

The Bhagavad Gita

— with Symbolic Commentary —



Sannyasin Anamika

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Introduction

The Bhagavad Gita seeks to serve as a spiritual guide for all living beings in the material world. In the search for liberation, one must recognize that it cannot be found here. As long as one remains entangled in matter, disappointment will follow disappointment, giving rise to deep soul-pain, frustration, and anger. In the material world, one is compelled to act; even in sleep the body continues its activity. Through material actions one remains bound to the physical realm, yet those who act without motives aimed at personal gain can attain liberation even while living on earth.

Through true knowledge one gains spiritual insight. Such knowledge is purifying and leads to freedom. Selfless, devoted service is the key. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna offers clear guidance on how to reach this goal. Through the fire of this transcendental knowledge, one becomes filled with inner joy, deep peace, and freedom. Outwardly one continues to act in the world, yet inwardly one is detached from the fruits of one's actions.

According to their cultural tradition, people give different names to the great mystery called God. In this revised version of the Bhagavad Gita, I use various names interchangeably: God, the Self, the Absolute, Brahman, and others. Should someone feel drawn to a different name, that is a free and independent choice that does not alter the sublime message of the Gita.

God is all in all—eternal, pure, and absolute. Though He may assume any form, He remains formless. Countless names are attributed to Him, yet He remains nameless. He is the first and supreme cause of all causes. He is the Source of all joy, rising from the depths of our soul by merely remembering Him. God is the transcendental light before which all suns in the universe fade like a candle flame. For human beings He is an unfathomable mystery, and blessed is the one who, through steadfast and loving devotion, is granted even a glimpse of His radiance.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna—who symbolizes the seeking human being—is described as a man of noble qualities and as a warrior of exceptional talent. If even he, the best among men, is overcome by deep doubt and despair, what then of us in this iron, dark age of Kali-yuga? When one struggles in the material world, it is

helpful to remember who or what one truly is: an immortal soul dwelling in a perishable body. If we are bound to a physical body, we are influenced by the three qualities of material nature—goodness, passion, and ignorance. Yet again we are given the opportunity to transcend the soul's bondage through actions performed without attachment to results.

We may view the material world as a prison. Some dwell in a dungeon, others in a cell, and a small minority in a golden cage; yet it remains a prison. This world may appear beautiful at first glance, but it is nothing more than an illusion built of glittering tinsel. By surrendering to and resting in the Self, one can free oneself from this web of deception. It is not an easy path, for the attraction of Maya—the illusion of the material world—is intensely strong. It is a struggle of falling and rising, until at last we become as steadfast as a rock in the surf, against which the wild waters of ignorance gradually come to rest.

Those who cultivate divine qualities attain spiritual perfection. Those who fall under the sway of base and destructive qualities become ever more entangled in the material world. Ignorance yields only material and temporary results. True knowledge purifies the heart and leads the sincere seeker to a pure faith in God. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna explains how the qualities of material nature—goodness, passion, and ignorance—affect human consciousness and how one may become free from their influence. He clarifies the difference between the path of knowledge (Jnana-yoga) and the path of selfless action (Karma-yoga). Both paths liberate the human being from bondage and from repeated birth within the material nature.

Preface

The Bhagavad Gita (translated from Sanskrit as “The Song of the Exalted Lord”) is a well-known religious-philosophical scripture within Hinduism and has become one of the most widely read books in the world. Many sages and philosophers, both Eastern and Western, refer to it as a work of profound wisdom and a guide to living a good and righteous life.

The term Hinduism was originally introduced by Western scholars in the nineteenth century; in India itself, the tradition is often referred to as Sanatana-dharma (the eternal teaching or eternal law), although “Hinduism” has since become the globally accepted term. Its spiritual vision is vibrant, colorful, and flexible, and can be interpreted in many ways. Hinduism has no single founder and no single holy book but consists of a vast body of scriptures known as the Vedas (“knowledge”). These are divided into the Shruti and the Smriti. The Shruti focus primarily on objective revelations, while the Smriti contain subjective dialogues, stories, and interpretations. The Bhagavad Gita forms part of the great religious-philosophical epic, the Mahabharata. “Maha” means great, and “Bharata” refers to India.

The Mahabharata recounts the history, traditions, and myths of human civilization, as well as the inner struggle of the human being between good and evil, between knowledge and ignorance. The Bhagavad Gita holds a central place within this epic and is regarded as the jewel of the Vedas. Within the tradition of Sanatana-dharma, many religious orders and sects exist, each claiming its own lineage as the sole truth. Against the backdrop of the Bhagavad Gita unfolds the story of a war. The opposing parties in this war are the Kauravas and the Pandavas—two branches of the same royal dynasty. The Kauravas represent evil or ignorance, while the Pandavas stand for goodness or knowledge.

A story of war leaves a deep impression on the human mind and is, figuratively speaking, fed to us from birth. In the time when Lord Krishna imparted the message of the Gita to His disciple and friend Arjuna, wars certainly took place. Yet this war narrative must be understood as an allegory. The people of that era generally had no formal education and were often illiterate. What they heard had to be presented in a form their minds could grasp.

Before beginning the commentary on the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, I wish to say a few words about the role of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna was a perfected yogi who had attained self-realization. Like Lord Jesus, He spoke in the “I-form” through His oneness with God. Follow the instructions of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, and you will hear the voice of the Supreme, the Beloved, in the sanctuary of your heart—first as a gentle whisper, and ultimately as an inflow of divine insight.





Chapter I

The despair of Arjuna

Verse 1. King Dhritarashtra said: "O Sanjaya, what did my sons and the sons of Pandu do, assembled on the sacred field (Kshetra) of Kuru-dharma, eager for battle?"

King Dhritarashtra had been blind from birth, which made him ill-suited to rule. For this reason, his younger brother Pandu was appointed king. When Pandu died prematurely, the throne was temporarily entrusted to Dhritarashtra until Pandu's eldest son would be old enough to assume kingship. Through the cunning and deceit of Prince Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra's eldest son, Pandu's heir was deprived of his rightful claim and, together with his brothers, exiled for many years. Dhritarashtra is not only physically blind but also spiritually blind, if his attachment to Duryodhana persists. Thus, he embodies the ego or the mind that clings to power yet remains blind to truth. Sanjaya, the king's advisor, symbolizes the higher consciousness that reports on the unfolding battle. The lineage of Dhritarashtra is known as the Kauravas, and that of Pandu as the Pandavas. The Kauravas represent evil and ignorance, while the Pandavas stand for goodness and knowledge. Kuru symbolizes all that is harmful or unrighteous and literally means "do it!" Dharma means "righteous way of living." Many believe that this battle took place, but as far as I know, its geographical location has never been found. I align myself with the conclusion of the mystics: the field of Kuru-dharma is the soul itself, where the struggle between good and evil, between knowledge and ignorance, is fought. The Bhagavad Gita should therefore not be interpreted literally, but symbolically.

Verse 2. Sanjaya said: “O King, after your son, Prince Duryodhana, beheld the battle formation of the Pandavas, he approached his teacher Dronacharya and spoke:”

Sanjaya is the embodiment of self-control and symbolizes the voice of conscience. Prince Duryodhana represents moral corruption. Dronacharya is both his teacher and the commander of the Kauravas. He was also the instructor of the sons of Pandu (the Pandavas), and he initiated them into the martial arts without making any distinction between them and the Kauravas. Symbolically, Dronacharya represents the first *guru* (spiritual teacher) one encounters on the spiritual path. He offers useful guidance on how to deal with inner conflict, yet he himself remains bound by the material nature, which makes him far from perfect. At a later stage, Lord Krishna, the perfect *guru*, takes over the instruction.

Verse 3. “O my teacher, behold the mighty army of the sons of Pandu, arranged in battle formation by your intelligent disciple, the son of Drupada.”

Drupada, king of Panchala, fights on the side of the Pandavas. He symbolizes the will toward transformation and restoration. His son, Dhrishtadyumna—also called the “Lord of Virtue”—embodies the purifying power born of intense spiritual discipline (*tapas*). He does not shrink from a courageous confrontation with the ego. Dhrishtadyumna has arranged his warriors with great skill, which may indicate that he positioned them according to the battle formations described in the Mahabharata (of which the Bhagavad Gita is a part), possibly in the circular formation known as *chakra-vyuha*. Symbolically, this signifies that all virtues have united and stand together as one.

Verse 4. “Their army contains valiant warriors and great archers, equal to Bhima and Arjuna—heroes such as Yuyudhana and Virata, and the mighty chariot-warrior Drupada.”

The battle symbolizes the confrontation between the higher and lower tendencies within the human being. The valiant warriors represent courageous qualities or virtues. The great archers stand for purposeful action performed in service of *dharma*—the unchanging, eternal, cosmic law. The phrase “equal to Bhima and Arjuna” expresses the balance between physical and moral strength, and between clarity of discernment and inner devotion. Bhima, whose strength is said to equal that of a thousand elephants, represents the compassionate heart that protects the weak, moral righteousness, and unwavering loyalty. Arjuna, the master archer and intimate friend of Lord Krishna, symbolizes devotional love, moral conduct, and the quest for spiritual liberation. Yuyudhana (also known as Satyaki) is the embodiment of unwavering dedication to truth and represents the warrior who

fight in service of dharma. Virata, the powerful ruler and king of Matsya, symbolizes loyalty to dharma and noble hospitality. Drupada (see previous verse) remains an important figure in this constellation. The term “great chariot-warrior” refers to a powerful inner force or virtue capable of carrying and guiding many other virtues. Symbolically, this verse portrays the gathering of all noble qualities — courage, clarity, devotion, loyalty, righteousness — standing united in preparation for the inner battle.

