

**BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ**  
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## Bhagavad-Gītā

Bhagavadgītā means 'song of God', and it is sometimes simply referred to as 'The Gītā', 'The Song'. **Bhagavadgītā is the most popular of all the Hindu scriptures.** It occupies a special place in the School of Vēdānta, representing one of the three authoritative works on Vēdānta known as *prasthāna-traya*, the other two being the Upaniṣads and the Brahma-sūtras. Its sublime and the universal teaching, appeals to everyone. The fundamentals of the Vēdic philosophy are in the Upaniṣads, and the essence of the Upaniṣads is the Bhagavadgītā. **Bhagavad-Gītā is the essence of what is in the Upaniṣads. Most of the Vīraśaiva concepts are from the Upaniṣads. Therefore, Bhagavad-Gītā is a good referral source for the Vīraśaiva concepts.** Most of what follows in this article is taken from two Bhagavadgītā books referenced here:

1. THE BHAGAVAD GITA with Sanskrit Text. Translation by Swami Chidbhananda. Published by The Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam, Tirupparaiturai, India. 1976
2. THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ (The Song of God) By Ramananda Prasad, Ph. D. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, India. Second Revised and Enlarged edition, Reprinted 1997

**Bhagavadgītā is a treatise on the Reality called Brahman.** This Reality has three categories. **The Immanent Reality** is the phenomenal universe. It is the abode of all living beings. It serves as a divinely devised training ground where, through pain and pleasure, and through life and death, all beings are driven to evolve in the Divinity. **The Transcendental Reality** is Īśvara who contains controls and governs the Immanent Reality. All worship and adoration are offered to this Reality. Īśvara bestows emancipation to those who perfect themselves. It is said that Īśvara is embodied in Kṛṣṇa for the benefit of the devotees. The substratum of these two categories of Reality is **The Absolute Reality** which is also called Nirguṇa Brahman or Pure Consciousness. The goal of human life is to dissolve one's individuality into this Absolute Reality – The Cosmic Awareness – *Prajñāna* - that is Brahman.

**The process by which one regains one's identity with Brahman is through Yōga.** Bhagavadgītā is a manual of the science of Yōga and its different paths. The emphasis in Bhagavadgītā is on the Karma Yōga, the path of non-selfish action. This is somewhat of a departure from the Upaniṣadic teaching that prefers the path of Jñāna Yōga, the path of discriminative Knowledge. This may be because the Upaniṣads were

geared specifically to those already free from social obligations – the forest dwellers and the hermits, whereas the Bhagavadgītā is intended for the society at large, the Karma Yōga being relevant to the householder as well as to the monastic.

Bhagavad-Gītā is composed as a dialog in a dialog. The inner dialog is between Divine Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna on the battle field of Kurukṣētra. The Kurukṣētra war was between the cousins - the Kauravas (said to be one hundred brothers) and the Pāṇḍavas (five brothers). Arjuna is one of the Pāṇḍavas, and Kṛṣṇa is his chariot driver. **The Kurukṣētra battlefield is said to be analogous to the human body where both good and bad are utilized to serve its purpose. The life lived on earth is a conflict between the good and the bad, and although the bad are more in number the good ultimately triumphs.**

Bhagavadgītā begins with the *Gītā Dhyānam* which means 'Meditation on Gītā'. This meditation has seven verses. The fourth one says something like this: All the Upaniṣads are the cows, the one who milks the cows is Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna is the calf, people of intellect are the drinkers, and the milk is the supreme nectar of the Gītā. It basically says that Bhagavadgītā is the essence of the Upaniṣads. Furthermore, in the colophon at the end of each chapter, Bhagavadgītā refers to itself as an Upaniṣad – 'In the Upaniṣad of Bhagavad-Gītā, the knowledge of Brahman, the Science of Yoga ...'

The main part of Bhagavadgītā has 700 verses which are distributed into 18 chapters. The chapter heading and the brief description of what is in each chapter is given below.

### **The Despondency of Arjuna**

This is the first chapter. It starts with the description of the armies of the Paṇḍavas and that of the Kauravas on the Kurukṣētra battlefield. Then despondency of Arjuna is described. After that Arjuna says that he does not foresee any good coming out of the battle where there is slaughtering of the kinsmen. Therefore, he does not want to engage in battle against his own kith and kin.

Kṛṣṇa's main teaching starts in the second chapter in response to the despondency of Arjuna. The teaching is as follows.

## **Yōga of Transcendental Knowledge (Sāmkhya-Yōga)**

Here the term 'Sāmkhya' means 'knowledge' or 'Jñāna'. In the Bhagavadgītā, there is some comingling of teachings of the later Sāmkhya Philosophical System. However it is to be noted that the Sāmkhya System is atheistic and does not mention Īśvara at all.

The wise do not grieve for the living or for the dead; they were neither non-existent before, nor will they cease to exist in the future. The indweller in the body experiences childhood, youth and old age in the body, and when the body dies, it passes on to another body; the serene indweller is not affected thereby. Senses and sense objects create pain and pleasure; they come and go, and are impermanent; they do not torment the one who is balanced in pain and pleasure and is steadfast. The unreal has no existence; the real never ceases to be. All this is pervaded by the Indestructible. The bodies have an end, but the indweller is indestructible and eternal. The indweller is not killed when the body is slain. The indweller Ātman cannot be slain, nor does Ātman slay. Similar to a person discarding old worn-out garments, and putting on new clothes, the embodied indweller casts off the worn-out bodies and enters into others that are new. Ātman is neither born, nor does It die. One who cognizes the Ātman as indestructible, eternal, unborn and changeless, does not slay or cause another to slay. This Ātman is said to be un-manifested, unthinkable and immutable, therefore, knowing It as such, one should not grieve. Even when one conceives of Ātman as subject to constant births and deaths, even then, one should not grieve because Ātman is neither born, nor dies; the body is born, and death is certain of that which is born, therefore, one should not lament over the inevitable.

**One should not waver from one's own duty. One should always perform one's duty. One, who forfeits one's own duty and honor, will incur sin.** Engaging in one's own duty, treating pain and pleasure, gain and loss, and victory and defeat alike, will not incur any sin. **Those who are resolute have only one thought of Self-knowledge.** But those who are not firm in their mind have thoughts that are endless and branched; there is no fixity of mind for those who cling to pleasure and power and whose judgment is obscured by ritualistic activities. To an enlightened person, the Vēdas are as useless as a reservoir of water for irrigation when there is flood everywhere.

**One should seek to perform one's own duty without seeking any claim on its rewards.** The fruit of work should not be the motive for action. And one should not lean towards inaction either. One should perform action renouncing attachments and fixing

the mind in Yoga. Being even-minded in success and failure, the equanimity of mind is verily Yōga, and **the work done to perfection is indeed Yōga.**

When one's understanding transcends the taint of delusion, then one will gain indifference to what has been heard and what is to be heard from the scriptures. When one's intellect has become poised, despite being tossed about by the conflicting opinions, then one will get into Yōga. One who abandons all the desires of the heart and is satisfied in the Self, by the Self, then that one is said to be stable in wisdom (*Prajñā*). One whose mind is not perturbed by adversity, who does not care for happiness, and who is free from fondness, fear and anger, that one is the Muni of constant wisdom.

