

The Bhagavad Gita

Translated by Ramanand Prasad

Chapter 1: Arjuna's Dilemma

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Seeing the sons of Dhritaraashtra standing; and the war about to begin; Arjuna, whose banner bore the emblem of Hanumana, took up his bow; and

Spoke these words to Lord Krishna: O Lord, (please) stop my chariot between the two armies until I behold those who stand here eager for battle and with whom I must engage in this act of war. (1.21-22)

I wish to see those who are willing to serve the evil-minded son of Dhritaraashtra by assembling here to fight the battle.

Sanjaya said: O King, Lord Krishna, as requested by Arjuna, placed the best of all the chariots in the midst of the two armies;

Facing Bheeshma, Drona, and all other Kings; and said to Arjuna: Behold these assembled Kurus!

There Arjuna saw his uncles, grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, and comrades.

Seeing fathers-in-law, all those kinsmen, and other dear ones standing in the ranks of the two armies,

Arjuna was overcome with great compassion and sorrowfully said: O Krishna, seeing my kinsmen standing with a desire to fight,

My limbs fail and my mouth becomes dry. My body quivers and my hairs stand on end.

The bow, Gaandeeva, slips from my hand and my skin intensely burns. My head turns, I am unable to stand steady and, O Krishna, I see bad omens. I see no use of killing my kinsmen in battle.

I desire neither victory nor pleasure nor kingdom, O Krishna. What is the use of the kingdom, or enjoyment, or even life, O Krishna?

Because all those, for whom we desire kingdom, enjoyments, and pleasures, are standing here for the battle, giving up their lives and wealth.

Teachers, uncles, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, and other relatives.

I do not wish to kill them, who are also about to kill, even for the sovereignty of the three worlds, let alone for this earthly kingdom, O Krishna.

O Lord Krishna, what pleasure shall we find in killing the sons of Dhritaraashtra? Upon killing these felons we shall incur sin only.

Therefore, we should not kill our brothers, the sons of Dhritaraashtra. How can we be happy after killing our kinsmen, O Krishna?

Though they, blinded by greed, do not see evil in the destruction of the family, or sin in being treacherous to friends.

Why shouldn't we, who clearly see evil in the destruction of the family, think about turning away from this sin, O Krishna?

With the destruction of the family, the eternal family traditions are destroyed, and immorality prevails due to the destruction of family traditions.

And when immorality prevails, O Krishna, the women of the family become corrupted; when women are corrupted, social problems arise.

This brings the family and the slayers of the family to hell, because the spirits of their ancestors are degraded when deprived of ceremonial offerings of rice-ball and water.

The everlasting qualities of Varna and family traditions of those who destroy their family are ruined by the sinful act of illegitimacy. (*Note: Varna means color, or the makeup and the hue of mind; a social division or order of society such as caste in India.*)

We have been told, O Krishna, that people whose family traditions are destroyed necessarily dwell in hell for a long time.

Alas! We are ready to commit a great sin by striving to slay our kinsmen because of greed for the pleasures of the kingdom.

It would be far better for me if the sons of Dhritaraashtra should kill me with their weapons in battle while I am unarmed and unresisting.

Sanjaya said: Having said this in the battle field and casting aside his bow and arrow, Arjuna sat down on the seat of the chariot with his mind overwhelmed with sorrow.

Chapter 2: Transcendental Knowledge

Sanjaya said: Lord Krishna spoke these words to Arjuna whose eyes were tearful and downcast, and who was overwhelmed with compassion and despair.

The Supreme Lord said: How has the dejection come to you at this juncture? This is not fit for an Aryan (the people of noble mind and deeds). It is disgraceful, and it does not lead one to heaven, O Arjuna.

Do not become a coward, O Arjuna, because it does not befit you. Shake off this weakness of your heart and get up (for the battle), O Arjuna.

Arjuna said: How shall I strike Bheeshma and Drona, who are worthy of my worship, with arrows in battle, O Krishna?

It would be better, indeed, to live on alms in this world than to slay these noble gurus, because, by killing them I would enjoy wealth and pleasures stained with (theirs) blood.

Neither do we know which alternative (to beg or to kill) is better for us, nor do we know whether we shall conquer them or they will conquer us. We should not even wish to live after killing the sons of Dhritaraashtra who are standing in front of us.