Verse 5. “Dhrishtaketu, Cekitana, the heroic king of Kashi, Purujit, Kunthibhoja, and Shaibya — all outstanding warriors.”

Dhrishtaketu symbolizes courage and determination, inspiring others through his confidence and steadfastness. Cekitana represents intuition and keen discernment. The king of Kashi refers to the ruler of the ancient city of Kashi (Benares, known as the “city of enlightenment”) and stands for the protector of spiritual knowledge and dharma. Purujit embodies the ability to overcome many inner weaknesses. Kunthibhoja symbolizes purity of intention and is known as the protector of Kunti, the mother of Arjuna. Shaibya, the noblest among men, represents self-sacrifice and moral integrity. Symbolically, this verse highlights a gathering of refined inner qualities — courage, intuition, purity, strength, and integrity — each playing its role in the inner battle for spiritual awakening.

Verse 6. “Yudhamanyu and the powerful Uttamauijas, Abhimanyu (son of Subhadra and Arjuna), and the sons of Draupadi — all of them are indeed great chariot-warriors.”

Yudhamanyu represents the courage to battle pride, arrogance, and self-satisfaction. Uttamauijas embodies exalted inner strength. Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadra and Arjuna, symbolizes youthful bravery and innocence — determined, pure-hearted, and devoted to righteousness. Draupadi represents the joyful and fearless heart, the embodiment of meditation itself. Her five sons symbolize parental love, sensitivity, tenderness, grace, and steadfastness — qualities that reflect the fitness to walk the path of meditation. These virtues arise from the union of willpower and wisdom. Symbolically, this verse portrays a gathering of noble inner forces: courage, purity, strength, devotion, tenderness, and unwavering resolve — all aligned in service of spiritual awakening.

Verse 7. “O best of the twice-born, now hear the names of the distinguished commanders of my army, so that you may be well informed.”

Duryodhana addresses Dronacharya with the title “twice-born” — a designation for a Brahmin or spiritual teacher — which makes clear that this battle is not an external

conflict but an inner one: a struggle between good and evil, between knowledge and ignorance. By using this honorific, Duryodhana attempts both to flatter and to manipulate Dronacharya's intellect, adopting a tone of expectation and exerting subtle mental pressure. The "distinguished" commanders refer to the ego's tendency—Duryodhana's tendency—to regard pride, ambition, control, and dominance as admirable qualities. Symbolically, this verse reveals how the ego elevates its own lower impulses and seeks validation from the intellect, hoping to enlist it in its service.

Verse 8. "You yourself, Bhishma, Karna, Kripa—victorious in battle—Ashvatthama, Vikarna, and Bhurishrava, the son of Somadatta."

Duryodhana here lists several destructive yet powerful forces at his disposal. Each of these figures can be understood as an archetype representing a particular tendency within us. Dronacharya symbolizes the intellect as the first teacher: skilled, knowledgeable, but still influenced by attachment and self-interest. Bhishma, often called "grandfather," does not refer here to a familial role but to an ancient, deeply rooted force that has held humanity in its grip since time immemorial. In this symbolic reading, Bhishma is not a person of flesh and blood but the embodiment of a primordial principle of delusion. As long as this delusion remains alive, darkness prevails in our understanding of truth. Karna represents talent misused through attachment to pride and resentment. Kripa stands for survival instinct and adaptability, yet he consistently chooses the side that offers security — opportunism rather than integrity. Ashvatthama embodies inherited beliefs and conditioning received through upbringing and environment. Vikarna symbolizes inner doubt: he recognizes injustice but collapses under group pressure. Bhurishrava, proud of lineage and status, identifies completely with his role and name. Symbolically, this verse reveals the many subtle and powerful forces that oppose spiritual awakening — pride, delusion, conditioning, opportunism, doubt, and attachment to identity — all marshalled by the ego in its struggle to maintain dominance.

Verse 9. "And many other heroic warriors, all skilled in the art of warfare and equipped with every kind of weapon, all prepared to give their lives for my cause."

"The many heroic warriors represent a wide range of lower, deeply ingrained habits or thought-patterns that have formed over the years. They are skilled in the art of warfare, meaning they are well-trained in self-preservation and know precisely how to undermine new insights. Equipped with every kind of weapon symbolizes the multitude of tactics through which the lower self-attempts to maintain its influence — rationalizations, emotional reactions, memories, fears, and conditioned responses. "Prepared to give their lives" illustrates how certain inner tendencies are

so deeply rooted that they resist transformation with fierce determination, even when such resistance does not serve our highest good. Together, these warriors form a powerful army of old patterns that oppose change and spiritual growth. Duryodhana feels greatly supported by them, for these forces will go to any length — even to the point of self-destruction — to secure victory for him. In this way, he attempts to convince himself of his own invincibility.

Verse 10. “Immeasurable is our army, protected by Bhishma; whereas the army protected by Bhima is limited.”

Duryodhana calls his army immeasurable and emphasizes that it is protected by Grandfather Bhishma. Symbolically, this means that all the forces of evil and ignorance have united with the intention of overpowering the forces of goodness and knowledge. Moreover, they are led by Bhishma — who, from an external perspective, is highly experienced and superior to Bhima, but who, in the symbolic reading, represents the embodiment of confusion and delusion. Duryodhana is convinced that this will work to his advantage and that victory is assured. However, it is not the quantity of forces that determines the outcome of the inner battle, but the quality. Even a vast army of lower tendencies cannot prevail against a single, well-established virtue rooted in truth.

Verse 11. “From your strategic positions, all of you must protect Grandfather Bhishma alone.”

The Kauravas are instructed to protect only Bhishma. Symbolically, Grandfather Bhishma is not a human being but the embodiment of *confusion* — the ancient foundation that supports the forces of evil and ignorance and keeps illusion alive. This confusion is primordial, which is why it is called “grandfather.” As long as it remains alive, the demonic qualities (the Kauravas) appear invincible. When confusion dies, ignorance ends with it. Even the slightest doubt regarding the Supreme severs our connection with Him and gives rise to confusion. For this reason, the army of the Kauravas seems undefeatable: if confusion is protected, ignorance continues to reign.

Verse 12. “Bhishma, the glorious grandsire of the Kuru dynasty, blew loudly upon his conch. It sounded like the roar of a lion and filled Duryodhana’s heart with joy.”

The lion here symbolizes fear. Fear exists only within the material nature. When Bhishma — the force that animates confusion — asserts his dominance, fear is stirred and strengthened. The material world nourishes the human being only with illusions; it has nothing else to offer. Thus, the blowing of the Kauravas’ conch shells

serves only to intensify fear. This is the sole power they truly possess: the ability to evoke anxiety, agitation, and inner turmoil. Confusion, when awakened, roars like a lion — and the ego, represented by Duryodhana, mistakes this roar for strength and victory. Symbolically, this is the moment when illusion gathers courage for itself.

Verse 13. “Then Madhava (Lord Krishna) and Arjuna, seated upon their magnificent chariot drawn by white horses, blew upon their transcendental conch shells.”

In this verse, Lord Krishna is called Madhava, meaning “Lord of Happiness” or “Source of Divine Joy.” The white horses symbolize purity, clarity of mind, and the strength that arises from a heart free of selfish desire. Their radiance reflects the inner luminosity of the soul aligned with truth. The sound of their transcendental conch shells reaches beyond the three worlds where death holds sway: the earthly realm of humans, the celestial realm of the gods, and the realm of Brahma. In all three, the fear of mortality and impermanence still exists. The call of Krishna and Arjuna transcends these limitations; it is a sound untouched by decay, time, or fear. Their great chariot is not constructed from earthly materials such as silver or gold. It is composed of transcendental energy — a vehicle of divine consciousness. Symbolically, it represents the purified mind guided by wisdom (Krishna) and disciplined action (Arjuna), moving forward on the path of liberation.

Verse 14. “Then Madhava (Lord Krishna) and Arjuna, seated upon their great chariot drawn by white horses, blew upon their transcendental conch shells.”

In this verse, Lord Krishna is addressed as Madhava, meaning “Lord of Happiness” or “Source of Divine Joy.” The white horses symbolize purity, clarity of mind, and the strength that arises from a heart free of selfish desire. Their brightness reflects the inner radiance of a mind aligned with truth. The sound of their transcendental conch shells reaches beyond the three worlds in which death holds dominion: the earthly realm of humans, the celestial realm of the gods, and the realm of Brahma. In all three, the fear of mortality and limitation still prevails. The call of Krishna and Arjuna transcends these realms; it is untouched by decay, time, or fear. Their great chariot is not constructed from earthly materials such as silver or gold. It is composed of transcendental energy — a vehicle of divine consciousness. Symbolically, it represents the purified mind guided by wisdom (Krishna) and disciplined action (Arjuna), moving steadily along the path toward liberation.

Verse 15. “Hrishikesha (Lord Krishna) blew upon His conch, Panchajanya. Dhananjaya (Arjuna) blew upon his conch, Devadatta, and Bhima, the man of mighty deeds, blew upon his formidable conch, Paundra.”

Hrishikesha is the name used here for Lord Krishna and means “Lord of the senses” — He who knows what moves in every heart. The five organs through which we perceive (touch, taste, smell, speech, and sight) are influenced and often distorted by the senses. Lord Krishna wants to help us free these from the grip of material nature and use them solely in the service of the Supreme Lord. Arjuna is here called Dhananjaya, meaning “conqueror of wealth.” Dhana means wealth and refers to the necessities of human life, which, however, are subordinate to the true wealth of the soul. The immeasurably powerful Bhima, also known as “wolf-bellied”, blows upon his impressive conch, Paundra, which symbolizes love for one’s fellow beings. Love springs from the heart, which is also called the “belly of feelings.”