The exited senses may forcibly carry away the mind of even a wise person striving for perfection; the yōgi having controlled all these senses should stay focused on the supreme goal; one who keeps the senses under subjugation is in constant wisdom. If one thinks of sense objects, one gets attached to the sense objects; from that attachment comes desire; from desire anger sprouts forth; from anger proceeds delusion; from delusion comes confused memory; from confused memory, there is ruin of reason; and due to ruin of reason, one perishes. The disciplined yōgi, on the other hand, moving among objects with the senses under control, and free from likes and dislikes, attains tranquility. All sorrow is destroyed in tranquility, and the intellect of such a person becomes completely steady. **One who lives devoid of longing, free from all desires, and without the feeling of "I" and "mine", that one attains Peace.** This is the super-conscious state of Brahman. Attaining this state, one is no longer deluded. Being established in this state even at the death-hour, one gets into oneness with Brahman.

### **Yoga of Action (Karma-Yoga)**

It is said that the two-fold path of spiritual practice – the path of work (Karma-Yōga) to the active and the path of Self-knowledge for the discerning – has been revealed to the world by the Blessed Lord.

One does not gain action-less-ness (freedom from bondage of karma) by abstaining from activity, nor does one rise to perfection by mere renunciation. No one can remain action-less even for a moment because everyone is driven to action by the Guṇas born of Prakṛti (explanation of these terms comes later on in the Bhagavadgītā). One who restrains the senses by the mind and directs one's organs of action to Karmayōga (the path of work

or the path of action), that one excels. Action is superior to inaction, and in inaction even the mere maintenance of the body would not be possible.

The world is bound by actions that are not performed as Yajña (sacrifice). One should earnestly perform actions for Yajña alone, free from any attachment to the fruits thereof. The good people who eat the remains of Yajña are freed from all sins; but the sinful ones who cook food only for themselves, they verily eat sin. From food the living beings are born; food is produced from rain; from Yajña the rain proceeds; and Yajña is born of karma. Karma has risen from the Vēda, and the Vēda from the Imperishable (explanation of this term comes later). Therefore, the all-pervading Vēda is ever centered in Yajña. One who does not follow this wheel thus revolving, and rejoices in the sense pleasures, that sinful one lives in vain. But one who rejoices in the Self, content with the Self, and is centered in the Self, for that one there is no obligatory duty. For that person there is no object to acquire by doing an action, and there is no loss by not doing an action; that person does not depend on anybody or anything. **Therefore one should constantly perform one's own obligatory duty without any attachment; by doing so, one verily attains the Supreme.**

One should perform action without attachment, and set an example to guide others that follow. One should inspire others by performing all works efficiently without any attachment. One should not unsettle the mind of ignorant people who are attached to the fruits of work. The Guṇas of Prakṛti perform all karma, but the one whose understanding is clouded by egoism thinks "I am the doer". Those deluded by the Guṇas get attached to the functions of the Guṇas. The wise should dedicate all work in a spiritual frame of mind, free from desire, attachment, and mental grief, to the Blessed Lord. Those who always practice this teaching are freed from the bondage of karma.

Likes (*rāga*) and dislikes (*dvēṣa*) of the senses for their respective objects are natural; one should not come under their domination. One's own natural work (*dharma*), though imperfect, is better than the dharma of another even if it is well discharged, because the unnatural work of another produces too much stress and fear.

The desire begotten by Rājōguṇa (explanation comes later) drives one to commit sin. Like the fire that is enveloped in smoke, the knowledge is covered by this insatiable desire; seated in the senses, the mind and the intellect, it deludes the person by veiling one's wisdom. Therefore, one should first master the senses and then slay the sinful desire. The senses are said to be superior to the body; the mind is superior to the senses;

the intellect is superior to the mind; and Ātman is superior to intellect. Thus, knowing Ātman to be superior to intellect, and restraining the self by the Self (Ātman), one should slay the mighty enemy that is in the form of desire.

### **Yōga of Renunciation of Action in Knowledge (Jñānakarma Saṅnyāsa-Yōga)**

Whenever there is decay of dharma and rise of adharma, the Blessed Lord embodies itself, and appears from time to time for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of dharma. One who truly understands the Lord's appearance and action, that one, after death, attains to the Blessed Lord, and is not reborn. Freed from passion, fear and anger, fully absorbed in devotion, and purified by penance in the fire of knowledge, many have attained Mukti (salvation). People worship with different motives; they are rewarded accordingly. Some long for success in work, for them success born of action comes quickly in this human world.

The four varṇas (castes) were created by the different distribution of Guṇa and Karma. Though the Blessed Lord is said to be the author thereof, one should know the Lord to be action-less and changeless. One who knows this truth is not bound by Karma.

Even the wise are perplexed as to what is action, what is inaction, and what is forbidden action. One who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, that one is a yogi. One whose doings are all devoid of design and desire for results, and whose actions are all burnt by the fire of knowledge, the sages call that one wise. One who has abandoned attachment to the fruits of action, who is content, and who does not depend on anybody for anything, that one, though engaged in action, verily does not do anything – does not incur karma in this action – it is the inaction in action.

One not having any desire, having mind and senses under control, having abandoned all possessions, and performing action by the body alone, does not incur any sin or bad karma. One who is content with whatever comes naturally, unaffected by pairs of opposites (such as pleasure and pain), without envy, balanced in success and failure, though engaged in work is not bound by karma. Of the one who is unattached, liberated, with mind absorbed in knowledge, performing work for Yajña alone, that one's entire karma melts away. The one whose oblation is Brahman, and cognizes Brahman alone in action, verily goes into Brahman.

Some yōgis perform sacrifices to Divinities alone, while others offer the self as sacrifice in the fire of Brahman; some offer hearing and other senses as sacrifice in the fire of restraint, while others offer sound and other sense objects as sacrifice in the fire of the senses; others offer all the actions of the senses and the functions of the life-energy (*Prāṇa*) as the sacrifice in the fire of self-control kindled by knowledge; yet others offer wealth, austerity and Yōga as sacrifice, while still others of self-denial and extreme vows offer sacred study and knowledge as sacrifice; others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming breath, and the incoming in the outgoing, restraining the flow of the outgoing and incoming breaths that are solely absorbed in the regulation of the life-energy (*Prāṇa*); and still others of regulated food habit offer in the *Prāṇa* the functions thereof; all these are knowers of Yajña, having their sins destroyed by Yajña. The eaters of the remnant of Yajña go to the Eternal Brahman.

The knowledge-sacrifice is said to be superior to the wealth-sacrifice, because all karma in its entirety culminates in knowledge. The wise who have already realized the Truth will then instruct the seeker of knowledge, who approaches them by reverence, by sincere questions, and by service. **Fire of knowledge reduces all karma to ashes. One who has perfected Yōga realizes the knowledge within in course of time. Having realized the Knowledge, one attains Supreme Peace.**

### **Yōga of Renunciation of Action (Karmaśaṅnyāsa-Yōga)**

Renunciation of action, the karma-śaṅnyāsa, and performance of action, the Karma-Yōga both lead to freedom from bondage; of the two, performance of action is superior to the renunciation of action. Constant śaṅnyāsin who neither hates nor desires and who is free from pair of opposites (such as desire and aversion) is easily set free from bondage. The real Śaṅnyāsin is one who understands the real meaning of renunciation; it is the renunciation of the lower-self – the ego with its desires. One, who is firmly established in either the knowledge or the performance of action, obtains the benefit of both.

