The Bhagavad Gītā

WINTHROP SARGEANT

Foreword by Huston Smith

Editor’s Preface by Christopher Key Chapple
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THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ
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THE BHAGAVAD GĪṬĀ

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Foreword by
HUSTON SMITH
To my dear wife, Jane
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I have written over thirty-five forewords to books, but none with the urgency with which I write this one.

Why is that the case? Because this edition of the Gītā looks so daunting that general readers are likely to conclude that it is not the one for them. But that would be a serious mistake, for the truth is that this is a multivalent book—there is something in it that will reward every serious reader.

Christopher Chapple’s admirable preface summarizes the Bhagavad Gītā’s plot and positions it in the vast literature of the Vedas. For Sanskrit scholars no stone is left unturned: abbreviations for grammatical usages—active, ablative, accusative, adjective, and adverb—are entered, and both English and Sanskrit grammar is remarked. It would be tedious to argue further the comprehensiveness of the book’s grammatical workout, but scholars can be assured that the coverage is exhaustive. A list of abbreviations that are used in the volume is included, as well as epithets (nicknames) that appear in the Gītā. When we turn to the text proper, for every line the Sanskrit is printed, followed by the transliteration of that line, and finally, the line’s English translation. For those who only want to read the Gītā’s story, therefore, the book is literally a page-turner, for all they need do is to read the verses on the bottom left-hand side of each page. However, should readers want elaboration, they will find it in the right-hand column of the page where, for example, dharma is translated as duty, law, righteousness, virtue, and honor.

So it goes. I am unspeakably grateful to Christopher Chapple for attending to the foregoing material for it frees me to attend to the substance of this classic. What does the Gītā use the foregoing machinery and underpinnings to say? Eager as I am to get to that substance, there is one transitional point that I want to make.

There are some books that will never have definitive editions, and I am not confining myself to translations; I am thinking of the vernacular in which the substance of the texts are cast—idioms, metaphors, analogies, innuendos and their likes. The reason for this is that in a way, these classics are living creatures in at least the sense that they seek out apertures through which to move. It is as if they were intelligent, looking for ingenious ways to get their point across to their readers. There are only a very few books that I know of that can do this, with the Tao Te Ching preeminent among them. Poetry works in this way, as do stories and tales, but not expository prose. The Gītā, however, manages this rare accomplishment, and I will leave it to the reader to figure out how it manages to do so.
The Bhagavad Gītā is the summation of the Vedānta, and among explicit doctrines the Vedānta stands out as one of the most direct formulations possible of what constitutes the very essence of our spirituality. Truth being one, the Gītā’s teachings find their parallels in the other revealed scriptures, but nowhere else are its teachings so succinctly stated.

As Christopher Chapple has told us, the teachings of the Gītā are presented in the form of a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna. The background of the battlefield imparts a dramatic charm. Sri Krishna, the teacher, is regarded by the Hindus as the Lord Himself in human form, and readers, absorbed in the book, often forget its historical character and feel as though many of its inspiring passages are directly addressed to themselves by the Lord who is the inner guide of us all. The suggestiveness of the book is almost without limit if it is read with the right attitude of mind.

The Gītā can be read as history, but it lends itself readily to being an allegory. In this mode, Arjuna represents the individual soul, and Sri Krishna the Supreme Soul that dwells in every heart. Arjuna’s chariot is the body. The blind king Dhṛtarāṣṭra is the mind under the spell of maya, ignorance, and his hundred sons are man’s numerous evil tendencies. The battle is an eternal one that is always going on between the powers of good and the powers of evil. The warrior who listens to the advice of the Lord speaking from within will triumph in this battle and attain the Highest Good.

Hindu philosophers have never been satisfied with the mere intellectual understanding of religious treatises. Scripture is merely a key to the infinite storehouse of knowledge that lies within every human soul. And as for philosophy, its object is to enable the student to see the Truth—to realize it in direct experience. Hence certain moral and spiritual disciplines are necessary in order to create the right mood for study of both philosophy and the scriptures. Hinduism lays down such disciplines: discrimination between the Real and the unreal and renunciation of the unreal; and acquisition of the six virtues (control of the mind, control of the senses, restraining the mind from being distracted by worldly objects, faith in the scriptures and the words of the teacher, mental concentration, and lastly, the longing for liberation). Inwardness of spirit, cultivated through self-control and contemplation, enables the student of the scriptures to grasp their subtle meaning, which otherwise remains hidden from the merely intelligent reader.

It is an immemorial custom among Hindus to read the Gītā as a part of their daily devotions. Without it, prayer and meditation do not seem to be complete.

In the remaining pages of this foreword, I unpack the Gītā, so to speak. I divide its contents into segments that, pieced together, deliver the Gītā’s message. These segments do not appear in the Gītā; they spin off from and expand the verse(s) of the Gītā that are noted at the end of each segment.

*The Purpose of Life*

Happiness derived from the fulfillment of worldly desires does not last. As one grows old, one realizes that everything is transient—wealth, possessions, health, and even life itself.
When money and the luxuries it can buy fail to bring lasting happiness, one begins to wonder what the cause of this discontent is. This inquiry leads to the discovery that besides the body and mind, there is another component of the human being that is less apparent and more important because it is more enduring and is always watching our activities. In spiritual texts the body-mind complex is called the Apparent Self and the more enduring component is called the Real Self. Eventually one realizes that the cause of the aforementioned discontent derives from attending to one’s Apparent rather than one’s Real Self, and that the purpose of life is to recognize this distinction and to identify oneself with one’s Real Self (cf. Bhagavad Gītā, chapter 2, verse 66, hereafter BG II:66).

Crisis of Self-Identity

We have arms and legs; our five sense organs (hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell) are superior to those limbs because they control a wider range of activities. Our minds (which receive and store information) are superior to our sense organs because they generate and retrieve thoughts. Our intellects are superior to our minds because they process information, make decisions. However, superior to all of the foregoing is the soul which is the source of consciousness and life. It is the Real Self that was mentioned in the preceding paragraph (BG IV:242).

Who Am I?

The human soul contains a spark of the Divine, the key attributes of which are indestructibility, indivisibility, and infinity. There is but One Being, and in every human soul this one and the same being permeates fully, not partially, just as the entire sun is reflected in miniature in every dewdrop.

If every human soul has the same Divine spark, then all human beings are endowed with the same potential for goodness. The knowledge, understanding, and abiding awareness of the Divine spark in every human being—the aforementioned Real Self—is the foundation of all of the human virtues (BG XV:7).

The Human Soul

Human beings move tranquilly through childhood, youth, and maturity, but old age is not welcomed, and approaching death is feared. In truth, however, all of these stages should be welcomed equally, for the human soul reincarnates and repeats the same stages until it reaches its release from the physical body. When the soul reincarnates, it carries with it the impressions and inclinations that it has accumulated in its past lives (BG II:2 and II:13).

The Spiritual Quest

The physical world is constantly changing; it is a scene of perpetual perishing. Sages, however, through deep introspection, came to the conclusion that whatever
ceases to exist cannot be the ultimate reality. An all-pervading consciousness, which by its nature is eternal and indestructible, can alone be the ultimate reality. We catch glimpses of this all-pervading consciousness when we encounter people who show tremendous courage, extraordinary creativity, and boundless compassion (BG II:16–17).

**Different Ways for Different Temperaments**

There are several paths to spiritual realization. People are born with different temperaments and tendencies: some like to be active, others reflective, others affective and engaged with their feelings, and others (the show-me types) favor experiments (let’s see what works). Spiritual paths exist for each of these four types. For the active there is the Way of Work, *karma yoga*; for the reflective there is the Way of Knowledge, *jñāna yoga*; for the affective type in whom sentiments prevail, there is the Way of Devotion, *bhakti yoga*; and for the experimental, let’s-see-what-works type, there is the Way of Meditation, *raja yoga* (BG XIII:24–25).

**Work without Attachment**

One doesn’t have to renounce the world to advance spiritually—one can remain fully engaged with family, social, and professional responsibilities. All one need do is to shift one’s attention and motivation for what one does. Say one is a business person, attend to the duties of the day with disregard for what they will net one—that’s all that need be done. Both the ignorant and the wise may do the same work, but the ignorant act with a selfish motive, and the wise act without expectation of any material gain (BG II:47 and III:25).

**Unselfish Work—a Mind Purifier**

Imagine a boy playing with his dog that has a curly tail. He tries to straighten the tail, but as soon as he lets go of it, it curls up again. The parts of our lives seem to behave like that—we straighten out one component, but then a curly tail takes it place. But take heart.

Mahatma Gandhi used nonviolent means to win India’s independence from British rule. At his cottage in Sevagram a prayer meeting was held at which a verse of the Bhagavad Gītā was read. After the meetings, Gandhi would sit quietly for a few minutes with closed eyes, contemplating the verse. Many who attended those meetings were astonished to see the transformation in Gandhi’s expression. His face often wore a look of pain that reflected the sufferings of his countrymen because of the cruelty of the rulers’ deeds. After meditating on the Gītā, however, his face glowed with love and compassion for all. The secret of Gandhi’s courage, calmness, and wisdom was his ability to reconnect his consciousness with the Divine—the source of infinite strength, infinite compassion, and infinite wisdom (BG II:48 and XII:13).
When Work Becomes Worship

Constant awareness of the presence of the Universal Spirit in everything can transform all work into worship. The mind becomes agitated and restless only when one works with a selfish motive. Work performed in the attitude of worship of the Universal Spirit purifies and calms the mind. It is a simple way to obtain peace of mind and enduring happiness (BG XVIII:46).

The Way of Knowledge

There are many kinds of knowledge. Secular knowledge does not take us beyond the material world—the world where everything is subject to change. It is impossible to find lasting happiness in things that are impermanent.

Deep introspection reveals that there is correspondence between the human being (the microcosm) and the universe (the macrocosm). One discovers that the spiritual component in human beings is identical with the Universal Spirit that pervades the phenomenal world.

As bliss is a primary attribute of the Universal Spirit, there must be a corresponding reservoir of happiness within all human beings. Those who seek enduring happiness must therefore guide their actions in the light of constant awareness of the divine presence in everything.

The journey toward spiritual realization is beset with hindrances as well as helps, and an uncontrolled mind is one of the major hindrances. It is not easy to discipline an unsteady mind, but constant awareness of one’s identity with the Supreme Spirit is a tremendous source of strength, wisdom, and perseverance (BG XVIII:20 and XVIII:37).

Imprisoned in a Cage

Some desires must be met to keep us alive—the desires for food, water, and clothing. But our desires do not stop there, and striving for these additional desires does not bring us closer to lasting contentment. Superfluous desires are better called cravings. We become angry when our cravings are not fulfilled. Greed is the food that sustains cravings and feeds the ego. The ego is the cheerleader of cravings—it enshrines self-conceit, possessiveness, and jealousy (BG XVI:12–16).

The Anatomy of Human Descent

An uncontrolled mind, always craving gratification of sense pleasures, leads to disastrous consequences. Imagine a sense object that comes to one’s attention. A desire arises to possess and enjoy that object. These thoughts create attachments and eventually craving. If the craving is not fulfilled, one becomes frustrated and angry, and angry people lose the capacity to discriminate between right and wrong, which in turn leads to a ruined life.
Spirituality begins with controlling one’s desires and anger, which requires rigorous vigilance. Imagine that two notorious burglars, Desire and Anger, succeed in sneaking into a house—the burglars are adept at stealing the jewels of peace and happiness. The task of protecting those jewels which are within each one of us begins with control of the mind (BG II:62–63).

Intellect over Mind

The mind is inherently extroverted. The five sense organs continuously bombard the mind with messages from the outer world, and these messages create an uninterrupted flow of thought waves. This is the reason why an uncontrolled mind is never free from the propensities of desire, aversion, and anger. However, these propensities are obstructions for the ripening of wisdom; so it is essential to learn to interrupt this flow of thoughts by withdrawing the sense organs at will from their sense objects. To achieve the capacity to do this, the intellect must learn to exercise its supremacy over the mind.

Withdrawing the senses from sense objects enables the intellect to withhold identification with the mind’s activities. This is how spiritual aspirants develop the art of noncooperation with the mind. When the mind counsels returning injury with injury, the intellect exercises its veto power and recommends returning injury with pardon. When the mind advises returning hatred with hatred, the intellect can decide to return wrongdoings with love and compassion.

However, even though withdrawing the senses from sense desires frees one from those desires, the taste for them lingers. Even the taste for worldly desires drops away when one directly experiences the Divine (BG II:58–59).

From Knowledge to Wisdom

Theoretical knowledge of the nature of the mind and how to control the mind is not enough. The spiritual path is slippery, and it does no good simply to carry the staff of knowledge-that-leads-to-wisdom—one must use that staff to steady oneself.

To change the analogy, the journey from knowledge to wisdom can be compared to the flight of a jet plane that struggles through thunderstorms at lower altitudes before reaching clear blue skies, where it flies smoothly and seemingly effortlessly (BG II:56).

From Wisdom to Peace

The attainment of wisdom is the hardest part of the spiritual journey. When that is accomplished, spiritual realization is very near.

A wise person is like an ocean that remains unmoved when rivers, even mighty one likes the Amazon, enter it. Having brought the mind under control, the wise person remains absorbed in the realm of spiritual consciousness where worldly desires knock but cannot enter. They are unswervingly aware of the fact that indestructibility, undivided consciousness, and bliss are the attributes of the Supreme Spirit (BG II:64 and II:70).
Which Is the Better Way?

Looking at a necklace of pearls, the eyes of the ignorant see pearls of different sizes and shapes, but they do not see the string that holds the pearls together. Something similar to that happens to a beginner who is seeking knowledge of the existence of the Supreme Spirit. The spiritual search leads to the discovery that actually there is no place in the universe where the Supreme Spirit is absent. In fact, like pearls of a necklace, the whole universe is pervaded and held together by the indwelling presence of one and the same Spirit.

It is possible but extremely difficult to comprehend the Divine Reality through knowledge alone. The prerequisite for attaining steady wisdom is a pure mind; but purification of the mind is a slow and arduous task, requiring virtues like truthfulness, honesty, and compassion.

The Way of Unselfish Work and the Way of Knowledge are two of the four ways for purifying the mind. The Way of Meditation and the Way of Devotion are the other two. Each of the ways enables the aspirant to realize the Spiritual Unity behind the apparent diversity in the universe. They are four paths to the same summit (BG V:1 and V:4).

The Way of Meditation

Those who are following either the Way of Knowledge or the Way of Unselfish Work soon discover that cravings of the mind for worldly pleasures are the greatest obstacle to spiritual realization. It is the habit of the mind to wander around in the outside world all the time. That habit can be broken by shifting the mind to the indwelling consciousness whose bliss can be attained by deep contemplation, succinctly known as meditation.

Spiritual bliss is far superior to the transient pleasures of everyday life, and meditation is the gate that opens that bliss to us. The indwelling Spirit can be experienced by cutting the chains that bind us to the world of matter, and it is meditation that does the cutting.

To change the analogy, the mind is like a lake, and stones that are dropped into it raise waves. Those waves do not let us see who we are. A full moon may be reflected in the water of the lake, but if the lake’s surface is troubled we do not see the moon clearly. The waters must be calmed. If one remains quiet, eventually the winds that ruffle the water will give up, and then one knows who one is. God is constantly within us, but the mind obscures that fact with agitated waves of worldly desires. Meditation quiets those waves (BG V:28).

Preparation for Meditation

The powers of the human mind tend to be dissipated like rays of light. Scientists have shown us that it is possible to unlock the secrets of nature by the powers of concentrated minds. Likewise, by using the mind as a powerful instrument mystics have been able to discover profound spiritual truths. As we have seen, meditation is the
method by which human beings can learn how to control and empower their minds for the spiritual journey.

The prerequisite for meditation is a firm resolve to adhere to moral values that help to purify the mind—truthfulness, noninjury, and noncovetousness. This resolve prepares one to mount the steps that ascend toward meditation. The first of these is purity, internal and external. The second step involves relaxing the mind by breathing rhythmically, prāṇāyāma. The final step is to withdraw the mind from the senses that monitor the external world and turn it toward the object of one’s concentration (BG VI:12).

*Meditation—the Method*

Meditation needs something to focus on. It can be the manifestation of Divinity in religious symbol, in a human form, or in nature, such as a snow-covered mountain, a serene lake in moonlight, or a colorful horizon at sunrise or sunset. The focus can also be holy words or syllables that are intoned as *mantras* and rhythmically repeated—the repetitions can be audible, inaudible (lips move but no sound is uttered), or mental (contemplation on the meaning of the *mantra*).

In the state of deep meditation the mind is completely detached from the outgoing senses and is fully submerged in the indwelling Divine Spirit, which in full glory is reflected in the mind only when it is totally free of all disturbances. When the mind loses all sense of being a separate identity, it enters into samādhi, a superconscious state where one savors bliss that endures. Success in reaching this state and making it endure can be achieved with practice (BG VI:18–19 and VI:21–22).

*The Way of Devotion*

Whether one follows the path of knowledge, or unselfish work, or meditation, the spiritual journey is difficult—it is like crossing mountain ranges by driving a car over a zigzagging road with numerous curves and many ups and downs.

But if one is impatient to complete the journey, there is another way. In this analogy there is a shortcut, a tunnel that cuts through the base of the mountain. In the spiritual journey this shortcut is called the Way of Devotion. Before one enters this tunnel the wayfarer must have faith that there will be light at its end. This way is for those who have emotional temperaments suitable for developing intense love and deep yearning (BG VIII:22; IX:31 and IX:34).

*Love and Devotion*

The spiritualized mind, also known as the pure heart, is the seat of Divine emotions. Spiritual seekers of emotional temperament adore Divinity and seek heart unity with their chosen Divine ideal. Only a devotee with a pure heart can achieve it. Unconditional love is a potent purifier of the heart’s emotions because it washes away the desire for trivial and transient objects.
Emotional devotees water the plant of devotion with tears of love. In true love, every act of the devotee becomes an act of worship (BG IX:26).

*The Merging of the Ways*

When one sees the entire universe as pervaded by the single Universal Spirit, one contemplates, marvels, and falls in love with its amazing glory. This love eventually turns into deep devotion and an intense yearning for direct knowledge of the Supreme Reality.

Moved by the intensity of one’s devotion, one’s chosen ideal will at last grant one a direct experience of the Supreme Reality, which is likewise the Supreme Truth. Having experienced that Truth oneself, all doubts are dispelled. This is how the flower of devotion evolves into the fruit of knowledge. When the paths of knowledge and devotion come together, they intermingle and strengthen each other. True devotion merges with true knowledge. Actually, one cannot truly know anything that one does not truly love (BG X:10–11).

*The Power of Maya*

Imagine a child playing by the side of a pond that is covered by algae. He pushes the algae aside to see the water beneath it. As soon as he glimpses the water, a puff of wind covers the water with algae again. He repeats his act again and again with the same result. Finally he tires of the game and turns away. The spiritual aspirant who wants to climb to the top of the mountain of self-realization without help will have a similar experience.

The truth of the matter is that one’s own efforts are not sufficient to keep the mind in a steady state. Work without attachment to results can protect the mind from sensory distractions, but the imagined desires will still arise in the mind and disturb its tranquility. Even these imagined desires however, subside when the mind tastes the Divine bliss.

One seems to be caught in a vicious circle—without the Divine nectar, minds do not become completely pure, and without completely purified minds, the reservoir of Divine nectar is inaccessible. One waits, hoping that at some point success will be attained (BG VII:14).

*Overcoming Hurdles*

Self-effort is not enough to overcome all the hurdles that arise in the spiritual journey. Who would dare to leap across deep chasms, wade through rushing torrents, and climb across razor-sharp cliffs without help from others?

Like fast-moving clouds covering the sun, agitations of the mind are always ready to disturb the intellect. Delusions of the mind cannot be completely overcome by self-effort. The only way to overcome those delusions is to seek refuge in the Supreme Spirit with unyielding faith. It is important not to let one’s pride and egotism bar one from the total surrender to the Supreme (BG XVIII:58 and XVIII: 66).
Self-Surrender and Divine Grace

A camel eats thorny brambles and its mouth bleeds. This does not keep him away from those brambles because the camel cannot control its nature. Bound by their nature, human beings likewise suffer innumerable sorrows, and no matter how hard they try, they are unable to free themselves from the shackles of the world. The only way out is to seek Divine help and surrender oneself to its ministrations (BG XVIII:62).

Arriving at the Destination

Spiritual life is about the spiritualizing of knowledge, love, and work. It proceeds through human effort supported by Divine grace. As a familiar Hindu adage has it, the winds of God’s love are constantly blowing, but one must raise one’s sail. Still, the question remains: to reach what destination?

Destinations are the termini of journeys that have starting points. Physicists think that the universe began with the Big Bang, but what caused that Bang? Mystics say that it was God, the heart that beats in the body of the universe. In “East Coker,” T. S. Eliot notes that “our end is in our beginning,” and sages in India coined a composite word to describe the end that is also the beginning, sat-chit-ānanda: Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss. It is important to keep in mind that these are not three things; they are three attributes of the single Reality. And thus the conclusion of this journey through the Bhagavad Gītā is Truth, Consciousness, and Bliss (BG XVIII:65).
The Bhagavad Gītā is one of the most studied and most translated texts in the history of world literature. Emerging from post-Vedic India, it has made its mark as a standard, almost universal work of the Hindu tradition. It also has intrigued and eluded interpreters outside India for over two centuries. Some are fascinated by its linguistic contribution; others are interested in sorting out the many philosophical and religious implications of the text. Part of the appeal of the Gītā, both at home in India and abroad, lies in its multivalent quality: it explicitly advances numerous teachings, some of them seemingly contradictory, and has been used in support of various others that have arisen since its composition. As Gerald Larson has noted, “The Gītā has been construed in all sorts of interpretive modalities, most of which can be argued to be more or less authentic and legitimate.” In this brief introduction, a sketch of the story line is given, followed by an assessment of how the many possible construals of the text in fact reflect the uniquely Hindu worldview that tolerates and in some cases requires holding together multiple positions simultaneously.

The Bhagavad Gītā tells a story of great crisis, a crisis that is solved through the interaction between Arjuna, a Pāṇḍava warrior hesitating before battle, and Krishna, his charioteer and teacher. The Gītā is included in the sixth book (Bhīṣmaparvan) of the Mahābhārata and documents one tiny event in a gargantuan epic tale. The main plot of the larger work involves a dispute between cousins over rulership of the Kurukṣetra kingdom in north central India. The kingdom had been lost by five brothers, the Pāṇḍavas, during a dice game and ceded to their cousins, the hundred sons of the blind king Dhṛtarāṣṭra. By prearranged agreement, the latter group was due to give back rulership to the five Pāṇḍava brothers, but refused to abide by the contract. The Pāṇḍavas are forced to wage war in order to regain their rightful territory. However, these two sets of cousins were raised together and shared the same teachers. The prospect of war between the two camps is especially repugnant because so many good friends and close relatives must be killed. Thus, we arrive at the opening of the Bhagavad Gītā, the moment just before the battle begins. Arjuna is thrust into crisis; he must face the anguish of killing his relatives and friends or allow himself to be killed.

The text begins with the blind king Dhṛtarāṣṭra asking his minister Saṃjaya to tell him what is happening on the field of the Kuruś, the battlefield. Saṃjaya proceeds to list the principal warriors on the field and then directs his focus to Arjuna and his
charioteer Krishna. Arjuna asks Krishna to place the chariot in the center of the field and then sees arrayed before him his teachers, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, and friends. The sight overwhelms him; it is clear that all will be slain. Thinking that if all is destroyed then kingdom and pleasure would be of no use, he throws down his bow, refusing to fight, his mind overcome with grief. In the chapters that follow, Krishna takes Arjuna on a philosophical journey, bringing into question Arjuna’s attachment to both himself and others. The dialogue builds until Arjuna receives from Krishna a vision of totality that liberates him from his prior self-preoccupied identity. This experience prompts Arjuna to seek new answers from Krishna, answers that explain how to live with an understanding in which action becomes purposeful and liberating.

How does Krishna exact the transformation of Arjuna from a man filled with doubt to a man of great knowledge and resolve? He begins in chapter 2 by explaining the Yoga of Knowledge, recounting to Arjuna the insights to be gained from Śāṅkhya philosophy. He reminds him that although contact with the objects of sense produces pleasure and pain, both are not lasting (II:14). He speaks of that which is beyond all change: weapons do not cut it; fire does not burn it; water does not wet it; winds do not dry it (II:23). He tells Arjuna that as a warrior his duty is to fight. If he wins, he gains the earth, if he loses, he gains heaven (II:37). Krishna urges Arjuna to ready himself for battle, to regard pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and failure as the same. Only when Arjuna has renounced interest in the fruits of his action can he find true peace.

These sage words, however, are not enough to prompt Arjuna into action. As will happen again and again over several more chapters, Arjuna asserts to Krishna that this teaching is not enough, that his mind is still confused, that he needs to hear a better path. Although the reasons provided by Krishna are certainly sufficient for Arjuna to move into battle, they remain empty theories; Arjuna is unable to act. So Krishna persists. In the third chapter, the Yoga of Action, Arjuna is advised to perform the action that has to be done, staying always free from attachment (III:19). Krishna points out that it was by action alone that Jñāna, the philosopher-king, attained perfection and tells Arjuna that he should act, attending to the holding together of the world (loka-samgraha) (III:20). Bringing to mind the Śāṅkhya system, he reiterates that actions are done by the guṇas of prakṛti alone; it is only the deluded one who thinks “I am the doer” (III:27). By knowing that all this is only the guṇas, one becomes free from attachment. When asked by Arjuna why a man is impelled to do evil, Krishna responds that desire and anger, born of passion (rajas), conceal true knowledge and fuel the senses. Only by subduing the senses and controlling the mind can desire be overcome.

In a discourse on the Yoga of Renunciation of Action in Knowledge in the fourth chapter, Krishna provides yet another teaching. He explains that one must see action in inaction and inaction in action; only then can one be free of compulsive desire. This is accomplished by renouncing the fruit of action (karma-phala-asaṅga), leading to constant satisfaction and independence. Such a one is said to do nothing, even though engaged in action (IV:20). Sacrifice is cited as the model for proper action; the sacrifice of knowledge (jñāna-yajña) is said to bring the completion of all action (IV:33). In the fifth chapter, the Yoga of Renunciation, Krishna further articulates
the need for the relinquishment of attachment, saying that the wise ones see a cow, an elephant, a dog, an outcaste, and even a learned and wise Brahmin as the same (V:18). He describes the sage intent on release as one whose senses, mind, and intelligence are controlled, who has overcome desire, fear, and anger; such a one is forever liberated (V:28). The means to achieve this are described in yet another teaching, the Yoga of Meditation. To gain yoga, Krishna advises “Abandoning those desires whose origins lie in one’s intention, all of them without exception, and completely restraining the multitude of senses with the mind; little by little he should come to rest, with the intelligence firmly grasped. His mind having been fixed in the self, he should not think of anything” (VI:24–25). Krishna assures Arjuna that even a small amount of practice will be beneficial.

As before, none of these teachings resolves Arjuna’s crisis. Hence, Krishna continues. In the next four chapters, Krishna tells Arjuna of the highest self, attainable through Krishna himself. In the Yoga of Knowledge and Discrimination, Krishna distinguishes between the lower prakṛtī, which is the world of the senses and the mind, and the higher prakṛtī, from which all life emerges. Both are said to have their origin in Krishna, who is the “seed of all beings.” He declares that even those who sacrifice to lesser gods in fact sacrifice to Krishna, but their fruit is of little consequence. “To the gods the god-worshipping go; My worshippers go surely to me” (VII:23). In the Yoga of Imperishable Brahman, Krishna explains purusā as the support of things, the vision to be attained, “within which all beings stand, by which all this universe is pervaded” (VIII:22). In knowing this, all fruits of action are transcended and peace is attained. In the Yoga of Royal Knowledge and of Royal Mystery, the ninth chapter, Krishna speaks of the prakṛtī that he issues forth. Those who see the higher prakṛtī through sacrifice and devotion make their offerings to Krishna: he is witness, the final shelter; the origin, dissolution, and foundation; immortality; existence and nonexistence; the enjoyer of all sacrifices. In chapter 10, the Yoga of Manifestation, Krishna explains the nature of his compassion: by appearing as so many gods, sages, trees, horses, weapons, demons, mantras, warriors, rivers, victories, Vedic hymns, and more, he has proven to be the manifestation of all that is worthy of worship, all that inspires ascension to the true self. At the end, he declares, “I support this entire universe constantly with a single fraction of Myself” (X:42).

Finally, after so much preparation and so many discourses, Arjuna asks Krishna in chapter 11 to reveal the form that is described as Lord and Highest Self. He asks for a direct experience, a showing (dārśana): “If Thou thinkest it possible for me to see this, O Lord, Prince of Yoga, then to me cause to be seen Thyself, the Imperishable” (XI:4). In response, Krishna reveals to Arjuna the vision that he has requested. “If there should be in the sky a thousand suns risen all at once, such splendor would be of the splendor of that Great Being” (XI:12). The vision is without beginning or end; all worlds are pervaded by it. The gods stand in amazement, singing praise. Into Krishna’s many mouths, studded with terrible tusks “glowing like the fires of universal destruction,” are cast all the players on the battlefield: the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the sage Bhīṣma, the teacher Droṇa, and all the others. Having revealed what time will bring, Krishna tells Arjuna to stand up, to conquer his enemies. “By Me these have already been struck down; be the mere instrument” (XI:33). Overwhelmed
by Krishna’s powers, Arjuna praises him as the first of gods, the primal purusa, the knower and what is to be known. After expressing homage and obeisance, he asks Krishna to return to his human form, and the dialogue once more resumes, but with a difference.

Arjuna has now had direct experience of what has been so lavishly praised and described by Krishna. The true self is no longer a theoretical abstraction but has been revealed in embodied form. From chapters 12 through 18, Arjuna no longer implores Krishna for definite answers about what he should or should not do. Rather than focusing on his own selfish concerns, Arjuna asks for further explanations on the nature of the devotion by which he has been given his vision. He asks Krishna to talk more about the difference between purusa, the knower of the field, and prakrti, the field of change. He asks more about the three gunas and how they function within prakrti; he finds out how the yogins see the highest self through the eye of wisdom. Krishna elucidates the distinction between liberating and binding conditions and then, in the concluding chapter, explains the Yoga of Freedom by Renunciation. The contents of the chapter reflect concerns that Krishna has addressed consistently since the second chapter: sacrifice of the fruits of action, the distinctions of the gunas, the cultivation of equanimity, the importance of nondoership.

The pivotal verse of the last chapter, indicating that Krishna’s task as teacher has been completed, is as follows: “Thus to thee by Me has been expounded the knowledge that is more secret than secret. Having reflected on this fully, do as thou desirest” (XVIII:63). Until this point, even after receiving the vision of totality, Arjuna has regarded Krishna as his teacher and relied utterly on him for guidance and instruction. Krishna’s command “Do as thou desirest!” signals that Arjuna’s knowledge has now been fully embodied, that he has reached the point where he can in full conscience act without hesitation. His decisions become his own. Arjuna’s final statement, notable for its first resolve in contrast to his lack of nerve in the first chapter, is this: “Delusion is lost and wisdom gained, through Thy grace, by me, Unchanging One. I stand with doubt dispelled. I shall do as Thy command” (XVIII:73). Arjuna, at the conclusion of the Gita, is free to act.

In our brief overview of the Bhagavad Gita, we have encountered a multiplicity of teaching. Arjuna stated his anguish in chapter 1 and, for the next nine chapters, received plausible advice from Krishna. Considered separately, it might even seem that any one of the nine yogas prescribed in those chapters by Krishna would be sufficient for Arjuna to solve his dilemma. However, all these yogas as well as everything else are ultimately negated by the vision of the True Self provided in chapter 11. In the final chapters, these teachings, and in fact the world itself, are resurrected in service of an enlightened way of detached action.

The unfolding of the Gita may be summarized in four movements: the crisis of Arjuna in chapter 1, his instruction by Krishna in chapters 2 through 10, the revelation of chapter 11, and then continued instruction in chapters 12 through 18. It might be supposed that the enlightenment experience of chapter 11 would be for Arjuna an eschatological event, that his vision of Krishna as Lord would utterly transform his relationship with the world, thus putting an end to any need for further teaching. But this is simply not the case: the vision is followed by further affirmation of what
Krishna has taught, a sequence of chapters “which show the ‘rehabilitation’ process of a man who has seen the emptiness beyond his own old structures of meaning and does not know yet how to proceed in the interpretation of the new” (de Nicolás, 273). Furthermore, if we look at the larger story of Arjuna as it unfolds in the great epic, even the autonomy that Arjuna achieves in chapter 18 does not help him when he attempts to enter heaven; the lessons of the Gītā must be repeated again and again, as new circumstances, new worlds, arise and fall.

Herein lies one of the special contributions of the Bhagavad Gītā: the religious vision, like the Hindu conception of life itself, is a forever repeating experience. The instruction Arjuna received before his enlightening vision remains essential following this experience, and is also deemed helpful for all who heed it. This is illustrated in the final verse of the text, in which Saṃjaya poetically proclaims: “Wherever there is Krishna, Lord of Yoga, wherever there is the Son of Prthū, the archer (Arjuna), there, there will surely be splendor, victory, wealth, and righteousness; this is my thought” (XVIII:78).

Theologically, the approach presented in the Gītā differs from generally accepted notions about mokṣa as requiring the renunciation of the world and of samādhi as trance-like obliteration of all things and thoughts. The Gītā presents a view of religious practice at variance with the classical tradition as found in the Dharmaśāstra, a view that Madeleine Biardeau attributes to a more open conception of liberation characteristic of the later sections of the Mahābhārata. She writes that this new approach gave every svadharma (one’s own duty) religious content and an access to ultimate salvation. The Brahmanic model was not lost sight of, but was generalized so as to fit all other categories of Hindu society, including Sudras, women, and all impure castes. Once the kṣatriya gained access to salvation through his . . . activities, the generalization became easy. . . . Nothing was outside the realm of ultimate values, though at the same time the status of the Brahmans remains unimpaired.(77)

As Biardeau points out, it is no longer one path, the path leading from studentship to householding to renunciation to blessedness that enables one to lead a full religious life. In the model presented by the Bhagavad Gītā, every aspect of life is in fact a way of salvation. Krishna tells Arjuna of innumerable ways to achieve peace of mind, to resolve his dilemma, and it is clear that the answers are provided not only for Arjuna but are paradigmatic for people of virtually any walk of life. The Gītā becomes a text appropriate to all persons of all castes or no caste; its message transcends the limits of classical Hinduism.

It is interesting to note that just as Krishna presented many perspectives to Arjuna, so have many scholars, both traditional and modern, held many perspectives on the Bhagavad Gītā. Robert N. Minor, whose own position is that “the Gītā proclaims as its highest message the lordship of Kṛṣṇa and the highest response of the human being to that lordship is devotion, bhakti” (xvi), notes several different usages of the text. For Śaṅkara (AD 788–820), the message is the “end of the world and its accompanying activity.” Madhusudana and Venkatanātha, while not rejecting Śaṅkara’s view, place more emphasis on devotion, as does Jñāneśvara, the Marathi commentator. Bhaskara
takes issue with Śaṅkara’s interpretation, asserting that the world is a real aspect of Brahman. Rāmānuja used the Gītā in support of his position that “the true self is not divine and not one with the other selves.” Nimbārka, a twelfth-century thinker, prompted interpretations that see Krishna as teaching “innate nonidentity in identity.” Madhva (1238–1317), the famous dualist, “radically reinterprets the text so that it asserts an eternal and complete distinction between the Supreme, the many souls, and matter and its divisions.” Minor also cites modern interpretations by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mohandas K. Gandhi, who used the text to help inspire the independence movement, and Sri Aurobindo, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and Swami Vivekananda, who took a syncretistic approach to the text (xvi–xix).

Few of the scholars cited here seem to agree on the meaning of the text, yet none of them can be said to be incorrect. It may be argued that this utter contextualization of the text causes it to fall into a fatal relativism; that the text, because it is open to so many interpretations and has been used to confirm opposing positions ranging from Śaṅkara’s monism to Madhva’s dualism, is trivial and perhaps meaningless. But how, then, could such a text survive? How can one account for or even describe a text that includes and is used to support a virtual cacophony of traditions and positions? Setting aside even the interpretations of the aforementioned later commentators, how can the explicitly nontheistic Sāmkhya appear alongside with the thoroughly theistic bhakti approach also taught by Krishna?

Max Mueller addressed a similar issue when trying to cope with the multiplicity of gods in the Rg Veda and invented a term to describe it:

To identify Indra, Agni, and Varuna is one thing, it is syncretism; to address either Indra or Agni or Varuna, as for the time being the only god in existence with an entire forgetfulness of all other gods, is quite another; it was this phase, so fully developed in the hymns of the Veda which I wished to mark definitely by a name of its own, calling it henotheism. (40)

The Vedic method which extols different gods within the same text is similar to that employed in the Bhagavad Gītā, in which each time Arjuna asks Krishna for one truth, again and again Krishna offers Arjuna yet another perspective, another chapter, another yoga. Each view, whether that of a god being sacrificed to or a yogic discipline being practiced, is given life as long as it proves effective. Multiplicity is the rule, with one god, one perspective gaining and holding ascendancy as long as it, he, or she proves efficacious. That one is then swept from its elevated position as new situations, new questions emerge: and yet, if pressed, a Hindu will always admit, of course, Indra is best; of course, Agni is best; of course, Varuna is best; of course, Karma Yoga is best; of course, Bhakti Yoga is best.

