

The words Of Krishna, Christ, God, The Supreme Being

The Song of the Blessed Lord, or Song of the Lord

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New version lighter, more airy, more penetrating, more accessible, more pleasant, fresher and higher.

This new version spreads the sublime teaching of the Lord, the most secret and highest knowledge, so captivating that one absolutely wants to know him better, to penetrate him, to echo him, never again to want to get rid of him and remain imperturbably in the truth. The word of God will never disappear.

Saul Judoeus

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Preamble.

The reasons for the advent of Krishna, God, the Supreme Person in this material world.

Lord Krishna is the original Person, such as his identity.

However, those who have little knowledge think that the Supreme Lord is formless. He has no form in the material sense but He has a transcendental form, all of knowledge, bliss and eternity.

Lord Krishna said, “I appear through My inner power.

Whenever anywhere in the universe spirituality sees a decline, and irreligion rises, I go down in person.

I appear from age to age, in order to deliver My devotees, destroy the unbelievers, and restore the principles of spirituality.

If I abstained, all galaxies would sink into desolation. Because of Me, man would beget unwanted offspring. Thus, I would disturb the peace of all beings.

No matter what a great man does, the masses always follow in his footsteps. The whole world follows the standard he sets by his example.”

When Krishna, God, the Supreme Personality of Godhead comes to this world, it is certainly to protect his devotees and annihilate the demonic disbelievers, but it is also to restore spirituality and spread spiritual knowledge, for the good of all living beings.

Spiritual knowledge cuts the knot of the heart. Spirit and matter are bound by the knot of the false ego. The false ego is to want to dominate matter, but it is also to identify with its body of matter and to ignore being, in truth, a spiritual soul. Now, this identification of self with matter exists for all souls conditioned by illusory matter and energy, and this knot becomes tighter and tighter when spiritual entities conceive of an excessive attraction to fleshly pleasures. Avatar Rsabhadeva explained to his sons that the material universe is a place of attraction between male and female principles. This attraction takes the form of a knot in the heart, which tightens under the influence of material attachment. For those who yearn for material possessions as well as social bonds, friendship and love, this attachment, this knot, becomes very powerful.

Only instructions reviving spiritual knowledge can sever this knot and tear it to pieces, to naught. No material weapon is required, because only authentic spiritual instructions can overcome it. When the Lord appears in this material world, He spreads spiritual knowledge, in order to cut the knot of identification with matter. He is the Supreme Teacher.

The Lord personally comes to the material universe to reveal his spiritual and absolute entertainments, as typically manifested in Vrindavana, Mathura and Dvaraka, the three major regions of his absolute kingdom. It seems for the sole purpose of attracting conditioned souls to Him, so that they may return to their original abode in the eternal world.

Krishna, God, the Supreme Person, is all about absolute integral knowledge, infinite perfect bliss and eternity. He is the original source of knowledge and absolute knowledge.

The teaching of Lord Krishna is the perfection of the science of God, because it was directly enunciated by Krishna Himself, when He came to our planet 5,000 years ago, with the aim of guiding men on the way of salvation.

In truth, all the words of the Supreme Sovereign Being, Krishna, retain all their freshness for eternity, just like the teachings He gives us. Not only are his precepts honored throughout our galaxy, especially in the higher Edenic, heavenly region, but also everywhere, in all ages, ever growing in youth and influence.

The word of God is always fresher, more alive and more renowned. It is also taught, not only on all the planets of our galaxy, but also on all the planets that make up all the galaxies of the material cosmos. She will never disappear.

The words of Krishna, God, the Sovereign Lord in his original, infinite and absolute form, contain not only the message of all the other revealed writings, but also information that is found nowhere else. This sublime knowledge expressed by the Supreme Lord Himself, has in its essence the purity of the eternal Absolute Truth. This is why it is said to be *"beyond human knowledge"*.

This word is pure, saving, living and eternal. She is heavenly food and life-giving drink. She is the flaming sword that destroys evil, annihilates demonic disbelievers, and impurities. She pours out blessings and is the purifying essence. It is the knowledge of knowledge, the one that contains within it the secret of secrets, that shows the right path, sweeps away doubts, fears, and strengthens the spirit. The essence of this word is the love of God. Whoever listens to God will never be confused or lost.

These sublime words are understandable as they are, and do not need to be interpreted. They were addressed to Prince Arjuna, and through him to all of us.

Krishna, God, the Supreme Person says to each of us: *"Listen to My word, for I instruct you for your good"*.

Teaching of Krishna, God, the Supreme Person

His own word, pure, living and eternal

On the battlefield of Kuruksetra.

In order to destroy all demonic disbelievers, all unrighteous, criminal kings, who mistreated, terrorized, martyred, debased, imprisoned and killed his devotees, Lord Krishna, God, the Supreme Person, organized a war, which took place on the battlefield of Kuruksetra. Krishna appealed to his devout warriors, including Prince Arjuna.

5,000 years ago, faced with the hesitations and questioning of his devotee Arjuna, Lord Krishna enunciated this sublime teaching on the battlefield of Kuruksetra.

Prince Arjuna then lives, scattered in both camps, his fathers, forefathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and friends, with them, his father-in-law and all those who once showed him so much benevolence. All are present. Seeing before him all those to whom bonds of friendship or kinship unite him, Prince Arjuna, the son of Kunti, is seized with great compassion and addresses the Lord.

In truth, this sublime teaching is addressed to all conditioned souls. This sacred, pure, living and eternal knowledge was given to them in order to free them from the corporeal concept of existence, from this false concept of the self, for they wrongly identify with their body, and lead them to renew the bond that unites them to the Supreme Lord. It is for the benefit of all fallen souls, in all parts of the universe that this wonderful teaching was given to Prince Arjuna.

Prince Arjuna said:

(Addressing the Lord), O infallible You, lead, I pray, my chariot between the two armies that I may see who is on the lines, who desires to fight, who I shall have to face in the imminent battle.

Let me see those who have come here to fight in the hope of pleasing the evil son of Dhirtarastra.

Dear Krishna, to see so mine, before me in bellicose lines, I tremble with all my limbs and feel my mouth dry out.

My whole body shivers and my hair bristles. My bow, Gandiva, falls from my hands, and my skin burns.

O Kesava (*one of the innumerable Names of Krishna*), I cannot dwell here any longer. I am no longer in control of myself and my mind goes astray; I only foreshadow fatal events.

What good can this fight bring, where my own family will be slaughtered?

At such a price, O Krishna, how could I still desire victory, yearn for royalty and the pleasures it brings?

O Govinda (*one of the innumerable Names of Krishna*), served by so many realms, served by happiness, what good is life even, when those for whom we desire these goods now stand on the battlefield?

O Madhusudana (*one of the innumerable Names of Krishna*), look. All my family, my fathers, sons, ancestors, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons and brothers-in-law, and my masters too, all ready to sacrifice their lives and wealth, stand before me. How could I wish their death, if by this I survive?

O You who hold all beings, I cannot resolve to fight against them, even in exchange for the three worlds, and what to say about this earth.

Although they are our aggressors, if we kill our friends and the sons of Dhirtarastra, we will be the prey of sin; such a crime would be unworthy of us. And what profit would it make?

O Krishna, You the Spouse of the goddess of fortune, how could we ever be happy after killing those of our lineage?

O Janardana (*one of the innumerable Names of Krishna*), if, blinded by lust, these men see no harm in destroying their family, no fault in quarreling with their friends, why should we, who see sin, do the same?

The destruction of a family leads to the collapse of eternal traditions; its last representatives then sink into irreligion.

When ungodliness, O Krishna, reigns in a family, women corrupt themselves, and from their degradation, O Descendant of Vrsni, an undesirable offspring is born.

The increase in the number of these undesirables generates for the family, and for those who destroyed the traditions, a life of hell. The ancestors are forgotten, we stop offering them the oblations of water and food.

Those who, by their irresponsible acts, break the tradition of lineage, they cause the abandonment of the principles by which prosperity and harmony reign within the family and the nation.

I have it from authorized source, O Krishna: those who destroy family traditions live forever in hell.

Alas, out of a thirst for the pleasures of royalty, is it not strange that we are now preparing to commit such great crimes?

It is better to die at the hands of the sons of Dhirtarastra, unarmed and without resistance, than to fight against them.

Prelude to divine knowledge, the revealed soul

The Supreme Person, Krishna, says:

O Arjuna, how could such filth have taken hold of you?

These degrading complaints are completely unworthy of a man awakened to the values of life. Through them, one does not reach the higher planets, but one gains reproach.

Do not yield to such a petty and demeaning weakness, O son of Prtha, which does not please you. Cast it out of your heart, and rise up, O conqueror of enemies.

Prince Arjuna said:

O conqueror of Madhu, how could I, in the course of battle, repel from my arrows men such as Bhishma and Drona, worthy of my veneration

Rather beg than enjoy the pleasures of this world if it is necessary to kill such noble souls. Even greedy, they are still my masters; their death would taint our victory with blood.

I do not know if it is right to defeat them or to be defeated by them. Here are the sons of Dhirtarastra in line before us on this battlefield: their death would take away our desire to live.

The failure made me lose all my temper; I can't see where my duty is anymore. Tell me clearly the right way. I am now Your disciple and leave it to You; enlighten me, please.

What might drive away the pain I feel, I don't see. No appeasement for me, even if, like a deva in heaven, I reigned here below on an unparalleled kingdom.

Having thus spoken on the battlefield, Prince Arjuna let down his bow and arrows. He sat down on his chariot, overwhelmed with pain.

The Blessed Lord says:

Though you hold learned discourses, you grieve without reason. Neither the living nor the dead do the wise man mourn.

Never was the time when we did not exist, I, you and all these kings; and never did any of us cease to be.

At the moment of death, the soul takes on a new body, as naturally as it passed, in the previous one, from childhood to youth, then to old age. This change does not disturb those who are aware of their spiritual nature.

Ephemeral joys and sorrows, like summers and winters, come and go. They are only due to the encounter of the senses with matter, and one must learn to tolerate them, without being affected by them.

He who is unaffected by joys and sorrows, who remains serene and resolute in all circumstances, is worthy of liberation.

The masters of truth have concluded that the real is eternal and the illusory is impermanent, and this after studying their respective nature.

Know that that which penetrates the whole body cannot be destroyed. No one can destroy the imperishable soul.

The soul is indestructible, eternal and without measure; only the material bodies it borrows are subject to destruction. With this knowledge, engage in battle.

Ignorant is he who believes that the soul can kill or be killed; the wise man knows that it neither kills nor dies.

The soul knows neither birth nor death. It is alive and will never cease to be. Unborn, immortal, original, eternal, it has never had a beginning and will never have an end. It does not die with the body.

How can he who knows that the soul is unborn, immutable, eternal and indestructible, kill or cause to be killed?

At the moment of death, the soul puts on a new body, the old one no longer needed, just as one puts on new clothes when one has worn them out.

No weapon can split the soul, nor fire burn it; water cannot wet it, nor wind dry it.

The soul is indivisible and insoluble; fire does not reach it, it cannot be dried up. It is immortal and eternal, omnipresent, unalterable and fixed.

It is said of the soul that it is invisible, inconceivable and immutable. Knowing this, you should not lament over the body.

And even if you believe the soul to be endlessly taken up by birth and death, you have no reason to grieve.

Death is certain for him who is born, and birth is certain for him who dies. Since you must do your duty, you should not grieve in this way.

All created things are originally unmanifest. They manifest in their transient state, and when dissolved, become unmanifest. What is the use of feeling sorry for them?

Some see the soul, and it is an astonishing wonder to them. So too do others speak of it, and still others hear of it. There are some, however, who, even after hearing about it, cannot conceive of it.

He who sits in the body is eternal, he cannot be killed. Therefore you have no need to mourn anyone.

You know, moreover, your duties as a warrior. They enjoin you to fight according to the principles of religion, so you cannot hesitate.