The state reached by Jñāni is also reached by the Karma-yōgi. Śaṅnyāsa is hard to attain without Karma-Yōga. A sage of meditation, purified by Karma-Yōga quickly attains the Brahman. With the mind purified by Karma-Yōga and the senses subdued, the self-disciplined who realizes one's self as the Self in all beings, though engaged in action, is not affected by action. The sage centered in the Self thinks "I do nothing at all" – though



seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going sleeping, breathing, speaking, emptying, holding, opening and closing the eyes – ignoring these and thinking that the senses are merely operating upon their sense objects. One, who acts abandoning attachment and dedicating deeds to Brahman, is untainted by sin. Abandoning attachment, the yōgi performs work with the body, the mind and the senses only, for self-purification. Having mentally renounced all actions the self-disciplined indweller rests happily in the city of nine-gates (the city of nine gates is the body; the nine gates are – two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, genito-urinary opening, and anus), neither acting nor causing to act.

The Lord does not create the urge for action or the action itself, and also does not create the union with the fruit of action. Nature does all this. The omnipresent Lord does not keep track of the merit or demerit of anyone. The mortals are deluded because the knowledge is veiled by ignorance. When ignorance is destroyed by Self-knowledge, the knowledge reveals the Supreme. Those who think on 'That', absorbed in 'That', fixed in 'That', and have 'That' as the goal, their taints being dispelled by knowledge, attain to immortality. **Those who have attained the Knowledge see the same in a Brāhmaṇa, in an outcaste, and even in a cow, an elephant and a dog. Those whose mind is set in equality overcome transitory existence; as Brahman is same in all, they are established in the Brahman.**

The one who is established in the Brahman with firm understanding and without any delusion, does not rejoice from getting what is pleasant, and does not grieve on getting what is unpleasant. The delights that are derived from the contact of senses with their sense-objects have a beginning and an end; the wise do not rejoice in them. With the self, detached from these external contacts, the wise one realizes the bliss in the Self; devoted to the meditation of Brahman, enjoys imperishable Bliss.

One who is able to resist the impulse of desire and anger is a yōgi, a happy one even before the body dies. One whose happiness is within, whose delight is within and whose illumination is within only, that yōgi becomes Brahman and attains the state of utmost Bliss. With the sins destroyed, doubts of dualities removed, minds disciplined, being delighted in the welfare of all beings, the Ṛṣi attains the state of utmost Bliss of Brahman. **The Self-realized person who has shed lust and anger, and has easily subdued the mind, attains the state of utmost Bliss of Brahman here and hereafter.**

Shutting out external objects, fixing the gaze between the eyebrows, equalizing the

outward and inward breaths moving through the nostrils, the sage who has controlled the senses, mind and intellect, who is solely pursuing the liberation from worldly life, and who has cast away desires, fear and anger, that sage is verily liberated.

### **Science of Yōga-Meditation (Dhyāna-Yōga)**

One who performs the duties without seeking its benefits is the real sañnyāsi and a yōgi; not the one who merely gives up the obligatory rites and the sacred fire. No one becomes a sañnyāsi and a yōgi without renouncing the cravings. Karma is the means for the one who seeks to attain Yōga, and serenity is the means when one has attained to Yōga. One is said to have attained to yoga when the one having renounced all cravings does not get attached to sense-objects and actions.

One must raise oneself and not debase oneself by one's own self; for the self itself could be one's friend as well as one's foe. One who has conquered one's base self by the divine self, for that one, own self is a friend; but to the one who has not subdued the base self, it acts as a foe. The self-disciplined one's serene Supreme-Self is same in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, and so also in honor and dishonor. Yōgi is said to be steadfast when the yōgi is satisfied with knowledge and wisdom, remains unshaken, has conquered the senses, and when the yōgi considers a clod, a stone and a gold-piece to be the same. **One who has equal regards for friends, companions, enemies, neutrals, arbiters, the hateful, the relatives, the saints and sinners, that one is said to be superior.**

A yōgi, living in solitude, having subdued the mind and body, and having gotten rid of the desires and passions, then, should always try to concentrate. A place for contemplation is to be fixed clean, the seat to be set not too high nor too low, and on it to spread the kusa-grass, a deer-skin and a cloth, one over the other. Sitting there on this seat, focusing the mind, restraining the thinking faculty and desires, one should practice Yōga for self-purification. The body, head and neck are to be held erect and still, and the gaze to be fixed at the tip of the nose without looking around. Serene and fearless, firm in vow of celibacy, subdued in mind, one should sit in Yōga thinking and intent on the Blessed Lord alone. Keeping ever steadfast in this manner, the yōgi attains Peace abiding in the Supreme and culminates in Nirvāṇa.

Yōga is not possible for the one who eats too much or abstains too much from eating, or

for one who sleeps too much or too little. For one who is moderate in eating and recreation, temperate in actions, and regulated in sleep and wakefulness, the Yōga becomes the destroyer of pain. When the disciplined mind rests in the Self alone, then the one is said to be established in Yōga. Just as a flame of a lamp in a windless place does not flicker, the disciplined mind of a yōgi practicing concentration on the Self is steadfast.

When the mind disciplined by the practice of Yōga attains quietude, when beholding the Self by the self, one is satisfied in the Self, when one feels the supreme bliss which is perceived by the intelligence and which transcends the senses and wherein the established one never moves from Reality, and when having gained one thinks that there is no greater gain than that wherein the established one is not shaken even by the heaviest affliction – that state is to be known as Yōga.

To attain the above state of Yōga, one should be doing the following: Abandoning without reserve all desires arising from cravings; curbing all senses from all sides by the mind; attaining quietude little by little with the intellect set in firmness; with the mind fixed on the Self, not thinking anything; and curbing the mind that may wander away by whatever cause, and subjecting it solely to the Self.

Supreme Bliss comes to the yōgi, whose mind is calm, whose passions are pacified, who has become one with Brahman and who is sinless. Constantly engaging the mind this way, the yōgi attains with ease the infinite bliss of contact with Brahman.

**With the mind being harmonized by Yōga, one sees one's own Self in all beings, sees all beings in one's own Self, and sees the same in all.**

One who sees the Blessed Lord everywhere and sees all in the Blessed Lord, that one does not become lost to the Blessed Lord, nor does the Blessed Lord become lost in that one. One who is established in Oneness and worships the Blessed Lord abiding in all beings, lives in the Blessed Lord. One who judges pleasure and pain everywhere by the same standard as one applies to oneself, that yōgi is regarded as the supreme.

Mind is restless and difficult to control, but by practice and non-attachment it can be controlled. Yōga is hard to attain by one who lacks self-control, but it can be attained by one who has controlled self and who strives by the right means.

For the one who has not attained Yōga, the doer of good never comes to grief, neither in this world nor in the next world there any destruction for such a person. Having attained to the worlds of righteous and having lived there, the doer of the good who falls from Yōga, is reborn in a house of the pure and prosperous, or born in a family of wise yōgis. There the person regains the knowledge acquired in the former body, and strives more than before for perfection. Even one who merely wishes to know Yōga raises superior to the performers of the Vēdic rites. The yōgi who strives with diligent attention, purified from sins, and perfected through many births, reaches the Supreme Goal.