Verse 16. “King Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, blew upon his conch, Anantavijaya; and Nakula and Sahadeva blew upon their conches, Sughosha and Manipushpaka.”

Sanjaya, the counsellor of King Dhritarashtra, refers to Yudhishtira as “king,” thereby affirming that he — and not the sons of Dhritarashtra — is the rightful heir to the throne. Kunti embodies the principle of duty fulfilled, and from this devotion to righteousness Yudhishtira, the personification of virtue, is born. The transcendental sound of Yudhishtira’s conch, Anantavijaya, signifies union with God, the victory that is eternal and without end. Throughout the battle, virtue — Yudhishtira — remains untouched and unwavering; this steadfastness is essential for attaining true victory. Nakula, who blows upon his conch Sughosha, symbolizes duty that destroys misfortune. Sahadeva, who blows upon Manipushpaka, represents devotional service to God — not performed in temples of stone, but in the sanctuary of the soul itself.

Verse 17. “The king of Kashi (Parmeshvas), an excellent archer, and Shikhandi, the great chariot-warrior, along with Dhrishtadyumna, Virata, and the invincible Satyaki.”

Some translate Parmeshvas simply as “the great archer.” However, the word can be divided into Param-Ish-Vas, meaning “to be one with God.” Kashi likewise symbolizes union with the Supreme, attained through mastery of the senses and concentration upon the heart. Shikhandi represents the process of detachment, the gradual loosening of all bonds that tie the soul to illusion. Dhrishtadyumna embodies the steadfast, dutiful heart. Virata represents the protective force that

creates space for goodness to grow. Satyaki symbolizes righteous conduct, the correct way of living aligned with truth.

Verse 18. “Drupada, the sons of Draupadi, and Abhimanyu — the strong-armed son of Subhadra — each blew upon their own conch.”

Drupada represents unwavering loyalty — a steadfastness that endures until the very end. The five sons of Draupadi symbolize qualities essential for meditate and inner refinement: compassion toward elders, gentleness, sensitivity, grace, and steadfastness. These virtues are subtle yet powerful aids on the spiritual path. Abhimanyu, the strong-armed son of Subhadra, embodies youthful courage, innocence, and the far-reaching power of righteous action. His extended arms symbolize both strength and openness — the willingness to act purely and bravely. Each of them blows upon his conch individually, emphasizing that every one of these qualities possesses its own unique strength and contributes its own distinct resonance to the inner battle.

Verse 19. “A tremendous tumult shook heaven and earth, and it tore apart the hearts of Dhritarashtra’s sons.”

Evil always presents itself as stronger than it truly is. It can rely only on external allies; inwardly it is helpless, cowardly, and weak. The sons of Dhritarashtra — who represent ignorance and the lower nature — suddenly felt overwhelmed by the profound unity of the Pandavas, who follow only the guidance of the Supreme and embody goodness and knowledge. The inner harmony of the Pandavas exposes the fragility of the forces of ignorance. What appears powerful on the outside collapses the moment it is confronted with truth, virtue, and unwavering devotion.

Verse 20. “When Arjuna, upon whose banner Hanuman was emblazoned, saw the sons of Dhritarashtra arrayed for battle and ready to fight, he lifted his bow and spoke these words to Hrishikesha (Lord Krishna).”

Arjuna embodies the loving human being who seeks wisdom and liberation yet is still touched by doubt and restlessness. The presence of Hanuman on his banner — fluttering in the wind — carries a dual meaning. On one hand, the monkey symbolizes the restless mind, always leaping from one thought to another. On the other hand, Hanuman represents renunciation, purity, and unwavering devotion. Hanuman was no ordinary monkey, but a being completely free from attachment and a great devotee of Lord Rama, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of the universe. His presence on Arjuna’s banner signifies that even during inner turmoil, the seeker is protected by devotion, purity, and the strength that arises from surrender to the Divine.

Verse 21 – 22 – 23. “O Infallible One (Lord Krishna), place my chariot between the two armies, so that I may see those who stand with the wicked Duryodhana and with whom I must fight in this great battle.”

Lord Krishna is indeed Infallible — one with the Supreme, He speaks and acts in the name of the Highest Truth. Arjuna realizes that once this battle begins, there will be no turning back. He wishes to see with his own eyes who his opponents are and whether this conflict might still be resolved in a peaceful manner. Arjuna’s request reflects the tenderness of the sincere seeker: he does not rush into conflict, even when righteousness is on his side. He wants clarity, not bloodshed; understanding, not destruction. Yet he also knows that the moment of decision has arrived, and that the path of truth sometimes demands confrontation with forces one would rather avoid.

Verse 24. Sanjaya said: “O Bharata (King Dhritarashtra), after Hrishikesha (Lord Krishna) heard the request of Gudakesha (Arjuna), He placed the finest of chariots in the midst of both armies.”

For Arjuna, who has reached the spiritual level of a kshatriya — a warrior of inner discipline — the decisive moment now arrives: the great battle within his soul begins, the battle between good and evil, knowledge and ignorance. Lord Krishna addresses him as Gudakesha, meaning “he who has conquered sleep.” This signifies that Arjuna is slowly awakening from his material slumber. He begins to discern the difference between the forces of good and evil, between knowledge and ignorance. He represents the human being who stands at a crossroads, compelled to make a choice that will determine the course of his spiritual life. The finest of chariots is, as previously explained, not made of earthly materials such as silver or gold. It is composed of transcendental energy — the vehicle of divine consciousness that carries the seeker into the heart of the inner battle.

Verse 25 – 26 – 27. “Before Bhishma, Dronacharya, and all the rulers of the world, Lord Krishna said: ‘O Arjuna, behold all the members of the Kuru dynasty assembled here.’ Arjuna then saw fathers, grandfathers, uncles, cousins, sons and grandsons, teachers and friends, fathers-in-law and benefactors — all standing on both sides. When Arjuna beheld them all, he was overwhelmed with compassion and spoke these words:”

The message of Lord Krishna is intended for everyone — for the virtuous as well as for the misguided. Does not the sunshine upon all beings without distinction? On both sides Arjuna sees family members and friends. All of them are deeply familiar

to him; they form part of his physical and mental existence. How can he detach himself from that which has been woven into his life for so long? Arjuna stands on the threshold of a total spiritual transformation. He is about to leave behind his old way of living — the patterns, attachments, and identities that have shaped him — and step into a new state of consciousness. The sight of his loved ones on both sides reveals the profound inner struggle of the seeker: the battle between what must be released and what the heart still clings to.

Verse 28 – 29. “O my Lord, when I see all these people gathered here, eager for battle, my body begins to tremble. My limbs grow weak, my mouth becomes dry, and my hair stands on end. My bow, Gandiva, slips from my hand, and my skin burns.”

All the symptoms described here point to intense fear and deep confusion. The bow Gandiva slipping from Arjuna’s hands symbolizes the loss of his grip on the world, the collapse of the certainties and attachments on which he has relied. These symptoms arise from a materialistic outlook on life — the belief that one’s identity, security, and meaning are rooted in the physical world and its relationships. When this worldview is shaken, the body reacts with trembling, weakness, dryness, and heat. Arjuna’s inner turmoil reflects the crisis of a seeker who stands at the threshold of spiritual transformation: the old self is falling apart, but the new self has not yet emerged.

Verse 30. “O Keshava (Lord Krishna), my mind is confused and I can no longer remain standing. I see only misfortune before me.”

Here Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna as Keshava, a name that refers to the slayer of the demon Keshi. Symbolically, this points to Krishna’s power to destroy fear, illusion, and inner turmoil. Arjuna, however, is increasingly drawn into the grip of the material world and entangled in the web of illusion. Spiritually, this verse marks the moment when the materialistic view of life tightens its hold: the seeker sees no way out and perceives only loss, because he does not yet stand firmly in the truth of the soul. First comes total confusion, followed by a loss of self-control. Arjuna wants to flee from the misfortune that dominates his mind. He believes that by escaping, he can free himself from fear and confusion — yet wherever one goes, inner confusion travels with us. Only through devotional service to the Supreme Lord can fear and confusion be figuratively “slain,” just as Keshi was destroyed by Keshava. In this way, the seeker gradually awakens to the reality of the soul and begins to transcend the illusions of the material world.

Verse 31. “I see no good in killing my own kinsmen. O Krishna, I do not desire victory, nor a kingdom, nor the happiness it may bring.”

Just like Arjuna, we are all conditioned in this material existence. We believe we have family ties, yet these bonds exist only as long as we live in the material world. In truth, the idea of “family” is itself a temporary illusion, a construct of the physical realm. To walk the spiritual path, we must learn to detach inwardly from these bonds — a painful and difficult process. But this does not mean hardening the heart or abandoning one’s family, as some traditional yogis have done, leaving wives and children behind in hardship to dedicate themselves solely to the Supreme. My personal understanding is that this teaching must be taken figuratively, not literally. We must detach spiritually, not neglect our responsibilities. We must loosen the inner knots of attachment, not forsake the people entrusted to our care. True renunciation lies in remaining inwardly free while still fulfilling one’s duties with love, integrity, and clarity — keeping the higher goal always in sight, without turning away from those who depend on us.

Verse 32 – 35. “O Govinda, even if we were to gain a kingdom filled with every form of happiness, what value would it have for us when all those for whom we desire it now stand before us on the battlefield? When grandfathers, fathers, sons, and other relatives, friends and teachers are prepared to give up their lives and possessions for this war? O Janardana, I do not wish to fight them — not even in exchange for the three worlds, let alone for this earth. There is no joy for me in killing the sons of Dhritarashtra.”