My heart is overcome by the weakness of pity, and my mind is confused about Dharma. I request You to tell me, decisively, what is better for me. I am Your disciple. Teach me who has taken refuge in You. (*Dharma may be defined as the eternal law governing, upholding, and supporting the creation and the world order. It also means duty, righteousness, ideal conduct, moral principles, and truth. Adharma is an antonym to Dharma. Expert guidance should be sought during the moment of crisis.*)

I do not perceive that gaining an unrivaled and prosperous kingdom on this earth, or even lordship over the gods will remove the sorrow that is drying up my senses.

Sanjaya said: O King, after speaking like this to Lord Krishna, the mighty Arjuna said to Krishna: I shall not fight, and became silent.

O King, Lord Krishna, as if smiling, spoke these words to the despondent Arjuna in the midst of the two armies.

The Supreme Lord said: You grieve for those who are not worthy of grief, and yet speak the words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.

There was never a time when I, you, or these kings did not exist; nor shall we ever cease to exist in the future.

Just as the Atma acquires a childhood body, a youth body, and an old age body during this life, similarly Atma acquires another body after death. The wise are not deluded by this. (*Atma or Atman means consciousness, spirit, soul, self, the source of life and the cosmic power behind the body-mind complex. Just as our body exists in space, similarly our thoughts, intellect, emotions, and psyche exist in Atma, the space of consciousness. Atma cannot be perceived by the senses, because, the senses abide in Atma.*)

The contacts of the senses with the sense objects give rise to the feelings of heat and cold, and pain and pleasure. They are transitory and impermanent. Therefore, (learn to) endure them, O Arjuna.

Because the calm person, who is not afflicted by these feelings and is steady in pain and pleasure, becomes fit for immortality, O Arjuna.

There is no nonexistence of the Sat (or Atma) and no existence of the Asat. The reality of these two is indeed certainly seen by the seers of truth. (*Sat exists at all times -- past, present, and future. Atma is called Sat. Asat is a notion that does not exist at all (like the horn of a rabbit, or the water in a mirage). The one that has a beginning and an end is neither Sat nor Asat. The body is neither Sat nor Asat, or both Sat and Asat, because, it has a temporary existence. Mithya is the one that appears Sat at first sight, but is really Asat. Body, like the universe or Jagat, is called Mithya.*)

Know That, by which all this (universe) is pervaded, to be indestructible. No one can destroy the indestructible (Atma) .

Bodies of the eternal, imperishable, and incomprehensible soul are said to be perishable. Therefore, fight, O Arjuna.

The one who thinks that Atma is a slayer, and the one who thinks that Atma is slain, both are ignorant, because Atma neither slays nor is slain.

The Atma is neither born nor does it die at any time, nor having been it will cease to exist again. It is unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval. The Atma is not destroyed when the body is destroyed.

O Arjuna, how can a person who knows that the Atma is indestructible, eternal, unborn, and imperishable, kill anyone or cause anyone to be killed?

Just as a person puts on new garments after discarding the old ones, similarly Atma acquires new bodies after casting away the old bodies.

Weapons do not cut this Atma, fire does not burn it, water does not make it wet, and the wind does not make it dry.

This Atma cannot be cut, burned, wetted, or dried up. It is eternal, all pervading, unchanging, immovable, and primeval.

The Atma is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable, and unchanging. Knowing this Atma as such you should not grieve.

If you think that this (body) takes birth and dies perpetually, even then, O Arjuna, you should not grieve like this.

Because, death is certain for the one who is born, and birth is certain for the one who dies. Therefore, you should not lament over the inevitable.

All beings, O Arjuna, are unmanifest before birth and after death. They are manifest between the birth and the death only. What is there to grieve about?

Some look upon this Atma as a wonder, another describes it as wonderful, and others hear of it as a wonder. Even after hearing about it no one actually knows it.

O Arjuna, the Atma that dwells in the body of all (beings) is eternally indestructible. Therefore, you should not mourn for any body.

Considering also your duty as a warrior you should not waver. Because there is nothing more auspicious for a warrior than a righteous war.

Only the fortunate warriors, O Arjuna, get such an opportunity for an unsought war that is like an open door to heaven.

If you will not fight this righteous war, then you will fail in your duty, lose your reputation, and incur sin.

People will talk about your disgrace forever. To the honored, dishonor is worse than death.

The great warriors will think that you have retreated from the battle out of fear. Those who have greatly esteemed you will lose respect for you.