The yōgi is deemed superior to the ascetics and the performers of rituals, and said to be even superior to the people who have knowledge of the Vēdas. Of all yōgis, one who worships the Blessed Lord with faith, and has merged in it, that one is held to be the most devout.

### **Yōga of Knowledge and Realization (Jñāna-Vijñāna-Yōga)**

It is said that, after knowing the Knowledge combined with Realization, nothing more remains to be known. Among thousands of people, scarcely one strives for perfection, and of those who strive for perfection, scarcely one knows the Truth.

The lower Prakṛti is divided eight-fold – earth, water, fire, air, cosmos/space/sky, mind, intellect and egoism. Different from that is the higher Prakṛti, the life element by which this universe is upheld. These two are to be known as the womb of all beings. The Blessed Lord is above these two, and is the origin and the dissolution of the whole universe. There is nothing higher than the Blessed Lord, and all these things are strung as a row of gems on a string. The Blessed Lord is said to be all this – radiance in the moon and sun, the syllable Ōm in all the Vēdas, sound in the cosmos, manliness in man, sweet fragrance in earth and the brilliance in fire, life in all beings and the austerity in ascetics, eternal seed of all beings, intelligence of the intelligent, the splendor of the splendid, the strength of the strong devoid of desire and passion, and desire not contrary to dharma in the beings.

Prakṛti has three-fold Guṇa namely, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas (this is further explained later). The divine illusion Māyā made up of the Guṇas is hard to surmount, but those who take refuge in the Blessed Lord cross over this illusion. The evil-doers, the deluded, and

the lowest of the people, deprived of the discriminative knowledge by Māyā do not seek refuge in the Blessed Lord.

Four types of virtuous people – the ones in distress, the ones seeking knowledge, the ones seeking wealth, and the ones imbued with wisdom – worship the Blessed Lord. Of these, the wise ones, ever steadfast and devoted to the One, excel. The wise, steadfast in mind, is established in the Blessed Lord alone, realizing that that is all there is and nothing else.

But those, whose discrimination has been led astray by desire and constrained by their own nature, look for other gods and practice various religious rites. Whatever religious practice a devotee engages in, if the faith is genuine and steady, the devotee obtains one's own wishes. The fruit that occurs this way to those of small intellect is temporary. The worshippers of the gods go to the gods. Not knowing the immutable and unsurpassed Supreme state, those of poor understanding believe the un-manifested to have taken manifestations. Veiled by Māyā, the ignorant ones do not know the Unborn, the Unchanging.

By the delusion of pairs of opposites (the dualities) arising from desire and aversion, all beings are subject to illusion. But those people of virtuous deeds whose sins have come to an end, who are freed from the delusion of dualities, worship the Blessed Lord, remaining steadfast in their vows. Those who take refuge in the Blessed Lord, and strive for freedom from decay and death, they, in full, individual self and all karma, realize the Brahman.

### **Yōga of Imperishable Brahman (Akṣarabrahma-Yōga)**

Akṣara means 'Imperishable', and it is Brahman the Supreme. Its dwelling in the individual body is called 'Adhyātma'. The offering which causes the origin of beings is called 'Karma'. 'Adhibhūta' pertains to the perishable Nature (all changeable objects). Puruṣa is 'Adhidaivata' which includes all divine personalities. The Blessed Lord in the body is 'Adhiyajña'.

Whoever leaving the body, remembers the Blessed Lord alone at the time of death, attains the Blessed Lord. Whatever being one thinks of at the last moment before leaving

the body at the time of death, that being alone does one attain. Therefore, one should think of the Blessed Lord at all times.

One who meditates on the Supreme Resplendent Puruṣa – the omniscient, the ancient, the controller, more minute than the minutest (atom), the supporter of all, of form inconceivable, effulgent like the sun, and beyond all darkness – with an unwavering mind, devotion and strength disciplined by constant practice of Yōga, and fixing the entire Prāṇa in the middle of the eyebrows, that one reaches the Supreme.

The one - closing all the gates of the body (the gates are mentioned above; here it mainly refers to ignoring all sensory input), confining the mind in the heart, fixing the life-energy Prāṇa in the head, engaging in firm Yōga, uttering the one syllable Ōm, and thinking of Brahman as one departs the body – attains the Supreme Goal. Having come to the Blessed Lord, the great souls are no more subject to rebirth, for they have reached the highest goal.

Anyone who has attained any of the worlds (*Lōka*) including that of Brahma is subject to rebirth (Brahma is the divinity of creation, and His *lōka* is Brahmālōka; He is not to be confused with the Brahman). Only on reaching the Blessed Lord there is no rebirth.

One day of Brahma lasts one thousand Yugas (there are four Yugas – Kṛta, Treta, Dvāpara, and Kali – the four Yugas together add up to 4.32 billion human/earth years), and one night of Brahma lasts another one thousand Yugas. At the coming of the Brahma day all manifest beings proceed from the un-manifested. At the coming of the Brahma night they merge again in the un-manifested. The multitude of beings, coming forth again and again, merges at the approach of night and re-manifests at the approach of the day. But beyond this un-manifested there is yet another Un-manifested Eternal Existence which does not perish even when all existences perish. This Un-manifested is called the Imperishable, and it is said to be the Ultimate Goal. Those who attain to it do not return.

The time in which yōgis depart never to return is - fire, light, day-time, the bright half of the moon, and the six months of the northern path of the sun – then going forth in this path, the knowers of Brahman go to Brahman and do not return. The time in which they depart to return is – smoke, night, the dark half of the moon, and the six months of the southern path of the sun – then going forth in this path, they attain lunar-light and return. These two paths, the bright and the dark, are said to be the world's eternal paths; by the bright path one does not return, but by the other dark path one returns. Knowing these

two paths, the yōgi is not deluded. Therefore, one should be steadfast in Yōga at all times. The yōgi who knows this, transcends the fruits of meritorious deeds attached to the study of the Vēdas, sacrifices, austerities and gifts, and attains to the Supreme.

### **Yōga of Sovereign Science and Sovereign Secret (Rājavidyā-Rājaguhya-Yōga)**

The most profound Knowledge which is the supreme purifier is directly realizable, is in accordance with dharma, is very easy to practice, and is timeless. One who realizes this Knowledge is released from the miseries of worldly existence. But those who have no faith (who are devoid of *Śraddhā*) for this dharma do not attain to the Supreme and hence return to the mortal worldly life.

This entire universe is pervaded by the Un-manifested form of the Blessed Lord. All beings exist there and depend on the Blessed Lord, but the Blessed Lord does not depend on them. Behold the divine mystery of the Lord bringing forth and supporting the beings, yet the Lord does not dwell in them.

All beings go to Prakṛti at the end of a Kalpa (Kalpa is a cycle of creation-evolution-maintenance-dissolution which is said to be equivalent to 4.32 billion years), and they are generated again and again at the beginning of the next Kalpa cycle. All this multitude of beings, helplessly, under the regime of Prakṛti is sent forth again and again. These acts do not bind the Blessed Lord who remains passive like the unconcerned and unattached. Because of the Blessed Lord's proximity, Prakṛti produces all this moving and the unmoving.