In these verses, Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna by three sacred names: Govinda — referring, in the context of the Vedas, to knowledge and divine wisdom. Mathusudana — the destroyer of the demon Madhu, symbolizing the slaying of the ego. Janardana — a name of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of the universe and protector of humanity. Arjuna refuses to fight his family because he does not want to sever the bond he feels with them. His heart is still tied to the world of relationships, identity, and emotional attachment. The three worlds, interpreted here in a symbolic and esoteric sense, refer to: the causal world — the realm where all creations exist as pure ideas, the subtle world — where these ideas take form, like a blueprint, the physical world — where creations manifest in their final, tangible shape. Even if he were offered dominion over all three, Arjuna sees no value in a victory that requires the destruction of those who have shaped his life. His words reveal the profound inner conflict of the seeker: the struggle between spiritual duty and emotional attachment, between the call of the soul and the pull of the world.

Verse 36. “O Madhava, how could we ever find happiness by killing our own relatives? Even if they serve evil, to kill them would burden us with sin. Therefore, it is wrong to take the lives of the sons of Dhritarashtra — our family and acquaintances.”

Here Arjuna addresses Lord Krishna as Madhava, meaning “Lord of happiness and prosperity.” Arjuna believes he could never again experience joy if he were to kill his own family members and acquaintances. His heart recoils at the thought, and he turns to Krishna in desperation, seeking guidance in this painful dilemma. As a loving and conscientious human being, Arjuna longs to do what is right. He fears committing sin through a wrong decision, and he is torn between spiritual duty and emotional attachment. His plea reveals the depth of his inner conflict: he wants to follow the path of righteousness, yet he cannot bear the thought of harming those to whom he feels bound. This moment marks the height of Arjuna’s moral crisis — the point at which the seeker realizes that worldly ties and spiritual truth cannot both be held tightly at once. Only divine guidance can resolve the tension.

Verse 37. “O Janardana (Lord Krishna), even the killing of my own family and friends — whose hearts are filled with greed — would be wrong and would burden me with karmic guilt.”

Janardana is another sacred name of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of the universe and protector of all beings. By addressing Krishna in this way, Arjuna appeals to the divine preserver, the One who safeguards righteousness and guides humanity through moral crisis. Arjuna is firmly convinced that killing his family and friends — even though they have chosen the side of evil — would be morally wrong and would place upon him a heavy burden of karmic consequence. His heart recoils from the idea of harming those to whom he is bound by affection, memory, and shared life. This verse reveals the depth of Arjuna’s inner conflict: he sees the wrongdoing of his relatives, yet he cannot bring himself to act against them. His compassion, though noble, becomes entangled with attachment, blurring his clarity and weakening his resolve. Spiritually, this moment shows how the seeker struggles when love, duty, and fear of karma collide — and why divine guidance is essential to rise above the illusions of the material world.

Verse 38. “O Krishna, why should we, who are able to discern right from wrong, destroy this family dynasty?”

Even though Arjuna knows that his relatives have engaged in wrongful actions, he still struggles to sever his ties with them and to take their lives. Gentle by nature, he would rather forgive them and continue life in harmony than raise his hand

against those he has loved and trusted. This verse reveals the depth of Arjuna's inner conflict: his moral clarity tells him one thing, his heart tells him another. He sees the corruption of his family, yet his compassion binds him to them. His longing for peace, reconciliation, and mutual understanding stands in stark contrast to the harsh duty that lies before him. Arjuna's hesitation is not weakness — it is the natural response of a loving soul confronted with a painful spiritual crossroads.

Verse 39. “By destroying the family dynasty, the eternal tradition will be lost, and those who remain will fall into irreligion.”

For Arjuna, the family lineage and its traditions hold great importance. He cannot yet grasp that family dynasties rise and fall, that they belong to the material world, and are therefore impermanent. Even religious traditions and rituals are nothing more than temporary aids meant to elevate the mind and heart into the proper spiritual atmosphere, so that one may ultimately attain Self-realization. Arjuna fears that by destroying his family, he will also destroy the sacred customs that have guided generations. What he does not yet see is that true spirituality does not depend on external forms, rituals, or inherited customs. These are stepping stones — valuable, but not eternal. The eternal tradition is not the outer lineage, but the inner dharma, the timeless truth of the soul. When this truth is forgotten, people indeed fall into confusion and godlessness — not because a family line ends, but because the inner light is obscured by attachment, fear, and ignorance. Arjuna's words reveal his sincere heart, but also his lingering identification with the material order. He still believes that spiritual truth depends on worldly structures, unaware that the real “tradition” Krishna will teach him is beyond birth and death, beyond family and form, beyond all that is transient.

Verse 40. “O Krishna, descendant of the Vrishnis, when a family falls into irreligion, the women become vulnerable, and from this arises unwanted progeny.”

In this verse, Lord Krishna is addressed as a descendant of the Vrishnis, the noble dynasty into which He was born. Arjuna, however, is still caught in the web of ancient social traditions. He speaks from within a worldview shaped by the norms of his time — a worldview in which the stability of the family was believed to depend on strict social order, and where women were often placed under restrictive expectations and control. Such ideas reflect historical cultural beliefs, not spiritual truth. And indeed, throughout the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna never speaks of women as inferior, nor as less capable, nor as beings needing to be controlled. His teachings consistently address the soul, which is beyond gender, caste, birth, or social role. Arjuna's fear in this verse is not about women themselves, but about the collapse of moral order as he understands it.

He worries that if the family structure disintegrates, society will lose its ethical foundation. Spiritually, this verse shows how Arjuna is still thinking in terms of social structures and inherited customs, while Krishna will guide him toward a truth that is timeless, universal, and completely free from social prejudice — the truth of the soul, which is neither man nor woman, but pure, eternal consciousness.

Verse 41. “The mixing of castes inevitably leads to downfall for both the family and those who destroy its tradition. The rituals of offering water and food to the ancestors cease, and thus even the forefathers fall.”

Arjuna’s reference to “unwanted progeny” reflects the ancient social worldview in which children born from the mixing of castes were believed to disrupt the established order. Within the Vedic religious tradition, society was divided into four castes: the priestly class, the warrior class, the merchant class, and the labourer class. But just like Arjuna, one must ultimately free oneself from these worldly traditions. Caste, lineage, and ritual obligations belong to the material world, not to the eternal truth of the soul. God does not ask for offerings, rituals, or ceremonies — neither for the living nor for the dead. The seeker must come to the realization that God alone is the one, eternal, absolute truth (dharma), a truth that must never be broken or obscured by social customs, inherited structures, or fear-based traditions. True dharma is not maintained through rituals or caste purity, but through inner purity, devotion, and alignment with the Supreme.

Verse 42. “It is a great wrongdoing to destroy the family traditions, for this leads to the mixing of castes. As a result, the social and spiritual duties meant for the welfare of the community are lost.”

Arjuna is still fully entangled in the Vedic religious Sanatana-dharma system as it was shaped by the priestly class. This system — which also included the unjust caste structure — must ultimately be transcended. These social constructs belong to the realm of the material world, not to the eternal truth of the soul. Only when a person rises above such inherited customs and rigid social frameworks can the true Divine Sanatana-dharma reveal itself — the dharma that is imperishable, unchanging, and eternal. When this realization dawns, it blossoms within the soul like a mystical rose, opening petal by petal from within. True dharma is not preserved by caste, ritual, or tradition, but by inner purity, devotion, and direct alignment with the Divine.

Verse 43. “O Janardana (Lord Krishna), I have heard through the succession of disciples that those whose family traditions have been destroyed dwell forever in hell.”

Arjuna speaks here from second-hand knowledge. He has heard these teachings “through the succession of disciples,” meaning he knows them only by tradition, not by direct experience. The fear of hell — a powerful tool used throughout history by religious institutions to control, frighten, or restrain people — has shaped his worldview since childhood. Arjuna believes the Brahmins, the priestly class, because he was raised in the tradition that they are the guardians of Sanatana-dharma, passing down sacred teachings through spiritual lineage. Yet what he has inherited is not the pure, eternal truth, but a mixture of social customs, ritual obligations, and fear-based doctrines. True Sanatana-dharma, however, is universal. It transcends birth, gender, caste, and social position. It is nothing less than unity with the Supreme, the eternal truth that shines beyond all outer forms. Therefore, the seeker must learn to move beyond external religious traditions, beyond fear, beyond inherited dogma, and awaken to the inner, eternal dharma — the direct, living connection with the Divine that no ritual, caste, or lineage can either grant or take away.

Verse 44. “Alas, how regrettable it is that we, driven by the desire to possess a kingdom, are even prepared to kill our own relatives.”

Arjuna is being torn between two forces: his longing for Divine insight, and his deeply ingrained material attachment to the ancient traditions he was raised to protect. He fears that abandoning these traditions — even inwardly — would be a grave offense. Yet the true “kingdom of God” lies hidden deep within the human being, and it can be revealed only through true knowledge. To reach this inner kingdom, one must figuratively break the bonds of family attachment and inherited customs that, upon deeper reflection, prove to be illusions of the material world. Because of his inner confusion, Arjuna perceives this necessary inner detachment as a terrible wrongdoing. He does not yet see that spiritual liberation requires the courage to let go of the old — not by abandoning loved ones, but by releasing the inner chains that bind the soul to ignorance.

Verse 45. “It would be better for me to stand unarmed and offer no resistance and be killed on the battlefield by the armed sons of Dhritarashtra.”

