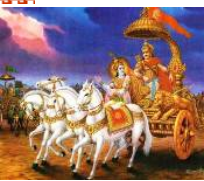
for the one who experiences the **brahmasAkshAtkAra**.

Therefore, says KrshNa, 'slaying the doubt in your heart born out of ignorance with the sword of j~nAna, stand up to do your duty'. The lack of discrimination regarding what is right and what is wrong creates a doubt in the mind and one cannot decide whether or not to perform an action. This is due to the ignorance of what is real and what is not, which is the cause for the accumulation of karma. As a result of this one goes through the cycle of birth and death, suffering the ills of samsAra as a consequence. This lack of discrimination is represented by the doubt in the heart, which j~nAna alone can destroy. This j~nAna can be acquired only through Karma yoga and dhyAna yoga., performing one's duties without attachment in the spirit of Yaj~na and at the same time contemplating on the Lord, the Supreme Self.

The two disciplines enunciated so far, namely, Karma yoga and dhyAna yoga or acquiring j~nAna through contemplation are not mutually exclusive but they appear to be so to Arjuna because he is not able to understand them properly. This necessitates the fifth chapter of the Gita where KrshNa points out that the two are not mutually contradicting but only indicate two different stages.

THUS ENDS THE FOURTH CHAPTER OF SRI BHAGAVAD GITA ON

J~NANA KARMA SANYASA YOGA





"SrI bhagavad gItA!"



CHAPTER 5

SANYASA YOGA - YOGA OF RENUNCIATION

SLOKAM 1

संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।

यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥

arjuna uvAca

sannyAsam karmaNAm krshNa puna: yogam ca Samsasi |

yat Sreya: etayo: ekam tat me brUhi suniScitam ||

Meaning:

Arjuna said,

KrshNa, you praised the acquirement of j~nAna which leads to renunciation of action and also you praise karma yoga subsequently. Tell me which of the two are conducive to my progress towards the highest goal.

Comments:

KrshNa has detailed about karma yoga in chapters 3 and 4 and hence Arjuna has no confusion regarding what is karma yoga. So he is not repeating the question he asked in the beginning of the third chapter. His doubt now is that while KrshNa elucidated on karma yoga he also spoke about acquiring the j~nAna that, all is nothing but Brahman and advised Arjuna to approach a guru to acquire j~nAna. This made Arjuna wonder whether j~nAna is better than karma. Hence KrshNa starts distinguishing between the two.



SLOKAM 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच

संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।

तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥

SrI bhagavAn uvAca

sannyAsa: karmayoga: ca ni:Sreyasakarau ubhau |

tayo: tu karmasannyAsAt karmayogo viSishyate ||

Meaning:

The Lord said,

Renunciation and karma yoga are both the means to achieve the goal of realization. But of the two, karma yoga is superior to renunciation of action.

Comments:

Arjuna now wants to know which of the two disciplines, sannyAsa (renunciation) or karma yoga, performance of work without attachment is more beneficial for him. Here KrshNa, the supreme physician starts prescribing the medicine suited to the patient and says that though both sannyAsa and karma yoga are equally effective, karma yoga is to be preferred, implying that in his case Arjuna needs only karma yoga.

The word **sannyAsa** means giving up fully, **san + nyAsa**. So it could be used in renouncing the action, or the fruit of action or the sense of agency of action. In the Gita it is used in all these meanings and hence it should be understood according to the context.



Here the word sannyAsa means sAnkhya yoga or j~nAna yoga, the word sAnkhya as used in the second chapter. Though both the paths, j~nAna and karma leads to the same goal the one to choose depends on the mental state of the seeker. Since Arjuna is qualified to do only karma yoga as he had not acquired j~nAna till then, KrshNa said that karma yoga is better than j~nAna yoga.

The one who follows sAnkhya yoga is the one who has already acquired self control and has given up agency of action and sees Brahman everywhere and hence the action has no effect on him. Till then one has to do karma yoga only giving up the desire for the fruit of action by offering all his actions to the Lord. Gradually he gives up the sense of agency when he acquires the j~nAna that all is Brahman.





SLOKAM 3

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।

निर्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥

j~neya: sa nityasannyAsI yo na dveshTi na kAnkshati |

nirdvandvo hi mahAbAho sukhAm bandhAt pramucyate ||

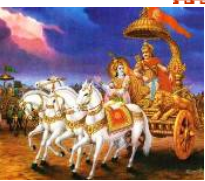
Meaning

He who does not desire, na kAnkshati nor dislikes, na dveshTi, and is ever beyond the pair of opposites, nirdvandva:, is to be known as the ever renounced, nityasannyAsI, and he is freed, pramucyate, easily, sukhAm, from the bondage, bandhAt.

Comments:

A karma yogi who works without attachment has neither desire nor aversion. So he is to be considered as nityasannyAsi, perpetually renounced. Thus doing everything with detachment he does not get bound by his works and his release from bondage is effortless.

Any action done with desire for the result or not done due to aversion for the same create fresh karma for which one has to experience the effect and it goes on to create bondage of life and death. When the same karma done without attachment there no fresh akarma resulting from it and hence there is no bondage from such karma.





SLOKAM 4

साङ्ख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।

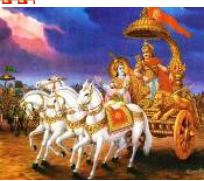
एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यग्भयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥

sAnkhyā yogau prthak bAlA: pravadanti na paNDitA: |

ekam api Asthita: samyak ubhayo: vindate phalam ||

Meaning:

Only the ignorant speak of the sAnkhyā and karma yoga as being distinct from each other and not the wise. One who follows either properly gets the result of both.





SLOKAM 5

यत्साङ्ख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।

एकं साङ्ख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥

yat sAnkhyai: prApyate sthAnam tat yogai: api gamyate |

ekam sAnkhyam ca yogam ca ya: paSyati sa: paSyati ||

Meaning:

The status which the follower of sAnkhya yoga attains, is reached by a karma yogi also. Hence one who sees both together, alone has the right perception.

Comments:

That is, sAnkhya and yoga which here denote, j~nAna yoga and Karma yoga, are not mutually exclusive and it is thought so only by the ignorant. The wise know that they are not different but both produce the same result. A karma yogi acts with detachment acquired with the knowledge that everything is transitory and in the process gains wisdom. The karma yoga is termed as yoga because it leads to real yoga, the union with the reality. So figuratively it is also renunciation. One who renounces the result of karma gradually reaches a stage when he will renounce the karma also.

What is meant by these two slokAs is this:

A j~nAni who has already mastered his senses and has acquired the knowledge that all this is Brahman, is a sannYasi on whom karma has no effect. Hence whether he does it or not is immaterial. But even the j~nAni may be doing karma such as maintaining his body till he is in embodiment or to set an example for others. But in either case he is a renounced soul as the karma does not affect him. When he gives up his mortal coil he attains moksha. The saints like





RamakrshNa, RamaNa and others are examples of this.

The karma yogi on the other hand does his karma giving up the attachment to the fruit and gradually gives up the sense of agency also when the karma does not affect him. Then on acquiring the state of mind that all this is nothing but Brahman, he attains moksha on leaving his body. Hence the goal of both is the same. It is like going to a place by rail or by air. But the destination is the same. This is the meaning of the above slokAs.





SLOKAM 6

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।

योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥

sannyAsastu mahAbAho duhkham Aptum ayogata: |

yogayukto muni: brahma nacireNa adhigacchatu ||

Meaning:

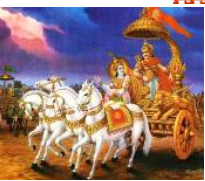
Renunciation is difficult to attain for one who has not followed karma yoga. The sage who is established in karma yoga is able to realize Brahman soon.

Comments

KrshNa here explains why he extolled karma yoga as being the better of the two. Renunciation is very difficult to win without karma yoga, which consists in dedicating the works to God without craving for the result. This in turn brings detachment. After this on contemplating on Brahman one attains it easily.

Even though both, namely, karma yoga and j~nAna yoga are said to lead to the same goal, the former is easier than the latter. First when a man starts thinking about himself as being something other than body, mind and intellect, the quest for the self begins.

He may get the knowledge that he is only the self who is immutable and eternal from the study of scriptures and also about his inner self or the real self that is Brahman. But due to his past karma his mind is full of desire, anger etc. Hence the mind should be cleansed of these first, through karma yoga, which makes him give up desire and hatred by dedicating all his karma and the results of karma to the Lord and sheds the sense of agency, when he is no more affected by his actions. Then only he is fit for the contemplation of Brahman.





On the other hand if he starts jñāna yoga by contemplation and giving up all actions, his desire and ego which have not been got rid of, will raise their ugly heads and drag him away from his goal. The sage Visvāmitra was an excellent example of this. He was a kṣatriya and his pride and anger pulled him away from his goal until he conquered them.

The natural doubt that may arise is that there are some who renounced the world relinquishing all their karma like Rāmākrṣṇa or Rāmaṇa and they become realized masters without pursuing karmamārga. But we see only their present embodiment which is but a continuation of several lives, this being the last. This point is elucidated by Kṛṣṇa Himself in the next chapter of the Gita





SLOKAM 7

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।

सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥

yogayukto viSuddhAtmA vijitAtmA jitendriya: |

sarvabhUtAtmabhUtAtmA kurvan api na lipyate ||

Meaning:

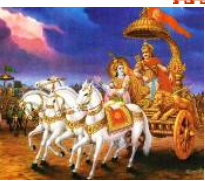
One who is established in yoga, has conquered his mind and senses and sees himself in all beings is not tainted by work.

Comments:

How does the karma yoga become the means of attaining self knowledge? KrshNa answers this in the next sloka. Established in yoga, his mind purified and self controlled he sees himself in all beings and therefore he is not tainted by his work. That is, he is not doing anything for his benefit alone but works for the welfare of all, which attitude has been described in the previous chapter as acting in the spirit of yaj~na

This sloka defines the karma yogi who can be called **yoga yukta**, established in karma yoga.

Three adjectives are given which, though look similar, are not so. **Jitendriya:** denotes the control of the senses, of course through the mind and intellect, which makes him **vijitAtma**, one who has controlled himself. By this the mind becomes pure, which is indicated by **viSuddhAtma**. He understands that the same Brahman who is his inner self is the self of all. This enables him to see himself in all beings. Such a yogi is not tainted by anything he does which is elucidated in the next two slokAs.





SLOKAM 8

नैव किञ्चित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।

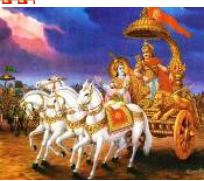
पश्यञ्शृण्वन्स्पृशञ्जिघ्रन्नाश्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्श्वासन् ॥

na eva kincit karomi iti yukto manyeta tattvavit |

paSyen SrNvan sprSan jighran aSnan gacchan svapan Svasan ||

Meaning:

Such a yogi who has the knowledge of reality should think "I am not doing anything", while seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating going, sleeping or breathing.



SLOKAM 9

प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्निमिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥

pralapan visrjan grhNan unmishan nimishan api |

indriyANi indriyArtheshu vartanta iti dhArayan ||

Meaning:

Speaking, discharging, grasping, opening and closing his eyes, he should think that the senses are interacting with the sense objects

Comments:

The knower of Truth, who sees only non-work in all work, is alone fit to renounce the world. He knows that it is only his senses which operate in whatever he does and KrshNa lists the common activities he engages in through his senses as 'paSyAn SrNvan sprSan jighran', seeing, hearing touching, smelling and so on.

This has already been explained in the third chapter as 'prakrte: kriyamANAni guNai: karmANi sarvaSa:' (3.27) All actions are due to the guNas of prakrti in all respects, and that the wise is not attached, knowing that the guNas are reacting with guNas, 'guNA guNeshu vartanta iti matvA na sajjate' (3.28) The same attitude is described here.

Everything except the Self are made up of guNas. So the like guNas inside are attracted towards the like guNas outside! The indriyas are the product of the guNas which includes the mind and intellect as they are also the products of prakrti. Sense objects, being the effects of Prkrti, are also made up of the three guNas. This is what is meant by indriyANi indriyArtheshu vartanta.



SLOKAM 10

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।

लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥

brahmaNyAdhAya karmANi sangam tyaktvA karoti ya: |

lipyate na sa pApena padmapatram iva ambhasA ||

Meaning:

One who acts without attachment reposing all actions in Brahman, is not tainted by sin like the lotus leaf by water.

Comments

The karma yogi acts without desire and attachment and offers all his actions to the Lord. He considers all the actions as the interaction between the guNas inside and guNas outside. Hence the result of actions producing sin or merit do not taint him and he remains like the lotus leaf which is not wetted by water on it.

There may arise question that when the karma yogi acts without desire and attachment naturally he would not do anything that may result in sin. Hence why should it be said that sin will accrue to him?

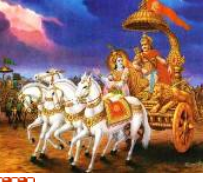
The Lord says in the 18th chapter, 'sarvArambha hi dosheNa dhUmena agni: iva AvrtA', meaning that all actions are covered with defects as the fire with smoke. It is possible to commit sin inadvertently causing harm to other beings in course of even daily actions like the imperceptible creatures may be killed by cooking, walking and other actions. Even those will not result in sin when one has renounced the agency of action.

The word Brahman here is taken to mean Brahman or nArAyaNa because all the



actions are done as an offering in the spirit of yaj~na. Ramanuja however explains the word as **prkr̥ti** as mentioned in the fourteenth chapter as '**mama yoni: mahat brahma**', meaning that the prakrti is the womb into which the Lord puts the seed of creation. The word **AdhAya** means reposing and as Brahman has no actions all the actions belong to prakrti. But the word has also another meaning to direct towards and this meaning has been accepted by Sankara and others according to which all actions of a karma yogi are directed towards Brahman as an offering and hence the word Brahman denotes only the Supreme Reality.