The ignorant ones do not know the higher nature of the Blessed Lord as the Great Lord of all beings. Having false hopes, false actions, and false knowledge, the ignorant ones, devoid of discrimination, possess the delusive qualities. But the Mahātmas (great souls) who possess the divine qualities worship with a focused mind, knowing the Blessed Lord as the Unchanging and the source of all beings. They, firm in vows, worship with devotion, ever steadfast. Yet others sacrifice with the Yajña knowledge, and many others worship in various ways – as the 'One in all' (meaning with Advaita or the non-dual oneness philosophy), as the 'distinct from all' (meaning with the duality or Dvaita Philosophy), and as the 'many faces' (meaning the polytheistic philosophy).

The Blessed Lord is mentioned to be all these following – the ritual (*Kratu*), the Yajña (sacrifice), the offering (*Svadha*), medicinal herb, Mantra, clarified-butter (ghee), the sacrificial fire, the oblation, Father of the world, the Mother, the designer, the grandfather, the knowable, the purifier, the syllable Ōm and also Ṛk, Sāman and Yajus, the goal, the supporter, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the shelter, friend, the origin, the dissolution, the foundation, the treasure-house, the seed imperishable, who gives heat, withholds and sends-forth rain, immortality and death, and Being (Sat) as well as Non-Being (Asat).

The knowers of the three Vēdas and the drinkers of the Sōma, purified from sin, worship by sacrifices for gaining heaven. They reach, after death, the world of the Lord of the Dēvas, and enjoy in heaven the celestial pleasures of the Dēvas. Having enjoyed there, upon exhaustion of the merits, they return to the world of the mortals. Thus, abiding by the injunction of the three Vēdas, desiring objects of pleasure, they go and come.

Those who worship the Blessed Lord, thinking of no other, and who are ever devout, gain the security of the Blessed Lord. Those devotees endowed with faith, and worship other gods, are really worshipping the Blessed Lord by the wrong method; they do not know the Blessed Lord, the Enjoyer and the Lord of all Yajñas; hence they fall. Devotees of the Dēvas (divinities) go to the Dēvas, devotees of the Pitrus (ancestors or forefathers) go to the Pitrus, worshippers of the Bhūtas (ghosts) go to the Bhūtas, but the devotees of the Blessed Lord go to the Blessed Lord.

Whatever is offered with devotion – a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water – the pious offering of the pure in heart, is accepted by the Blessed Lord. Therefore, whatever one does, whatever one eats, whatever is offered in sacrifice, whatever is gifted away, whatever austerity is practiced, all is to be done as an offering to the Blessed Lord. By doing so, one is freed from the bondage to karma. Then with the mind set in the Yōga of renunciation, having freed from bondage, one will come to the Blessed Lord.

There is none hateful or none dearer to the Blessed Lord who is the same in all beings. But those who worship the Blessed Lord with devotion, they are in the Blessed Lord and the Blessed Lord is in them. Even if one with sinful conduct worships the Blessed Lord with undeviating devotion, that one is to be reckoned as righteous; and soon that righteous person obtains lasting peace. **For those who take refuge in the Blessed Lord, though they may be of inferior birth, such as, women, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, even they attain the Supreme Goal.** Therefore, having come to this transient joyless world, one should always worship the Blessed Lord with devotion.



Thus, one should – fix the mind on, be devoted to, sacrifice unto, and bow down to the Blessed Lord. Having made oneself steadfast in and taking the Blessed Lord as the Supreme Goal, one will come to the Blessed Lord.

### **Yōga of Divine Manifestations (Vibhūti-Yōga)**

Neither the hosts of the Dēvas, nor the great Ṛṣis know the origin of the Blessed Lord, because, in every respect the Blessed Lord is the source of them all. One who knows the Blessed Lord as unborn and beginning-less, and as the great Lord of the worlds, that one among the mortals is not deluded, and thus is freed from all sins.

The following different qualities of beings are said to have arisen from the Blessed Lord – intellect, wisdom, non-delusion, patience, truth, self-restraint, calmness, pleasure, pain, birth, death, fear, fearlessness, non-injury, equanimity, contentment, austerity, charity, fame and disgrace.

The seven great Ṛṣis and the four ancient Manus were born with the power of the Blessed Lord; and from them, all the creatures in the world have come forth. One who knows this glory and the power of the Blessed Lord is endowed with unfaltering Yōga. The wise know this and adore the Blessed Lord with love and devotion. With their mind fixed on, with their life absorbed in, enlightening each other and ever speaking of the Blessed Lord, they are contented and delighted. They, ever devout and worshipping with love, come to the Blessed Lord with the Yōga of discrimination. Out of pure compassion for them, the Blessed Lord in their hearts destroys the ignorance-born darkness by the luminous lamp of wisdom.

Then, although there is no end to the details of the manifestation, a long list of the divine glories according to their prominence is given starting with the Supreme as the Self seated in the hearts of all beings. It is said that the Blessed Lord stands supporting the whole universe with a single fragment of Itself.

### **Yōga of the Vision of the Cosmic Form (Viśvarūpadarśana-Yōga)**

This part is in chapter 11 of the 18 chapters of Bhagavad-Gītā. Here upon Arjuna's request to see the Supreme Īśvara form, Kṛṣṇa, after giving divine eyes to Arjuna so that he can see, reveals to him the form of the Supreme Īśvara.

Behold the forms, by hundreds and thousands, manifold and divine and of multi-colors and shapes. Behold the Ādityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Aśvins and also the Maruts. Behold many marvels never seen before. Behold the whole universe of the moving and unmoving, and whatever else one desires to see.

Then the description of the Supreme Īśvara form is given: With many mouths and eyes, with many marvelous sights, with many divine ornaments, with many uplifted divine weapons, wearing heavenly garlands and raiment, anointed with celestial perfumes, all wonderful, resplendent, boundless, with faces on all sides, the splendor of that Mahātmā (Great Ātma) shines like the splendor of thousand suns blazing all at once in the sky.

Then there is a long description of what Arjuna says he sees.

### **Yōga of Devotion (Bhakti-Yōga)**

The steadfast devotees who worship with supreme faith by fixing their mind on the Blessed Lord (as the Personal God), are considered as perfect in Yōga.

**Those who worship the Imperishable**, the Indefinable, the Un-manifest, the Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the Unchangeable, the Immovable, the Eternal – having restrained all senses, even-minded everywhere, engaged in the welfare of all beings – **attain the Supreme, but they have a greater difficulty because the Goal of the Un-manifested (Impersonal Brahman) is very hard for the embodied to reach.** On the other hand, **those who worship the Blessed Lord (as the Personal God), renouncing all actions in the Lord, regarding the Lord as the Supreme Goal, meditating on the Lord, will be delivered out of the ocean of the mortal Saṁsāra** which is the worldly life of births and deaths.

One should fix one's mind on the Blessed Lord alone, and one should let the thoughts dwell in the Blessed Lord, that way, one will live thereafter in the Blessed Lord. If one cannot fix one's mind on the Blessed Lord, then one should seek to reach by Abhyāsa-Yōga which is the practice of spiritual discipline. If one is unable to do that practice, then

one should perform actions for the Blessed Lord's sake. If one is not able to do even that, then abandoning fruits of all actions, one should take refuge in the Blessed Lord. Knowledge is better than formal practice; meditation is better than knowledge; better than meditation is the renunciation of the fruit of all action; peace follows renunciation.