The gentle-hearted Arjuna would rather die on the battlefield than raise his hand against his own family. To him, the preservation of the family tradition — even though it has been corrupted by wrongdoing — still feels more sacred than his own life. His compassion, though noble, is intertwined with attachment. He cannot yet distinguish between the outer form of tradition and the inner truth that Krishna will soon reveal. Arjuna believes that by refusing to fight, he is choosing righteousness, unaware that his reluctance is rooted not in spiritual clarity but in emotional confusion. This verse marks the point where Arjuna’s despair reaches its peak: he

would rather surrender his life than face the inner battle required to break through illusion. He does not yet see that true dharma sometimes demands the courage to act, even when the heart trembles.

Verse 46. Sanjaya said: "After speaking these words, Arjuna, his mind overwhelmed with sorrow, cast aside his bow and arrows and sat down on the chariot."

Arjuna has reached the lowest point of his despair. Unable to bear the conflict between his outer, inherited nature — which binds the human being with false promises and emotional attachments — and the inner path of spiritual transformation and liberation, he collapses inwardly. His strength leaves him, not because he lacks courage, but because he is torn between illusion and awakening. Arjuna's posture reveals a universal truth about the human condition: when emotion takes control, the seeker loses his spiritual direction. Confusion clouds the mind, the heart trembles, and the will becomes paralyzed. At precisely such moments, the presence of the spiritual teacher — here, Lord Krishna — becomes essential. The teacher does not fight our battles for us, but leads us back to clarity, insight, and steadfast action. Arjuna's surrender marks do not defeat, but the beginning of true discipleship: the moment when the seeker becomes ready to receive higher knowledge.

Hier eindigt het eerste hoofdstuk van de Bhagavad Gita, "De wanhoop van Arjuna".



Summary of Chapter I

In the first chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the inner drama of Arjuna unfolds. What begins as readiness for battle transforms, the moment he sees his relatives, teachers, and friends arrayed against him, into profound confusion and despair. Caught within the ancient structures of Vedic Sanatana-dharma and the caste system, he struggles with the clash between outer duty and inner truth.

His mind becomes overwhelmed by sorrow, attachment, and moral doubt. He fears that destroying family traditions and social order will cause irreparable harm — not only to the living, but also to the sacred connection with the ancestors. Yet he does not realize that true dharma is universal, oppresses no one, and transcends all temporary structures.

At the end of the chapter, Arjuna lays down his bow and arrows — the outward symbols of his warrior's duty, but also of his inner direction. He chooses passivity, not out of spiritual surrender, but out of emotional paralysis. Thus, the stage is set for Krishna's teaching, in which outer duty and inner liberation will be illuminated in an entirely new light.



Grandfather Bhishma, the ancient embodiment of confusion, lies pierced by a shower of arrows on the battlefield, yet he is still alive. Only when he — confusion itself — dies and his mask breaks, does the serpent of illusion disappear and the swan of insight and purity appear.



Chapter II

The Path of Knowledge

Verse 1. Sanjaya said: “When Madhusudana (Lord Krishna) saw Arjuna seated there, despondent and bewildered, his eyes filled with tears, He spoke the following words, full of compassion:”

Arjuna’s tears and clouded gaze symbolize the obscuring of the inner eye through attachment to emotion. Having reached the depths of confusion and despair, Arjuna is now ready to receive spiritual counsel from Lord Krishna.

Verse 2. The Blessed Lord said: “Arjuna, how has this unworthy weakness come upon you in this difficult hour—conduct that leads only to dishonor and disgrace?”

Lord Krishna asks this question to challenge Arjuna and remind him that the path of the noble soul is always directed toward truth, courage, and service—and that action born of fear or attachment stands in direct opposition to it. True compassion is clear, courageous, and aligned with dharma; Arjuna’s attitude, by contrast, is passive and rooted in personal attachment. He is confused, sorrowful, and weakened, unable to bring himself to fight, yet he must enter this inner battle in order to overcome the illusions of material existence.

Verse 3. “Son of Partha, do not yield to this faint-heartedness, for it does not befit you. O conqueror of the enemy, rise and cast off this dreadful weakness.”

Arjuna is addressed here as “son of Partha,” referring to his mother Kunti, who was the sister of Lord Krishna’s father, Vasudeva. Lord Krishna is therefore not only Arjuna’s blood relative, but also his beloved friend and spiritual teacher. This reveal

the intimate bond between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, who represents the seeking human being. In this verse, Lord Krishna urges Arjuna to cast off the veil of emotion and return to his original strength.

Verse 4. Arjuna said: “O conqueror of Madhu, O destroyer of the enemy, how can I, in this battle, aim my arrows at Bhishma and Dronacharya, to whom I owe reverence and deep respect?”

As mentioned earlier, Dronacharya is the first guru who teaches the disciple the spiritual art of battle, yet he himself remains connected to the material world and is therefore imperfect. Nevertheless, through him the longing for God-realization is awakened. Grandfather Bhishma symbolizes confusion and self-deception, through which one comes to regard family as one’s own flesh and blood and traditions as eternal and sacred. Together, they also represent everything the soul has once cherished as ego-driven action. Arjuna’s confusion shows how, when the human being loses the inner compass, even the highest values may appear harmful. One must act without ego, without attachment, and with pure intention.

Verse 5. “It would be better for me to live in this world as a beggar than to kill these revered teachers. If I were to kill them, all the pleasures of this world would feel to me as though stained with blood.”

Arjuna does not wish to sever the bonds with his teachers. He would rather live as a beggar, content with a few crumbs, than oppose them. In this context, “killing” them means overcoming the inner obstacles that hinder Self-realization. His reasoning is still rooted in emotion and attachment, not in clear insight into dharma. He regards his teachers as irreplaceable, whereas true dharma is not bound to any person, but is a universal guiding principle for the soul.

Verse 6. “I do not know what would be better for me: to conquer them or to be conquered by them. I do not wish to kill the sons of Dhritarashtra, yet they stand before me on the battlefield. And if I kill them, I will not wish to go on living.”

Arjuna’s reasoning about loss and gain on the material and emotional level offers no way out; it only deepens his confusion. He believes that even if he were to overcome these forces, the loss of what he loves—persons, roles, and traditions—would take away his desire to live. This is the point at which the seeker is caught between two extremes: clinging to the old or stepping into the unknown. It is time to ask Lord Krishna, his beloved friend and guru, for guidance on how to free himself from this dreadful tangle of illusions.

Verse 7. “My heart feels heavy and helpless, and my mind is confused concerning dharma. I take refuge in You and am now Your disciple. Therefore, I ask You: instruct me and tell me what I must do.”

Arjuna is fully aware that he cannot resolve the dilemma before him by himself. He ceases to reason from the ego and surrenders to Lord Krishna as his spiritual teacher. Mystically, this is the moment when the soul releases the ego and opens itself to transformation. Spiritual knowledge is obtained only through humility, surrender, and the longing for truth. Dharma includes the principles of life within the Vedic religion by which a good person is expected to live: surrender to the Creator, moderation, purity, marital faithfulness, self-control, honesty, knowledge of the Vedic scriptures, and knowledge of the Super soul.

Verse 8. “Even if I were to obtain sovereignty over the entire earth and the heavens, I still do not know how I could dispel this inner pain that consumes my senses.”

Arjuna realizes that no worldly power can help him resolve this inner conflict, except by following the guidance of his spiritual teacher, Lord Krishna. Yet his insight is still incomplete, for he does not yet see that the solution lies in transcending ego and attachment. This is a universal lesson: no outward victory can replace the inner battle required for Self-realization.

Verse 9. Sanjaya said: “After Gudakesha (Arjuna), the conqueror of sleep, had spoken these words to Hrishikesha (Lord Krishna, Lord of the senses), he said, ‘I shall not fight,’ and fell silent.”

Gudakesha, “conqueror of sleep,” reminds us that Arjuna is normally vigilant and self-controlled, yet at this moment he is paralyzed by emotion. His declaration that he will not fight is both literal and symbolic: the soul refuses to enter the inner battle. The silence that follows is equally meaningful. On one level it is the ending of speech; on another, it is an inner emptiness into which divine instruction can enter. This marks the transition from ego-driven argument to discipleship and receptivity.

Verse 10. Sanjaya said: “O descendant of Bharata (King Dhritarashtra), Hrishikesha (Lord Krishna) then smiled and spoke the following words to Arjuna, who sat grieving in the midst of the two armies.”

Lord Krishna, who knows the secrets of every heart, smiles at Arjuna, for He is not only his spiritual teacher but also his beloved friend. This smile is not mockery, but

an expression of compassion. Lord Krishna sees that Arjuna's crisis is the doorway to spiritual growth. That this dialogue takes place between the two armies symbolizes that divine instruction unfolds in the very midst of conflict and tension. The fact that it can be heard by both armies emphasizes that the message of the Gita is universal, intended for all who are willing to listen.

Verse 11. The Blessed Lord said: "Though you speak learned words, you grieve for what is not worthy of grief. The wise mourn neither for the living nor for the dead."

Lord Krishna calls Arjuna's reasoning learned, but not wise. Many possess worldly knowledge yet lack spiritual wisdom. Everything that belongs to the material world is transient and therefore not worthy of ultimate grief. Lord Jesus would later express words of a similar meaning. This statement may sound stern, but it is meant to awaken the human being from material sleep. It invites the spiritual seeker to shift perspective from the temporary to the timeless.

Verse 12. "Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these rulers. Nor will there ever come a time when any of us shall cease to be."

The Supreme has neither beginning nor end. Our soul, being a part of Him, is likewise immortal. Only material existence is changing and perishable. This verse forms the foundation of the entire teaching: true wisdom begins with the realization that the soul is immortal. It transcends personal relationships and emotions; even those who stand as enemies on the battlefield are, in essence, eternal souls. Grief over the temporary body is a mistake born of identification with the perishable. This insight is essential for attaining true equanimity, through which gain and loss lose their absolute meaning.