SLOKAM 11

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।

योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥

kAyena manasA buddhyA kevalai: indriyai: api ||

yogina: karma kurvanti sangam tyaktvA Atma Suddhaye ||

Meaning:

The karma yogis act with their body, mind and intellect, giving up attachment for the purification of themselves.



SLOKAM 12

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।

अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥

yukta: karmaphalam tyaktvA SAntim Apnoti naishThikIm |

ayukta: kAmakAreNa phale sakta: nibadhyate ||

Meaning:

The karma yogi giving up the attachment for the fruit of action attains lasting peace. But the one who is not attained yoga becomes attached to the fruit of action, motivated by desire, gets bound by his actions.

Comments:

Even a non-knower of truth, that is, brahmaj~nAna, if he acts with an attitude of surrender, without attachment, is not stained by karma like a lotus leaf by water because such yogis, with detachment, work for self purification, and attain liberation whereas the others who are attached to the results of action get bound by them.





SLOKAM 13

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।

नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥

sarvakarmANi manasAa sannyAsya Aste sukham vaSI |

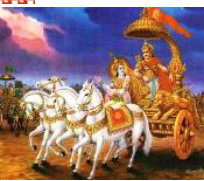
navadvAre pure dehI na eva kurvan na kArayan ||

Meaning:

But one who has controlled himself, renounces all actions mentally and remains happy in his body as in a town which has nine gates, not doing anything nor causing any action to be done.

Comments:

But the man of wisdom, having renounced all actions by discriminative intelligence, perceiving action as inaction sits in the body as a monarch inside a citadel with nine gates, the nine openings of the body through which all experience is gained. The self is the Lord of the castle with which the sage identifies himself and hence he does no work nor he causes any work to be done, meaning, there is no direct nor causative agency as the Self is immutable.





SLOKAM 14

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।

न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥

na kartrtvam na karmANi lokasya srjati prabhu: |

na karmaphalasamyogam svabhAvastu pravartate ||

Meaning:

The Lord who is the real self of all does not cause the sense of agency, nor the action nor the result of action in the universe. The nature alone prevails.

Comments:

The sense of agency in man is not created by the Lord but it is his own ego that makes him think that he is the doer. The actions are also either desire motivated or done as duties according to varNAsramadharma for which the doer alone is responsible. The result of actions also automatically follow and they are not decided by the will of the Lord. All these are only due to the interaction of the guNas according to prakrti. That is why it is said that one who has the view that 'guNA guNeshu vartanta'. is not affected by his actions since the kartrtvam is absent in him and hence the karma and the phalan do not adhere to him.

But if one does everything as an offering to the Lord then does the Lord becomes responsible for the action and their fruits? The next sloka answers this.





SLOKAM 15

नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।

अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥

na Adatte kasyacit pApam na ca eva sukrtaṁ vibhuḥ ||

aj~nAnena Avrtam j~nAnam tena muhyanti jantavaḥ ||

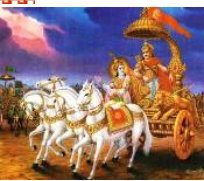
Meaning:

Neither He accepts the sins nor merits of the individual selves. The knowledge is covered with ignorance and so the individual souls are deluded.

Comments:

When an action is done as the offering to the Lord the result does not accrue to the doer. So there is neither sin nor merit resulting from the action. This is what the sentence 'na Adatte kasyacit pApam na ca eva sukrtaṁ vibhuḥ', means, even when the action is desire motivated, the result does not belong to the doer but to the action, which has already been mentioned as 'karmaNyeva adhikAraste mA phaleshu kadAcana' (BG.2.47). So it is wrong to ascribe the result of action to the Lord and to think that He has given suffering to some and happiness to others.

Then why do the people think that they are the doers and act with the expectation of a specific result? It is due the ignorance, aj~nAna, which conceals the j~nAna and hence the delusion that one is the doer and which makes him act with the expectation of result.





SLOKAM 16

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।

तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥

j~nAnena tu tat j~nAnam eshAm nASitam Atmana: |

teshAm Adityavat j~nAnam prakASayati tat param ||

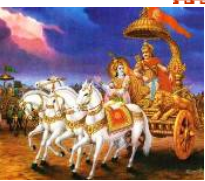
Meaning

To those whose ignorance is destroyed by knowledge of the self, the j~nAna, shines like the Sun.

Comments:

This ignorance that 'I am the doer' is destroyed on acquiring the knowledge, which KrshNa told Arjuna to get from a guru by service, humility and enquiry, (sloka 34, chapter4)

When the Sun rises the darkness is automatically destroyed as the darkness is only the absence of light. Similarly the ignorance is only the absence of knowledge, which is the real nature of the self and at the dawn of knowledge it wholly disappears revealing the real self which was there forever.





SLOKAM 17

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।

गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः ॥

tat buddhaya: tadAtmAAna: tannishThA: tat parAyaNA: |

gacchanti apunarAvrttim j~nAna nirdhUta kalmashA: ||

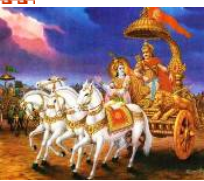
Meaning:

Their intellect riveted in the self, being engrossed in the self, contemplating on the self and fixing their goal as the self, the yogis whose impurities are washed away by j~nana reach the state of no return.

Comments:

When the knowledge of the self dawns in the mind of seeker, the ignorance which is the cause of "I" ness and "MY"ness is removed, and he becomes j~nAna nirdhUta kalmasha, all the effects of ignorance, so far obscuring his real nature, are removed, nirdhUta kalmasha. Then the karma yogi sheds sense of agency and desire for result and acts with the spirit of yaj~na. Armed with the knowledge that everything is Brahman, his intellect thinks of nothing but Brahman, tat buddhi, and with all his thoughts centered in Brahman, tannishThA, he dwells in Brahman, tadAtmA. Then the only goal to him is the attainment of Brahman, tat parayANa, the state from which there is no reverting back to the cycle of birth and death.

On attaining the state of self realization from which there is no return, what will be the nature of perception of such a j~nAni? This is explained in the subsequent slokAs.





Gajendra moksham - thanks: Sau. R Chitralkha



SLOKAM 18

विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।

शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥

vidyAvinayasampanne brAhmaNe gavi hastini |

Suni ca eva SvapAke ca panDitA: samadarSina: ||

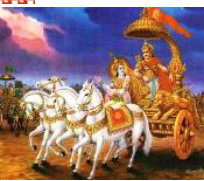
Meaning:

Those who have the brahmaj~nAna, perceive a learned and modest Brahmin, cow, elephant, dog and the dog-eater with equanimity.

Comments:

What would be the perception of the sage who has realized the Self? What has been described in the next few slokAs is reminiscent of what has been said in the second chapter about sthitapraj~na. The sages perceive the same Reality in a Brahmin, learned but modest, in a cow and in an elephant and also in a dog and the one who eats dog's flesh. The listing here of the highest form of intellect to the lowest is to show that the sage has the same love towards all creatures and should not be taken literally as grading the creation in anyway.

A Brahmin who is not only learned but also modest about it because he knows that in brahmaj~nAna there is no such thing as "I know", tops the list. Upanishad declares that one who says he knows, knows not and one who says he does not know, knows. The more one reads and hears about Brahman, the more he realizes that Brahman cannot be understood by scriptures alone but only through direct intuition which comes only through contemplation and then also only through the grace of the Lord as the Upanishad says, 'yam eva esha vrNute tena labhyate', meaning that only he whom the Lord chooses will get the real knowledge. Whom will He choose? This is explained by the entire Gita.



Then among the animals, cow is the highest in order of evolution for its meekness and love and because it feeds the whole world, more than anything else was the love of KrshNa towards it for which he was known as gopAla.

Among other animals, elephant is supposed to be most intelligent and mighty, having a wonderful memory power. Everybody from a child to an adult loves to watch an elephant and such is the glory of the animal. Moreover no other animal obtained the grace of the Lord like Gajendra did.

The dog is the lowliest of the animals, because it represents servility and dependence. Also it is the weakest animal. But even lower is he who eats its flesh because the dog-flesh is not acceptable for eating.

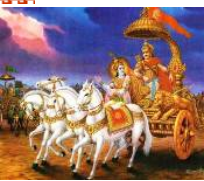
The sthitapraj~na sees all these with the same attitude. He knows that it is only the body which is different but not the soul because he sees Brahman everywhere.

This Gita-sloka has been illustrated nicely by an incident in the life of Sankara. He was returning from his bath in Ganges with his sisHyAs. A man of the low caste specified as dog-eater in the above sloka with four dogs came in front and there was not enough space for Sankara and the man to pass, without touching each other. To keep intact his austerity in not touching any one after bath before he finished his pUja, Sankara told him to move away so that he can pass. The man asked Sankara to tell him whether he wanted the body to move away or the soul? Was it the body he was afraid of polluting by the contact or the soul? Because there is no difference between the soul of himself and that of Sankara. Then Sankara was stupefied and asked him who he was. Then Lord Siva appeared to Sankara, who realized that it was the ISvara Himself who came in the form of a low caste man with the four vedAs as his dogs. Then Sankara sang the ManIshA pancakam, giving out the non-difference of souls, comprising of five beautiful slokAs.

Now the question will be, was Sankara really deluded into believing that touching the man will pollute him? This does not seem appropriate for the



eminent advocate of advaita and the exponent of various VedAnta works such as bajagovindam. No, Sankara was deluded for a moment no doubt but it was not his own delusion but was created by Lord Siva to make him compose the ManIsha pancakam. Moreover Sankara might have acted as he did, not because he saw any difference between men but because he, being the Acarya, must set an example to the disciples to follow the AcAra as otherwise they would have done as they pleased and would be ruined because they lacked the wisdom of their AcArya. It is for the similar reason the saints like ParamacArya of Kanchi, RamaNa and RamakrshNa were following the ritualistic practices.





SLOKAM 19

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।

निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्मात् ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥

iha eva ta: jita: sarga: eshAm sAmye sthitam mana: |

nirdosham hi samam brahma tasmAt brahmaNi te sthitA: ||

Meaning:

Those whose mind abides in equanimity conquer birth while being here itself.
Brahman remains the same and flawless and hence they reside in Brahman.





SLOKAM 20

न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।

स्थिरबुद्धिरसंमूढो ब्रह्मवित् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥

na prhrshyet priyam prApya na udvijet prApya ca apriyam |

sthirabuddhi: asammUDha: brahmavit brahmaNi sthita: ||

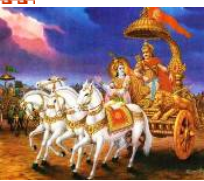
Meaning:

One with a steady mind, undeluded, a knower of Brahman and abiding in Brahman, would not feel elated having a pleasant experience nor would be depressed on getting something unpleasant.

Comments:

KrshNa says that the birth has been vanquished even here in this life by those who have acquired **samatva** or even mindedness, There is no plurality in Brahman as it is one only without a second, '**ekameva advitIyam**'. The sage resides in Brahman alone and therefore he sees no plurality, nothing but Brahman everywhere, as declared by the Upanishad, **sarvam khalu idam brahma**'. A **brahmavit**, knower of Brahman abides in Brahman, **brahmaNi sthita:** and hence he neither feels elated on getting something pleasant nor feels depressed on meeting with the unpleasant. He is termed as **sthirabuddhi:**, one whose intellect is steady, in other words, **sthitapraj~na:**, who is described in the second chapter of the Gita as '**dukhkeshvanudvignamanA: sukheshu vigatasprha:**'. Such a man of wisdom abides in Self and for him there is no work to be done anymore. As KrshNa declared in the third chapter of the Gita he has nothing to gain from action or non-action, '**na eva tasya krtArthtena nAkrteneha kaScana**'.

The knower of Brahman who has attained the state of seeing Brahman



everywhere as detailed in the previous sloka 'vidyAvinayasampanne' has no desires and hence looks upon all worldly experiences as something that pertains to the body, mind and intellect, which are the products of the three guNAs. Since he identifies himself with the self, sukha and duhkha which do not touch the self have no effect on him. Hence he conquers birth and death while being in this embodied state because karma does not have any effect on him and does not create bondage which is the cause of birth and death.



'brahmavit!' (SrI rAmAnujAcArya)

Such a sage is described by four adjectives namely, brahmavit, brahmaNi sthita:, sthira buddhi: and asammUDha:.

He is brahmavit, knower of Brahman, meaning that he knows that everything is Brahman. The world of variegated entities are only the manifestations of the supreme reality like the different shapes and colours of the articles made of



clay of which the real essence is nothing but clay, or like the various ornaments made of gold which are in essence nothing but gold. The upanishad says, 'vAcArambhaNam vikAra: nAmadheyam mrttiketyeva satyam'. It means that the names are different but the reality is nothing but clay. Similarly all things are nothing but Brahman in reality.

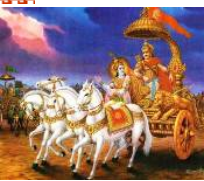
Therefore he is brahmaNi sthita:, established in Brahman because like a goldsmith who sees only gold in all ornaments, he sees only Brahman and his thoughts are always with Brahman only.

As a result of this his intellect is sthira unwavering, not being oscillated by any other thought. Hence he is sthirabuddhi:. Consequently he is free from delusion which arises only due to ignorance of reality. Without the knowledge that everything is Brahman, one gets deluded by the opposites such as likes and dislikes, sukha and dukkha, gain and loss etc. all of which arises from an attitude of seeing the world as different from himself.

On the other hand those who possess equanimity, eshAm sAmye sthitam mana:, are not deluded and they are said to cross over the samsara, the cycle of transmigration while being in their embodiment. They carry on till the body falls and attain salvation.

nirdosham hi samam brahma- All imperfections are due to the three guNAs. Since Brahman is beyond the guNAs no imperfections affect Brahman. The self is not affected by the imperfections of the body, mind and intellect. Brahman which is the Self of the self is therefore not contaminated by the imperfections. This statement serves to dispel the doubt that if the world is the manifestation of Brahman whether the imperfections of the world would adhere to Brahman.