One, who does not hate anyone, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from the feelings of 'I and mine', who is even-minded in pain and pleasure, who is forbearing, ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled and possessed of firm conviction, that one, with mind and intellect fixed on the Blessed Lord, is the devotee who is dear to the Blessed Lord. One by whom the world is not afflicted and whom the world cannot afflict, one who is free from anger, fear and anxiety, that one is dear to the Blessed Lord. One who has no wants, who is pure and prompt, unconcerned, untroubled, and who is selfless in all undertakings, that one, thus devoted to the Blessed Lord, is dear to the Blessed Lord. One who is the same to foe and friend and also in honor and dishonor, who is the same in cold and heat and in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachments, to whom censure and praise are equal, who is silent, content, homeless, steady minded and full of devotion, that one, is dear to the Blessed Lord.

**They who follow the dharma described above, endued with faith, looking upon the Blessed Lord as the Supreme Goal, and devoted, they are exceedingly dear to the Blessed Lord.**

### **Yōga of the Discrimination of the Kṣētra and the Kṣētrajña (Kṣētrakṣētrajñavibhāga-Yōga)**

'Kṣētra' means a 'field'. It is said that according to the sages, the physical body is called Kṣētra, and the one who knows this is called the Kṣētrajña. The knowledge of Kṣētra and Kṣētrajña is deemed as the true knowledge.

The body is said to be made of – the great elements (five Mahābhūtas namely earth, water, fire, air and sky/space/cosmos), egoism, intellect, un-manifested Prakṛti (matter), ten organs (five sense organs namely eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin, and five organs of action namely mouth, hand, leg, reproductive organ and digestive organ), mind, and five objects of senses (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch).

The body's modifications are said to be – desire, hatred, pleasure, suffering, the

aggregate, intelligence, and firmness or resolve.

Then – humility, modesty, non-injury, forbearance, honesty, service to the teacher, purity (of thought, word and deed), steadfastness, self-control, aversion towards sense objects, absence of egoism, constant reflection on pain and suffering inherent in birth, old age, disease and death, un-attachment, non-fondness with son, wife, home and the like, constant equanimity in the occurrence of the desirable and the undesirable, unwavering devotion to the Blessed Lord in Yōga of non-separation, resort to solitude, distaste for the society of people, constancy in Self-knowledge, and the perception of the end of the knowledge of Truth – all this is declared to be the Knowledge, and what is opposed to it is ignorance.

Then - 'that which has to be known, knowing which, one attains to immortality' - is described as follows. The Supreme Brahman is beginning-less. It is neither 'Sat' (Being) nor 'asat' (non-being). With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes and heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, Brahman exists enveloping all – Shining by the functions of all the senses, yet without the senses; Absolute, yet sustaining all; devoid of Guṇas, yet experiencing them; outside and within all beings, unmoving and also the moving, incomprehensible because of subtlety, is far and yet near; undivided and yet seems to have divided in beings; is to be known as the supporter of beings; devours and generates; is the Light of all lights and is beyond darkness; is the knowledge, the knowable and the goal of knowledge; and is seated in the hearts of all.

Prakṛti and Puruṣa are both without beginning (Prakṛti is non-conscious primordial matter, and Puruṣa is pure spirit). All modifications and Guṇas are born of Prakṛti. Prakṛti is the cause in the production of the body and the senses. Puruṣa is said to be the cause in the experience of pleasure and pain. Puruṣa seated in Prakṛti experiences the Guṇas born of Prakṛti. Attachment to the Guṇas is said to be the cause of birth in good and evil wombs. The Supreme Puruṣa in the body is also called Mahēśvara (the Great Lord) and Paramātmā (the Supreme Self).

Some by meditation, others by the Yōga of Knowledge, and yet others by Karma Yōga, behold the Self in the self by the self. Still others not knowing this, worship as they have heard from others; they also transcend death by their devotion.

Whatever being is born whether moving or unmoving, is from the union of Kṣētra (Prakṛti)

and Kṣētrajña (Puruṣa).

One who sees the Supreme Lord (Paramēśvara) the same in all beings, truly sees, and beholding the Supreme Lord the same everywhere does not destroy the self by the self, therefore, the one reaches the Supreme Goal. One, who sees that all actions are done by Prakṛti alone, truly understands that the Ātman is not the doer. When one realizes that the whole variety of beings rest in the One, and that that is an evolution from that One alone, then the one attains Brahman.

Having no beginning and possessing no Guṇas, the Supreme Self, though dwelling in the body, does not act and is not tainted. As the all-pervading Ākāśa is not tainted by reason of its subtlety, so the Self seated in the body everywhere is not tainted. Just as one sun illuminates the whole world, the Lord of Kṣētra illuminates the whole Kṣētra (body).

Those who perceive with the eye of wisdom, the distinction between the Kṣētra and Kṣētrajña, and also the liberation of beings from the hold of Prakṛti, they go to the Supreme.

### **Yōga of the Division of the Three Guṇas (Guṇatrayavibhāga-Yōga)**

The term Guṇa means 'quality'. Prakṛti (here called Mahatbrahma) is the womb where the germ/seed is placed; thence is there the birth of all beings. Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas are the three Guṇas born of Prakṛti; they bind the embodied one (Jīva/soul) to the body. Sattva, being stainless, binds the embodied to the body by creating attachment to happiness and attachment to knowledge. Rajas, being of the nature of passion, and being the source of desire and attachment, binds the embodied one to the body by attachment to action. Tamas, born of ignorance, deludes the embodied being and binds it to the body by negligence, laziness and excessive sleep. Sattva binds one to happiness and Rajas to action, while Tamas veils knowledge and binds one to ignorance.

Sattva asserts itself by predominating over Rajas and Tamas, Rajas over Sattva and Tamas, and Tamas over Sattva and Rajas. Sattva may be known to be predominating when the light of knowledge beams through all the gateways of the body. When Rajas predominates over the other two, greed, the undertaking of action, unrest and longing arise. When Tamas is predominating, indiscrimination, inertness, heedlessness, and

delusion arise. If the embodied one meets with death of the body while Sattva is predominating, then that one goes to the pure worlds of those who know the highest. Meeting death while Rajas is predominating, one is born among those attached to action. And dying in Tamas, one is born in the wombs of the deluded. Fruit of good action is said to be Sāttvika and pure; the fruit of Rajas is pain; and that of Tamas is ignorance. From Sattva arises wisdom, and from Rajas arises greed, but from Tamas arise ignorance and error. Those who are freed in Sattva go upwards, those in Rajas remain in the middle, and those freed in Tamas go downwards.

The embodied one that crosses over (transcends) the three Guṇas out of which the body is evolved, is freed from birth, death, decay and pain, and attains to immortality. The marks of one who has crossed over the three Guṇas are said to be as follows – does not hate activity and delusion when present, and does not long after them when absent; sitting like the one unconcerned, is not moved by the Guṇas, and knowing that the Guṇas are operating, is firm and does not move; is balanced in pleasure and pain; views a clod of earth, a stone and gold alike; is the same to agreeable and disagreeable, and same in censure and praise; is the same in honor and dishonor; and same to friend and foe.