Blessed are the warriors who are given the opportunity to fight, for then the door to the planets of delight opens for them.

But if you refuse to fight this just battle, you will sin for failing to do your duty, and thus lose your reputation as a warrior.

Men will forever speak of your infamy, and for him who has known honours, disgrace is worse than death.

The great generals who esteemed your name and your glory highly will believe that fear alone made you leave the battlefield, and will judge you a coward.

Your enemies will cover you with outrageous words and will mock your valour. What could be more painful for you?

If you die fighting, you will reach the planets of delight. If you win, you will enjoy the kingdom of the Earth. Stand up, then, and fight firmly.

Fight out of duty, without counting your joys or your sorrows, your loss or your gain, your victory or your defeat; thus, you will never incur sin.

You have so far received from Me the analytical knowledge of the sankhya philosophy. Now receive the knowledge of yoga (*yoga: practice of union and communion with God*), which enables you to act without being bound to your actions. When this intelligence guides you, you will be able to break the chains of karma (*karma: law of action and reaction, or law of cause and effect*).

To him who walks this path, no effort is in vain, no benefit gained is ever lost; the smallest step frees us from the most dreadful fear.

He who walks this path is resolute in his endeavour, and pursues a single goal. On the other hand, the mind of him who lacks this firmness is lost in many oblique paths.

The unwary man clings to the flowery language of the Vedas (*Vedas: the original holy scriptures*), which teach various practices for attaining the planets of delights,

favourable rebirth, gaining power and other benefits. Inflamed with desire for the joys of an opulent life, he does not see beyond it.

Too attached to sense pleasures, wealth and fame, and lost in these desires, no one ever knows the firm resolve to serve the Supreme Lord with love and devotion.

Overcome the three gunas (*the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature: virtue, passion and ignorance*), those influences of material nature which are the primary object of the Vedas. Free yourself from duality, give up all desire for material possession and peace; be firmly united with the Supreme.

For just as a great sheet of water fills all the functions of the well at once, so he who knows the ultimate purpose of the Vedas will thereby reap all the benefits they provide.

You have the right to perform the duties that fall to you, but not to enjoy the fruits of your actions; never think that you are the cause of the consequences of action, and at no time seek to escape from your duty.

Be firm in yoga. Do your duty without being bound by either success or failure. This equality of soul is called yoga.

Free yourself from all material acts through devotional service, absorb yourself in it. Those who yearn for the fruits of their deeds are “*miserly*”.

Devotional service can free one in this life from the consequences of action, good or bad. Therefore, strive to attain the art of acting in yoga.

Absorbed in devotional service, the sage takes refuge in the Lord and, renouncing the fruits of his actions in this world, becomes free from the cycle of death and rebirth. He thus attains the state that is beyond suffering.

When your mind has passed through the thick forest of illusion, all that you have heard, all that you may yet hear, will be of no consequence to you.

When your mind is no longer distracted by the flowery language of the Vedas, when it is fully absorbed in spiritual realisation, then you will be in union with the Divine Being.

When a man frees himself from the thousands of material desires created by his mind, when he is satisfied in his true self, he is fully aware of his spiritual identity.

He who is no longer affected by the three forms of suffering here on earth (*those arising from the body and mind, those caused by other living entities, and those originating in the material nature, under the impulse of the beings of the higher planets, who govern the various functions of the material nature*), who is no longer intoxicated by the joys of life, and who is free from attachment, fear, and anger, is considered to be a wise man with a firm mind.

He who, free from all bonds, does not rejoice in happiness any more than he grieves in unhappiness, he is firmly established in absolute knowledge.

He who, like a turtle that retracts its limbs into its shell, can detach the senses from their objects, that one possesses true knowledge.

Even away from material pleasures, the incarnate soul may still feel some desire for them. But let it taste a higher joy, and it will lose that desire, and remain in spiritual consciousness.

Strong and impetuous are the senses. They delight even the mind of the man of wisdom, who wants to master them.

He who restrains his senses and absorbs himself in Me proves a sure intelligence.

Contemplating the objects of the senses, man becomes attached; hence covetousness arises, and from covetousness, anger.

Anger calls forth delusion, and delusion leads to the misguidance of memory. When memory goes astray, intelligence is lost, and man falls back into the ocean of material existence.

Whoever masters his senses by observing the regulative principles of freedom, receives His full mercy from the Lord, and is thus freed from all attachment as well as aversion.

The three forms of material suffering no longer exist for him whom the Lord has thus touched with His unmitigated mercy. His intelligence becomes serene and soon becomes firm.

If a person is unaware of his spiritual identity, he can neither control his mind nor strengthen his intelligence; how, then, can he experience serenity?

And how, without it, could he taste happiness?

Just as a strong wind sweeps a boat across the water, it is enough for one of the senses to drag the mind away for the mind to be swept away.

Therefore, he who turns his senses away from their objects possesses a sure intelligence.

That which is night for all beings becomes, for the man who has mastered the senses, the time of awakening; that which for all is the time of awakening, is night for the collected sage.

He who remains steadfast in spite of the ceaseless flow of desires, as the ocean remains immovable in spite of the thousand rivers flowing into it, can alone find serenity; but not he who seeks to satisfy these desires.

He who is no longer attracted to material pleasures, who is no longer a slave to his desires, who has rejected all spirit of possession and who has freed himself from the false ego, can alone know perfect serenity.

Such are the modes of spirituality. He who settles there, even at the moment of death, comes out of his confusion, and the Kingdom of God opens for him.

Action in Krishna consciousness

The Supreme Lord says:

You who are blameless, as I have already explained, two kinds of men realise the Absolute Truth. Some approach it by means of empiricism, or philosophical speculation, others by acting in a spirit of devotion.

It is not simply by refraining from action that one can free oneself from the chains of karma (*the law of action-reaction or the law of cause and effect*). Renunciation alone is not enough to achieve perfection. Inevitably, man is compelled to act by the influence of the three gunas (*the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature: virtue, passion and ignorance*), and cannot remain inactive, even for a moment.

He who withholds his senses and organs of action, but whose mind is still attached to the objects of the senses, is deluded, and is only a pretender.

He who disciplines his senses by mastering his mind, and who, without attachment, engages his organs of action in acts of devotion, is far superior to him. Do your duty, for action is better than inaction. Without action, man is unable to attend to his simplest needs. But action should be offered as a sacrifice to Visnu (*Krishna's plenary emanation*), lest it bind the doer to the material world. Therefore, perform your duty in order to please Him, and forever you will be freed from the chains of matter.

At the beginning of creation, the Lord of all beings populated the universe with men and celestial beings. Recommending the sacrifices to Visnu, He blessed them saying, "*May these sacrifices bring you happiness and shower upon you all desirable benefits.*"

Satisfied by the sacrifices of men, the celestial beings in turn will satisfy men, and from this mutual exchange will come prosperity for all. Satisfied by these sacrifices, the celestial beings do not fail to provide for all the needs of man. But whoever enjoys their gifts without offering anything in return is a thief.

The devotees of the Lord are free from all faults, because they eat only food offered as a sacrifice (*dairy products, cereals, legumes, and especially no meat, fish and eggs*). But those who prepare food for their own pleasure are feeding only on sin. The body of every being is sustained by the food whose rains enable it to grow. And the rains

flow from the sacrifice, the sacrifice that man performs by fulfilling the duties prescribed for him.

The prescribed duties are given in the Vedas (*the original holy scriptures*), and the Vedas are directly from the Supreme Person. Therefore, the all-pervading Absolute (*God, Krishna*) is eternally found in the acts of sacrifice.

He who does not perform sacrifice as prescribed in the Vedas, lives in sin. He exists in vain who delights in sense pleasures.

However, there is no duty for the enlightened being on the true self, who perfectly fulfilled, rejoices and is satisfied only in himself.

He who has realised his spiritual identity does not pursue any self-interest in discharging his duties, nor does he seek to shirk his obligations. Thus, man must act out of a sense of duty, detached from the fruit of his actions, for through the act free from attachment, one attains the Absolute.

Even kings like Janaka, and others, attained perfection through the performance of duty. So do your duty, if only for the edification of the people.

Whatever a great man does, the mass of people always follow in his footsteps; the whole world follows the standard he sets by his example.

There is no duty in the three worlds that I must perform; I need nothing, nor do I desire anything. And yet, I lend Myself to action.

For, if I did not act, all men would follow the path that I would have traced. If I refrained from acting, all the universes would sink into desolation; because of Me, man would beget undesirable offspring. Thus I would disturb the peace of all beings.

In performing his duty, the ignorant man clings to the fruits of his labour. The enlightened man also acts, but without attachment, for the sole purpose of guiding the people to the right path. Let not the wise man trouble the ignorant who are attached to the fruits of their actions. They should not be encouraged to inaction, but rather to imbue their every act with love and devotion.

Under the influence of the three gunas (*the three attributes of material nature: virtue, passion and ignorance*), the soul led astray by the false ego (*identification with the body and the desire to dominate matter and material nature*) believes that it is the author of its acts, whereas in reality they are performed by nature.

He who knows the nature of the Absolute Truth (*God or Krishna*), is not preoccupied with the senses and their pleasure, for he knows the difference between the self-interested act and the act of love and devotion.

Confused by the three gunas, the ignorant person becomes absorbed in material activities, to which he becomes attached. But although, because of the poverty of

knowledge of their author, these actions are of an inferior order, the wise man should not disturb the one who performs them.

Therefore, devoting all your actions to Me, absorbing your thoughts in Me, free from all indolence, selfishness and self-motivation, fight (*fulfil My will*).

He who fulfils his duty according to My instructions and follows this teaching with faith, without envy, he frees himself from the chains of karma. But those who, because they are envious, neglect to always apply My teachings, they are, know this, deluded, deprived of knowledge, doomed to ignorance and servitude. Even the wise man acts according to his own nature, for so it is with all beings. What is the point of repressing this nature?

Although they feel attraction and repulsion for sense objects, incarnate beings should not allow themselves to be dominated by the senses or their objects, for these are an obstacle to spiritual realisation.

It is better to perform one's own duty, even if imperfectly, than to assume the duty of another, even if it is to perform it perfectly. It is better to fail or die in fulfilling one's own duty than to do another's, which is a very perilous thing.

Arjuna asks the Lord.

O Lord Krishna, what is it that even against his will drives man to sin, as if he were forced to do so?

The blessed Lord says:

It is concupiscence alone. Born in contact with the Passion, then changed into anger, it is the devastating enemy of the world and the source of sin.

Just as smoke hides fire, just as dust covers the mirror and the womb envelops the embryo, so various degrees of concupiscence cover the being.

Thus the pure consciousness of being is veiled by its eternal enemy, concupiscence, insatiable and burning like fire.

It is in the senses, the mind and the intelligence that it lodges, this concupiscence that leads the being astray by stifling its true knowledge.

Therefore, begin by curbing the scourge of concupiscence, the very source of sin, by regulating your senses. Crush this devastator of knowledge and spiritual realisation.

The senses prevail over inert matter, but superior to the senses is the mind, and intelligence surpasses the mind. Even higher than intelligence, however, is the soul (*which each of us actually is*).

Knowing that you are thus beyond the material senses, mind and intelligence, master your lower nature by spiritual knowledge, and conquer that insatiable enemy, concupiscence.

Absolute spiritual knowledge

The blessed Lord said:

I gave this imperishable science, the science of yoga (*yoga: the practice of union and communion with God*), to Vivasvan, the celestial being of the sun, and Vivasvan taught it to Manu, the father of humanity. And Manu taught it to Ikshvaku.

Supreme Knowledge, transmitted from master to disciple, is how the holy kings received and realised it. But in the course of time the disciplic succession has broken down, and this science, in its state of purity, now seems to be lost.

If I am teaching you today this very ancient science, the art of communing with the Absolute, it is because you are My friend and My devotee, and thus you can penetrate its sublime mystery.