Paul Hacker has referred to the accommodation of multiple teachings within one tradition as “inclusivism.” Antonio T. de Nicolás has explained this phenomenon philosophically as

a systematic and methodic effort to save rationality in its plural manifestations through an activity of embodiment that emancipates man from any form of
identification, allowing him the freedom to act efficiently in any one identifiable field in the social fabric. (164)

Just as the many gods of the Vedas are effective in different situations, so the many yogas are prescribed in the Gītā without compromising or subordinating one to another. Mutual paths are allowed to exist in complementarity.

In a sense, the Gītā is composed in the spirit of the Jaina approach to truth. The Jainas assert that every statement is an utterance of partial truth; all postulation is rendered senseless by the ultimate postulate that no words are ever totally adequate to experience (avaktavya eva). Similarly, Krishna painstakingly guides Arjuna through many yogas, yet, the entire problematic is obliterated when Krishna reveals his true form to Arjuna. All the words, all the individual personalities and collective armies are swallowed up by the gaping mouth of Krishna, the origin and dissolution of all things. The net result is that all possibilities are present for Arjuna when he gains the knowledge that all are impermanent.

The Bhagavad Gītā sets forth a multiplicity of possible paths. A panoply of perspectives is offered to the reader in a nonjudgmental way; the many positions proposed by Krishna do not necessarily compete with one another but rather complete one another. If one needs to act, one uses Karma Yoga; if one needs to meditate, one uses Dhyāna Yoga. This “henocretic” text is written with a gentle tolerance, allowing various practices and positions to be pursued.

In a manner true to the construction of the text itself, the present rendition by Winthrop Sargeant does the least violence to the original of all the translations of the Gītā with which I am familiar. He shows the reader the possibilities offered by the text, setting out in menu form variant English-language samplings for each of the Sanskrit terms. His work makes a unique contribution, inviting the reader to sample the translation he serves up, but also inviting the reader to experiment with creating his or her own delicacy.

USER’S GUIDE FOR THE WORD-BY-WORD ANALYSIS OF THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

Reaching into another culture, whether the ancient phase of one’s own people or the heritage of ancestors other than one’s own, requires a spirit of adventure and inquiry. Texts, whether the Bible or the Confucian Analects or the Bhagavad Gītā, often serve as the portal or entry point for engaging and comprehending a worldview. However, any attempt to understand a text carries the risk of missing the mark. To know the meanings of the words of any book does not guarantee understanding of authorial intent or how others following the author have interpreted the text. As we reach back in history the context can easily shift. For religious texts even one simple turn of phrase can generate multiple redactions.

The Bhagavad Gītā, as noted in the translator’s preface to this book, has given rise to nearly countless interpretations, from A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada’s assertion of the primacy of Lord Krishna rooted in the Dvaita theology of Madhva to Antonio T.
de Nicolás’s perspectival reading of the text based on the existential insights of Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset. For Mahatma Gandhi, the text designed to gird the warrior Arjuna for battle became an inspiration for India’s nonviolent revolution. Reader, take your place, perhaps take sides, and take heart that this book can serve many people in many ways.

Sargeant situates the place of the Gītā within the context of Sanskrit literary history, indicating its use of participles, finite conjugated verbs, rules of euphonic or sound combination (*samadhī*), and the complex systems of noun endings (declensions) and compounds (pages 3–8). In the very first edition of this book, Sargeant provided a simple word equivalent for each Sanskrit term with some identification of the grammatical part of speech. In the editions of 1984 and 1994, I provided a deeper analysis of each term, locating its verbal root origin where possible. I also expanded the range of possible meanings for each word, following a convention also observed in translating Patañjali’s *Yoga Sūtra* (see my *Yoga and the Luminous*, 143–215). This approach gives the reader the toolbox of approaches available to the translator and provides an opportunity for the reader to develop his or her own rendering of the text within a range of reasonable possibilities.

Each translator brings a distinct methodology to the task. One of my favorite translations of the Bhagavad Gītā is perhaps also the most inscrutable. Franklin Edgerton not only translates every single term, including the now widely accepted and understood terms *karma* and *dharma*, but he also retained Sanskrit word order, stretching the English language into amazing contortions that rival the most advanced *yoga* poses. Christopher Isherwood and Swami Prabhavananda alternate between prose and verse renderings, utterly at variance with the original cadence and word order. George Thompson surmises that the text was primarily recited or sung and chooses a simplified word flow that sounds melodious and clear in the English language. My own training in classical *yoga* included the memorization of the 1943 Gita Press translation of the second chapter of the Gītā, replete with such neologisms as “car-warriors” for what Thompson renders “great chariot warriors” (35) and “self-controlled practicant” for what Patton renders as “that person whose thought is placid” (65). In an attempt to capture a hint of the cadence of the original *slokā* construction, a lilting, symmetrical play of four sets of eight syllables in each verse, Laurie Patton stretches each verse into eight lines.

As one example of choices made by three translators, we will consider verse II:49. This verse includes a key technical term employed in the original, *buddhi-yoga*, indicating the importance of the first emanation of *prakṛti* (the creative matrix), which is the *buddhi*. *Buddhi*, related to the word Buddha or Awakened One, is often translated as the “intellect.” In Sāṅkhya philosophy, the *buddhi* also carries the residues of all past *karma* in the form of enduring inclinations or the state of being known as the *bhāvās*. It determines the state or mood into which one awakens. In Sāṅkhya, as in the second chapter of the Gītā, the modality of knowledge (*jñāna*) within the *buddhi* guarantees freedom.

Sargeant renders this verse:

> Action is inferior by far
> To the Yoga of intuitive determination,
Conqueror of Wealth (Arjuna). 
Seek refuge in intuitive determination!
Despicable are those whose motives 
are based on the fruit of action.

Sargeant attempts to retain vestiges of the sloka form by dividing the verse into four lines. He also retains the epithet for Arjuna while also making clear to the reader that Krishna is addressing Arjuna, who has many nicknames.

Thompson does not attempt to retain the versification in a literal sense, but divides his translation into three discrete sentences:

Arjuna, action is far inferior to the yoga of insight. Seek refuge in insight. Those whose goal is the fruits of their actions wind up miserable.

Thompson, for the sake of clarity, eliminates all of Arjuna’s variant names and makes a very different word choice for the term buddhi.

Patton agrees with the usage of the term insight for buddhi and retains the epithet for Arjuna. She stretches out the versification:

Winner of Wealth, 
action is far inferior 
to the yoga of insight. 
Look for refuge 
in insight; 
for those who are 
motivated by fruits 
are to be pitied.

Her choice of the term pitied stays closer to the original than either despicable or miserable. From all three translations, we get the sense that thinking or reflection is better than acting on one’s first impulse for the sake of greed or desire or selfishness.

If we turn to the Sanskrit analysis, the original grouping of the terms can be clearly discerned:

düreṇa hyavaram karma  
buddhiyogād dhanamjaya  
buddhau saranam anviccha  
krpanah phalahetavaḥ

As previously noted, the buddhi holds the history of one’s past actions. Without using insight or intuitive determination, one might plunge headlong into the performance of action motivated solely by yearning for its fruits (phalahetu) rather than taking into account the larger picture. By seeing the prominence of the term buddhi at the start of the second and third lines, and by feeling the impact of the imperative verbs “seek! wish for! desire!” at the end of the second line, scrutiny of the Sanskrit can help deepen the understanding
of the reader. Additionally, the reader can see the framing of ideas contained within the verse. The opening and closing lines refer to the problem to be overcome: attachment to the fruits of action. The middle two lines exhort the reader to recognize the solution: applying and taking refuge in a disciplined (yoga) intellect (buddhi).

Through a careful and creative scanning of the Sanskrit terms provided by Sargeant, variants of key terms such as yoga, karma, and jñāna will be easily discerned. These include yoked (yukta), origin or cause of action (kāraṇam), and knower (jña). The lilt, appeal, and genius of the Gītā’s composer lie in the gentle word play of the text. By examining the text repeatedly at a leisurely pace, one can gain a friendly familiarity with this classic of world religious literature.

Mahatma Gandhi, according to his secretary Narayan Desai, committed to memory and recited daily the last nineteen verses of the second chapter, using them as a companion in his quest for social justice (lecture presented at Loyola Marymount University, October 9, 2008). Similarly, one might develop a favorite section of the text for deeper study and reflection.

To fully utilize the tools set forth in this edition, the reader might want to apply the following steps:

1. Sound out the words from the transliterated Sanskrit, following the pronunciation guide on pages 5–8.
2. Make note of words that seem familiar, such as prakṛti, puruṣa, duḥkha, karma, dharma, yoga, jñāna, and so forth.
3. Scan the English paraphrase directly beneath the Sanskrit text, taking notice of words that seem important or intriguing. The paraphrase follows the Sanskrit word order.
4. Consult the detailed assessment in the right-hand column for words of interest. Over the course of several verses, some of the words will repeat and become familiar.
5. Read with greater understanding the Sargeant translation. Pay attention to his final word choice in light of various options. For instance, the word vega in VI:23 can be translated as “agitation, impetus, shock, momentum, onset, orgasm.” Sargeant chooses the word agitation for his translation. Patton chooses shock. The Gita Press version selects the word urges. De Nicolás translates vega as force, while van Buitenen uses driving force. Which do you prefer?
6. Go a step further. Can you find the word vega in your own experience? Which emotion do you find lying behind or associated with desire and anger? Use this technique with other passages.
7. Find a verse or set of verses that hold your interest or attention. Scan the words as suggested here. Compare Sargeant’s translation with one or two others. Use the word analysis section in Sargeant’s translation to understand the word choices made by the other translator(s). Decide upon your own preference.
8. Develop a collection of verses from the Bhagavad Gītā that you find particularly important. Use the ample white space on each page to copy alternate translations and to develop your own translation and commentary.
9. Search out a study group on the Bhagavad Gītā. Consider enrolling in a Sanskrit language class at a nearby college, university, or yoga center.

Winthrop Sargeant (1903–1986) served for many decades as the premier music writer for The New Yorker. His personal fascination with Indian philosophy, not related in any way to his livelihood, resulted in this labor of love. Sargeant’s Gītā was created by a nonspecialist for all persons interested in this classic book. Tens of thousands of people throughout the world have benefited from his careful rendering and analysis of the text. Through his efforts, the elite and arcane world of complex Sanskrit grammar has been made accessible to a wide audience. A classic work of world literature has found new expression, with tools to facilitate greater understanding. By reaching deeply into this text, we extend ourselves back through history into an appreciation of the path trod by our civilizational ancestors in India and perhaps into a deeper sense of self-understanding.

It has been an honor working with this edition of the book. My sole contribution has been editing the grammatical analysis for consistency and completeness; any errors or omissions that occur are my own.

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WORKS CITED


THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ
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Why add one more to the numerous English translations of the Bhagavad Gîtā? It is said to have already been translated at least two hundred times, in both poetic and prose forms. My excuse is that, though many fine translations exist, none that I know of presents the original Sanskrit with an interlinear word-for-word arrangement that permits the reader to learn the sound as well as the meaning of each word. The arrangement also makes it possible for the reader to see the metrical formation of the poem’s stanzas, and their grammatical structure. It should also enable the studious reader to savor something of the original language, which is elegant and extremely concise. As an added aid, a running vocabulary is provided, referring to the Sanskrit words on each page, along with their grammatical forms. Below each stanza will be found a readable English translation which I hope will give greater coherence to what is often awkwardly expressed in the literal word-for-word interlinear translation. The line of transliteration is designed to show the reader how the words are pronounced, so that, if he desires, he can appreciate the sound of the original language. In making the readable translation that appears at the bottom of each page, my object has been to stick as closely as possible to literal meaning rather than to attempt a masterpiece of English prose. Such grand poetic concepts as appear in the translation are inherent in the poem. I have added nothing, and what I have striven for is simple clarity along with a reproduction of something of the force and economy of the original.

I have consulted numerous previous translations, among them those of Franklin Edgerton, S. Radhakrishnan, Eliot Deutsch, Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, and Swami Chidbhavananda, Juan Mascaro and P. Lal. I have found them all worth reading, each, as I suppose is inevitable, showing a slightly different approach. To a poem such as this, many approaches are possible, and all are worth considering. I have tried in the vocabularies to indicate a considerable variety of possible meaning. In writing the introductory chapters on language, cosmology and psychology, and the setting of the poem as the principal didactic jewel of the great Hindu epic, the Mahābhārata, I have had recourse to numerous sources—Pratap Chandra Roy’s translation of the Epic, Chakravarti Narasimhan’s “The Mahābhārata,” C. Rajagopalachari’s condensed version, the account given under various headings in Benjamin Walker’s “The Hindu World,” and in connection with other matters I have consulted the admirable prefaces to Swami Nikhilananda’s “The Upanishads” as well as his translations of these works, Surendranath Dasgupta’s “History of Indian Philosophy,” Sukumari Bhattacharji’s “The Indian Theogony,” Ralph T. H. Griffith’s translation of the Rg Veda, Dr. J. A. B. van Buiten’s translation of Rāmānuja’s commentary on the Bhagavad Gîtā, as well as the recently published first volume of his translation of the Mahābhārata (University of Chicago Press) and countless works on Hindu religion and philosophy that I have read in the past, along with such
useful staples of Sanskrit study as Whitney's Sanskrit Grammar, the Oxford Sanskrit Dictionary edited by Monier-Williams, and the abridged version of Böhtlingk and Roth's St. Petersburg Lexicon.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. J. A. B. van Buitenen, of the University of Chicago, who kindly offered to read the manuscript before publication, who made innumerable small corrections and many suggestions, nearly all of which I have followed, and who read the proofs. I would also like to express belated gratitude to the late Sarat Lahiri, a Bihari Brāhman, resident in New York, from whom I learned my first Sanskrit many years ago. I am also grateful to Alice Morris for much patient copying and to my old friend Louis Biancolli for encouragement.

As to my own qualifications, though I am known primarily as a magazine writer and music critic, my interest in the Sanskrit language has been of long duration, and I have spent a considerable amount of time in India as a journalist. As a Sanskrit scholar I am largely self taught, but am certainly competent for the task in hand. Moreover, the present translation has been read and approved by the highest authority. I have been acquainted for many years with the Bhagavad Gitā in translation, and have found many translations somewhat unsatisfactory because of deviations in meaning, and because few of them give any idea of the poem's structure, either metrical or grammatic. My aim has been to fill the gap by relating each word to the original, giving a grammatical commentary and a vocabulary from which various alternative meanings for each word may be picked – thus making it possible for the reader to make his own translation if he disagrees with mine. In the case of stanzas which are not entirely clear in translation, I have appended explanatory footnotes, many of them quoted from the commentary of Rāmānuja, the great eleventh-century south Indian religious philosopher, as translated by J. A. B. van Buitenen, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, Patna, Varanasi, 1968. I have translated the poem afresh, and I know many parts of it by heart in the original language. The work has been a labor of love. If it in any way clarifies the poem to the reader, or interests him in the language in which it was originally written, my aim will have been realized. In a project as complex as this one, a few errors are apt to occur, and for these I ask the reader's indulgence. 

Winthrop Sargeant
THE LANGUAGE OF THE
BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

Sanskrit is a euphonious and very elegant language which has been spoken by upper-caste Indians, and the Vedic Aryans before them, for a longer time than any other known tongue. It is one of the ancient Indo-European languages, with many cognates in ancient Greek and Latin as well as in practically every modern major European language except Finnish and Hungarian. It is safe to say that it was spoken before 1,600 B.C. by the Aryans, and it is still spoken by a minority of brāhmans today. It also appears continually in modern India, in proper names, names of institutions and regions, and so on; and several modern Indian languages, including Hindi and Bengali, are derived from it. It has also influenced several languages of southeast Asia including that of Indonesia. There is, to be sure, considerable difference between Vedic Sanskrit (circa 1400–300 B.C.) and the Sanskrit of later times, but this difference is not as great as is sometimes supposed. The later language tends to join prefixes to the words they modify, whereas in Vedic they are usually separated. Also, an important feature of the Vedic language was the use of aorist forms which tend to disappear in the later language. There is also, as might be expected, considerable difference in vocabulary. Epic-Purānic Sanskrit succeeded the earlier Vedic language somewhere around 500 B.C., and was itself succeeded by so-called Classical Sanskrit during the Gupta Empire and the later Princely States (circa 400–1500 A.D.). Classical Sanskrit differs from Epic-Purānic mainly in the increased use of long compound words. The written, as opposed to the spoken language dates only from about 300 B.C., and even then very little was written down. Indians have always prided themselves on their memories, which have indeed been phenomenal when one considers that the whole literature of the Vedas, the Epics, the Upanishads, the Purāṇas, and much other material has been handed down by word of mouth. The bulk of Sanskrit literature was not written down until well into the Christian era. Even today there are some brāhmans who look down upon the printed word as a method of preserving the literature, and there exists in India a tremendously complicated method of mnemonics by which lengthy items of literature can be memorized. It is interesting to note that, owing to the detailed researches of Panini (350–250 B.C.?) and other great Hindu grammarians – researches that were not only linguistic but also concerned lingual and laryngeal anatomy – Sanskrit is the only ancient language the exact pronunciation of which is known today.

The Bhagavad Gītā is conceived in Epic-Purānic Sanskrit, the language of the Epics, Purāṇas and Upanishads, and it was probably first written down in the early centuries of the Christian era though like many other works which are embodied in written form, it undoubtedly dates from an earlier word-of-mouth version. Epic-Purānic Sanskrit is in many ways the simplest form of the language. An occasional aorist remains (there are eight or ten of them in the Bhagavad Gītā) and there is an occasional use of the prohibitive “mā” in place of the “na”
of Classical Sanskrit. But the long compounds of Classical Sanskrit have not yet appeared. The Bhagavad Gita, in its written form at any rate, is generally thought to date from the second or third century A.D., being considered a later interpolation in the long Epic, the Mahābhārata, most of which describes an India of an earlier period, possibly 800 B.C.

Sanskrit being one of the Indo-European group of languages, its general formation resembles that of Ancient Greek and Latin, being slightly more complex than that of the former and much more complex than that of the latter. Its verbal forms are derived from roots which also give birth to nouns and adjectives. Certain Sanskrit participial forms, such as the present participle in "ant" can still be found in French (German "end," English "ing"). The past passive participle ending "ta" survives in modern Italian, and there are fascinating resemblances among the personal pronouns to the "we" (vayam), "you" (yītīyam) and "us" (asmān) of modern English, as well as prominent cognates to German such as the verb √vēy which is close to "werden," and means "to exist," or "to become" among other things. There is also a marked similarity of the Sanskrit verbs √bhū and √as, both of which mean "be," and "is." Sanskrit verbs have a first person, second person and third person (singular and plural) similar in construction to Latin, with elements of the same m (o); s, t, mas (mus), tas (tus), nt endings that go with these persons in Latin. Sanskrit, however, has a dual form for both verbs and nouns (we two, you two, they two), and its verbs have two distinct conjugation systems, the active, or parasmāipada, and the middle, or ātmanepada, the former having our normal active meaning and the latter sometimes, but not always, having a more passive or reflexive character. In the simpler areas of conjugation the parasmāipada forms end in i and the ātmanepada forms in e.

Nouns in Sanskrit are declined as they are in Latin, except that Sanskrit has one more case. The cases in Sanskrit are as follows:

Nominative, used for the subject of a sentence.
Accusative, used for the direct object and also in the dative sense of "to."
Instrumental, used where English would use "by," "with," or "by means of."
Dative, used in the sense of "for," "to," or "toward."
Ablative, used in the senses of "of" and "from."
Genitive, used for the most part in the same sense of "of" as the ablative (in many words the ablative and genitive are identical).
Locative, used in the senses of "in" or "on," or occasionally "to," "toward," or "among."
Vocative, used as in Latin in direct address ("O Vishnu," etc.).

There are three genders of nouns and adjectives – masculine, feminine and neuter.

In the vocabularies of the following translation, the abbreviations nom., acc., inst., abl., gen., loc., and voc. are used to designate the above described cases, and sg. and pl. are used for singular and plural. In the matter of verbs, the root is given with the preceding sign √, and 1st sg., 2nd sg., etc., mean first person singular, second person singular and so on. Participial forms are indicated. The
gerund form ending in “ya” or “tvā” is very common, having the approximate meaning of the English present participle in “ing,” or of “having done,” “having seen,” etc. There is a gerundive form in “ya” indicating future action, “to be done,” “to be known,” etc. The infinitive ending in “tum” is standard in the Epic-Purānic language, and the perfect active participle in “tavant” or “navant” is common. There are some special verbal forms – the passive, intensive, desiderative and causative – whose applications are obvious and which are noted in the vocabularies. There are also the standard tenses for verbs – indicative, subjunctive (which does not appear in the Bhagavad Gītā except in its aorist form), the optative (usually conveying the meaning “should”), the imperative, imperfect, perfect, aorist (rare) and future; also a periphrastic future in which the nominative singular of a noun or of a nomen agentis type noun ending in  strokeLine is standard in the Epic-Purānic language, and the perfect active participle in “tavant” or “navant” is common. There are some special verbal forms – the passive, intensive, desiderative and causative – whose applications are obvious and which are noted in the vocabularies. There are also the standard tenses for verbs – indicative, subjunctive (which does not appear in the Bhagavad Gītā except in its aorist form), the optative (usually conveying the meaning “should”), the imperative, imperfect, perfect, aorist (rare) and future; also a periphrastic future in which the nominative singular of a noun or of a nomen agentis type noun ending in  strokeLine combined with the verb  strokeLine “be,” and a periphrastic perfect in which the perfect forms of the verbs  strokeLine as and  strokeLine kr (sometimes  strokeLine bhū) are used as suffixes of an accusative derivative noun stem in  strokeLine ām. For further information, I recommend any standard Sanskrit grammar. I have used Whitney’s Sanskrit Grammar (Harvard University Press; also Oxford University Press), a pioneer work which is still standard.

The Sanskrit alphabet is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ए</td>
<td>a, pronounced as in but.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऐ</td>
<td>ā, “father.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऐ</td>
<td>i, “lily or it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ि</td>
<td>ì, “police.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऐ</td>
<td>u, “push, full.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऐ</td>
<td>ŭ, “prude or crude.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऐ</td>
<td>r, “as a slightly trilled vowel r, having the sound of ir in “birth” or ur in “purpose.”” N.B. There is a long tradition involving the pronunciation ri for this vowel, and it is recommended by Monier-Williams on grounds of euphony. It is used by many Indians, and it survives in the ri of Sanskrit (Samskṛta). But the ri pronunciation has been abandoned by most present-day Sanskrit scholars in favor of a simple vowel r such as appears in many Slavonic languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऐ</td>
<td>r, “the same pronunciation, more prolonged.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऐ</td>
<td>l, “pronounced by many Indians and the English as “Iry” (as in revelry), but probably originally a pure l vowel as in the “le” of “simple” (see Whitney 24). There is, theoretically, also a long l vowel but it is practically never used.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऐ</td>
<td>e, “pronounced as in bet or tempo.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऐ</td>
<td>ē, “aisle.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऐ</td>
<td>o, “stone or pole.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऐ</td>
<td>ū, “German “Haus.””</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
k, " " " kill or meek.
kh, " " " inkhorn or bunkhouse.
g, " " " go, get or dog.
gh, " " " loghouse.

ñ, " " " sing or kink.
c, pronounced ch as in church.
ch, pronounced chh as in birch hill.
j, pronounced as in judge or jump.

ñ, " " " hedgehog (hejhog).
ñ, " " " French bon, or as in hinge (hinge).
t, " " " true.

th, " " " anthill.
d, " " " drum.
dh, " " " red head.

ñ, " " " none.

t, " " " tone or tub.
th, " " " nuthatch.
d, " " " dot (slightly toward the th sound).
dh, " " " adhere.
n, " " " nut or thin.
p, " " " pot or hip.
ph, " " " uphill or shepherd.
b, " " " beer or rub.

bh, " " " abhor.
m, " " " man or ham.
y, " " " young or royal.
r, " " " red or shear.
l, " " " law or lead.

v, " " like w in twine or wind.

š, " " as in sure.
š, " " " shut or bush.
s, " " " sin or hiss.
h, " " " hero or hit.

When attached to consonants, vowel marks are as follows: ^ above the line = e (as in ñ ñe).
^ above the line = ā (as in ñ ñài). ɾ indicates o at the middle or end of a word (as in ñ ñko).
ɾ indicates āu at the middle or end of a word (as in ñ ñtäu). ș below the line indicates u (as in ñ ñtu).
ș below the line indicates ü (as in ñ ñbhü). ș above the line indicates a consonant r (as in ñ ñmärata). Below
the line it indicates a vowel r (as in ñ ñbhü). The short i at the middle or end
of a word is indicated by a tie to the left (as in शृङ्खला). The long ि is indicated by a similar tie to the right (as in नील). Long न is indicated by an extra down-stroke न (as in धन्त). Otherwise every consonant is assumed to be followed by a short ए. Most combined consonants are self-explanatory, except for क्ष, श्र, ज्ञ, र्ख and छ्र (the diagonal stroke within the letter always indicates a consonant र). The विसर्ग (‘:' written at the end of a word in place of s or r, and transliterated as h) is pronounced like the English aspirate h, but in Hindu usage it is followed by a short echo of the preceding vowel. The अनुस्वार (ṁ or ॐ) is a nasal sound like n in French ‘bon.’ A diagonal stroke to the right beneath a letter (त्र, र्थ, etc.) indicates that it is a final, and is not followed by an ‘a’ as it otherwise would be.

Although accent in Sanskrit is supposed to be quantitative as it was in Ancient Greek, the practice for many centuries has been to use a stress accent somewhat milder than that used in English, meanwhile observing the difference between long and short syllables. (Theoretically at least, a long syllable is twice as long as a short syllable). This accent falls on the penultimate syllable, or, in the case of a word ending with two short syllables, on the antepenultimate, or, in the case of a word ending in three short syllables, on the fourth from the end. These rules apply only to Classical and Epic-Purānic Sanskrit. Vedic Sanskrit has a more complicated system of accentuation. A long syllable is one containing a long vowel, a diphthong, or followed by more than one consonant. All others are short.

There remains the complicated subject of सन्धि, or the laws of euphonious combination, which are to be found at work in virtually every phrase of Sanskrit. The aim of these laws is to enhance the elegance of sound of the language. There are laws relating to internal (i.e., within a given word) euphonic combination, which I shall pass over, since their effects are to be found in the vocabularies. External सन्धि is a much more noticeable and puzzling phenomenon. It occurs at the end of a word, and is determined by the beginning of the following word. The reader will probably notice it first in the peculiar behavior of s when it occurs at the end of a word. It may be converted into ś or ṣ or ṛ, or ā (visarga), or, in the case of final as into ṝ, or, what is perhaps still more common, it may disappear altogether. Other letters behave somewhat similarly. Final ṛ may also become : (visarga). Final t is interchangeable with d, and sometimes also even with n, j, l, c, and several other letters, depending on the beginning of the following word. त and य are interchangeable, the latter being used before a vowel and losing its independence as a syllable. The same thing is true of u and v. न becomes in under certain circumstances (e.g., when preceded in the same word by s or r, or when followed by more than one consonant) and न under others. Final न after a short vowel and before a succeeding vowel is doubled to nn. Vowels, as the above alphabet shows, come in short and in long (अ, आ, उ, ऊ) forms. The vowel ए, in practice, has only a short form. Diphthongs are e, ए, o and ओ. In euphonic combination all types of a (long or short) combine to make ए, and all forms of ऐ combine to make ऐ; all forms of u combine to make उ. a or ए combines with vowel r to form ar. a or ए combine with i or ऐ to form e, a or ए combine with u or ओ to form o, a or ए combine with o to form ओ.
āu. An initial a after a final e or o is dropped and an apostrophe or *avagraha* is put in its place. Before a vowel āu becomes āv, e becomes a and āī becomes ā. And so on. For all the circumstances under which these changes and others occur, there is no recourse but a careful study of the subject as presented in Whitney's or some other grammar.

While most if not all the above changes will be found written out in the text, the *anusvāra* (m or occasionally n) is not always as easy to detect. It is very common, and its accurate rendering is vital to the proper pronunciation of Sanskrit. In the Sanskrit text it is indicated merely by a dot above the line. Its commonest occurrence is as a substitute for final m before a word beginning with a consonant or semivowel such as y, h or v. In transliteration it is written m, or sometimes n. Its pronunciation, as has been said, is approximately like the n in French “bon”, thus a fairly indeterminate nasal sound with no closure either of the mouth or of the palate. It occurs also in such words and names as “saṁdhi,” “Saṁjaya,” “Jarāsaṁdha,” etc. Proper pronunciation makes the transition to the following consonant as smooth as can be imagined. In other texts, especially where internal saṁdhi is concerned, the dot, in transliteration is often placed below the m instead of above it, as is the practice I have followed, mainly for the sake of uniformity.

The metre of most of the stanzas of the Bhagavad Gītā is what is known as *sloka* metre, consisting of four lines of eight syllables each, and can be conveniently remembered by the English reader as the metre of Longfellow’s “Hiawatha” (e.g. “by the shores of Gitchee Gumee” etc.). The verse is blank, i.e. there are no rhymes. There are, however, a number of stanzas, particularly at more dramatic moments, in which the *triṣṭubh* metre, consisting of four lines of eleven syllables each, is used. The *sloka* is the all-purpose metre of the Epics as well as much popular poetry. The *triṣṭubh* metre originated as the commonest metre of the Vedas, and is supposed to convey a warlike or powerful impression.

Regarding the page by page vocabularies in this edition, it might be remarked that Sanskrit is a very ambiguous language in which a single word may have scores of meanings, sometimes contradictory ones. Thus the common verb *yādhā*, according to Monier-Williams' dictionary, can mean put, place, take, bring, remove, direct, fix upon, resolve upon, destine for, bestow on, present, impart, appoint, establish, constitute, make, generate, produce, create, cause, effect, perform, execute, seize, take hold of, bear, support, wear, put on, accept, obtain, conceive, get, assume, have, possess, show, exhibit, incur, undergo, etc. In the vocabulary attached to each stanza I have included only the meanings that are close to the ones intended in the poem.

A concluding word about the transliteration and the literal English translation: as far as is possible I have placed the transliterated word, as well as the translated one, directly beneath its Sanskrit equivalent. I have taken the liberty, however, of introducing definite and indefinite articles (the former rarely used and the latter non-existent in Sanskrit) in order to make the meaning clearer. I have also placed the word “and” (Sanskrit “ca”) before the last of the words it connects, instead of after a couple, or group, of connected words as is the Sanskrit usage (similar to the use of “que” in Latin).
THE SETTING OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

The Mahābhārata, one of the two great Hindu epics (the other is the Rāmāyana), and the one in which the Bhagavad Gītā appears at a climactic moment, is a creation of tremendous length. It has been estimated to be seven times as long as the Iliad and the Odyssey put together, or nearly three times as long as the Judaeo-Christian Bible. It is also a somewhat rambling work, containing many interpolated stories and moral treatises, and it is very Indian in its treatment of time, swinging backward and forward and not always sticking to a consistent chronology. What I have abstracted from it here, with the help of secondary sources, is merely a thin genealogical thread which leads up to the famous Battle of Kurukṣetra, along with a very much condensed narrative of that battle and its aftermath. The heroes of the battle, known as the Pāṇḍava Princes, are Arjuna (whose colloquy with the god Krishna forms the substance of the Bhagavad Gītā) and his half-brothers Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Nakula and Sahadeva. The villains are the hundred Sons of Dhrta rastra, their cousins, otherwise known as the Kaurava (Sons of Kuru) Princes. The mythological ancestry and relationships between all these characters are complex, and the following condensation attempts to describe them. The battle itself is a tragic episode in which nearly all the kṣatriya, or warrior, race is destroyed, the villains being killed and the heroes, when not slain, dying on a long pilgrimage, eventually attaining heaven. The one exception, King Yudhiṣṭhira, reaches heaven by a more roundabout route.

Unlike the Hebrew and Christian conceptions of creation, the Indian allows for the infinity of time, and regards the universe as one of many that stretch, in cycles of creation and destruction, into the endless past, and that will stretch, in similar cycles, into the endless future. The mythology pertaining to this particular universe concerns a primeval darkness, when all was water, until the eternal First Cause formed the Hiranya-garbha, the “golden foetus” or “golden egg,” which floated on the cosmic waters, and, in later myth, became identified with the creator god Brahmā. The egg divided itself into two parts, one becoming the heavens, the other the earth.

Now, Brahmā, the creator god, had a spiritual son (a product of Brahmā’s thumb, according to some sources) named Marīci, and Marīci’s son in turn became the tremendously prolific sage-king Kaśyapa, sometimes referred to as Prajāpati, or “the Lord of Creatures.” Kaśyapa married the twelve daughters of Dakṣa (who is also sometimes referred to as Prajāpati). Dakṣa was the son of Prajāpati, an earlier being. It is perhaps significant that these early names are personifications, though names as personifications are common throughout the epic. Brahmā is thought to derive from the root śbrh which means “grow” or “evolve.” Dakṣa means “intelligence” or “mastery.” (It is cognate with the English “dextrous” and its etymological ancestors.) And Prajāpati means “clever” or “wise.” In any case, Kaśyapa impregnated the daughters of Dakṣa, and they gave birth to the gods, demons, animals and many other types of being. One of
these daughters, named Dākṣāyaṇī, or Savarna, gave birth to the sun god, Vivasvat (which means "shining forth"). The extraordinary scope of the Hindu imagination is illustrated by the fact that the great Indian commentator Rāmānuja, who lived in the eleventh century A.D., placed the date of Vivasvat's birth at twenty-eight mahāyugas (about 120 billion years) before his own time, a figure that is perhaps closer to modern scientific theories of the birth of the sun than the chronologically vague account in Genesis would place it.

Vivasvat, who is mentioned in the Bhagavad Gītā (IV, 1), became the father of Manu Vāivasvata (also mentioned in IV, 1), the Noah of Hindu mythology, who survived a great flood with the assistance of Vishnu (Vishnu had assumed the form of a fish for the purpose according to the Purāṇas). So ancient are the theoretical origins of this mythology that Manu Vāivasvata was merely the seventh in a long list of Manus belonging to previous universes. He became, after the flood, the progenitor of the human race. This he accomplished by holding a sacrifice during which a woman named Ilā was created. With Ilā's help he begot nine sons, among whom was Ikṣvāku (likewise mentioned in the Bhagavad Gītā, IV, 1), progenitor of the Solar Race to which the sage-king Janaka (mentioned in the Bhagavad Gītā, III, 20) belonged. Other early members of the Solar Race were King Sagara of Ayodhyā, Raghu Rāma, grandfather of Rāma, the hero of the Rāmāyaṇa, and Sud yumma, another son of Manu Vāivasvata, who became the progenitor of the Lunar Race with which we are concerned here.

Among the descendants of Sud yumma was one Purūravas who married an apsārā, or water nymph, named Urvasī, and begot three sons—Āyu, whose descendants founded the Kāśi line of kings to which some of the warriors at the Battle of Kurukṣetra belonged; Amāvasu, with whom we need not be concerned here, and Nahuṣa, father of the great King Yayāti Nāhuṣa. Yayāti practically peopled the whole subcontinent of India, as well as some territory north of the Himalaya, doing for India what his ancestor Manu Vāivasvata had done for the known world. Yayāti had two wives, Devayāni and Srmīśṭhā. By the former he begot Yadu, who became the progenitor of the Yādava and Vṛṣṇi clans from which Krishna was descended. By the latter he begot Pūru, the ancestor of Bharata, progenitor of both the Pāṇḍava and Kāurava lines, from which most of the heroes of the Battle of Kurukṣetra were descended. (It is interesting to note that apparently the Pūru, or Pāurava family continued under its own name down to the time of Alexander's invasion of India, when a great king named "Poros" by the Greeks, was defeated in a memorable battle by Alexander, and later became his friend.) Among the early descendants of Bharata was King Hastin who founded the city of Hastinapura where the Pāṇḍava and Kāurava princes were brought up. Among Hastin's descendants was one Saṁvaraṇa who married Tapati, a daughter of the Sun god by Chāyā (which means "shade"), and they begot Kuru. At this point the Kāuravas (Sons of Kuru) and the Pāṇḍavas (Sons of Pāṇḍu) are not yet differentiated, and this is a bit confusing because the Pāṇḍavas were as much "sons of Kuru" as the Kāuravas were. Some way further down the genealogical line we meet Prince Pratīpa, who was a descendant of Bharata and Kuru, and here we are closer to the immediate ancestry of our
principal characters. Prince Pratīpa was the father of King Śaṁtanu, who, in turn, was the father of the great warrior Bhīṣma, known in the Mahābhārata as “the Grandsire,” actually an uncle of Pāṇḍu, and the great uncle, and teacher in the art of arms, of the Pāṇḍava Princes, Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva, as well as the villainous Duryodhana and the remaining ninety-nine sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. In the great battle the Pāṇḍava Princes are arrayed against their beloved teacher Bhīṣma, a circumstance which is one of the causes of Arjuna’s agony of indecision at the beginning of the Bhagavad Gītā.

