

# The Bhagavad Gîtâ



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The sixth book of the Mahabharata translated by Kâshinâth Trimbak Telang



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

## CHAPTER 01

### Arjuna's Dilemma



Dhritarâshtra said:

What did my (people) and the Pândavas do, O Sañgaya! when they assembled together on the holy field of Kurukshetra, desirous to do battle?

Sañgaya said:

Seeing the army of the Pândavas drawn up in battle-array, and Dhrishtaketu, Kekitâna, and the valiant king of Kâsî, Purugit and Kuntibhoga, and that eminent man Saibya; the heroic Yudhâmanyu, the valiant Uttamaugas, the son of Subhadrâ, and the sons of Draupadî--all masters of great cars. And now, O best of Brâhmanas! Learn who are most distinguished among us, and are leaders of my army. I will name them to you, in order that you may know them well. Yourself, and Bhîshma, and Karna, and Kripa the victor of (many) battles; Asvatthâman, and Vikarna, and also the son of Somadatta, and many other brave men, who have given up their lives for me, who fight with various weapons, (and are) all dexterous in battle. Thus our army which is protected by Bhîshma is unlimited; while this army of theirs which is protected by Bhîma is very limited. And therefore do ye all, occupying respectively the positions only.'

Then his powerful grandsire, Bhîshma, the oldest of the Kauravas, roaring aloud like a lion, blew his conch, (thereby) affording delight to Duryodhana. And then all at once, conchs, and kettledrums, and tabors, and trumpets were played upon; and there was a tumultuous din. Then, too, Mâdhava and the son of Pându (Arguna), seated in a grand chariot to which white steeds were yoked, blew their heavenly conchs. Hrishîkesa, blew the Anantavigaya, and Nakula and Sahadeva (respectively) the Sughosha and Manipushpaka. And the king of Kâsî, too, who has an excellent bow, and Sikhandin, the master of a great car, and Dhrishtadyumna, Virâta, and the unconquered Sâtyaki, and Drupada, and the sons of Draupadî, and the son of Subhadrâ, of mighty arms, blew conchs severally from all sides, O king of the earth! That tumultuous din rent the hearts of all (the people) of Dhritarâshtra's (party), causing reverberations throughout heaven and earth. Then seeing (the people of ) Dhritarâshtra's party regularly marshalled, the son of Pându, whose standard is the ape, raised his bow to the evil-minded son of Dhritarâshtra.'

Saṅgaya said:

Thus addressed by Gudâkesa! Hrishîkesa stationed that excellent chariot between the two armies, in front of Bhîshma and Drona and of all the kings of the earth, and said O son of Prithâ! look at these assembled Kauravas.' There the son of Prithâ saw in both armies, fathers and grandfathers, preceptors, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, companions, fathers-in-law, as well as friends. And seeing all those kinsmen standing (there), the son of Kuntî was overcome by excessive pity, and spake thus despondingly.

Arguna said:

Seeing these kinsmen, O Krishna! standing (here) desirous to engage in battle, my limbs droop down; my mouth is quite dried up; a tremor comes on my body; and my hairs stand on end; the Gândîva (bow) slips from my hand; my skin burns intensely. I am unable, too, to stand up; my mind whirls round, as it were; O Kesava! I see adverse omens! even for the sake of sovereignty over the three worlds, how much less then for this earth (alone)? What joy shall be ours, O Ganârdana! after killing Dhritarâshtra's sons? Killing these felons, their ancestors fall down (to hell). By these transgressions of the destroyers of families, which occasion interminglings of castes, the eternal rites of castes and rites, of families are subverted. And O Ganârdana! we have heard that men whose family-rites are subverted, must necessarily live in hell. Alas! we are engaged in committing a heinous sin, seeing that we are making efforts for killing our own kinsmen out of greed of the pleasures of sovereignty. If the sons of Dhritarâshtra, weapon in hand, should kill me in battle, me weaponless and not defending (myself), that would be better for me.

Saṅgaya said:

Having spoken thus, Arguna cast aside his bow together with the arrows, on the battle-field, and sat down in (his) chariot, with a mind agitated by grief.



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

## CHAPTER 02

## Transcendental Knowledge



Saṅgaya said:

To him, who was thus overcome with pity, and dejected, and whose eyes were full of tears and turbid, the destroyer of Madhu spoke these words.

The Deity said:

How (comes it that) this delusion, O Arguna! which is discarded by the good, which excludes from heaven, and occasions infamy, has overtaken you in this (place of) peril? Be not effeminate, O son of Prithâ! it is not worthy of you. Cast off this base weakness of heart, and arise, O terror of (your) foes!

Arguna said:

How, O destroyer of Madhu! shall I encounter with arrows in the battle Bhîshma and Drona--both, O destroyer of enemies! entitled to reverence? Not killing (my) preceptors--(men) of great glory--it is better to live even on alms in this world. But killing them, though they are avaricious of worldly goods, I should only enjoy blood-tainted enjoyments. Nor do we know which of the two is better for us--whether that we should vanquish them, or that they should vanquish us. Even those, whom having killed, we do not wish to live--even those sons of Dhritarâshtra stand (arrayed) against us. With a heart contaminated by the taint of helplessness.