**One who serves the Blessed Lord with unswerving devotion, and has gone beyond the Guṇas, is destined for becoming the Brahman.**

### **Yōga of the Highest Puruṣa (Puruṣōttama-Yōga)**

They speak of an 'Aśvatta' tree in the cosmos with its roots above and the branches below. Its leaves are said to be the Vēdas, and one who understands this is the knower of the Vēdas. Nourished by the Guṇas the branches of the tree spread below and above, and it is said that the sense objects are its buds; its roots stretch below engendering action (causing Karmic bondage). The tree's form, its end, its origin or its existence is not perceived on earth. The tree's firm roots are to be cut with a strong axe of non-attachment, and then the Goal should be sought for going from where one does not return. One should seek refuge in the Primeval Puruṣa from which the Eternal Activity streams forth. Those - who are free from pride and delusion, have conquered the evil of attachment, are constantly dwelling in the Self with their desires completely stilled, and who are freed from the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain – those un-deluded persons reach the Eternal Goal. Neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the fire illuminates there; that is the Supreme Abode; who go there do not return.

A portion of the Supreme has become an individual soul Jīva, in the world of the Jīvas. Abiding in Prakṛti, the Jīva becomes associated with the five senses (ear, eye, touch, taste and smell) and the mind. When Jīvātman casts off the body (upon the death of the body), it takes the above six sensory faculties with it; when still in the body, it presides over these six faculties, and experiences the sense objects through these senses. The yōgis striving for freedom cognize the indweller, but the unrefined and the unintelligent, even though striving, do not cognize the indweller.

The light which is in the sun and which illuminates the whole world, and that which is in the moon and the fire, is from the Supreme Self. Its energy supports all beings and all plants on earth. Abiding in the body of living beings as Vaiśvānara (universal person or commonality in all people) it is associated with Prāṇa and Apāna, and is involved in the digestion of four kinds of food. It is seated in the hearts of all, and the memory and knowledge and their loss there off come from the Supreme Self. It is to be known by the study of the Vēdas, and it is indeed the author of the Vēdānta as well as the knower of the Vēdas.

There are two Puruṣas in the world – the Kṣara (Perishable) and the Akṣara (the Imperishable). All beings are Perishable, and 'Kutastha' is Imperishable. Distinct from these two Puruṣas, there is another, the 'Highest', which pervades the three worlds (Lōkas) as Īśvara, and sustains them. This Highest Puruṣa known in the world and in the Vēdas as 'Puruṣōttama' transcends the Perishable and even the Imperishable Puruṣa. The wise one who knows this Puruṣōttama knows everything and worships wholeheartedly.

### **Yōga of Division between the Divine and the Demonic Qualities (Daivāsurasam̐padvibhāga-Yōga)**

There are two types of beings in this world – the divine and the demoniacal.

The qualities of the divine are as follows – fearlessness, purity in heart, steadfastness in knowledge and Yōga, alms giving, control of the senses, Yajña, study of the scriptures, austerity, straightforwardness, non-injury, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, serenity, absence of slander, compassion to beings, un-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, vigor, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride, and such.

Qualities of the demoniacal are as follows – ostentation, arrogance, self-conceit, anger, harshness, ignorance and such; they do not know what to do and what to refrain from; they do not have right conduct or truth; they claim that the universe is unreal, without a moral bias, without God, born of mutual union, and brought about by lust; they are of small intellect, of fierce deeds, and rise as enemies of the world for its destruction; they are filled with insatiable desire, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance; they hold evil ideas through delusion, and work with impure resolve; they regard gratification of lust as the highest, and feel sure that that is all; they strive to secure by unjust means hoards of wealth for sensual enjoyment; bewildered by many fancy, enmeshed in the snare of delusion, and addicted to the gratification of lust, they fall into a foul hell; self-conceited, stubborn, and filled with pride and intoxication of wealth, they perform sacrifices in name for show, and not according to the scriptural injunctions; as a result of egoism, power, insolence, lust and wealth, these malicious people hate Ātman in their own body and those of others. These cruel haters are hurled forever only into the demonic wombs, birth after birth, thus falling into a condition even lower.

**Three destroyers of oneself are lust, anger and greed; therefore, one should abandon these three.** One who is liberated from lust, anger and greed, and who practices what is good, goes to the Supreme Good. One, who acts in the impulse of desire and does not abide in the ordinances of the scriptures, does not attain perfection, or happiness, or the Supreme Goal. Therefore, one should let the scriptures be the authority in deciding what is to be done and what not to be done, and one should perform one's duties in accordance to the scripture.

### **Yōga of the Threefold Faith (Śraddhātrayavibhāga-Yōga)**

Śraddhā means 'faith'. It is said that the nature of faith of the embodied is of three kinds – Sāttvika, Rājasika, and Tāmasika. One's faith is in accordance with one's own natural disposition; the person is known by that faith. If one constantly contemplates with faith on something the person wants one may become whatever one wants.

Sāttvika persons worship Dēvas, the Rājasika people worship demigods and demons, and the Tāmasikas worship ghosts and spirits. Food also is of three kinds. The foods that augment vitality, energy, vigor, health, joy and cheerfulness, and which is savory substantial and agreeable, is liked by the Sāttvikas. The foods that are bitter, sour, saline, pungent, dry and burning are liked by the Rājasikas. Food which is stale, tasteless, stinking, cooked overnight, and impure is liked by the Tāmasikas. Yajña is Sāttvika when performed without desiring any fruit, and with the mind focused on the Yajña alone. That



which is performed in expectation of a reward or for self-gratification is the Rājasika Yajña. Yajña is said to be Tāmasika when it is performed contrary to the ordinance of the scriptures, without any Mantra, in which no food is distributed, and is devoid of gifts and faith.

Austerity of the body is said to be – the worship of God, the teacher and the wise, Purity, unrighteousness, continence, and non-injury. Austerity of speech is said to be – that which causes no excitement, is truthful, pleasant and beneficial, and also the practice of sacred recitation. Mental austerity consists of – serenity of mind, gentleness, silence, self-control, and purity of disposition. This three-fold austerity practiced by the steadfast with utmost faith and desire of no fruit is Sāttvika. The austerity practiced with the object of gaining respect, honor and reverence is Rājasika; it is unstable and transitory. Austerity practiced with foolish obstinacy, with self-tortures or for the purpose of destroying another is said to be Tāmasika.

A gift which is made with a feeling that it is one's duty to give, and which is given to a worthy person at the right place and time, is said to be Sāttvika. A gift which is given with a view to receive something in return, or when given grudgingly, is said to be Rājasika. A gift given to an unworthy person without respect or with insult, or given at a wrong place or time, is said to be Tāmasika.

"Ōm Tat Sat" is said to be the triple designation of Brahman. Therefore, the followers of Vēdas utter "Ōm" at the commencement of acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity as enjoined in the scriptures. The seekers of Mōkṣa (salvation) utter "Tat" without seeking a reward when performing acts of sacrifice, austerity and gift-giving. The word "Sat" is used in the sense of reality and of goodness, and also for an auspicious act. Steadfastness in sacrifice, austerity and gift is also called "Sat"; and action for the sake of the Supreme is also called "Sat". Whatever is sacrificed, given or performed, and whatever austerity is practiced without faith is called "Asat"; it is of no value here or hereafter.