It is one of the universal rules of mythology that great heroes always have mysterious or divine births. Bhīṣma was the son of King Śaṁtanu by Gañgā, otherwise known as the River Ganges. By another wife, Satyavatī, Śaṁtanu begot Cīrāṅgada and Vīcitrāvīrya. Vyāsa (mentioned in the Bhagavad Gītā, X, 13) was also a son of Satyavatī, but his birth was premarital. He was a son of the hermit Parāśara. The birth of Vyāsa as a son of Satyavatī is one of those odd features of Hindu literature that defy chronological sense. Vyāsa is supposed to have compiled the Vedas, the earliest of which date from about a thousand years previously, as well as the Mahābhārata, in which he appears as an important character. The word vyāsa means “divider,” “arranger” or “compiler.” Perhaps there were more than one of these, or perhaps, according to the Hindu theory of reincarnation, a Vyāsa was born whenever compiling was to be done. He appears in the Mahābhārata as a respected sage.

Now, Bhīṣma was a man of great nobility. When his father, King Śaṁtanu, approached him noting that he was an only son (this was long before the birth of Cīrāṅgada and Vīcitrāvīrya), and that if anything happened to him the line would become extinct, Bhīṣma went to the house of a fisherman, whose daughter Satyavatī, mentioned above, the aging king had met and admired, and asked Satyavatī’s father for her hand in marriage to his father. The fisherman agreed on one condition – that Satyavatī’s sons should inherit Śaṁtanu’s throne. Bhīṣma, Śaṁtanu’s first-born and proper heir, met this condition by renouncing the throne and vowing to remain childless throughout his life, thus permitting the sons of Satyavatī the royal succession. Not only did Bhīṣma make this sacrifice (continence was, and is, an admired trait in India), he went to the court of the King of the Kāśi and took part in a trial of arms, defeating all opponents and winning the daughters of that king, Aṁbā, Aṁbikā and Aṁbālikā, as wives for his half-brother Vīcitrāvīrya, son of Satyavatī. On the death of Śaṁtanu, Vīcitrāvīrya, who was still a minor, reigned at Hāśtinapura, with Bhīṣma as regent. Such was the extraordinary generosity of Bhīṣma, and he became, during his lifetime, the greatest warrior in the world, as well as the greatest teacher of the art of arms. But after marrying Aṁbikā and Aṁbālikā, King Vīcitrāvīrya proved to be childless (the story of what happened to Aṁbā, the other sister, who refused marriage, must await its place), and his half-brother Vyāsa, the sage, lay with his wives, according to the custom of levirate, to beget sons for him. Aṁbikā then became the mother of Dhrtrāṣṭra, the blind and vacillating king of the Kauravas, and Aṁbālikā became the mother of Pāṇḍu, who later became formally though not actually the father of the Pāṇḍava (or
Sons of Pāṇḍu) Princes. Thus it will be seen that the Pāṇḍavas and the Kāuravas (Descendants of Kuru) were, barring a few supernatural interventions and a remarkable amount of substitute fatherhood, cousins, and that while the Kāuravas were very distant descendants of Kuru, the Pāṇḍavas were also descended from Kuru through their official, if not actual, father Pāṇḍu.

But before we get to the reasons why Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva were not the real sons of Pāṇḍu, we must relate what happened to Arībā. At the time Bhīṣma won her as a bride for his half-brother Vicitrāvīrya, Arībā was in love with a certain Śālva, King of Sāubha and one of the royal personalities who had participated in the trial of arms in which Bhīṣma had defeated all adversaries. Among others, he had defeated Śālva, and then spared his life. (Such trials of arms were held traditionally whenever a princess reached marriageable age. Sometimes the victor carried her off, as was the case with Bhīṣma. Sometimes the event was what was called a svayamvara, or “own choice,” at which the princess made her choice among the assembled warriors.) When Bhīṣma brought Arībā to Hāstinapura along with her sisters, Arībā refused to marry Vicitrāvīrya, and told those present that she had chosen Śālva as her future husband according to the rule of svayamvara. Bhīṣma obligingly sent her back to Śālva. But when she got there, Śālva, who felt humiliated by his defeat at the hands of Bhīṣma, refused to have anything to do with her. He sent her back to Bhīṣma, whom he felt had won her in honorable combat. Arībā, as might be expected, was rather upset. When she returned to Hāstinapura, things got even worse: Vicitrāvīrya refused to marry anyone whose heart was pledged to another. Arībā asked Bhīṣma to marry her, but this was out of the question because of Bhīṣma’s vow of chastity. Arībā became overwhelmed with hatred for Bhīṣma, who had been the author of all her misfortunes. She approached Śālva again, but he refused her a second time. Then she sought champions among the princes at Hāstinapura who might fight and kill Bhīṣma. But none of them would volunteer. They not only respected the old warrior, they were afraid of him. Then Arībā undertook austerities in order to gain the favor of the god Vishnu, and Vishnu gave her a garland, saying that whoever wore it would become an enemy of Bhīṣma. Arībā then approached King Drupada of the Pañcālas, offering him the garland. But even Drupada, who was a mighty warrior, declined to fight with Bhīṣma. Finally, on the advice of some ascetics, she went to see Paraśurāma (“Rāma of the Axe”), a famous brāhmaṇ who had taken up the un-brahmanical profession of arms, and had vowed to exterminate the kṣatriya, or warrior, caste. Paraśurāma also became an avatār of the god Vishnu in honor of whom she had previously performed austerities. He agreed to be her champion. But when the battle took place Paraśurāma was defeated by Bhīṣma. This was the last straw for Arībā. She went to the Himalaya where she practiced extreme austerities to gain the favor of the god Shiva. Shiva appeared before her, and promised that she would, in her next incarnation, become a man. Impatient for her next birth, she built a great fire and plunged into it to be burned to death. She was subsequently reborn as Sikhaṇḍin, son of King Drupada. In due time, she, or he, became one of the warriors at the Battle of Kurukṣetra, and, as Arjuna’s charioteer, partici-
pated in the slaying of her old enemy Bhīṣma. In this combat Bhīṣma refused to
defend himself against Śiśiṇḍin because he knew of his reincarnation and con­
sidered him to be a woman.

Now we come to the story of Pāṇḍu, officially the son of King Vicitravīrya but
actually the son of Vicitravīrya’s half brother Vyāsa by Aṁbālīkā. Pāṇḍu was
also a half brother of the blind King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was the son of Vyāsa by
Aṁbikā. Dhṛtarāṣṭra had a hundred sons. Pāṇḍu reigned at Hāstina-pura with
Bhīṣma as advisor. Pāṇḍu had two wives – Kuntī, daughter of Śūra, a Yādava
king (who was also the father of Vasudeva, Krishna’s father, thus making Kuntī
Krishna’s aunt), and Mādri, another princess. Once, while out hunting, Pāṇḍu
had the misfortune to kill a deer which was copulating with its mate and which
was really a sage in disguise. While dying, the sage levelled a curse at Pāṇḍu. He
would die the instant he had intercourse with a woman. Thus Pāṇḍu was in­
capable of having children, and the stage was set for the sort of divine, or other­
wise peculiar births that are mandatory for great heroes. All of the so-called Sons
of Pāṇḍu had gods for fathers.

Kuntī, who had been adopted in childhood by her father’s childless cousin
Kuntibhoja, and had taken her name from him (it had originally been Prthā) had
once received a mantra, or magical invocation, from the sage Durvāśas with
which she could summon any god to be the father of her children. As a matter of
fact, or properly speaking, legend, she had used it once before her marriage to
Pāṇḍu. She had summoned the Sun god, and by him had had a child named
Karna who was born with earrings and a complete suit of armor. Kuntī had been
so embarrassed by this illegitimate, though divine, birth (it was also a virgin
birth), that she had set the child afloat in a river, where he was picked up by a
charioteer named Adhiratha, and brought up by him as his son. Karna was un­
aware of his miraculous birth until the Battle of Kurukṣetra, and thought of
himself as the son of a humble charioteer. Just before the battle, however, Kuntī
informed him of his divine lineage. But this happened after Karna had cast his
lot with the Kauravas, and was preparing to fight against his half brothers, the
Pāṇḍava Princes. Kuntī told her legal husband Pāṇḍu about the mantra, and
promptly went about becoming the mother of great heroes by various gods. By
Dharma, the god of righteousness, she became the mother of the just and
honorable Yudhīṣthira. By Vāyu, the god of the winds, she begot the powerful
Bhīma, whose habit was to uproot trees to use as weapons, and who had the ap­
petite of a wolf. By Indra, the chief of the Vedic gods, she begot Arjuna, the
stainless knight who is the hero of the Bhagavad Gītā. In the meantime, Pāṇḍu’s
other wife, Mādri, was busy along similar lines. She became the mother of the
twins, Nakula and Sahadeva by the twin Aśvinīs, the heavenly horsemen who pull
the chariot of the dawn. Thus, all the Pāṇḍava Princes, as befits heroes, were of
divine birth. As to Pāṇḍu, he died suddenly in a moment of forgetfulness while
having intercourse with Mādri. Mādri dutifully committed suttee (or satī as the
Sanskrit has it), burning herself upon her husband’s funeral pyre.

Meanwhile, at the court of King Śūra, of the Yādava line, his grandson Krishna
was born. There had already been intimations of his divine role as the avatār of
the god Vishnu. When his father, Vasudeva, was born there had been a rolling of heavenly drums because he was to become the parent of Vishnu’s *avatār*. Vasudeva duly married Devaki, a niece of King Ugrasena of Mathurā. There were difficulties. Devaki’s cousin, an evil tyrant named Kaṁsa who had imprisoned King Ugrasena and usurped the throne, arranged that all Devaki’s children should die at birth (a sage had predicted that Kaṁsa would be slain by a son of Devaki). Six children thus perished. But Vasudeva magically inserted the seventh into the womb of Rohini, another of his wives, and the child who was born was Balarāma, Krishna’s older brother. Krishna himself was placed by Vasudeva into the hands of a cowherd named Nanda. Krishna was brought up by Nanda and his wife among cowherds and milkmaids. He was a sly child, and delighted in stealing milk, butter and fruit. But he also performed several heroic feats as a child. And he pursued the opposite sex, accumulating, according to some sources, as many as 16,108 wives including his chief wife Rukmini. The evil Kaṁsa continued to try to waylay Krishna and his brother Balarāma, seeking their death, but was always foiled by one stratagem or another. Finally, Kaṁsa invited Krishna and Balarāma to take part in an athletic contest in which he sent savage demons and wild beasts to fight them. Among these was Keśin, king of the savage horse-demons, whose death at Krishna’s hands earned Krishna the epithet of Keśinśudana (Slayer of Keśin) by which, among other nicknames, he is addressed in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. The demons and beasts being easily overcome by Krishna and Balarāma, Kaṁsa himself entered the arena and was killed, in fulfillment of the sage’s prophecy, by Krishna. Kaṁsa’s brother Sunāman then tried to avenge Kaṁsa’s death, but was slain by Balarāma. The result was that the imprisoned King Ugrasena was freed and reigned again in his kingdom at Mathurā. Shortly afterward, Krishna descended into hell to bring back his six brothers whom Kaṁsa had caused to be slain at birth. The six then ascended to heaven with Krishna’s help. Then Krishna changed his habits, left the milkmaids behind, underwent purification ceremonies and acknowledged Vasudeva and Devaki as his true parents. Along with his brother Balarāma, he received spiritual instruction, and instruction in the art of war, from Śāṇḍiplī, a famous warrior-sage. During this period, Pañcajana, a marine demon who lived at the bottom of the sea in the form of a conch, kidnapped Śāṇḍiplī’s son. Krishna went to the rescue and slew Pañcajana, and thereafter used the conch shell Pañcajanya (mentioned in the *Bhagavad Gītā* I, 15) as a trumpet.

Jarāsaṁdhī, King of Māgadha, whose daughters had married Kaṁsa, heard of Kaṁsa’s death at the hands of Krishna, and sent a great army against Mathurā, attacking the city eighteen times without decisive result. A “barbarian” (Greek) king named Kālayavana, “Black Greek” (Yavana, “Ionian,” was the Indian term for Greeks, many of whom had settled in India at this time), joined his armies to Jarāsaṁdhī’s, and finally Krishna was forced to abandon the city. He moved his capital to a town in the Gujarat called Dvārakā (“the city of gates or doors”) which then became one of India’s sacred cities. Krishna’s later exploits included battles with, and defeats of, the gods Indra, Varuṇa and Śiva, the conquest of a large number of tribes and kings, the abduction of a Gandhāra
princess from her svayamvara and the defeat of the King of Niṣāda who had attacked Dvārakā. He became India’s ideal of manhood and a god who is worshipped to this day.

Pāṇḍu and his half brother Dhṛtarāṣṭra seem to have divided the throne at Hāstina-pura, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, disqualified because of his blindness, acting as regent until the death of Pāṇḍu, who, as has been said, died because of the sage’s curse (he had by the time of his death taken up residence in the forest with his wives and children). Kunti, his chief wife, remained to take care of the children while Mādri, as has been related, committed sutee. The sages of the forest took Kunti and the children back to Hāstina-pura, entrusting them to the old warrior Bhīma. The children (the Pāṇḍava Princes Yudhiṣṭhīra, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva) grew up together with the hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra (the Kaurava princes) in typical boyish rivalry and general high spirits. But Bhīma was something of a bully. Much more powerfully built than the others, he delighted in grasping the Sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra with his arms and holding them under water until their breaths gave out, and when they climbed trees he would shake the trunks until they fell out like ripe fruit. The Sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra hated Bhīma from infancy. Chief among them was Duryodhana (“Dirty Fighter”), and he became an early enemy of the Pāṇḍava Princes, partly because of Bhīma’s bullying but also because he was afraid that Pāṇḍu’s eldest son, Yudhiṣṭhīra, might succeed to the throne instead of himself. Duryodhana hatched a plot to wipe out the Sons of Pāṇḍu. He poisoned Bhīma’s food, bound him, and threw him into a river to drown, and he planned to cast Arjuna and Yudhiṣṭhīra into prison, and seize the throne himself. But the poison only strengthened Bhīma, who burst his bonds and swam to shore. Meanwhile the sons of Pāṇḍu and the Sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were taught the arts of war by the older warriors Kṛpā, Droṇa and “the grandsire” Bhīma. It was Arjuna who grew up to be the most skillful warrior, while Bhīma, because of his superhuman strength, became the most powerful one.

During this time, the unacknowledged half-brother of the Pāṇḍava Princes, Karna, who had been born to Kunti by the Sun god but had been brought up as the son of a humble charioteer, appeared at Hāstina-pura. He challenged Arjuna to combat, much to the delight of Duryodhana. It is said that the father of both heroes, the god Indra and the Sun god, appeared in the sky to encourage their offspring. But there was some question as to whether Karna, allegedly the son of a charioteer, was of sufficient rank to fight with Arjuna, and the fight was called off. Duryodhana thereupon crowned Karna King of Aṅga, a kingdom some authorities identify with modern Bengal. But the encounter did not follow immediately, for Duryodhana carried Karna off in his chariot. Knowing that such an encounter was inevitable at some point, the god Indra, father of Arjuna, sought to weaken Karna. He appeared to Karna in the guise of a brāhmaṇ and begged from him his earrings and armor. Karna, who was famous for his generosity, gave them up, and Indra, astonished by this act, granted Karna in return the use of the Sakti, a magical weapon which was Indra’s own and which had the power to kill even at a great distance. But Indra made a proviso. The
weapon could be used by Karna only once, after which it would return to its godly owner. Karna went to the warlike brahman Parashurama ("Rama of the Axe") who hated all members of the kshatriya, or warrior, caste. He represented himself to Parashurama as a brahman, and Parashurama taught him the proper mantra, or magical invocation, to use with the Sakti. But one day while Karna slept, a stinging insect burrowed into his thigh, inflicting a painful and bloody wound. Karna bore the pain without flinching. Parashurama then knew immediately that Karna was not the brahman he represented himself to be. Only a kshatriya, or member of the warrior caste, could stand such pain without crying out. Karna had to confess that he was a kshatriya, and Parashurama, outraged by the deception, pronounced a curse on Karna – he would be doomed to forget the mantra at the moment he needed it most. And so it turned out. But we are getting ahead of our story.

In the forest hermitage of the sage Bharadvaja, his own son, the great hero Drona was trained in archery along with Drupada, son of the king of the Panchalas. As has been said, mythology demands that all heroes be born in a peculiar manner, and the births of Drona and Drupada were peculiar indeed, for neither had a mother. Drona, whose name means "bucket," was born from a bucket into which his father's seed had fallen. Something similar had happened to Prsata, the king of Panchala. He was observing a beautiful nymph, named Menakā when his seed fell to the ground. Ashamed, he took a rapid (dru) step (pada) to stamp out the seed. But he did not succeed, and Drupada was born from it. Drona was a brahman, but despite his birth became a renowned warrior. Drupada was a kshatriya. During their childhood Drupada often spoke of giving half his kingdom to Drona. But when King Prsata died and Drupada ascended the throne of Panchala, he spurned his former friend, calling him a poor beggar. Drona, however, was selected by "the grandsire" Bhishma to train the five Sons of Pându as well as the hundred sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra in the arts of war. After their apprenticeship was over, Drona sent the Sons of Pându on an expedition to defeat and capture Drupada. They defeated the Panchalas and took Drupada prisoner. Drona then forgave Drupada, but retained, as a pledge of future friendship, half the Panchala kingdom, thus gaining by force what he had been promised and then denied. Drupada was angry, and hoped for a son who would slay Drona. He performed a great sacrifice to this end, in which, it is said, ten million cattle were killed. When the moment arrived, Drupada's wife was unprepared to receive his seed. But a son and a daughter sprang forth miraculously from the sacrificial fire. These were the twins Dhṛṣṭadyumna ("He whose splendor is bold") and Dhṛṣṭadṛṣṭi ("Daughter of Drupada"), later the collective wife of the five Pândava Princes. Many years later, Dhṛṣṭadyumna did indeed slay Drona.

Duryodhana, the evil elder son of the blind King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, became enraged at the popularity and success at arms of the Pândava Princes, and the possibility that Yudhiṣṭhira, instead of he, might succeed to the throne of Hāstina Purāṇa. With the connivance of Karna and Śakuni, the brother-in-law of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, he plotted to destroy the Sons of Pându. At first, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was inclined to kindliness toward his nephews, the Sons of Pându, would hear
nothing of the plot. Later, owing to the wiles and insistent arguments of Duryodhana, he agreed to it, and mentioned to the Sons of Pându that a great festival in honor of Shiva was to take place in the nearby city of Vāraṇāvata, and that the Pândavas owed it to themselves to attend, because the people of Vāraṇāvata were anxious to see them. Before the festival took place, Duryodhana, Karna and Śakuni sent a minister named Purocana to Vāraṇāvata to construct a palace for the Sons of Pându to stay in during their visit. By prearrangement this palace was built of wax and other inflammable materials. The idea was to set fire to the palace while the Sons of Pându were asleep, and thus destroy them. But Vidura, a younger brother of Pându and Dhrtarāṣṭra, who favored the Pândava Princes, warned Yudhiṣṭhira that something was afoot in Vāraṇāvata, and sent a miner to dig a subterranean exit from the wax palace. Pretending that they knew nothing of the plot, the Sons of Pându took up residence in the palace, but kept a sharp lookout. At midnight the palace was set aflame, and the Sons of Pându escaped through the subterranean tunnel. Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his sons exchanged their garments for funereal ones and performed impressive obsequies near a river for the supposedly dead Pândava Princes. Only Vidura was not overcome by apparent grief; he knew that the Pândavas had escaped.

The Sons of Pându journeyed into the forest, often carried with their mother Kunti on the broad shoulders and hips, or with the hands, of the powerful Bhima. During this journey they met their grandfather the sage Vyāsa, who gave them good counsel and advised them to dress as brāhmans. Finally they arrived at a city called Ekacakra (“One Wheel,” actually “the City of the One Wheel of Dominion”), whose king had fled, and which was being held in thrall by a terrible cannibalistic demon named Bakasura (“Crane Demon”). A brāhman family gave them shelter, and when they learned about the demon and his insistence on tribute in the form of human flesh and other foods, Bhima set out to destroy him. A terrific battle ensued in which the demon pulled up trees by the roots to belabor Bhima with. But Bhima, who was well aware of this tactic, finally threw him to the ground and broke his bones. He returned to the city, dragging the demon’s body to the city gates, took a bath and then told the brāhman family of his deed.

While the Sons of Pându were sojourning at Ekacakra, they heard about the svayamvara of Princess Drāupadī, daughter of King Drupada (“Rapid Step”) of Pāncāla who has already been mentioned in connection with his boyhood friend Droṇa. Drāupadī was a great beauty, and princes came from many distant kingdoms to compete for her hand. The Sons of Pându were still disguised as humble brāhmans, and after a long march they arrived at Pāncāla where they took up residence at the home of a potter. When the great day of the svayamvara arrived, even Krishna and his brother Balarāma had come to Pāncāla to compete in the ceremony. King Drupada had caused a revolving ring to be placed on a pole at a great height, and had after a long march they arrived at Pāncāla where they took up residence at the home of a potter. When the great day of the svayamvara arrived, even Krishna and his brother Balarāma had come to Pāncāla to compete in the ceremony. King Drupada had caused a revolving ring to be placed on a pole at a great height, and had after a large bow constructed which was difficult to bend. He who shot an arrow through the ring with this bow could claim Drāupadī as his wife. It would be a difficult feat, and the gods assembled in midair to witness the spectacle. One by one, the princes stepped up to try their skill. Some
could not even bend the bow, and none succeeded in hitting the target. Then Arjuna stepped forward, took up the bow and shot five arrows straight through the ring. Both King Drupada and Princess Drāupadi were overjoyed, though there were murmurs of objection from some who were present — including Karna and Salya, King of Madra — that a brāhman should win a prize reserved for warriors (Arjuna was still disguised as a brāhman).

When the Pāṇḍava Princes returned home, they agreed that Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest of them, should marry Drāupadi. But as they saw their mother, Kuntī, they cried out “We have won a great prize today,” and Kuntī said “Then share the prize between you.” Kuntī’s word being law, there was nothing to do but marry all five Sons of Pāṇḍu to Drāupadi. King Drupada objected to the marriage (polyandry was not a common practice among Hindus, though polygamy was), but he finally yielded. It was arranged that Drāupadi should stay two days at the house of each brother in turn, and that none of the others would see her during this time. She subsequently bore five sons, one by each of the brothers; Pratīvindhya by Yudhiṣṭhira, Sutasoma by Bhima, Śrutakīrti by Arjuna, Śatānīka by Nakula and Śrutakarman by Sahadeva. Arjuna was her favorite husband, and when he afterward married a second wife, Subhadrā, a sister of Krishna whom he had carried off by force with Krishna’s permission, Drāupadi was overcome with jealousy.*

Back in Hāstinapurā, the capital of Dhrtaraśtra’s kingdom, the Sons of Kuru heard of the doings at Pāṇcāla and realized for the first time that the Sons of Pāṇḍu had not perished in the burning of the wax palace. Vidura was happy at this news. His brother, the vacillating, blind King Dhrtaraśtra, was at first relieved to hear the news, but later connived with his sons against the Pāṇḍavas. Duryodhana, eldest of the Sons of Dhrtaraśtra, was infuriated, and so was his brother Dhuśāsana. They consulted with their uncle Śakuni, plotting the downfall of the Pāṇḍavas all over again. They considered setting the sons of Kuntī (Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhima and Arjuna) and the sons of Mādri (Nakula and Sahadeva) against each other. They considered bribing Drupada to join them against the Pāṇḍavas. They also considered fomenting jealousy among the Pāṇḍavas through experts in the art of erotics, and fomenting the jealousy of Drāupadi by catching the Pāṇḍavas in flagrante delicto with other women. By this time the Pāṇḍavas had been joined by Dhṛṣṭadyumna, son of Drupada, and also by Śiṅhadeva, the male incarnation of Arhba, daughter of the King of the Kāsis, now a son of Drupada. In addition, they had been joined by Krishna and the Yadavas, Krishna’s tribe. This was a formidable group to contend with, and the Sons of Dhrtaraśtra were understandably fearful. The wise, aged and generous Bhīma counselled making peace with the Sons of Pāṇḍu and giving them half the kingdom. Droṇa agreed. The hotter-headed Duryodhana and Karna did not.

* There has been some speculation among historians as to the relative customs of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas. The Cambridge History of India holds that the polyandry of the Pāṇḍavas is an indication of their comparative primitiveness, that they were a northern tribe who went to war with the more civilized Kauravas, and that the latter were an old settled people who preferred to gain their ends by guile and conspiracy rather than war — a point that seems to be borne out by the narrative.
But Vidura, their virtuous uncle, was sent to Drupada’s court to make peace with the Pāṇḍavas and bring them back to Hāstinapura along with their mother and common wife. This being accomplished, the kingdom was divided in half, Yudhīṣṭhīra was crowned king of the other half, and the Sons of Pāṇḍu took up residence in a new city (identified by some with modern Delhi). They named the city Indraprastha, and there they reigned justly for thirty-six years.

Meanwhile, Yudhīṣṭhīra began to have dreams of empire, and sent for Krishna to advise him whether or not he might undertake the Rājasūya Sacrifice and name himself emperor. But Krishna pointed out that as long as his, Krishna’s old enemy King Jarāśāṃdha, King of Magadha, reigned, held some eighty-six princes in prison, and planned to attack and imprison a full hundred, nobody else could proclaim himself emperor. Yudhīṣṭhīra was inclined to give up his idea, but Bhīma did not like this spirit of complacence, which he thought unworthy of a king. Krishna proposed that he, Bhīma and Arjuna set out to kill Jarāśāṃdha and free his prisoners who would then become allies of the Pāṇḍavas. Arjuna was enthusiastic. The Sons of Pāṇḍu had too long refrained from heroic deeds. So they set out. Now, Jarāśāṃdha, like all the other warrior heroes in this epic, had had a strange birth. His father, one Bṛhadratha, had been childless, and had consulted a sage about his problem. At that moment a mango fell into the lap of the sage. The sage cut the mango into two halves and presented them to Bṛhadratha, who gave each half to one of his two wives. The result was that each wife gave birth to a child, and that only on the intervention of a rākṣasi, or female demon named Jara (“the Old One”), who tied the two halves together, was Jarāśāṃdha made into a complete human being (hence his name, “put together by Jara”). He grew into a man of immense strength, and a very wicked one. When Krishna and the Pāṇḍava Princes arrived at Jarāśāṃdha’s court, they were disguised as holy men, and Jarāśāṃdha welcomed them with courtesy. But soon they revealed themselves as warriors, and sought battle with him in single combat. Jarāśāṃdha chose Bhīma as his opponent, and they battled each other for thirteen days. On the thirteenth, Bhīma killed Jarāśāṃdha, the captive princes were released, Jarāśāṃdha’s son was made king of Magadha and Krishna and the Sons of Pāṇḍu returned to Indraprastha. Yudhīṣṭhīra performed the Rājasūya Sacrifice, which was indispensable for one who sought imperial dominion, and proclaimed himself emperor. After the ceremony, however, the sage Vyāsa, his natural grandfather, who had been in attendance, cautioned Yudhīṣṭhīra, and prophesied evil days to come for the kṣatriya race.

Duryodhana, who had also attended the ceremony, noted the prosperity that the Pāṇḍavas had brought to Indraprastha, and this inflamed his anger even further. He went to his uncle Śakuni with a proposal that the Sons of Dhrṛtarāṣṭra should declare war against the Sons of Pāṇḍu, and take back the half of the kingdom they had been given. But the wily and evil Śakuni proposed that, on the contrary, they should invite Yudhīṣṭhīra to a game of dice. He, Śakuni, was skilled in the tricks of dice playing. Yudhīṣṭhīra was not. Śakuni could accomplish by peaceful means what Duryodhana wanted to gain by war. King Dhrṛtarāṣṭra was reluctant to approve this idea, but as usual he vacillated and finally
consented, causing a large hall of games to be built and sending his brother Vidura with an invitation to Yudhiṣṭhira. Vidura was not happy with his assignment, and he warned Yudhiṣṭhira that probably no good would come of the invitation. Nevertheless, partly out of courtesy, partly because he had a weakness for gambling, Yudhiṣṭhira accepted, and went with his retinue to Hāśtinapura, where the Sons of Pāṇḍu were put up in regal fashion by the Sons of Dhrṛtarāṣṭra. Next morning, a cloth having been spread in the hall of games, the game began. Yudhiṣṭhira was quite aware of Śakuni’s reputation as an expert at the game, but he plunged ahead. He wagered jewels and gold, then chariots and horses. Śakuni won every throw. Intoxicated by the game, Yudhiṣṭhira went on to wager cattle, sheep, villages, citizens and all their possessions. Śakuni won them all. Then, in desperation, the foolish Yudhiṣṭhira began to wager his brothers Nakula, Sahadeva and finally Arjuna, Bhīma and himself. Śakuni won them all, and then asked Yudhiṣṭhira to wager their common wife Drāupadī. (This was technically against the rules. It was bad form for one side to suggest to the other what he should wager.) The elders, Droṇa, Kṛpa, Bhiṣma and Vidura, and even King Dhrṛtarāṣṭra himself were outraged by this suggestion, but the evil Duryodhana, Karna and the remaining Sons of Dhrṛtarāṣṭra shouted in exultation. Śakuni won again, and Drāupadī was sent for, to become the household servant of the Sons of Dhrṛtarāṣṭra. Vidura was filled with forebodings. Duryodhana sent his brother Duḥśāsana to fetch Drāupadī. He caught her by the hair and dragged her before the assembly. The elders hung their heads in shame. Even Vikarna, one of Dhrṛtarāṣṭra’s sons, protested that the game had been rigged and that, contrary to the rules, it was Śakuni who had suggested the wager of Drāupadī. But Duryodhana was adamant, and his brother Duḥśāsana even went to the extreme of stripping the clothes from the Pāṇḍavas, including Drāupadī. In Drāupadī’s case, however, a miracle occurred. As her robes were stripped away, new ones appeared in their place, and Duḥśāsana, having piled up a great heap of elegant garments, was finally forced to cease, from fatigue. At this point Bhīma swore a mighty oath, that one day he would rend the breast of Duḥśāsana and drink his blood. The howling of animals was suddenly heard from the forest. King Dhrṛtarāṣṭra, foreseeing the destruction of his race, called Drāupadī and Yudhiṣṭhira to his side, asked them for forgiveness and restored their kingdom to them. (There had been been a legal dilemma not only over Śakuni’s right to suggest the wager of Drāupadī, but also as to whether Yudhiṣṭhira, who had wagered and lost himself, any longer had the right to wager Drāupadī who, at that point, was no longer his property. One of the reasons Dhrṛtarāṣṭra set the Sons of Pāṇḍu free was the dubious legality of this wager.)

But when the Pāṇḍava Princes had left, Duryodhana, seeing his plans frustrated, upbraided his father, King Dhrṛtarāṣṭra, and complained that by his generous action he had strengthened their enemies again. Dhrṛtarāṣṭra, who was a doting father, gave in to Duryodhana’s arguments and agreed once more to a game of dice. Yudhiṣṭhira was again summoned, and the crafty Śakuni again took up the dice. This time the stake was that the defeated party go with his brothers into exile for thirteen years, spending the last of the thirteen incognito. If they
were recognized during the thirteenth year, they would agree to go into exile again for another twelve years. Needless to say, Yudhiṣṭhira lost again, and the Sons of Pāṇḍu took to the forest. Droṇa and Vidura were both apprehensive. They felt that, in retribution, the race of the Kāuravas (the Sons of Dhrṛtarāṣṭra, along with Dhrṛtarāṣṭra himself, Vidura and Śakuni) was doomed. But Duryodhana slapped his thighs in derision. Then Vidura pronounced a curse on Duryodhana to the effect that he would die, with both legs broken, on the battlefield at the hands of Bhima if he proceeded with his evil plans. After that, Vidura left the court and cast his lot with the Sons of Pāṇḍu.

At this point, Krishna was busy lifting the siege of Dvārakā, which had been besieged in his absence by a certain King Śalva, whose friend, Śiśupāla, Krishna had slain. When he heard of the dice game at Hāstinapura he set out at once to find the Pāṇḍavas in the forest, and he brought along with him many men of the Bhoja and Vṛṣṇi tribes as well as Dhrṛṣṭaketu, King of Cedi, and members of a warrior tribe known as the Kekayas who had been friends of the Pāṇḍavas. Krishna found the Pāṇḍavas, but stayed with them only long enough to express his sympathy, and then returned to Dvārakā with Subhadra, the second wife of Arjuna, and their child Abhimanyu. As to Arjuna himself, he went on a pilgrimage to the Himālaya, where he practiced austerities. He was met by his father, the god Indra, who was disguised as a brāhman. Indra advised him to do penance to Śiva (a god who was rapidly displacing the old Vedic god Indra at this time). Arjuna did as he was told. But during his austerities he was charged by a wild boar. He shot it with an arrow, and another huntsman shot it at the same moment. This was Śiva himself, though Arjuna was unaware of the fact. Śiva suggested that they fight over the matter of who had killed the boar. Arjuna accepted, and the two battled. But Arjuna soon noticed that his opponent was unscathed while he himself was being wounded. Then he recognized Śiva, asked forgiveness, and Śiva healed his wounds, strengthening him a hundredfold. He was then taken in a chariot to Indra’s realm, rested for a while in the kingdom of the gods and obtained divine weapons.

While Arjuna was away, Krishna and Balarāma again visited the Pāṇḍavas, and several sages told them stories to take their minds off their misfortunes. But Dṛūpdāyi never gave up lamenting her humiliation at the hands of the Sons of Dhrṛtarāṣṭra. Dṛūpdāyi wanted revenge, and eventually she got it. Many things happened in the forest. A great army was collecting around the Pāṇḍavas, and was becoming a burden to support. They sent it away, telling those who were so inclined to go to the court of Dhrṛtarāṣṭra, and the others to the court of Drupada. The Pāṇḍavas then went on a pilgrimage, during which Bhima stumbled upon his half brother Hanumān (also a son of the wind god Vāyu), who had taken a heroic role in the Rāmāyana, the other great Hindu epic. The encounter brought joy to both brothers, and Hanumān recounted the adventures he had had while assisting Rāma to bring back his beloved Sitā from captivity at the hands of the King of Lāṅkā (Ceylon). Meanwhile, against the advice of Dhrṛtarāṣṭra, Duryodhana and the Kāuravas went to the forest to gloat over the misery of the Pāṇḍavas. There, they attacked a group of gangharvas (heavenly musicians) and were de-
feated after a great battle. They were rescued by the just and noble Yudhiṣṭhīra, with whom the gandharvas refused to fight, and the rescue humiliated Duryodhana, Karna and the Sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Miracles occurred, and adventures without number came the way of the Sons of Pāṇḍu. Arjuna returned from his pilgrimage. Finally, the thirteenth year of their exile arrived, and, in various disguises, they came to the court of Virāṭa, King of the Matsyas, where they took up domestic service. Yudhiṣṭhīra became a courtier to the king; Bhima served as a cook; Arjuna disguised himself as a eunuch to serve the ladies of the court; Nakula became a stable boy; Sahadeva became the king's cowherd, and Drāupadī became the attendant of the queen and the princesses of Virāṭa's court. But soon Drāupadī's beauty caught the eye of Kīcaka, the commander in chief of Virāṭa's armies, and he sought to seduce her. Her entreaties that she was merely a low-caste serving woman were of no avail. Kīcaka pursued her and tried to rape her. Careless of revealing the identities of the Sons of Pāṇḍu, she arranged for an assignation with Kīcaka, and persuaded Bhima to go in her place. When Kīcaka appeared, Bhima pounded him to a pulp, later going back to his kitchen, taking a bath and sleeping with satisfaction. Kīcaka's death made Drāupadī an object of fear at the court of King Virāṭa, and she was asked to leave. She requested one more month's stay (it was the last month of the thirteenth year of the exile of the Sons of Pāṇḍu, and they were obliged to preserve their incognito until it ended).