Saṅgaya said:

Having spoken thus to Hrishîkesa, O terror of (your) foes! Gudâkesa said to Govinda, 'I shall not engage in battle;' and verily remained silent. To him thus desponding between the two armies, O descendant of Bharata! Hrishîkesa spoke these words with a slight smile.

The Deity said:

You have grieved for those who deserve no grief, and you talk words of wisdom to be perishable; therefore do engage in battle, O descendant of Bharata! He who thinks it to be the killer and he who thinks it to be killed, both

know nothing. It kills not, is not killed. Therefore about (this) unavoidable thing, you ought not to grieve. The source of things, O descendant of Bharata! is unperceived; their middle state is perceived; and their end again is unperceived. What (occasion is there for any) lamentation regarding them--an open door to heaven! But if you will not fight this righteous battle, then you will have abandoned your own duty and your fame, and you will incur sin. All beings, too, will tell of your everlasting infamy; and to one who has been honoured, infamy is (a) greater (evil) than death. (Warriors who are) masters of great cars will think that you abstained from the battle through fear, and having been highly thought of by them, you will fall down to littleness. Your enemies, too, decrying your power, will speak much about you that should not be spoken. And what, indeed, more lamentable than that?

Killed, you will obtain heaven; victorious, you will enjoy the earth. Therefore arise, O son of Kuntî! resolved to (engage in) battle. Looking alike on pleasure and pain, on gain and loss, on victory and defeat, then prepare for battle, and thus you will not incur sin. The knowledge here declared to you is that relating to the Sâṅkhya, does not belong to those, O son of Prithâ! who are strongly attached to (worldly) pleasures and power, and whose minds are drawn away by that flowery talk which is full of (ordinances of) specific acts for the attainment of (those) pleasures and (that) power, and which promises birth as the fruit of acts. Having recourse to devotion, O Dhanañgaya! perform actions, casting off (all) attachment, and being equable in success or ill-success; (such) equability is called devotion. Action, O Dhanañgaya! is far inferior to the devotion of the mind. In that devotion seek shelter. Wretched are those whose motive (to action) is the fruit (of action). He who has obtained devotion in this world casts off both merit and sin, then will you acquire devotion.

Arguna said:

What are the characteristics, O Kesava! of one whose mind is steady, and who is intent on contemplation? How should one of steady mind speak, how sit, how move?

The Deity said:

When a man, O son of Prithâ! abandons all the desires of his heart, and is pleased in his self only and by his self; from want of discrimination, confusion of the memory; from confusion of the memory, loss of reason; and in consequence of loss of reason. he is utterly ruined. But the self-restrained man who moves among. He into whom all objects of desire enter, as waters enter the ocean, which, (though) replenished, (still) keeps its position unmoved,-he

only obtains tranquillity; not he who desires (those) objects of desire. The man who, casting off all desires, lives free from attachments, who is free from egoism.



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## CHAPTER 03

### Path Of Service



Arguna said:

If, O Ganârdana! devotion is deemed by you to be superior to action, then why, O Kesava! do you prompt me to (this) fearful action? You seem, indeed, to confuse my mind by equivocal words. Therefore, declare one thing determinately, by which I may attain the highest good.

The Deity said:

O sinless one! I have already declared, that in this world there is a twofold path renunciation. For nobody ever remains even for an instant without performing some action; since the qualities of nature constrain everybody, not having free-will (in the matter), to some action.

From food are born (all) creatures; from rain is the production of food; rain is produced by sacrifices; sacrifices are the result of action; know that action has its source in the Vedas; the Vedas come from the Indestructible. Therefore the all-comprehending Vedas are always concerned with sacrifices. And having regard also to the keeping of people (to their duties) you should perform action. Whatever a great man does, that other men also do. And people follow whatever he receives as authority. There is nothing, O son of Prithâ! for me to do in (all) the three worlds, nothing to acquire which has not been acquired. Still I do engage in action. For should I at any time not engage without sloth in action, men would follow in my path from all sides, O son of Prithâ! If I did not perform actions, these worlds would be destroyed, I should be the cause of caste interminglings; and I should be ruining these people. As the ignorant act, O descendant of Bharata! with attachment to action, so should a wise man act without attachment, wishing to keep the people (to their duties). A wise man should not shake the convictions of the ignorant who are attached to action, but acting with devotion (himself) should make them apply themselves to all action. He whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks himself the doer of the actions, which, in every way, are done by the qualities of nature. A man of perfect knowledge should not shake these men of imperfect knowledge (in their convictions). Dedicating all actions to me with a mind knowing the relation of the supreme and individual self, engage in battle without desire, without (any feeling that this or that is) mine, and without any mental trouble. One's own duty, though defective, is better than another's duty well performed.



Death in (performing) one's own duty is preferable; the (performance of the) duty of others is dangerous.

Arguna said:

But by whom, O descendant of *Vrishni*! is man impelled, even though unwilling, and, as it were, constrained by force, to commit sin?

The Deity said:

It is desire, it is wrath. Thus knowing that which is higher than the understanding, and restraining (your)self by (your)self, O you of mighty arms! destroy this unmanageable enemy in the shape of desire.