Arjuna said: Vivasvan, the deva of the sun, appeared long before You, how can you understand that You could have originally given him this science?

The blessed Lord said:

Though both of us have passed through innumerable existences, I remember all of them, while you have forgotten them.

I remain unborn, and My body, spiritual and absolute, never deteriorates; I am the Lord of all beings. And yet, in My original Form, I descend into this universe at regular intervals.

Whenever in any part of the universe spirituality declines, and irreligion rises, I descend in Person.

I appear from age to age to deliver My devotees, to annihilate the miscreants, to restore the principles of spirituality.

He who knows the absoluteness of My advent and My Acts will no longer have to be reborn in the material universe; leaving his body, he enters My eternal Kingdom.

Free from all attachments, free from fear and anger, completely absorbed in Me and seeking refuge in Me, many became purified by learning about Me, and all thus developed a pure love for Me.

All follow My way, in one way or another, and according as they surrender to Me, in proportion I reward them.

In this world, man aspires to the fruits of his deeds, and that is why he worships the heavenly beings. Here on earth, man quickly reaps the fruits of his labour.

I have created the four divisions of society according to the three gunas (*the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature: virtue, passion and ignorance*) and the duties they impose on man. But know that though I have created them, they do not contain Me, for I am immutable.

Action does not affect Me and I do not aspire to its fruits. He who knows Me as such does not get entangled in the trappings of karma (*action-reaction law or law of cause and effect*) either.

In the strength of this knowledge all the great souls of past times have acted, and thus have attained liberation. Walk, then, in the footsteps of the ancients, and fulfil your duty in this divine consciousness.

Even the intelligent man becomes confused when it comes to determining what is action and what is inaction. Now I will teach you action, and this knowledge will deliver you from all sin. The nature of action is very complex, difficult to understand; therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between legitimate action, condemnable action and inaction.

He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is distinguished by his intelligence, and although he is engaged in all kinds of actions, he is on a purely spiritual level.

He who, in action, has freed himself from all desire for material enjoyment, can be considered firmly established in knowledge. The sages say that the fire of perfect knowledge has reduced the consequences of his actions to ashes. Totally detached from the fruits of his actions, always satisfied and self-sufficient, he does not act materially, although he is continually active. The man thus enlightened has perfect control of his mind and intelligence; he renounces all sense of possession and acts only to provide for his strict vital needs. Thus neither sin nor the consequences of sin reach him. He who, free from duality and envy, sees failure and success with the same eye, satisfied with what comes naturally to him, even though he acts, never gets bogged down. The actions of one who, firm in absolute knowledge, is not influenced by the three gunas (*virtue, passion, ignorance*), are purely spiritual, performed for the sole satisfaction of Yajna [*Krishna*]. The man who is fully absorbed in Krishna consciousness is assured of attaining the eternal kingdom, for his acts are all purely spiritual: and by oblation and by offering, they participate in the absolute.

As stated above, the man acting in accordance with the principles of Krishna Consciousness is the highest, most perfect spiritualist and mystic. But Krishna devotees are not the only ones who offer sacrifices; there are also people who offer sacrifices to celestial beings, or to the Supreme Impersonal Being (*the only aspect of God known to believers on earth*). Depending on the nature of their recipients, these

sacrifices take different forms, but this diversity is superficial, since all sacrifice ultimately goes to the Supreme Lord, Visnu, or Krishna.

Some sacrifice hearing and other senses in the fire of the mastered mind, and others offer sound and other sense objects to the fire of sacrifice.

Those who wish to attain spiritual realisation through mastery of the senses and the mind, offer the activities of all their senses and their vital breath as a sacrifice in the fire of the mastered mind.

Others, enlightened by the sacrifice of their material possessions and by great austerities, take strict vows and adopt the eight-phase yoga. Still others study the Vedas (*the original holy scriptures*) to acquire absolute knowledge. Some also seek exaltation in the mastery of the respiratory functions: they practise melting the exhaled breath into the inhaled breath, and then the reverse; in this way they manage to suspend all breathing and experience ecstasy. Some, restricting their food, sacrifice the exhaled breath in itself.

Among them, all those who know the purpose of sacrifice are freed from the chains of karma (*the law of action-reaction or the law of cause and effect*). Having tasted the nectar of the fruits of sacrifice, they attain the supreme spheres of eternity.

Know that without sacrifice, one cannot live happily in this life, in this world; and what of the next?

These various sacrifices are authorised by the Vedas and are designed according to the various forms of action; knowing this, you will attain liberation.

Superior to the sacrifice of material goods is the sacrifice of knowledge, for ultimately the sacrifice of action finds its end in absolute knowledge.

Seek to know the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Enquire of him with submission, while serving him. The realised soul can reveal knowledge to you, for he has seen the truth.

And when you thus know the truth, you will understand that all beings are an integral part of Me, that they live in Me, and belong to Me.

Even if you are the vilest of fishermen, once you embark on the vessel of spiritual knowledge, you will cross the ocean of suffering. Like the blazing fire that converts wood into ashes, the inferno of knowledge reduces to ashes all the consequences of material actions.

There is nothing in this world as pure and sublime as absolute knowledge. The ripe fruit of all yogas (*the practice of union and communion with God*), he who possesses it finds joy in himself in due course. The man of faith, bathed in absolute knowledge and master of his senses, soon experiences the highest spiritual peace.

But the ignorant and the unbelieving, who doubt the sacred writings, cannot become God-conscious. For the doubter, there is no happiness in this life, in this world, or in the next.

He whose spiritual knowledge has uprooted his doubts, and who, having renounced the fruits of his deeds, has established himself firmly in the consciousness of his real self, he remains free from the chains of action. You must, armed with the sword of knowledge, cut away the doubts which ignorance has caused to sprout in your heart. With the weapon of yoga, rise up and fight.

The Path of Deepening the Spiritual Self

Prince Arjuna questions Lord Krishna again.

O Krishna, first You ask me to renounce acts, then to act, in the spirit of devotion. Tell me clearly, I pray Thee: which of these two ways is the better?

The Blessed Lord says:

Renunciation of acts and devotional act, both lead to liberation, but higher is the devotional act.

Know this, he who neither abhors nor covets the fruits of his deeds knows unchanging renunciation. Freed from duality, he easily unties the bonds that hold him to matter.

Only an ignoramus would claim that devotional action concludes differently from the study of material elements. The true scholars affirm that if one follows either path perfectly, one attains their common ends.

He who knows that the goal reached by renunciation can also be reached by devotional action, and who thus realises the unity of these two paths, sees things in their right perspective.

Whoever practices renunciation but does not serve the Lord with love and devotion cannot find happiness. The wise, on the contrary, purify themselves by devotional acts and soon attain the Absolute. He whose acts are permeated with devotion, the pure soul, master of his senses and mind, is dear to all, and all are dear to him. Though always active, he never falls into the traps of karma.

Although he sees, hears, touches, smells, eats, moves, sleeps and breathes, he whose consciousness is purely spiritual knows that in reality he is not the author of his acts. He is always aware of this: when he speaks, accepts or rejects, evacuates, opens or closes his eyes, only the material senses are involved; he himself has no connection with these acts. Just as water does not wet the leaves of the lotus, sin does not affect

him who, without attachment, performs his duty, offering the fruits to the Supreme Lord.

The spiritualist, breaking his attachments, acts with his body, his mind, his intelligence, and even his senses, for one purpose only: to purify himself. Unlike the one who, without union with the Divine, covets the fruits of his labour and thus becomes bogged down in matter, the soul established in devotion finds, by offering to Me the results of all his acts, an unmixed peace. When the incarnated soul dominates its lower nature, renounces all action by thought, it lives in peace in the city of nine gates [the body] and does not perform, nor cause, any material act.

The incarnate being, master of the city of the body, is never the originator of any act, nor does he create the fruits of acts or engender action in others; everything is the work of the three gunas (*the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature: virtue, passion and ignorance*). The Supreme Being can never be held responsible for the acts, virtuous or guilty, of anyone. But the incarnate being is no less misguided, because ignorance veils his inner knowledge.

However, when that knowledge which dispels the darkness of ignorance awakens in the being, then everything is revealed to him, as by a rising sun.

He whose mind and intelligence, whose refuge and faith lie in the Absolute (*in God, Krishna*), sees pure knowledge ridding him of all his doubts. He then proceeds with firm steps on the path of liberation. The humble sage, enlightened by pure knowledge, sees with equal eye the noble and learned sage, the cow, the elephant, or the dog and the dog-eater.

He whose mind remains ever constant has already conquered birth and death. He is flawless, like the Supreme Being, and has already established his abode in Him.

He who neither rejoices in joys nor grieves in sorrows, whose mind is fixed on the soul, who knows no error and possesses the knowledge of God, has already transcended matter. The liberated being is not subject to the attraction of the material pleasures of the outer world, for he knows inner ecstasy. Devoting himself to the Supreme Being, he enjoys boundless bliss.

The intelligent man never indulges in sense pleasures; he does not indulge in them, for they have a beginning and an end and bring only suffering.

He who, before leaving his body, learns to resist the impulses of the senses, to restrain the impulses born of concupiscence and anger, is a true spiritualist, happy even in this world.

He whose actions, happiness and light are purely inner, is the perfect spiritualist. A liberated, realised soul, he will attain the Absolute (*God, Krishna*). He who is beyond doubt and duality, who is free from sin, who works for the good of all beings and whose thoughts turn inwards, he realises the Absolute and attains liberation.

For supreme liberation is close at hand for those who, free from anger and material desires, have realised their spiritual identity and, being self-controlled, are always striving for perfection. Closed to the objects of the senses, fixing his gaze between the eyebrows and immobilising in his nostrils the ascending and descending airs, thus mastering the senses, the mind and the intelligence, the spiritualist becomes free from the desire of anger and fear. He who remains in this state is liberated.

Because he knows Me to be the ultimate Goal of all sacrifices, of all austerities, Sovereign of all stars and celestial beings, Friend and Benefactor of all beings, the wise man finds the cessation of material suffering.

The Path of Deepening the Spiritual Self (Continued)

The Blessed Lord says:

He is the renunciate, the true spiritualist, the one who performs his duties without any attachment to the fruits of his deeds, and not the one who does not light a fire, who withdraws from action.

It is said that yoga, communion with the Absolute, cannot be separated from renunciation, for without abandoning all desire for material enjoyment, no one can become a spiritualist. The neophyte who follows the eight-phase path of yoga progresses through action, whereas the perfect spiritualist must cease all material action. This is what was established. He will be called the perfect spiritualist, the one who, having rejected all material desire, no longer acts for the pleasure of the senses, nor to enjoy the fruit of his actions. The mind can be the friend of the conditioned soul, just as it can be its enemy. Man must use it to elevate himself, not to degrade himself.

To the one who has mastered it, the mind is the best friend; but to the one who has failed in the enterprise, it becomes the worst enemy.

He who has mastered the mind, and thus gained serenity, has already attained the Supreme Soul (*the full emanation of Krishna, also known as the third aspect of Krishna*). Joy and sorrow, cold and heat, glory and disgrace, he sees them with one eye.

The spiritualist is the realised soul, the being to whom spiritual knowledge and the realisation of that knowledge give fulfilment. He has reached the spiritual level and possesses self-mastery. With one eye he sees the gold, the pebble and the clod of earth.

Even higher is the one who sees with an equal eye the indifferent, the impartial, the benefactor and the envious, the friend and the enemy, the virtuous and the sinner. The spiritualist must always endeavour to fix his mind on the Supreme Being. He

must live in a solitary place, always remaining in control of his mind, free from all desires and feelings of possession.

In a holy and secluded place, he must provide for himself, neither too high nor too low, a seat of kusa grass, covered with a buckskin and a cloth of soft material. There he should sit firmly, practise yoga (*the practice of union and communion with God*) by controlling the mind and senses, fixing his thoughts on a single point, and thus purifying his heart.