Your enemies will speak many unmentionable words and scorn your ability. What could be more painful than this?

You will go to heaven if killed, or you will enjoy the earth if victorious. Therefore, get up with a determination to fight, O Arjuna.

Treating pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat alike, engage yourself in your duty. By doing your duty this way you will not incur sin.

The wisdom of Saamkhya (or the knowledge of the Self) has been imparted to you, O Arjuna. Now listen to the wisdom of Karma-yoga endowed with which you will free yourself from the bondage of Karma.

In Karma-yoga no effort is ever lost, and there is no harm. Even a little practice of this discipline protects one from great fear (of birth and death). (*Karma-yoga is also referred to as Nishkaama Karma-yoga, Seva, selfless service, Buddhi yoga, yoga of work, science of proper action, and yoga of equanimity. A Karma-yogi works for the Lord as a matter of duty without a selfish desire for the fruits of work, or any attachment to results. The word Karma also means duty, action, deeds, work, or the results of past deeds.*)

Those who are resolute have only one thought (of Self-realization), but the thoughts of the irresolute are endless and many-branched, O Arjuna.

The unwise who delight in flowery words (or the chanting of the Vedas without understanding the real meaning) stress Karma-Kaanda, the ritualistic aspect of the Vedas, O Arjuna, and say that there is nothing else (except material enjoyment).

They prescribe various specific rites for the attainment of pleasure and power to those who are full of desires, and hold the attainment of heaven as the highest goal of life. The rebirth is their fruit of action.

The resolute determination (of Self-realization) is not formed in the minds of those who are attached to pleasure and power; and whose discernment is obscured by such (ritualistic) activities.

The Vedas deal with the three states or Gunas of mind. Become free from dualities, be ever balanced and unconcerned with the thoughts of acquisition and preservation. Rise above the three Gunas, and be Self-conscious, O Arjuna. (*Guna means the quality,*

state, or the property of mind, matter, and the nature. Refer to Chapter 14 for more details on Gunas.)

To a Self-realized person the Vedas are as useful as a reservoir of water when there is flood water available everywhere.

You have Adhikaara over your respective duty only, but no control or claim over the results. The fruits of work should not be your motive. You should never be inactive. *(The word Adhikaara means ability and privilege, prerogative, jurisdiction, discretion, right, preference, choice, rightful claim, authority, control.)*

Do your duty to the best of your ability, O Arjuna, with your mind attached to the Lord, abandoning (worry and) attachment to the results, and remaining calm in both success and failure. The equanimity of mind is called Karma-yoga.

Work done with selfish motives is inferior by far to the selfless service or Karma-yoga. Therefore be a Karma-yogi, O Arjuna. Those who seek (to enjoy) the fruits of their work are verily unhappy (because one has no control over the results).

A Karma-yogi gets freedom from both vice and virtue in this life itself. Therefore, strive for Karma-yoga. Working to the best of one's abilities without getting attached to the fruits of work is called (Nishkaama) Karma-yoga.

Wise Karma-yogis, possessed with mental poise by renouncing the attachment to the fruits of work, are indeed freed from the bondage of rebirth and attain the blissful divine state.

When your intellect will completely pierce the veil of delusion, then you will become indifferent to what has been heard and what is to be heard (from the scriptures).

When your intellect, that is confused by the conflicting opinions and the ritualistic doctrine of the Vedas, shall stay steady and firm with the Self, then you shall attain Self-realization.

Arjuna said: O Krishna, what is the mark of a person whose Prajna is steady and merged in superconscious state? How does a person of steady Prajna speak? How does such a person sit and walk? *(Prajna means consciousness, mind, intellect, judgment, discrimination, and wisdom.)*

The Supreme Lord said: When one is completely free from all desires of the mind and is satisfied in the Self by the (joy of) Self, then one is called a person of steady Prajna, O Arjuna.

A person whose mind is unperturbed by sorrow, who does not crave pleasures, and who is free from attachment, fear, and anger; such a person is called a sage of steady Prajna.

Those who are not attached to anything, who are neither elated by getting desired results nor troubled by undesired results, their Prajna is deemed steady.

When one can completely withdraw (or restrain) the senses from the sense objects as a tortoise withdraws its limbs (into the shell), then the Prajna of such a person is considered steady.