Just as the clay is the same in all the articles made of clay and gold is the same in all ornaments, Brahman is also the same not undergoing any change.





SLOKAM 21

बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम् ।

स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥

bAhyasparSeshu asaktAtmA vindati Atmani yat sukham |

sa brahmayoga yuktatmA sukham akshayam aSnute ||

Meaning:

The one whose senses are not drawn towards sense objects outside, acquires joy within himself, being engrossed in Brahman which gives him undiminished joy.

Comments:

The sage who enjoys unalloyed bliss in being immersed in Brahman is referred to here by three epithets, bAhyasparSeshu asaktAtmA, vindati Atmani yat sukham and brahmayoga yuktAtmA.

bAhyasparSeshu asaktAtmA - He is detached, asakta, from the sense experience outside, bAhyasparSa, sparSa here meaning contact and bAhya is outside. The word sparSa means touch literally but it stands for all sense contacts.

The reason why he has given up attachment to the outside world is denoted by the next epithet.

vindati Atmani yat sukham - the joy he obtains from merging with the self.

He gets the supreme joy in merging with the self. Sankara says in bajagovindam, 'yasyabrahmaNi ramate cittam nandati nandati nandati eva'. He whose mind is reveling in Brahman he is happy, he is happy, he is happy, meaning





that the joy experienced through his brahmAnubhava permeates in all three levels of being, physical, mental and intellectual. The same idea is expressed in Gita, by the sloka:

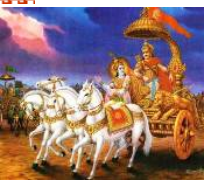
maccittA madgataprANA: bodhayanta: parasparam |

kathayantaSca mAm nityam tushyanti ca ramanti ca ||

--BG.10.9

Those whose mind is engrossed in the Lord, whose whole life existence depends on Him, telling each other about Him and enlightening each other, remain contented reveling in Him.

Such a sage who is engrossed in Brahman, brahmayoga yuktAtmA ever rejoices in the bliss of Brahman which is sukhām akshayam, inexhaustible joy.





SLOKAM 22

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।

आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥

ye hi samsparsajA bhogA: duhkhayonaya eva te |

Adyantavanta: kaunteya na teshu ramate budha: ||

Meaning:

All pleasures born out of sense contact, result only in pain, as they are temporary. Oh son of Kunti! The wise never revels in those.

Comments:

The man of discrimination having known the supreme Reality does not delight in objective enjoyment. The enjoyment born of sense contact is short lived and brings sorrow in its wake, Sankara says in Bajagovindam, 'viddhi vyAdhyabhimAnagrastam lokam Sokahatam ca samastam', Life is extremely fickle and short but even the short duration is not peaceful but wrought with disease and other afflictions due to ego-centric desires.

A man is happy when he gets an experience which is conducive to happiness. But till when? Only until something or someone is not obstructing his joy or till he desires something else. Often the same object that gives joy may turn into a thing of sorrow. This is because they are fleeting and not a source of everlasting happiness. This is why KrshNa says in the second chapter that all the experience of joy and sorrow born out of sense contact come and go and they have to be endured. 'mAtrAsparSAstu kaunteya SItoShNa sukhaduhkhadA: AgamApAyina: anityA: tAn titikshasva' (BG. 2.14).

The same idea is expressed here by the word **Adyantavanta:**, meaning that they





have a beginning and an end, applied to the sensual pleasures, **samsprSajA bhogA:** and hence they are the cause of sorrow, **duhkhayonaya:**. All the sensual pleasures are desire-motivated and as said in the sloka '**dhyAyato vishayAn pumsa:**' (BG. 2.62/63), they give rise to the rest of the evils that destroy man namely krodha, lobha etc. Hence, says KrshNa, the wise do not delight in these pleasures of the world, as they seek the eternal joy from the experience of Brahman.





SLOKAM 23

शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।

कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥

Saknoti iha eva ya: soDhum prAkSarIra vimokshaNA+ |

kAma krodhodbhavam vegam sa yukta: sa sukhI nara: ||

Meaning:

The man who is able to withstand the impulses from desire and anger while being in this world before the soul leaves the body, is the true yogi and he is a happy man.

Comments:

Kenopanishad says:

इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः

iha cet avedI atha satyam asti na cet iha avedIt mahatI vinashTi:

-Kenopanishad 2.5

If one knows the supreme reality in this life itself it is true existence; if not there is great loss.

Gita is the essence of Upanishads, which contain profound truth but not commonly understood without intuitive intellect. The Supreme Reality or Brahman, the bhagavAn of the devotee, are all beyond description by words. The sages and later the saints and realized masters, out of compassion for the people who suffer in the samsAra, have tried to express something which cannot be expressed in words. And as such their words are naturally relevant to





the age and nature of the world in which they lived in. All their sayings are truth only and each one understands it to the limit of his intellect and mental impressions due to karma. KrshNa who was **bhagavAn svayam**, also tried to teach the meaning of Upanishads in easier and lucid style.

KrshNa says **nara:**, man, who is able to withstand the impulses of kAma and krodha is the yogi and is happy. Here he uses the word **nara:** which has a special significance. It is said that the life of human is attained after several births as other beings. The animals have no discrimination and act through impulse only, that is, have only sensory perception. Though they also feel sukha and duhkha they are helpless to avert it.

On the other hand the devAs have only sensual enjoyment and experience joy or sorrow as when they are cursed or oppressed by the demons but again they are helpless to get out of that stage because the heaven is only **bhogabhUmi** and not **yogabhUmi**. Only in the world of men one is capable of elevating himself and attain mukti, to enjoy eternal bliss freeing himself from the evils of transmigration. So a man alone can strive for spirituality.

The Supreme Bliss or Brahman hood is the birthright of all and it can be sought only through human life. If one wasted the divine gift of a human life through pursuing sensual pleasures that may take him to lower births due to the desire and wrath born out of such life, he is really lost. The evolution at any stage is possible only by giving up something to acquire a higher faculty such as the fish becoming a land animal by giving up its love of water and the monkeys giving up their climbing trees to become humans etc. Similarly for a man to become divine to attain immortality and enjoy brahmAnanda, he has to give up his tendencies that bind him towards the cycle of birth and death, namely, sensual attachments. This is the purpose of life and the one who realizes it is the yogi and a sukhI.

Of course we do not know whether it is possible for us to do it in one birth. But the effort must be made as the saying goes, '**gacchan pipIliko yAti yojanAnAm**



SatAni api; agacchat vinateyo api padam ekam na gachati'. Even an ant goes 1000 yojanAs by consistent movement but even the GaruDa does not go even one foot by not moving. Moreover we never know how much distance we have traveled in so many births and whether this is the last.

There is a story to illustrate this. Narada was going along a forest and he came across two persons who were meditating under a tree. They bowed down to him and asked him where he was going and Narada replied that he was going to VaikuNTha. Then they both asked him to find out from the Lord how many births they have yet to undergo. He agreed and went away. On returning that way again they both wanted to know the answer to their question. Narada told one of them to see a tamarind tree nearby and said that he had as many lives to go as there are leaves in that tree. He was very happy saying that since there is a definite number of leaves in the tree his lives will end soon. Then Narada met the other one who was some distance away from the first and told him that he had to go through seven more lives. But instead of feeling happy he cried saying that he thought he would get salvation in the same birth and got disheartened at his efforts to attain it. It is needless to say that who of the two would have been liberated earlier. The former represents the man portrayed in the above sloka. His equipoise and joy would take him sooner than he expected as promised by the Lord later 'kshipram bhavati dharmAtma Sasvat SAntim nigacchati'. He becomes saintly in a moment and gets everlasting peace.





SLOKAM 24

योऽन्तः सुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।

स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥

yo anta: sukho antarArAma: tathA anta: jyoti: eva ya: |

sa yogI brahmanirvANam brahmabhUto adhigacchati ||

Meaning;

A yogi who abides in Brahman experiences the peace of Brahman while living in this world, experiences the infinite joy within himself, revelling in himself illuminated by the inner light.

Comments:

brahmabhUta: is the one who has realized Brahman while in this embodiment. He is the yogi who has found eternal bliss in himself, **anta: sukha:** and revels in it, **antarArAma:**, perceiving the supreme light of the divine in himself, **antarjyoti:**. He attains the peace of Brahman, **brahmanirvANam**.

When we identify ourselves with body, mind and intellect as the result of ego born out of ignorance, the real self is obscured, like the one who is seeing through the telescope cannot see himself. But when the perception is turned inward on acquiring the wisdom, he sees himself as the pure self and of the nature of infinite bliss. This is the state described in the above sloka.

The happiness from the worldly experience is infinitesimal as compared to that of Brahmananda, as the latter does not depend on external objects. It is realized within, when the awareness of body, mind and intellect is not there. The joy of Brahman is characterized by eternal peace as opposed to the exhilaration of the worldly joy which like the high tide ebbs away when the sensation is over.

In the next two slokAs KrshNa gives the description of such yogis.





SLOKAM 25

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः ।

छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥

labhante brahmanirvANam rshaya: kshINakalmashA: |

chinnadvaidhA yatAtmAna: sarvabhUtahite ratA: ||

Meaning:

Those whose sins have been washed away, **kshINakalmashA:**, who is free from the opposites, **chinnadvaidhA:**, who are established in the supreme self, **yatAtmAna:** and who are interested the welfare of all beings, **sarvabhUtahite ratA:** those sages attain the **brahmanirvANa**, the joy and peace of experiencing Brahman.

Comments:

The experience of Brahman clears all doubts, and destroys all karma and hence the sins are washed away as declared by the Upanishad:

bhidyate hrdayagranthi: chidyante sarvaSamsayA: |

khsIyante ca asya karmANi tasmin drshTe parAvare ||

--see sloka 42 of chapter 4

As mentioned is sloka 18 '**vidyA vinayasampanne**' the sage who attains the **brahmaj~nAna** has equanimity towards all beings and as he is free from the opposites of love and hate etc., he is concerned only with the welfare of all.





SLOKAM 26

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।

अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥

kAmakrodha viyuktAnAm yatInAm yata cetasAm |

abhita: brahma nirvANam vartate viditAtmanAm ||

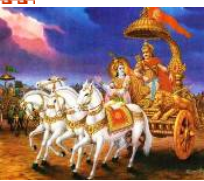
Meaning:

Thus all around the sages, who are free from kAma and krodha, who have controlled their senses and who have the knowledge of the Self, the peace of Brahman exists.

Comments:

The sages who are free from desire and the resultant anger have perfect self control as the result of the knowledge of Brahman. They see only Brahman everywhere in all beings and hence there is nothing but Brahman all around.

Thus one who has realized the self while in this world always reveling in the bliss of Brahman, is free from karma leading to bondage, free from the sins that create karma and attains **samatva**, equipoise. But till he is liberated from the body he has to live in this world until the **prArabda** is exhausted but it does not affect him as there is the peace and joy of Brahma all around him. He acts on in the world as everyone else, motivated not by desire but by concern for the well being of all. The ignorance has gone with the dawn of knowledge and there is no more any effect of **mAyA**, the product of ignorance which creates non-apprehension, **AvaraNa** and misapprehension, **vikshepa**.



SLOKAM 27

स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।

प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥

sparSAn krtvA bahi: bAhyAn cakshu: ca eva antare bhruvo: |

prANa apAnau samau krtvA nAsa abhyantara cAriNau ||

Meaning:

Shutting out all the sense contacts outward, fixing the eyes at the space between the eyebrows, equalizing the inward and outward breaths that move inside the nostrils.





SLOKAM 28

यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।

विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥

yatendriya manobuddhi: muni: moksha parAyaNa: |

vigata icchA bhaya krodha: ya: sadA yukta eva sa: ||

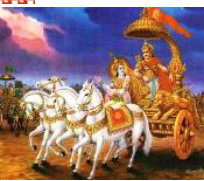
Meaning:

Controlling his senses, mind and intellect, casting off desire, fear and anger, the sage who is intent on attaining salvation becomes liberated forever.

Comments:

At the end of the chapter as usual KrshNa hints at the contents of the chapter to follow, namely **dhyAna yoga**. He has been explaining about karma yoga and j~nAna yoga in the foregoing chapters which stress the inner and outer control in order to attain liberation. Now it is time to answer the inevitable question about the way of doing it. The practical side of yoga is outlined in the next chapter about which a mention is made here.

sparSAn krtvA bahi: bAhyAn means giving up all sensual contacts with the outside world. This does not imply shutting one self within four walls because experience of the sensual pleasures can very well be in the mind itself as made out in the sloka '**dhyAato vishayAn pumsa:**'. (Ch.2.62/63) This is indicated by the phrase '**yatendriya mano buddhi:**', controlling the mind and intellect, in the next sloka. Hence the first requisite for yoga of contemplation, **dhyAna yoga** is control of the mind and intellect by turning them away from the sense contacts when the outward flow towards the sensual objects is automatically stopped.



How this can be done is indicated by the phrase **vigata icchA bhaya krodha:**, which is the prerequisite to **yatendriya mano buddhi**. Attachment to worldly pleasures comes from desire which in its wake gives rise to fear of losing what one desired and anger when there is an obstacle to achievement of the object of desire. So as KrshNa termed desire as **mahASano mahA pApmA** (ch.3.37) and as **dushpUreNa anala** (ch.3.39) in the third chapter, it is the desire which is the root of all evil and when it is given up, the mind becomes controlled.

Hence the seeker of salvation, **mokshaparAyaNa**, controls his mind and intellect by controlling desire which results in the absence of sensual contacts, which means that the sense contact does not affect him.