With the body, neck and head straight, the gaze fixed on the tip of the nose, the mind at peace, mastered, free from fear, firm in the vow of continence, he must then meditate on Me in his heart, making Me the ultimate goal of his life.

Thus, by mastery of the body, by mastery of the mind and of the act, the spiritualist, removed from material existence, reaches My abode [*the spiritual Kingdom*].

No one can become a spiritualist if he eats too much, but also too little, if he sleeps too much, but also too little.

When, through practice, the spiritualist succeeds in regulating the activities of his mind, when, freed from all material desires, he attains the Absolute, he is said to be established in yoga. Master of the mind, the spiritualist remains firm in his meditation on the Supreme Being, like a flame which, sheltered from the wind, does not waver. The perfection of yoga, meditation, is attained when, through practice, the mind is withdrawn from all material activity. Then, once the mind is purified, he realises his true identity and tastes inner joy. In this happy state, he enjoys, through his purified senses, infinite spiritual happiness. Having attained this perfection, the soul knows that nothing is more precious, and will not deviate from the truth, but will remain unperturbed, even in the midst of the worst difficulties. Such is the true liberation from all the sufferings born of contact with matter.

Unshakable faith and determination must accompany this practice of Yoga. The spiritualist must unreservedly discard all material desires engendered by the false ego (*identification with the body and the desire to dominate matter*) and thus master the totality of the senses through the mind.

With firm conviction, he must gradually rise, through intelligence, to perfect concentration, and thus fix his mind on the Supreme Being, without thinking of anything else. Wherever he is carried away by his feverish and fickle nature, the mind must be brought under the control of the spiritual self.

The spiritualist whose mind is absorbed in the Self knows without question the ultimate happiness. Having understood that he is a partaker of the Absolute (*of God*), he is already liberated; his mind is serene, his passions are appeased. He is free from all sin. Established in spiritual realisation, purified of all material defilements, the spiritualist enjoys the supreme happiness that comes from constant union with the Absolute.

The true spiritualist sees Me in all beings and all beings in Me. Truly, the realised soul sees Me everywhere.

He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me is never separated from Me, nor do I ever separate from him.

The spiritualist who knows Me to be One with the Supreme Soul in the multiplicity of beings, adores Me and in Me he always abides.

The perfect spiritualist sees, through his own experience, the equality of all beings, happy or unhappy.

New question from Arjuna:

This yoga which You have described in few words, O Lord, I do not see how to practice it, for the mind is capricious and unstable. The mind is elusive, feverish, powerful and tenacious. To subdue it seems to me more difficult than to master the wind.

The Blessed Lord says:

It is, indeed, difficult to tame this feverish mind. However, it is achieved by constant practice and detachment.

For one who has not mastered his mind, the work of spiritual realisation will be difficult. But for those who master it and guide their efforts by the appropriate means, success is sure. This is My thought.

Arjuna asks again:

He who, after having taken the path of yoga (*of the practice of union and communion with God*) with faith, abandons it, for not having been able to detach his mind from the world, and who, as a result, does not attain spiritual perfection, O Krishna, what is his fate?

If he turns away from the path of spiritual realisation, O Krishna, does he not perish, as a cloud dissipates, deprived of all refuge?

In this point lie my doubts, O Krishna; please dispel them completely, for none but Thee can.

The blessed Lord said:

O son of Prtha (*Arjuna*), for the spiritualist of happy deeds, there is no destruction either in this life, in this world, or in the next; never, My friend, does evil, or misfortune, seize him. After countless years of delight on the planets where those who have practised goodness live, he who has failed in the path of yoga is reborn in a rich and noble or virtuous family.

He can also be reborn into a family of spiritualist sages. In truth, it is rare to obtain such a birth here on earth. There he recovers the divine consciousness acquired in his past life, and resumes his march towards perfection. By virtue of the divine consciousness acquired in his past life, he is naturally drawn to the practice of Yoga, sometimes even unwittingly. Desiring to know Yoga, he already transcends all scriptural rites. Let the Spiritualist, purified of all faults, strive to perfect his spiritual realisation, and he will at last, after many lives of intense practice, attain the supreme goal. The spiritualist is higher than the ascetic, the philosopher and the man who aspires to the fruits of his deeds. Therefore, in all circumstances, be a spiritualist. And of all spiritualists, he who with complete faith always abides in Me and worships Me, serving Me with love, is the greatest, and is most intimately related to Me.

Knowledge of the Absolute (of God)

Teaching of Krishna, God, the Supreme Person.

Now listen. This is the way in which, fully conscious of Me in the practice of yoga (*the practice of union and communion with God*), your mind bound to Me, you will know Me in its entirety, without the slightest doubt.

In its totality, I will reveal it to you, this knowledge of the phenomenon and of the noumenon, outside of which there is nothing left to know.

Among thousands of men, perhaps only one will seek perfection, and among those who attain it, rare is the one who knows Me in truth.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego (*the fact of identifying oneself with one's body, of wanting to dominate matter, and material nature*), these eight elements distinct from Myself, constitute My lower energy.

Besides this lower energy, another energy is Mine, a higher, spiritual energy. The living beings, which struggle with material nature and by which the universe subsists, constitute it.

Of all things in this world, material and spiritual, know that I am the origin and the end.

No truth is superior to Me. All things rest on Me, like pearls on a string. I am the flavour of water, the light of the sun and moon, the syllable Om of the Vedic mantras. I am the sound in the ether, and in man the ability.

Of the earth I am the original fragrance, and of the fire the heat. I am the life in all that lives, and the asceticism of the ascetic.

Know that I am the first seed of all beings. Of the intelligent I am intelligence, and of the powerful I am prowess. I am the strength of the strong free from desire and passion. I am the carnal union that does not violate the principles of religion.

Every state of being, whether it be of Virtue, Passion or Ignorance, is but a manifestation of My energy. In a sense, I am everything; never, however, do I lose My individuality. Understand that I am not subject to the gunas. Misled by the three gunas [*the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature: Virtue, Passion, and Ignorance*], the entire Universe is unaware of who I am, I the Supreme, the Unquenchable, who transcends these material influences.

The energy constituted by the three gunas, this divine energy, Mine, cannot be surpassed without harm. But he who surrenders to Me easily crosses its limits.

The fools, the last of men, those whose knowledge is stolen by delusion, the demoniacs, these miscreants do not surrender to Me.

Of four orders, the virtuous who with devotion serve Me: the unfortunate, the curious, the man who pursues wealth and the one who desires to know the Absolute (*Krishna*).

Of all, superior is the wise man with perfect knowledge, whom pure devotional service unites with Me. I am very dear to him, as he is also very dear to Me.

All these devotees are indeed magnanimous souls, but he who knows Me, I consider as living in Me. Absorbed in My absolute service, he comes to Me. After many rebirths, when he knows that I am all that is, the Cause of all causes, the man of true knowledge surrenders to Me. Rare is such a great soul.

Those whose minds are distorted by material desires dedicate themselves to the heavenly beings. They follow, each according to their nature, the various rites proper to their worship.

I dwell in the heart of each one as the Supreme Soul. And as soon as a man desires to worship the celestial beings, it is I who strengthens his faith and thus enables him to devote himself to the celestial being he has chosen.

Full of this faith, he asks the celestial being for certain favours, and sees his desires fulfilled. But in reality, these favours come from Me alone. Men of brief intelligence worship the celestial beings; ephemeral and limited are the fruits of their worship. Whoever devotes himself to the celestial beings reaches their planets, when My devotees, however, reach My planet, the supreme. Men without intelligence, not knowing Me, believe that I borrow this Form, this personality. Their ignorance prevents them from knowing My supreme and unchanging nature.

I never show Myself to the foolish or the stupid, because of My internal power, I am veiled for them. This misguided world does not know Me, the Unborn, the Imperishable.

Because I am God, the Supreme Person, I know everything about the past, the present and the future. I also know all beings, but no one knows Me.

All beings are born in illusion, tossed about by the dualities of desire and aversion. But men free from these dualities, the fruits of illusion, men who in their past lives as well as in this life were virtuous, men in whom sin has ended, these serve Me with determination.

Through devotional service, they take refuge in Me, those intelligent men who strive to be free from old age and death. Verily, they are at the spiritual level. They possess the entire knowledge of acts, spiritual or material.

He who knows Me as the Supreme Lord, the very principle of material manifestation, the source of celestial beings and the Master of all sacrifices, can, with a fixed mind, even at the moment of death, grasp Me and know Me again.

How to reach the Absolute (God)

The Supreme Lord says:

The imperishable spiritual being (*the soul*) is called spiritual. The self is its eternal nature, and karma, or material action, the acts that generate and determine the successive bodies it dons.

The material manifestation is in permanent mutation, and the universe, with all its celestial beings, constitutes the universal form of the Supreme Lord; and I am that Lord, the Master of sacrifice, who as the Supreme Soul, dwells in the heart of every incarnated being.

Whoever, at death, at the very moment of leaving the body, remembers Me alone, immediately reaches My Abode, do not doubt it.

For, it is the thoughts, the memories of the being at the moment of leaving the body that determine his future condition.

Thus, in Me, Krishna, in My personal Form, always absorbs your thoughts. Dedicating your actions to Me, turning your mind and your intelligence towards Me, you will undoubtedly come to Me.

He who always remembers Me, the Supreme Lord, and meditates on Me, without deviating from the path, he undoubtedly comes to Me. One should meditate on the Supreme Lord as the Omniscient Being, the most ancient, the Master and Sustainer of

all, who, even more tenuous than the most tenuous, is inconceivable, beyond material intelligence, and always remains a person. Resplendent as the sun, He transcends this world of darkness.

He who, at the moment of death, fixes his vital air between his eyebrows and, with the deepest devotion, absorbs himself in the remembrance of the Supreme Lord, will go to Him.

The great sages of renunciation, versed in the Vedas (*the original holy scriptures*), and who utter the omkara (the spiritual sound vibration), enter the Supreme Spiritual Being.

I will now instruct you in this way of salvation, which requires continence. For, yoga (*yoga = the practice of union and communion with God*) consists in detaching oneself from all sense activity. It is by closing the doors of the senses, keeping the mind fixed on the heart and maintaining the vital air at the top of the head that one becomes established.

Thus established in yoga, and uttering the sacred syllable om, the supreme alliance of letters, he who, at the moment of leaving the body, thinks of Me, God, the Supreme Person, he will undoubtedly reach the spiritual planets.

Because constantly absorbed in devotional service, he who always remembers Me, without deviation, reaches Me without difficulty. When they have reached Me, the spiritualists imbued with devotion, those noble souls, having thus ascended to the highest perfection, never again return to this transitory world, where suffering reigns.

All the planets of the universe, from the most evolved to the lowest, are places of suffering, where birth and death follow one another. But for the soul that reaches My Kingdom, there is no more rebirth.

One day of Brahma (*the first created being, and demiurge of our galaxy*) is worth a thousand of the ages known to men, and as much its night.

With the day of Brahma all varieties of beings are born, and when his night comes, all are annihilated.

Endlessly, day after day, the day is reborn, and each time, myriads of beings are brought back into existence. Endlessly, night after night, night falls, and with it, beings, in annihilation, without their being able to do anything about it. There is, however, another world, eternal, beyond the two states, manifest and unmanifest, of matter. This is the supreme world, which never perishes. When everything in the material universe is dissolved, it remains intact.

It is said to be unmanifest and imperishable, this supreme kingdom, the ultimate goal, for those who reach it, there is no return. This world is My Absolute abode.

Only through pure devotion can one reach God, the Supreme Lord, greater than all. Although He never leaves His kingdom, He penetrates everything, and everything in Him rests.

Let me now describe to you the moments when one leaves this world and never returns, and those when one leaves and returns.

He who knows the Supreme Spiritual Being leaves this world at an auspicious time, in the light of day and under the sign of the celestial being of fire, during the fifteen days when the moon grows and the six months when the sun passes to the north.