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

## CHAPTER 04

### Path Of Renunciation With Knowledge



The Deity said:

This everlasting, and Manu communicated it to Ikshvâku. Coming thus by steps, it became known to royal sages. But, O terror of (your) foes! that devotion was lost to the world by long (lapse of) time. That same primeval devotion I have declared to you to-day, seeing, that you are my devotee and friend, for it is the highest mystery.

Arguna said:

Later is your birth the birth of the sun is prior. How then shall I understand that you declared (this) first?

The Deity said:

I have passed through many births, O Arguna I and you also. I know them all, but you, O terror of (your) foes! do not know them. Even though I am unborn and inexhaustible in (my) essence, even though I am lord of all beings, still I take up the control of my own nature, and am born by means of my delusive power. Whensoever, O descendant of Bharata! piety languishes, and impiety is in the ascendant, I create myself. I am born age after age, for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, and the establishment of piety. Whoever truly knows thus my divine birth and work, casts off (this) body and is not born again. He comes to me, O Arguna! Many from whom affection, fear, men in this world worship the divinities, for in this world of mortals, the success produced by action is soon obtained. The fourfold division of castes was created by me according to the apportionment of qualities and duties. But though I am its author, know me to be inexhaustible, and not the author. Actions defile me not. I have no attachment to the fruit of actions. He who knows me thus is not tied down by actions. Knowing this, the men of old who wished for final emancipation, performed action. Therefore do you, too, perform action as was done by men of old in olden times. Even sages are confused as to what is action, what inaction. Therefore I will speak to you about action, and learning that, you will be freed from (this world of) evil. One must possess knowledge about action; one must also possess knowledge about prohibited action; and again one must possess knowledge about inaction. The truth regarding action is abstruse. He is wise among men, he is possessed of

devotion, and performs all actions are all destroyed.

Brahman is the oblation; with Brahman (as a sacrificial instrument) it is offered up; Brahman is in the fire; and by Brahman it is thrown; and Brahman, too, is the goal to which he proceeds who meditates on Brahman in the action. Others, who (take) limited food, offer up the life-breaths into the life-breaths. All of these, conversant with the sacrifice, have their sins destroyed by the sacrifice. Those who eat the nectar-like leavings of the sacrifice repair to the eternal Brahman, and that one perfected by devotion finds within one's self in time. He who has faith, whose senses are restrained, and who is assiduous, obtains knowledge, who has renounced action by devotion, and who has destroyed misgivings by knowledge. Therefore, O descendant of Bharata! destroy, with the sword of knowledge, these misgivings of yours which fill your mind, and which are produced from ignorance. Engage in devotion. Arise!



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

## CHAPTER 05

### Path Of Renunciation



Arguna said:

O *Krishna*! you praise renunciation of actions and also the pursuit (of them). Tell me determinately which one of these two is superior.

The Deity said:

Renunciation and pursuit of action are both instruments of happiness. But of the two, pursuit of action is superior to renunciation of action. He should be understood to be always an ascetic, who has no aversion and no desire. For, O you of mighty arms! he who is free from the pairs of opposites is easily released from (all) bonds. Children--not wise men--talk of *sankhya* and *yoga* as distinct. One who pursues either well obtains the fruit of both. The seat which the *sankhyas* obtain is reached by the *yogas*--(all) free (from egoistic notions).

He who is possessed of devotion, abandoning the fruit of actions, attains the highest tranquillity. He who is without devotion, and attached to the fruit (of action), is tied down by (reason of his) acting in consequence of (some) desire. The self-restrained, embodied (self) lies at ease within the city of nine portals; since Brahman is free from defects and equable, therefore they rest in Brahman.

He who knows Brahman, whose mind is steady, who is not deluded, and who rests in Brahman, does not exult on finding anything agreeable, nor does he grieve on finding anything disagreeable, and whose minds are restrained, and who have knowledge of the self, the Brahmic bliss is on both sides (of death).

The sage who excludes (from his mind) external objects, (concentrates) the visual power between the brows, whose highest goal is final emancipation, from whom desire, fear, and wrath have departed, is, indeed, for ever released (from birth and death). He knowing me to be the enjoyer of all sacrifices and penances, the great Lord of all worlds, and the friend of all beings, attains tranquillity.



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## CHAPTER 06

### Path Of Meditation



The Deity said:

He who, regardless of the fruit of actions, performs the actions which ought to be performed, is the devotee and renouncer; not he who discards the (sacred) fires; he should not debase his self, for even (a man's) own self is his friend, (a man's) own self is also his enemy place, not too high nor too low, and covered over with a sheet of cloth, a deerskin, and (blades of) Kusa (grass),--and there seated on (that) seat, fixing his mind exclusively on one point, with the workings of the mind and senses restrained, he should practice devotion for purity of self. Holding his body, head, and neck even and unmoved, (remaining) steady, looking at the tip of his own nose, is pleased in the self; in which one experiences that infinite happiness which transcends the senses, and which can be grasped by the understanding only; and adhering to which, one never swerves from the truth; acquiring which, one thinks no other acquisition higher than it; and adhering to which, one is not shaken off even by great misery; that should be understood to be called devotion in which there is a severance of all connexion with pain. That devotion should be practised with steadiness and with an undesponding heart. Abandoning, without exception, all desires. He who has devoted his self to abstraction, by devotion, looking alike on everything, sees the self abiding in all beings, and all beings in the self.