But rumors of the slaying of Kīcaka began to reach Hāṣṭina-pura, and, as everybody knew Kīcaka to be a man of great physical prowess, slayable only by the mighty Bhima, a suspicion began to grow that the Pāṇḍavas were at Virāṭa's court. Duryodhana proposed invading Virāṭa's realm, and was enthusiastically supported by King Suśarman of Trigarta (which lay in the neighborhood of modern Lahore). Suśarman had long had an account to settle with Virāṭa, and now that the latter's chief of armies had been killed, he thought it a good time to strike. Karṇa agreed. Suśarman attacked the dominions of Virāṭa, laying waste the land. Virāṭa regretted the loss of his general, but Yudhiṣṭhīra reassured him. Though he was a mere holy man, Yudhiṣṭhīra said, he was also an expert in the art of war. If Virāṭa would permit him to arm the cook, the stable boy and the cowherd, they would protect him. These, of course, were Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva, and they set out, this time without Arjuna, to protect Virāṭa and defeat Suśarman and the Kāuravas. There was a big battle, and Virāṭa was taken captive for a time. Bhima at one point wanted to uproot a tree to use as a weapon, but this was such a well-known habit of his that Yudhiṣṭhīra cautioned him against it, lest the identity of the Pāṇḍava Princes be discovered. Bhima took his place in a chariot, and the Pāṇḍavas threw back the armies of Suśarman, released Virāṭa and brought him back to his capital city, Matsya, in triumph. Meanwhile, Duryodhana had attacked Virāṭa's realm from the opposite side and was stealing the cattle that were part of Virāṭa's wealth. Virāṭa's son, Prince Uttara, was anxious to respond to this attack, and he had heard that Arjuna, though a eunuch (still disguised), had at one time been a charioteer. He asked Arjuna to serve him in this capacity, and the two of them went out alone to tackle the whole Kāurava army. It was Uttara's first battle, and when he saw the Kāuravas arrayed,
Arjuna was at some pains to keep him from fleeing the field. Finally, he made Uttara his charioteer, and, sending him to retrieve some weapons he had hidden in a tree, prepared for battle, sounding his conch horn Devadatta. Drôña and Bhîśma had already recognized him. But the period of thirteen years had expired. Drôña advised the Kûrûs to let Duryodhana return to Hûstinapura with part of the army, and to leave another part to seize Virâta’s cattle. Bhîśma, Drôña, Krûpa, Asvatthâman, son of Drôña, and Karṇa would remain to give battle to Arjuna. But Arjuna pursued Duryodhana, and at the same time managed to put the cattle stealers to flight. Then he returned to fight with the Kûrû forces, defeating them all and finally using a magic weapon that made them fall down unconscious. He then stripped their clothes off, and they were forced to return to Hûstinapura in disgrace. Meanwhile, Arjuna sent word back to the court of Virâta, saying that the young Uttara had won a glorious victory. On the way back, he hid his arms in the tree again, and assumed his former effeminate garb as a eunuch.

When Virâta returned to his court after the victory over Suśarma, he noticed that his son, Uttara, was missing, but Uttara soon turned up. On being questioned, he gave all the credit for the victory to Arjuna, and the Pûṇḍaras immediately disclosed their true identity. No longer was it necessary for them to maintain their incognito. They left Virâta’s capital and settled in the city of Upaplavya, another place in Virâta’s realm. Here they summoned their friends and relatives. Krishna and Balarâma arrived with Arjuna’s second wife Subhadrâ and their son Abhimanyu, along with many Yûdha warriors. Those who had briefly joined the Pûṇḍaras in the forest returned. The King of the Kûsîs and Śâibya, King of the Śibis, arrived with their retinues. Drupada, King of the Pûñcâlas, brought a considerable army, along with Śikhandin (the former Ambâ) and his twin brother Dhṛṣṭadyumna. Sâtyaki (otherwise known as Yuyudhâna, and a kinsman of Krishna) was present also. Led by Krishna, this mighty gathering of warriors thought of sending a last peace envoy to the Kûrûs. Balarâma was in favor of this move. But Sâtyaki deplored the idea as unworthy of warriors, and Drupada agreed. A brâhman was nevertheless sent to Hûstinapura with proposals to Duryodhana for a peaceful settlement, the settlement being that the Sons of Dhṛtarâśtra agree to return the lands they had taken from the Sons of Pûndu. The aged Bhîśma was in favor of the settlement, but Karṇa was for war. Krishna and Balarâma regarded themselves as neutrals, friendly to both sides. Duryodhana approached Krishna asking for his help in the coming battle. Krishna offered Duryodhana and Arjuna each a choice between himself, unarmed, and his army, the Nârâyaṇa tribesmen. Arjuna chose Krishna, and Duryodhana the army. Krishna agreed to serve as Arjuna’s charioteer. Balarâma decided to abstain from the battle.

Meanwhile a tremendous mobilization took place on both sides. Sâlya, King of Madra Deśa, marched toward the Pûṇḍaras with a huge army, intending to join them, but Duryodhana extended exaggerated hospitality toward him and his troops, and when Sâlya asked how he could repay it, Duryodhana asked him to join the side of the Kûrûs, which he did. Sâlya was an uncle of Nakula and
Sahadeva, and thus he cast his lot against them just to keep a promise. His sympathies, however, remained with the Pañcavas, and he promised Yudhiṣṭhīra that if he were to become Karna's charioteer when Karna attacked Arjuna, he would hamper Karna's efforts. Ultimately, at their headquarters in Upaplavya, in Virata's kingdom, the Pāṇḍavas mobilized a force of seven divisions. The Kāuravas, at Hāstina-pura, mobilized a much larger force of eleven divisions. Each division consisted of 21,870 chariots, an equal number of elephants, three times as many horsemen and five times as many foot soldiers. Thus, tremendously large armies were prepared to fight. By count, the Pāṇḍavas had an army of 153,090 chariots, 153,090 elephants, 459,270 horsemen and 765,450 foot soldiers, while the Kāuravas, under the Sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, had an army of 240,570 chariots, 240,570 elephants, 721,710 horsemen and over a million foot soldiers. Even allowing for the exaggerations common in epics, these were armies of colossal dimensions, perhaps similar to the massive armies of contemporary Persia, and far exceeding in number those of the contemporary Greeks.

Two last minute efforts were made to avoid war. Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the blind and weak-minded king of the Kāuravas, sent his minister Saṁjaya to plead for peace with the Pāṇḍavas, but Saṁjaya was merely the personal envoy of a monarch who confessed he could not control his own sons. Drāupadī, the collective wife of the Pāṇḍavas, was prepared to sacrifice anything for revenge, and was very much for war. Krishna made a trip to see the Kāuravas without much hope, and, as he expected, was spurned by Duryodhana. There was no recourse but war. One more thing happened just before hostilities broke out. Kuntī, mother of the Pāṇḍava Princes, met Karna while he was at prayers near a river, and informed him that he was not the humble charioteer's son he thought he was, but her own son by the Sun god. This gratified Karna, but it was too late to withdraw from battle against his half brothers, Yudhiṣṭhīra, Bhima and Arjuna.

Now that we are on the eve of the great Battle of Kurukṣetra, it might be wise to review our cast of main characters.

First the Sons of Pāṇḍu, otherwise known as the Pāṇḍavas (the Good Guys):

Yudhiṣṭhīra ("He who is steady in battle"), son of Prthūr or Kuntī by the god Dharma ("Righteousness" or "Law"), the eldest of the Pāṇḍava Princes, known for his uprightness of character, rightful inheritor of the throne at Hāstina-pura, king of Indraprastha, and, after the slaying of Jarāsaṁdha, emperor.

Arjuna, son of Prthūr or Kuntī by the god Indra, and hero of the Bhagavad Gītā. (Because of his mother's two names, he is often referred to as Pārtha, "Son of Prthū," or Kāunteya, "Son of Kuntī"). He is a blameless knight (his name means "Silver White") and a powerful warrior noted particularly for his skill as an archer.

Bhima, son of Prthūr or Kuntī by the wind god Vāyu, and sometimes referred to as Vṛkodara ("the Wolf-bellied") because of his insatiable appetite. He is not the most intelligent, but he is by far the most powerful of the Pāṇḍava Princes, a man accustomed to uprooting trees to assail his enemies with. He is a great slayer of demons. He is also a half brother of Hanumān, the monkey god who assisted the great hero Rāma, of the epic The Rāmāyaṇa. During the final stages
of the Battle of Kurukṣetra, he tears apart the evil Kāurava, Duḥṣāsana, and
drinks his blood. “Bhima” means “terrible” or “awful.”
Nakula (“Color of the Mongoose”), son of Māđrī by one of the Aśvins, the
divine horsemen who draw the chariot of the dawn. The Aśvins were Vedic gods
of very early origin. Nakula led the Vatsa tribesmen in the great battle.
Sahadeva (“Accompanied by the gods”), son of Māđrī by the other of the
Aśvins, and twin brother of Nakula.
Next, their allies:
Drupada (“Rapid Step”), King of Pāṇcāla, father of Dhṛṣṭadyumna and of his
twin Drāupadi, the collective wife of the Pāṇḍava Princes, thus their father-in-
law.
Dhṛṣṭadyumna (“He whose Splendor is Bold”), son of Drupada, and com-
mander in chief of the Pāṇḍava armies.
Śīkhaṇḍin (“He who wears a Tuft of Hair”), son of Drupada, a reincarnation
of Aṁbā, who had refused to marry Vicitrāvīrya – now a powerful warrior,
though still regarded by Bhīṣma as female.
Abhimanyu (“Into Anger”), son of Arjuna by his second wife Subhadrā.
Sātyaki (“He whose Nature is Truth”), otherwise known as Yuyudhāna
(“Anxious to Fight”), a kinsman of Krishna and King of the Vṛṣṇi tribe.
Virāṭa (“Ruling Widely”), King of Matsya, at whose court the Pāṇḍava
Princes had taken refuge in disguise during the thirteenth year of their exile.
Uttara (“Superior”), son of Virāṭa, and brother-in-law of Abhimanyu.
Sahadeva (“Accompanied by the Gods”), son of the dead Jarāśāṇādha, King
of Māgadha, not to be confused with the Pāṇḍava Prince of that name.
Śāliya (“Relating to the Śibis”), King of the Śibis.
Ghaṭotkaca (“Shining like a Jug” – a name derived from the fact that he was
bald), son of Bhīma by a rākṣasī, and thus half rākṣasa, or demon.
Irāvat (“Comfortable”), son of Arjuna by a Nāga (Serpent-demon) princess.
The King of the Kāṣis, father of Aṁbā, Aṁbikā and Aṁbālikā, the last two of
whom married Vicitrāvīrya and, by Vyāsa, became grandmothers of the Pāṇḍava
Princes.
Dhṛṣṭaketu (“He whose Brightness is Bold”), King of the Cedis.
Cekitāna (“Intelligent”), a prince, ally of the Pāṇḍavas.
Krishna (“Black” or “Dark”), theoretically a neutral, but acting as Arjuna’s
charioteer. He is the avatar of Vishnu, or the Supreme Spirit, and he speaks most
of the lines of the Bhagavad Gītā. He is also related to the Pāṇḍavas by marriage,
being the brother of Kunti, mother of the Sons of Pāṇḍu, and hence their uncle.
Besides these notables, the Pāṇḍava army contained members of the Abhisāra
tribe of West Kashmir, the Daśārnas, a people from south-east of Madhya Deśa,
the Karūṣa, an outcaste tribe related to the Cedis, the Vatsas, inhabitants of a
country of that name, and the Yādavas (members of Krishna’s tribe). This army
was mobilized at Upaplavya in the land of Matsya, ruled by Virāṭa.

Now, the Sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, otherwise known as the Kāuravas or the Sons of
Kuru (the Bad Guys):
Duryodhana ("Dirty Fighter"), eldest son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and instigator of the events that led up to the Battle of Kurukṣetra. His primary aim was to deny Yudhiṣṭhira the throne of Hastinapura, and to rule in his place.

Śakuni ("Large Bird" or "Cock"), brother-in-law of King Dhṛtarāṣṭra and maternal uncle of the Kāūrava Princes. A counsellor to Duryodhana.

Duḥśāsana ("Of Bad Commands"), a son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and the warrior who dragged Draupadi by the hair before the assembled Kāūravas after the first dice game.

Karṇa ("Ear" – a name perhaps derived from the fact that he was born wearing a pair of earrings), a son of Kunti by the Sun god before her marriage to Pāṇḍu, and hence an unacknowledged half brother of the Pāṇḍava Princes. He was left afloat in a river as an infant and brought up by a charioteer. Until just before the battle, he was unaware of his true identity. A powerful warrior and great general.

Bhīma, aged warrior, teacher of the princes on both sides of the Battle of Kurukṣetra. He was the great uncle of both the Sons of Pāṇḍu and the Sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and he was reluctant participant in the battle. However, because of his sagacity in matters of war, he was made generalissimo of the Kāūrava forces until he was slain by Arjuna and his charioteer Śikhaṇḍin. His name, like Bhīma’s means “terrible” or “awful.”

Droṇa ("Bucket"), a great warrior and teacher of warriors. A brāhman by birth, and the father of Aśvatthāman.

Kṛpa (a name related to kṛpā, f. "pity"), warrior and teacher of warriors, adopted son of King Śaṅtanu, one of the elder warriors at Kurukṣetra, and at one point, general of the Kāūrava forces.

Aśvatthāman ("He who has the Strength of a Horse"), son of Droṇa by Kṛpa’s sister Kṛpī.

Vinda, a son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Sudākṣiṇa ("Having a good Right Hand"), King of the Kambojas. The Kambojas of the Mahābhārata are located north of Kurukṣetra.

Bhagadatta ("He who is Given by Bhaga," a god who bestows wealth), King of Pṛāgyotisā (modern Assam), who led the Kīrāṭa, a mleccha, or barbarian, tribe in the battle.

Śalya ("Spear"), King of Madra, brother of Pāṇḍu’s second wife, Mādrī and thus a maternal uncle of the Pāṇḍava Princes Nakula and Sahadeva.

Śālva ("Son of the Śalvas"), King of the Śalva people.

Jayadratha ("He whose Chariot is Victorious"), King of Sindhu-Sāuvīra, a country near the Indus River.

Śūrasena ("He whose Army is Valiant"), King of Mathurā.

Kṛtavarman ("He whose Armor is Ready"), an allied warrior.

Bhūrīśravas ("He whose Praise Abounds"), son of King Somadatta of the Bāhlikas (Bactrians).

Citrasena ("He whose Army is Excellent"), a son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

And along with these notables, the Kāūrava army contained members of the Andhaka, Aṁbaśṭha, Darada, Kṣudraka, Mālava, Kaliṅga, Kekaya, Munḍa, Niśāda, Śalva, Śibi (which had members on both sides), Sindhu, Bāhlika
(Bactrian), Vāṅga (Bengal), Videha and Vidarbha tribes, along with some Yādavas.

The blind King Dhṛtarāṣṭra stood behind the Kāurava lines and listened while his minister Saṁjaya described the battle to him.

At the time of this legendary, and also probably historic, battle, northern India was divided into small, warlike kingdoms. It was the time of the later “Vedic” works, the Brāhmaṇas, the Upanishads and the Āryakas, and, though the warriors at Kurukṣetra (with the exception of Krishna) were not particularly involved in intellectual pursuits, it was a time of enormous intellectual ferment among the brāhmans, who were engaged in interpreting, and adding to, the Vedas. The India portrayed in the Mahābhārata still retained some of the warlike traditions of the Aryans who had invaded the subcontinent less than a thousand years previously. It was also a country comprising a wide variety of races: Dravidians (the inhabitants at the time of the Aryan invasion), Persians, Scyths, Mongols, Greeks and many primitive tribes that may have originated in the pre-Dravidian races – the Australoids and paleolithic Negritos. And it also included what is now practically the whole of North India, plus some territory to the East and West. (N.B. Though the date of the Battle of Kurukṣetra has been tentatively placed by authorities at some point between 800 and 600 B.C., the Mahābhārata, of which it forms a part, is vague as to dates, and was probably in process of compilation from 400 B.C. to 300 A.D.).

The great battle was supposed to be fought according to certain rules of knightly etiquette, which were, in fact, adhered to in the very beginning. Fighting was to take place only in daylight. After sunset, everybody mixed in friendship. Single combats were supposed to be only among equals. Anyone leaving the field or sitting in Yoga posture was supposed to be immune from attack. Anyone who surrendered was to be spared. Anyone momentarily disengaged was prohibited from attacking one already engaged. Horsemen were prohibited from attacking foot soldiers. Mounted warriors could fight only with other mounted warriors. Warriors in chariots could fight only with other chariot-borne warriors. Anyone disarmed could not be attacked, and no attacks could be made on drummers, conch blowers or attendants, including charioteers. Animals were not to be killed unnecessarily or deliberately. As in all wars, however, these rules rapidly broke down as passions rose, and during the last days of the battle they were not observed at all.

Just as the first day of battle started, Arjuna, overcome with grief at the prospect of killing relatives, teachers and friends, asked Krishna, his charioteer, to draw up the chariot between the two armies, and the Bhagavad Gitā – all 2,800 lines of it – was spoken between Krishna and Arjuna. The great Yale Sanskritist Franklin Edgerton has called this a dramatic absurdity. With all due respect, I do not agree. When God speaks, it is not illogical for time to stand still while armies stand frozen in their places. In fact, I consider this frozen moment a dramatic triumph, and it is set at a point of climax in the epic where what follows is a foregone tragic conclusion.
Then the battle started. On the first day the Pāṇḍavas fared badly. Bhīṣma fought with Abhimanyu, Arjuna’s son and his own great grand nephew, gallantly complimenting him on his technique. Abhimanyu became a great hero. When he was hard pressed by Bhīṣma, Virāṭa, Uttara (his son), Dhrṣṭḍyūnma and Bhīma came to his assistance (this had been a fight between the oldest and the youngest warriors present). Uttara attacked Śalya, accidentally killing Śalya’s horse, and Śalya promptly killed Uttara (first casualty). But Uttara’s elephant continued to fight until it was killed. Śveta, a Pāṇḍava warrior, attacked Śalya, and for a time held off the whole Kaurava army single-handed, including Bhīṣma, but Bhīṣma finally killed him (second casualty) and went on to harass the Pāṇḍava army. The Pāṇḍavas were downcast as the sun set.

On the second day Dhrṣṭḍyūnma, the Pāṇḍava commander in chief, arrayed his army very carefully. But Bhīṣma attacked it with fearful results. Arjuna said to Krishna, “The grandsire (Bhīṣma) must be slain.” Arjuna attacked. The Kauravas tried to protect Bhīṣma but Arjuna fought them off. The gods came down to witness the battle. Bhīṣma hit Krishna (Arjuna’s charioteer) with an arrow. This angered Arjuna, but he did not succeed in killing Bhīṣma. At another point in the battlefield Drona was attacking Dhrṣṭḍyūnma, the Pāṇḍava generalissimo. The latter was hard pressed, but Bhīma came to his aid and carried him off in his chariot. Duryodhana then sent the Kaliṅga army against Bhīma who slew great numbers. Bhīṣma supported the Kaliṅgas: Śāṭyaki and others supported Bhīma and Abhimanyu. Śāṭyaki killed Bhīṣma’s charioteer (foul play) and Bhīṣma was forced to flee. The Kauravas were routed.

On the third day, the Kauravas attacked Arjuna. Śakuni attacked Śāṭyaki and Abhimanyu. Abhimanyu rescued Śāṭyaki, whose chariot had been destroyed. Drona and Bhīṣma attacked Yudhiṣṭhīra. Bhīma and his son Ghaṭotkaca attacked Duryodhana with heroism. Duryodhana swooned in his chariot, hit by Bhīma’s arrows, and was forced to retreat. Bhīma slew Kauravas by the score. Then Bhīṣma and Drona regrouped the Kauravas and Duryodhana returned to the field. Duryodhana criticized Bhīṣma for lack of zeal. Bhīṣma then made a tremendous attack on the Pāṇḍavas, and the Pāṇḍavas scattered. Krishna egged on Arjuna to attack Bhīṣma, but Arjuna’s heart was not in it. Bhīṣma, with great gallantry, continually praised his opponents. The Kauravas were turned back at the end of the day.

On the fourth day the Kauravas advanced under Bhīṣma, Drona and Duryodhana. Aśvatthāman, Bhūriśravas, Śalya and Citrasena surrounded Abhimanyu and attacked him, but his father, Arjuna, came to his rescue, and Dhrṣṭḍyūnma arrived with reinforcements. Then Bhīma appeared, and the Kauravas sent a large force of elephants against him. He scattered them all and caused panic among the Kauravas. Bhīma then attacked Duryodhana and nearly killed him. Bhīma’s bow was shattered. He picked up a new one and cut Duryodhana’s bow in two. Duryodhana smote Bhīma so heavily that he was forced to sit upon the ground. Bhīma’s son Ghaṭotkaca came to his defense. Eight of Duryodhana’s brothers were killed by Bhīma. By nightfall the Pāṇḍavas had won a victory, and
the Kāuravas were downcast. Bhīṣma advised suing for peace, but Duryodhana wouldn't listen to him.

On the fifth day Bhīṣma attacked the Pāṇḍavas and caused considerable havoc. Arjuna then attacked Bhīṣma. Duryodhana complained to Droṇa about the weakness of the Kāuravas attacks. Droṇa then attacked Sātyaki and Bhīma came to his defense. Droṇa, Bhīṣma and Salya together attacked Bhīma, but Śikhaṇḍin came to the rescue. At this point Bhīṣma turned away. He considered Śikhaṇḍin to be a woman, and he would not fight with women. Droṇa attacked Śikhaṇḍin and compelled him to withdraw. There ensued a big, confused battle in which the sons of Sātyaki were slain. Sātyaki had attacked Bhūriṣravas in an effort to protect them, but Bhūriṣravas killed them all. Bhīma rescued Sātyaki. Duryodhana rescued Bhūriṣravas. Arjuna slew thousands. It was a big Pāṇḍava victory.

On the sixth day Droṇa's charioteer was killed (foul play). There was great slaughter. Bhīma fought eleven of the Sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra all by himself, scattered them and pursued them on foot wielding his mace. He got behind the Kāurava lines and Dhrṣṭadyumna went to rescue him. Duryodhana and the other Kāuravas attacked Bhīma and Dhrṣṭadyumna who were in their midst. At this point Dhrṣṭadyumna, being surrounded along with Bhīma, used a secret weapon (the Pramohana, "that which bewilders the mind") which he had received from Droṇa as a student, and with it stupefied the Kāuravas. Then Duryodhana arrived with a similar secret weapon (it must have resembled tear, or nerve gas) and stupefied the Pāṇḍavas. But Yudhiṣṭhira came on with a large force to support Bhīma, who promptly revived and joined in. Droṇa killed Dhrṣṭadyumna's horses (foul play) and shattered his chariot. Dhrṣṭadyumna took refuge in Abhimanyu's chariot. The Pāṇḍavas wavered. Duryodhana was wounded by Bhīma and rescued by Kṛpa. Bhīṣma scattered the Pāṇḍavas, and the day was declared a victory for the Kāuravas.

On the seventh day there were many single combats. Virāṭa was defeated by Droṇa. Virāṭa's son Śaṅga was killed (this was the third of Virāṭa's sons to be slain). But the Kāuravas were getting the worst of it. Later, Yudhiṣṭhira defeated Śrutāyu, killing his horses and charioteer (foul play). Duryodhana's army was demoralized. Cekitāna attacked Kṛpa, killing his charioteer and horses (more foul play). Kṛpa retaliated by engaging Cekitāna in single combat on the ground, fighting until both fell, wounded and exhausted. Bhīma took Cekitāna away in his chariot. Śakuni performed a similar service for Kṛpa. Bhīṣma attacked Abhimanyu, but Abhimanyu was rescued by his father Arjuna. The other four Pāṇḍava Princes joined in, but Bhīṣma held his own against all five. At sunset, the warriors of both sides retired to their tents, nursing their wounds.

On the eighth day Bhīma killed eight of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons. Iravat, Arjuna's son by his Nāga princess wife, was killed by the rāṣṭasa warrior Alambuṣa. Arjuna was downcast. Ghaṭotkacca attacked the Kāuravas with great slaughter. Duryodhana advanced and was almost killed by Ghaṭotkacca, being rescued at the last minute by Droṇa. Sixteen sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra were killed that day.

On the ninth day Bhīṣma slew Pāṇḍavas by the thousand. Abhimanyu defeated
the rākṣasa warrior Alambaṣa. Sātyaki duelled with Aśvatthāmana, Drona with Arjuna, and Bhīma again attacked the Pāṇḍavas. Krishna suggested that Arjuna kill Bhīma, but, again, Arjuna had not the heart to kill his old teacher. Exasperated, Krishna got down from the chariot and proposed to attack Bhīma on foot, but Arjuna pulled him back. The day was generally victorious for the Kauravas.

On the tenth day Bhīma was killed, or to be more precise, mortally wounded. Arjuna attacked him with Śikhaṇḍin as his charioteer (Bhīma had already prophesied that he would be invincible except in the presence of Śikhaṇḍin, whom he considered to be a woman). Śikhaṇḍin shot arrows at Bhīma. Arjuna sent a hail of arrows, piercing Bhīma’s armor at points that Śikhaṇḍin had missed. Bhīma died very slowly, supported by a cushion of arrows. He claimed that he had been killed by Arjuna (an honor), though Śikhaṇḍin felt that he, or she, had fulfilled Arība’s vow by bringing the great son of King Śantānu to his end. The gods folded their hands in reverent salutation as Bhīma was defeated. The battle stopped while both sides paid homage to the old warrior. Bhīma asked for water, and Arjunashot an arrow into the ground. Water sprang forth. “Gaṅgā (the Ganges) has come up to quench her son’s thirst,” they said. Bhīma still counselled peace. Karnā approached him asking for his blessing. Bhīma advised him not to fight. But Karnā insisted that since he had cast his lot with Duryodhana, he had no choice but to continue. Bhīma survived for fifty-eight days (he kept himself alive deliberately so that he could die during “the upper going,” or northern phase of the sun, and thus attain nirvāṇa (see footnote to stanza 23, book VIII of the Gītā). He delivered several didactic discourses: he was still living, in fact, after the battle had ended.

The Kauravas then made a plan to capture Yudhiṣṭhira alive. It was Duryodhana’s idea, and Drona took it up gladly because he did not want to see Yudhiṣṭhira killed (it will be remembered that Yudhiṣṭhira was the rightful heir to the throne of Hāṣtinapura, and that Duryodhana was seeking to deprive him of the right). Duryodhana’s fundamental purpose was to get Yudhiṣṭhira into another game of dice. The Pāṇḍavas, however, heard of the plan and made their preparations to counter it.

On the eleventh day Drona attempted to capture Yudhiṣṭhira, but Yudhiṣṭhira fled on a swift horse, holding that it was no disgrace for a warrior to flee before a brāhmaṇ. There was single combat between Sahadeva and Śakuni. Śalya was defeated by Nakula; Dhrṣṭaketu was defeated by Kṛpa. Sātyaki engaged Kṛtavarmān; Virāṭa engaged Karnā. Abhimanyu engaged four prominent Kauravas at once. Bhima defeated Śalya. The Kauravas began to lose courage. Drona again attempted to capture Yudhiṣṭhira, but was foiled by Arjuna, who forced Drona to retreat. The day was a defeat for the Kauravas.

On the twelfth day the Kauravas, seeing that they could not capture Yudhiṣṭhira while Arjuna was present in the field, made a plan to draw Arjuna off and kill him. Susarmaṇ, chief of the army of the King of Trigarta, along with his four brothers, attacked Arjuna. He slew them all. Drona again tried to capture Yudhiṣṭhira, but Dhrṣṭadyumna and the other Pāṇcāla Princes stood by to protect him. Dhrṣṭadyumna attacked Drona, but Drona avoided him to get at Arjuna.
Drupada stood in his way. Drona attacked him, and then made for Yudhiṣṭhira. Two Pāñcāla princes, Vṛka and Satyajit, were killed, and Virāṭa's son Śatānika was killed by Drona while Śatānika was attempting to attack him. Pāñcālya, another Pāñcāla prince, was killed by Drona. Then occurred one of the most heroic feats of the entire battle. Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu, broke through the line of the Kaurava forces, and found himself surrounded. In a tremendous display of valor, he fended off the entire Kaurava army, including Duryodhana. The Pāṇḍavas tried to get to Abhimanyu to rescue him, but were prevented. The Kauravas, throwing good form to the winds, ganged up on Abhimanyu and disarmed him. He continued to fight with a chariot wheel as his only weapon. Finally, Lakṣmanā, son of Duḥśāsana, struck him to the ground, killing him. Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son Yuyutsu, who was fighting on the Pāṇḍava side, was so disgusted by this performance that he left the field. Yudhiṣṭhira blamed himself for the death of Abhimanyu. Arjuna was told about his son's death, and vowed vengeance on Jayadratha, King of the Śindhus, who was indirectly responsible (he had helped to trap Abhimanyu).

The battle continued. Drona failed in all his attempts to capture Yudhiṣṭhira. The Kaurava forces were stampeded. Bhagadatta, King of Prāgjyotisā, was indignant over the rout of the Kauravas. He attacked Bhīma and destroyed his chariot and horses. Bhīma, on foot, attacked the underside of Bhagadatta's elephant, inflicting wounds and driving the animal mad. All these were unfair tactics, but the rules of war were rapidly breaking down. Bhagadatta was attacked on all sides by the Pāṇḍavas, but Bhagadatta's maddened elephant caused great havoc among them. Arjuna, with Krishna as his charioteer, then made a tremendous attack on Bhagadatta, killing both him and his elephant. Śakuni's brothers, Vṛṣa and Acala, tried to rally the Kaurava forces, but were killed by Arjuna. Śakuni attacked Arjuna, but was forced to flee.

On the thirteenth day Arjuna, raining showers of arrows, penetrated the Kaurava ranks, and many Kauravas fled. Duḥśāsana became infuriated, and rushed against Arjuna with a force of elephants. But Arjuna pierced the elephant host, and Duḥśāsana's force, along with Duḥśāsana himself, fled, seeking Drona's protection. Arjuna proceeded against Drona's army with the object of getting at Jayadratha. Yudhāmanya and Uttamāujas followed him to protect him. Arjuna smote the Kaurava army, including an elephant force brought against him by the Aṅgas and Kaliṅgas. Arjuna slew horses, elephants and warriors. Meanwhile, Bhīma attacked a Kaurava warrior named Jalasaṁdha, Son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, while Yudhiṣṭhira engaged Kṛtavarm and Dhṛṣṭadyumna engaged Drona. Seeing the Kaurava forces slaughtered by Śatāyaki, Drona rushed toward him. At that point, Arjuna who was fighting the army of Jayadratha, blew his conch horn. Yudhiṣṭhira, hearing it, and suspecting that Arjuna was in trouble, sent Śatāyaki to the rescue. Then, Bhīma attacked Drona with some success, and proceeded through the Kaurava lines, seeking Arjuna. Karna rushed at Bhīma, and caused him to retreat. Five of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons attacked Bhīma, but he dispatched them all.

On the fourteenth day Bhūriśravas, Prince of the Bāhlikas, advanced against
Sātyaki and brought him to the ground, dragging him by the hair and striking him on the chest with his feet. Seeing Sātyaki’s plight, Arjuna, from a distance where he was engaged with Jayadratha, sent a stream of arrows at Bhūriśravas, cutting off his right arm. Bhūriśravas sat upon the ground in Yoga position. Sātyaki then beheaded Bhūriśravas as he sat. Arjuna pressed Jayadratha. There had been a vow made by Jayadratha’s father Vṛddhakṣatra that the head of whoever caused his son’s head to fall to the ground would burst into a hundred pieces. Krishna informed Arjuna of this vow, and Arjuna, as he beheaded Jayadratha, caused a stream of arrows to convey the head into the lap of his father, who was meditating nearby. When his father roused himself from meditation, he let his son’s head fall to the ground and his head burst into a hundred pieces. The battle continued into the night by torchlight, and the Pāṇḍavas attacked Drona, but Drona slew his old enemy Drupada as well as Virāga.

On the evening of the fifteenth day all knightly ethics were totally discarded. Even Krishna had lost all sense of honor — a rather surprising state considering that he was the avatar of Vishnu or the Supreme Spirit. He suggested naming one of the Pāṇḍava elephants Aśvatthāman, after Drona’s son and then killing the animal. The idea was carried out. During a lull in the fighting, Drona was told that Aśvatthāman was dead, and thought that he had lost his son. He appealed to Yudhiṣṭhira for confirmation knowing that Yudhiṣṭhira never lied. But honor was at such a low ebb that Yudhiṣṭhira did lie, confirming the death of Aśvatthāman. Drona, grieving, laid down his arms and was promptly decapitated by Dhṛṣṭadyumna. After Drona’s death, Karna took charge of the Kaurava army.

On the sixteenth day Karna challenged Yudhiṣṭhira to fight, but during the ensuing combat Yudhiṣṭhira ignominously fled for the second time. A little later Bhima, recalling Drāupadi’s humiliation after the dice game, attacked Duḥśāsana, who had dragged Drāupadi before the assembled Kauravas, tore him apart and drank his blood as he had promised to do. The warriors on both sides were horrified by Bhima’s act.

On the seventeenth day there was a long and terrible duel between Arjuna and Karna. At one point a wheel of Karna’s chariot became stuck in the mud, and he was forced to leap to the ground to try to raise it. He invoked the laws of chivalry, and asked Arjuna not to attack him while he was engaged in this task. He also thought of the mantra that he had learned from the brāhman warrior Paraśurāma to use with the Sakti. But, as predicted, he could not remember it. Krishna egged Arjuna on, and Arjuna unethically slew Karna. A little later, Yudhiṣṭhira, who had previously fled before Karna’s attack, reproached Arjuna for not supporting him at the time. This enraged Arjuna, and he would have turned on his brother to kill him, but for the intervention of Krishna (even the Pāṇḍavas were now quarreling among themselves). After the death of Karna, Śalya assumed command of the Kaurava forces.

On the eighteenth and last day the tide turned definitely in favor of the Pāṇḍavas. Duryodhana was now practically alone. He fled and concealed himself in a nearby lake (he possessed the power of remaining under water). A little later Sahadeva slew Śakuni and Yudhiṣṭhira slew Śalya. After Śalya’s death, Aśvat-
Thāman took charge of the Kaurava forces. Bhima next killed all the remaining Sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra except the absent Duryodhana. Then he searched for Duryodhana and discovered his hiding place in the lake. He taunted Duryodhana, and forced him to emerge. A tremendous battle with clubs ensued between Bhima and Duryodhana. Finally, Bhima, hitting below the belt, broke both Duryodhana’s legs with his club, and trampled upon his body. This unfair and brutal act aroused the anger of Yudhiṣṭhira, who struck Bhima across the face and asked Arjuna to take him away. Balarāma, Krishna’s brother, had finally appeared on the field, had witnessed Bhima’s foul blow, and was so disgusted that he attacked Bhima with a plow (Balarāma’s customary weapon). He was stopped by Krishna, and left angrily for their capital city Dwārakā. Duryodhana, still alive, rebuked Krishna, calling him the son of a slave (an allusion to his cowherd foster father).

Then Aśvatthāman took an oath to exterminate the Pāṇḍavas, and egged on by the dying Duryodhana, he, Kṛpa and Kṛtavarman, the last remaining Kaurava nobles decided on a night raid, approaching the Pāṇḍavas in their camp. Kṛpa was against this idea, but he went along. The Pāṇḍava Princes were away at the time, Aśvatthāman first killed his father’s slayer, Dhṛṣṭadyumna by stamping on him as he slept. Next he killed Šikhandin who was also asleep, as well as the warriors Uttaṃājas, Prativindhya, Sutasoma, Śatāṅika and Śrutakirti. Using a magic weapon (the brahmastra), he slew the unborn Parikṣit, son of Abhimanyu, who was still in his mother’s womb. However, Parikṣit came alive again, owing to Krishna’s magic intervention. Aśvatthāman then killed the five young sons of Drāupadi by her five husbands. Kṛpa and Kṛtavarman took no part in this cowardly slaughter; they were keeping watch at the gates of the camp. Aśvatthāman brought the five heads of the sons of Drāupadi back to Duryodhana, saying that they were the heads of the five Pāṇḍava Princes. But Duryodhana knew better, and he reproached Aśvatthāman for slaying innocent children. Then he died.

The Pāṇḍava Princes, returning to their camp, saw what Aśvatthāman had done, and pursued him furiously. Bhima fought with Aśvatthāman and overcame him. Aśvatthāman took a jewel from his forehead and presented it to Bhima in token of defeat. Bhima gave the jewel to Drāupadi, who later presented it to Yudhiṣṭhira as an ornament for his crown.

The battle was over. Only three of the warriors on the Kaurava side – Kṛpa, Aśvatthāman and Kṛtavarman – survived. The children of the Pāṇḍavas had all been killed except Arjuna’s grandchild Parikṣit. The bodies of the slain warriors were gathered up, wrapped in perfumed linen, laid upon a great funeral pyre and burned. Yudhiṣṭhira was proclaimed King of Hāstinapura. Dhṛtarāṣṭra mourned the loss of his hundred sons. He embraced Yudhiṣṭhira as a token of peace. But when Bhima was announced to the blind king, Krishna put a metal statue in his place, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra crushed it to powder. Gandhārī, wife of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and mother of his hundred sons, did not forgive, but nevertheless blessed the Pāṇḍavas. Yudhiṣṭhira reigned at Hāstinapura, but he was not happy. Krishna returned to Dwārakā. Yudhiṣṭhira’s reign lasted for fifteen years, during which he treated the
blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra with respect. As for Dhṛtarāṣṭra himself, he practiced austerities and went to live in the forest, accompanied by Kuntī, Gāndhārī and his minister Saṃjaya. They returned after three years only to be burned to death as their house caught fire. Saṃjaya, however, escaped the fire and went to the Himālaya as a saṃnyāsin, or renouncer of all the things of life.