After doing this the yogi sits down to meditation, the details are prescribed in the next chapter with a mention of basic disciplines here as **cakshu: ca eva antare bhruvo:** and **prANa apAnau samau krtvA** etc.

cakshu: antare bhruvo: - with eyes fixed between the eye brows. KrshNa is not advising us to become cross eyed! It should not be taken literally. It denotes only concentration at one point. Raising the eyes towards the eyebrows as though gazing between them avoids distraction and also upward glance means elevating our attention to a higher objective.

prANa apAnau samau krtvA - When one is agitated the inward and outward breaths are not even. Making them even means that the mind is at rest.

In this state the yogi becomes yukta experiencing the peace of Brahman and becomes liberated forever.





SLOKAM 29

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।

सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥ ५-२९ ॥

bhoktAram yaj~na tapasAm sarvalokamaheSvaram

suhrdam sarvabhUtAnAm j~nAtvA mAm SAntim rcchati

Meaning:

Knowing Me as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, and as the supreme Lord of all the worlds and the real friend of all beings, one gets everlasting peace.

Comments:

As the chapter is about karma yoga, KrshNa clinches the issue and ends the chapter by saying that by dedicating all work to the Lord knowing Him to be the master of all and also the true friend, one will get salvation.

bhoktAram yaj~na tapasAm - The Lord is the receiver of all sacrificial offering and all austerities are directed only to Him. This will be further elaborated in chapter 9 as 'ye api anyadevatA bhaktA:....' (Ch 9.23) because He is the Lord of all beings in all the worlds, being the Self of all. Yaj~na here means all work done as an offering to the Lord and tapas denotes the austerities undertaken for self control.

suhrdam sarvabhUtAnAm - He is the real friend of all. suhrd means Sobhanam hrd asya asti iti, one who has a good heart. The Lord is the closest friend of all as He showers His grace on all without expecting anything in return. He asks only for pure heart that loves Him for His sake. He then returns the love thousand fold as a true friend.





"The Supreme Lord of all!"

The word suhrd is used here to denote that even though He is the overlord of all we need not fear Him and keep our distance out of reverence and awe as in the case of a supreme master because he is also our friend.

THUS ENDS THE FIFTH CHAPTER OF SRI BHAGAVAD GITA ON

SANYASA YOGA



CHAPTER 6

DHYANA YOGA - YOGA OF MEDITATION

SLOKAM 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।

स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥

bhagavAn uvAca

anASrita: karmaphalam kAryam karma karoti ya: |

sa sanyAsI ca yogI ca na niragni: na ca akriya: ||

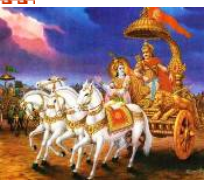
Meaning:

The Lord Said -

One who performs the actions that have to be done without attachment to the fruit of action, he alone is the sannyAsi and also a yogi and not the one who simply gives up the ritual of fire or action.

Comments:

SannyAsi is the one who follows the path of knowledge and the yogi here means karma yogi who follows the path of action. For a sannyAsi there are no rituals and no obligatory karma. But sannyAsa means mental renunciation of the worldly desires and not physical giving up of activities while mentally dwelling upon them in which case he will be a pseudo sannyAsi as Kṛṣṇa Himself will elaborate in a later chapter.

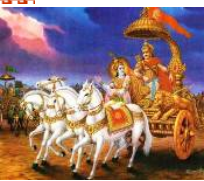




"Do all your actions without attachment!"



On the other hand the one who does all his actions without attachment to the fruit and giving up the sense of agency, that is, a karma yogi, is both a yogi and a sannyAsi as sannyAsa consists in giving up attachment and yoga is giving up the sense of agency.





SLOKAM 2

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।

न ह्यसंन्यस्तसङ्कल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥

yam sannyaAsam iti prAhu: yogam tam viddhi pANDava |

na hi asannyasta sankalpa: yogI bhavati kaScana ||

Meaning:

Hence what is commonly known as sannyAsa is also the yoga. For one who has mentally not renounced the wishful thinking, there can be no yoga.

Comments:

Sankalpa is the thoughts that propel the action. A karma yogi who has given up the sense of agency has no desire-motivated actions and all he does is an offering to the Lord. Hence there is no sankalpa which creates the feeling 'I am doing'. When there is sankalpa, the will to act because of desire for fruit, it brings **vikalpa** or misconception due to ego-centric desires. This is the **mAyA**, called **cittavrtti jAla**. The net made up of the thread of thoughts that bind the man.

Karma yoga is normally prescribed to the householder who has to discharge his duties which are obligatory in his stage of life. But by the same process he can scale the height of the yoga of meditation. The karma done without attachment giving up the fruit therein purifies the mind preparing him for the practice of dhyAna yoga, Yoga of meditation. He is commended by KrshNa as being the yogi and a sannyAsi at the same time. Renunciation, sannyAsa, means giving up and he who does it is a sannyAsi. Yoga is the concentration of mind and he who has it is a yogi. So by merely giving up rituals and obligatory duties does not make one a sannyAsi or a yogi. The rejection of the agency, the feeling that 'I am the doer' is common to both yoga and sannyAsa. Hence KrshNa says that without mental renunciation yoga is not possible.





SLOKAM 3

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनिर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।

योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥

Aruruksho: mune: yogam karma kAraNam ucyate |

yogArUDhasaya tasya eva Sama: kAraNam ucyate ||

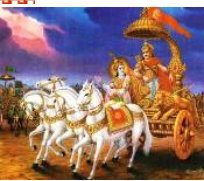
Meaning:

For the one who wishes to climb to the state of being established in yoga, action is the means of attaining it. When he has reached that stage, tranquility is the means.

Comments

The state of yoga is the same as that of sthitapraj~na outlined in the second chapter when one gets the **samatvabuddhi**. Then his mind becomes calm without any disturbances what so ever. This is the state of **yogArUDha**. It could be reached only by **nishkAmakarma**. Hence for the one who wishes to reach there should be doing karma without attachment, which is karma yoga, referred to as karma in this sloka as the term yoga denotes the final stage of **yogArUDha**. When he becomes **yogArUDha**, the tranquility of mind born out of the renunciation of desire and sensual pleasures leads him to the final state of self-realization.

The word **muni** means the one whose thoughts are always centered round the supreme self. **mananAt muni:**, **manana** meaning contemplation. The word **mauna**, silence is derived from **muni** because the mind of a muni is still without thought-disturbances and hence he remains silent, being devoid of sankalpa. There is nothing to be achieved by him by speech or willful action as denoted in the third chapter by the sloka, '**na eva krtenArtho na akrteneha kaScana**' (3.18). This is the state of **yogArUDha**. But how to know that one has reached that stage? This is explained by the next sloka.





SLOKAM 4

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।

सर्वसङ्कल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥

yadA hi na indriyArtheshu na karmasu anushajjate |

sarvasankalpa sannyAsI yogArUDha: tadA ucyate ||

Meaning:

When one is not attached to the sense objects or to the actions and has given up all thoughts of desire then he is said to have climbed to the state of yoga.

Comments:

By practicing karma yoga, the **Aruruksha**, one striving for yoga, becomes free from desires and desire-motivated activities. When there is no desire, the attachment for sense objects becomes extinct. Still it is possible to get attached to the action itself born out of the sense of agency as a result of the ego that creates the feeling of "I" and "mine". Renunciation of this is denoted by the term **sarva sankalpa sannyAsI**. The desires for sensual pleasure no more distract him and he is free from the attachment of the result of actions and also of actions as such. Then one has reached the state of yogArUDha.

Involvement and dedication to action need not necessarily be followed by attachment. One feels that he is placed in particular circumstances for performing the particular action by the will of the Lord and simply executes his duty to the best of his ability as the service of the Lord. Any action sacred or secular done with the spirit of sacrifice and as an offering is karma yoga because it is free from attachment. Compared with a person working with self interest the karma yogi is able to do a better job and it brings success even though he may not be expecting it. The practical method of attaining the state of yoga is being outlined in the subsequent part of this chapter.





SLOKAM 5

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥

uddharet AtmanA AtmAnam na AtmAnam avasAdayet ||

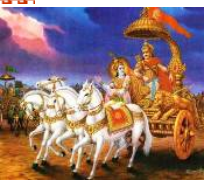
AtmA eva hi Atmano bandhu: AtmA eva ripu: Atmana: ||

Meaning:

One should elevate himself by his own self and should not allow it to go down. The self only is the friend of oneself and the self alone is the foe of oneself.

Comments:

When the peak is reached, self is lifted up by itself. No external aid can help in elevating oneself which includes the learning of SAstrAs. All the external means to meditation like study of SAstrAs, japa, chanting and others can only help in purifying our internal equipment to make us ready to concentrate. But to attain yoga and subsequent liberation one has to transcend the body mind and intellect, the latter termed as the inner equipment, and identify with one's self. This could be achieved only through Self alone. This is what has been implied by **uddharet AtmanA AtmAnam**. The diffidence that whether this could be done is dispelled by the words '**na AtmAnam avasAdayet**', elevate the Self and not push it down, which means 'do not give up'. Self alone is the friend, **Atma** here meaning the inner self, the self alone becomes the enemy. Here the word self means not the Atma but the mind and intellect.



SLOKAM 6

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।

अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥

bandhu: AtmA AtmAna: tasya yena AtmA eva AtmanA jita: |

anAtmanastu Satrutve varteta Atma eva Satruvat ||

Meaning:

The self is the friend of oneself if he has controlled himself by the self. But to one who has not done so the self remains hostile like an enemy.

Comments:

In interpreting the words like yoga, Atma and other similar ones having a generally understood meaning, one must be careful and construe their meaning according to the context in which they are mentioned. Many distorted versions are only due to the failure of doing so or deliberate misinterpretation. To the one who has controlled himself, the Self, **Atman**, becomes a friend because he identifies himself with his Self and not with his body, mind and intellect, which constitute non-self. On the other hand if he identifies himself with his non-self, it prevents him from realizing his Self and he becomes the enemy of himself. Here the self which becomes his enemy is not the inner self but his internal equipment consisting of body, mind and intellect.



SLOKAM 7

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥

jItAtmana: praSAntasya paramAtmA samAhita: |

SItoShNa sukhaduhkheshu tathA mAna apamAnayo: ||

Meaning:

The Self of one, who has controlled himself and is serene, remains, always settled in situations of heat and cold, of joy and sorrow.

Comments:

jItAtmA is one who has controlled his self, meaning his individual self, jIvatmA, comprising of body, mind and intellect, (the Atman or the Supreme Self, the paramAtman is not meant).

Hence as a result of this, he remains praSAnta, calm.

param AtmA samAhita: - His real self, Atman, is referred to as param Atman to distinguish it from the jIvatmA. His Self is integrated in Brahman in all the situations like that of heat and cold, joy and sorrow.

The experience of heat and cold belongs to the body and felt through the indriyAs. When the mind attaches itself to the indriyAs the sensations give rise to joy or sorrow. The idea of honour and disgrace, mAna and apamAna pertain to the thought that is the intellect.

The one whose thoughts are centered in Brahman does not identify himself with body, mind and intellect and hence the opposites of heat and cold, joy and sorrow and honour and disgrace do not affect him.





SLOKAM 8

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कघटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।

युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥

j~nAna vij~nAna trptAtmA kUTastho vijitendriya: |

yukta iti ucyate yogI samloshTASmakAncana: ||

Meaning:

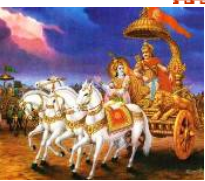
The yogi who is contented with knowledge and wisdom and has full control of his senses is said to be integrated in yoga and remains immutable like the anvil, treating the potsherd, stone and gold equally.

Comments

The sage who is detached from the body and mind through j~nAna and vij~nAna is not affected by anything that happens to him and hence he is **kUTastha**, immutable and unshakable like the anvil of the ironsmith which, even though repeatedly hit does not undergo any change like the piece of iron that is placed on it, which alone changes in shape, being red-hot. The Self is called **kUTastha** as is unaffected by the changes in the body, mind and intellect which are like red-hot iron, full of **rAga**. (**rAga** means colour especially red, signifying rajas.) So the one who has identified with the Self remains unaffected by the changes which pertain only to body, mind and intellect!

Such a yukta, treats a potsherd, a stone and gold equally. Potsherd is something that is of no use and no one cares to pick it up. Stone is not so and could be used for various purposes by various people. Gold is desired by all. But to a yogi of integrated intellect, who dwells in Brahman always, all things are the same, denoted by the word **samaloshTASma kAncana**. He experiences the joy of the Supreme Self, compared to which everything else is like the potsherd only.

This **samatva** or attitude of equality of all things extends also towards all people. This is explained in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 9

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।

साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥

suhrt mitra ari udAsIna madhyastha dveshya bandhushu |

sAdhushu api ca pApeshu samabuddhi: viSishyate ||

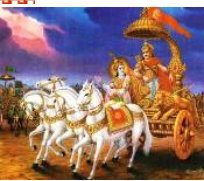
Meaning:

The yogi who has equanimity towards a well-wisher, friend, enemy, the indifferent, the neutral, those who hate and the relatives and also towards the good and the sinners, excels.

Comments:

In chapter two, sloka 48, KrshNa said 'samatvam yoga ucyate' - Yoga is equanimity. This is denoted by samabuddhi here. KrshNa was going to elaborate on the practice of the yoga of meditation for which the requisites have been described in the foregoing slokAs. After saying that one must have the same attitude towards the opposites and remain calm under all circumstances, now the concept is extended to include the nonchalance towards all, friend and foe!

A suhrd is one who does good without expecting anything in return. While mitra is one who befriends for a purpose. ari is an enemy or adversary and udAsIna is an indifferent person. madhyastha is a mediator, dveshya is one who hates you and bandhu is a relation. In short he treats all alike without having likes and dislikes. It is interesting to note that the words mitra and ari are juxtaposed with one another and so are the words dveshya and bandhu. This implies that the pairs are interchangeable. A mitra who is friendly for some specific purpose can become an ari, an adversary when the purpose is not fulfilled. Similarly a



bandhu will soon become dveshya. One who shows bitterness or hatred towards you is often a relative as we see around us in this world. As these characteristics belong to the non-self, the yogi, who is united with his Self is not bothered about it. He ignores the container and sees only the content



'suhrd!'" (swAmi deSikan)

So long KrshNa has been elaborating on the state of yogArUDha, the one who has scaled the heights of meditation. Now He starts to give the guidelines to reach that state, namely the discipline to be followed by an **Arurukshu**, one who is desirous of reaching that state.