Whether he leaves at night, in the smoke, during the waning of the moon, or in the six months when the sun passes to the south, let him reach the lunar star, and the spiritualist will still have to return to this world.

According to the Vedas (*the original holy scriptures*), there are two ways to leave this world: in darkness or in light. One is the way of return, and the other is the way of no return. They never go astray, the devotees who know these two ways. Be therefore, O ever steadfast in devotion.

The study of the Vedas (*the original holy scriptures*), sacrifices, austerities, charitable acts, philosophical research and self-serving action. He who chooses the path of devotional service is in no way deprived of their fruits, and in the end he gains the absolute kingdom.

The most secret wisdom

The Supreme Lord says:

Because you never envy Me, I will reveal to you the most secret wisdom, by which you will be freed from the sufferings of material existence.

This knowledge is king among all the sciences. It is the secret of secrets, the purest knowledge, and because it makes us directly realise our true identity, it represents the perfection of the spiritual life. It is imperishable, and of joyful application.

Men who, on the path of devotional service, are deprived of faith, cannot reach Me. They come back to be born and die in this world.

This universe is entirely pervaded by Me, in My unmanifested form. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them.

At the same time, nothing created is in Me. See My supernatural power, I sustain all beings, I am everywhere present and yet I remain the very source of all creation. As in the ethereal space stands the mighty wind, blowing everywhere, so know that in Me

stand all beings. At the end of an age, all material creations return to Me, and at the beginning of the next age, by My power, I create again.

The whole material universe is under My command. By My will it is manifested anew each time, and it is always by it that in the end it is annihilated.

But these acts cannot bind Me. Forever detached from them, I remain as neutral in them. Material nature acts under My direction, under My direction it generates all beings, mobile and immobile. By My command again, it is created and then annihilated, in an endless cycle.

The foolish denigrate Me when in human form I descend into this world. They know nothing of My spiritual and absolute nature, nor of My total supremacy.

Thus misguided, they cherish demonic and atheistic views. Vain are their hopes of liberation, vain their self-interested acts, vain their aspiration for knowledge.

But those who are unaware of misguidance, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. Knowing that God, the Supreme Person, is original and inexhaustible, they are absorbed in devotional service.

Ever singing My glories, prostrating themselves before Me, greatly determined in their spiritual endeavours, these magnanimous souls eternally adore Me with love and devotion.

Others, who cultivate knowledge, worship Me either as the one existence, or in the diversity of beings and things, or in My universal form.

But it is I who am the rite and the sacrifice, the oblation to the ancestors, the medicinal herb and the mantra. I am both the butter and the fire and the offering. Of this universe I am the Father, the Mother, the Sustainer and the Forefather. I am the Object of Knowledge, the Purifier and the syllable Om. I am also the Rk, the Sama and the Yajur. I am the Goal, the Sustainer, the Master, the Witness, the Abode, the Refuge and the dearest Friend. I am the creation and the annihilation, the Base of all things, the Resting Place and the Eternal Seed.

I control heat, rain and drought. I am Immortality, as well as Death personified. Both being and non-being are in Me. It is indirectly that they worship Me, the men who study the Vedas (*the original holy scriptures*) and drink soma (drink of immortality), thus seeking to gain the planets of delight. They are reborn on the planet of Indra (*the king of the heavens, from the upper region of our galaxy*), where they enjoy the pleasures of celestial beings.

When they have enjoyed these heavenly pleasures, when their merits have been exhausted, they return to this mortal Earth. Fragile happiness, therefore, is the only fruit they reap after following the principles of the Vedas. But those who worship Me with devotion, meditating on My absolute form, I fill their lacks and preserve what

they possess. Any oblation that man sacrifices with faith to the celestial beings is actually meant for Me alone, but offered without knowledge.

For, I am the sole Beneficiary and the sole Object of the sacrifice. Now, those who ignore My true, absolute nature, fall back. Those who worship the celestial beings will be reborn among the celestial beings, among the spectres and other spirits those who live in their worship, among the ancestors the worshippers of the ancestors, in the same way, it is with Me that My devotees will live.

Let one offer Me, with love and devotion, a leaf, a flower, a fruit, some water, and this offering, I will accept it.

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice and lavish, whatever austerity you practice, let it be in order to offer it to Me. Thus, you will free yourself from the consequences of your acts, all of them, virtuous or guilty. Through this principle of renunciation, you will be freed and come to Me. I do not envy, I do not favour anyone, towards all I am impartial. But whoever serves Me with devotion lives in Me; he is a friend to Me, as I am his friend.

Even if he commits the worst acts, anyone engaged in devotional service should be seen as a holy man, for he is on the perfect path.

Soon he becomes blameless and finds eternal peace. You can proclaim it loudly, My devotee will never perish. Whoever takes refuge in Me, even if he is of low birth, a woman, a merchant, or even a labourer, can attain the supreme goal.

What then of the spiritual guides, the righteous, the devotees and the holy kings, who in this ephemeral world, in this world of suffering, serve Me with love and devotion. Always fill your mind with Me, become My devotee, offer Me your homage and devote your worship to Me. Perfectly absorbed in Me, you will come to Me.

The Glories of the Absolute (of God)

Krishna, God, the Supreme Person reveals to us who He is:

Once again listen to My supreme word, spoken for your good, which will bring you joy. Neither the multitudes of celestial beings nor the great sages know My origin, for in all things I am the Source of both.

He who knows Me unborn, without beginning, the Sovereign of all worlds, he, without illusion among men, becomes free from all sin.

Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from doubt and delusion, indulgence, truthfulness, self-control and quietude, joys and sorrows, birth and death, fear and fearlessness, non-violence, equanimity, contentment, austerity, charity, glory and disgrace, all proceed from Me alone.

The seven great sages, the other four who were before them, and the Manus [*the fathers of humanity*] were born of My Mind; all beings in this world are their descendants.

He who truly knows this glory and power, Mine, serves Me with pure, undivided devotion; this is a certain fact. Of all worlds, spiritual and material, I am the Source, from Me all things emanate. The wise who know this truth perfectly with all their hearts serve and worship Me. My pure devotees always absorb in Me their thoughts, and their life, surrender it to Me. They enlighten each other about My Person, talk about Me endlessly, and thereby find immense satisfaction and joy.

Those who always serve and adore Me with love and devotion, I give them the intelligence by which they can come to Me. Living in their hearts, and full of compassion for them, I dispel, with the bright torch of knowledge, the darkness born of ignorance.

I will therefore describe to you My divine glories, but only the most salient, for infinite is My splendour. I am the Supreme Soul in the heart of every being. Of all, I am the beginning, the middle and the end.

Among the Adityas, I am Visnu, and among the sources of light, the radiant sun. Among the Maruts, I am Marici, and among the stars of the night, the moon.

Among the Vedas, I am the Sama. Among the celestial beings, I am Indra, and among the senses, the mind. In the beings, I am the life force [*consciousness*]. Among the Rudras, I am Siva. Of the Yaksas and Raksasas, I am the celestial being of wealth [*Duvera*], and among the Vasus, I am the Fire [*Agni*]. Among the mountains, I am Meru.

Among the priests, know that I am the head, Birhaspati, the lord of devotion, and among the military leaders, Skanda, the lord of war. Among the waters, I am the ocean.

Among the great sages, I am Bhirgu. Among the vibrations of sound I am Om, the Absolute Syllable, and among the sacrifices, the japa, the chanting of the Holy Names. Among the immovable masses, I am the Himalayas.

Among the trees, I am the sacred fig tree, and among the sages and celestial beings, Narada. Among the Gandharvas, singers of the celestial beings, I am Citraratha, and among the accomplished souls, the sage Kapila. Among the horses, know that I am Uccaihsrava, born of the nectar of immortality. Among the noble elephants, I am Airavata, and among men, the monarch.

Among the weapons, I am the thunderbolt, and among the cows, the surabhi, with abundant milk. Among the procreators, I am Kandarpa, the celestial being of love, and among the snakes, the king, Vasuki.

Among the Nagas, the celestial serpents, I am Ananta, and among the princes of the wave, Varuna. Among the ancestors, I am Aryama, and among those who enforce the law, the celestial being of death.

Among the demoniacs Daityas, I am the fervent Prahlada, and among the enslavers, time. Among the beasts, I am the lion, and among the birds, Garuda, who carries Visnu.

Among the purifiers, I am the wind, and among those who bear arms, I am Rama. Among the fishes I am the shark, and among the rivers, the Ganges. Of all creation I am the beginning and the end, and the in-between. Among all sciences, I am the spiritual science of the soul, and of logicians, I am the conclusion, the final truth.

Among letters, I am the A, and among compound words, the dvandva. I am also the inexhaustible time, and among the creators, Brahma, whose many faces look everywhere.

I am the death that devours all, and also the Source of all that is to come. In women I am the name, the fortune, but also the beautiful words, the memory, the intelligence, the fidelity and the patience.

Among the hymns, I am the Brhat-sama, sung to Indra, and among the poems, the Gayatri, sung daily by the learned sages. Among the months, I am November and December, and among the seasons, the blossoming spring.

I am the play of deceivers, and the brilliance of all that shines. I am the victory, the adventure and the strength of the strong.

Among the descendants of Vrsni, I am Vasudeva, and among the Pandavas, Arjuna. Among the sages, I am Vyasa, and among the great thinkers, Usana.

Among the punishments, I am the rod, and among those who seek victory, morality. In secret things, I am silence, and of the wise, wisdom.

Moreover, I am the Seed of all existence: Nothing movable or immovable exists without Me. My divine glories know no bounds. What I have revealed to you is only a way of example, a tiny parcel of My infinite greatness. All that is beautiful, powerful, glorious, bursts forth, know that it is only a simple fragment of My splendour. But what good is all this detail?

For, the whole universe, by a single spark of My Person, I penetrate and sustain it.

The universal form of the Lord

The Supreme Lord says:

See here My glory, hundreds, thousands of divine forms, infinitely diverse, multi-coloured like the sea. Behold the Adityas, the Rudras, all other celestial beings. Contemplate the innumerable manifestations that no one has ever known before. All that you desire and will desire to see, the mobile as well as the immobile, see it at once in this universal form, for everything is there.

But you cannot see Me with the eyes that are yours. I therefore bestow upon thee the divine eyes through which thou mayest behold My inconceivable powers.

I am Time, destroyer of worlds, come to engage all men. Apart from you [the Pandavas], they will all perish, warriors of the two armies that clash.

So arise, ready to fight. Triumphant over your enemies, you will enjoy a prosperous kingdom. All, by My command, are already slain, and you, Savyasacin, can only be, in this struggle, an instrument in My hand.

Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Darna, and the other valiant warriors, all are already put to death. Fight without being troubled, and you will defeat all your enemies in this struggle.

In joy, I have revealed to you in this world, through My internal power, My universal, sublime, infinite, dazzling form, which no one before you has ever seen.

Neither the study of the Vedas (*the original holy scriptures*), nor the sacrifices, nor the charitable acts, nor even the rites, the severe asceticism or such other practices, allow to see My universal form. No one before you has been able to contemplate it. Before this terrible form of Me, your mind has become obscured, but let your fear subside, let your confusion cease. In all serenity, contemplate now the Form of your desire.

This Form, Mine, which you are now contemplating, is very difficult to see. The celestial beings themselves unceasingly aspire to discover It, this Form so dear.

This Form which you see with your spiritual eyes, neither the simple study of the Vedas, nor the severe asceticism, nor the charitable acts, nor the ritual adoration allow to know it. No one, through these paths, will see Me as I am. Only by serving Me with undivided love and devotion can one know Me as I am, standing before you, and likewise, in truth, see Me. Thus, and only thus, can one penetrate the mystery of My Person. He who, free from intellectual speculation and the defilement of his past deeds, benevolent towards all beings, absorbs himself in pure devotional service, he comes to Me.

Devotional service offered to Krishna

In truth, devotional service, or service of love and devotion, is the manifestation of one's love for Krishna, God, the Supreme Sovereign Person.