Arguna said:

I cannot see, O destroyer of Madhu! (how) the sustained existence (is to be secured) of this devotion by means of equanimity which you have declared-in consequence of fickleness. For, O *Krishna*! the mind is fickle, boisterous strong, and obstinate; and I think that to restrain it is as difficult as (to restrain) the wind.

The Deity said:

Doubtless, O you of mighty arms! the mind is difficult to restrain, and fickle. Still, O son of Kuntî! it may be restrained by constant practice and by indifference (to worldly objects). It is my belief, that devotion is hard to obtain for one who does not restrain his self. But by one who is self-restrained and assiduous, it can be obtained through (proper) expedients.

Arguna said:

What is the end of him, O *Krishna*! who does not attain the consummation of his devotion, being not assiduous, go to ruin like a broken cloud, being, O you of mighty arms! without support, and deluded on the path (leading) to the Brahman? Be pleased, O *Krishna*! to entirely destroy this doubt of mine, for none else than you can destroy this doubt.

The Deity said:

O son of *Prithâ*! neither in this world nor the next, is ruin for him; for, O dear friend! none who performs good (deeds) comes to an evil end. He who is fallen from devotion attains the worlds of those who perform meritorious acts, dwells (there) for many a year, and is afterwards born into a family of holy and illustrious, he is led away by the self-same former practice, and although he only wishes to learn devotion, he rises above the (fruits of action laid down in the) divine word. But the devotee working with great efforts, and cleared of his sins, attains perfection after many births, and then reaches the supreme goal. The devotee is esteemed higher than the performers of penances, higher even than the men of knowledge, and the devotee is higher than the men of action; therefore, O Arguna! become a devotee. And even among all devotees, he who, being full of faith, worships me, with his inmost self intent on me, is esteemed by me to be the most devoted.



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

## CHAPTER 07

### Self-Knowledge And Enlightenment



The Deity said:

O son of *Prithâ!* now hear how you can without doubt know me fully, fixing your mind on me, and resting in me, and practising devotion. I will now tell you exhaustively about knowledge together with experience; that being known, there is nothing further left in this world to know. Among thousands of men, only some; and even of those who have reached perfection, and who are assiduous, only some know me truly. Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, understanding, and egoism among all beings. And all entities which are of the quality of goodness, and those which are of the quality of passion and of darkness, know that they are, indeed, all from me; I am not in them, but they are in me, do not resort to me. But, O *Arguna!* doers of good (acts) of four classes worship me: one who is distressed, one who is seeking after knowledge, one who wants wealth, and one, O chief of the descendants of *Bharata!* who is possessed of knowledge. Of these, he who is possessed of knowledge, who is always devoted, and whose worship is (addressed) to one (Being) only, is esteemed highest. For to the man of knowledge I am dear above all things, and he is dear to me. All these are noble. But the man possessed of knowledge is deemed by me to be my own self. For he with (his) self devoted to abstraction, has taken to me as the goal than which there is nothing higher. At the end of many lives, the man possessed of knowledge approaches me, (believing) that *Vâsudeva* is everything. Such a high-souled man is very hard to find. Those who are deprived of knowledge by various desires approach other divinities, observing various regulations, I am not manifest to all. This deluded world knows not me unborn and inexhaustible. I know, O *Arguna!* the things which have been, those which are, and those which are to be. But me nobody knows. All beings, O terror of (your) foes! are deluded at the time of birth by the delusion, O descendant of *Bharata!* caused by the pairs of opposites arising from desire and aversion. But the men of meritorious actions, whose sins have terminated, worship me, being released from the delusion (caused) by the pairs of opposites, and being firm in their beliefs, the whole *Adhyâtma*, and all action. And those who know me with the *Adhibhûta*, the *Adhidaiva*, and the *Adhiyagña*, having minds devoted to abstraction, know me at the time of departure (from this world).





# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

## CHAPTER 08

### The Eternal Spirit



Arguna said:

What is that Brahman, what the Adhyâtma, and what, O best of beings! is action? And what is called the Adhibhûta? And who is the Adhiyagña, and how in this body, O destroyer of Madhu? And how, too, are you to be known at the time of departure (from this world) by those who restrain their selves?

The Deity said:

The Brahman is the supreme, the indestructible. Its manifestation (as an individual self) is called the Adhyâtma. The offering (of an oblation to any divinity), which is the cause of the production and development of all things, is named action. The Adhibhûta is all perishable things. The Adhidaivata is the (primal) being. And the Adhiyagña, O best of embodied (beings)! is I myself in this body.

And he who leaves this body and departs (from this world) remembering me in (his) last moments, comes into my essence. There is no doubt of that. Also whichever form will tell you briefly about the seat, which those who know the Vedas declare to be indestructible; which entered by ascetics from whom all desires have departed; and wishing for which, people pursue the mode of life of Brahmakârins. But, O son of Kuntî! after attaining to me, there is no birth again. Those who know a day of Brahman to end after one thousand ages, and the night to terminate after one thousand ages, are the persons who know day and night, the day, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern solstice, departing (from the world) in these, those who know the Brahman go to the Brahman. Smoke, night, the dark fortnight, the six months of the southern solstice, (dying) in these, the devotee goes to the lunar light and returns, obtains all the holy fruit which is prescribed for (study of) the Vedas, for sacrifices, and also for penances and gifts, and he attains to the highest and primeval seat.