SLOKAM 10

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।

एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥

yogI yunjIta satatam AtmAnam rahasi sthita: |

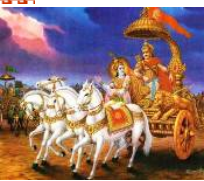
ekAkI yatacittAtmA niraSI: aparigraha: ||

Meaning;

The yogi who wishes to reach the state of yogArUDha described above, he should always fix his mind on the Self, retiring to a secluded spot alone, controlling his mind and intellect, giving up all desires and possessions.

Comments:

One who wishes to meditate should keep himself secluded as meditation is not possible in a crowd. He should be alone, **ekAkI**. Nowadays group meditation has become popular and this may appear to be a bit out of place but the words **rahasi sthita:** and **ekAkI** are used to indicate that the meditation should be done in a place and time as to have no disturbance or interruptions. That is why in those days the sages retired to the forest to do **tapas**. The state of **yatacittAtma**, control of mind and intellect will come only when one becomes **nirASI:**, free from desire and **aparigraha**, not attached to possessions. Otherwise his mind will be full of desire for things he wants to acquire and anxiety for his possessions. To renounce the world and to become a sannyAsin is no guarantee that one will be **nirASI** and **aparigraha**. The story goes that when Janaka was listening to the upadesa of his guru, he was told that his palace was on fire. He never moved from his place because being a true karma yogi he thought that nothing belonged to him but the hermits who were with him ran to rescue their meager possessions of cloth and water pot etc. This does not mean that Janaka was failing in his duty as a protector but it shows that having done



his duty well he was sure that everything would be done without his presence or concern. Individually he was not worried about his possessions which he considered to be not his in reality.

But simply by retiring to a secluded place will one be able to meditate? This is a common misconception. When we try to insist the importance of persistent contemplation of God to develop bhakti we often hear people say "How can we think of God all the time living in the world pressed by our family commitments? It may be possible if we are allowed to go to a secluded spot away from family atmosphere". What they do not understand is that even if they go to Himalayas they take their thoughts with them. This is what exactly Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna in the eighteen chapters of the Gita when he wanted to go away from the battlefield. Then what should an aspirant do? The answer is given in the next line 'yata cittAtmA nirAsI: aparigraha:

One who wishes to scale the heights of meditation should be yatacittAtmA, self-controlled, nirAsI, without desire and aparigraha:, without possessions. This does not mean renouncing the world physically but mentally, like King Janaka, by giving up clinging attachments to worldly pleasures and possessions.





SLOKAM 11

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।

नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥

Sucau deSe pratishThApya sthiram Asanam Atmana: |

na ati ucchritam na atinIcam caila ajina kuSa uttaram ||

Meaning:

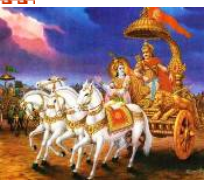
He should place himself in a pure spot, in a firm seat neither too high nor too low and covered with cloth, deer skin and dharbha grass.

Comments:

Next KrshNa elaborates on the physical aids to meditation. The spot must be clean, conducive to spirituality, the seat must be firm to reduce anxiety and covered with kuSa grass, a hide and a cloth in that order. To avoid the roughness of the seat, deer skin is spread on it and dharbha grass is to preserve the skin. The cloth on the skin prevents the hairs on the skin from sticking on the body.

The seat should not be very high or very low. That is, one should not sit on a cliff or under the ground. This again is to ensure safety. If one sits in a high seat or on a cliff he may fall down if he happens to doze! In a low seat like underground he may be disturbed by insects or water.

These conditions have to be understood in the context of the period of Gita and should not be confused with the modern times. The point stressed here is that the seat on which you meditate must be comfortable and secure just enough to enable you to concentrate.



SLOKAM 12

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।

उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥

tatra ekAgram mana: krtvA yatacitta indriya kriya: |

upaviSyA Asane yunjyAt yogam Atma viSuddhaye ||

Meaning:

There he should practice yoga, with mind single-pointed, with his senses and mind controlled, seated on the seat, for the sake of purifying himself.

Comments:

Seated thus one should withdraw his mind from the outside world and concentrate on the supreme for purification of his inner equipment. Are there any other conditions to practice yoga other than choosing the proper seat? This is explained in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 13

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।

संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥

samam kAyaSirogrIvam dhArayan acalam sthira: |

samprekshya nAsikAgram svam diSa: ca anavalokayan ||

Meaning:

Keeping his body, head and neck straight, holding himself motionless and steady, seeing the tip of his nose not looking in other directions.

Comments:

This sloka is translated as 'holding the body, head and neck evenly and steadily, the resolute yogin fixes his gaze on the tip of his nose, not looking around'. This instruction is not given so as to make the meditator develop a squint or stiff-back! It only means that one should not be distracted by body movement or by outward objects. Fixing the gaze at the tip of the nose signifies the position of the half-closed eyes as being kept open one will be tempted to look around and closing them may induce him to sleep!



SLOKAM 14

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।

मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत् मत्परः ॥

praSantAtmA vigatabhI: brahmacArivrate sthita: |

mana: samyama macchitta: yukta AsIta matpara: ||

Meaning:

With his mind calm, free of fear, following abstinence, with his thoughts centered on Me by restraining his mind, he should meditate on Me.

Comments:

Such a yogi becomes calm in mind, praSantAtma, free of fear, vigatabhI:, because he sees Brahman everywhere and in his self as fear come only from something other than us. We do not fear ourselves. To control of mind mana: samyama come from his brahmacharya vrata, which does not mean celibacy but control of desire. Then he is able to turn his mind on the Lord, macchitta: and becomes engrossed in Him, matpara:. Then he is yukta, integrated in yoga.





SLOKAM 15

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।

शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥

yunjan evam sadAtmAnam yogI niyatamAnasa: |

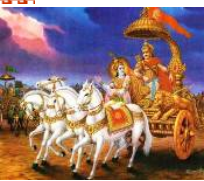
SAntim nirvANaparamAm matsamsthAnam adhigacchati ||

Meaning:

Ever applying himself in this state of contemplation, the yogi, whose mind is restrained, attains the highest state of supreme peace that abides in Me.

Comments:

With tranquillized inner sense and indriyAs under control the yogi should direct his thoughts on the Supreme Reality. Thus he gets peace which will culminate in emancipation, nirvANa.





SLOKAM 16

नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।

न चातिस्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥

na atyaSnatsta: tu yogo asti na ca ekAntam anaSnata: |

na ca atisvapna SIasya jAgrata: na eva ca arjuna ||

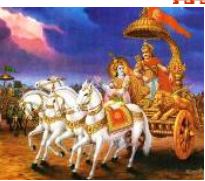
Meaning:

There can be no yoga possible for an overeater or for one who starves: or for one who oversleeps or the one who never sleeps.

Comments:

KrshNa warns against overdoing the practice of yoga as well as taking it too easy. One who eats in excess will not be able to meditate because the moment he sits down to do it he will feel sleepy and lethargic. On the other hand if one eats little or starves, eating not enough to keep him active and energetic, he will be overcome with fatigue. Similarly one who sleeps too much will cultivate tamas instead of sattva which is needed to control his mind and concentrate. But one who sacrifices his sleep in order to pursue yoga in earnest will not have the strength to do so.

Indulgence in eating has got a wider meaning of indulgence in all sensual enjoyments. As the senses are awake during the time one is not engaged in meditation, the sensual experience must be moderate and conducive to his spiritual upliftment. One who strives for yoga should eat the sAttvika food and avoid rajasika and tamasika as they will either excite or create indolence. KrshNa elaborates on the type of food in a later chapter. Regarding other sense experiences, one should hear, contact, smell and see only what is good for his spiritual progress. In short those sensations which will increase sattva and





reduce rajas and tamas. Karma yogi who works with detachment is not tempted by the latter kind of sensual experiences. This comes easily to a devotee as he does everything as the service of the Lord as KulaSekara AzhvAr puts it in a sloka in MukundamAla thus.



"sing His praises!" (Melkote SrI yOga nrsimhar)

'Oh tongue, sing about KeSava, the slayer of Mura. Oh mind, think of SrIdhara. Two hands, you worship Him, Two ears, you hear the stories about acyuta. Oh eyes, look at KrshNa. Pair of feet, you go to the temple of Hari. Oh nose, you

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smell the tuLa's leaves from the feet of Mukunda. Oh head, bow down to adhokshaja'.

When all the senses are thus engaged in the service of the Lord they will cease to be attracted by the worldly sensual pleasures. This reminds one, of the Kural of the famous Tamil sage TiruvALLuvar, who has given to the world maxims with deep meaning in short sentences.

பற்றுக் பற்றற்றான் பற்றினை அப்பற்றை

பற்றுக் பற்று விடற்கு

paRRruga paRRaRRAn paRRinai appaRRai

paRRuga paRRu viDaRrku.

It means that in order to relinquish the attachment of the world one has to develop attachment towards the Lord. If we want to give up something it is easier to do so by shifting our attachment to something else which is more desirable.

This calls to the mind an episode in the life of Sri Ramanuja. There was a man in Srirangam who had a beautiful wife and he was much enamored with her and used to spread an umbrella on her head to shield her from the Sun much to the ridicule of others. Ramanuja saw him and took pity on him and asked him what is that he found so attractive in his wife. He replied that she had beautiful eyes. Ramanuja told him that if he finds a pair of eyes more attractive will he switch his devotion to that. When the man asked who has more beautiful eyes, Ramanuja took him inside the temple of Ranganatha and showed him the Lord and asked him has he ever seen a pair of more beautiful eyes. Due to past merit, and due to the grace of the AcArya, the man along with his wife became a great devotee of the Lord and great disciples of Ramanuja, renouncing all that he had. This illustrates well the Kural quoted above.





SLOKAM 17

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।

युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥

yuktAhAra vihArasya yukta ceshTasya karmasu |

yukta svapna avabodhasya yogo bhavati duhkhaA ||

Meaning:

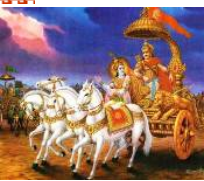
The yoga becomes destroyer of sorrows for him who is moderate in eating and in relaxation and in all his actions and in sleep and waking.

Comments:

Hence one should be wise in all his activities and should eat enough to sustain himself and not indulge in food to satisfy his palate. He should also have enough sleep to give his body proper rest and in all activities be moderate and should not overdo work, taking enough time for relaxation and rest.

We could understand about moderation in food. But how to define moderation is sleep and work? The SAstra prescribes about six hours sleep in the middle part of the night, that is, for two yAmAs, keeping awake in the first and last yAmA. But this varies according to the individual requirements of the yogi.

The moderation in work means to do the work as karma yoga and not get addicted to work. This addiction is called overwork and those who are addicts to work are workaholics. This occurs because of ego that one is indispensable and the attitude that 'I am doing', and 'I alone can do it' etc. No one is indispensable in this world. All actions are by the will of God and it is His responsibility to take care of all. Man out of ego thinks that he or his work is important. Detachment should permeate not only to possessions and relations





but also to the work. A karma yogi does his work as the offering to God and hence he does it well. But he is not anxious about the result which he knows is not in his control.





SLOKAM 18

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।

निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥

yadA viniyatam cittam atmAni eva avatishThate |

ni:sprha: sarvakAmebhyo yukta iti ucyate tadA ||

Meaning:

When the mind, controlled rests on the Self, being free from desires and attachments then one is said to be yukta, one who is integrated in yoga.

Comments:

The state described by yukta is no different from that of sthitapraj~na, explained in the second chapter but here we have amore detailed account of an integrated mind, referred to in the second chapter. When is a mind said to be established in the self, 'Atmani eva avatishThate?' When it is controlled, yadA viniyatam, How this is achieved? When the mind is free from desires and attachments, ni:sprha: sarvakAmebhya:.

But against the common misconception that one should never have any desire, VedAnta is not against desires as even to attain liberation is a desire and to see and sing about and serve the lord as a prelude to this is also a desire. But VedAnta is against the clinging to the desire only, which is termed as sanga in second chapter in sloka 62 'dhyAyato vishayAn pumsa:...' Desire is only a thought like saying "I like this girl". But when it turns out to be sanga, attachment due to dwelling upon the object of desire to the exclusion of everything else it becomes an obstacle to spiritual progress. This of course refers to the early stages because when one attains the final state of a sthitapraj~na he becomes free from likes and dislikes and entirely free from desire of any sort. Why this happens is explained in sloka 20.





SLOKAM 19

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।

योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥

yathA dIpo nivAtastho na ingate sA upamA smrtA |

yogino yata cittasya yunjato yogam Atmana: ||

Meaning:

The mind of the yogi who practices meditation is compared to a flame of a lamp which does not flicker in a place devoid of wind.

Comments:

In the absence of wind there is no movement of the flame of a lamp. Thoughts occur in the mind constantly, each one being replaced by the next, hence the mind is termed as fickle. This can be very well experimented when we sit down to do japa or when a student sits down to study. Thoughts which we never knew we had will crowd the mind at that time! What we to steady the mind then is to direct it towards the object of our devotion. When there is no wind, the flame of the lamp burns steadily upwards. So too the mind of a yogi is turned upwards without thought disturbances.

In the next four slokAs we have a complete description of the state of yoga.