The desire for sensual pleasures fades away if one abstains from sense enjoyment, but the craving (for sense enjoyment) remains. The craving also disappears from the one who has seen (or known) the Supreme.

Restless senses, O Arjuna, forcibly carry away the mind of even a wise person striving for perfection.

Having brought the senses under control, one should fix one's mind on the Self. One's Prajna becomes steady whose senses are under control.

One develops attachment to sense objects by thinking about sense objects. Desire for sense objects comes from attachment to sense objects, and anger comes from unfulfilled desires.

Delusion arises from anger. The mind is bewildered by delusion. Reasoning is destroyed when the mind is bewildered. One falls down (from the right path) when reasoning is destroyed.

A disciplined person, enjoying sense objects with senses that are under control and free from likes and dislikes, attains tranquillity.

All sorrows are destroyed upon attainment of tranquillity. The intellect of such a tranquil person soon becomes completely steady.

There is neither Self-knowledge nor Self-perception to those whose senses are not under control. Without Self-perception there is no peace; and without peace there can be no happiness.

The mind, when controlled by the roving senses, steals away the Prajna as a storm takes away a boat on the sea from its destination, the spiritual shore.

Therefore, O Arjuna, one's Prajna becomes steady whose senses are completely withdrawn from the sense objects.

A yogi is aware of the thing (or Atma) about which others are unaware. A sage who sees is unaware of the experience (of sense objects) about which others are aware.

One attains peace in whose mind all desires enter without creating any disturbance, as river waters enter the full ocean without creating a disturbance. One who desires material objects is never peaceful.

One who abandons all desires and becomes free from longing and the feeling of 'I' and 'my' attains peace.

O Arjuna, this is the Braahmee or superconscious state. Attaining this (state), one is no longer deluded. Gaining this state, even at the end of one's life, a person attains oneness with the Supreme.

Chapter 3: Path of Karma Yoga

Arjuna said: If You consider that transcendental knowledge is better than work then why do You want me to engage in this horrible war, O Krishna?

You seem to confuse my mind by apparently conflicting words. Tell me, decisively, one thing by which I may attain the Supreme.

The Supreme Lord said: In this world, O Arjuna, a twofold path of Sadhana (or the spiritual practice) has been stated by Me in the past. The path of Self-knowledge (or Jnana-yoga) for the contemplative, and the path of unselfish work (or Karma-yoga) for the active. *(Jnana-yoga is also called Saamkhya-yoga, Samnyasa-yoga, and yoga of knowledge. A Jnana-yogi does not consider oneself the doer of any action, but only an instrument in the hands of divine for His use. The word Jnana means metaphysical or transcendental knowledge.)*

One does not attain freedom from the bondage of Karma by merely abstaining from work. No one attains perfection by merely giving up work.

Because no one can remain actionless even for a moment. Everyone is driven to action, helplessly indeed, by the Gunas of nature.

The deluded ones, who restrain their organs of action but mentally dwell upon the sense enjoyment, are called hypocrites.

The one who controls the senses by the (trained and purified) mind and intellect, and engages the organs of action to Nishkaama Karma-yoga, is superior, O Arjuna.

Perform your obligatory duty, because action is indeed better than inaction. Even the maintenance of your body would not be possible by inaction.

Human beings are bound by Karma (or works) other than those done as Yajna. Therefore, O Arjuna, do your duty efficiently as a service or Seva to Me, free from attachment to the fruits of work. (*Yajna means sacrifice, selfless service, unselfish work, Seva, meritorious deeds, giving away something to others, and a religious rite in which oblation is offered to gods through the mouth of fire.*)

Brahmaa, the creator, in the beginning created human beings together with Yajna and said: By Yajna you shall prosper and Yajna shall fulfill all your desires.

Nourish the Devas with Yajna, and the Devas will nourish you. Thus nourishing one another you shall attain the Supreme goal. (*Deva means a deity, a demigod, a celestial person, the agent of God, one who fulfills desires and protects.*)

The Devas, nourished by Yajna, will give you the desired objects. One who enjoys the gift of the Devas without offering them (anything in return) is, indeed, a thief.

The righteous who eat the remnants of the Yajna are freed from all sins, but the impious who cook food only for themselves (without sharing with others in charity) verily eat sin.

The living beings are born from food, food is produced by rain, rain comes by performing Yajna. The Yajna is performed by doing Karma. (See also [4.32](#))

The Karma or duty is prescribed in the Vedas. The Vedas come from Brahman. Thus the all-pervading Brahman is ever present in Yajna or service.