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CHAPTER  
09

## Supreme Knowledge And The Big Mystery



Now I will speak to you, who are not given to carping, of that most mysterious knowledge, accompanied by experience, by knowing which you will be released from evil. It is the chief among the sciences, the chief among the mysteries. It is the best means of sanctification.

It is imperishable, not opposed to the sacred law. It is to be apprehended directly, O son of Kuntî! the universe revolves. Deluded people of vain hopes, vain acts, vain knowledge.

But the high-souled ones, O son of Prithâ! who are inclined to the godlike nature, knowing me as the inexhaustible source of (all) entities, worship me with minds not (turned) elsewhere.

Constantly glorifying me, and exerting themselves, and saluting me with reverence, they worship me, being always devoted. And others again, offering up the sacrifice of knowledge, worship me as one, as distinct, and as all-pervading in numerous forms, the *Rik*, *Sâman*, and *Yagus* also; the goal, the sustainer, the lord, the supervisor, the residence to the gods go to the gods; those who make vows to the manes go to the manes, those who worship the *Bhûtas* go to the *Bhûtas*; and those likewise who worship me go to me. Whoever with devotion offers me leaf, flower, fruit, water, that, presented with devotion, I accept from him whose self is pure. Whatever you do, O son of Kuntî! whatever you eat, whatever sacrifice you make, whatever you give, whatever penance you perform, do that as offered to me, women, *Vaisyas*; and *Sûdras* likewise, resorting to me, attain the supreme goal. What then (need be said of) holy *Brâhmanas* and royal saints who are (my) devotees? Coming to this transient unhappy world, worship me. (Place your) mind on me, become my devotee, my worshipper; reverence me, and thus making me your highest goal, and devoting your self to abstraction, you will certainly come to me.



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

CHAPTER  
10

## Manifestation Of The Absolute



Yet again, O you of mighty arms! listen to my excellent, whose descendants are (all) these people in the world, were all born from my mind, worship me, believing that I am the origin of all, and that all moves on through me. (Placing their) minds on me, offering (their) lives to me, instructing each other, and speaking about me, they are always contented and happy. To these, who are constantly devoted, and who worship with love,, I give that knowledge by which they attain to me. And remaining in their hearts, I destroy, with the brilliant lamp of knowledge, the darkness born of ignorance in such (men) only, out of compassion for them.

Arguna said:

You are the supreme Brahman, the supreme goal, the holiest of the holy. All sages, as well as the divine sage Nârada, Asita. You only know your self by your self. O best of beings! creator of all things! lord of all things! god of gods! lord of the universe! be pleased to declare without, exception your divine emanations, by which emanations you stand pervading all these worlds. How shall I know you, O you of mystic power! always meditating on you? And in what various entities, O lord! should I meditate on you? Again, O Ganârdana! do you yourself declare your powers and emanations; because hearing this nectar, I (still) feel no satiety.

The Deity said:

Well then, O best of Kauravas! I will state to you my own divine emanations; but (only) the chief (ones), for there is no end to the extent of my (emanations). I am the self, O Gudâkesa! seated in the hearts of all beings among the high-topped (mountains). And know me, O Arguna! to be Brihaspati, the chief among domestic priests. I am Skanda among generals. I am the ocean among reservoirs of water. Among beasts I am the lord of beasts, and the son of Vinatâ among metres. I am Mârgasîrsha among the months, the spring among the seasons.



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

CHAPTER  
11

## Vision Of The Cosmic Form



Arguna said:

In consequence of the excellent and mysterious words concerning the relation of the supreme and individual soul,, which you have spoken for my welfare, this delusion of mine is gone away. O you whose eyes are like lotus leaves! I have heard from you at large about the production and dissolution of things, and also about your inexhaustible greatness. O highest lord! what you have said about yourself is so. I wish, O best of beings! to see your divine form. If, O lord! you think that it is possible for me to look upon it, then, O lord of the possessors of mystic power! show your inexhaustible form to me.

The Deity said:

In hundreds and in thousands see my forms, O son of *Prithâ*! various, divine, and of various colours and shapes. See the *Âdityas*, *Vasus*, *Rudras*, the two *Asvins*, and *Maruts* likewise. And O descendant of *Bharata*! see wonders, in numbers, unseen before. Within my body, O *Gudâkesa*! see to-day the whole universe, including (everything) movable and immovable, (all) in one, and whatever else you wish to see. But you will not be able to see me with merely, this eye of yours. I give you an eye divine. (Now) see my divine power.

Saṅgaya said:

Having spoken thus, O king! Hari, the great lord of the possessors of mystic power, then showed to the son of *Prithâ*. his supreme divine form, having many mouths and eyes, having (within it) many wonderful sights, having many celestial ornaments, having many celestial weapons held erect, wearing celestial flowers and vestments, having an anointment of celestial perfumes, full of every wonder, the infinite deity with faces in all directions (divisions). Then *Dhanaṅgaya* filled with amazement, and with hair standing on end, bowed his head before the god, and spoke with joined hands.