SLOKAM 20

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।

यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥

yatra uparamate cittam niruddham yogasevayA |

yatra ca eva AtmanA AtmAnam paSyAn Atmani tushyati ||

Meaning:

Where the mind is at rest, controlled by the practice of yoga and where one, seeing the Self by himself revels in the Self,

Comments:

The reason why the one with integrated mind is free from desires and attachment is that he is enjoying, **uparamate cittam**, the supreme bliss of the absolute, **Atmani tushyati**, by seeing the Self in himself **AtmanA AtmAnam paSyAn**. What is this bliss? As explained earlier it is the absolute bliss not dependant on external objects. Joy from external objects is short lived and the same object brings unhappiness according to the time and circumstances. This is because it is not the object but the mind which creates happiness or unhappiness. In the state of yoga the mind is still, resulting happiness is pure uncontaminated bliss.





SLOKAM 21

खमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।

वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥

sukham Atyantikam yat tat buddhihgrAhyam atIndriyam |

vetthi yatra na ca eva ayam sthita: calati tattvata: ||

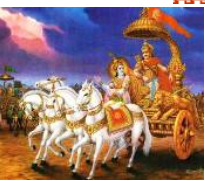
Meaning:

Where one knows that supreme happiness which can be understood by the intellect but could not be experienced by the senses, where he does not swerve from that state being established therein,

Comments:

The bliss of Brahman is highest, **Atyantikam**, comprehensible through intellect, **buddhigrAhyam**, but could not be experienced by the senses, **atIndriyam**. The bliss of the Self realization will be experienced only when one transcends the body, mind and intellect and therefore it is not grasped by sense organs. When the ego is also absent, what remains is the pure self. As the ego is the creator of objective experiences the subjective nature of bliss cannot be experienced by the ego. But this could be understood by the intellect. When we are in deep sleep all that we experience on waking up is a sensation of peace and joy. But in deep sleep the senses, mind and intellect and even the ego do not exist because we never experienced anything then. What really existed then was the Self alone but we were not aware of it due to the ignorance that covers the cognition of Self. This we could understand through intellect but not experience till that state of yoga is reached when the body, mind and intellect are transcended. To denote that it is different from the joys of the world, KrshNa says, **yatra sthita: na calati tattvata:**, once the state of bliss is experienced the yogi does not slip back.

If it is not an objective experience why should one strive to attain that. The answer is given in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 22

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।

यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥

yam labdhvA ca aparam lAbham manyate na adhikam tata: |

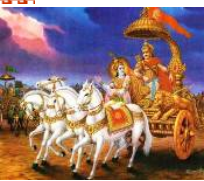
yasmin sthita: na duhkkena guruNA api vicAlyate ||

Meaning:

Attaining which one does not consider any other gain more than that and staying in which state he is not moved even by the greatest grief,

Comments:

When it is said that the yogi once experienced the bliss never slips back the possible doubt that may arise is that whether the sorrows of the world would not affect him anymore? No, says KrshNa. After gaining that beyond which there is no more to be gained, the yogi is not affected even by greatest sorrow. He has reached the stage, *duhkheshu anudvignamanA: sukheshu vigatasprha:*, (sloka 56, chapter 2).





SLOKAM 23

तं विद्याद्दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।

स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥

tam vidyAt duhkhasamyogaviyogam yoga samj~nitam |

sa niScayena yuktavyo yogo anirviNNa cetasa ||

Meaning:

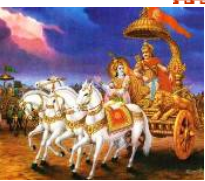
Know that to be the yoga which separates one from the association with grief. This yoga must be practiced with a firm mind free from despondency.

Comments;

This yoga, is termed as 'duhkhasamyogaviyoga yoga', disjunction from the conjunction with duhkha, by KrshNa. He further says that this yoga has to be practised with a mind not dejected, 'anirviNNa cetasa'.

The purpose of yoga is to free oneself from the ills of samsAra and from the cycle of births and deaths because even the joys of samsAra are felt as duhkhayonaya; source of sorrow. So the contact with everything in the world is duhkhasamyoga, contact with sorrow. The yoga outlined above is the cure for samsAra and hence it is called duhkha samyoga viyoga, the disjunction of the conjunction with sorrow.

This yoga must be followed with firm conviction, niSacyena and without dejection or despondency. Firm conviction comes out of the decision that this is the way of salvation and anirviNNa cetasa, the mind without despondency is emphasized because the yoga could not come to completion if the mind is dejected at the failure to progress as one wished. In other words it should be faithfully followed.





SLOKAM 24

सङ्कल्पप्रभवान्कामांस्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।

मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥

sankalpa prabhavAn kAmAn tyaktvA sarvAn aSeshata: |

manasA eva indriyagrAmam viniyamya samantata: ||

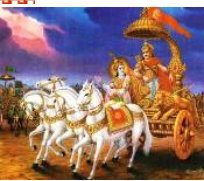
Meaning:

Relinquishing all desires born out of the mind completely, controlling the senses by the mind in all respects,

Comments:

The natural rejoinder to this would be "How can I practise this?" Kṛṣṇa anticipates this and answers it Himself. First one has to give up all desires, sarvAn kAmAn tyaktvA, born of thoughts, sankalpa prabhavAn, by controlling the senses with the mind on, manasA indriyagrAmam samyamya all sides, samantata:.

A desire gets strengthened only when the mind runs behind it. That is why it is said that the senses should be controlled by the mind. As explained earlier sankalpa is the seat of desire. The path of desire is described thus. First comes sprhA, eagerness which creates iccha, wish which turns in to trshNa, longing and once enjoyed the vAsana or impression of the experience which is the cause of attachment follows. So here it is said that one should give up all desires rising out of the thought of them as made out in the sloka 'dhyAyato vishayAn' (2:62).





"Fix your mind on Me!" (namperumAl -SrIrangam)



SLOKAM 25

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।

आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥

Sanai: Sanai: uparamet buddhyA dhrtigrhItayA |

Atmasamstham mana: krtvA na kincit api cintayet ||

Meaning:

Slowly one should detach himself with the intellect in firm grasp, with mind fixed on the Self, without having any thoughts.

Comments:

Slowly and gradually, **Sanai: Sanai:**, the mind should be trained to concentrate on Brahman. It is easily said than done. True, says KrshNa, but you have to withdraw the mind from wherever it wanders. The nature of the mind is that if you control it in one direction it runs in another. So draw back the mind persistently when it runs from one object to the other.

It is not possible to turn the mind away from the worldly desires and attachment in a single attempt due to the accumulated vAsanAs of several lives. To do it forcibly will only result in disaster as the mind at the next available opportunity will run after them with redoubled vigour. It is something like those following a vrata abstaining from drink for the period specified. When the period of austerity is over, they indulge in drink with double fold enthusiasm. Hence it should not be forced but slowly and gradually the mind should be turned away from the worldly attachments. The more one gets involved in spiritual studies and association with the spiritually minded, the better will be the mind control. In sitting down to meditation first it will be possible to control the mind only for few minutes and then gradually the period will increase until one comes to a stage where he is able to concentrate on the divine the moment he sits down for it.



SLOKAM 26

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।

ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥

yato yato niScarati mana: cancalam asthiram |

tata: tata: niyamyai etat Atmani eva vaSam nayet ||

Meaning:

The mind should be restrained and directed towards the Self, pulling the fickle and restless mind from wherever it wanders.

Comments:

Usually we find that when you sit down to japa, for instance before you chant the name, say, Rama, the mind wanders to the Raman next door and by the time it has dwelt on his history and qualities past and present and you become aware of its wanderings you would come to the end of your japa. So, says KrshNa, "Withdraw the mind the moment it wanders and concentrate on the Self and again when it starts to run, bring it back". Restraining the mind thus it finally does your bidding. It is suggested that you fix your gaze at some symbol or form for few minutes and then close your eyes and try to see the same inside





SLOKAM 27

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।

उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥

praSAntamanasam hi enam yoginam sukham uttamam |

upaiti SAnta rajasam brahmabhUtam akalmasham ||

Meaning:

The greatest bliss comes to the yogi, whose mind is at peace, who has subdued the rajas, who is free from defects and who is established in Brahman.

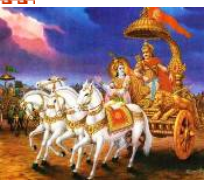
Comments:

praSAntamanasam - refers to the one who has given up desires through discrimination, viveka and detachment, vairAgya.

SAntarajasam - one who has given up all activities that increase rajas, that is, desire-motivated activities.

kalmasham - defects born out of tamas like lethargy, delusion and evil tendencies which induce one to commit sin. akalmasham refers to one who has given up tamasik activities and tendencies.

brahmabhUtam - means the yogi who has dispelled rajas and tamas and established in sattva but not yet attained the final bliss of Brahman. It is gained only through persistent contemplation mentioned in the next sloka





SLOKAM 28

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।

सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥

yunjan evam sadA AtmAnam yogI vigata kalmasha: |

sukhena brahmasamsparSam atyantam sukham aSnute ||

Meaning:

Thus the yogi who is engrossed in the Self always, from whom all impurities are removed, gets this greatest Bliss through the contact with Brahman.

Comments:

As explained in sloka, 25 the mind is trained to think of nothing but Brahman always, sadA AtmAnam yunjan, because the yogi identifies himself with the Self only and not with body, mind and intellect. vigata kalmasha: is the same as akalmasha: in the last sloka.

When the mind is free from the defects due to rajas and tamas, the intellect is established in pure sattva and it becomes easy then to contemplate on the Brahman. The Brahman experience resulting from this is the brahmasamsparSa. Then there is unlimited bliss of Brahman.

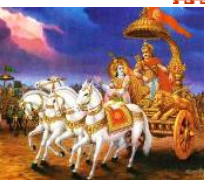
How to define this bliss of Brahman? The Upanishad says,

यो वै भूमा तत्सुखं नाल्पे सुखमस्ति भूमैव सुखं भूमा त्वेव विजिज्ञासितव्यम्

yo vai bhUmA tat sukham na alpe sukham asti bhUmA eva sukham

bhUmA tveva vijij~nAsitavyam

-chAndogya:7.23.1





Meaning:

Whichever is the highest that alone is the bliss. There is no happiness in that which is trivial. The highest alone is bliss and one should try to cognize that alone.

What is **bhUmA**, the highest? The Upanishad explains,

यत्र नान्यत्पश्यति नान्यच्छृणोति नान्यद्विजानाति स भूमा

yatra na anyat paSyati, na anyat SrNoti, na anyat vijAnAti, sa bhUmA

- chAndogya:7.24.1

Meaning:

Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, knows nothing else, that is **bhUmA**, the highest.

यत्रान्यत्पश्यत्यन्यच्छृणोत्यन्यद्विजानाति तदल्पं यो वै भूमा तदमृतमथ यदल्पं तन्मर्त्यं

yatra anyat paSyati anyat SrNoti anyat vijAnAti tat alpam,

yo vai bhUmA tat amrtam atha yat alpam tat martyam

-chAndogya:7.24.1

Meaning:

Where one is aware of, hears, and sees something else it is **alpam**, trivial. **bhUmA** is immortal and **alpam** is mortal.

What this conveys is that, whatever joy one experiences in this world it is always impermanent as we are aware of other things at the same time which mars the enjoyment. Any acquisition of the object of desire sooner or later brings fear, anxiety and uncertainty in its wake. This is due to the difficulties



experienced in protecting and maintaining what we have. So it is called **alpam**, trivial and mortal, **martyam**, because the desire motivated activities resulting in the joy of the worldly things only creates karma which causes birth and death.

On the other hand the bliss of Brahman is called **bhUmA**, the highest, because in that state one is not aware of anything else except the unlimited joy and it is **amrtam**, immortal because there is no return to mortality from that.

The scriptures have also given an estimate of the bliss of Brahman in order that it may be understood by the intellect. In BrhadAraNyaka Upanishad, we have a passage describing the bliss of Brahman (brhd. 4.3.33).

If one could imagine an individual who has youth, money, power, family, land, health, fame and honour, he is the happiest of men and it is the highest joy of this world. Hundred times this is the joy in the pitrloka. In gandarvaloka the joy is hundred times that of the ptrs. Hundred times this is the happiness of those who have become devAs by their merit and the happiness of the born-devAs is hundred times more than these devAs by merit. In the PrajApati loka one gets hundred times more joy than that of the devAs. The bliss of Brahman is hundred times more than that of the PrajApatitis. But in fact this bliss of Brahman cannot be measured at all as anything that can be measured becomes limited and the bliss of Brahman is unlimited.

The one who is integrated in yoga sees himself in all beings and all beings in himself and thus has the perception of the same everywhere.

The effects of yoga are outlined in these slokAs. The one who has identified himself with the Self, not only sees himself as the Self but also the others. In fact there is no such concept as 'others', as everything is nothing but Brahman. As all the ornaments are nothing but gold to a goldsmith, to the yogi who has had the perception of Brahman, everything is only Brahman. Hence he sees himself in all and all in himself.



SLOKAMS 29 & 30

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥ २९ ॥

sarvabhUtastham AtmAnam sarvabhUtAni ca Atmani |

Ikshate yogayuktAtmA sarvatra samadarSana: || 29 ||

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥ ३० ॥

yo mAm paSyati sarvatra sarvam ca mayi paSyati |

tasya aham na praNaSyAmi sa ca me na praNaSyati || 30 ||

Meaning:

One who sees Me everywhere and everything in Me, I never perish (cease to exist) in him nor he perishes in Me.

Comments:

'ISavasyam idam sarvam', says the upanishad. The whole Universe is the Lord Himself. Everything came from Him and He is the inner soul of all and hence everything is the Lord Himself, the contained and the container. The teacups may be of different forms, colour and shapes but the tea is the same. Similarly the real Self in all is the Lord and the devotee-yogi sees Him in everything, everywhere. But the example should not be taken too literally as the cup and the tea are two different things and exist in the relationship of the container and the contained while the Lord is both.