The one who does not help to keep the wheel of creation in motion by sacrificial duty, and who rejoices in sense pleasures, that sinful person lives in vain, O Arjuna.

The one who rejoices in the Self only, who is satisfied with the Self, who is content in the Self alone, for such a (Self-realized) person there is no duty.

Such a person has no interest, whatsoever, in what is done or what is not done. A Self-realized person does not depend on anybody (except God) for anything.

Therefore, always perform your duty efficiently and without attachment to the results, because by doing work without attachment one attains the Supreme.

King Janaka and others attained perfection (or Self-realization) by Karma-yoga alone. You should perform your duty (with apathetic frame of mind) with a view to guide people and for the universal welfare (of the society).

Because, whatever noble persons do, others follow. Whatever standard they set up, the world follows.

O Arjuna, there is nothing in the three worlds (earth, heaven, and the upper regions) that should be done by Me, nor there is anything unobtained that I should obtain, yet I engage in action.

Because, if I do not engage in action relentlessly, O Arjuna, people would follow My path in every way.

These worlds would perish if I do not work, and I shall be the cause of confusion and destruction of all these people.

As the ignorant work, O Arjuna, with attachment (to the fruits of work), so the wise should work without attachment, for the welfare of the society.

The wise should not unsettle the mind of the ignorant who is attached to the fruits of work, but the enlightened one should inspire others by performing all works efficiently without attachment.

All works are being done by the Gunas (or the energy and power) of nature, but due to delusion of ego people assume themselves to be the doer.

The one who knows the truth, O Arjuna, about the role of Guna and action does not get attached to the work, knowing that it is the Gunas that work with their instruments, the organs.

Those who are deluded by the Gunas of nature get attached to the works of the Gunas. The wise should not disturb the mind of the ignorant whose knowledge is imperfect.

Dedicating all works to Me in a spiritual frame of mind, free from desire, attachment, and mental grief, do your duty.

Those who always practice this teaching of Mine, with faith and free from cavil, are freed from the bondage of Karma.

But, those who carp at My teaching and do not practice it, consider them as ignorant of all knowledge, senseless, and lost.

All beings follow their nature. Even the wise act according to their own nature. What, then, is the value of sense restraint?

Raaga and Dwesha (or the attachments and aversions) for the sense objects remain in the senses. One should not come under the control of these two, because they are two stumbling blocks, indeed, on one's path of Self-realization.

One's inferior natural work is better than superior unnatural work. Death in carrying out one's natural work is useful. Unnatural work produces too much stress.

Arjuna said: O Krishna, what impels one to commit sin as if unwillingly and forced against one's will?

The Supreme Lord said: It is Kaama and anger born of Rajo Guna. Kaama is insatiable and is a great devil. Know this as the enemy.

Kaama, the passionate desire for all sensual and material pleasures, becomes anger if it is unfulfilled. As the fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror by dust, and as an embryo by the amnion, similarly the Self-knowledge gets obscured by Kaama.

O Arjuna, Jnana gets covered by this insatiable fire of Kaama, the eternal enemy of Jnani.

The senses, the mind, and the intellect are said to be the seat of Kaama. Kaama, with the help of the senses, deludes a person by veiling Jnana.

Therefore, O Arjuna, by controlling the senses kill this devil (of material desire) that destroys knowledge and discrimination.

The senses are said to be superior (to matter or the body), the mind is superior to the senses, the intellect is superior to the mind, and Atma is superior to the intellect.

Thus, knowing the Atma to be superior to the intellect, and controlling the mind by the intellect (that is purified by Jnana), one must kill this mighty enemy, Kaama, O Arjuna.

Chapter 10: Manifestation of the Absolute

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, listen once again to My supreme word that I shall speak to you, who are dear, for your welfare.

Neither the Devas nor the great sages know My origin, because I am the origin of all Devas and sages also.

One who knows Me as the unborn, the beginningless, and the Supreme Lord of the universe, is considered wise among the mortals, and gets liberation from the bondage of Karma.

Discrimination, knowledge, non-delusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, control over the mind and senses, pleasure, pain, birth, death, fear, fearlessness; .

Nonviolence, equanimity, contentment, austerity, charity, fame, and ill fame; all these diverse qualities in human beings arise from Me alone.