Arguna said:

O god! I see within your body the gods, as also all the groups of various beings; and the lord Brahman seated on (his) lotus seat, and all the sages and celestial snakes. I see you, who are of countless forms, possessed of many

arms, stomachs, mouths, and eyes on all sides. And, O lord of the universe! O you of all forms! I do not see your end or middle or beginning. I see you bearing a coronet and a mace and a discus--a mass of glory, brilliant on all sides, difficult to look at, having on all sides the effulgence of a blazing fire or sun, and indefinable. You are indestructible, the supreme one to be known. You are the highest support!" and praising you with abundant (hymns) of praise. The Rudras, and Âdityas, the Vasus, the Sâdhyas, the Visvas, the two Asvins, the Maruts, and the Ushmapas, and the groups of Gandharvas, Yakshas, demons, and Siddhas are all looking at you amazed. Seeing your mighty form, with many mouths and eyes, with many arms, thighs, and feet, with many stomachs, and fearful with many jaws, all people, and I likewise, are much alarmed, O you of mighty arms! Seeing you, O Vishnu! touching the skies, radiant, possessed of many hues, with a gaping mouth, and with large blazing eyes, I am much alarmed in my inmost self, and feel no courage, no tranquillity.

And seeing your mouths terrible by the jaws, and resembling the fire of destruction, I cannot recognise the (various) directions, I feel no comfort. Be gracious, O lord of gods! who pervadest the universe. And all these sons of Dhritarâshtra, together with all the bands of kings, and Bhîshma and Drona, and this charioteer's son by (reason of your) jaws. And some with their heads smashed are seen (to be) stuck in the spaces between the teeth. As the many rapid currents of a river's waters run towards the sea alone, so do these heroes of the human world enter your mouths blazing all round. As butterflies, with increased velocity, enter a blazing fire to their destruction, so too do these people enter your mouths with increased velocity (only) to their destruction. Swallowing all these people, you are licking them over and over again from all sides, with your blazing mouths. Your fierce splendours, O Vishnu! filling the whole universe with (their) effulgence, are heating it. Tell me who you are in this fierce form. Salutations be to thee, O chief of the gods! Be gracious. I wish to know you, the primeval, one, for I do not understand your actions.

The Deity said:

I am death, the destroyer of the worlds, fully developed, and I am now active about the overthrow of the worlds. Even without you, the warriors standing in the adverse hosts, shall all cease to be. Therefore, be up, obtain glory, and vanquishing (your) foes, enjoy a prosperous kingdom. All these have been already killed by me. Be only the instrument, O Savyasâkin! Drona, and Bhîshma, and Gayadratha, and Karna, and likewise other valiant warriors also, whom I have killed, do you kill. Be not alarmed. Do fight. And in the battle you will conquer your foes.

Saṅgaya said:

Hearing these words of Kesava, the wearer of the coronet, trembling, and with joined hands, bowed down; and sorely afraid, and with throat choked up, he again spoke to *Krishna* after saluting him.

Arguna said:

It is quite proper, O *Hrishīkesa*! that the universe is delighted and charmed by your renown, that the demons run away affrighted in all directions, and that all the assemblages of Siddhas bow down,(to you). And why, O high-souled one! should they not bow down to you (who are) greater than Brahman, and first cause? O infinite lord of gods! O you pervading the universe! you are the indestructible, that which is, that which is not, and what is beyond them. You are the primal God, the ancient being, you are the highest support of this universe. You are the father of the world-movable and immovable,--you its great and venerable master; there is none equal to you, whence can there be one greater, O you whose power is unparalleled in all the three worlds? Therefore I bow and prostrate myself, and would propitiate you, the praiseworthy lord. Be pleased,

O God! to pardon (my guilt) as a father (that of his) son, a friend (that of his) friend, or a husband (that of his) beloved. I am delighted at seeing what I had never seen before, and my heart is also alarmed by fear. Show me that same form, O god! Be gracious, O lord of gods! O you pervading the universe! I wish to see you bearing the coronet and the mace, with the discus in hand, just the same (as before). O you of thousand arms! O you of all forms! assume that same four-handed form.

The Deity said:

O Arguna! being pleased (with you), I have by my own mystic power shown you this supreme form, full of glory, universal, infinite, primeval, and which has not been seen before by any one else but you, O you hero among the Kauravas! I cannot be seen in this form by any one but you, (even) by (the help of) the study of the Vedas, or of sacrifices, nor by gifts, nor by actions, nor by fierce penances. Be not alarmed, be not perplexed, at seeing this form of mine, fearful like this. Free from fear and with delighted heart, see now again that same form of mine.

Saṅgaya said:



Having thus spoken to Arguna, Vâsudeva again showed his own form, and the high-souled one becoming again of a mild form, comforted him who had been affrighted.

Arguna said:

O Ganardana! seeing this mild, human form of yours, I am new in my right mind, and have come to my normal state.