Krishna ruled in Dvārakā for thirty-six years, but his tribe, the Yādavas, gave themselves up to drunken revelry. In one of their drunken orgies Krishna’s son, Pradyumna, and also Sātyaki were killed. Balarāma was so disgusted at this that he retired to the forest, assumed a Yoga position and died. Krishna realized that the time had come to end his role as the *avatār* of Vishnu. He was shot by a hunter as the *avatār* escaped. The Pāṇḍavas crowned Parīkṣit, son of Abhimanyu and Uttara, and grandson of Arjuna, king. Then they departed for the Himālaya along with Drāupadī. On the way, Drāupadī, Sahadeva and Nakula died. Then Arjuna and Bhīma died. Yudhīṣṭhira alone was left, and he continued to climb. A dog had joined him. The god Indra sent a chariot to take Yudhīṣṭhira to heaven but would not take the dog. Yudhīṣṭhira had become fond of the dog and refused to go without it. Then the dog vanished. It had been the god Dharma (Yudhīṣṭhira’s father) in disguise. Yudhīṣṭhira finally found himself on Mount Meru, the Olympos of India, and, much to his disgust, found Duryodhana there. A messenger took Yudhīṣṭhira through a sort of hades, where he found the other Pāṇḍava Princes and Kārṇa. He chose to remain with them. Then heaven opened, and Yudhīṣṭhira and the others became godlike.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE VOCABULARIES

abl., ablative.
acc., accusative.
act., active.
adj., adjective.
adv., adverb.
*BV cpd., Bahuvrihi compound. A compound which is always adjectival to a noun or pronoun, either expressed or implicit. The last member is a noun and the first usually an adjective. Its structure can be most simply explained by examples: "He whose B (last member) is A (first member)" or "This of which the B (last member) is A (first member)." Examples can readily be found in English: "redneck," i.e. he whose neck is red; "bluebeard," i.e. he whose beard is blue; "hardhat," i.e. he whose hat is hard. In Sanskrit: mahāratha, he whose chariot is mighty; Dhṛtarāṣṭra (proper name), he by whom the kingdom is held; mahābāho (vocative), O Thou whose arms are mighty; anantarūpa, that of which the form is unending: avyatādini, such that their beginnings are unmanifest.
dat., dative.
DV cpd., Dvandva (copulative) compound.
esp., especially.
f., feminine.
fut., future.
gen., genitive.
indic., indicative.
ifc., "in fine compositi," "at the end of a compound," indicating the last member of a compound.
inst., instrumental.
interrog., interrogative.
irreg., irregular.
*KD cpd., Karmadhāraya compound, a compound the members of which have the same case. There are three types: (a) the first member is an adjective, the second a noun. Example in English: "highway," in Sanskrit: "mahādhana," "great wealth." (b) both members are nouns. Example in English: "gentleman-thief," i.e. a thief who is a gentleman; "boy-actress" (in Shakespeare's time), i.e. an actress who is really a boy. Examples in Sanskrit: "rājārṣi," "king-sage;" "devajana," "god people." (c) both members are adjectives. Examples in English: "pale-red," "snow-white." Examples in Sanskrit: "dhūmarāja," "god people.
loc., locative.
loc. absol., locative absolute.
m., masculine.
mid., middle.
n., neuter.
nom., nominative.
p., past.
pass., passive.
pl., plural.
pr., present.
saṃdhi – not an abbreviation, but a term indicating an alteration in accord with the laws of euphonious combination of words.
sg., singular.
*TP cpd., Tatpuruṣa compound. A compound of two words which would ordinarily have different case endings. Examples in English:
“mountain peak,” i.e. the peak of a mountain, etc. In Sanskrit: jivaloka (jiva, living; loka, world), the world of the living; rajendra (rāja, king; Indra, chief), chief of kings, etc. The members of these compounds are nouns.

voc., vocative.

* I am indebted to the Sanskrit scholar J. A. B. van Buitenen of the University of Chicago for these remarkably clear definitions of Sanskrit compounds. They are far preferable to the ones listed in Whitney’s Sanskrit Grammar.
EPITHETS (NICKNAMES) USED IN THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

For Krishna:
Hṛṣīkeśa – The Bristling-haired One.
Acyuta – Imperishable One, or One who has not Fallen.
Mādhava – Descendant of Madhu (a Yādava or Mādhava patriarch).
Keśava – The Handsome-haired One.
Govinda – Chief of Herdsmen.
Madhusūdana – Destroyer of the Demon Madhu (properly an epithet of Vishnu).
Janārdana – Agitator of Men, or Man-kind-tormenting (an epithet of Vishnu).
Vārṣṇeya – Clansman of the Vṛṣṇis.
Keśinīśūdana – Slayer of the Demon Keśin.
Arisūdana – Destroyer of the Enemy.
Bhagavān – Blessed One.
Vāsudeva – Son of Vasudeva.
Prabho – Splendid One (voc.).
Mahābhāho – Mighty Armed One (a general epithet of warriors).
Yādava – Descendant of Yadu.

And in the Great Manifestation of Book XI:
Puruṣottama – Supreme Spirit, or Best of Men.
Mahātman – whose self is great.
Viṣṇu – Vishnu (whose avatar Krishna is).
Deveśa (Deva Iṣa) – Lord of Gods.
Anantarūpa – whose form is endless, Infinite Form.
Prajāpati – Lord of Creatures.
Aprameya – Immeasurable One.
Apratimaprabhāva – Incomparable Glory.
Īśam Īdyam – Lord to be Praised.
Deva – God.
Sahasrabāho – Thousand-armed One (voc.).

For Arjuna:
Dhanamjaya – Conqueror of Wealth.
Pāṇḍava – Son of Pāṇḍu.
Kapaidhvaja – The Monkey-banne red (a descriptive term rather than an epithet).
Pārtha – Son of Pṛthā.
Kāunteya – Son of Kuṇṭi.
Guḍākeśa – Thick-haired One.
Parampāta – Scorcher of the Foe.
Puruṣaśārīha – Bull among Men.
Mahābhāho – Mighty Armed One (a general epithet of warriors).
Kurunandana – Son of Kuru, or Joy of Kuru.*
Anagha – Blameless One.
Bhārata – Descendant of Bharata (a general epithet, also applied to King Dhṛtarāṣṭra).
Bharatarūṣabha – Bull of the Bharatas.
Dehabhṛtām Vara – Best of the Embodied.
Kuruśreṣṭha – Best of Kurus.*
Savyasācin – Ambidextrous Archer.
Kriṣṭin – Diademend One.
Kurupravīra – Chief Kuru* Hero.
Bharatāsreṣṭha – Best of the Bharatas.
Bharatasattama – Highest of the Bharatas.
Puruṣavyāghra – Tiger among Men.

* Reference to the ancient patriarch Kuru testifies to the fact that he was the common ancestor of both the Pāṇḍavas and the Kāuravas (Sons of Kuru).
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Dhrtarashtra uvāca

Dhrtarashtra spoke:

when in the field of virtue, in the field of Kuru

assembled together, desiring to fight

mine and the Sons of Pāṇḍu

what did they? Sanjaya?

Dhritarashtra spoke:

When they were in the field

of virtue, in the field of the Kurus,

Assembled together, desiring to fight,

What did my army and that of the Sons of Pandu do, Sanjaya?

* Kurukṣetra is an actual place, a small plain in the Panjab north of Delhi near Panipat.
samjdaya uvāca
Samjaya spoke:

Seeing indeed the army Of the sons of Pandu arrayed,
King Duryodhana, approaching his Master (Drona),
Spoke these words:

drṣṭvā (gerund √drṣ), seeing, having seen.
tu, indeed, truly.
pāṇḍava (adj.), pertaining to the Sons of Pāṇḍu.
aniṇa (m. n. acc. sg.), army, fighting force, face, appearance, edge.
(pāṇḍava-aniṇa, m. n. acc. sg. TP cpd., army of the Sons of Pāṇḍu.)
vṛūṇam (m. n. acc. sg.), arrayed, drawn up in battle formation.
duryodhana (m. nom. sg.), Duryodhana, chief of the Kūrava (Kuru) army, son of Dhrtaḥśtra and chief inciter of the battle. The name means “Dirty fighter.”
tadā, then, at that time.
ācāryam (m. acc. sg.), teacher, master, to the teacher, to the master (Drona).
upasamgampya (gerund upa sam √gam), approaching, going up to.
rājā (m. nom. sg.), the King, royal personage, here referring to Duryodhana.
vacanam (n. acc. sg.), word, speech.
abravīt (3rd sg. imperf. act. √brū), he said, he spoke.
Behold, O Master, the great army
Of the sons of Pandu
Arrayed by the son of Drupada,
Wise by your instruction.

* Both Droṇa and Drupada, as befits great heroes in mythology, had odd births. Drupada’s father, Prṣata, lost his seed at the sight of Menaka, an apsārā (nymph), wife of a Gandharva (aereal being). He tried to trample out the seed. Hence his name “rapid step.” Nevertheless, Drupada was born from this seed. Droṇa’s father, Bharadvāja, lost his seed under similar circumstances. It fell into a bucket he was carrying. Droṇa means “bucket” – see chapter on the setting of the Bhagavad Gītā.
I

4

त्र्युत्रुत्रा महेश्वरसा
atra śūrā maheśvāsā
here (are) heroes, mighty archers

भीमार्जुनसमायुधि
bhimārjunasamā yudhi
Bhīma and Arjuna equal to in battle.

युयुधानो विराटस्व
yuyudhāno virātas ca
Yuyudhāna and Virāta

ध्रुपदास का महाराठाख
drugadas ca mahārathaḥ
and Drupada, whose chariot is great.

Here are heroes, mighty archers, Equal in battle to Bhima and Arjuna, Yuyudhana and Virata, And Drupada, the great warrior;

atra, here, in this case.
śūrās (m. nom. pl.), heroes.
maheśvāsās (m. nom. pl.), maheśvāsās (m. nom. pl.), mahā iṣu āsās “mighty arrow hurlers,” mighty archers.
bhīma, Bhīma, a powerful warrior, brother of Arjuna, son of Kunti by the wind god Vāyu. The name means “tremendous,” or “awful.”
arjuna, Arjuna, the warrior hero of the Bhagavad Gītā, son of Kunti or Prthū. The name means “silver white.”
samās (m. nom. pl.), the same, equivalent, equal.
(bhīma-arjuna-samās m. nom. pl., TP cpd., equal to Bhīma and Arjuna.)
yudhi (m. loc. sg.), in battle, in fighting.
yuyudhānas (m. nom. sg.), Yuyudhāna, son of Satyaka. A Pāṇḍava ally. The name means “anxious to fight.”
viśās (m. nom. sg.), Virāta, a warrior king with whom the Pāṇḍavas once took refuge. A Pāṇḍava ally. The name refers to a district in India.
ca, and.
drugadas (m. nom. sg.), Drupada (“Rapid Step”), a Pāṇḍava warrior (see footnote on p. 53 above).
ca, and.
mahārathas (m. nom. sg.), epithet for Drupada, mighty warrior (as BV cpd.), he whose chariot is great.
And the valorous King of Kasi, valorous,

and the King of Kasi, valorous,

And the valorous King of Kashi,

And Shaibya, bull among men.

* Kuntibhoja, a Yadava prince, has an interesting relationship with the Pândava princes. He is, by adoption, their father-in-law, having adopted Prthë, daughter of his cousin Śūra, who was also a Yadava prince. Upon adoption, Prthë took her foster father’s name and became known as Kunti. Kunti, formerly Prthë, thus belonged to the Yadava clan, and was an aunt of Krishna, whose father, Vasudeva, was her brother (and a son of Śūra). Ultimately she became the mother of the first three Pândava princes (Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhima and Arjuna), as well as Karna. Throughout the Bhagavad Gītā Arjuna is referred to as Pārtha (Son of Prthë), or Kāunteya (Son of Kunti). — See chapter on “The Setting of the Bhagavad Gītā.”
Yudhamanyu and Yudhamanyu, mighty, Yudhamanyu, a warrior ally of the Pāṇḍavas. The name means “fighting with spirit.”

ca, and.

vikram, striding forth, bold, courageous.

Uttamaujas, a warrior ally of the Pāṇḍavas. The name means “of highest power” or “of supreme valor.”

cA, and.

Uttamaujas, a warrior ally of the Pāṇḍavas. The name means “of highest power” or “of supreme valor.”

cA, and.

uttrāvān, valorous, full of heroism.

Subhadras, the son of Subhadra, i.e. Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadra (Krishna’s sister) by Arjuna, who abducted her with Krishna’s consent.

drāupadeyās, the sons of Drāupadi, who was the collective wife of the five Pāṇḍava princes and the daughter of Drupada. There were five sons of Drāupadi: Prativindhya (by Yudhīśthira), Sutasoma (by Bīma), Srutakirti (by Arjuna), Satānika (by Nakula) and Srutakarman (by Sahadeva).

cA, and.

sarva (samādhi for sarve, nom. pl.), all.

evā, indeed (often used as a rhythmic filler).

mahārathās, great warriors, (as BY cpd.), those whose chariots are great.
Those of ours who are indeed distinguished,
Know them! O highest of the Twice-born,
The leaders of my army
I name for you by proper names:

asmākam tu viśiṣṭā ye
ours indeed distinguished who

tān nibodha dvijottama
them know! O highest of the Twice-born

nāyakā mama sāinyasya
leaders of my army

sāṁjaṛtham tān bravīmi te
for information I name to thee:

asmākam (gen. pl.), ours, our.
tu, indeed, truly.
viśiṣṭās (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle vi Śīṣ), distinguished, particular, preeminent.
ye (m. nom. pl.), who.
tān (m. acc. pl.), them.
nibodha (2nd sg. imperative act. ni Śudh), know! understand!
dvija (m.), twice-born, member of one of the three highest castes.
uttama (m.), highest chief, most excellent.
(dvijottama, m. voc. sg. TP cpd., O Highest of the Twice-born, refers to Droṇa.)
nāyakās (m. nom. pl.), leaders, chiefs, commanders.
mama (gen. sg.), of me, of my, of mine.
sāinyasya (m. n. gen. sg.), of army, of troops.
saṁjaṛtham (saṁ jñā artham, n. acc. sg.), for the purpose of knowing, for information, by proper names.
tān (acc. pl.), them.
bravīmi (1st sg. pr. indic. act. brū), I tell, I speak, I name.
te (dat. sg.), to thee.
bhavān bhīṣmaś ca karnaś ca
Thy Lordship and Bhīṣma and Karna

kṛpaś ca samitiṃjayah
and Kṛpa, victorious in battle

āśvatthāmā vikarnaś ca
Āśvatthāmān and Vikarna

sāumadattis tathāś ca
and the Son of Somadatta also;

Your Lordship and Bhishma and Karna
and Kṛpa, always victorious in battle,
Ashvatthama and Vikarna
and the son of Somadatta also;

bhavān (honorific, m. nom. sg.), Thy Lordship,
Your Lordship, thou. Refers to Drona.

bhīṣmaś (m. nom. sg.), Bhīṣma, aged Kāurava warrior,
known as "the grand-sire,"
great uncle of the Pāṇḍava princes, who is
fighting on the other side. He is a reluctant
participant in the battle. The name means
"awe-inspiring," "terrible" or "awful."

karnaś (m. nom. sg.), Karna, a Kāurava warrior,
unacknowledged half-brother of Arjuna and the other Pāṇḍava princes. He is
the son, by the Sun God Sūrya, of Prthū or
Kuntī, before her marriage to Pāṇḍu. He
has an old family grudge against Arjuna.

āśvatthāmā (m. nom. sg. of Āśvatthāmān),
Kāurava warrior, son of Drona and Kṛpī (sister of Kṛpa). The name means "having
the strength of a horse."

vikarnaś (m. nom. sg.), a son of King Dhṛta-
rāṣṭra and a Kāurava warrior. (The name
means either "without ears" or "having
wide ears."

sāumadattis (m. nom. sg.), the Son of Somadatta,
and a warrior prince on the Kāurava
side.

tathā, thus, also.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
anye ca bahavah śūrā
and other many heroes

madarthe tyaktajititāh
for my sake whose lives are risked

nānāśastraprāharanāḥ*
various weapon assailing

sarve yuddhaviśāradāḥ
all battle-skilled.

And many other heroes
whose lives are risked for my sake,
attacking with various weapons,
all skilled in battle.

* The compound śāstra-prāharanāḥ means literally "weapons to strike and weapons to hurl."
(I)

Sufficient is that force of ours
Guarded by Bhishma;
Insufficient though is
The force guarded by Bhima.

* This stanza has puzzled many translators because (1) Duryodhana's (the speaker's) forces are actually greater than those of the Pândavas (therefore hardly "insufficient"); (2) tad "that" seems to refer to something nearby while idam "this" seems to refer to something far off; (3) Bhîśma is generally regarded as a much greater leader of troops than Bhîma; (4) the words sound unnatural coming from Duryodhana who is supposed to be encouraging his forces with a pep talk.

The eminent Sanskrit scholar J. A. B. van Buitenen has investigated the matter and published his conclusions in the Journal of the American Oriental Society (Vol. 85, No. 1, Jan.-March 1965). The Vulgate version, from which practically all translations have been made, was, according to van Buitenen, preceded by another version used by Bhâskara the Vedântin, in the ninth century or thereabouts. In that version, which still survives, the names Bhîśma and Bhîma are transposed and the stanza reads:

aparyâptam tad asmâkam
balaṁ bhîmâbhîrakṣitam
paryâptam tv idam eteṣāṁ
balaṁ bhîmâbhîrakṣitam

balaṁ bhîmâbhîrakṣitam
(by) Bhishma guarded;

etevam (by) Bhima guarded;

aparyâptam (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle a pari vāpa), incomplete, insufficient, unlimited, unbounded, unequal.
tad (m. nom. sg.), that, this.
asmâkam (gen. pl.), of us, ours, to us.
balaṁ (n. nom. sg.), strength, force.
Bhîśma, the old Kûrava warrior, great uncle of the Pândava princes and a chief of the Kûrava army.
abhirakṣitam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle abhi vâry), guarded, protected.
(Bhîśma-abhirakṣitam, n. nom. sg. TP cpd., guarded by Bhîśma.)
paryâptam (n. nom. p. pass. participle pari vâpa), sufficient, abundant, equal.
tu, but though.
idam (n. nom. sg.), this.
eteṣāṁ (m. gen. pl.), of these, to them.
balaṁ (n. nom. sg.), strength, force.
Bhîma, Pândava warrior, brother of Arjuna.
abhirakṣitam (n. nom. p. pass. participle abhi vâry), protected, guarded.
(Bhîma-abhirakṣitam, n. nom. sg., guarded by Bhîma.)
And in all movements,  
Stationed each in his respective place,  
All of you, indeed,  
Protect Bhishma!

which in van Buitenen’s translation reads:  

“‘That army guarded by Bhima is not equal to us;  
On the other hand, this army, guarded by  
Bhishma is equal to them.’”

Actually, though Bhishma is the leader of the Kauravas, Bhima is not the leader of the Pándavas. Edgerton thinks the name Bhima is chosen in order to make a word play on the two names.
I  

12  

तस्य संज्ञनयन हर्षः
tasya saṁjanayan harṣaṁ
producing joy, of him (Duryodhana)

कुरुव्र्द्धः पितामहः
kuru vrddhaḥ pitāmahah
the Aged Kuru, the Grandfather,

सिंहनादं विनाद्योच्चैः
simhanādaṁ vinadyoccaih
roaring a lion’s roar on high

शान्कहं दध्माव प्रतापवान्
saṅkham dadhmāu pratāpavān
conch horn he blew powerfully

Making him (Duryodhana) happy,
The aged Kuru, his grandsire,
Roaring like a lion,
Blew his conch horn powerfully.

tasya (m. gen. sg.), of him, i.e. to him, to Duryodhana.
saṁjanayan (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle caus. saṁ jān), producing, bringing forth.
harṣaṁ (m. acc. sg.), joy, delight.
kuru (m.), Kuru, member of the Kuru tribe.
vrddhas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle vrḍh), grown larger, aged.
pitāmahas (m. nom. sg.), grandfather, lit. “great father,” descriptive of Bhiṣma.
simha (m.), lion.
nādam (m. acc. sg.), loud sound, roar.
vinadya (gerund vi nād), sounding forth, crying, bellowing.
(simhanādaṁ vinadya, roaring a lion’s roar.)
uccās (inst. pl. adverb), by high, by loud, loudly, elevated, on high.
šaṅkham (m. n. acc. sg.), conch horn.
dadhmāu (3rd sg. perfect vdhama), he blew.
pratāpavān (m. nom. sg. adj. from pra tap), full of dignity, full of power, full of strength, full of energy, searingly.
And thereupon the conch horns and the kettledrums,  
The cymbals, drums and trumpets  
All at once were sounded.  
The uproar was tremendous.

tatas, then, thereupon, from thence.  
sāṅkhās (m. nom. pl.), conch horns.  
ca, and.  
hēryas (f. nom. pl.), kettledrums.  
ca, and.  
pañava (m.), cymbal, drum.  
ānaka (m.), drum.  
gomukhās (m. nom. pl.), trumpets, lit. “bull­mouths” or “bull faces” (the plural refers to the whole compound).  
pañavanakagomukhā (m. nom. pl., DV cpd. the cymbals, drums and trumpets.)  
sahasā (n. inst. sg.), suddenly, quickly, all at once.  
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).  
abhahanyanta (3rd. pl. imperf. pass. abhi √han), they were struck, they sounded.  
sas (m. nom. sg.), the, this.  
sabdās (m. nom. sg.), sound, syllable, uproar.  
tumulas (m. nom. sg.), tumultuous, noisy.  
abhavat (3rd sg. imperf. act. √bhā), it was, it became.
Then, standing in the great chariot
Yoked with white horses,
Krishna and Arjuna
Sounded forth their divine conch horns.

Arjuna's chariot is drawn by four horses.
Pāṇcajanya, the Bristling Haired One (Krishna),

Devadatta, Conqueror of Wealth (Arjuna)

Pāṇḍu, the Wolf-bellied (Bhīma)

Krishna blew his Pāṇcajanya;
Arjuna blew Devadatta,
While Bhīma, terrible in action,
Blew the great conch horn Paundra.
King Yudhishthira,
Son of Kunti, blew Anantavijaya;
Nakula and Sahadeva
Blew Sughoṣa and Manipuspaka.
And the King of Kashi, supreme archer,
And Shikhandi, that great warrior, Dhrishtadyumna and Virata
And Satyaki, the invincible;

kāśyāś ca parameśvāsah
and the King of the Kāsīs, supreme archer,

śikhandī ca mahārathah
and Śikhāṇḍin, great warrior;

śaṭyakīścāparājītaḥ
and Śatyaki, the invincible:

kāśyāś (m. nom. sg.), the King of the Kāsīs, a tribe in a district identified with modern Benares.
ca, and.
parama (m.), supreme, highest.
śivāsas (m. nom. sg. śiva, arrow; śiva, hurler), archer, Bowman.
(parama-śivāsas, m. nom. sg. KD cpd., best archer.)
sikhandhī (m. nom. sg. of Śikhāṇḍin), a Pāṇḍava warrior, born as a girl and miraculously changed to a male, son of Drupada, and eventual killer of Bhīṣma who would not fight with a woman.
ca, and.
mahārathas (m. nom. sg.), great warrior, (as a BV cpd.) he whose chariot is great.
dhrṣṭadyumnas (m. nom. sg.), Pāṇḍava warrior; son of Drupada and brother of Drāupadī.
virītas (m. nom. sg.), Virāta, warrior king of a particular district in India, with whom the Pāṇḍava princes took refuge during the thirteenth year of their exile.
ca, and.
satyaśis (m. nom. sg.), Yuyudhāna, son of Satyaka and an ally of the Pāṇḍavas. The name means "one whose nature is truth."
ca, and.
aparājītas (m. nom. sg.), unconquered, invincible.
Drupada and the Sons of Drupadī

drupada drūpadeyāś ca
drupadasi (m. nom. sg.), “Rapid Step,” king of the Pāṇcālas and father of Drūṣṭadyumna, Śikhandin and Drupadī, the latter the common wife of the five Pāṇḍu princes.
drūpadeyās (m. nom. pl.), the sons of Drupadī.

cā, and.
sarvaśāh prthivipate
all together, O Lord of the Earth
(Dhṛtarāśtra)
sarvaśa (adv.), altogether, wholly, entirely.
prthivipate (m. voc. sg.), O Lord of the Earth, refers here to Dhṛtarāśtra, to whom the scene is being described by Sārjivaya.
sāubhadras (m. nom. sg.), the son of Subhadra, viz., Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna and Subhadra, his second wife.
mahā, strong, mighty.
bāhus (m. nom. sg.), arm.
(mahābāhus, nom. sg., BV cpd., having mighty arms.)
saṁkhān (m. acc. pl.), conch horns.
dadhmuḥ (3rd pl. perfect act. vdhmuḥ), they blew.

Drupadī and the Sons of Draupadī

sāubhadraś ca mahābāhuḥ
and the Son of Subhadra, strong armed

sāubhadras (m. nom. sg.), the son of Subhadra, viz., Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna and Subhadra, his second wife.
mahā, strong, mighty.
bāhus (m. nom. sg.), arm.
(mahābāhus, nom. sg., BV cpd., having mighty arms.)
saṁkhān (m. acc. pl.), conch horns.
dadhmuḥ (3rd pl. perfect act. vdhmuḥ), they blew.

praṁhak prthak, one by one, respectively, each in turn.

Drupada and the Sons of Draupadī

All together, O Lord of the Earth,
And the strong armed son of Subhadra
Blew their conch horns, each his own.

sarvaśa (adv.), altogether, wholly, entirely.
prthivipate (m. voc. sg.), O Lord of the Earth, refers here to Dhṛtarāśtra, to whom the scene is being described by Sārjivaya.
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mahā, strong, mighty.
bāhus (m. nom. sg.), arm.
(mahābāhus, nom. sg., BV cpd., having mighty arms.)
saṁkhān (m. acc. pl.), conch horns.
dadhmuḥ (3rd pl. perfect act. vdhmuḥ), they blew.

praṁhak prthak, one by one, respectively, each in turn.
The noise burst asunder
The hearts of the sons of Dhritarashtra,
And the tumult caused
The sky and the earth to resound.

*sas* (m. nom. sg.), the, this,
*ghoṣas* (m. nom. sg. from *ghuṣ*), noise, cry,
tumult, sound.
*dhārtarāṣṭrāṇām* (m. gen. pl.), of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.
*hrdayāni* (n. acc. pl.), hearts.
*vyadārayat* (3rd sg. causative imperfect act. *vi dr*), it burst, it tore, it rent, it lacerated, it caused to burst.
*nabhas* (n. acc. sg.), sky, firmament.
*ca* (f. acc. sg.), earth.
*ca* (f. acc. sg.), earth.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
tumult, tumultuous, tumult.
*vyanunādayan* (m. nom. sg. pr. causative act. participle *vi anu nad*), causing to make resonant, causing to thunder, causing to howl.
Then, Arjuna, having seen the sons of Dhritarashtra
Drawn up in battle array,
Raised his bow as the clash of weapons began.

* Arjuna’s standard was a flag with the symbol of a monkey. Incidentally, the monkey was Hanumān, the monkey god, who assisted Rāma in bringing back the kidnapped Sītā, his wife, in the Rāmāyana.
I

21

ह्रस्वीकेशं तदा बाल्यम्

ह्रस्वीकेशं तदा वाक्यं
to the Bristling Haired One (Krishna)
then word

इदम् या ह महीपते ।

इदम् या ह महीपते
this he said: O Lord of the Earth,

सेनयोर उभयोर मध्ये

सेनयोर उभयोर मध्ये
of the two armies both in the middle

रथं स्थापयं मे ज्युत।

रथं स्थापयं मे ’ज्युता
the chariot cause to stand of me, Imperishable One

Arjuna then spoke these words to Krishna:
O Lord of the earth,
Cause my chariot to stand in the middle
Between the two armies, Imperishable One,

ह्रसि (f.), bristling, erect.
केशम् (m. acc. sg.), hair.
(ह्रस्वीकेश, Bristling Haired a common nick-
name for Krishna.)
तदा, then.
वाक्यं (n. acc. sg.), word, speech.
इदम् (n. acc. sg.), this.
ाहा (3rd sg. perf. act. √ах), he said.
महि (f. nom. sg.), the earth.
पते (m. voc. sg.), O Lord, O Ruler, O Mas-
ter.
(महीपते, m. voc. sg. TP cpd., O Lord of
the Earth.)
सेनयोर् (f. gen. dual), of the two armies.
उभयोर् (f. gen. dual), of both.
मध्ये (n. loc. sg.), in the middle, in the
midst of.
रथम् (m. acc. sg.), chariot.
स्थापया (2nd sg. causative imperative act.
√स्थाय), cause to stand, cause to be situated.
में (gen. sg.), of me.
अच्युतम् (m. voc. sg.), not fallen, unchanging,
imperishable, unshaken, firm, an epithet of
Vishnu-Krishna.
I

22

yāvad etān nirikṣe 'ham
until these I behold, I,

yoddhukāmanāvasthitān
battle-hungry arrayed.

kāir maya saha yoddhayam
with whom? by me together to be fought

asmin ranasamudāyame
in this battle in undertaking.

Until I behold these warriors, 
Battle-hungry and arrayed. 
With whom must I fight 
In undertaking this battle?

yāvad, as many, as much, until.
etān (m. acc. pl.), these.
nirikṣe (1st sg. mid. nir viṅkṣ), I see, I behold.
aham (nom. sg.), I.
yoddhukāman (m. acc. pl.), wishing to fight, anxious to fight, hungry for battle.
avasthitān (m. acc. pl.), arrayed, arranged in battle formation.
kāis (m. inst. pl. interrog.), by whom? with whom?
mayā (m. inst. sg.), by me, with me.
saha, together, along with.
yoddhayam (n. nom. sg. gerundive yudh used impersonally), to be fought.
asmin (m. loc. sg.), in this.
raṇa (m.), battle, conflict; raṇa also means joy, pleasure, delight, and in its use here means battle as an object of delight.
samudāyame (m. loc. sg. derivative noun from sam uḍv yam), in lifting, in raising, in setting about, in undertaking, in readiness for.
(raṇa-samudāyame, m. loc. pl. TP cpd., in readiness for battle.)
I

23

yōtsyamānān avekṣe 'ham
those who are about to give battle I
behold, I,

ya ete 'tra samāgatāḥ
who these here come together

dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddher
of the Son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra of evil mind

yuddhe priyacikīrṣavah
in battle wishing to do service.

I behold those who are about to give battle,
Having come together here,
Wishing to do service in warfare
For the evil-minded son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra
(Duryodhana).
thus addressed, the Bristling Haired One
(Krishna)

by the Thick Haired One (Arjuna),
o Descendant of Bharata

of the two armies of both in the middle

having caused to stand the chief chariot

Thus Krishna was addressed by Arjuna,
O Dhritarashtra,
Having caused the chief chariot
To stand in the middle between the two armies.
Before the eyes of Bhishma and Drona
And all these rulers of the earth,
Arjuna said: Behold these Kurus assembled.
Arjuna saw standing there
Fathers, then grandfathers,
Teachers, maternal uncles, brothers,
Sons, grandsons, friends as well;

I
26

tatrāpaśyat sthitān pārthah
there he saw standing, the Son of Prthī
(Arjuna)

pitṛn atha pitāmahān
fathers, then grandfathers,

ācāryān mātulān bhrātṛn
teachers, maternal uncles, brothers,

putrān pāutrān sakhiṁs tathā
sons, grandsons, friends as well
Arjuna saw fathers-in-law, companions,
In the two armies,
And contemplated
All his kinsmen, arrayed.
Filled with infinite pity,
Despondent, he said this:
Having seen my own people,
Krishna,
Desiring to fight, approaching.
My limbs sink down,
My mouth dries up,
My body trembles,
And my hair stands on end;

sīdanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √sad), they
sink down, they sit.
mama (gen. sg.), of me, my.
gātrāṇi (n. nom. pl.), limbs, legs, instru-
ments of motion (from √gā, go).
mukham (n. nom. sg.), mouth, face.
ca, and.
pariśasyati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. pari √sasu),
it dries up, it makes dry.
vepathus (m. nom. sg. from √vip), a trem-
bling, a quivering, a quaking.
ca, and.
śarire (m. loc. sg.), in the body.
me (gen.sg.), of me, my.
roma (n.), hair, body hair.
harṣas (m. nom. sg. derivative noun √harṣ),
standing on end, bristling, standing erect.
(roma-harṣas, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., bristling
of the hair.)
ca, and.
jāyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive √jan), it is
born, it is brought forth, produced.
Gāndiva (Arjuna’s bow) falls from (my) hand,
My skin burns,
I am unable to remain as I am,
And my mind seems to ramble.
nimittāni ca paśyāmi
and omens I perceive

viperitāni keśava
inauspicious, O Handsome-haired One,

na ca śreyo 'nupaśyāmi
and not welfare I foresee

hatvā svajanam āhave
having destroyed own people in battle.

I perceive inauspicious omens,
O Krishna,
And I foresee misfortune
In destroying my own people in battle.
I do not desire victory, Krishna, 
Nor kingship nor pleasures. 
What is kingship to us, Krishna? 
What are enjoyments, even life?

na, not. 
kānkte (1st sg. pr. indic. mid. √kānkte), I desire, I wish for, I hanker after. 
vijayam (m. acc. sg.), conquest, victory. 
krṣṇa (m. voc. sg.), Krishna. 
na, not. 
ca, and, or. 
rajya (n. acc. sg.), kingship, kingdom, kingly power. 
sukhāni (n. acc. pl.), pleasures, happinesses, joys. 
ca, and, or. 
kim (interrog.), what? 
nas (dat. pl.), to us. 
rajyena (n. inst. sg.), with kingship, with kingdom, by kingship. 
govinda (m. voc. sg.), “Cow Finder,” epithet of Krishna, often translated “Chief of Cowherds,” because of a presumed Prakrit derivation, the interpretation of which is moot among scholars. See footnote. 
kim (interrog.), what? 
bhogāīs (m. inst. pl.), with pleasures, with enjoyments. 
jīvitena (n. inst. sg.), with life, by life. 
vā, or.

* Govinda (lit. “cow finder”), “Chief of Cowherds” presumes an adoption into Sanskrit of the Prakrit “gopendra” (gopa Indra), but this is the translation usually accepted.
Those for whose sake we desire
Kingship, enjoyments, and pleasures,
They are arrayed here in battle,
Abandoning their lives and riches.

yeśām (m. gen. pl.), of whom.
arthe (m. loc. sg.), for the sake of, in sake.
kāṅkṣitam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle
vēkāṅkṣ), desired, wished for, hankered after.
nas (gen. pl.), of us, by us.
rājya (n. nom. sg.), kingship, sovereignty.
bhogās (m. nom. pl.), pleasures, enjoyments
(of eating in particular).
sukhāni (n. nom. pl.), pleasures, comforts.
ca. and.
ta (sahādi for te, m. nom. pl.), they.
ime (m. nom. pl.), these.
avasthitās (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle
ava vēsthi), standing, arrayed, arranged in
battle formation.
yuddhe (n. loc. sg.), in battle, in warfare.
prānāṁ (m. acc. pl.) vital breaths, lives.
tyaktvā (gerund vētyaj), abandoning, sacri-
ficing, relinquishing, having abandoned.
dhanāni (n. acc. pl.), riches, booty.
ca. and.
Teachers, fathers, sons,
And also grandfathers,
Maternal uncles, fathers-in-law,
grandsons,
Brothers-in-law, and other kinsmen.
etān na hantum icchāmi
them not to slay I desire,

ghnato 'pi madhusūdana
who are also killing, Slayer of Madhu,

api trailokyarājyasya
even for the sovereignty of the three worlds

hetoh kim nu mahīkṛte
on account; how then for the earth?

I do not desire to kill
Them who are bent on killing,
Krishna,
Even for the sovereignty of the three worlds.
How much less then for the earth?
What joy would it be for us
To strike down the sons of
Dhritarashtra, O Krishna?
Evil thus would cling to us,
Having killed these aggressors.
Therefore we are not justified in killing The sons of Dhritarashtra, our own kinsmen. How, having killed our own people, Could we be happy, Krishna?
I

38

yadi, if. api, even. ete (m. nom. pl.), these. na, not. pasyanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √paś), they see, they perceive. lobha (m.), greed, desire. upahata (p. pass. participle upa √han), overpowered. cetasas (n. nom. pl.), thoughts. (upahatacetasas, n. nom. p. BV cpd., with thoughts overpowered, whose thoughts are overpowered.) kula (n.), family. kṣaya (m., noun from √kṣi), destroying, destruction. kṛtam (m. acc. sg. p. pass. participle √kr), made, caused, done. (kula-kṣaya-kṛtam, m. acc. sg. TP cpd., caused destruction of family.) dosam (m. acc. sg.), wrong, evil. mitra (m.), friend. drohe (m. loc. sg.), in injury, in treachery, in mischief. (mitradrohe, m. loc. sg., treachery to a friend.) ca, and. pātakam (n. acc. sg.), crime, evil, lit. “that which causes to fall” (√pat).
I

39

katham na jñeyam asmābhiḥ
how not to be known by us

pāpād asmān nivartitum
from evil from this to turn back

kulaśayakṛtam dosam
the destruction-of-family-caused evil,

prapasyadbhir janārdana
by discernment, Agitator of Men?