The Supreme Lord says:

He who attaches his mind to My personal Form, and always engages in My worship, full of ardent spiritual faith, that one I hold to be the most perfect. As for those who devote themselves entirely to the unmanifested, the undefined, inconceivable, inaccessible to the senses, omnipresent, fixed, immutable

[the impersonal concept of the Absolute Truth], those whose worship consists in mastering the senses, being equal to all and working for the universal good, they also eventually reach Me. For them, however, whose minds are bound to the unmanifest, to the impersonal aspect of the Absolute *(to the impersonal aspect of Krishna)*, the progress will be very painful. To advance along this path is always difficult for the incarnate being.

For those who worship Me, surrender all their actions to Me and devote themselves to Me without division, absorbed in devotional service and constantly meditating on Me, for such a one I am the Liberator who will soon snatch him from the ocean of deaths and rebirths.

Simply fix your mind on Me, God, the Supreme Person, and place all your intelligence in Me. Thus, there is no doubt that you will always live in Me. If you cannot fix your mind on Me without failing, observe the regulative principles of devotional service.

If, however, you cannot submit to the regulative principles of devotional service, then try to dedicate your works to Me, for by acting for Me, you will attain the perfect state.

And if thou canst not even act in that consciousness, then strive to renounce all fruits of thy acts, and in the soul to establish thy consciousness.

But if to this practice also thou canst not bend, then cultivate knowledge. Superior to knowledge, however, is meditation, and superior to meditation is the renunciation of the fruits of deeds, for this renunciation can confer all peace on the mind.

He who is envious of nothing, who behaves with all as a benevolent friend, who thinks himself the possessor of nothing, who is free from the false ego *(that is, identifying with the body, dominating matter and material nature)*, and in joy as in sorrow remains the same, who, full of forgiveness, always knows contentment, who is resolutely engaged in devotional service, and whose mind and intelligence are in harmony with Me, he is very dear to Me.

He who never causes agitation to others, and whom agitation never troubles either, whom joys and sorrows do not affect, he is very dear to Me.

He who does not depend in any way on the modes of material action, the pure being, expert in everything, free from anxiety, free from suffering, and who does not seek the fruit of his actions, he, My devotee, is very dear to Me.

He who does not seize either joy or sorrow, who does not grieve or covet, who renounces the favourable as well as the unfavourable, he, My devotee, is very dear to Me. He who towards friend or foe is equal, and the same before glory or disgrace, heat or cold, joy or sorrow, praise or blame, who is always free from defilement, silent, satisfied with everything, unconcerned with lodging, and who, established in knowledge, serves Me with love and devotion, that one is dear to Me.

He who, full of faith, in this imperishable path of devotional service commits himself wholly, making Me the Supreme Goal, he is infinitely dear to Me.

Nature, the Supreme Being, and Consciousness

The Supreme Lord says:

“Field” is called the body, and *“knower of the field”* is called one who knows the body.

Understand that in all bodies, the knower, I am also. And to know the body, to know the possessor of the body, that is the knowledge. This is My thought.

Now listen, I beg you: in few words I will describe the field of action, how it is constituted, its metamorphoses, its source, as well as the knower of this field and its influence. This knowledge, of the field of action and its knower, has been expounded by various sages in various Vedic writings (*of the Vedas, the original holy scriptures*), especially the Vedanta-sutra (*sacred book*) where cause and effect are presented with great reason.

The combination of the five great elements, the false ego (*identification with one's body, and the desire to dominate matter and material nature*), the intelligence, the unmanifested, the ten sense organs, the mind and the five sense objects, and then desire and aversion, joy and sorrow, signs of life and conviction, are, in short, the field of action and what results from the interactions of its constituent elements.

Humility, modesty, non-violence, tolerance, simplicity, the act of approaching an authentic spiritual master, purity, constancy and self-control; renunciation of the objects of sense pleasure, freedom from false ego and the clear perception that birth, sickness, old age and death are evils to be fought; Detachment from wife, children, home and all that is connected with it, equality of mind in all situations, pleasant or distressing; pure and constant devotion to Me, seeking out solitary places and detachment from the masses, recognising the importance of spiritual realisation, and

the philosophical search for the Absolute Truth, such I declare to be knowledge, and ignorance all that goes against it.

I will now instruct you in the object of knowledge, and its knowledge will make you taste the eternal. It is called brahman, the spiritual; it is without beginning, and subordinate to Me. He transcends the world of matter, and with it the effects and causes inherent in it.

Everywhere his hands and legs, his eyes and faces, and nothing escapes his hearing. Thus the Supreme Soul is everywhere present.

The original source of the senses of all beings, the Supreme Soul is nevertheless devoid of them. It is the sustainer of all, yet it remains unattached. And beyond the three gunas (*the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature: virtue, passion and ignorance*), He remains the Master.

The Supreme Truth is within as well as without, in the moving as well as in the still; It surpasses the power of perception and understanding bound to the material senses. It is infinitely distant and yet very near. Though seemingly divided, the Supreme Soul remains indivisible; It is One.

Though She sustains all beings, understand that She also devours them and makes them all grow.

Of all that is luminous, She is the Source of light. She is unmanifested, She dwells beyond the darkness of matter. It is the knowledge, the object of knowledge and the goal of knowledge. It dwells in the heart of everyone. Thus, I have in few words described to you the field of action, the knowledge and the object of knowledge. All the depth of these things, to My devotees alone it is given to know it, and thus to reach My nature.

Both material nature and the separate beings, you should know, have no beginning. Their mutations and the three gunas (*the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature: virtue, passion and ignorance*) have no other origin than material nature.

Nature is said to be the cause of all material acts and their consequences; the separate being (*the individual spirit soul separate from Krishna*), on the other hand, is the cause of the various pleasures and sufferings he experiences in this world.

Thus, the separate being borrows various ways of existence within the material nature and enjoys the three gunas there: this is because he touches that nature. He then experiences suffering and pleasure in various forms of life.

But there is another beneficiary in the body who transcends matter; and that is the Lord, the supreme possessor, Witness and Conscientious, who is called the Supreme Soul (*and whom Jesus called the Holy Spirit*).

He will attain liberation who thus knows material nature and what living beings are and how they interact with the three gunas (*virtue, passion and ignorance*). Whatever his present condition, he will never again be reborn in this world.

Some perceive the Supreme Soul through meditation, others through the cultivation of knowledge, and still others through unselfish action.

Then one meets those who, though not well versed in spiritual knowledge, engage in worship of the Supreme Lord because they have heard of Him. Willingly listening to the sayings of authorities, they too triumph over the cycle of death and rebirth. Know that all that is, movable and immovable, proceeds only from the union of the field of action with the knower of the field.

He who sees that the Supreme Soul in all bodies accompanies the separate soul, and understands that neither of them ever perishes, he indeed sees. He who in every being sees the Supreme Soul, everywhere the same, does not let his mind lead him to degradation. Thus he reaches the supreme and absolute goal. He who can see that it is the body, born of the material nature, which performs all action, that the inner soul never acts, he indeed sees. When the man of intelligence ceases to see in terms of multiple identities, due to multiple bodies, he attains spiritual vision. Then everywhere he sees only the spiritual soul.

Those who have the vision of eternity can see that the soul is spiritual, eternal, beyond the three gunas. Although it is in the body of matter, the soul never acts or is bound. Just as ether, which is everywhere spread, cannot, however, of a subtle nature, mix with anything, so the soul, of spiritual substance, though in the body, does not mix with it.

As the sun alone illuminates the whole galaxy, so the spirit soul alone illuminates the whole body with consciousness.

He who, in the light of knowledge, thus sees what distinguishes the body from the possessor of the body, and also knows by what means one becomes free from the grip of material nature, he attains the supreme goal.

The supreme wisdom, the highest knowledge

The Supreme Lord says:

Once again I shall tell you that supreme wisdom, the highest knowledge, by which all the sages have risen from here to the ultimate perfection.

Whoever establishes himself in this knowledge can attain the spiritual and absolute nature, similar to Mine. Then he is not reborn at the time of creation, and at the time of dissolution, is not affected.

The material substance in its totality, called brahman (*the material nature or the total material substance, made up of the twenty-four material elements*), is the seat of conception; this brahman I fertilise, and thus make possible the birth of all beings.

Understand this, that all species of life proceed from the bosom of material nature, and that I am its father, who gives the seed.

Material nature is formed of the three gunas (*the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature: virtue, passion and ignorance*). Let the distinct being, Imperishable, touch the material nature and he becomes conditioned by these three gunas.

Know that virtue, the purest of the gunas, enlightens the being and frees him from the consequences of all his sinful acts. He who is governed by virtue develops knowledge, but at the same time becomes conditioned by the feeling of happiness that it gives.

Passion, you should know, consists of thirsts, of ardent and endless desires. It rivets the embodied soul it dominates to material action and its fruits.

As for ignorance, know that it causes the misguidance of all beings. This guna leads to madness, indolence and sleep, which enchain the incarnated soul.

Virtue attaches the being to happiness, passion to the fruits of his actions, and ignorance to madness.

At times, passion prevails over virtue and ignorance; at other times, it is virtue that defeats passion and ignorance. At other times again, ignorance, in its turn, overthrows virtue and passion. Thus, never does the struggle to rule cease between the gunas.

When through all the doors of the body (*eyes, ears, nostrils, the orifice of the sex and the anus*) the luminous flow of knowledge penetrates, then one can be assured that virtue grows in power.

When passion grows, then with it grow the signs of great attachment, uncontrollable desires, ardent aspirations and intense efforts.

And when ignorance rises, then darkness, inertia, insanity and delusion are born.

He who dies under virtue gains the higher planets, the pure planets where the great sages live.

He who dies under passion is reborn among men who devote themselves to selfish action.

And whoever dies under ignorance is reborn in the world of beasts.

It is said that acts performed under the aegis of virtue lead to purification of the doer; under the influence of passion, distress, and under ignorance, foolishness.

From virtue comes true knowledge, and from passion greed. Folly and foolishness, and delusion too, come from ignorance.

Those who are ruled by virtue gradually rise to the higher planets, those who are ruled by passion remain on the middle, earthly planets, and those. Those enveloped by ignorance fall into the infernal worlds.

When one sees, in every act, that nothing escapes the three Gunas, but that I, the Supreme Lord, transcends them, then one can know My spiritual nature.

When the incarnate being is able to go beyond the three gunas, he becomes free from birth, death, old age and the sufferings they cause. One can then enjoy ambrosia in this very life.

He who has no aversion, whether to enlightenment, attachment or delusion, who has no craving for these things in their absence; who, above these fruits of the three gunas, stands as neutral, ever unyielding, aware that nothing acts outside them; Who looks upon pleasure and suffering with the same eye, and to whom the clod of earth, gold and stone are of equal value, who is wise and holds both praise and blame as identical; who is affected neither by glory nor by opprobrium, who treats friends and enemies equally, and who has renounced all self-interested undertakings, of such a one it is said that he has transcended the three gunas.

He who is completely absorbed in devotional service, without ever failing, therefore transcends the three gunas and thereby attains the spiritual level.

I am the foundation of the impersonal Supreme Being (*the only aspect of God known to believers on earth*), who is immortal, inexhaustible, eternal, and the very principle of ultimate happiness.

Krishna, God, the Supreme Person

The Supreme Lord says:

There is a banyan tree, a tree whose roots point upwards, and downwards point the branches; its leaves are the Vedic hymns (*of the Vedas, the original holy scriptures*). He who knows it, knows the Vedas

The branches of this tree, which is nourished by the three gunas (*virtue, passion, ignorance*), extend in height as well as in depth; its twigs are the objects of the senses. Some of its roots also point downwards, linked to the material acts performed in the world of men.