NammAzhvAr says, 'uNnum soru parugunIr tinnum veRRilaiyum ellAm kaNNan emperumAn' the food, the water and betel leaves taken after food, everything is the Lord. Not only the sentient but also the insentient is perceived as the Lord by the devotee who is established in bhakti yoga.

In such a devotee, the Lord always exists and he exists in the Lord. That is, there is no more separation. In truth there was never a separation and the ignorance deluded us into believing that we are different from the Self and from others. It is like a king's son who got lost and believed himself to be a poor beggar but when he was made aware of his real identity he finds that he was always the son of the king. The bliss of Brahman described above is the rightful inheritance of every one but like the king's son we were led to believe that we were the imperfect beings caught in samsAra. Upanishads give various examples to illustrate this. When one sees the Lord every thing and everything in the Lord this realization never goes away as it is the real truth and not delusion like believing ourselves to be finite beings subjected to sufferings of the world.

This idea is expressed in the Upanishads thus:

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।

तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति

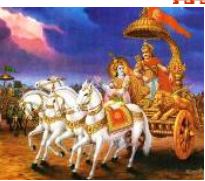
dvA suparNA sayujA sakhAyA samAnam vrksham parishasvajAte |

tayo: anya: pippalam svAdvattyanaShnanan anya: abhicAkaSIti ||

-Mundaka Upanishad: 3-1-1

Meaning:

Two birds that were always together and friendly, occupies the same tree! One of them eats sour and sweet fruits in the tree while the other simply observes,





not eating anything.

These two birds are the jIvAtmA and paramAtmA. The jIvA identifying itself with the body, mind and intellect experiences the sorrow and joy of the world which are denoted by the sour and sweet fruits of the world. The ParamAtmA or supreme self is not affected by the world and looks on as the witness. The jIvA personified as the bird eating the fruits of the tree is further described in the Upanishad as rising slowly towards the top and going near the other bird it realizes that they were not two but one. That is, the jIvA realizes that it is only the Self and not the body. This beautiful metaphor conveys exactly what has been described as the effect of the yoga in the above sloka.





SLOKAM 31

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥

sarvabhUtasthitam yo mAm bajati ekatvam Asthita: |

sarvathA vartamAno api sa yogI mayi vartate ||

Meaning:

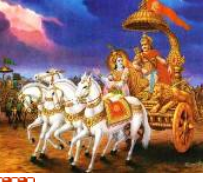
That yogi who is established in the view of oneness, worships Me, he exists in Me wherever he is.

Comments:

This sloka answers the question whether a yogi who sees the Lord everywhere will lapse back into activity or not. When he has attained the perception of oneness, worships the Lord everywhere but he continues in this world doing everything as before but with a different attitude, as the service of the Lord. What ever he does is for lokakshema as explained earlier. So in all his activities which may appear normal, he dwells in the Lord.

This sloka implies that one need not retreat to the forest to become a yogi but could realize the self from wherever he is if he is able to give up his desires and attachment and become engrossed in the divine.





SLOKAM 32

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥

Atmaupamyena sarvatra samam paSyati yo arjuna |

sukham vA yadi vA duhkham sa yogI paramo mata: ||

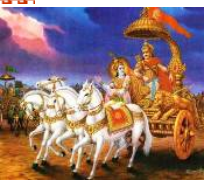
Meaning:

One who sees the likeness of Atman everywhere and hence everything equally, pleasure or pain, that yogi is the highest.

Comments:

To such a yogi as described in the foregoing slokAs, who sees the Self everywhere and attained equanimity, the sthitapraj~na, both pleasure and pain are the same since they do not affect him.

One whose mind is established in Brahman is always in bliss whether he is in meditation or engaged in worldly pursuits whether he is in company or alone. Such a yogi who looks on all as his own Self is deemed the highest.



SLOKAM 33

अर्जुन उवाच

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।

एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥

arjuna uvAca

yo ayam yoga: tvayA prokta: sAmyena madhusUdana |

etasya aham na paSyAmi cancalatvAt sthitim sthirAm ||

Meaning:

Arjuna said

This yoga of equanimity which you taught KrshNa, I am not able to see its stability because of the fickleness (of the mind.)





SLOKAM 34

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।

तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥

cancalam hi mana: krshNa pramAathi balavat drDham |

tasya aham nigraham manye vAyo: iva sudushkaram ||

Meaning:

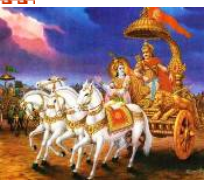
The mind, KrshNa, is fickle, agitated, strong and obstinate. Controlling it, I think, is more difficult than controlling the wind.

Comments:

KrshNa has been talking about the state of yogArUDha which is rather difficult to understand by the uninitiated and Arjuna was like us and to him it is next to impossible to control the mind and bring it to the state of one-pointedness. The mind, he says, is very unsteady, turbulent, obstinate and powerful. Therefore the control of the mind is as difficult as controlling the wind, which is to say that it is impossible.

We are under the control of the mind and not vice versa. So like Arjuna we feel that it is next to impossible to control our mind. But even in everyday life without any spiritual pursuit one has to exercise certain amount of control mentally, orally and physically in order to live a happy and peaceful life. As our speech and action are only the external manifestation of our thoughts the reins of control must be applied to our mind before the thoughts get transferred into words or action. This is what has been emphasized in the second chapter of the Gita by 'dhyAyato vishayAn pumsa:....' (BG 2-62,63).

Here are three adjectives applied to the mind. pramAathi, agitated, balavat,



strong and drDham, firm or obstinate. When mind gets attached to a thing, it becomes turbulent, pramAathi swayed by the emotions of kAma and krodha etc. It also becomes strong, balavat, in its attachment and it is not easy to detach it from the object of desire. When we try to do it the mind shows its obstinacy, drDhatva, by justifying its action. There are so many reasons the mind can supply for remaining attached. The man of the world says, "why should I give up the pleasures of the world for something which I do not know about and who will take care of my family and possessions if I give them up?"

One thing should be understood clearly. Detachment does not necessitate running away from the world to the forest which is what Arjuna wanted to do, but due to attachment and not detachment. The real detachment vairAgya consists in change of attitude and not change of circumstances. This detachment from the world comes only with the knowledge that all the pleasures and possessions are not the source of permanent happiness.

The word KrshNa means eternal bliss. Krshi refers to the earth and the 'Na'kAra stands for nivrtti, bliss through emancipation. Krshna also means one who attracts, karshati iti. To detach from one thing is possible only by attaching ourselves to something higher as explained earlier. So when mind gets attached to the Lord, the other attractions which are termed as alpa in the Upanishad are given up to attain the happiness that is bhUmA.





SLOKAM 35

श्रीभगवानुवाच

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥

Sri bhagaVan uvAca

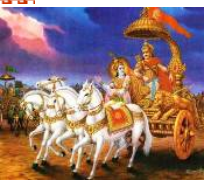
asamSayam mahAbAho mana: durnigraham calam |

abhyAsena tu kaunteya vairAgyeNa ca grhyate ||

Meaning:

The Lord said -

Oh Great armed one! Of course the mind is difficult to grasp and fickle. But it can be empowered by practice and detachment.





SLOKAM 36

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः ।

वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥

asamyata AtmanA yogo dushprApa iti me mati: |

vaSyAtmanA tu yatataA Sakyo avAptum upAyata: ||

Meaning:

Yoga is not possible for one who has no self control. But by the one who has controlled himself and tries, it is possible.

Comments:

Do not despair, says KrshNa, in the oft-quoted and one of the most important slokAs of the Gita. Of course the mind is fickle and uncontrollable. But it can be controlled by **abhyAsa** and **vairAgya**. Dispassion, **vairAgya** comes from renouncing the desires of the world as mentioned in an earlier sloka '**sankalpa prabhavAn kAmAn...**' and the abhyAsa consists in withdrawing the mind slowly and gradually on each and every occasion when it plays truant, as made out in the earlier sloka '**yato yato niscarati...**'.

In the beginning of the 6th chapter of the Gita, it is said '**Aruruksho: mune: yogam karma kAraNam ucyate**'. In the beginning, to renounce the desires, karma yoga is practiced. To do action without attachment to the fruit results in the removal of desire. When the agency is given up and all actions are done as the work of the Lord, one feels that he is the instrument in His hands.

In the modern times it is fitting to give the analogy of a computer to explain karma yoga. The computer does the work it is programmed for though very efficiently, more or less like a sentient being, yet it is only an instrument.





Similarly we are programmed according to our karma and if we do our work efficiently without attachment to the fruit like the computer, which has no desire of its own, we will be the instrument of God through which His grace flows.

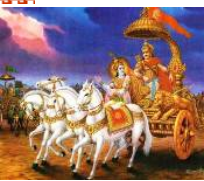
When the desires are removed one gets detachment, *vairAgya* and the mind is no more agitated and become the slave of the yogi. But till one achieves this, constant practice, *abhyAsa* is essential. The phrase '*vairAgyena ca*', is significant because no amount of practice will be fruitful without detachment. Only because of the absence of *vairAgya* the mind is *durnigraha* and *cala*. Therefore Yoga is not possible without controlling the mind but can be achieved easily by one who ceaselessly tries with his mind under control. *VairAgya* and *abhyAsa* are like the two hands of the tongs of self control. One gets strengthens with the other.

abhyAsa means continuous application of mind on the Self by the method described earlier in this chapter. One way of doing it is to relate whatever one experiences, with the Divine as in the song, '*kAkaicciraginilE nandalAla*', where the poet Subrmanya BhArati associates everything he sees with the Lord; the black colour of the crow, the green trees etc. This attitude has been described beautifully by the AzhvArs in their compositions on the nAyaka-nAyaki bhAva of devotion.

This requires incessant contemplation of the divine by *SravaNa*, hearing about the divine manifestations and *manana*, ruminating on what is heard and *nididhyAsana*, deep contemplation and assimilating the divine thoughts.

The association with the saintly souls helps. The mind will be peaceful in the company of the good and spiritually inclined. It is difficult to control the mind in the company of evil. To get rid of *rAga* and *dvesha* one must live in the atmosphere of the good vibrations.

Now a days there is a sad tendency of people to involve themselves too much with the emotions and violence of the make-belief world, I mean the TV serials.



If one watches the episodes displaying violent and negative emotions all day long the mind will accumulate more rubbish than it already has. The samsAra is duhkha as it is, but why should you create an illusory samsAra to add to the burden of our sorrow!

VairAgya detachment can be gained by the knowledge that all the pleasures and possessions of this world are temporary and end in grief. Man knows this and sees it happening all around. Still it is the desire which prevents him from seeing the truth. Recently we saw that the millionaires were virtually on the streets due to the earthquake in Gujarat. This is what Sankara means by saying 'harati nimeshAt kAla: sarvam', the time carries away everything in a moment including our life. YudhishTira was asked by the yaksha what was the most wonderful thing in the world and he said that men see people dying everyday but still they think not about their own death. This is greatest wonder.

Patanjali in his yoga sUtra defines vairAgya thus:

drshTAnusravika vishayavitrshNasya vaSIkAra samj~nA vairAgyam

Giving up all the desires of things of this world and the next is vairAgya. Desire of the next world is not the desire of moksha but the desire for attaining heaven etc., which also belong to the world of their own. Hence desire-motivated karma, kAmya karma, like performance of yaj~na, vrata and other austerities for the sake of enjoyment in the next life or in the life after death is also to be avoided. Gita says later that one who attains other worlds due to his merit gained in this world also returns here only after the merit is exhausted, 'kshINe puNye martyalokam viSanti'.

With this knowledge gained through studies of scriptures and of the lives of the holy men, one gets vairAgya. Then he gets the supreme vairAgya knowing that everything is Brahman and to attain that stage is the ultimate joy. Patanjali terms it as tat param purushakhyAte: guNa vaitrshNyam. Knowledge and experience of Brahman can be gained by transcending the guNas of prakrti, as detailed by KrshNa in the earlier chapters.



Thus if abhyAsa is the current of the river that takes the mind towards Brahman, vairAgya is the dam that prevents the mind from running around towards the worldly desires.

In sloka 36, we find the declaration that by one who has controlled the mind and tries, yoga becomes attainable. **vaSyAtmanA tu yatatA**. There may be a doubt as to why the word '**yatatA**' is used here. **vasyAtmAnA** refers to the one who has controlled his mind. But that is not the end. When the mind is completely in his power and ready to do his bidding, the yogi should make repeated efforts to unite the mind with the divine. This is possible only when he employs his mind all the time in contemplation of the Divine. If we want to meditate on the Lord for half an hour everyday, we should engage our mind in the thought of Him for the rest of 23 and a half hours. If we allow the mind to run around all through the day it will not come to rest when we sit on meditation. Like a dog which seems to be well controlled as long as it is on the leash but runs away to the garbage heap as soon as it is let off the mind can be treacherous and must always be kept on the leash of vairAgya.



SLOKAM 37

अर्जुन उवाच

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।

अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥

arjuna uvAca

ayati: Sraddhaya upeta: yogAt calitamAnasa: |

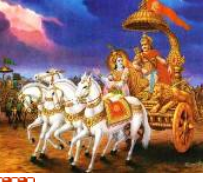
aprApya yoga samsiddhim kAm gatim krshNa gacchati ||

Meaning:

Arjuna said -

What will be the fate of one. KrshNa, who cannot control himself though possessed of faith and his mind thus wanders away from yoga?





SLOKAM 38

कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति ।

अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥

kascit na ubhayavibhrashTa: chinna abhram iva naSyati |

aprathishTho mahAbAho vimUDhaH brahmaNa: pathi ||

Meaning:

Fallen from both, (karma and yoga) is he lost like a cloud broken by wind, swerving from the path to Brahman deluded and supportless.





SLOKAM 39

एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः ।

त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य छेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते ॥

etah me samSayam krshNa chettum arhasi aSeshata: |

tvadanya: samSayasya asya chettA na hi upapadyate ||

Meaning:

This is my doubt, KrshNa, and I find no one else more competent enough to clear this and hence you must dispel this doubt completely.