Verse 13. "Just as the self within this body experiences childhood, youth, and old age, so the soul passes from one body into another. The wise are not disturbed by this."

Lord Krishna uses a visible metaphor: just as we pass through childhood, youth, and old age within a single lifetime, so at death the soul passes into another body. The wise understand that these changes concern only the body, not the soul. This verse is a key to understanding reincarnation: birth and death are transitions, just like the phases of life. Such insight frees one from fear and makes it possible to live with equanimity, regardless of outward circumstances.

Verse 14. “O son of Kunti (Arjuna), happiness and sorrow come and go, just like heat and cold. They are nothing more than sensory experiences. Endure them with equanimity, O descendant of Bharata.”

In this verse Arjuna is addressed as the son of Kunti and descendant of Bharata, referring to the noble and virtuous qualities he inherits from both his mother’s and father’s line. In the material world, nothing remains permanent; everything is subject to change. Through true knowledge and steadfast endurance, we can learn to undergo these changes courageously and without being inwardly shaken. Remaining undisturbed does not mean becoming insensitive, but realizing that all experiences are transient. This attitude makes it possible to follow the path of yoga without being distracted by the temporary fluctuations of life.

Verse 15. “O best among men (Arjuna), the wise one who remains undisturbed by joy and sorrow, and stays steadfast in both, is ready to taste the nectar of immortality.”

As long as one dwells in a human body, one encounters the opposites that belong to material nature. They come and go like ebb and flow. One is easily captivated by worldly objects. One of my teachers once summarized this playfully: “Doughnuts here, doughnuts there—slightly tastier at one stall than at another, and one keeps eating until the stomach aches. The next day the pain is forgotten, and one begins again with appetite.” It is not always easy to meet the temptations of the world with composure, yet with trust, patience, and steadfastness one remains in noble company.

Verse 16. “That which is unreal shall never come into being; that which truly is shall never cease to exist. For the wise, the knowers of the Self, this alone is reality.”

Everything that is changeable and perishable appears real as long as one experiences it as reality. Just as a dream seems real while we are asleep, so our material existence appears real. The wise, however, who have attained Self-realization, have experienced the reality of God.

Verse 17. “Know that That which pervades all things is indestructible. Nothing can destroy It.”

The Absolute pervades all that exists. Even the smallest atom is filled with God’s power and omnipotence. He is smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest. Everything exists in Him and from Him. Unchanging and imperishable,

exalted beyond time and space, nothing is taken from Him, and nothing is added to Him.

Verse 18. "All material bodies in which the eternal, indestructible, and immeasurable Self dwells are limited and finite. Therefore, O descendant of Bharata, fight."

Material nature is limited and finite. Even if the body receives the best medical care, death will sooner or later arrive. Medical science attempts to keep the human body alive ever longer by means of many interventions, sometimes even against nature itself, yet ultimately these too fail. The soul, however, is indestructible, boundless, and eternal. We may compare the Supreme to the sun and the soul to a ray of sunlight: when the body dies, the ray is withdrawn into its source. Therefore Lord Krishna encourages Arjuna not to fear death, but to fulfil his duty as a Kshatriya, a warrior, with courage.

Verse 19. "They are ignorant who think that the Self can kill, or that the Self can be killed."

The Vedas express in mystical language that the soul is no larger than one ten-thousandth part of the tip of a hair, yet remains indestructible. Only the material body can be slain. The Self, the Supreme Spirit, neither kills nor can be killed.

Verse 20. "The Self knows neither birth nor death. Eternal and unchanging, It rises beyond the body when the body dies."

For the human being, who thinks in terms of time and space, it is sometimes difficult to grasp that the Self always was, is, and shall be. The Self undergoes no change. It cannot be killed and rises above the body when the body dies.

Verse 21. "O son of Partha (Arjuna), how can one who knows the Self as unborn, eternal, and indestructible kill another, or cause oneself to be killed?"

Lord Krishna addresses Arjuna as the son of Partha, a name referring to his mother Kunti. This form of address recalls his noble lineage and the moral and spiritual values she embodied. The wise know that they can neither be killed nor truly kill another. Yet this does not mean that one may kill recklessly or incite others to kill. "Thou shalt not kill" is a cosmic law. This verse is an invitation to spiritual maturity: the insight that the Self remains untouched, whatever outward events may occur.

Verse 22. "Just as a person lays aside worn-out garments and puts on new ones, so the Self casts off an old and exhausted body and enters a new one."

During material existence, the human being undergoes many bodily transformations. When the body loses its function, the soul, the jiva-atma, moves into a new covering. This process repeats until the cycle of birth and death is broken. The soul enjoys and suffers in the material world, while the Supersoul, Paramatma, is present as the silent witness and supports the soul in its spiritual development. This verse invites detachment, yet it certainly does not imply that one may treat the body, or the lives of others, carelessly: the body is a precious instrument for spiritual progress and therefore deserves care and respect.

Verse 23. “No weapon can cleave the Self, nor can fire burn It; water cannot soak It, nor can the wind dry It.”

No means whatsoever has the power to destroy the Self. It is eternal, without beginning or end, untouched by the changes of birth and death. Whoever realizes this knows that true safety does not lie in outward protection, but in knowing the indestructible Self. This insight frees one from fear and awakens a deep reverence for life in all its forms. Through meditation and inner purification, this knowledge becomes a lived reality, and the fear of loss and death disappears completely.

Verse 24. “The Self cannot be cut into pieces; It is indestructible and all-pervading, insoluble, unmoving, immortal, and eternally the same.”

The Self is invulnerable to the forces of the material world. It transcends time and space and remains unchanged amid the fluctuations of existence. Whoever identifies with this finds an inner peace that no outward event can disturb. This insight frees one from fear and opens the heart to compassion and wise action.

Verse 25. “It is said that the Self is unmanifest, unchanging, inconceivable, and beyond thought. Therefore, knowing this truth, you have no reason to grieve.”

There is no separation between the Self that dwells within our body and the Supreme. Only the Supreme exists; from Him all manifestations arise—visible and invisible, material and immaterial. Why, then, should we grieve? The Self cannot be perceived by the senses, nor grasped by the intellect. It is free from change and transcends the limits of time and space. Whoever realizes this knows that no outward event can touch the essential. This insight liberates one from grief and fear, and opens the way to a life rooted in inner peace, compassion, and wise action.

Verse 26. “Even if you believe that the Self is continually born and continually dies, O mighty-armed one, even then you have no reason to grieve.”

Until now Lord Krishna has taught the eternity of the soul; yet even if one believes that beings are repeatedly born and repeatedly die, birth and death remain part of a natural process. They are inevitable phases within a greater movement. Why grieve over what cannot be avoided? Life asks for courage and the fulfilment of one's duty, whatever one's worldview may be. By calling Arjuna "mighty-armed," Lord Krishna reminds him of his inner strength and his capacity to face the battle of life. Whoever understands this is not paralyzed by fear or sorrow, but acts with clarity and steadfastness.

Verse 27. "For one who is born, death is certain; and for one who has died, birth is equally certain. Therefore, in the face of the inevitable, you should not grieve."

Birth and death are inseparable links in the chain of existence. This law applies both to the physical body and to all appearances in the material world. The process is unavoidable, and whoever realizes this is not consumed by grief, but learns acceptance and develops equanimity and steadfastness amid change.

Verse 28. "In the beginning beings are unmanifest, and at the end they are unmanifest again. Only in the intervening phase do they appear in form. What reason, then, is there for sorrow, O descendant of Bharata?"

Life is a movement between the visible and the invisible. Everything that appears arises from the unmanifest and returns to it again. This is the natural order of creation. Whoever understands this sees that grief over the disappearance of forms has no ultimate ground, for the essential remains untouched.

Verse 29. "Some behold the Self as something wondrous; others speak of It as something wondrous; still others hear of It as something wondrous. Yet even after hearing, hardly anyone truly understands It."

The Self is a mystery that surpasses the intellect. Only a few behold It through direct experience, and those who do speak of It with reverence. Others hear about It, but without inner ripeness it remains merely an idea. True knowing comes only through personal realization, when the heart and consciousness open to eternal reality.

Verse 30. "The eternal Self within the body of every being is indestructible, O descendant of Bharata. Therefore, you should not grieve for any living being."

The Self is the same in all beings and remains untouched. It transcends birth and death and is unaffected by the changes of existence. Whoever realizes this understands that grief over the inevitable is not in harmony with spiritual insight.

Compassion and wisdom grow from the realization of unity, not from attachment to form. This insight invites action in accordance with dharma.

Verse 31. “Even if you consider only your own duty, you should not waver. For a Kshatriya, a warrior, there is no path more blessed than a battle fought in accordance with dharma.”

To fulfil one’s inner calling is the path toward liberation. For one born with the nature of a warrior, the defence of righteousness is not a choice but a destiny. A dharmic battle is not an act of violence, but a necessary struggle to restore balance. Whoever understands this acts without doubt, with clarity and surrender. According to the Vedic religious tradition, there are four castes: Shudras, or labourers; Vaishyas, or merchants; Kshatriyas, or warriors; and Brahmins, or priests. Symbolically, however, these four castes point to stages in the spiritual evolution of the human being. The Shudra represents the first step on the spiritual ladder, where the human being turns toward outward worship and adoration of God. The Vaishya begins to seek God within. The Kshatriya, the third phase, is the stage of intense inner battle, in which the human being must relinquish transient traditions, both worldly and religious. In the final spiritual phase, that of the Brahmin, the human being attains God-realization.