No one in this world can perceive the exact shape of this tree. No one can see the end, the beginning or the base. But one must, with determination, slice with the sword of detachment this banyan tree with its powerful roots, seek the place from where, once one reaches it, there is no return. Then there surrender to the Supreme Person, God, from whom all things began, and in whom all things remain from time immemorial.

The man who is free from illusion, pride and false relationships, the man who knows the Eternal, who overcomes concupiscence and the duality of joys and sorrows, and who knows the path of surrender to the Supreme Person, he attains that eternal kingdom.

This supreme kingdom, Mine, is not illuminated by the sun, the moon or the electric force. For those who reach it, there is no return to this world.

The beings in the world of conditions (*the material universe*) are eternal fragments of My Person. But because they are conditioned, they struggle fiercely against the six senses, and among them, the mind.

Just as the air carries away smells, the living being (*the incarnated soul*) in this world carries with it from one body to another the various ways it conceives, thus taking on a new material body. The living being is endowed with a certain sense of hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell, all of which revolve around the mind. He thus has his own range of sense objects.

The foolish cannot conceive how the living being leaves the body, or what kind of body, under the rule of the three gunas, he has to enjoy. But all this he whose eyes are initiated in knowledge can see.

He sees all this with clarity, the spiritualist steadfastly established in spiritual realisation. But others, devoid of spiritual realisation, cannot, however hard they try, grasp the truth.

The Splendour of the sun, which dispels the darkness of the whole galaxy, know that it proceeds from My Person. And also that of the moon, and also that of the fire.

I enter into each of the planets, and through My energy, hold them in their orbit. I become the moon, and thus give the juice of life to all plants.

I am, in every animate body, the fire of digestion, and also the vital breath, inspired as well as exhaled. Thus, I do the assimilation of the four kinds of food.

I stand in the heart of every being, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. The goal of all. The purpose of the Vedas (*the original holy scriptures*) is to know Me; verily, it is I who composed the Vedanta (holy book), and I am the One who knows the Vedas.

There are two orders of beings: the fallible and the infallible. In the material universe, all are fallible; but in the spiritual world, it is said that all are infallible.

But other than these is the greatest of beings, the Lord Himself, who enters the worlds and upholds them.

Since I am absolute, beyond the fallible and the infallible, since I am the greatest of all, the world and the Vedas celebrate Me as that Supreme Person.

He who, free from doubts, knows Me in this way, as God, the Supreme Person, he, know this, his knowledge embraces all. Therefore with all his being he serves Me with love and devotion.

What I am now revealing to you is the most secret part of the Vedic scriptures (the Vedas, the original holy scriptures). He who grasps its contents will know wisdom, and his efforts will lead him to perfection.

The Divine and Demonic Natures

The Supreme Lord says:

Absence of fear, purification of existence, development of spiritual knowledge, charity, self-control, performance of sacrifices, study of the Vedas, austerity and simplicity, non-violence, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation, serenity, aversion to criticism, compassion, absence of covetousness, meekness, modesty and firm determination, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of envy and thirst for honours, these are the spiritual qualities of men of virtue, men born of the divine nature.

Arrogance, pride, self-righteousness, harshness, ignorance, these are the outstanding features of men born of the demonic nature.

The divine qualities serve the liberation of the being, the demonic attributes push to enslave it. But fear not, for with the divine qualities you are born.

In this world there are two orders of created beings, one divine, the other demonic. I have already spoken to you at length about the divine attributes. Now hear from My lips the demonic attributes.

Demonic beings do not know what they should or should not do. In them there is no purity, no right conduct, no truthfulness.

They claim that this world is unreal and groundless, that no God rules it, that it results from sexual desire and has no other cause than concupiscence.

Based on such conclusions, the demonic beings, misguided and devoid of intelligence, indulge in harmful, infamous works that aim to destroy the world.

Demonic beings, who take refuge in self-conceit, pride and insatiable concupiscence, fall prey to illusion. Fascinated by the ephemeral, they devote their lives to unhealthy acts.

To enjoy the senses until the last moment is, they believe, the major imperative for man. And so their anguish knows no end. Chained by hundreds, by thousands of desires, by concupiscence and anger, they pile up wealth in illicit ways, to satisfy the appetite of their senses.

Such is the thought of the evil man: *“So much wealth is mine today, and by my plans more will come. I possess so much today, and tomorrow more and more. This man was of my enemies, and I killed him, in turn I will kill the others. Of everything I am the lord and master, of all the beneficiary. I am perfect, I am powerful, I am happy, I am the richest, and surrounded by high connections. No one reaches my power and happiness. I will perform sacrifices, do charity, and thereby rejoice.”*

This is how ignorance deceives him.

Confounded by manifold anxieties and caught in a net of illusions, he becomes too attached to sense pleasure, and sinks into hell.

Vain of himself, always arrogant, led astray by wealth and fatuity, he sometimes makes sacrifices, but out of all principle and rule, these can only be in name.

Having sought refuge in the false ego (*he identifies himself with his body, and wants to dominate matter and material nature*), in power, pride, concupiscence and anger, the demoniac blasphemes the true religion and envies Me, the Supreme Lord, who resides in his own body, as well as in that of others.

The envious and evil ones, the last of men, I plunge into the ocean of material existence in the various forms of demonic life.

These, reborn life after life within the demonic species, can never approach Me. Little by little they sink into the most sinister condition.

Three doors open into this hell: concupiscence, anger and greed. Let every sane man close them, for they lead the soul to its doom.

Those who have avoided these three gates of hell dedicate their lives to acts that lead to spiritual realisation. In this way, he gradually reaches the supreme goal (*finding God, and going to his eternal kingdom*).

He, on the other hand, who rejects the precepts of the Scriptures in order to act according to his own whim, attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme goal.

What your duty is and what it is not, know how to determine in the light of the principles given in the Scriptures. Knowing these laws, act in such a way as to gradually elevate yourself.

The branches of faith

Arjuna questions Lord Krishna again.

As for those who do not follow the principles of the scriptures, but devote themselves to a cult of their own invention, what is their condition, O Krishna?

Is it that of virtue, passion or ignorance?

The Blessed Lord answers.

According to the nature of the material influences [*gunas: virtue, passion, ignorance*] received by the incarnate being, his faith may belong to three orders: virtue, passion or ignorance. Hear My word on this.

According to which guna marks his existence, the being develops a particular faith. He is said to have such and such a faith, according to whether he is bathed in one or the other

Those who are ruled by virtue worship celestial beings, those who are ruled by passion worship demonic beings, and those who are enveloped by ignorance live in the worship of ghosts and other spirits.

Those who impose upon themselves severe austerities, but which are not in conformity with the scriptures, indulging in them out of pride, egotism, concupiscence and attachment, driven by passion, and who thus torture their bodies, without understanding, in their unconsciousness, that they also torture Me, the Supreme Soul within them, these, know that they are asuras (*demonic, impious, evil, atheistic beings*).

The foods dear to everyone are also divided into three orders, which correspond to the three gunas (*the three attributes and modes of influence of material nature: virtue, passion, ignorance*). The same applies to sacrifice, austerity and charity. Listen, and I will teach you what distinguishes them.

The foods of virtue purify existence and prolong its duration. They provide strength, health, joy and satisfaction. These substantial foods are sweet, juicy, fatty and full of flavour.

Foods that are too bitter, sour, salty, pungent, dry or hot are loved by those who are dominated by passion. They cause suffering, unhappiness and disease.

And dear to men who are enveloped by ignorance, food cooked for more than three hours before being eaten, food that is tasteless, lacking in freshness, smelly, decomposed or impure, and even leftovers.

Among the sacrifices, those which are performed out of duty, according to the rules of the Scriptures, and without expecting any fruit for oneself, belong to virtue.

But the sacrifice made with a view to some material result or benefit, or in an ostentatious manner, out of pride, know that it is born of passion.

As for the sacrifice performed without any faith and outside the scriptural precepts, where no consecrated food is distributed, no hymn sung, where the priests receive no gift in return, it is said to be born of ignorance.

The use of truthful language, directed towards the good of all, but also the avoidance of hurtful words, as well as the diligent recitation of the Vedas (*the original holy scriptures*), are the austerities of the word.

Serenity, simplicity, gravity, self-control and purity of thought are the austerities of the mind.

Practised with faith by men whose aim is not to obtain some material benefit for themselves, but to satisfy the Supreme (*Krishna, God*), the threefold union of these austerities proceeds from the Virtue.

As for ostentatious penances, which seek the respect, honour and veneration of men, they are said to belong to Passion. They are only unstable and ephemeral.

Finally, penances and austerities performed out of foolishness, and made of obstinate tortures, or undergone with a view to wounding, to destroying, are said to be the result of ignorance.

Charity dictated by duty, done without expecting anything in return, under just conditions of time and place, and to whomsoever is worthy, this charity is said to be accomplished under the sign of Virtue.

But charity inspired by the hope of reward, or by the desire for material fruit, or done with reluctance, is said to belong to Passion.

Finally, charity that is not done at the proper time and place, or to people who are worthy of it, or that is exercised in a disrespectful and contemptuous manner, is said to belong to Ignorance.

OM tat sat, from the beginning of creation, these three syllables have been used to designate the Supreme and Absolute Truth [*Krishna*]. For the satisfaction of the Supreme, the Brahmanas (learned sages) have uttered them while chanting the Vedic hymns (*of the Vedas, the original holy scriptures*) and performing sacrifices.

Thus, spiritualists always begin their sacrifices, austerities and charitable acts by pronouncing Om (*the syllable Om, spiritual sound vibration*), in order to reach the Absolute (*Krishna*).

One must perform sacrifices, austerities and charitable acts by pronouncing the word tat, if one wants to know the goal of these spiritual practices, which is to free oneself from the chains of matter.

The Absolute Truth is the goal of devotional practices, and it is designated by the word sat. These practices, sacrifices, austerities and charitable acts, in harmony with the Absolute, the Supreme Person, are to please Him.

But sacrifices, austerities and charitable acts performed without faith in the Supreme are ephemeral, no matter what rituals accompany them. They are called asat (*perishable, ephemeral*), and they are vain, both in this life and in the next.

The perfect renunciation

Arjuna asks Krishna one last time:

I long to know the purpose of renunciation, and also the purpose of the sannyasa (*renunciatee*), O Conqueror of the monster Kesi, O Hrsikesa (*another name of Krishna*).

The Blessed Lord says:

Abandoning the fruits of any act is what the sages mean by this word, “*renunciation*”. And what the great scholars call “*sannyasa*” is the very state of the man who practices this renunciation.

Some sages say that all self-interested actions should be renounced, while others maintain that acts of sacrifice, austerity and charity should never be abandoned.

From My lips now listen to the nature of renunciation. The Scriptures distinguish in it three orders.

Acts of sacrifice, austerity and charity must not be renounced, but must be carried out. In truth, these sacrifices, austerities and charities sanctify even great souls.

But all these practices must be performed without expecting any fruit, only out of a sense of duty. This is My ultimate thought.

One must never abandon the prescribed duty. Of the man who, under the influence of illusion, abandons it, it is said that his renunciation is Ignorance.

And he who, through fear, or judging it to be painful, shirks the prescribed duty, is said to be dominated by Passion. Such an act can never confer the elevation which results from renunciation.

But he who performs the prescribed duty for the sole reason that it must be performed, without any attachment to the fruits of his act, his renunciation proceeds from Virtue.

The intelligent man, established in Virtue, who neither hates unfavourable action nor attaches himself to favourable action, has no doubts about his action.

Impossible, in truth, is for the incarnate being, the renunciation of any act. Therefore, true renunciation is practised by those who renounce the fruits of their actions.

The threefold fruit of acts, desirable, undesirable and mixed, awaits, after death, the man who has not practised renunciation. But the renunciate will neither enjoy nor suffer from such fruit.

Let Me instruct you in the five factors of the act, which the Sankhya philosophy describes: they are the place, the doer, the senses, the effort and, above all, the Supreme Soul.