The Deity said:

Even the gods are always desiring to see this form of mine, which it is difficult to get a sight of, and which you have seen. I cannot be seen, as you have seen me, by (means of) the Vedas, not by penance, not by gift, nor yet by sacrifice. But, O Arguna! by devotion to me exclusively, I can in this form be truly known, seen, and assimilated with, O terror of your foes! He who performs acts for (propitiating) me, to whom I am the highest (object), who is my devotee, who is free from attachment, and who has no enmity towards any being, he, O son of Pându! comes to me.



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

CHAPTER  
12

## Path Of Devotion



Arguna said:

Of the worshippers, who thus, constantly devoted, meditate on you, and those who (meditate) on the unperceived and indestructible, which best know devotion?

The Deity said:

Those who being constantly devoted, and possessed of the highest faith, worship me with a mind fixed on me, are deemed by me to be the most devoted. But those, who, restraining the (whole) group of the senses, and with a mind at all times equable, meditate on the indescribable, indestructible, unperceived (principle) which is all-pervading, unthinkable, indifferent is esteemed higher than knowledge; and the abandonment of fruit of action than concentration; from (that) abandonment, tranquillity soon (results). That devotee of mine, who hates no being, who is friendly and compassionate, who is free from egoism, and from (the idea that this or that is) mine, to whom happiness and misery are alike, who is forgiving, contented, constantly devoted, self-restrained, and firm in his determinations, and whose mind and understanding are devoted to me, he is dear to me. He through whom the world is not agitated, and of a steady mind, and full of devotion, that man is dear to me. But those devotees who, imbued with faith, and (regarding) me as their highest (goal), resort to this holy (means for attaining) immortality, as stated, they are extremely dear to me.



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

CHAPTER  
13

## Creation And The Creator



The Deity said:

This body, O son of Kuntî! is called Kshetra, egoism, the understanding, the unperceived also, the ten senses, and the one, and the five objects of sense, desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, body, consciousness, courage, thus in brief has been declared the Kshetra with changes. It has hands and feet on all sides, it has eyes, heads, and faces on all sides, it has ears on all sides, it stands pervading everything in the world. Possessed of the qualities of all the senses, (but) devoid of all senses (to be) produced from nature. Nature is said to be the origin of the capacity of working (residing) in the body and the senses; and spirit is said (to be) the origin of the capacity of enjoying pleasures and pains.

They, too, being (thus) devoted to hearing (instruction) cross beyond death. Whatever thing movable or immovable comes into existence, know that to be from the connexion of Kshetra and Kshetragña, O chief of the descendants of Bharata! He sees (truly) who sees the supreme lord abiding alike in all entities, and not destroyed though they are destroyed. For he who sees the lord abiding everywhere alike, does not destroy himself, go to the supreme.



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

CHAPTER  
14

## Three Modes Of Material Nature



The Deity said:

Again I will declare (to you) the highest knowledge, the best of (all sorts of) knowledge, having learnt which, all sages have reached perfection beyond (the bonds of) this (body). Those who, resorting to this knowledge, reach assimilation with my essence, are not born at the creation, and are not afflicted. Know that passion consists in being enamoured, and is produced from craving and attachment. That, O son of Kuntî! binds down the embodied (self) with the bond of action. Darkness (you must) know to be born of ignorance, it deludes all embodied (selfs). And that, O descendant of Bharata! binds down (the self) with heedlessness. Encountering death during (the prevalence of) passion, he is born among those attached to action. Likewise, dying during (the prevalence of) darkness, he is born in the wombs of the ignorant, attains immortality, being freed from birth and death and old age and misery.

Arguna said:

What are the characteristics, O lord! of one who has transcended these three qualities? What is his conduct, and how does he transcend these three qualities?

The Deity said:

He is said to have transcended the qualities, O son of Pându! who is not averse to light and activity and delusion (when they) prevail, and who does not desire (them when they) cease, of indefeasible immortality, of eternal piety, and of unbroken happiness.



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

CHAPTER  
15

## The Supreme Being



The Deity said:

They say the inexhaustible Asvattha. The sun does not light it, nor the moon, nor fire.

Entering the earth, therefore am I celebrated in the world and in the Vedas as the best of beings. He who, undeluded, thus knows me the best of beings, worships me every way, O descendant of Bharata! knowing everything. Thus, O sinless one! have I proclaimed this most mysterious science. He who knows this, has done all he need do, and he becomes possessed of discernment.

  
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# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

CHAPTER  
16

## Divine And The Demonic Qualities



Freedom from fear, purity of heart, perseverance in (pursuit of) knowledge and abstraction of mind, gifts endowments. Godlike endowments are deemed to be (means) for final emancipation, demoniac for bondage, given up to the enjoyment of objects of desire, being resolved that that is all, bound down by nets of hopes in hundreds, given up to anger and desire, they wish to obtain heaps of wealth unfairly for enjoying objects of desire. "This have I obtained today; this wish I will obtain; this wealth is mine; and this also shall be mine; this foe I have killed; others too I will destroy; I am lord, I am the enjoyer, I am perfect, only into demoniac wombs. Coming into demoniac wombs, deluded in every birth, they go down to the vilest state, O son of Kuntî! without ever coming to me.

Threefold is this way, to hell,-- ruinous to the self, nor happiness, nor the highest goal. Therefore in discriminating between what should be done and what should not be done, your authority (must be) scripture. And knowing what is declared by the ordinances of scripture, you should perform action in this world.