Why should we not know enough
To turn back from this evil,
Through discernment of the wrong
causeth
By the destruction of the family,
O Krishna?

katham (interrog.), how?
na, not.
jñeyam (gerundive jñā), to be known, to be understood.
asmābhiḥ (m. inst. pl.), by us, with us.
pāpāḥ (n. abl. sg.), from evil, from wrong.
asmat (n. abl. sg.), from this.
nivartitum (infinite ni vṛtti), to turn back.
kula (n.), family.
kṣaya (m. noun from kṣi), destruction.
kriyam (m. acc. sg. p. pass. participle kv),
doing, making, done, made, caused.
kula-kṣaya-kṛtam, m. acc. sg. TP cpd.,
caused destruction of family.
dōsam (m. acc. sg.), evil, wrong.
prapasyadyabhīs (m. inst. pl. pr. participle pra vais),
by discerning, by discernment.
janārdana (m. voc. sg.), Agitator of Men,
Mover of Men, epithet of Vishnu-Krishna.
In the destruction of the family,
The ancient family laws vanish;
When the law has perished,
Lawlessness overpowers the entire family also.
Because of the ascendency of lawlessness, Krishna,
The family women are corrupted;
When women are corrupted,
O Krishna,
The intermixture of caste is born.
I

42

संकारो नरकायाव
samkarō narakāyāvā
termixture to hell

कुलग्निनाम कुलस्या ca
kulaghniiniim kulasya ca
of the family destroyers and of the family

पतनति पितरो ह्येशाम patanti pitaro hyēšām
they fall, the ancestors indeed of these

लुप्तपिङ्कोदाकक्रियाह luptapindodakakriyāh
deprived of offerings of rice and water

Intermixture brings to hell
The family destroyers and the family, too;
The ancestors of these indeed fall,
Deprived of offerings of rice and water.

samkaras (m. nom. sg. from sam \(√kṛ\)), intermixture, pouring together.
narakāya (m. dat. sg.), to hell.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
kula (n.) family.
ghnānām (m. g. pl.), destroyers (ghna from \(√han\)).
(kulaghnānām, m. g. pl., TP cpd., of family destroyers.)
kulasya (n. gen. sg.), of the family.
ca, and.
patanti (3rd pl. pr. act. indic. \(√pat\), they fall.
pitaras (m. nom. pl.), the fathers, the ancestors, the manes.
hi, indeed, truly.
qiim (m. gen. pl.), of these.
lupta (m. p. pass. participle \(√lup\), deprived, robbed, plundered.
pinda (m.), ball, cake, lump, mouthful of rice (offered to ancestors).
udaka (n.), water.
kriyās (f. nom. pl.), rites, offerings.
(luptapindodakakriyās, m. nom. pl., DV cpd. deprived of offerings of balls of rice, and water.)
By these wrongs of the family destroyers,
Producing intermixture of caste,
Caste duties are abolished,
And eternal family laws also.

doṣais (m. inst. pl.), by wrongs, by sins, by evils.
etais (m. inst. pl.), by these.
kulaghñānām (m. gen. pl.), of the family destroyers.
varṇa (m.), caste, color.
sukkara (m. from sam √kṛ), intermixture, pouring together.
kāraṇās (m. inst. pl. from √kṛ), by producing, by making, by creating.
(varnasamkarakārakās, m. inst. pl. TP cpd., by creating intermixture of caste.)
utsādyante (3rd pl. pr. indic. passive causative ut d vSad), they are withdrawn, they leave off, they disappear, they are obliterated, they are abolished.
jāti (f.), birth, caste, race, lineage.
dharmas (m. nom. pl.), duties, laws, rights.
(jāti-dharmas, m. nom. pl. TP cpd., laws of caste.)
kuladharmas (m. nom. pl.), family laws, family duties.
cā, and.
śāsvatās (m. nom. pl.), eternal, perpetual, continuing.
utsannakuladharmanam
of obliterated family laws

manusyanam janardana
of men, O Agitator of Men

narake nityatam vaso
in hell indefinitely dwelling

bhavatityanususurma
it is, thus we have heard repeatedly.

Men whose family laws have been
obliterated,
O Krishna,
Dwell indefinitely in hell,
Thus we have heard repeatedly,
Ah! Alas! We are resolved
To do a great evil,
Which is to be intent on killing
Our own people, through greed for royal pleasures.
If the armed sons of Dhritarashtra
Should kill me in battle
While I was unresisting and unarmed,
This would be a greater
happiness for me.

yadi, if.
mām (acc. sg.), me.
apratikāram (m. acc. sg. adv. from a prati √kr), unopposing, unresisting, without remedy, without return.
asastram (n. acc. sg.), unarmed, without weapon.
sastra (m.) weapon
pañayah (m. nom. pl.) hand
(sastrapāñayās, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., weapon armed, those armed with weapons,
as BV cpd. whose hands are with weapons.)
dhārtaraśtrās (m. nom. pl.), the Sons of Dhṛtarāśtra.
rāne (m. loc. sg.), in battle, in the joy of battle.
hanyus (3rd pl. optative act. √han), they should kill, they may kill, they might kill.
tad (n. nom. sg.), that, this.
me (gen. sg.), to me, of me.
kṣemataram (comparative), greater ease, greater tranquility, greater happiness.
bhavet (3rd sg. optative act. √bhū), it would be.
Thus having spoken on the battlefield, Arjuna sat down upon the seat of the chariot, Throwing down both arrow and bow, With a heart overcome by sorrow.

End of Book I

The Despondency of Arjuna
BOOK II

Sanjaya spoke:
To him thus overcome by pity,
despairing,
Whose eyes were filled with tears and
downcast,
Krishna spoke these words:

tam (m. acc. sg.), him, to him.
tathā, thus, in this way, also, as well.
krpayā (f. inst. sg.), by pity, by sorrow.
āvistam (m. acc. sg. p. pass. participle a
viś), taken possession of, fallen into,
overcome by.
asṛu (n.), tear.
vāna (p. pass. participle √pr), filled with,
full of.
ākula (adj.), downcast, disturbed.
ākṣaṇam (n. acc. sg. from ākṣa), eye.
(asrпадnākuleśanām, n. acc. sg. BV cpd.,
whose eyes were filled with tears and down­
cast.)
visṣādantam (n. acc. sg. pr. participle vi√sad),
despairing, desponding, dejected.
idam (n. acc. sg.), this.
vākyam (n. acc. sg.), word, speech.
vāca (3rd sg. perf. act. √vac), he said, he
spoke.
Madhusūdanas (m. nom. sg.), Slayer of
Madhu, epithet of Krishna referring to
Vishnu-Krishna’s slaying of the demon
Madhu.

Sanjaya spoke:
To him thus overcome by pity,
despairing,
Whose eyes were filled with tears and
downcast,

UVACA MADHUSUDANAH
said the Slayer of Madhu

Sanjaya spoke:
Samjaya spoke:

UVACA
Sanjaya, the minis­
ter of the blind King Dhrētāraṣṭra, who is
narrating the story.

UVACA (3rd sg. perf. act. √vac), he said, he
spoke.

UVACA

Tam tathā krpayāviṣtam
to him thus overcome by pity,

Asrupānākuleśanām
whose eyes were filled with tears and
downcast,

Viṣādantam idam vākyam
despairing, this word
The Blessed Lord spoke:

Whence has this timidity of yours
Come to you in time of danger?
It is not acceptable in you, does not
lead to heaven,
And causes disgrace, Arjuna.
Do not become a coward, Arjuna. This is not suitable to you. Abandoning base faintheartedness, Stand up, Arjuna!
Arjuna spoke:

How can I kill in battle
Bhishma and Drona, O Krishna?
How can I fight with arrows against
These two venerable men, O Krishna?
Indeed, instead of slaying these noble gurus
It would be preferable to live on alms here on earth;
Having slain the gurus, with desire for worldly gain,
I would enjoy here on earth delights smeared with blood.

*gurûn (m. acc. pl.), elders, gurus, teachers.
ahatvā (gerund a Ṛhan), not slaying, instead of slaying.
hi, indeed, in truth.
mahānubhāvān (m. acc. pl.), of great might, mighty, high-minded, noble, generous.
sreyas (comparative), better, preferable.
bhoktum (infinitive √bhuī), to eat, to enjoy.
bhūkṣyam (n. acc. sg.), living on alms, begging, mendicancy.
apī, even, also.
īha, here, here in the world, here below.
loke (m. loc. sg.), on earth.
hatvā (gerund Ṛhan), having slain, slaying.
artha (m.), gains, property, booty, object.
kāmān (m. acc. pl.), desires, greed.
(arthakāmān, m. acc. pl. BV cpd., desirous of gain.)
tu, indeed, but.
gurūn (m. acc. pl.), elders, gurus, teachers.
īha, here on earth, here in the world.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
bhuṇīyā (1st sg. opt. mid. √bhuj), I should enjoy, I should eat.
bhogān (m. acc. pl.), enjoyments, pleasures.
rudhira (adj.), red, bloody.
pradīghān (m. acc. pl. from pra Ṛdih), smeared, covered.
(rudhiraṇaṇḍhān, m. acc. pl. TP cpd. from pra Ṛdih, smeared with blood.)
And this we do not know: which for us is preferable,
Whether we should conquer them or they should conquer us.
The sons of Dhritarashtra, having killed whom we would not wish to live,
Are standing before us.

---

* The first two lines of this stanza contain an extra syllable apiece – not uncommon in triśubh metre.
My own being is overcome by pity and weakness.
My mind is confused as to my duty. I ask you
Which is preferable, for certain?
Tell that to me, your pupil. Correct me, I beg you.

kārpayyadōdopahatasyabhāvah
pity-weakness-overcome own being

prachāmi tvāṁ dharmasamādhacetāḥ
I ask thee, duty uncertain in thought,

which preferably should it be for certain?
Tell that to me,

siṣyas te 'ham śādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam
pupil of thee, I, correct me, thy suppliant.

My own being is overcome by pity and weakness.
My mind is confused as to my duty. I ask you
Which is preferable, for certain?
Tell that to me, your pupil. Correct me, I beg you.
Indeed, I do not see what will dispel
This sorrow of mine which dries up my senses,
Even if I should obtain on earth unrivaled and
Prosperous royal power, or even the sovereignty of the gods.
Sanjaya spoke:
Thus having addressed Krishna,
Arjuna said,
"I shall not fight,"
And having spoken, he became silent.

---

* Sloka metre resumes.
† *gudāketa* has been translated by some native translators as *gudāka tta*, "Conqueror of Sleep."
It is generally believed that *gudāka*, "sleep," is an artificial word, invented to explain *gudāketa*, and not the other way around.
II
10

tam uvāca hrṣīkeśah
to him spoke the Bristling Haired One

prahasann īva bhārata
beginning to laugh, so to speak, O Descendant of Bharata,

senayor ubhayor madhye
of armies of both in the middle,

viśidantam īdam vacah
dected, this word:

To him, the dejected Arjuna, Krishna,
Beginning to laugh, O Dhritarashtra,
In the middle between the two armies,
Spoke these words:
śrībhagavān uvāca

The Blessed Lord spoke:

śrībhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.

uvāca (3rd sg. perf. act. vac), he spoke, he said.

The Blessed Lord spoke:

You have mourned those that should not be mourned,

And you speak words as if with wisdom;
The wise do not mourn for the dead or for the living.
Truly there was never a time when
I was not,
Nor you, nor these lords of men;
And neither will there be a time when
we shall cease to be
From this time onward.

na, not.
tu, truly, indeed.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
aha (nom. sg.), I.
jaatu, ever.
na, not.
asa (1st sg. imperf. act. as), I was, I existed.
na, not, nor.
tvam (nom. sg.), thou.
na, not, nor.
ime (m. nom. pl.), these.
janadhipas (m. nom. pl.), lords of men, rulers of men. TP cpd.
na, not, nor.
ca, and, or.
eva, either, indeed (often used as a rhythmic filler).
na, not.
bhavisyahams (3rd pi. fut. act. bhuh), we shall be, we shall exist.
sarve (m. nom. pl.), all.
vayam (nom. pl.), we.
atas, from here.
param (adj. acc. sg.), beyond, after.
(atah param, henceforth, further on, from this time onward.)
13

Dehinā 'smin yathā dehe
dothe embodied, as in this body,

Kośarāṁ yauvanām jara
childhood, youth and age,

Tathā dehāntarahāpti
so also acquisition of another body.

Dhīras tatra na muhyati
the wise one in this not he is deluded.

Just as in the body childhood, adulthood, and old age
Happen to an embodied being,
So also he (the embodied being) acquires another body.
The wise one is not deluded about this.

dehinās (m. gen. sg.), of the embodied,* i.e. the ātman or soul.
asmin (m. loc. sg.), in this.
yathā, in which way, as.
dehe (m./n. loc. sg.), in the body.
kāmāram (n. nom. sg.), childhood.
yauvanam (m. nom. sg.), youth.
garā (f. nom. sg.), age, old age.
tathā, in this way, so, so also.
deha (m./n.), body.
antara, other, another.
prāptis (f. nom. sg. from pra āp), acquisition, attainment, obtaining, advent, reaching, arrival at.
(deha-antara-prāptis, TP cpd., obtaining another body.)
dhīras (m. nom. sg.), wise one, wise man.
tatra, there, in that, in this, in this matter.
na, not.
muhyati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. āmuh), he is deluded, he is confused.

* The embodied, i.e. that which is in, but not of, the body, viz. the ātman, or self.
Physical sensations, truly, Arjuna,
Causing cold, heat, pleasure, or pain,
Come and go and are impermanent.
So manage to endure them, Arjuna.

mātrā (f.), material, measure, quantity.
sparśās (m. nom. pl. derivative noun from √sprś), touchings, sensations.
(mātrā-sparśās, m. nom. pl. KD cpd., material sensations.)
tu, indeed, truly, but.
kāunteya (voc.), O Son of Kunti, epithet of Arjuna, referring to his mother Prthū or Kunti.
śīta (n.), cold.
usna (n.), heat.
sukha (n.), pleasure, happiness.
duḥkha (n.), pain, misfortune.
dās (m. nom. pl. suffix), causing, bringing about.
āgama (from ā √gam), coming.
apāyinas (m. nom. pl. from apa ṭi), going.
anityās (m. nom. sg.), impermanent, transient, not eternal.
tan (m. acc. pl.), them.
titikṣasva (2nd sg. imperative mid. desiderative ṭiṣṭ), thou must endeavor to endure, do manage to endure!
bhārata (m. voc. sg.), Descendant of Bharata, epithet of Arjuna.
Indeed, the man whom these (i.e. the sensations) do not afflict, O Arjuna, The wise one, to whom happiness and unhappiness are the same, Is ready for immortality.
II

16

naśato viidyate bhāvo
not of the non-existent, there is found
coming to be,

nābhāvo viidyate sataḥ
in the not non-existent, there is found the
real;

ubhayo api drṣṭo 'ntas
of both surely perceived the certainty

It is found that the unreal has no being;
It is found that there is no non-being
of the real.
The certainty of both these
propositions is indeed surely seen
By the perceivers of truth.

na, not.
asatas (n. gen. sg. pr. participle a √as), of
the non-existent, of the not real.
vidyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. pass. √2 vid), it is
found.
bhāvas (m. nom. sg.), being, coming to be,
becoming.
na, not.
abhāvas (m. nom. sg.), not being, not exist­
ing, not becoming.
vidyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. pass. √2 vid), it is
found.
satas (n. gen. sg. pr. participle √as), of the
real, of the true, of the existent.
ubhavos (m. gen. dual), of both.
api, indeed, surely, also, even.
drṣṭas (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle √drṣ),
seen, perceived, discerned.
antas (m. nom. sg.), certainty, conclusion,
end.
tu, indeed, but.
anayos (m. gen. dual), of these two.
tattva (n.), truth, reality, “thatness.”
tattvādibhis (m. inst. pl. from √drṣ TP cpd.),
by the seers, by the perceivers, by the dis­
cerners, by the knowers.
Indestructible indeed that, know!

by which all this universe pervaded

destruction of the imperishable, of this,

not anyone to accomplish is capable.

Know that that by which all this universe
Is pervaded is indeed indestructible;
No one is able to accomplish
The destruction of the imperishable.

* i.e. the ātman (self) or Brahman.
These bodies inhabited by the eternal, The indestructible, the immeasurable embodied Self, Are said to come to an end. Therefore fight, Arjuna!

\[antavanta ime deha\] (having an end these bodies)

\[nityasyoktah saririnah\] (of the eternal, said, of the embodied,)

\[anasiino 'prameyasya\] (of the indestructible, of the immeasurable.)

\[tasmad yudhyasva bharata\] (therefore fight, Descendant of Bharata!)

\[antavantas\] (m. nom. pl.), having an end, impermanent.
\[ime\] (m. nom. pl.), these.
\[deha\] (m. nom. pl.), bodies.
\[nityasya\] (m. gen. sg.), of the eternal, of the undying.
\[uktas\] (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle \(\sqrt{vac}\)), said, declared.
\[saririnas\] (m. gen. sg.), of the embodied, of the soul, of the \(\dot{a}tman\).
\[anasiinas\] (m. gen. sg. derivative noun \(a\ \sqrt{nas}\)), of the indestructible, of the not lost.
\[aprameyasya\] (m. gen. sg. derivative noun from \(a\ pra \sqrt{m}\)), of the not to be measured, of the immeasurable.
\[tasm\] (m. abl. sg.), from that, therefore.
\[yudhyasva\] (2nd sg. imperative mid. \(\sqrt{yudh}\)), fight! join in battle!
\[bh\] (m. voc. sg.), Descendant of Bharata, epithet of Arjuna.

* I.e. the \(\dot{a}tman\) or Brahman.
He who imagines this (the embodied Self) the slayer
And he who imagines this
  (the embodied Self) the slain,
Neither of them understands
This (the embodied Self) does not slay,
  nor is it slain.

II
19

ya enam vetti hantāram
who this he thinks the slayer

yaścāinām manyate hatam
and who this he thinks slain

ubhāu tāu na vijānīto
both they two not they understand

nāyāṁ hanti na hanyate
not this it slays, not it is slain.

yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
enam (m. acc. sg.), this.  
vetti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. viḍ), he thinks,  
he knows, he imagines.
hanṭāram (m. acc. sg. derivative noun from 
√han), slayer, killer.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who, which.  
cu, and.
enam (m. acc. sg.), this.  
manyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. √man), he 
thinks, he imagines.
hatam (m. acc. sg. p. pass. participle √han), 
slain, killed.
ubhāu (m. nom. dual), both.  
tāu (m. nom. dual), they two.  
na, not.
vijānītas (3rd dual pr. indic. mid. vi √jñā),  
they two know, they two understand.  
na, not.
ayam (m. nom. sg.), this.  
hanti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. √han), he slays,  
he kills.  
na, not.
hanyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. pass. √han), he is 
slain, he is killed.
Neither is this (the embodied Self) born nor does it die at any time, Nor, having been, will it again come not to be. Birthless, eternal, perpetual, primaeval, It is not slain when the body is slain.
II

21

vedāvinaśīnaṁ nityam
he knows, the indestructible, the eternal,

ya enam ajam avyayam
who this, the, unborn the imperishable,

katham sa puruṣah pārtha
in what way this man, Son of Prthā,

kam ghātayati hanti kam*
whom he causes to slay? he slays whom?

He who knows this, the indestructible,
the eternal,
The birthless, the imperishable,
In what way does this man cause to
be slain, Arjuna?
Whom does he slay?

veda (3rd sg. perf. act. āvid, with present
meaning), he knows.

avināśīnaṁ (n. acc. sg. from a vi ānas), in-
destructible, not subject to loss.
nityam (n. acc. sg.), eternal.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
enam (m. acc. sg.), this.
ajam (n. nom. acc. sg.), unborn, birthless.
avyayam (n. acc. sg.), imperishable.
katham (interrog.), how? in what way?
sas (m. nom. sg.), this, the, he.
puruṣas (m. nom. sg.), man.
pārtha (m. voc. sg.), O Son of Prthā, epithet
of Arjuna referring to his mother Prthā.
kam (m. acc. sg. interrog.), whom? which?
ghātayati (3rd sg. causative act. āhan), he
causes to slay.
hanti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. āhan), he slays.
kam (m. acc. sg. interrog.), whom?

* Sloka metre resumes.
As, after casting away worn out garments,
A man later takes new ones,
So, after casting away worn out bodies,
The embodied Self encounters other,
new ones.

\* Triśṭubh metre.
Weapons do not pierce this (the embodied Self),
Fire does not burn this,
Water does not wet this,
Nor does the wind cause it to wither.

na, not.
enam (m. acc. sg.), this.
chindanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. \( \sqrt{chid} \)), they cut, they pierce, they chop.
\( \text{sastrii} \) (n. nom. pl.), weapons.
na, not.
enam (m. acc. sg.), this.
dahati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. \( \sqrt{dah} \)), it burns.
pavakas (m. nom. sg.), fire, flame.
na, not.
ca, and.
enam (m. acc. sg.), this.
kledayanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. causative act. \( \sqrt{klid} \)), they cause to become wet, they wet, they moisten.
\( \text{apas} \) (f. nom. pl.), waters, the waters.
na, not, nor.
\( \text{so\text{\texttextsubscript{\textvowels}}}\text{ayati} \) (3rd sg. pr. indic. causative act. \( \sqrt{\text{\textvowels}us} \)), it causes to dry, it causes to wither.
m\text{\texttextsubscript{\textvowels}utas} (m. nom. sg.), wind, the wind.

* Sloka metre resumes.
This cannot be pierced, burned, Wetted or withered; This is eternal, all pervading, fixed; This is unmoving and primeval.
It is said that this is unmanifest, Unthinkable, and unchanging. Therefore, having understood in this way, You should not mourn.

* I.e. the foregoing propositions.
II

26

atha ca

and moreover (if) this, being eternally born,

nityam vā manyase mṛtam

or eternally, thou thinkest, dead,

तथापि त्वम महाबाहो
tathāpi tvam mahābāho

then even thou, Mighty Armed One,

नैनं शोचिन्महासि!
nāinam śocitumarhasi

not this to mourn thou shouldst.

And moreover even if you think this
To be eternally born or eternally dead,
Even then
You should not mourn for this, Arjuna.
II

27

जातस्य हि ध्रवो मृत्युर्
jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur
of the born indeed certain death.

भृवं जन्म मृत्युः च।
dhruvam janma mṛtasya ca
and certain birth of the dead

तस्मादपरिहार्यं तथा
tasmādapihāre 'rthe
therefore, inevitable in purpose,

न तव शोचिनिमह्यसि।
na tvam śocitunahasi
not thou, to mourn thou shouldst.

For the born, death is certain;
For the dead there is certainly birth.
Therefore, for this, inevitable in consequence,
You should not mourn.

jātasya (m. gen. sg.), of the born.
hi, indeed, truly.
dhruvas (n. nom. sg.), certain, safe, fixed.
mṛtyus (m. nom. sg.), death.
dhruvam (n. nom. sg.), certain, undoubted.
janma (n. nom. sg.), birth.
mṛtasya (m. gen. sg.), of the dead.
ca, and.
tasmā (abl. sg.), from this, for this, therefore.
aparthaṁ (m. loc. sg. gerundive a pari √ḥṛ), in unavoidable, in inevitable.
arthā (m. loc. sg.), in purpose, in aim, in consequence.
na, not.
tvam (nom. sg.), thou.
śocitum (infinitive √suc), to mourn, to lament.
arhasi (2nd sg. pr. indic. act. √arh), thou shouldst, thou art obliged, thou art able.
Beings are such that their beginnings are unmanifest,
Their middles are manifest,
And their ends are unmanifest again.
What complaint can there be over this?
Someone perceives this as a wonder,
Another declares this as a wonder,
Still another hears of this as a wonder;
But even having heard of this, no one
knows it.

\* Triśūbha metre with second line one syllable too long.
† This stanza explains the mystical nature of Brahman and the ātman.
Deha nityam avadhyo 'yam*
embodied (one) eternally inviolable, this,

Dehe sarvasya bharata
in the body of all, Descendant of Bharata,

Tasmāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni
therefore all beings

Na tvam śocitumarhasi
not thou to mourn shouldst.

This, the embodied Self, is eternally indestructible
In the body of all, Arjuna.
Therefore you should not mourn
For any being.

deha (m. nom. sg.), the embodied, the soul, the ātman.
nityam (adv.), eternally.
avadhyas (m. nom. sg. gerundive a ādhi), inviolable, not to be harmed.
ayam (m. nom. sg.), this.
dehe (m./n. loc. sg.), in the body.
sarvasya (m. gen. sg.), of all, of anyone, of everyone.
bḥarata (m. voc. sg.), Descendant of Bharata, epithet of Arjuna, sometimes applied to other worthies of the tribe.
tasmāt (abl. sg.), from this, therefore.
sarvāṇi (n. acc. pl.), all.
bhūtāṇi (n. acc. pl.), beings, creatures.
na, not.
tvam (m. nom. sg.), thou.
śocitum (ininfinitive śuc), to mourn, to lament.
arthasi (2nd sg. pr. indic. act. ārth), thou shouldst, thou art able, thou art obliged.

* Sloka metre resumes.
svadharmam api ca ve kṣya
and own (caste) duty just perceiving,

na vikampitum arhasī
not to tremble thou shouldst

Thy own caste duty just perceiving,

Thou shouldst not tremble.
Indeed, anything superior to righteous battle
Does not exist for the kṣatriya
(man of warrior caste).

svadharmam (m. acc. sg.), own duty, here
"own caste duty" as a kṣatriya, or warrior.
api ca, even though, although, just.
avekṣya (gerund ava viṣky), looking at, per­ceiv­ing, beholding.
na, not.
vikampitum (infinitive vi vi kamp), to tremble, to waver.
arhasī (2nd sg. pr. indic. act. vi arh), thou shouldst, thou art obliged, thou art able.
dharmya (n. abl. sg.), than righteous, than lawful.
dhi = hi, indeed, truly.
yuddhā (n. abl. sg.), than battle, from fighting.
sreyas (comparative), better, preferable.
anyat (n. n. s.), other.
kṣatriyasya (m. gen. sg.), of the kṣatriya, of the warrior, of the member of the warrior caste.
na, not.
vidyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. pass. √2 vid), it is found.
And if by good fortune they gain
The open gate of heaven,
Happy are the kṣatriyas, Arjuna,
When they encounter such a fight.
Now, if you will not undertake
This righteous war,
Thereupon, having avoided your own
duty and glory,
You shall incur evil.

_atha, now, then._
_ceed, if._
_tvam (nom. sg.), thou._
_imam (m. acc. sg.), this._
_dharmyam (m. acc. sg.), proper, lawful, dutiful._
_sangramam (m. acc. sg.), assembly, army, combat, fight, engagement._
_na, not._
_kariyasi (2nd sg. fut. act. √kr), thou shalt undertake, thou shalt do, make, etc._
_tatas, then, thereupon._
_svadharman (m. acc. sg.), own duty._
_kirtim (f. acc. sg.), glory, fame._
_ca, and._
_hitvam (gerund √hā), having avoided, having left._
_papam (n. acc. sg.), evil, sin._
_avāpsyasi (2nd sg. fut. act. ava √āp), thou shalt attain, thou shalt incur._
akīrtim cāpi bhūtāni
and disgrace also people

kathayisyanti te 'vyayām
they will relate of thee, forever,

sambhitasya cākīrtir
and for the honored, disgrace

maranāda atiricyate
than dying it is worse.

And also people will relate
Your undying infamy;
And, for one who has been honored,
Disgrace is worse than dying.

akīrtim (f. acc. sg.), disgrace, absence of
glory, infamy.
ca, and.
bhūtāni (n. nom. sg.), beings, people.
kathayisyanti (3rd pl. fut. act. v'kath), they
will relate, they will tell how it was.
te (gen. sg.), of thee.
avyayām (f. acc. sg.), eternal, undying.
sambhāvitasya (m. gen. sg. p. pass. causative
participle sam 'bhū), of the honored, of
the famous, of the esteemed.
ca, and.
akīrtis (f. nom. sg.), disgrace, infamy.
maranāt (n. abl. sg.), than dying, from dy-
ing.
aturicyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. ati 'ric), it
exceeds, it surpasses.
bhayāt (n. abl. sg.), from fear, through fear.
raṇāt (m. abl. sg.), from delight in battle, from battle.
uparatam (m. acc. sg. p. pass. participle upa śrāmaḥ), withdrawn from, abstaining, ceased, stopped.
mahāyante (3rd pl. fut. mid. śman), they will think, they will believe.
tvām (acc. sg.), thee.
manahāthās (m. nom. pl.), the great warriors, (as BV cpd.) “those whose chariots are great.”
yeṣām (m. gen. pl.), of whom, among whom.
tvam (nom. sg.), thou.
bahu (m.), much, many.
matas (m. nom. sg. pass. participle śman), thought, believed, esteemed.
bhūtvā (gerund śbhū), having been.
yāsyasi (2nd sg. fut. act. śyā), thou shalt go, thou shalt come.
lāghavam (m. acc. sg.), lightness, insignificance.

The great warriors will think
That you have abstained from the battle
through fear,
And among those by whom you have been held in high esteem
You shall come to be held lightly.
And your enemies will speak many words of you that should not be spoken, deriding your capacity. What greater hardship is there than that?
Either, having been slain, you shall attain heaven,
Or, having conquered, you shall enjoy the earth.
Therefore stand up, Arjuna,
Resolved to fight.
Holding pleasure and pain to be alike,
Likewise gain and loss, victory and defeat,
Then engage in battle!
Thus you shall not incur evil.

sukha (n.), pleasure, happiness.
duhkh (n. nom. acc. dual), pain, misery.
(sukhaduhkh, n. acc. dual DV cpd., pleasure and pain.)
same (n. acc. dual), in similar state, alike, the same.
krtv (gerund √kr), having made, having done.
labhlabhau (m. acc. dual), gain and loss (labha alabhha). DV cpd.
jayajaya (m. acc. dual), victory and defeat (jaya ajaya). DV cpd.
tatas, then, from there.
yuddhya (n. dat. sg.), to battle, to fighting.
yuja (2nd sg. imperative mid. √yu), join! engage! yoke thyself!
na, not.
evam, thus.
papam (n. acc. sg.), evil, sin.
avapsyasi (2nd sg. fut. act. ava √ap), thou shalt incur, thou shalt attain, thou shalt obtain.
This (insight) is wisdom, as declared in the theory of Sāmkhya; Now hear it as applied in arduous practice; Yoked with this determination, Arjuna, You shall rid yourself of the bondage of karma.

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*Sāmkhya*, one of the six traditional systems of Hindu philosophy, and one of the oldest. The others are *Mīmāṃsā*, *Yoga*, *Vedānta*, *Vaiśeṣika*, and *Nyāya*. The *Sāmkhya* system is attributed to the sage Kapila (circa 500 B.C.) and is known as the “reason method” of salvation, while *Yoga*, or at least *karma*-Yoga (the Yoga of action) is the “action method.” The two often overlap in the Bhagavad Gītā, and are not always distinct. *Sāmkhya* is the older of the two. From it comes the concept of the *guṇas*. It postulates a cosmology in which results are implied in causes, and in which the universe remains constant, nothing new ever being added to or subtracted from it. Nothing is ever created. Everything is a manifestation or mutation of what has always existed. Thus death is merely a transitory state leading to other states. In this, *Sāmkhya* has a parallel in the modern scientific theory of the conservation of matter and energy. *Sāmkhya* does not recognize gods or sacrifices. It is said to have influenced Buddhism.
II

40

na, not.

iha, here, here in the world.

abhikrama (m.), undertaking, effort.

nāsas (m. nom. sg. derivative noun from √nās), loss, disappearance, destruction.

(abhikrama-nāsa, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., destruction of effort.)

asti (3rd sg. pr. indic. √as), it is, there is.

pratyavāyas (m. nom. sg. from prati ava √i), decrease, diminution, reverse, contrary course, opposite action.

na, not.

vidyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. pass. √2 vid), it is found.

svalpam (m. acc. sg.), little, very small.

api, even, also.

asya (gen. sg.), of it, of this.

dharmasya (m. gen. sg.), of discipline, of law, of virtue.

trāyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. √trāi), it protects, it rescues.

mahatas (n. abl. sg.), from great.

bhaya (n. abl. sg.), from danger, from fear.

It is known as “the way of knowledge,” and it proposes knowledge as the principal means of salvation. Still other means of salvation mentioned in the Gītā are meditation and love of God.
vyavasāyātmikā buddhir
resolute-natured insight

ekeha kurunandana
one in this matter, Descendant of Kuru (Arjuna),

bahuśākhā hyanantāś ca
having many branches, indeed endless,

buddhayo 'vyavasāyināṁ
the insights of the irresolute.

Here there is a single resolute understanding, Arjuna. The thoughts of the irresolute Have many branches and are, indeed, endless.
The ignorant ones proclaim
This flowery discourse, Arjuna,
Delighting in the letter of the Veda
And saying, “There is nothing else.”
Being of desirious natures, intent on heaven

Offering rebirth as the fruit of action, abounding in many specific rites,

Enjoyment and power goal with regard to

Full of desires, intent on heaven, They offer rebirth as the fruit of action, And are addicted to many specific rites Aimed at the goal of enjoyment and power.

* I.e. the “ignorant ones” of the preceding stanza.
bhoga (m., from √bhuj), enjoyment, pleasure.
äśvarya (n.), power, lordship.
prasaktānām (m. gen. pl.), of the attached.
(bhogāśvaryaṇprasaktānām, gen. pl. BV cpd., of those attached to pleasure and power.)
tayā (f. inst. sg.), by this.
apahṛta (n. p. pass. participle apa √hr), stolen away.
cetasām (n. gen. pl.), of thoughts, of minds.
tayāpahṛtacetasām, m. gen. pl. BV cpd., of those whose thoughts are stolen away by this.)
vyāvasāya (from vi ava √so), resolution.
āmikā (f. nom. sg. ifc.), having the nature of, “selved,” “natured.”
buddhis (f. nom. sg.), insight, enlightenment, intelligence.
samādhiḥ (m. loc. sg.), in meditation.
na, not.
vidhiyate (3rd sg. p. indic. passive vi √dhā), it is granted, it is given.

To those (the ignorant ones) attached to enjoyment and power,
Whose thought is stolen away by this kind of talk,
Resolute insight
In meditation is not granted.
II
45

trāiguṇya
viśayā
tvā

three guṇas territories in the Vedas

nistrāiguṇyo bhavārjuna

without the three guṇas be! Arjuna

nirdeandevo nityasatvasāstho

indifferent toward the pairs of opposites,
eternally fixed in truth,

niryogakṣema ātmavān

free from (thoughts of) acquisition and
comfort, possessed of the self.

The Vedas are such that their scope is
confined to the three qualities;
Be free from those three qualities,
Arjuna,
Indifferent toward the pairs of
opposites, eternally fixed in truth,
Free from thoughts of acquisition and
comfort, and possessed of the Self.
As much value as there is in a well
When water is flooding on every side,
So much is the value in all the Vedas
For a brahman who knows.

yāvān (m. nom. sg.), as much, so much.
arthas (m. nom. sg.), use, object, aim, value.
udapāne (m. loc. sg.), in a well.
sarvatas, (adv.), on all sides, everywhere.
saṁpluta (p. pass. participle saṁ vīḍu), over-
flowing.
udake (n. loc. sg.), in water, with water.
(saṁpluta-udake, n. loc. sg. KD cpd., over-
flowing with water.)
tāvān (m. nom. sg.), so much.
sarveṣu (m. loc. pl.), in all.
vedeṣu (m. loc. pl.), in the Vedas.
brāhmaṇasya (m. gen. sg.), of the brahman,
for the brahman.
vijñataḥ (m. gen. sg. pr. participle vi vijñā),
knowing, wise.
Your right is to action alone;
Never to its fruits at any time.
Never should the fruits of action be your motive;
Never let there be attachment to inaction in you.