Verse 32. “O son of Partha, blessed are the Kshatriyas who are called to such a battle, for the gates of heaven open before them.”

Sometimes life unexpectedly offers the opportunity to fulfil one’s calling. For one born with the nature of a warrior, a dharmic battle is not a burden but a blessing—a gateway to inner elevation. Those who recognize this opportunity and act upon it are truly blessed, for they live in harmony with their deepest destiny.

Verse 33. “If you refuse to fight for this righteous cause, you abandon your duty and your honour, and you incur sin—inner disharmony.”

To avoid one’s destiny does not lead to peace, but to a loss of strength and clarity. Whoever abandons their calling out of fear, attachment, or doubt loses not only outward dignity, but also inner direction. Dharma asks for courage and surrender—not escape. Whoever understands this chooses the path of truth, even when it is difficult.

Verse 34. “The world will remember your disgrace forever, and for a noble person disgrace is worse than death.

Avoiding one's calling leads not only to inner disharmony, but also to the loss of dignity in the eyes of others. For one born with strength and nobility, denying one's destiny becomes a lasting shame. Such shame weighs heavier than death, for it wounds the inner being and dims the light of the soul.

Verse 35. "The great commanders, who hold you in respect, will think that you fled the battlefield out of fear, and for this they will despise you."

Avoiding one's calling out of fear does not bring peace, but loss of strength and radiance. Even those who respect you will interpret your silence as weakness. More importantly, your own soul will lose its clarity. Whoever abandons their duty loses not only the respect of others, but also the connection with inner strength.

Verse 36. "Your enemies will slander and mock you with scornful words. Do you realize how painful and humiliating this will be for you?"

The loss of inner radiance through ridicule weighs heavier than outward defeat. Whoever avoids their calling is not only despised but also mocked—by others and by the voices of doubt within. Such mockery wounds the heart, undermines trust, and weakens the soul. What could be more painful than that?

Verse 37. "O son of Kunti, if you are slain, you will attain heaven; if you are victorious, you will enjoy the earthly kingdom. Therefore, arise and fight!"

Whoever fulfils their calling always wins. If you fall, you are lifted upward; if you succeed, you receive the fruits of life. In either case, it is right to rise and act—with clarity and surrender. The path of dharma knows no loss, only growth.

Verse 38. "Pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat—regard them all as the same. Look upon them without distinction. Prepare yourself for battle, and you will incur no sin."

Equanimity is the key to pure action. Whoever is not carried away by the desire for success or the fear of failure, but acts from clarity and surrender, lives in harmony with dharma and becomes detached from the world and its interests. Such action purifies the heart and liberates the soul. It is not the outcome that matters, but the inner attitude with which one acts.

Verse 39. "O son of Partha, thus far I have explained to you the teaching of knowledge, Jnana-yoga, by which Self-realization is attained. Now I shall explain to you the teaching of Karma-yoga, through which you are freed from the bonds of action and from their consequences, karma."

Lord Krishna has first set forth the path of insight for Arjuna. Now He will explain the path of action without attachment to results, in which every deed becomes a devotional act offered to God. An action performed in this way is no longer material, but transcendental, and therefore lies beyond the law of cause and effect, karma.

Verse 40. "On this path no effort is ever lost, and there is no adverse reaction. Even a small beginning on this way of inner calling protects one from the greatest fears."

Action without attachment to results, offered to the Supreme, is never lost. Once one has entered this devotional path, even if only for a short distance, it is counted a hundredfold or more. When this path is resumed in the present life or in a future incarnation, one begins again from the point where one had stopped. Nothing is lost; moreover, this path protects us from the great danger of the endless cycle of birth and death.

Verse 41. "O joy of the Kurus, by entering this path you direct yourself with determination toward one single goal, while those who hesitate and doubt wander away onto countless side paths."

Liberation requires a focused mind. Through the practice of action without attachment to results, and by offering such action to the Supreme, one becomes steadfastly directed toward one goal: God. Because these actions are no longer result-oriented but are performed in transcendental service, they fall beyond material nature and are freed from the law of karma. Whoever hesitates, however, and still wishes to enjoy the fruits of action, will lose the way in the labyrinth of material nature and become entangled in confusion.

Verse 42 – 43. "Those who long for sense gratification and luxurious living are misled by the unwise, who teach the flowery language of the Vedas and proclaim that nothing exists beyond it. They listen only to their desires and follow many rites to be elevated after death to higher planets; yet the result remains rebirth."

Many are misled by false teachers who merely repeat the flowery language of the Vedas and recommend countless rites for material gain, and for promotion after death to higher planets where one may live for a time in luxury and enjoyment. Yet this does not promise liberation from the cycle of birth and death; rebirth in the material world remains certain. The karma-yogi is not deceived by beautiful words that lead away from inward surrender and direct realization of the Self.

Verse 44. “Their minds are completely absorbed by the desire for sense gratification. Being indecisive, they lack the steadfastness to direct their attention solely toward the Supreme and to be devoted to Him alone.”

Those whose minds are focused only on satisfying the senses become completely entangled in material nature and lack the determination to be devoted to God alone. Samadhi requires a calm and free inner mind—unbound, clear, and focused. Whoever seeks the eternal must release the grip of desire and material attachment.

Verse 45. “The Vedas speak of the three qualities of material nature. O Arjuna, free yourself from the triad of the three gunas and rise above all opposites. Be steadfast, free from worldly anxieties, and remain anchored in the Self.”

If one dwells in a material body, one is subject to nature and its three qualities. Through the practice of God-consciousness, one can overcome ignorance and passion and abide in the quality of goodness, sattva. Ultimately, however, even this quality must be transcended and understood in its proper context. This does not mean that goodness should disappear from life, but that one must not become attached to its fruits—just as the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing. Our sole aim is to transcend the material world and attain Self-realization.

Verse 46. “Those who have realized the Supreme within themselves are spiritually exalted above ascetics, scholars, and ritualists. Therefore, O Arjuna, become a yogi.”

Discipline, knowledge, and duty are valuable, yet only when they are carried by the spirit of yoga—action in equanimity, free from attachment, and directed toward union with the Supreme—do they attain their true power. The yogi embodies this union and is therefore exalted above all other seekers.

Verse 47. “Of all yogis, the one who serves Me with sincere devotion and surrender, whose mind is fixed on Me alone, is without exception the most perfect yogi.”

Yoga finds its highest fulfilment in loving devotion. Whoever directs heart and mind wholly toward the Divine, and lives in a continual inner relationship of trust and surrender, is the truly perfected yogi. All other forms of yoga find their completion here.

Verse 48. “O Arjuna, perform your actions in constant devotion. Remain detached and regard success and failure as no different from one another. Yoga is the path of equanimity.”

Yoga is indeed the path of equanimity, and Lord Krishna is the perfect Yogi. There are many disciplines of yoga. Hatha-yoga, for example, is the physical form of yoga in which the body and mind are brought to rest through various postures. Many other disciplines also exist, each attracting the spiritual seeker according to temperament and inclination. Yet in this present age of Kali-yuga—the iron age of conflict, deception, and delusion—certain yogic disciplines are very difficult to follow, let alone sustain. For this age, Karma-yoga is therefore recommended as the path toward Self-realization. By acting with equanimity, without interest in the results of one's actions, and by performing them solely to please the Supreme, one becomes ever more firmly anchored in God-consciousness.

Verse 49. "O Dhananjaya (Arjuna), work performed for results is far inferior to work done with a mind undisturbed by thoughts of results. Take refuge in wisdom born of equanimity. Only the ignorant work for reward, and they are in a pitiable state."

Here Lord Krishna addresses Arjuna as Dhananjaya, meaning "conqueror of wealth." Perform your work conscientiously and to the best of your ability, yet do not seek any reward. Remain equanimous, whatever the outcome of your work may be. Success or gain is not the point. Whoever strives only for success binds himself to the temporary and misses the eternal.

Verse 50. "One who is endowed with wisdom, performs devoted service, and thereby attains equanimity, frees himself even in this life from the reactions of both good and bad deeds."

When our mind is devotionally directed toward God and rests in a state of equanimity, it gives rise to true confidence. Therefore, practise devotion and equanimity, regardless of success or failure, and free yourself in this very life from the consequences of both good and bad actions. Even good karma binds if attachment remains; the yogi transcends both by acting without self-interest.

Verse 51. "The wise act in continual union with the Supreme Lord. Guided by inner equanimity, they renounce the fruits of their actions and are thereby freed from rebirth, attaining the state that is free from all suffering."

Whoever acts without attachment to outcome, but in surrender to the Supreme, loosens the chain of cause and effect and the cycle of birth and death. Such a person is already, while living on earth, a liberated soul.

Verse 52. “When your mind crosses the swamp of illusion, you will regard with equal vision all that you have heard and all that you will yet hear.”

There comes a moment when words lose their grip—not because they are untrue, but because you have touched the essential. The river of knowledge flows into the ocean of experience; there, the water becomes still. What remains is clear seeing—without searching, without collecting, without clinging.

Verse 53. “When the mind remains undisturbed, unmoving and steadfastly established in the Self, no longer confused by the many Vedic opinions expressed in flowery language, you will attain God-realization.”

There comes a moment when seeking ceases—not because everything has been heard, but because inner knowing stands firm. The mind rests in the Self, no longer distracted by opinions or methods. Then yoga is no longer merely a path, but a state: a homecoming into the lap of the Supreme, the Beloved.

Verse 54. Arjuna said: “O Krishna, how do we recognize the person who has come to wisdom, who has attained the state of samadhi, whose mind is steadfast and abides continually in meditation? How does such a person live, act, and speak?”