Whatever act, good or bad, a man performs through the body, the mind or the word, proceeds from these five factors.

And therefore he who thinks he is acting alone, who does not consider the five factors of the act, does not show great intelligence, and is thus unable to see things in their true light.

He whose acts are not motivated by the false ego (*identification with his body, and domination of matter and material nature*), whose intelligence is not bogged down, never kills, even if he kills in this world. Nor do his actions ever bind him.

Knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the knower are the three factors that give rise to the act. The senses, the act itself and its author form the threefold basis of all action.

There are three orders of knowledge, acts and doers; they correspond to the three gunas (*virtue, passion, ignorance*). Listen to Me describing them to you.

The knowledge by which one distinguishes in all existences a single, imperishable spiritual essence, one within the multiple, this knowledge, know this, proceeds from Virtue.

But the knowledge by which one perceives the existence, in various bodies, of so many beings of different natures, this knowledge, know this, belongs to Passion.

As for the knowledge by which, blind to the truth, one attaches oneself to one kind of action, as if it were all, this knowledge, very limited, is said to belong to the darkness of Ignorance.

The act which is dictated by duty, the act which is performed without attachment, without attraction or aversion, and is accompanied by the renunciation of its fruits, this act is said to proceed from Virtue.

But the act performed with great effort, the act which aims at the gratification of desires, and which is motivated by the false ego, this act is said to belong to Passion.

As for the act performed in unconsciousness and error, without considering the consequences or the chain of events it entails, which does violence to others and proves impracticable, this act is said to belong to ignorance.

The person who acts free from material attachment, free from false ego, enthusiastic, resolute, and indifferent to success or failure, is said to be under the sign of Virtue.

But the doer who is attached to the fruits of his labour, who passionately desires to enjoy them, who is greedy, envious, impure, tossed about by joys and sorrows, is said to be dominated by Passion.

The doer who always goes against the scriptural precepts, materialistic, obstinate, deceitful and skilled in insult, lazy, always morose, who constantly puts off till tomorrow, is said to be bathed in Ignorance

Now listen in detail. I will describe for you the three kinds of intelligence and determination, according to the three gunas (*virtue, passion, ignorance*).

The intelligence by which one distinguishes between what is right and wrong, what is to be feared and what is not, what binds and what releases, this intelligence proceeds from Virtue.

But the understanding which does not distinguish between the ways of religion and irreligion, nor does it distinguish between what is right and wrong to do, this imperfect understanding belongs to Passion.

As for the intelligence bathed in delusion and darkness, which mistakes irreligion for religion and religion for irreligion, which always turns to the evil path, this intelligence is Ignorance.

The determination which cannot be broken, which the practice of Yoga (*the practice of union and communion with God*) steadfastly sustains, and which thus governs the mind, the life itself and the movements of the senses, this determination proceeds from Virtue.

But the determination by which, in piety, the acquisition of goods, and the gratification of the senses, one holds fast to some personal fruit, this determination belongs to Passion.

As for the determination which proves impotent to lead beyond dreaming, fear, lamentation, gloom and delusion, this inapt determination belongs to Ignorance.

Now hear Me describe to you the three kinds of happiness enjoyed by the conditioned being, and by the repetition of which he sometimes comes to the end of all suffering. The happiness which at first may seem like poison, but in the end proves to be comparable to nectar, and which awakens to spiritual realisation, this happiness is said to proceed from Virtue.

But happiness born of the contact of the senses with their objects, which at first is like nectar, but in the end takes the taste of poison, this happiness is said to belong to Passion.

As for happiness which is blind to spiritual realisation, and which from beginning to end is only a chimera, born of sleep, laziness and illusion, this happiness is said to belong to Ignorance.

No being, neither on Earth, nor among the celestial beings, on the higher planets, is free from the influence of the three gunas.

Scholarly sages, administrators or warriors, traders or farmers and labourers are distinguished by the qualities they manifest in action, according to the influence of the three gunas: virtue, passion and ignorance.

Serenity, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, integrity, wisdom, knowledge and piety are the qualities that accompany the act of the wise scholar.

Heroism, power, determination, ingenuity, courage in battle, generosity, and the art of governing are the qualities that accompany the act of the administrator or warrior.

The ability to cultivate the land, to care for livestock and to trade is linked to the act of the merchant or the farmer. As for the worker, it is in his nature to serve others by his work.

By following his own nature in his actions, every man can know perfection. How to accomplish this, hear Me tell you now.

By worshipping the Lord, the Omnipresent, the origin of all beings, man can, in the performance of his own duty, attain perfection.

It is better to perform one's own duty, even if imperfectly, than to assume the duty of another, even if it is to perform it perfectly. By the performance of the prescribed duties, which one's nature assigns to each, one never incurs sin.

As fire is covered by smoke, so every undertaking is veiled by some fault. Therefore, no one should abandon the act proper to his nature, even if it be stained.

Man can taste the fruits of renunciation through simple self-control, detachment from worldly things and disinterest in material pleasures. Therein lies the highest perfection of renunciation.

Briefly, learn from Me how, if one acts in the way I am about to explain to you, one can attain the supreme perfection, the spiritual level.

Entirely purified by the intellect, mastering the mind with determination, renouncing the objects that give pleasure to the senses, free from attachment and aversion, the man who lives in a secluded place, who eats little and controls the body and the tongue, who always remains in contemplation, detached, without false ego (*who does not identify with his body, nor dominate matter or material nature*), without vain power or glory, without lust or anger, who closes himself to material things, free from all feeling of possession, serene, this man is raised to the level of spiritual realisation.

He who attains the spiritual level at the same time realises the Supreme Being, and finds infinite joy in it. He never grieves, never aspires for anything; he is equal to all beings. He then gets to serve Me with pure love and devotion.

Through devotional service, and only then, can one know Me as I am. And the being who, through such devotion, becomes fully conscious of My Person, then enters My absolute Kingdom.

Though engaged in all kinds of activities, My devotee, under My protection, reaches, by My grace, the eternal and imperishable Abode.

In all your actions, depend only on Me, and always place yourself under My protection. This devotional service, perform it in full awareness of My Person.

If you become conscious of Me, all the obstacles of conditioned existence, by My grace you will overcome them. If, however, you do not act with such awareness, but with the false ego, closing your ear to Me, you will be lost.

If you do not act according to My directives, if you refuse to fight the battle, you will be misled. And, by your nature, you will still have to fight.

Under the influence of illusion, you now refuse to act according to My instructions. But, compelled by your own nature, you will have to act the same.

The Supreme Lord stands in the hearts of all beings, and directs the wanderings of all of them, who are each as if on a machine (*the body*), consisting of material energy.

Surrender yourself entirely to Him. By His grace, you will know absolute peace, and you will reach the eternal and supreme Abode.

Thus have I revealed to you the most secret of all knowledge. Reflect carefully and then act as you please.

If I reveal to you this most secret part of knowledge, it is because you are My dearest friend. Listen to My word, for I say it for your good.

Always fill your mind with Me, and become My devotee. Offer Me your homage, devote your worship to Me, and to Me you will come. This I promise you, for you are My infinitely dear friend.

Leave all other forms of religion behind and simply surrender to Me. All the consequences of your faults, I will free you from them. Have no fear.

This secret knowledge cannot be revealed to men who are neither austere, nor devoted, nor engaged in devotional service, or who envy Me.

For one who teaches this supreme secret to My devotees, progress in devotional service is assured, and in the end, no doubt, he will return to Me.

None of my servants in this world is dearer to Me than he is, and none will ever be dearer to Me.

And I proclaim that he who studies this sacred talk, ours, will adore Me with his understanding.

And he who listens to it with faith, without envy, will free himself from the consequences of his guilty deeds and will reach the planets where the virtuous live.

O Arjuna, conqueror of wealth, have you listened to everything with a perfectly vigilant mind?

Are your illusions, your ignorance, now dispelled?

Arjuna answers the Lord:

O dear Krishna, you infallible, my illusion has now vanished. I have, by your grace, recovered my memory. Here I am, firm, free from doubt. I am ready to act on your word.

Wherever Krishna is, the Master of all spiritualists or transcendentalists, wherever Arjuna, the sublime archer, reigns opulence, victory, formidable power and morality.

Summary of the sublime, pure, eternally living and sacred teaching of Krishna, God, the Supreme Person.

In truth, Lord Krishna teaches the highest morality.

This teaching on supreme morality is summarized in the last word of the chapter "*The highest wisdom*". Each of us must become a devotee of Krishna.

The essence of any religion is to surrender completely to Krishna. God's teaching is indeed the supreme way of true religion and the purest morality. All other ways may lead those who borrow them to purity, or lead them to the pure knowledge of God, but it is in Krishna's teaching alone, in his ultimate teaching, that lies the pinnacle of morality and religion, surrendering to Krishna.

Through the teaching of Krishna, God, the Supreme Person, we understand that while meditation and philosophical speculation may enable us to realize our spiritual nature, total surrender to God is the very establishment of the highest perfection. This is the essence of the Lord's teachings.

Observance of regulatory principles (*not having sex outside marriage, not eating meat, fish and egg, not consuming drugs and exciting products such as coffee, tea, alcohol, smoking, and playing games of chance and money*), and various religions can be held to be a secret way, provided that religious rites are. The latter, however, cannot lead beyond meditation and the development of knowledge.

Surrender to Krishna, through devotional service dedicated to Krishna, in full Krishna consciousness or God consciousness, is the most secret, "*confidential*" teaching of God's knowledge, and the essence of the final chapter "*Perfect Renunciation*".

Lord Krishna still teaches that the Ultimate Truth is none other than Himself, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the Absolute Truth.

Absolute Truth is realized in three degrees: The Supreme Impersonal Spiritual Being (*the only aspect of God known to believers on earth*), the Supreme Soul also called the Holy Spirit, called "*localized*", because it resides in the heart of all living beings, humans, animals and plants, and the Supreme Spiritual Being, Krishna, in his personal, real, Primordial, Original, Infinite, and Absolute form, at the origin of all the plentiful emanations, or emanations of the plentiful emanations, and the Avatars.

By perfect knowledge of Absolute Truth, one must understand, perfect knowledge of Krishna, as He really is. All branches of knowledge are included in the knowledge of Krishna. Krishna transcends matter, for He always dwells in the spiritual atmosphere of His eternal inner power.

All living beings are divided into two orders: some eternally conditioned, and others eternally liberated. They are innumerable and are all an integral part of Krishna, of which they are tiny fragments.

As for material energy, it manifests itself in twenty-four elements, which form its divisions. Material creation takes place under the action of eternal time, and the material universe is created and then dissolved by the external power of the Lord. His creations and dissolutions, or manifestations and non-manifestations, are repeated in an endless cycle.

The teaching of the Lord “*The words Of Krishna, Christ, God, The Supreme Being*” essentially deals with five subjects: the Supreme Lord, material nature, living beings, eternal time, and acts of all kinds.

The last four elements depend on the first, God, the Supreme Person, Lord Krishna.

The various concepts of the Absolute Truth, that is, the Supreme Impersonal Spiritual Being, the Supreme Soul present in the heart of each of the living beings, or any other spiritual concept that one may have, are included in the Supreme Person.

Although on the surface the Supreme and Absolute Person, the living being, material nature and time seem distinct, nothing is separated from the Absolute. But still, the Absolute differs from all things. This is the philosophy of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, where God is both and inconceivably different and not different from all that is. It gives us the perfect knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

In its original position, the living being is purely spiritual, a spiritual soul, a tiny fragment of the Supreme Spiritual Being, Krishna. It is nevertheless classified as the marginal energy of the Lord, for it may remain bound to spiritual energy, or come into contact with material energy. In other words, the individual being distinct from God lies between the spiritual and material energies. And because, belonging to the higher energy, it is endowed with a fragment of independence. Actually, to make good use of this fragment of independence is for him, to place himself under the guidance of Krishna, and thus attain his original natural condition, in the blissful energy of the Lord.