### **Yōga of Liberation by Renunciation (Mōkṣasañnyāsa-Yōga)**

The sages call the renunciation of selfish work as Sañnyāsa, and the abandonment of the fruits of all work as Tyāga.

Abandonment is said to be of three kinds. Yajña, gift and austerity are purifying to the wise and should not be given up, but these actions are to be performed without any attachment for rewards. The abandonment of any obligatory duty is not proper; but if abandoned it is said to be Tāmasika. Abandonment of action because it is painful, or abandoned because of fear of bodily trouble, is said to be Rājasika. Whatever obligatory work is to be done, is merely done because it ought to be done, and is done without any attachment to its fruits, is said to be Sāttvika.

A Tyāgi imbued with Sattvaguṇa and steady understanding, and free from all doubts, does not hate disagreeable work, and is not attached to the agreeable work. It is indeed not possible to renounce action entirely; therefore, one who renounces the fruit of action is regarded as one who has renounced (Tyāgi). Three-fold fruits of action namely, desirable, undesirable and mixed, accrue after death to the one who is not a Tyāgi, but not to the one who is a Tyāgi.

There are five factors in the accomplishment of all actions as taught in the Sāṃkhya – the body, the doer/agent/actor, various senses, different functions of various sorts, and presiding deity or the five basic elements. Whatever action one performs with body, speech and mind, whether right or wrong, the above five are its causes. One, who, due to imperfect knowledge, looks upon the Self to be the doer of action, does not understand at all.

Knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the knower are the threefold instrument to action. The instrument, the object, and the agent are the three constituents of action. Knowledge, action, and actor are of three kinds according to the Guṇa concept of the Sāṃkhya:

The knowledge by which a single reality is seen in all beings, undivided in the divided, that knowledge is Sāttvika. The knowledge by which different realities of various types are seen in beings as separate from one another, that knowledge is Rājasika. The knowledge by which a single effect is seen as if it were everything and that which is irrational, baseless, and worthless, that knowledge is Tāmasika.

An action that is performed free from attachment, without likes or dislikes, and without desiring any fruit from it, that action is Sāttvika. An action performed with desire, with egoism, or with too much effort, that action is Rājasika. Action that is performed because

of delusion, without any regret to consequences, loss or injury to others, that action is Tāmasika.

An agent (doer/actor) who is free from attachment, non-egoistic, endowed with firmness and zeal, and who is unaffected by success or failure, that agent is said to be Sāttvika. An agent who is passionate, desiring to obtain the fruit of action, greedy, impure, moved by joy and sorrow, that agent is said to be Rājasika. An agent who is unsteady, vulgar, stubborn, deceitful, malicious, indolent, despondent, and procrastinating, that agent is Tāmasika.

Buddhi (intellect or understanding), and resolve or firmness also have threefold distinctions according to the Guṇas. The intellect by which one understands the path of work and of renunciation, right and wrong actions, fear and fearlessness, and bondage and liberation, that intellect is said to be Sāttvika. The intellect that makes a distorted understanding of dharma and adharma, of what to be done and what not to be done, that intellect is said to be Rājasika. The intellect, obscured by ignorance, regards adharma as dharma, and views all things in a perverted way, that intellect is said to be Tāmasika.

Through Yōga, the unswerving firmness by which the functions of the mind, the Prāṇa (life-energy), and the senses are regulated, that firmness is said to be Sāttvika. The firmness by which one clings to Dharma (righteousness), Kāma (lust), and Artha (wealth), desirous of fruit of each from attachment, that firmness is said to be Rājasika. The firmness by which one does not give up sleep, fear, grief, despair and also conceit, that firmness is said to be Tāmasika.

Happiness that comes after a long spiritual practice, and which rejoices ends one's sorrow, is said to be of three kinds. Happiness born of the translucence of intellect due to Self-realization which comes like a poison at first, but is like nectar at the end, that happiness is Sāttvika. Happiness that arises from the contact of the senses and their objects, and which comes like the nectar at first and like poison at the end, that happiness is Rājasika. Happiness which arises from sleep, sloth, misconceptions, and which deludes the self both at the beginning and at the end is said to be Tāmasika.

There is no being on earth or among the Dēvas in heaven who is free from the three Guṇas born of Prakṛti. **The duties of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras are distributed to them according to the Guṇas inherent in their nature (said**

**to be not according to their birth).** Those who have serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, and also uprightiness, knowledge, realization, and belief in hereafter, are labeled as Brāhmaṇas based on their own nature. Those who have qualities pertaining to heroism, vigor, firmness, resourcefulness, not fleeing from battle, generosity and lordliness, are called Kṣatriyas based on their own nature. Those who are good in agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are the Vaiśyas based on their own nature. Those who do service and labor type of work are called Śūdras based on their own nature.

**One who is engaged in one's own duty and is also devoted to one's own duty attains to perfection.** By worshipping the Blessed Lord from whom all beings originate and by whom all this universe is pervaded, in the form of performing one's own natural duty, the one attains perfection. One's own dharma, though may be imperfect, is better than the dharma of another; one who does the duty ordained by one's own nature, incurs no sin. One should not abandon the duty to which one is ordained, even if it is defective, because, all undertakings are enveloped by defects as fire is covered by smoke.

**One whose intellect is always unattached, who has subdued one's mind and senses, and from whom all desires have disappeared, that one by renunciation attains the supreme state of freedom from action (karma).** How one who has practiced such perfection attains the Supreme Knowledge that is Brahman, is given. Endowed with pure understanding, restraining the self with firmness, turning away from sound and other objects of the senses, abandoning likes and dislikes, living in solitude, eating lightly, controlling the thought, word and deed, always engaged in meditation and concentration, endued with dispassion, having abandoned egoism, violence, arrogance, desire, enmity and property, free from the notion of "mine", and peaceful – one becomes fit for attaining Brahman.

Absorbed in Brahman, the serene minded one does not grieve or desire, sees the same in all beings, and attains the supreme devotion to the Blessed Lord. By devotion, one truly understands the essence of the Blessed Lord, and having known the essence, one enters into the Blessed Lord forthwith. Even while continually doing all duties, by taking refuge in the Blessed Lord, and by the grace (**Prasāda**) of the Blessed Lord, one reaches the eternal un-decaying Abode (liberation). Mentally offering all deeds to the Blessed Lord, having the Lord as the highest goal, resorting to Buddhi-Yōga (Yōga of intellect) one should fix the mind on the Blessed Lord; this way, by the grace of the Blessed Lord, one will overcome all obstacles.

Īśvara the Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings. His Māyā causes all beings to revolve as though mounted on a machine. One should seek refuge in this **Śaraṇa** alone with all sincerity; by His grace one will gain Supreme Peace and Eternal Abode.

Thus one should reflect fully upon this wisdom that is more profound than all profundities. This should not be spoken to one who is devoid of austerities, who does not have devotion, who does not do service, and who dishonors the Blessed Lord. One with supreme devotion, who teaches this immensely profound philosophy to the devotees, will be rendering the most pleasing service to, and will come to, the Blessed Lord. Just studying this sacred dialogue is like worshipping the Blessed Lord with Jñāna-Yajña (knowledge sacrifice). One who merely hears this Bhagavad-Gītā with faith, is liberated from evil, and will attain the auspicious regions of the righteous.

*Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!*