Comments:

Now Arjuna comes out with another question. Suppose an aspirant starts meditation with full faith and tries to control his mind unsuccessfully and before he accomplishes it his life is cut short. What will be the fate of such a person? Should he start his spiritual practice from the beginning in his next life? Or is he lost like a torn cloud deprived of both, the Self realisation and the heavenly enjoyment which he would have if he had proceeded in the karma mArga, meaning kAMya karma?

A seeker striving for the bliss of Brahman has to forego the joys of the world by controlling his mind and also has to give up the desires of heaven etc. Thus he tries for achievement of yoga but finds it difficult to control his mind. He has the faith in the scriptural teachings and in the final goal of eternal bliss. But he is not able to achieve full mind control and his life ends. Hence he had lost the joys of this world and the next and also had not attained the bliss of Brahman. What will be the fate of such a yogi who has swerved from his path and dies? Will his efforts be in vain? This is the pertinent question of Arjuna.

VyAsa the poet compares the state of such yoga bhrashTa to the cloud scattered by winds.





SLOKAM 40

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।

न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥

SrI bhagavAn uvAca

pArtha na eva iha na amutra vinASa: tasya vidyate |

na hi kalyANakrt kaScit durgatim tAta gacchati ||

Meaning:

The Lord said -

Oh Arjuna, neither in this world not in the next such a soul gets lost.

Comments:

Here KrshNa as the Supreme Self gives the assurance, that none who strives for self redemption ever comes to harm. Then what happens to a yogabhrashTa, one who has strayed from the path of Self realisation and meets his end of life? The answer is given in the next sloka.

The above statement is one of the assurances contained in the Gita like 'kaunteya pratijAnIhi na me bhakta: praNaSyati', (ch.9.31), 'ananyA: cintAyanto mAm' (ch.9.22) etc. This statement holds good generally for all who do good, whether it is worship, or dhAna, giving to and helping others, any austerities and even mentally indulging in such activities. Nothing good done goes waste. This is not a matter of faith alone but could be scientifically verified by the Newton's laws of motion that says, every action has an equivalent and opposite reaction. Action is karma which creates future karma in



the form of results to be experienced. Good karma brings good results. Since thinking is also karma, good thoughts create good vibrations which come back to us redoubled. If even the desire motivated karma produces good result, the spiritual karma would definitely bring only good result, in this life or the next. This is explained in the following slokAs.





SLOKAM 41

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।

शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥

prApya puNyakrtAm lokAn ushitvA SASvatI: samA: |

SucInAm SrImatAm gehe yogabhrashTo abhijAyate ||

Meaning:

After attaining the meritorious worlds and staying there for considerable time, the one who has swerved from his yoga is born in the house of pure-hearted and prosperous.

Comments:

The man who has slipped from yoga goes to the meritorious worlds and stays there for long time and then takes birth in a home of a householder who conform to Vedic ordinances and who is affluent. There, due to pUrvajanma vAsanAs, he is drawn towards yoga and when the obstructing vAsanAs are weakened he pursues the yogic path.

One should remember that the term yogabhrashTA applies not to the one who after practicing yoga a little, lapses back to sensuous life, not able to control his mind, but to the one who practices till the end but unsuccessfully, or is not able to fix his mind at the last moments of his life due to the strong vAsnAs which overpower him at the time of death.

Any individual who is born in an affluent family of pious and honest people but has no interest in worldly pleasures is an example of this kind of yogabhrashTA. Even in kaliyuga we have had many examples like the AcAryAs and saints and saint composers like the Trinity of Carnatic music etc.



SLOKAM 42

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।

एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥

athavA yoginAm eva kule bhavati dhImatAm |

etat hi durlabhataram loke janma yat IdrSam ||

Meaning:

Or he is born in the family of yogis with wisdom. But it is very rare to get such birth in this world.





SLOKAM 43

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम् ।

यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥

tatra tam buddhisamyogam labhate paurvadehikam |

yatate ca tato bhUya: samsiddhau kurunandana ||

Meaning:

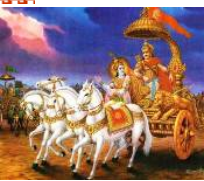
Oh Arjuna! There he gets the perfection of the intellect from where he left off in the previous birth and strives again hard to attain salvation.

Comments:

Depending upon the state up to which he has advanced in yoga he perhaps gets birth in the family of wise yogins though it is rare because this happens only to a near perfect yogin like JaDabharata, who are very rare.

Being born in the family of yogis he acquires memory of ideas accumulated in his previous birth and strives harder to reach perfection.

The idea is that one need not lose courage and confidence as to whether he will be able to achieve perfection in this life. Whatever we do comes to our aid sooner or later and we start from where we left. This is because the spiritual vAsanAs once acquired never perish and even when one slips back they always come to him at the right time as in the case of Ajamila, who was trained for spiritual life but was tempted to the evil life of lust and crime, but got the wisdom at the right time through the grace of the Lord. So the right time to start is now!





SLOKAM 44

पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव हियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः ।

जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥

pUrvAbhyAsena tena eva hriyate hi avaSa: api sa: |

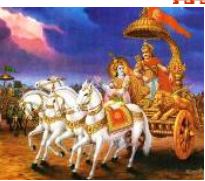
jij~nAsurapi yogasya Sabdabrahma ativartate ||

Meaning:

Due to the practice earlier, he gets the yoga without conscious effort. Even one who is desirous of practicing yoga transcends, **Sabda-brahma**, the world of sensual experiences and of the Vedic rituals performed for the sake of result.

Comments:

This sloka refers to the one who is yogabhrashTA and born in the home of fortunate and pure, **SucInAm SrImatAm gehe**. To him affluence dose not offer any temptation and his mind is fixed in yoga by nature, like king Janaka. Here KrshNa, to confirm the statement that none who strives for self redemption ever comes to harm, says that also one who has the desire to know the yoga even before he progresses in practicing it transcends the **Sabdha-brahma**. The term '**Sabdha-brahma**' refers the world of sensual experience, the sabdha or sound representing all senses. Sabdha-brahma also refers to the word of the VedAs referring to the ritualistic portion of the Vedas which prescribes performing yaj~na etc. for attaining the desired fruit.





SLOKAM 45

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।

अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥

pryatnAt yatamAnastu yogI samSuddha kilbisha: |

aneka janma samsiddha: tata: yAti parAm gatim ||

Meaning:

But the yogi who consciously practices yoga perfected from several births, purified from sins attains the highest goal.

Comments:

The yogi who has perfected his yoga more or less but dies without attaining the goal is born in the family of yogis and there in the conducive atmosphere he easily attains the goal of yoga, the highest status, **parAm gatim**, that is moksha. He has already done the preliminaries in the previous births necessary in the previous births and is ready for the completion of yoga. His sins being washed off, **j~nAna nirdhUta kalmashA:**, (ch.5.17) already his mind and intellect pure, the realization dawns like the sun, **teshAm Adityavat j~nAnam prakASayati tat param**, (ch.5-16) as soon as he starts yoga in this birth. Then he attains the final state from where there is no more returning to samsAra, **gacchanti apunarAvrttim** (ch.5.17)





SLOKAM 46

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।

कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥

tapasvibhya: adhika: yogI j~nAnibhya api mato adhika: |

karmibhya: ca adhika yogI tasmAt yogI bhava arjuna ||

Meaning:

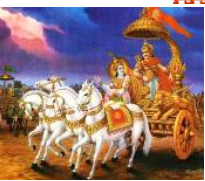
The yogi so far described above is superior to those who follow austerities, who pursue knowledge and those who follow the karma mArga. Therefore Arjuna, be a yogi.

Comments:

There are many disciplines prescribed for spiritual progress. Following austerities is called tapas, like controlling the mind and body and concentrating on an ideal with the purpose of attaining something, either in this world or the next. VisvAmitra was the classical example of this kind of tapasvI.

Acquiring knowledge of Brahman by the study of scriptures is another and one who does that is referred to here as j~nAni, and the term j~nAna should not be confused with brahmaj~nAna which is the result of only the direct experience of Brahman. The one who has the latter is termed as j~nAni in the next chapter in sloka 'caturvidhA bajante mAm', where KrshNa mentions four kinds of persons who resort to Him, ArtI, arthAthI, jij~nAsu and j~nAni. The word j~nAni in this sloka denotes jij~nAsu, one with the thirst for knowledge.

The tapasvI mentioned above can be classified as the arthArthI, one who practice austerities for result and the karmi can come under ArtI, as he is dissatisfied with his lot and wants to better himself.





The term karmi, means those who follow the injunctions of the karma kANDa for satisfying various desires in this world and the next and for the mitigation of ills of the world and perform the rituals prescribed in the karma kANDa of the VedAs.

Then who is the yogi specified here? It is the one who, by the path of j~nAna yoga, karma yoga or bhakti yoga, has cleansed his inner equipment and contemplates on the divine with equanimity and detachment and who in due course become qualified for experiencing Brahman.

As explained in this chapter earlier, yoga of meditation is not possible for one who has not given up all worldly desires and controlled his mind fully. Then there is a single thought of divinity in his mind and he alone attains the final goal of self-realisation.

Granting that the yogi has single-pointed concentration, what should be his object of contemplation? This is answered in the next sloka.





SLOKAM 47

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।

श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥

yoginAm api sarveshAm madgatena antarAtmanA |

SrddhAvAn bhajate yo mAm sa me yuktatamo mata: ||

Meaning:

Of all the yogis the one whose mind and intellect is engrossed in Me, one who contemplates on Me with faith is integrated in yoga, in My opinion.

Comments:

madgatena antarAtmanA, when the inner equipment, antarAtman, consisting of mind and intellect is absorbed in the Lord,

SraddhAvAn - one who has full faith that this is the path of salvation as made out by the scriptures.

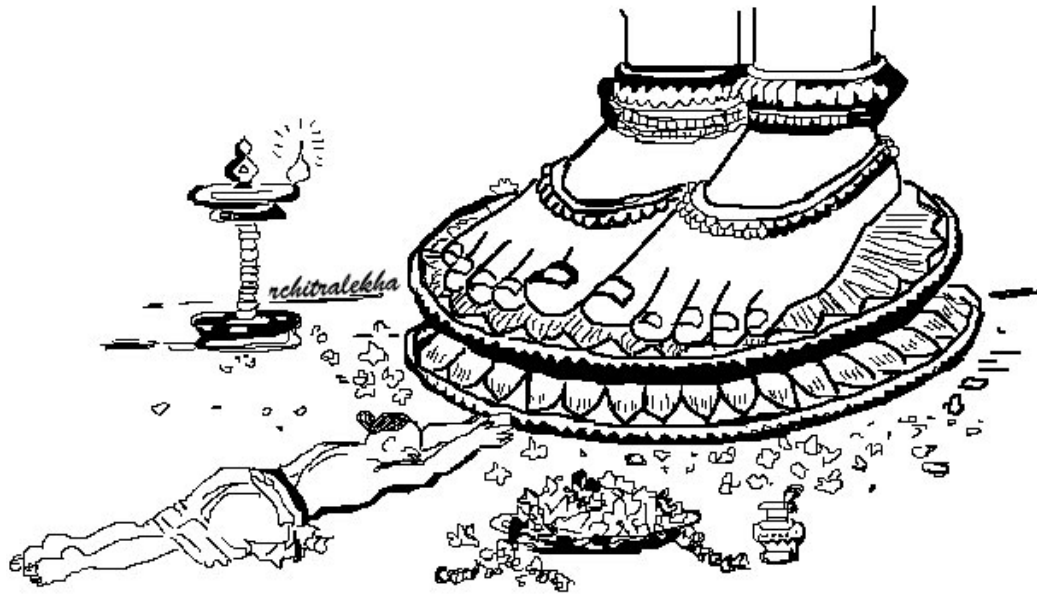
bhajate mAm - one who worships Me. The root 'bhaj' has many meanings one of them being 'to adore'. It is in this sense the word is used here and not in the common meaning of worship with flowers or singing etc.

As explained earlier in the chapter to detach the mind from the lower, one has to attach it to the higher. There is nothing higher than the Lord Himself and when all thoughts are centered on Him all the worldly shackles fall off and yoga becomes as obvious as the fruit on hand. The perfect example of this yoga is the gopis of Brindavan. Their entire thoughts, emotions and their senses were completely immersed in KrshNa. Hence they attained the supreme state very easily, which even the sages strive hard to reach,. They stand as the definition of the word yoga described by Patanjali in his yoga sUtra.





KrshNa says that such a yogi in his opinion is **yuktatama**, most integrated in yoga.



sarvam SrI kRshNArpaNamastu!

THUS ENDS THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF SRI BHAGAVAD GITA ON

DHYANA YOGA





acyutA! pAhi mAm! (thiruvendipuram SrI devanAtha Perumal and hemabjavalli tAyAr



NIGAMANAM

The Gita is traditionally divided into three parts:

1. First six chapters,
2. Chapters 7 to 12 and
3. Chapters 13 to 18

The whole Gita being the elucidation of the mahAvAkya, **tat tvam asi**, 'that thou art'. The first six chapters denote the meaning of **tvam**, the individual soul, the next six describe the **tat**, the nature of Brahman, the absolute reality and the last six with **asi**, elaborating on how the individual soul becomes united with the supreme self.

According to VisishTadvaita, it can be taken to mean the three reals, ISvara, jIvA and jagat, the first part explaining the nature of jIvA, the second of the Lord, ISvara and the last is about the jagat, world.

The three sections of Gita are also believed to represent the three themes of the philosophy of VisishTadvaita, namely, tattva, hita and purushArtha, that is, what is the reality, how to attain it and the benefits on attaining it. But in reality it is difficult to segregate the chapters of Gita like this because all these principles permeate through all the chapters. Hence the Gita should be read as one whole, pUrNam, without parts, as the Lord Himself.

END OF VOLUME 1

(Chapters 7 to 12 to be continued in next volume)