The seven great sages and four ancient Manus, from whom all these creatures of the world were born, originated from My potential energy.

One who truly understands My manifestations and yogic powers, is united with Me in unswerving devotion. There is no doubt about this.

I am the origin of all. Everything emanates from Me. Understanding this, the wise ones worship Me with love and devotion.

With their minds absorbed in Me, with their lives surrendered unto Me, always enlightening each other by talking about Me; they remain ever content and delighted.

I give the knowledge, to those who are ever united with Me and lovingly adore Me, by which they come to Me.

Out of compassion for them I, who dwell within their heart, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the shining lamp of knowledge.

Arjuna said: You are the Supreme Brahman, the supreme abode, the supreme purifier, the eternal divine spirit, the primal God, the unborn, and the omnipresent.

All sages have thus acclaimed You. The divine sage Narada, Asita, Devala, Vyaasa, and You Yourself tell me.

O Krishna, I believe all that You have told Me to be true. O Lord, neither the Devas nor the demons fully understand Your manifestations. (See also 4.06)

O Creator and Lord of all beings, God of all gods, Supreme person and Lord of the universe, You alone know Yourself by Yourself.

(Therefore), You alone are able to fully describe Your own divine glories, the manifestations, by which You exist pervading all the universe.

How may I know You, O Lord, by constant contemplation? In what form (of manifestation) are You to be thought of by me, O Lord?

O Lord, explain to me again in detail, Your yogic power and glory; because, I am not satiated by hearing Your nectar-like words.

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, now I shall explain to you My prominent divine manifestations, because My manifestations are endless.

O Arjuna, I am the Atma abiding in the heart of all beings. I am also the beginning, the middle, and the end of all beings.

I am Vishnu among the (twelve) sons of Aditi, I am the radiant sun among the luminaries, I am Marici among the gods of wind, I am the moon among the stars.

I am the Sama Veda among the Vedas; I am Indra among the Devas; I am the mind among the senses; I am the consciousness in living beings.

I am Shiva among the Rudras; (I am) Kubera among the Yakshas and demons; I am the fire among the Vasus; and I am Meru among the mountain peaks.

Among the priests, O Arjuna, know Me to be the chief, Brihaspati. Among the army generals, I am Skanda; I am the ocean among the bodies of water.

I am Bhrigu among the great sages; I am the monosyllable OM among the words; I am Japa among the Yajna; and I am the Himalaya among the immovables.

I am the Peepal tree among the trees, Narada among the sages, Chitraaratha among the Gandharvas, and sage Kapila among the Siddhas.

Know Me as Uchchaisrava, born at the time of churning the ocean for getting the nectar, among the horses; Airavata among the elephants; and the King among men.

I am thunderbolt among the weapons, Kaamadhenu among the cows, and the cupid among the procreators. Among the serpents, I am Vaasuki.

I am Sheshanaaga among the Naagas, I am Varuna among the water gods, and Aryamaa among the manes. I am Yama among the controllers.

I am Prahlada among Diti's progeny, time or death among the healers, lion among the beasts, and the Garuda among birds.

I am the wind among the purifiers, and Lord Rama among the warriors. I am the shark among the fishes, and the Ganges among the rivers.

I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of the creation, O Arjuna. Among the knowledge I am knowledge of the supreme Self. I am logic of the logician.

I am the letter "A" among the alphabets, among the compound words I am the dual compound, I am the endless time, I am the sustainer of all, and have faces on all sides (or I am omniscient).

I am the all-devouring death, and also the origin of future beings. Among the feminine nouns I am fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intellect, resolve, and forgiveness.

I am Brihatsaama among the hymns. I am Gaayatri among the mantras, I am Maargsirsha (November-December) among the months, I am the spring among the seasons.

I am the fraud of the gambler; I am the splendor of the splendid; I am victory (of the victorious); I am resolution (of the resolute); I am the goodness of the good.

I am Vaasudeva among the Vrishni, Arjuna among the Paandavas, Vyaasa among the sages, and Ushanaa among the poets.

I am the power of rulers, the statesmanship of the seekers of victory, I am silence among the secrets, and the Self-knowledge of the knowledgeable.

I am the origin or seed of all beings, O Arjuna. There is nothing, animate or inanimate, that can exist without Me. (See also 7.10 and 9.18)

There is no end of My divine manifestations, O Arjuna. This is only a brief description by Me of the extent of My divine manifestations.