This is not a question about outward behaviour, but about the fragrance of inner freedom. How does a voice sound that seeks nothing more? How does a body rest that clings to nothing? How does one move who leaves no trace of attachment behind? Arjuna asks for the living proof of liberation.

Verse 55. The Blessed Lord said: “When a person has completely given up all desires of the mind and is satisfied in the Self alone, finding fulfilment there, then you may be certain that such a person has attained true and steadfast wisdom.”

When a person is filled by the blissful presence of the Supreme at the centre of the heart, turns away from the material world, and no longer feels drawn to its endless illusory desires, then it is certain that the stage of wisdom has been reached. Such a person finds fulfilment and deep peace in the Self alone.

Verse 56. “The wise one whose mind remains undisturbed in sorrow, who is free from craving in joy, and who has been liberated from attachment, fear, and anger, is called steadfast in mind.”

This is the peace that is not given by the world and cannot be taken away by it. Sorrow and joy are like waves striking against a rock; attachment, fear, and anger are like chains that seek to bind the soul. The steadfast sage has broken these chains and stands still in the light of the Self.

Verse 57. “Whoever remains unmoved in the face of good and evil, glorifying neither the one nor despising the other, bound neither to person nor place—regard such a one as having come to wisdom.”

This is the silence of a heart no longer swept away by the waves of destiny. Good and bad are like sunlight and shadow moving across the path; the wise one continues onward, attached neither to the light nor to the darkness, for he knows the Source from which both arise.

Verse 58. “Whoever can withdraw the senses from the attraction of their objects, as a tortoise draws its limbs into its shell, is unwavering in perfect consciousness.”

There are three categories of adversity: bodily afflictions; external misfortunes, such as accidents; and disturbances caused by great cosmic forces, such as natural disasters. One who is detached withdraws the senses from the attraction of their objects, even though the pull of nature continues to exist. The senses are sometimes compared to venomous serpents: they wish to move freely, tolerate no restraint, and are therefore extremely difficult to master. We can overcome their powerful attraction by making God the centre of our existence and using the senses only in His service, by which all our activities are transcended. True self-mastery is not repression, but an inner strength through which the senses withdraw naturally once the soul rests in the Self.

Verse 59. “One may withdraw from the objects of the senses, yet they do not lose their attraction. But when Self-realization is attained, even this longing comes to an end.”

Even the ignorant may withdraw from sensory objects, yet the attraction of nature remains within them. For the one who has realized the Supreme, the Beloved, within himself, even the most subtle material attraction disappears. It becomes barren and loses every trace of malice.

Verse 60. “O son of Kunti, the senses are so strong and turbulent that they can violently carry away even the mind of a wise person, despite his efforts to control them.”

The material person who favors sensory objects is ruled by the senses. Great agitation and restlessness arise in the mind, which seeks to have the senses satisfied. The senses are like rivers in the rainy season: they suddenly swell and sweep away everything that is not firmly anchored. Wisdom is the compass, but anchoring in the Self is the anchor; without that anchor, even the most experienced helmsman may be carried away. Advanced souls may still become victims of sense gratification through turbulent nature. Discipline and constant remembrance of the Supreme are necessary in order not to be distracted by sudden impressions or temptations.

Verse 61. “Whoever controls the senses, holds them completely in check, and fixes consciousness solely upon Me as the centre, has truly come to wisdom.”

In this age of Kali-yuga, the iron age of deception and delusion, it is difficult to master the senses. Yet mastery is not a struggle, but a reversal of direction. The senses want to grasp, but the yogi lets them serve. He sits still, not because he feels nothing, but because his consciousness is directed toward the Supreme, the Beloved. There, in that devotion, the senses become quiet—and wisdom becomes deeply grounded. Lord Krishna speaks here in the “Me-form,” just as Jesus would later do: the voice of the Divine Self speaking through the human being.

Verse 62. “By directing attention toward sense objects, attraction arises. From attraction comes desire and craving, and desire is the cause of anger.”

It begins innocently: a thought that lingers, an image that repeats itself. But repetition weaves a thread of attachment. From that thread desire grows, and when desire is not fulfilled, it turns into anger. Thus, the mind becomes trapped in a chain it has forged for itself. The wise one recognizes this beginning and turns the gaze inward before the thread closes around him.

Verse 63. “From anger arises delusion; from delusion, confusion of memory; from confusion of memory, the destruction of discernment; and when discernment is destroyed, one falls.”

Anger is the cause of illusion and deception. The result of deception is confusion, through which all knowledge is forgotten. When knowledge is lost, discernment (buddhi) is lost as well, and we are no longer able to perceive the difference between

good and evil, between reality and unreality. Ultimately one loses self-control and falls back into material nature. The wise one sees this process and returns to the Source before the mist of anger darkens the inner being.

Verse 64. "But one who is free from attachment and aversion, and who uses the senses with restraint under the guidance of the Self, attains inner peace and the grace of the Supreme."

The yogi does not live outside the world, but in the midst of its currents. He sees, hears, and acts, yet his heart is bound neither by preference nor aversion. His senses are like horses that obey the reins of the Self. Thus he attains prasada: the quiet peace that descends as grace. Where the bound human being falls into confusion, the liberated one finds rest in clarity.

Verse 65. "One who is completely filled with God-consciousness, content and inwardly at peace, is freed from mental and physical suffering and attains steadfastness."

In the stillness of prasada, the storms of pain dissolve. The heart that is clear and uplifted is no longer tossed about by desire or fear. There, in that peace, discernment becomes firmly grounded. The yogi sees things as they are, and his wisdom remains unwavering.

Verse 66. "One who is not united with the Self cannot possibly possess an undisturbed mind in which peace prevails. And how can one be happy without peace?"

For one who is not devoted to the Supreme, there can be no peace, no steadfastness of mind, and no knowledge of the true nature of the Self. There is no lasting happiness for one who longs only for material objects and remains imprisoned in the dungeon of sensory enjoyment.

Verse 67. "Just as a ship at sea is driven here and there by a storm, so discernment is carried away by the mind when it is besieged by the wandering senses."

The human being who allows the senses to roam freely becomes like a boat without a rudder. The wind of desire and distraction seizes him and carries him far from the shore of insight. His wisdom is stolen, not by an enemy outside him, but by the unrest within. The wise one holds the reins and does not allow the mind to follow the senses, so that the boat may safely reach the farther shore.

Verse 68. "O mighty armed one (Arjuna), whoever can restrain the senses from their objects has truly attained steadfastness and wisdom."

The yogi is not one who kills the senses, but one who master's them. He no longer allows them to determine the course, but holds them firmly, like horses obedient to the reins. Thus, his insight is no longer stolen by the storms of desire but becomes firmly grounded in the Self. Here the human being finds the peace of steadfast wisdom. In this age of Kali-yuga, it is extremely difficult to restrain the senses by willpower alone; yet by directing attention toward the Supreme and using the senses only in His service, what is impossible even for those of great will becomes possible.

Verse 69. "What is night for living beings is day for the wise; what is day for the wise is night for living beings."

Most of the humanity is caught in the net of material desire. People are tossed between pain and joy and undergo the fluctuations of nature. If they do not turn toward spiritual reflection, they continue wandering through the labyrinth of birth and death. What is day for the ignorant is night for the wise—and the reverse is also true. The wise one has realized the Self within. The material world, which appears to the ignorant as the highest good, is for him no more than a dream through which he moves untouched.

Verse 70. "Only one in whom all desires enter as waters flow into the ocean, without causing any change, attains peace. One who is carried away by desire does not attain peace."

The ocean is always full yet remains still even though countless rivers flow into it. So, it is with the wise one: desires come and go, but he is not disturbed by them. His heart is grounded in the Self, not in the pursuit of fulfilment. Therefore, he finds peace. The person who cherishes desire remains thirsty; however many rivers may flow in.

Verse 71. "Whoever gives up all desires and lives without craving, without a sense of ownership, and without ego attains true peace."

No one in this material world is entirely free from desires. Yet when these are transcended through devoted service to the Supreme, the fire of craving for sensory enjoyment is gradually extinguished. One then no longer takes pleasure in sensual gratification and longs only to please the Supreme, the Beloved, and to become absorbed in Him. This pure, spiritual love for the Supreme ultimately becomes so exalted that it cannot be captured in words

Verse 72. "O Arjuna, when a person attains the ultimate state of the Self, the Supreme Spirit, it can never again be taken away from him. Even in his final hour of life, he remains established in this blissful state, one with the Supreme."

When one continually practises devoted service to God, this inner strength becomes so powerful and exalted that, when the time is ripe, one is completely absorbed into the Self. From that moment onward, no return to the material world is possible, not even at the hour of death.

Here ends the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, "The Path of Knowledge."



Summary of Chapter II

In Chapter II, Krishna begins to dispel Arjuna's despair by instructing him in the eternal truth of the soul. He explains that the body is perishable, while the Self is unborn, unchanging, and immortal. Arjuna's sorrow arises from attachment to temporary forms, not from insight into the true nature of existence.

Krishna then introduces karma-yoga: action performed without attachment to the result. The human being must fulfil his duty with a steadfast mind, free from fear, desire, and doubt. True wisdom does not lie in passivity, but in clear insight that leads to right action.

Arjuna learns that inner stability arises when the mind is no longer swept away by emotions, desires, and social traditions. The wise person stands above duality and finds peace in the realization that only the eternal Self truly exists.

Chapter II thus forms the philosophical foundation of the Gita: the distinction between body and soul, between attachment and duty, between illusion and truth — and the path that leads to inner freedom.