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

CHAPTER  
17

## Threefold Faith



Arguna said:

What is the state of those, O *Krishna*! who worship with faith, (but) abandoning scripture ordinances--goodness, passion, or darkness?

The Deity said:

Faith is of three kinds in embodied (beings), it is produced from dispositions. It is of the quality of goodness, of the quality of passion, and of the quality of darkness. Hear about it. The faith of all, O descendant of Bharata! is conformable to the heart which is cold, tasteless, stinking, stale, impure, and even leavings, are liked by the dark. That sacrifice is good which, being prescribed in (scripture) ordinances, is performed by persons not wishing for the fruit (of it), and after determining (in their) mind that the sacrifice must needs be performed.

But when a sacrifice is performed, O highest of the descendants of Bharata! with an expectation of fruit (from it), and for the purpose of ostentation, know that sacrifice (to be) passionate. They call that sacrifice dark, which is against the ordinances (of scripture), in which no food is dealt out (to Brâhmanas, &c.), which is devoid of Mantras, and with ostentatiousness, and which is uncertain and transient.' 'Sat' is employed to express existence and goodness; and likewise, O son of *Prithâ*! the word 'Sat' is used to express an auspicious act.

Constancy in (making) sacrifices. penances, and gifts, is called 'Sat;' and (all) action, too, of which that.



# The Bhagavad Gîtâ

CHAPTER  
18

## Salvation Through Renunciation



Arguna said:

O you of mighty arms! O *Hrishîkesa*! O destroyer of *Kesin*! I wish to know the truth about renunciation and abandonment distinctly.

The Deity said:

By renunciation the sages understand the rejection of actions done with desires. The wise call the abandonment of the fruit of all actions (by the name) abandonment. Some wise men say, that action should be abandoned as being full of evil; and others, that the actions of sacrifice, gift, and penance should not be abandoned. As to that abandonment, O best of the descendants of *Bharata*! listen to my decision; for abandonment, O bravest of men! is described (to be) threefold. The actions of sacrifice, gift, and penance should not be abandoned; they must needs be performed; for sacrifices, gifts, and penances are means of sanctification to the wise. But even these actions, O son of *Prithâ*! should be performed, abandoning attachment and fruit; such is my excellent and decided opinion. The renunciation of prescribed action is not proper. Its abandonment through delusion, he is said to be possessed of abandonment, who abandons the fruit of action. The threefold fruit of action, agreeable, disagreeable, and mixed, accrues after death to those who are not possessed of abandonment, but never to renouncers, the object of knowledge, the knower--threefold is the prompting to action. The instrument, the action, the agent, thus in brief is action threefold.

Knowledge and action and agent are declared in the enumeration of qualities, who wishes for the fruit of actions, who is covetous, cruel, and impure, and feels joy and sorrow. That agent is called dark, who is without application wishes, O son of *Prithâ*! for the fruit, That courage is dark, O son of *Prithâ*! by which an undiscerning man does not give up sleep, fear, sorrow, despondency, and folly. Now, O chief of the descendants of *Bharata*! bear from me about the three sorts of happiness. That happiness is called good, in which one is pleased after repetition, restraint of the senses, penance, purity, forgiveness, straightforwardness, also knowledge, experience, and belief (in a future world), this is the natural duty of *Brâhmanas*. Valour, glory, Courage, dexterity by renunciation. Learn from me, only in brief, O son of *Kuntî*! how one who has obtained perfection attains the Brahman, which is the highest culmination of



knowledge. A man possessed of a pure understanding, controlling his self by courage, discarding sound and other objects of sense, casting off affection and aversion; who frequents clean places, who eats little, whose speech, body, and mind are restrained, who is always intent on meditation and mental abstraction will constrain you. That, O son of Kuntî! which through delusion you do not wish to do, you will do involuntarily, tied down by your own duty, flowing from your nature.

The lord, O Arguna! is seated in the region of the heart to me, will proclaim this supreme mystery among my devotees, will come to me, freed from (all) doubt. No one amongst men is superior to him in doing what is dear to me. And there will never be another on earth dearer to me than he. And he who will study this holy dialogue of ours, will, such is my opinion, have offered to me the sacrifice of knowledge. Have you listened to this, O son of Prithâ! with a mind (fixed) on (this) one point only? Has your delusion (caused) by ignorance been destroyed, O Dhanañgaya?

Arguna said:

Destroyed is my delusion; by your favour, O undegraded one! I (now) recollect. I will do your bidding.

Sañgaya said:

Thus did I hear this dialogue between Vâsudeva and the high-minded son of Prithâ, (a dialogue) wonderful and causing the hair to stand on end. By the favour of Vyâsa, I heard this highest mystery, (this) devotion, from Krishna himself, the lord of the possessors of mystic power, who proclaimed it in person. O king! remembering and (again) remembering this wonderful and holy dialogue of Kesava and Arguna, I rejoice over and over again. And remembering and (again) remembering that excessively wonderful form of Hari also, great is my amazement, O king! and I rejoice over and over again. Wherever (is) Krishna, the lord of the possessors of mystic power, wherever (is) the (great) archer, the son of Prithâ, there in my opinion (are) fortune, victory, prosperity, and eternal justice.