* Acting without regard or desire for the fruits of action is one of the most constant teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. It refers to "disinterested action," which is not to be confused with irresponsible or careless action. According to the law of karma an individual is responsible for his actions throughout eternity, or until he achieves nitya, The "fruits" (usually translated in the plural, though the singular phalam is used in the Sanskrit) mean the results of action, and they are of three kinds: those of obligatory action, those of action prompted by desire, and those that arise from delusion (see XVIII 23, 24, 25). The first of these is really action without desire for the fruits, i.e. action which is a duty. The second and third are related to desire, and the elimination of desire for the fruits of action is basic to the Gita's teaching. The last line, about "inaction" is an injunction against sloth – one of the evils associated with the guna of tamas, or darkness. Action prompted by delusion (see above) is also associated with tamas. Thus, action prompted by greed, desire for wealth, desire for power, or desire for fame is not advised.
Fixed in yoga, perform actions,
Having abandoned attachment,
Arjuna,
And having become indifferent to success
or failure.
It is said that evenness of mind is yoga.
II

49

dūrenta hyavaram karma
by far, indeed, inferior, action

buddhiyogād dhanamjaya,
to intelligence-discipline, Conqueror of Wealth.

buddhāu saraṇam anviccha
in insight refuge seek;

krpaṁ phalahetavah
despicable (are) those who are motivated by fruit.

Action is inferior by far
To the yoga of wisdom, Arjuna.
Seek refuge in wisdom!
Despicable are those whose motives are based on the fruit of action.

dūrenta (n. inst. sg.), by far, by distance, by a long way.
hi, indeed.
avaram (n. nom. sg.), inferior, below, low, unimportant.
karma (n. nom. sg.), action, doing, making.
buddhiyogāt (m. abl. sg.), from the Yoga of intelligence, to the Yoga of intelligence, to mental determination, intuitive determination. TP cpd.
dhanamjaya, (m. voc. sg.), Conqueror of Wealth, frequent epithet of Arjuna.
buddhāu (f. loc. sg.), in insight, in enlightenment, in intelligence, in mental determination.
saraṇam (n. acc. sg.), refuge.
anviccha (2nd imperative act. anu√îṣ), seek! wish for! desire!
krpaṁ (m. nom. pl.), despicable, pitiable.
phalahetavah (m. nom. pl. BV cpd.), those whose motives are based on fruit, those who are motivated by the fruit.
He who is disciplined in intuitive determination casts off here in the world both good and evil deeds; therefore to Yoga yoke thyself!

Yoga in actions (is) skill. He whose wisdom is established casts off, here in the world, both good and evil actions; Therefore devote yourself to yoga! Yoga is skill in action.
The wise ones, who have abandoned the fruit born of action, and are freed from the bondage of rebirth, go to the place that is free from pain.

**Notes:**
- *buddhi* (f.), intelligence, enlightenment, intuitive determination.
- *yuktas* (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle √yu), yoked, joined, disciplined.
- *phalam* (n. sg.), fruit, result.
- *tyaktva* (gerund √tyaj), abandoning, having abandoned, having cast aside.
- *manisinas* (m. nom. pl.), wise, wise ones.
- *janma* (n.), birth, rebirth.
- *bandha* (m.), bondage.
- *vinirmuktas* (m. nom. pl. participle vi nir √muc), released, freed from.
- *padam* (n. acc. sg.), place, way, abode.
- *anāmayam* (n. acc. sg.), free from disease, free from pain, healthy, salubrious.
When your intellect crosses beyond
The thicket of delusion, then you shall become disgusted
With that which is yet to be heard
And with that which has been heard (in the Veda).
When your intellect stands
fixed in deep meditation, unmoving, disregarding Vedic doctrine,
then you shall attain Self-realization.

sruti (f.), heard, what is heard.
vipratipanna (f. nom. sg. p. pass. participle vi prati √pad), perplexed, false, mistaken, contrary.
(srutivipratipanna, f. nom. sg., contrary to ritual-centered revelation, disregarding Vedic doctrine.) TP cpd.
te (gen. sg.), of thee, by thee, thine.
yadā, when.
sthāsyati (3rd sg. fut. act. √sthā), it shall stand.
nīcchā (f. nom. sg.), unmoving, motionless, fixed.
samādhā (m. loc. sg.), in meditation, in deep meditation.
acalā (f. nom. sg.), immovable, unmoving.
buddhis (f. nom. sg.), intelligence, mental determination.
tadā, then.
yogam (m. acc. sg.), Yoga.
avāpsyasi (2nd sg. fut. act. ava √āp), thou shalt attain, thou shalt obtain, thou shalt reach.
II

Arjuna spoke:

How does one describe him who is
of steady wisdom,
Who is steadfast in deep meditation,
Krishna?
How does he who is steady in
wisdom speak?
How does he sit? How does he
move?
The Blessed Lord spoke:
When he leaves behind all desires
Emerging from the mind, Arjuna,
And is contented in the Self by the Self,
Then he is said to be one whose
wisdom is steady.
II

56

duḥkhesvanudvignamanāḥ
in misfortunes not agitated the mind

sukheśu vigatasprhah
in pleasures freed from desire

vītarāgabhayakrodah
departed passion, fear, anger,

sthitadhir munir ucyate
steady in thought, a sage he is said to be.

He whose mind is not agitated in
misfortune,
Whose desire for pleasures has
disappeared,
Whose passion, fear, and anger have
departed,
And whose meditation is steady, is said to
be a sage.
He who is without attachment on all sides,
Encountering this or that, pleasant or unpleasant,
Neither rejoicing nor disliking;
His wisdom stands firm.
And when he withdraws completely
The senses from the objects of the
senses,
As a tortoise withdraws its limbs
into its shell,
His wisdom stands firm.
Sense objects turn away from 
the abstinent man, 
But the taste for them remains; 
But the taste also turns away 
From him who has seen the 
Supreme.

---

* Flavor being the object of hunger, most basic of desires.
† The ātman.
yatatos of the striving, indeed even, Son of Kunti,

 пурушасья випашцита of the man of wisdom,

 इत्रयाणि प्रमादीनि the senses tormenting

 हरान्ति प्रसाब्धम् मनः they carry away forcibly the mind.

 The turbulent senses
 Carry away forcibly
 The mind, Arjuna,
 Even of the striving man of wisdom.
Restraining all these senses,
Disciplined, he should sit, intent on Me;
He whose senses are controlled,
His wisdom stands firm.
For a man dwelling on the objects of the senses,  
An attachment to them is born;  
From attachment, desire is born;  
From desire, anger is born;

*The use of three different prefixes to jāyate (it is born), viz., upa, sam, abhi, testifies to the fact that in Sanskrit, such prefixes are sometimes used merely for elegance (in this case avoidance of repetition), and do not necessarily convey any difference in meaning.*
From anger arises delusion;
From delusion, loss of the memory;
From loss of the memory, destruction of discrimination;
From destruction of discrimination one is lost.
With the elimination of desire and hatred, 
Even though moving among the objects of the senses, 
He who is controlled by the Self, 
By self-restraint, attains tranquility.
II

65

prasāde sarvadukkhānām
in tranquility, of all sorrows

hānir aśyopajāyate
cessation for him it is born.

prasannacetaso hiśu
of the tranquil minded, indeed, at once

buddhil paryavatiśthatē
the intelligence it becomes steady.

In tranquility the cessation of all sorrows
Is born for him.
Indeed, for the tranquil-minded
The intellect at once becomes steady.

prasāde (m. loc. sg.), in tranquility, in peace.
sarva, all.
dukkhānām (n. gen. pl.), of sorrows, of misfortunes.
hānis (f. nom. sg. from ṛhā, leave), cessation, withdrawal.
asya (m. gen. sg.), of him, of it, for him.
upajāyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive upa ṛaṇ), it is born, it is produced.
prasanna (p. pass. participle pra ṛsad), clear, bright, tranquil, placid.
cetasas (m. gen. sg.), of mind, minded, of thought.
(prasannacetasas, m. gen. sg. BV cpd., of him whose mind is tranquil.)
hi, indeed, truly.
aśu (adv.), quickly, at once, immediately.
buddhis (f. nom. sg.), intelligence, enlightenment, discrimination.
paryavatiśthatē (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. pari ava śhā), it becomes steady, it steadies, it stands.
There is no wisdom in him who is uncontrolled,
And there is likewise no concentration in him who is uncontrolled,
And in him who does not concentrate, there is no peace.
How can there be happiness for him who is not peaceful?

na, not.
asti (3rd sg. pr. indic. ās), it is, there is.
buddhis (f. nom. sg.), intelligence, discrimination, intuitive determination.
ayuktasya (m. gen. sg.) of the uncontrolled, of the undisciplined one, of him who is undisciplined.
na, not.
ca, and.
ayuktasya (m. gen. sg.), of the uncontrolled, of the undisciplined, of the unsteadfast in Yoga.
bhāvanā (f. nom. sg.), meditation, perception, concentration.
na, not.
ca, and.
abhāvayatas (m. gen. sg.), of the non-meditating, of the non-perceiving, of the non-concentrating.
sāntis (f. nom. sg.), peace, tranquility.
asāntasya (m. gen. sg.), of the unpeaceful, of the unpeaceful one.
kutas (interrog.), whence? from where?
sukham (n. acc. sg.), happiness, joy, good fortune.
When the mind runs  
After the wandering senses,  
Then it carries away one’s understanding,  
As the wind carries away a ship on the waters.
tasmād yasya mahābāho
therefore of whom, Mighty Armed One,

nigrhitāni sarvasaḥ
withdrawn on all sides

indriyāṇindriyārthebhyaḥ
the senses from the objects of the senses

tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā
of him the wisdom standing firm.

Therefore, O Arjuna,
The wisdom of him whose senses
Are withdrawn from the objects of the senses;
That wisdom stands firm.
The man of restraint is awake
In that which is night for all beings;
The time in which all beings are awake
Is night for the sage who sees.

* Meaning that the “sage who sees” perceives the light of the atman, which is dark as night to others, while the others see the light of the senses which is dark as night to the sage.
Like the ocean, which becomes filled
yet remains unmoved and stands still
As the waters enter it,
He whom all desires enter and who
remains unmoved
Attains peace; not so the man who is
full of desire.

The ocean, the waters they enter in which
way,
He whom all desires enter and who
remains unmoved
Attains peace; not so the man who is
full of desire.
The man who abandons all desires
Acts free from longing.
Indifferent to possessions, free from egotism,
He attains peace.
II

72

एया ब्राह्मी स्थिति: पार्थ
eṣā brāhma sthitih pārtha
this the brāhmanic position, Son of Prthā.

नेना प्रायत्व विमुख्याति
nānām prāpya vimuhyati
not, this having attained, he is deluded.

स्थितवं ज्ञातं सत्तकाले यथा
sthitvā 'syām antakāle 'yā
fixed in it, at time of death even

ब्राह्मानिवानम् निःस्थिति
brahmanirvānam niḥsthitam
brahmanirvāna he reaches.

This is the divine state, Arjuna.
Having attained this, he is not deluded;
Fixed in it, even at the hour of death,
He reaches the bliss of God.

esā (f. nom. sg.), this.
brāhma (adj., f. nom. sg.), holy, divine, pertaining to Brahma.
brāhma sthitis (f. nom. sg.), the state of Brahma, Brahmānic state, state concerning Brahma, Brahmānic position.
pārtha, Son of Prthā, frequent epithet of Arjuna.
na, not.
enām (f. acc. sg.), this.
prāpya (gerund pra ṣāp), attaining, having attained.
vimuhyati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. vi muh), he is deluded, he is confused.
sthitvā (gerund ṣāh), fixed, standing firm.
asyām (f. loc. sg.), in it, in this.
antakāle (m. loc. sg.), in time of end, at time of death.
aṇi, even, also.
brahmanirvānam (n. acc. sg.), Brahmānirvāna, the nirvāna (ceasing to exist) in Brahma (the word nirvāna—from nir ṣvā, blow—means "blown out" in the sense that a candle is blown out).
ṛcchati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. ṛ), he reaches, he attains.

End of Book II

The Yoga of Knowledge
Arjuna spoke:

If it is Your conviction that knowledge
Is better than action, O Krishna,
Then why do You urge me to engage
in this terrible action?
vyāmiśreṇeva vākyena
by equivocal-like speech

buddhim mohayasīva me
the intelligence thou confusest-like, of me;

tad ekam vada niścitya
this one tell! surely

yena sreyo 'ham āpnyām
by which the highest good I should attain.

With speech that seems equivocal,
You confuse my intelligence.
Tell me surely this one thing:
How should I attain the highest good?
The Blessed Lord spoke:

In this world there is a two-fold basis (of devotion)
Taught since ancient times by Me, O Arjuna:
That of knowledge — the yoga of the followers of Sankhya
And that of action — the yoga of the yogins.

*See footnote on p. 136.
Not by abstention from actions
Does a man attain the state beyond karma,
And not by renunciation alone
Does he approach perfection.

na, not
karmanām (n. gen. pl.), of actions, of deeds, from actions
anārambhā (m. abl. sg. from an ā ṛambha), from non-commencement, from non-undertaking, from abstention
nāiśkarmyaṁ (n. acc. sg.), freedom from action, inactivity, state beyond karma
puruṣas (m. nom. sg.), man, spirit
āṣnute (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. vāṣ), he attains
ca, and
samāyaśanaṁ (n. abl. sg.), from renunciation, from relinquishment
eva, indeed, alone (often used as a rhythmic filler)
siddhiṁ (f. acc. sg.), perfection, fulfillment, success
samadhiḥagacchati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. sam adhi ṛgam), he approaches, he comes near, he surpasses
na, not.
hi, indeed, truly.
kaścid, anyone, anyone whatsoever.
ksaṇam (n. nom. sg.), an instant, a moment, the twinkling of an eye.
api, even, also.
jātu, ever, at any time.
tīṣṭhati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. vsthā), he stands, he exists, he remains.
akarmakṛt (m. nom. sg.), not action doing, not performing action.
kāryate (3rd sg. pr. indic. pass. causative vkr), he is caused to perform, he is forced to perform.
hi, indeed, truly.
avāsas (m. nom. sg.), without will, against will.
karma (n. acc. sg.), action.
sarvas (m. nom. sg.), all, everyone.
prakṛti-jāīś (m. inst. pl.), by original sources born, by material nature born.
guṇās (m. inst. pl.), by the guṇas.

Indeed, no one, even in the twinkling of an eye:
Ever exists without performing action;
Everyone is forced to perform action, even action which is against his will,
By the qualities which originate in material nature.
He who sits, restraining his organs of action,
While in his mind brooding over
The objects of the senses, with a deluded mind,
Is said to be a hypocrite.
But he who undertakes the control of the senses by the mind, Arjuna, and, without attachment, engages the organs of action in the yoga of action, is superior.
Perform your duty,
For action is indeed better than nonaction,
And even the mere maintenance of your body
Could not be accomplished without action.

niyatam kuru karma tvam
enjoined perform action thou,
karma jyāyo hyakarmanah
action better indeed than non-action
śarīrayātrāpi ca te
and body conduct even of thee
na prasiddhyed akarmanah
not it could be accomplished without action.

niyatam (m. acc. sg. p. participle ni-
vyan), enjoined, subdued.
kuru (2nd sg. imperative act. kr), peform!
karma (n. acc. sg.), action, deeds.
tvam (nom. sg.), thou
karma (n. nom. sg.), action.
jyāyas (comparative), better, superior.
hi, indeed, truly.
akarmanas (n. abl. sg.), from inaction, than non-action.
śarīra (n.), body.
yātrā (f. nom. sg.), conduct, maintenance.
api, even, also.
ca, and.
te (gen. sg.), of thee, thy.
na, not.
prasiddhyet (3rd sg. opt. act. prasid).
should be accomplished, it might be
accomplished, it should succeed, it should be
attained.
akarmanas (n. abl. sg.), without action, from non-action, from inaction.
Aside from action for the purpose of sacrifice,
This world is bound by action.
Perform action for the purpose of sacrifice, Arjuna,
Free from attachment.

yalña (m.), sacrifice.
arthā (m. abl. sg.), from object, from purpose, from aim.
(yálnārthā, m. abl. sg. TP cpd., for the purpose of sacrifice.)
karma (n. abl. sg.), from action.
anyatra. adv., aside from, elsewhere, otherwise.
lakṣa (m. nom. sg.), world.
ayam (m. nom. sg.), this.
karmabandhanas (m. nom. sg. BV cpd.) such that it is bound by action.
tad (n. acc. sg.), that, this.
artham (m. acc. sg.), purpose, aim, object.
karma (n. acc. sg.), action, deeds.
kūnteṣa (m. voc. sg.), Son of Kunti, epithet of Arjuna referring to his mother.
mukta (p. pass. participle sāmuc), freed, released.
saṅga (m. nom. sg. saṅga), attachment, clinging.
(muktasaṅgas, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., being free from attachment.)
samācara (2nd sg. imperative act. sam a car), perform! accomplish!
Having created mankind along with sacrifice,
Prajapati, (the Lord of Creatures) anciently said,
"By this (i.e. sacrifice), may you bring forth;
May this be your wishfulfilling cow."

\[\text{sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ srṣtvā} \]
\[\text{together with sacrifices mankind having created,} \]

\[\text{पुरोवाच प्रजापति:} \]
\[\text{purovāca prajāpatiḥ} \]
\[\text{anciently said Prajapati (the Lord of Creatures)} \]

\[\text{एव वो प्रसविष्यद्वम} \]
\[\text{esa vo 'stovaiśtakāmadhuk} \]
\[\text{this of you may it be the milch cow of desires.} \]
By this (i.e. sacrifice) may you nourish the gods
and may the gods nourish you;
by nourishing each other,
you shall attain the highest welfare.”

*bhāvayate, “may you cherish,” sometimes translated “may you foster,” “prosper ye” or “may you nourish,” is actually a causative form of the root, ṣvḥā, ”be,” “exist.” Thus its literal meaning is “may you cause (the gods) to be.” The metaphysical inference is interesting. Man causes the gods to be, and in return the gods cause man to be. This is by no means the only place in religious literature where a mutual creation is hinted at—man creating god and god creating man. The idea also reminds one of William James’ statement in “Essays on Faith and Morals”: “I confess that I do not see why the very existence of an invisible world may not depend in part on the personal response which any one of us may make to the religious appeal. God himself, in short, may draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity.”
III

12

िṣ्टान् भोगान् हि वो देवा
िṣ्टान् bhogān hi vo devā
"desired enjoyments indeed to you the
gods

dास्यन्ते यज्ञाविवित्ताः
daśyante yajñabhāvävitāḥ
they will give, sacrifice-produced;

tैर दत्तान् अप्रदायिभ्यो
tāir dattān apradāyaibhyo
by these gifts not offering to them

यो भुन्क्ते स्तेन एव सः
yo bhuṅkte stena eva saḥ
who he enjoys, a thief, he."

"The gods, nourished by the
sacrifice,
Will indeed give you desired enjoyments;
He who enjoys these gifts while not
offering to them in return,
Is a thief."

िṣ्टान् (m. acc. pl. p. pass. participle √is), de-
sired, wished for, sought for, asked for.
bhogān (m. acc. pl.), enjoyments, pleasures.
hi, indeed, truly.
vas (dat. pl.), to you.
devās (m. nom. pl.), the gods.
daśyante (3rd pl. future mid. √dā), they will
give.
yajñabhāväviśas (yajña + m. nom. pl. p. pass.
participle √bhū), sacrifice-produced, (as
TP cpd.) brought into being by sacrifice.
tāis (m. inst. pl.), by these.
dattān (m. acc. pl.), gifts.
apradāya (gerund a pra √dā), not giving, not
offering.
ebhyaś (m. dat. pl.), to them.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
bhuṅkte (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. √bhuj), he
enjoys, he eats, he possesses.
stenas (m. nom. sg.), thief.
eva, indeed, only (often used as a rhythmic
filler).
sas (m. nom. sg.), he, this.
The good, who eat the remainder of the sacrifice, Are released from all evils; But the wicked, who cook only for their own sake, Eat their own impurity.

\textit{yajñaśiṣṭāśinaḥ} \textit{santo}\textit{ }\textit{yajñaśiṣṭāśinaḥ santo}  
the sacrifice remainder eating, the good,  
\textit{mucyante sarvakilbiṣāīh}  
they are released from all evils,  
\textit{bhuijate te tvagham pāpā}  
they eat they indeed, evils the wicked  
\textit{ye pacantyātmakāraṇāt}  
who they cook for own sake.

\textit{yajñaśiṣṭā} (n.), the “sacrifice remainder” which is eaten by the faithful after the gods and priests have consumed their share.  
\textit{āśinaḥ} (m. nom. pl. from \textit{āṣ}), eating, enjoying.  
\textit{yajñaśiṣṭāśinas}, (m. nom. pl. TP cpd., those who eat the remainder of the sacrifice.)  
\textit{santas} (m. nom. pl.), good, existing, true.  
\textit{mucyante} (3rd pl. pr. indic. passive \textit{muc}), they are released, they are liberated.  
\textit{sarvakilbiṣāīs} (n. inst. pl.), by sins, from wrongs, from evils. KD cpd. from all evils.  
\textit{bhuijate} (3rd pl. pr. indic. mid. \textit{bhuj}), they enjoy, they eat.  
\textit{te} (m. nom. pl.), they.  
\textit{agham} (n. acc. sg.), impurity, pain, suffering.  
\textit{pāpās} (m. nom. pl.), the wicked, the evil ones.  
\textit{ye} (m. nom. pl.), who.  
\textit{pacanti} (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. \textit{pac}), they cook, they digest.  
\textit{ātma} (n.), self, own.  
\textit{kāraṇāt} (n. abl. sg.), from reason, from cause, for the sake of.  
\textit{ātmakāraṇāt}, n. abl. sg. TP cpd., for their own sake.)
Beings exist from food,
Food is brought into being by rain,
Rain from sacrifice,
And sacrifice is brought into being by action.

annāt (n. abl. sg.), from food.
bhavati (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √bhu), they exist, they are, they come to be.
bhūtāni (n. nom. sg.), beings, living beings, existences.
parjanīyt (m. abl. sg.), from the rain cloud, from the rain god.
anna (n.), food.
śaṁbhavas (m. nom. sg.), origin, source.
(annasāṁbhavas, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., of which food is the source.)
yajñāt (m. abl. sg.), from sacrifice.
bhavati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. √bhū), it, he, exists, it, he, comes to be.
parjanyas (m. nom. sg.), the rain cloud, the rain god.
yajñas (m. nom. sg.), sacrifice, worship.
karma* (n.), action, doing, deeds.
saṁudbhavas (m. nom. sg. from saṁ ud √bhū), origin, source, cause of being.
(karmasaṁudbhavas, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., brought into being by action, whose origin is in action.)

* Throughout the Bhagavad Gītā, the word karma (action) is used in several senses. Sometimes, as here, it refers to religious action, the ritual action of the priest performing the sacrifice. Elsewhere it refers to the warlike action proper to the warrior caste to which Arjuna belongs. At still other places it has the meaning of the sum of past actions that is carried into a future life.
Know that ritual action originates in Brahman (the Vedas)
And Brahman arises from the Imperishable;
Therefore the all-pervading Brahman Is eternally established in sacrifice.

---

* Edgerton has pointed out that this stanza does not constitute the logical syllogism that it seems on first reading to be. “Sacrifice” is not the starting point of the series, but an intermediate term.
evam pravartitam cakram
even thus set in motion the wheel

na nānuwartayati ha yah
not he causes to turn (the wheel) here in
the world, who,

pradhānyarāgaṁ
malicious, sense-delighted,

mogham pārtha sa jīvati
vain, Son of Prthā, he lives.

He who does, here on earth,
Turn the wheel thus set in motion,
Lives, Arjuna,
Maliciously, full of sense delights, and in
vain.

* I.e. The circular sequence: sacrifice, the rain
god, food, beings, sacrifice, the rain god, etc. etc.
स्वात्मरतिरेव स्वाद
Yastvātmāratiśreva syād
who only gratified in the self he should be

तत्स्त्र मनवः
ātmavrptaśca mānavaḥ
and satisfied in the self, the man

तत्स्त्र मन्वः च संतुष्टस्
ātmanyeva ca saṁtuṣṭas
and in the self content

तत्स्य कार्यं न विद्यते
tasya kāryam na vidyate
of him the to-be-done, not it is found.

He whose delight is only in the Self,
Whose satisfaction is in the Self,
And who is content only in the Self;
For him the need to act does not exist.

yas (m. nom. sg.), who, which, what.
īu, indeed.
ātma (m.), self.
ratis (f. nom. sg.), pleasure, gratified, pleased, content.
(ātmāratis, f. nom. sg. BV cpd., whose delight is in the self.)
eva, indeed, only (often used as a rhythmic filler).
syā (3rd sg. opt. act. √as), he should be, he may be.
ātma (m.), self.
trptas (m. nom. sg. p. participle √trp), pleased, satisfied.
(ātmātrptas, n. nom. sg. BV cpd., who is content in the self.)
ca, and.
mānavas (m. nom. sg.), man, a man, a descendant of Manu, the primal ancestor.
ātmani (m. loc. sg.), in the self.
eva, indeed, only (often used as a rhythmic filler).
ca, and.
saṁtuṣṭas (m. nom. sg.), content, satisfied, pleased.
tasya (m. gen. sg.), of him.
kāryam (n. nom. sg. gerundive √kṛ), to-be-done, to be accomplished, task, duty.
a, not.
vidyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive √2 vid), it is found.
He has no purpose at all in action, 
Or in non-action, 
And he has no need of any being 
For any purpose whatsoever.
Therefore, constantly unattached,
Perform that action which is your duty.
Indeed, by performing action while unattached,
Man attains the Supreme.

* The "therefore" is not a consequence of the preceding stanzas, which describe the person who has attained complete concentration on the ātman. This stanza is the advice to Arjuna to perform action while unattached, in order to attain the state described in III 17 and 18.
Perfection was attained by kings like Janaka

With action alone.

For the mere maintenance of the world, You should act.

---

* Janaka, a famous philosopher king who, with his priest and adviser, Yājñavalkya, opposed the brāhmaṇ priesthood, claiming that he himself, though a member of the warrior caste, could perform sacrifices without brāhmaṇ help. Eventually he became a brāhmaṇ and a rājarṣi, or royal seer. He was the father of Śītā, the heroine of the Rāmāyaṇa. He is thought to have influenced the Buddha, who was also a member of the kṣatriya caste. The reference is to Janaka, as a kṣatriya (warrior or doer) attaining perfection through deeds rather than austerities.
Whatever he does the best
Thus do the rest;
Whatever standard he sets,
The world follows that.
II

22

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं
na me pārthāsti kartavyam
not of me, Son of Pṛthā, there is to-be-done

निष्ठ तोकषेः किचन।
na, not.

trīṣu lokesu kimcana
in the three worlds anything whatever

नानवाप्तमावप्तवयम्
nānavāptamāvāptavayam
nor not attained to be attained,

वर्त एष च कर्मणि।
varta eva ca karmani
I engage nevertheless in action.

For Me, O Arjuna, there is nothing whatever
To be done in the three worlds,
Nor is there anything not attained to be attained.
Nevertheless I engage in action.
Indeed, if I, unwearied, should not engage
In action at all,
Mankind would follow
My path everywhere, O Arjuna.
If I did not perform action,
These worlds would perish
And I would be the cause of confusion;
I would destroy these creatures.

utsideyus (3rd pl. opt. act. ud √sad), they
would sink down, they should perish.
ime (m. nom pl.), these.
lokās (m. nom. pl.), worlds.
na, not.
kuryām (1st sg. opt. act. √kr), I should per-
form, I should do.
karma (n. acc. sg.), action, deeds.
ced, if.
aham (nom. sg.), I.
sāmkarasya (m. gen. sg.), of confusion, “of
together-pouring,” or scattering to-gether.
ca, and.
karta (m. nom. sg.), maker, doer, performer,
creator.
syām (1st sg. opt. √as), I should be.
upahanyām (1st sg. opt. act. upa √han), I
should destroy, I should smite.
imās (f. acc. pl.), these.
prajās (f. acc. pl.), creatures, beings, prog-
eny, offspring, descendants, people.
While those who are unwise act
From attachment to action, O Arjuna,
So the wise should act without
attachment,
Intending to maintain the welfare
of the world.
na buddhibhedam janayed
not intelligence-fragmentation one should produce

ajñānāṁ karmasāṅgināṁ
of the ignorant, of the action attached;

jośayet sarvakarmāṇi
one should cause (them) to enjoy all actions,

vidvān yuktah samācaran
the wise, disciplined performing.

One should not unsettle the minds of
The ignorant who are attached to action;
The wise one should cause them to
enjoy all actions,
While himself performing actions in
a disciplined manner.
prakṛtes (f. gen. sg.), of material nature, of nature.
kriyamāṇāni (n. nom. pl. pr. mid. participle √kr), being performed, performed.
guṇās (m. inst. pl.), by the guṇas.
karmāṇi (n. nom. pl.), actions.
sarvasaḥ, adv., everywhere, in all cases, altogether, entirely.
ahaṁkāra (m.), lit. “I making,” egotism.
vimūḍha (m. p. pass. participle vi √muh), deluded, confused.
ātmā (m. nom. sg.), self.
(ahaṁkāravimūḍhātmā, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., he whose self is confused by egotism.)
kartā (m. nom. sg.), doer, creator.
aham (nom. sg.), I.
iti, thus (used to close quotations).
manyate (3rd sg. mid. √man), he thinks, he believes, he imagines.

Actions in all cases are performed
By the qualities of material nature;
He whose mind is confused by egoism
Imagines, “I am the doer.”
The truth-knowing, but, Mighty Armed One,

But he who knows the truth, O Arjuna, About the two roles of the qualities and action, thinking, "The qualities work among the qualities," Is not attached.
Those deluded by the qualities of material nature
Are attached to the actions of the qualities.
The perfect knower should not disturb
The foolish men of incomplete knowledge.
Deferring all actions in Me,
Meditating on the supreme Spirit,
Having become free from desire and selfishness,
With your fever departed, fight!

\textit{mayi \text{loc. sg.}}, in me, to me, on me.
\textit{sarv\=ani \text{n. acc. pl.}}, all.
\textit{karm\=ani \text{n. acc. pl.}}, actions, deeds.
\textit{san\=nyasya \text{gerund} sam n i \text{vas}}, relinquishing, entrusting, renouncing.
\textit{adh\=y\=a\=tmacetas\=a \text{n. inst. sg.}}, by meditating on the Supreme Spirit (\textit{adh\=y\=a\=ma}), by thinking on the Supreme Self.
\textit{nir\=a\=s\=i\=s \text{m. nom. sg.}}, not wishing for, not asking for, free from asking, free from desire.
\textit{nirmamas \text{m. nom. sg.}}, indifferent to “mine,” free from desire for possessions.
\textit{bh\=utv\=a \text{gerund} \sqrt{\text{bha}},} becoming, being, having become, having been.
\textit{yud\=h\=yasva (2nd imperative mid. \sqrt{\text{yudh}})}, fight! engage in battle!
\textit{vigata \text{p. pass. participle} \sqrt{\text{gam}}}, gone away, departed, disappeared.
\textit{j\=varas \text{m. nom. sg.}}, fever, grief.
\textit{vigata-j\=varas \text{m. nom. sg.} \text{BV cpd.}}, one whose fever is departed.

\textit{I.e. allowing God to initiate all actions.}
III

31

वे मे मतम् हंद नित्यम्
ye me matam idam nityam
who of me doctrine this constantly

अनुस्तिष्ठति मानवाः
anusthanti manavah
they practice, men,

श्रद्धावतः नसुयन्तो
śraddhavanto 'nasüyanto
believing, not sneering,

मुच्यन्ते ते उपि कर्मभिः
mucyante te 'pi karmabhiḥ
they are released, they also by actions.

Men who constantly practice
This teaching of Mine,
Believing, not sneering,
Are also released from the bondage of
actions.

ye (m. nom. pl.), who, which.
me (gen. sg.), of me, my.
matam (n. acc. sg.), thought, doctrine.
idam (n. acc. sg.), this.
nityam (adv.), constantly, eternally, perpetually.
anusthanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. anu
śiha), they practice, they follow, they carry out.
mānavas (m. nom. pl.), men, mankind, descendants of Manu, progenitor of the human race.
śraddhavantas (m. nom. pl.), believing, full of faith.
anaśūyantas (m. nom. pl. pr. participle an
śasūya), not sneering, not spiteful, not envious, not caviling, not grumbling, not speaking ill of, not showing jealousy.
mucyante (3rd pl. pr. pass. śmuc), they are released, they are liberated.
te, (m. nom. pl.), they.
api, even, also.
karmabhiṣ (n. inst. pl.), by actions, from actions.
But those who, sneering at this,
Do not practice My teaching,
Confusing all wisdom,
Know them to be lost and mindless.

ye (m. nom. pl.), who.
tu, but.
etad, (n. acc. sg.), this.
abhyaśīyantas (m. nom. pl. pr. participle abhi-śāya), sneering, showing ill will, caviling.
na, not.
anuṭṭhanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. anu-śthā), they practice, they follow, they carry out.
me (gen. sg.), of me, my.
matam (n. acc. sg.), thought, doctrine.
sarva, all.
jjāna (n.), knowledge, wisdom.
vimūḍhān (m. acc. pl. p. pass. participle vi-muḥ), confusing, deluding.
(sarva-jjāna-vimūḍhān, m. acc. pl. TP cpd., confusing all knowledge.)
tān (m. acc. pl.), them.
viddhi (2nd sg. imperative act. āviḍ), know! learn!
nāṣṭān (m. acc. pl. p. pass. participle ānāṣ), lost, destroyed.
acetasas (m. acc. pl.), them whose minds are not, them who are mindless, the stupid ones.
One acts according to one’s own material nature.
Even the wise man does so.
Beings follow their own material nature;
What will restraint accomplish?

sādṛśam (adv.), according to.
ceṣṭate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. √cest), he, she, one acts, one strives, one moves, one struggles.
svasyāḥ (f. gen. sg.), from own, through own.
prakṛtes (f. gen. sg.), from material nature.
jñānavān (m. nom. sg.), full of wisdom, wise, wise man.
api, even, also.
prakṛtim (f. acc. sg.), material nature.
yānti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √yā), they go, they follow.
bhūtāni (n. nom. pl.), beings, existences.
nigrahās (m. nom. sg.), restraint, control, subduing.
kim (interrog.), what?
kareṣyati (3rd sg. future act. √kṛ), it will make, it will do, it will accomplish.
Passion and hatred are seated
In the senses in relation to their objects.
One should not come under the power of these two;
They are indeed one’s enemies.

**indriyasya (n. gen. sg.), of a sense, of a power.**

**indriyasya (n. gen. sg.), of a sense, of a power.**

**artha (m.), object, purpose.**

**(indriyasyendriyasyārthe, m. loc. sg., of a sense in relation to an object of that sense.)**

**raja (m.), passion, desire.**

**dvesa (m.), hatred, aversion.**

**(rajadveśau, m. nom. dual DV cpd., passion and hatred.)**

**vyavasthitau (m. nom. dual p. pass. participle vi ava śthā), seated, abiding in.**

**tayos (m. gen. dual), of them two.**

**na, not.**

**vasam (m. acc. sg.), power, will, authority, control.**

**āgacchet (3rd sg. opt. act. ā गच्छ ति), one should come, one should come near, one should fall into, one should come under.**

**tāu (m. nom. dual), they two, them two.**

**hi, indeed, truly.**

**asya (m. gen. sg.), of him, of it, of one.**

**paripanthināu (m. nom. dual), two enemies, two hindrances, two things that stand in the way, two adversaries, two antagonists.**
Better one’s own duty though deficient
Than the duty of another well performed.
Better is death in one’s own duty;
The duty of another invites danger.

śreyāṁ svadharma viguṇaḥ
better own duty deficient

paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt
than duty of another (caste), well performed.

svadharme nidhanam śreyah
in own duty death better,

paradharmo bhayavahāḥ
duty of another (caste), danger inviting.

śreyāṁ (m. nom. sg. comparative), better, superior, preferable.
svadharma (m. nom. sg.), own duty (here meaning duty of one’s own caste).
viguṇaḥ (m. nom. sg.), deficient, imperfect, ineffective, unsuccessful.
paradharmāt (m. abl. sg.), from duty of another, than duty of another (here meaning of another caste).
sva, su well, good.
anuṣṭhitāt (abl. p. pass. participle anuṣṭhā, than done, than practiced, than performed.
svadharme (m. loc. sg.), in own duty, in own caste duty.
nidhanam (n. nom. sg.), settling down, end, death.
śreyas (n. nom. sg. compar.), better, superior, preferable.
paradharmas (m. nom. sg.), duty of another, opposite duty.
bhya (n.), danger, fear.
avahās (from āvah), inviting, bringing.
(bhya-avahāḥ, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., bringing fear.)
Arjuna spoke:

Then impelled, by what

Does a man commit this evil,

Unwillingly even, O Krishna,

As if urged by force?
The Blessed Lord spoke:
This force is desire, this force is anger;
Its source is the rajas guna.
Voracious and greatly injurious,
Know this to be the enemy.
by smoke he is covered, the bearer (Agni, god of fire),

and as similarly a mirror by dust,

as membrane-covered, the embryo,

As fire is obscured by smoke,
And a mirror by dust,
As the embryo is enveloped by the membrane,
So the intellect is obscured by passion.
The knowledge even of the wise ones is obscured by this eternal enemy, having the form of desire, which is as insatiable fire.
The senses, the mind and the intellect
Are said to be its (i.e. the eternal
definy’s) abode;
With these, it confuses the embodied
one,
Obscuring his knowledge.

indriyāni mano buddhir
the senses, the mind, the intelligence

asya dhiṣṭānam ucyate
of it the abode, it is said;

etān vimohayateṣa
with these, it confuses, this,

jñānem āvṛtya dehinam
knowledge-obsuring, the embodied one.
Therefore, restraining the senses
First, O Arjuna,
Kill this evil demon
Which destroys knowledge and discrimination.