Whatever is endowed with glory, brilliance, and power; know that to be a manifestation of a fraction of My splendor.

What is the need for this detailed knowledge, O Arjuna? I continually support the entire universe by a small fraction of My energy.

Chapter 11: Vision of the Cosmic Form

Arjuna said: My illusion is dispelled by Your profound words, that You spoke out of compassion towards me, about the supreme secret of the Self.

O Krishna, I have heard from You in detail about the origin and dissolution of beings, and Your imperishable glory.

O Lord, You are as You have said, yet I wish to see Your divine cosmic form, O Supreme Being.

O Lord, if You think it is possible for me to see this, then O Lord of the yogis, show me Your imperishable Self.

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, behold My hundreds and thousands of multifarious divine forms of different colors and shapes.

See the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Ashvins, and the Maruts. Behold, O Arjuna, many wonders never seen before.

O Arjuna, now behold the entire creation; animate, inanimate, and whatever else you like to see; all at one place in My body.

But, you are not able to see Me with your physical eye; therefore, I give you the divine eye to see My majestic power and glory.

Sanjaya said: O King, having said this; Lord Krishna, the great Lord of (the mystic power of) yoga, revealed His supreme majestic form to Arjuna.

(Arjuna saw the Universal Form of the Lord) with many mouths and eyes, and many visions of marvel, with numerous divine ornaments, and holding divine weapons.

Wearing divine garlands and apparel, anointed with celestial perfumes and ointments, full of all wonders, the limitless God with faces on all sides.

If the splendor of thousands of suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, even that would not resemble the splendor of that exalted being.

Arjuna saw the entire universe, divided in many ways, but standing as (all in) One (and One in all) in the body of Krishna, the God of gods.

Then Arjuna, filled with wonder and his hairs standing on end, bowed his head to the Lord and prayed with folded hands.

Arjuna said: O Lord, I see in Your body all the gods and multitude of beings, all sages, celestial serpents, Lord Shiva as well as Lord Brahmaa seated on the lotus.

O Lord of the universe, I see You everywhere with infinite form, with many arms, stomachs, faces, and eyes. Neither do I see the beginning nor the middle nor the end of Your Universal Form.

I see You with Your crown, club, discus; and a mass of radiance, difficult to behold, shining all around with immeasurable brilliance of the sun and the blazing fire.

I believe You are the imperishable, the Supreme to be realized. You are the ultimate resort of the universe. You are the protector of eternal Dharma, and the imperishable primal spirit.

I see You with infinite power, without beginning, middle, or end; with many arms, with the sun and the moon as Your eyes, with Your mouth as a blazing fire whose radiance is scorching all the universe.

The entire space between heaven and earth is pervaded by You alone in all directions. Seeing Your marvelous and terrible form, the three worlds are trembling with fear, O Lord.

These hosts of demigods enter into You. Some with folded hands sing Your names and glories in fear. A multitude of Maharishis and Siddhas hail and adore You with abundant praises.

Rudras, Adityas, Vasus, Saadhyas, Vishwedevas, Ashvins, Maruts, Ushmapas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras, and Siddhas; they all amazingly gaze at You.

Seeing your infinite form with many mouths, eyes, arms, thighs, feet, stomachs, and many fearful teeth; the worlds are trembling with fear and so do I, O mighty Lord.

Seeing Your great effulgent and various-colored form touching the sky; Your mouth wide open and large shining eyes; I am frightened and find neither peace nor courage, O Krishna.

Seeing Your mouths, with fearful teeth, glowing like fires of cosmic dissolution, I lose my sense of direction and find no comfort. Have mercy on me! O Lord of gods, refuge of the universe.

The sons of Dhritaraashtra along with the hosts of kings; Bheeshma, Drona, and Karna together with chief warriors on our side are also quickly entering into Your

fearful mouths having terrible teeth. Some are seen caught in between the teeth with their heads crushed. (11.26-27)

As many torrents of the rivers rush toward the ocean, similarly, those warriors of the mortal world are entering Your blazing mouths.

As moths rush with great speed into the blazing flame for destruction, similarly all these people are rapidly rushing into Your mouths for destruction.

You are licking up all the worlds with Your flaming mouths, swallowing them from all sides. Your powerful radiance is burning the entire universe, and filling it with splendor, O Krishna.

Tell me who are You in such a fierce form? My salutations to You, O best of gods, be merciful! I wish to understand You, the primal Being, because I do not know Your mission.

The Supreme Lord said: I am death, the mighty destroyer of the world, out to destroy. Even without your participation all the warriors standing arrayed in the opposing armies shall cease to exist.

Therefore, you get up and attain glory. Conquer your enemies and enjoy a prosperous kingdom. All these (warriors) have already been destroyed by Me. You are only an instrument, O Arjuna.

Kill Drona, Bheeshma, Jayadratha, Karna, and other great warriors who are already killed by Me. Do not fear. You will certainly conquer the enemies in the battle, therefore, fight!

Sanjaya said: Having heard these words of Krishna; the crowned Arjuna, trembling with folded hands, prostrated with fear and spoke to Krishna in a choked voice.

Arjuna said: Rightly, O Krishna, the world delights and rejoices in glorifying You. Terrified demons flee in all directions. The hosts of Siddhas bow to You in adoration.

Why should they not, O great soul, bow to You, the original creator who is even greater than Brahmaa? O infinite Lord, O God of gods, O abode of the universe, You are both Sat and Asat, and the imperishable Brahman that is beyond both (Sat and Asat).

You are the primal God, the most ancient Person. You are the ultimate resort of all the universe. You are the knower, the object of knowledge, and the supreme abode. The entire universe is pervaded by You, O Lord of the infinite form.

You are Vaayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, Shashaanka, and Brahmaa as well as the father of Brahmaa. Salutations to You a thousand times, and again and again salutations to You.

My salutations to You from front and from behind. O Lord, my obeisances to You from all sides. You are infinite valor and the boundless might. You pervade everything, and therefore You are everywhere and in everything.

Considering You merely as a friend, not knowing Your greatness, I have inadvertently addressed You as O Krishna, O Yadava, O friend; merely out of affection or carelessness.

In whatever way I may have insulted You in jokes; while playing, reposing in bed, sitting, or at meals; when alone, or in front of others; O Krishna, I implore You for forgiveness.

You are the father of this animate and inanimate world, and the greatest guru to be worshipped. No one is even equal to You in the three worlds; how can there be one greater than You? O Being of Incomparable Glory.

Therefore, O adorable Lord, I seek Your grace by bowing down and prostrating my body before You. Bear with me as a father to his son, as a friend to a friend, and as a husband to his wife, O Lord.

I am delighted by beholding that which has never been seen before, and yet my mind is tormented with fear. Show me that (four-armed) form. O God of gods, the refuge of the universe have mercy!

I wish to see You with a crown, holding mace and discus in Your hand. O Lord with thousand arms and universal form, appear in the four-armed form.

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, being pleased with you I have shown you, through My own yogic powers, this supreme, shining, universal, infinite, and primal form of Mine that has never been seen before by anyone other than you.

Neither by study of the Vedas, nor by Yajna, nor by charity, nor by rituals, nor by severe austerities, can I be seen in the cosmic form in this human world by anyone other than you, O Arjuna.

Do not be perturbed and deluded by seeing such a terrible form of Mine as this. With fearless and cheerful mind, now behold My four-armed form.

Sanjaya said: Lord Krishna, having thus spoken to Arjuna, revealed His four-armed form. Then assuming His gentle human form, Mahatma Krishna consoled Arjuna who was terrified.

Arjuna said: O Krishna, seeing this gentle human form of Yours, I have now become composed and I am normal again.

The Supreme Lord said: This (four-armed) form of Mine that you have seen is very difficult, indeed, to see. Even the gods are ever longing to see this form.

Neither by study of the Vedas, nor by austerity, nor by charity, nor by ritual, can I be seen in this form as you have seen Me.

However, through single-minded devotion alone, I can be seen in this form, can be known in essence, and also can be reached, O Arjuna.

The one who does all works for Me, and to whom I am the supreme goal, who is my devotee, who has no attachment, and is free from enmity towards any being attains Me, O Arjuna. (See also 8.22)

Chapter 18: Nirvana through Renunciation

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O Arjuna, did you listen to this with single-minded attention? Has your delusion born of ignorance been destroyed?

Arjuna said: By Your grace my delusion is destroyed, I have gained knowledge, my confusion (with regard to body and Atma) is dispelled and I shall obey Your command.

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