**Translation**

Therefore, restraining the senses
First, O Arjuna,
Kill this evil demon
Which destroys knowledge and discrimination.
They say that the senses are superior. 
The mind is superior to the senses; 
Moreover, the intellect is superior 
to the mind; 
That which is superior to the intellect 
is the Self.

* I.e. the Yoga of action, without desire for the 
fruits of action, see following stanza, also stanzas 
40 and 41.
evam buddheḥ param buddhavā
even, thus, even so.
buddhes (f. abl. sg.), from the intelligence,
than the intelligence.
param (n. nom. sg.), higher.
buddhavā (gerund v.buddh), having learned.
saṁstabhya (gerund sam v.stabh), together
sustaining, upholding.
ātman (m. acc. sg.), self.
ātmā (m. inst. sg.), by the self.
jaḥi (2nd sg. imperative act. v.han), kill! de­stroy!
śatrum (m. acc. sg.), enemy, adversary.
maḥābāho (m. voc. sg.), O Mighty Armed
One, epithet of Arjuna and other warriors.
kāmarūpam (n. acc. sg.), desire-form, having
the form of desire, (as BV cpd.) which has
the form of desire.
durāsadam (n. acc. sg.), difficult to approach,
encountered with difficulty.

Thus having known that which is
higher than the intellect,
Sustaining the self by the Self,
Kill the enemy, O Arjuna,
Which has the form of desire and is
difficult to conquer.

End of Book III

The Yoga of Action
BOOK IV

The Blessed Lord spoke:

1

इमं विवस्वते योगं
imam vivasvate yogam
this, to Vivasvat, Yoga

प्रोक्तवान अहम अवययम
proktavn aham avyayam
having declared, I, imperishable,

विवस्वन मनवे प्राहा
vivassvan manave praha
Vivasvat to Manu communicated,

मनुर इक्ष्वाकवे ब्रवीत
t manur ikshvāke 'bravīt
Manu to Ikṣvāku imparted.

The Blessed Lord spoke:
I proclaimed this imperishable yoga
to Vivasvat;
Vivasvat communicated it to Manu,
And Manu imparted it to Ikṣvāku.

---

* Vivasvat, the Sun god.
† Manu, Manu Vaivasvata, son of the Sun god.
‡ Ikṣvāku, son of Manu Vaivasvata. All are early legendary figures. See chapter on “The Setting of the Bhagavad Gītā.”
Thus received by succession,
The royal seers knew this;
After a long time here on earth,
This yoga has been lost, Arjuna.

**evam**, thus, so.
**paramparā**, succession, one to another.
**prāptam**, received, obtained, attained.
**imam**, this.
**rājarṣayas**, royal seers.
**vidus**, they knew.
**sas**, it, this.
**kālena**, by time, in time, with time.
**iha**, here, here on earth.
**mahatā**, long, great, extended.
**yogas**, Yoga.
**naṣṭas**, lost, destroyed.
**paramātapa**, Scorcher of the Foe, epithet of Arjuna and other warriors.
This ancient yoga is today
Declared by Me to you,
Since you are My devotee and friend.
This secret is supreme indeed.
Arjuna spoke:
Your birth was later,
The birth of Vivasvat earlier;
How should I understand this,
That You declared it in the
beginning?
The Blessed Lord spoke:
Many of My births have passed away,
And also yours, Arjuna.
I know them all;
You do not know them,
Arjuna.
Although I am birthless and My nature is imperishable,
Although I am the Lord of all beings,
Yet, by controlling My own material nature,
I come into being by My own power.

* There appears to be a contradiction here between "birthless" and "many of my births" of the preceding stanza, but Krishna's "births" refer to his "giving forth" of himself—see following stanza.
Whenever a decrease of righteousness
Exists, Arjuna,
And there is a rising up of
unrighteousness,
Then I manifest Myself.
paritānāya sādhūnām
to protecting of the good

vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
and to the destruction of evil doers

dharmasamsthitapārthāya
for the sake of establishing righteousness,

sambhavāmi yuge yuge
I come into being from age to age.

For the protection of the good
And the destruction of evil doers,
For the sake of establishing righteousness,
I am born in every age.

paritānāya (n. dat. sg. from pari √trā), to refuge, to protecting, to preservation, to deliverance.
sādhūnām (m. gen. pl.), of the righteous, of the good, of the virtuous ones.
vināśāya (m. dat. sg. from vi √naś), to the destruction, to the loss, to the perishing.
ca, and.
duṣkṛtām (m. gen. pl.), of evil doers, of doers of wicked deeds.
dharma (m.), righteousness, duty, law.
saṁsthāpana (pr. causative noun from saṁ √sthā), the establishing.
arthāya (m. dat. sg.), for the purpose of, with the aim of, for the sake of.
(dharmasamsthāpanārthāya, m. dat. sg. TP cpd., for the sake of the establishing of righteousness.)
saṁbhavāmi (1st sg. pr. indic. act. saṁ √bhā), I come into being, I originate myself.
yuge yuge (n. loc. sg.), from age to age, in age after age. The conception of the Hindu yuga is explained at length in a footnote to stanza 17 of Book VIII.

* This conception of the “coming into being” from age to age to protect the good and punish the evil is not confined to Hinduism. Buddhism has a Buddha who arrives at different times for that purpose. Messianic Judaism, and thus Christianity, have parallels, though they require only one visitation of the Messiah, or avatār of God.
Janma karma ca me divyam

thus who knows in truth

not he goes; to me goes he, Arjuna.

He who knows in truth
My divine birth and action,
Having left his body, he is
Not reborn; he comes to Me, Arjuna.

janma (n. acc. sg.), birth.
karma (n. acc. sg.), action, deeds.
cia, and.
me (gen. sg.), of me, my.
divyam (n. acc. sg.), divine, heavenly, godlike.
evam, thus.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
vetti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. \textit{vid}), he knows.
tattvatas (adv.), “by thatness,” by the truth about, in truth, truly.
tyaktvā (gerund \textit{tyaj}), leaving, renouncing, abandoning, having left, having abandoned.
deham (n. acc. sg.), body, material body.
punarjanma (n. acc. sg.), “again birth,” rebirth.
na, not.
eti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. \textit{i}), he goes, he comes.
mām (m. acc. sg.), me, to me.
eti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. \textit{i}), he goes, he comes.
sas (m. nom. sg.), he, the, this.
arjuna (m. voc. sg.), Arjuna.
Thinking solely of Me, resorting to Me,
Many whose greed, fear, and anger
have departed,
Purified by the austerity of knowledge,
Have attained My state of being.

नित्यागभयक्रोधः
vitāragabhayakrodhā
gone passion fear and anger

मनमयाः मम उपाश्रयति:
manmayā mām upāśritāḥ
absorbed in me, me resorting to,

बहवो ज्ञानतपसा
bahavo jñānatapasā
many, by knowledge austerity

पुताः मद्भावम् धारताः
pūtā madbhāvam āgatāḥ
purified, my state of being (have) attained.

vita (p. pass. participle vi √i), gone away, disappeared.
rāga (m.), passion, greed.
bhaya (n.), fear, danger.
krodha (m. nom. pl.), anger.
(vitāragabhayakrodhās, m. nom. pl. disappeared greed, fear and anger; free of passion, fear and anger; (as BV cpd.) whose greed, fear and anger have departed.)
manmayā (m. nom. pl.), absorbed in me, thinking solely of me.
mām (acc. sg.), me.
upāśritās (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle upa ā vārī), resorting to, clinging to.
bahavas (m. nom. pl.), many.
jñānatapasā (n. inst. sg. TP cpd.), by knowledge-austerity, by the austerity of wisdom.
pūtās (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle vāpū), purified, cleansed.
madbhāvam (m. acc. sg.), “of me being,” my state of being.
āgatās (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle ā vāgam), come to, attained, reached.
In whatever way, 
Men take refuge in Me, I reward them. 
Men everywhere, Arjuna, 
Follow My path.

ye (m. nom. pl.), who. 
yathā, in which way, as. 
mām (acc. sg.), me. 
prapadyante (3rd pl. pr. indic. mid. pra pad), they take refuge in, they resort to. 
tām (m. acc. pl.), them. 
yathā, thus, in this way, so. 
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler). 
bhajāmi (1st sg. pr. indic. act. vbhaj), I share with, I love, I reward. 
aham (nom. sg.), I. 
mama (gen. sg.), of me, my. 
vartma (n. acc. sg.), path, road, turning. 
anuvartante (3rd pl. pr. indic. mid. anu vṛt), they follow. 
manuṣyāḥ (m. nom. pl.), men, human beings. 
pārtha (m. voc. sg.), Son of Prthā, epithet of Arjuna. 
sarvasaḥ (adv.), everywhere, on all sides. 

ye yathā mām prapadyante 
who, in whatever way Me they take refuge in

manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvasaḥ 
men, Son of Prthā, everywhere. 

In whatever way, 
Men take refuge in Me, I reward them. 
Men everywhere, Arjuna, 
Follow My path.
Desiring the success of ritual acts,
Men sacrifice here on earth to the Vedic gods.
Quickly indeed in the world of men Ritual acts bring success.
The system of four castes was created by Me,
According to the distribution of the qualities and their acts.
Although I am the creator of this (the system),
Know Me to be the eternal non-doer.
Actions do not taint Me;
I have no desire for the fruit of action;
Thus he who comprehends Me
Is not bound by actions.
Having known this, the ancients, Seeking release, also performed action. Therefore perform action As it was earlier performed by the ancients.
What is action? What is inaction?

Thus, even the wise are confused in this matter.

This action I shall explain to you, Having known which, you shall be released from evil.

* kavayás, poets. One must remember that much of Sanskrit religious literature was conceived in poetic form. Thus “poets” here (often translated “sages”) were religious teachers who wrote, or rather sang, in verse.
One must know the nature of action,
The nature of wrong action,
And also the nature of inaction.
The way of action is profounded.
He who perceives inaction in action, 
And action in inaction, 
Is wise among men; 
He is a yogi and performs all actions.
of whom all enterprises

desire and purpose excluded,

who has consumed his karma in the fire of knowledge,

him they call paññita, the wise ones.

He who has excluded desire and motive
From all his enterprises,
And has consumed his karma in the fire of knowledge,
Him the wise men call a sage.
He who has abandoned all attachment
to the fruits of action,
Always content, not dependent,
Even when performing action,
Does, in effect, nothing at all.
Performing action with the body alone,
Without wish, restrained in thought
and self,
With all motives of acquisition
abandoned,
He incurs no evil.

nirāsīś (m. nom. sg.), hopeless, free from
desires, indifferent, without wishes.
yata (m. p. pass. participle vyam), restrained,
controlled.
citta (n.), thought, mind.
ātmā (m. nom. sg.), self.
yata-citta-ātmā, m. nom. sg. BY cpd., hav­
ing a self with a controlled mind.)
tyakta (p. pass. participle vyāj), abandoned, 
left, renounced.
sarva, all.
parigrahās (m. nom. sg. from pari grah),
getting, attaining, grasping, acquisition,
possessions, property.
sārīram (n. acc. sg.), bodily, with the body.
kevalam (n. acc. sg.), alone, exclusively, 
only, merely.
karma (n. acc. sg.), action.
kurvan (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle kr),
performing, doing, making.
na, not.
apnoti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. ṛp), he at­
tains, he obtains, he reaches, he incurs.
kilbiṣam (n. acc. sg.), guilt, fault, evil.
Content with whatever comes to him,
Transcending the dualities (i.e. pleasure, pain, etc.), free from envy,
Constant in mind whether in success or in failure,
Even though he acts, he is not bound.

yadreçhā (f. nom. sg.), chance, accidental, spontaneous.
lābha (m.), obtaining, gain.
samitustas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle sam vītus), content, satisfied.
(lābha-samitustas, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., one who has contentment.)
dvandva (n.), pairs, dualities, polarity of opposites.
atitas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle aitī), going beyond, transcending.
(dvandva-atitas, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., gone beyond opposites.)
vimatsaras (m. nom. sg.), whose envy is gone, free from envy, free from greed, free from malice.
samas (m. nom. sg.), constant, the same, indifferent.
siddhā (f. loc. sg.), in success, in accomplishment.
asiddhā (f. loc. sg.), in failure, in nonsuccess.
ca, and.
kṛtvā (gerund kṛ), making, having made, having done, having acted.
apī, even, also.
na, not.
nibadhya (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive ni vīadh), he is bound down, he is bound.
The work of one who is free from attachment, who is liberated, Whose thought is established in knowledge, Who does work only as a sacrifice, Is wholly dissolved.

gata (m. p. pass. participle √gam), gone.
saṅgasya (m. gen. sg.), of attachment, of clinging.
(gaṭasaṅgasya, m. gen. sg., of the free from attachment, (as BV cpd.) of one from whom attachment is gone.)
muktasya (m. gen. sg. p. pass. participle √muc), of the released, of the liberated one.
śāna (n.), knowledge.
avastha (p. pass. participle √sthā), established, supported.
cetās (n. gen. sg.), of thought, of mind.
(jñānavasthitacetasas, m. gen. sg. BV cpd., of him whose thought is established in knowledge.)
yajñāya (m. dat. sg.), to sacrifice, for sacrifice.
ācaratas (m. nom. sg. pr. participle act. ācar), undertaking, moving towards.
karma (n. nom. sg.), action, ritual action.
samagram (adv.), wholly, together, in the aggregate.
praviśyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. pass. pra vi śīḍ), is is melted away, it becomes dissolved, it vanishes.
Brahman is the offering, Brahman is the oblation,

Brahma by him to be attained

Brahman is the offering, Brahman is the oblation

Poured out by Brahman into the fire of Brahman,
Brahman is to be attained by him
Who always sees Brahman in action.

* "The entire act consists of Brahman because it is of Brahman’s nature: the sacrifice is Brahman, the utensils are Brahman, the fire in which the sacrifice is offered is Brahman, the sacrificer himself is Brahman. He who contemplates this insight, contemplates the act-as-Brahman. Such a one is capable of knowing the proper form of the ātman—which is Brahman—through his acts, because his acts are of Brahman’s nature. In other words, the acts performed by an aspirant have the form of knowledge because they imply the realization that they consist of Brahman and are therefore a means of contemplating the ātman..." Rāmānuja, tr. van Buitenen.
Some yogins perform
Sacrifice to the gods;
Others offer sacrifice,
By sacrifice itself, in the fire of Brahman.
Others offer senses like hearing
In the fire of restraint;
Still others offer sound and other
objects of the senses
In the fire of the senses.
Others offer all actions of the senses
And actions of the vital breath
In the fire of the yoga of self-restraint,
Which is kindled by knowledge.

sarvāni (n. acc. pl.), all.
indriyakārmani (n. acc. pl.), sense actions,
actions of the senses.
prāṇa (m.), vital breath.
karmāni (n. acc. pl.), actions.
ca, and.
apare (m. nom. pl.), some, others.
ātmāsamyama, self restraint, self control.
yogāṅgāu (m. loc. sg.), in Yoga fire.
(ātmāsamyamayogāṅgāu, m. loc. sg. TP
cpd., in the fire of the Yoga of self re-
straint.)
juhvati (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. āhu), they
offer, they sacrifice.
jñāna (n.), knowledge.
dīpate (m. loc. sg. caus. p. pass. participle
ādīp), in kindled.
(jñānadiipate, m. loc. sg. TP cpd., kindled by
knowledge.)
material possession sacrifices, austerity sacrifices,

Yoga sacrifices, thus some;

whose sacrifices consist of Vedic recitation and the knowledge sacrifice,

ascetics (with) sharpened vows.

Some offer as sacrifice their material possessions
Or their austerities and practice of yoga,
While ascetics of severe vows Offer study of the scriptures and knowledge as sacrifice.

**dravya** (n.), substance, thing, object, material possession.
**yajñās** (m. nom. pl.), sacrifices, offerings.
**(dravyayajñās**, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., those whose sacrifices are made with material things.)
**tapas** (n.), austerity, self-denial.
**yajñās** (m. nom. pl.), sacrifices, offerings.
**(tapoyajñās**, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., those whose sacrifices are made in the form of austerity.)
**yoga** (m.), Yoga.
**yajñās** (m. nom. pl.), sacrifices, offerings.
**(yogayajñās**, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., those whose sacrifices take the form of Yoga.)
tathā, thus, also, likewise.
apare (m. nom. pl.), some, others.
**svādhyāya** (m.), Veda study, reciting the Veda to oneself.
**jñāna** (n.), knowledge, wisdom.
**yajñās** (m. nom. pl.), sacrifices, offerings.
**(svādhyāyajñānayajñās**, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., those whose sacrifices consist of Veda study and the knowledge sacrifice.)
ca, and.
apatās (m. nom. pl.), ascetics, men of austerity.
**saṁśīta** (p. pass. participle sam ṣī), sharpened, whetted.
vratās (m. nom. pl.), vows, ordinances, rules, commands.
apāne juhvatī prāṇam
in exhalation they offer inhalation,
apāne 'pānam tathāpare
in inhalation, exhalation thus others

prānāpānagatī ruddhvā
the path of inhalation and exhalation
restraining,

prāṇāyāma-paśyāṇāḥ
control of the breath intent upon.

Some offer inhalation into exhalation,
And others exhalation into inhalation,
Restraining the path of inhalation and exhalation,
Intent on control of the vital breath.

apāne (m. loc. sg.), in exhalation, in the abdominal breath (the Hindus believed in two breaths: the vital breath (prāṇa), and the abdominal breath (apāna), supposed to have been breathed through the anus, though the two terms were also used for inhalation and exhalation respectively, which is their meaning here).

juhvatī (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. ṣhu), they offer, they sacrifice.

prāṇam (m. acc. sg.), inhalation, vital breath.

prāne (m. loc. sg.), in inhalation, in the vital breath.
apānam (m. acc. sg.), exhalation, the abdominal breath.
tathā, thus, also.
apare (m. nom. pl.), some, others.

prānāpānagatī (f. acc. dual), the paths of inhalation and exhalation.

ruddhvā (gerund ṣruḥ), restraining.
prāna (m.), vital breath, inhalation.

āyama (m. from ā-āyam), control, stopping.
apāyancā (m. nom. pl. ifc.), intent upon.

(prāṇāyama-parāyancā, m. nom. pl., TP cpd, intent on breath control.)

* These are Yoga breathing exercises, as yet understood by few in the West, but familiar to all Yogins.
Others who have restricted their foods
Offer the life breath into the life breath;
All these are knowers of sacrifice,
And their evils have been destroyed through sacrifice.

apare (m. nom. pl.), some, others.
niyatāhārāḥ (m. nom. pl. BV cpd.), who have been restrained in food.
prāṇān (m. acc. pl.), inhalations, vital breaths.
prāṇeṣu (m. loc. pl.), in inhalations, in vital breaths.
juhvati (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. जुह), they sacrifice, they offer.
sarve (m. nom. pl.), all.
api, even, also.
ete (m. nom. pl.), these.
yajñavidas (m. nom. pl.), the sacrifice-knowing, those with knowledge of sacrifice.
yajñakṣapita (yajña + p. pass. causative participle यज्ञकष्टि), sacrifice-destroyed, destroyed by sacrifice.
kalmaṣāḥ (m. nom. pl.), evils, wrongs.
(yajñakṣapitakalmaṣāḥ, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., whose evils have been destroyed through sacrifice.)
The enjoyers of the nectar of the sacrificial remnants
Go to primeval Brahman.
Not even this world is for the non-sacrificing;
How then the other, Arjuna?

yajñāsiṣṭa (n.), sacrifice remainder, remainder of the offering, remainder consumed after the gods have taken their portion of the sacrifice.

amṛta (n.), nectar, immortality.
bhujas (f. nom. pl.), enjoying, eating.
(yajñāsiṣṭa-amṛta-bhujas, f. nom. pl., BV, sacrifice-remnant-nectar-enjoying ones.
yānti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. vyād), they go, they come.
brahma (n. acc. sg.), to Brahman, Brahman.
sanātanam (n. acc. sg.), primaeval, aged, ancient.
na, not.
ayam (m. nom. sg.), this.
lokas (m. nom. sg.), world.
asti (3rd sg. pr. indic. ās), it is.
ayājñasya (m. gen. abl. sg.), of the non-sacrificing, for the non-sacrificing one.
kutas (interrog.), how?
anyas (m. nom. sg.), other.
kurusattama (m. voc. sg.), Best of Kurus, Highest of Kurus, epithet of Arjuna.
Thus sacrifices are of many kinds, 
Spread out before Brahman. 
Know them all to be born of action. 
Thus knowing, you shall be released.

\textit{evam,} thus, accordingly. 
\textit{bahuvidhās} (m. nom. pl.), of many kinds, of many sorts. 
\textit{yajñās} (m. nom. pl.), sacrifices, offerings. 
\textit{vitatt} (m. nom. pl. sg. p. pass. participle \textit{vi-tātan}), stretched, arranged, spread. 
\textit{brahmaṇas} (n. gen. sg.), of Brahman. 
\textit{mukhe} (n. loc. sg.), in the mouth, in the face. 
\textit{karmajān} (m. acc. pl.), action born, born of action, arising from action. 
\textit{viddi} (2nd sg. imperative act. \textit{vi-vid}), know! learn! 
\textit{tān} (m. acc. pl.), them. 
\textit{sarvān} (m. acc. pl.), all. 
\textit{evam}, thus, this. 
\textit{jñātvā} (gerund \textit{jiñā}), knowing, having known. 
\textit{vimokṣyāse} (2nd sg. fut. pass. vi \textit{muc}), thou shalt be released; thou shalt be liberated.
śreyān dravyamayād yajñāj better than material-possession sacrifice

Jñānayajñāḥ paramātapa
(is) knowledge sacrifice, Scorcher of the Foe.

Sarvam karmākhilam piṛthā all action without a gap, Son of Pṛthā

Jñāne parisamāpyate in knowledge is fully comprehended.

Better than the sacrifice of material possessions
Is the wisdom sacrifice, Arjuna;
All action without exception, Arjuna,
Is fully comprehended in wisdom.
IV

34

तद् चिद्द्र प्रणिपातेन
tag viddhi pranipata
this know! by humble submission,

परिप्रश्नेन सेवया
pariprasnena sevaya
by enquiry, by service,

उपदेश्यति ते शान्त
upadekshyanti te janam
they will teach to thee knowledge,

शान्तिनस् तद्श्वदशिनः
jnatinas tatadvardishnah
the knowing, the perceivers of truth.

Know this! Through humble
submission,
Through enquiry, through service (on
your own part),
The knowing ones, the perceivers of
truth,
Will be led to teach you knowledge.

tad, (n. acc. sg.) this, that.
viddhi (2nd sg. imperative act. √vid), know!
learn!
pranipata (m. inst. sg. from pra ni √pat),
by bowing respectfully to, by humble sub-
mission, by prostrating oneself.
pariprasnena (m. inst. sg. from pari √prach),
by interrogation, by enquiry.
sevaya (f. inst. sg.), by service, by waiting
on, by attendance.
upadekshyanti (3rd pl. fut. act. upa √diś),
they will point out, they will instruct, they
will teach.
te (dat. sg.), thee, to thee.
jnanim (n. acc. sg.), knowledge, wisdom.
jnatinas (m. nom. pl.), the knowing, the
wise ones.
tattva (n.), “thatness,” truth.
darśinas (m. nom. pl. from √drś), perceiv-
ers, seers, understanders.
tatva-darśinas, (m. nom. pl. TP cpd., seers
of truth.)
Knowing that, you shall not again
Fall into delusion, Arjuna;
And by that knowledge you shall
see all beings
In yourself, and also in Me.

yad (n. acc. sg.), which, what.
jñātavā (gerund √jñā), knowing, having known.
na, not.
punar, again.
moham (m. acc. sg.), delusion, confusion.
evam, thus, so.
yāsyasi (2nd sg. fut. act. √yā), thou shalt go to, thou shalt come to, thou shalt fall into.
pāṇḍava (m. voc. sg.), Son of Pāṇḍu, epithet of Arjuna.
yena (m. inst. sg.), by which, with which.
bhūtāṇi (n. acc. sg.), beings, creatures.
āśeṣena (m. inst. sg.), without remainder, all.
drakṣyasi (2nd sg. fut. act. √drś), thou shalt see, thou shalt perceive, thou shalt behold.
ātmani (m. loc. sg.), in the self, in thyself.
atho, then.
mayi (loc. sg.), in me.
Even if you were the most evil
Of all evildoers,
You would cross over all wickedness
By the boat of knowledge.
As the kindled fire
Reduces firewood to ashes, Arjuna,
So the fire of knowledge
Reduces all actions to ashes.

yathā, in which way, as.
edhāṃsi (n. nom. pl.), firewood, kindling.
samiddhas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle sam āṇḍh), set on fire, kindled.
agnis (m. nom. sg.), fire.
bhasmasāt kurute (bhasmasāt adv. + 3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. āṇḍh), it reduces to ashes.
arjuna (m. voc. sg.), Arjuna.
(jñāna (n.), knowledge, wisdom.
agnis (m. nom. sg.), fire.
(jñānāgnaś, m. nom. sg. KD cpd., the fire of knowledge.)
sarva, all.
karmāṇi (n. acc. pl.), actions.
bhasmasāt (adv.), to ashes.
kurute (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. āṇḍh), it reduces.
tathā, thus, in this way, so.
Yoga

38

न हि ज्ञानेन सद्रः
na hi jñānena sadṛśam
not indeed to knowledge similar

पवित्राम इहा विद्यते
pavitram iha vidyate
purifier here in the world it is found;

तत् स्वयं योगसिद्धः
tat svayam yogasaṁsiddhaḥ
that himself the perfected in Yoga

कालेनात्मनि विन्दति
kālenātmani vindati
with time in the self he finds.

No purifier equal to knowledge
Is found here in the world;
He who is himself perfected in yoga
In time finds that knowledge in the Self.
He who possesses faith attains knowledge; Devoted to that (knowledge), restraining his senses, Having attained knowledge, he quickly attains Supreme peace.

śraddhāvān labhate jñānam
possessing faith he attains knowledge
tatparah samyatendriyah
devoted to that, restraining sense,

jñānam labdhvā parāṁ sāntim
knowledge having attained, to supreme peace

acireṇādhigacchati
not slowly he goes.
The man who is ignorant, and
does not have faith,
Who is of a doubting nature, is
destroyed.
Neither this world nor that beyond,
Nor happiness, is for him who
doubts.

\[\text{ajña (m. nom. sg.), ignorant, unknowing.} \]
\[\text{ca, and.} \]
\[\text{āśṛddadhānas (m. nom. sg.), not giving faith, without giving faith, not placing faith.} \]
\[\text{ca, and.} \]
\[\text{saṁśaya (m. from sam \(\sqrt{ṣi}\), doubting, hesitating, lacking in resolution.} \]
\[\text{ātmā (m. nom. sg.), self.} \]
\[\text{(saṁśayātmā, nom. sg. BV cpd., he whose self doubts.)} \]
\[\text{vinaśyati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. vi \(\sqrt{ṇaṣ} \)), he is lost, he is destroyed.} \]
\[\text{na, not.} \]
\[\text{ayam (m. nom. sg.), this.} \]
\[\text{lokās (m. nom. sg.), world.} \]
\[\text{asti (3rd sg. pr. indic. \(\sqrt{as} \)), it is, there is.} \]
\[\text{na, not.} \]
\[\text{paras, beyond, distant, remote, former, later.} \]
\[\text{na, not, nor.} \]
\[\text{sukham (n. nom. sg.), happiness, bliss, agreeableness, comfort, pleasure, delight, joy.} \]
\[\text{saṁśaya (m. from sam \(\sqrt{ṣi}\), doubting, hesitating.} \]
\[\text{ātmānas (m. gen. sg.), of the self, for the self.} \]
\[\text{(saṁśayātmānas, m. gen. sg. BV cpd., of the self of him who doubts, for him whose self is doubtful.)} \]
Action does not bind him
Who has renounced action through yoga,
Whose doubt is cut away by knowledge,
And who is possessed of the Self, Arjuna.
Therefore, having cut away, with your own sword of knowledge,
This doubt that proceeds from ignorance and abides in your heart,
Resort to yoga!
Stand up, Arjuna.

End of Book IV

The Yoga of Renunciation of Action in Knowledge
Arjuna spoke:
You praise renunciation of actions,
And again You praise yoga, Krishna,
Which one is the better of these two?
Tell this to me definitely.

Arjuna (m. nom. sg.), Arjuna.

uvāca (3rd sg. perf. act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

**BOOK V**

Arjuna spoke:

1

sāṁyāsaṁ karmaṇāṁ kṛṣṇa
renunciation of actions, Krishna,

punar yogyāṁ ca sāṁsasi
and again Yoga thou praisest.

yacchreya etayor ekam
which better of these two, the one?

tan me brāhi suniścitam
this to me tell definitely.

Arjuna spoke:
You praise renunciation of actions,
And again You praise yoga, Krishna,
Which one is the better of these two?
Tell this to me definitely.

sāṁnyāsam (m. acc. sg. from sam ni √as), renunciation, throwing down, abandonment.
karmaṇām (n. gen. pl.), of actions, of deeds.
kṛṣṇa (m. voc. sg.), Krishna.
punar, again.
yogam (m. acc. sg.), Yoga.
ca, and.
sāṁsasi (2nd sg. pr. indic. act. √sāṁs), thou praisest, thou recitest, thou approvest, thou declarest.
yad (n. nom. sg.), which, what.
śreyas, better, preferable.
etayos (m. gen. dual), of these two.
ekam (acc. sg.), one, the one.
tad (n. acc. sg.), this, that.
me (dat. sg.), to me.
brāhi (2nd sg. imperative act. √brā), tell! say!
suniścitam (adv. from p. pass. participle su nis √ci), definitely, firmly resolved, in a settled way.
2  

śribhagavān uvāca  
the Blessed Lord spoke:

śribhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.

uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

śribhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.

uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

śribhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.

uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

śribhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.

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uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

śribhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.

uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

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uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

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uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

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uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

śribhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.

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śribhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.

uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

śribhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.

uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

śribhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.

uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

śribhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.

uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.
He is to be known as the eternal sannyasi
Who neither hates nor desires,
Who is indifferent to the pairs of opposites, O Arjuna.
He is easily liberated from bondage.
Sāṁkhya and yoga distinct, the childish declare; not the pāṇḍits;

Even with one of them, practiced correctly,

One finds the fruit of both.

Sāṁkhya, Sāṁkhya, one of the oldest of Hindu philosophies, non-theistic, concerned with theory (see discussion in footnote to II 39).

Yoga. prthak (adv.), distinct, separate, single, one by one.

bālās (m. nom. pl.), childish, foolish.

pravadanti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. pra ṛvad), they declare, they maintain.

na, not.

pāṇḍītas (m. nom. pl.), pāṇḍits, wise men.

ekam (n. nom. sg.), one.

api, even.

āsthiitas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle ā ṛsihā), practiced, followed, undertaken, performed.

sāmyakc (adv.), correctly, (adj.) true, right.

ubhayos (m. gen. dual), of both.

vindate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. ṛvida), he finds, one finds.

phalam (n. acc. sg.), fruit.
which by the Sāṅkhya is attained, the place,
that by Yogas also it is attained.

one Sāṅkhya and Yoga

who perceives, he perceives.

The place that is attained by the followers of Sāṅkhya
Is also attained by the followers of yoga.
Sāṅkhya and yoga are one.
He who perceives this, truly perceives.
Renunciation indeed, O Arjuna, 
Is difficult to attain without yoga; 
The sage who is disciplined in yoga 
Quickly attains Brahman.
He who is devoted to yoga, whose self is purified, Whose self is subdued, whose senses are conquered, Whose self has become the self of all beings, Is not tainted even when acting.

yogayuktas (m. nom. sg. TP cpd.), he who is disciplined in Yoga, he who is yoked to Yoga. viśuddha (p. pass. participle viṣuddhi), purified, cleansed. ātmā (m. nom. sg.), self. (viśuddhātmā, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., whose self is purified, whose self is cleansed.) vijita (p. pass. participle vi jīti), conquered, subdued, controlled. ātmā (m. nom. sg.), self. (vijitātmā, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., whose self is subdued, whose self is conquered.) jīta (p. pass. participle jīti), conquered, subdued, controlled. indriyas (n. with m. nom. sg. ending), sense. (jitendriyas, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., whose senses are conquered.) sarva, all. bhūta (m.), being. ātma (m.), self. bhūta (m.), being, becoming. ātma (m. nom. sg.), self. (sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., whose self has become the self of all beings.) kurvan (pr. participle akt. kr), acting, doing. āti, even, also. lipyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive lipe), he is smeared, he is befouled, he is defiled.
"not anything I do," thus,

"I do not do anything," thus,

Steadfast in yoga, the knower of truth
should think,

Whether seeing, hearing, touching, smelling,
Eating, walking, sleeping, breathing.
praśapan visrjan grhān

talking, excreting, grasping,

unmiśan niṃśan api

opening the eyes, shutting the eyes also.

indriyāṇindriyārtheṣu

"the senses in the objects of the senses"

vartanta iti dhārayan

abide,” thus believing.

Talking, excreting, grasping,

Opening the eyes and shutting the eyes,

Believing

“The senses abide in the objects of the senses.”

pralapan (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle prālap), talking, chattering, addressing.

visrjan (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle viṣṛj), defecating, eliminating, letting go, discharging, sending forth, evacuating the bowels.

grhān (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle grāh), grasping, laying hold of.

unmiśan (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle unmiṣaḥ), opening the eyes.

niṃśan (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle niṃśaḥ), shutting the eyes.

api, also, even.

indriyā (n. nom. pl.), senses, powers.

indriyārtheṣu (n. loc. pl.), in the sense objects, in the objects of the senses.

vartanta (saṃdhi for vartante, 3rd pl. mid. pr. indic. viṣṛj), they abide, they dwell, they work, they turn.

iti, thus (often used to close a quotation).

dhārayan (m. nom. sg. pr. causative act. participle dhṛ), resolving, maintaining, believing, being convinced.
Offering his actions to Brahman,
Having abandoned attachment,
He who acts is not tainted by evil
Any more than a lotus leaf by water.

brahmani (n. loc. sg.), in Brahman, on Brahman.
ādhyāya (gerund ā ṛdhā), placing, putting.
karmāṇi (n. acc. pl.), actions, deeds.
saṅgam (m. acc. sg.), attachment, clinging.
tyaktvā (gerund ṛtyaḥ), abandoning, having abandoned.
karoṭi (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. ṛkṛ), he acts.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
lipyate (3rd sg. pr. passive ṛlip), he is smeared, he is befouled, he is defiled.
na, not.
sas (m. nom. sg.), he, this.
pāpena (n. inst. sg.), by evil, by wrong.
padma (m.), lotus.
pattaram (n. nom. sg.), leaf.
(padma-patra, KD cpd., n. nom. sg., lotus leaf.)
iva, like.
ambhasā (n. inst. sg.), by water.
With the body, with the mind, with the intellect,
Even merely with the senses,
The yogins perform action toward self-purification,
Having abandoned attachment.
He who is disciplined in Yoga, having abandoned the fruit of action,
Attains steady peace;
The undisciplined one, attached to fruit,
Is bound by actions prompted by desire.
Renouncing all actions with the mind, 
The embodied one sits happily, as the ruler 
Within the city of nine gates, 
Not acting at all, nor causing action.

sarva, all. 
karmāṇi (n. acc. pl.), actions, deeds. 
manasā (n. inst. sg.), with the mind, by the mind. 
saṁnyasya (gerund sam ni √2 as), renouncing, throwing down. 
āste (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. √āṣ), he sits, it sits. 
sukham (adv.), happily, pleasantly. 
vaśi (m. nom. sg.), having mastery, ruler, lord. 
nava, nine. 
dvāre (m. loc. sg.), in the gate, inside the gate. 
(navadvāre, m. loc. sg. BV cpd., whose gates are nine.) 
pure (m. loc. sg.), in the city. 
dehi (m. nom. sg.), the embodied one, the embodied soul, the atman. 
na, not. 
eva, at all, indeed (often used as a rhythmic filler). 
kurvan (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle √kr), acting, doing, making. 
na, not, nor. 
kārayan (m. nom. sg. pr. causative act. participle √kr), causing to act, causing action, causing deeds.

* “the city whose gates are nine.” The “city” is the body. The “nine gates” are the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth and the organs of excretion and generation.
The Lord does not create
Either the agency (the means of action) or the actions of people,
Or the union of action with its fruit.
Nature, on the other hand, proceeds
(in all this).
The Lord does not receive
Either the evil or the good deeds of
anyone.
Knowledge is enveloped by ignorance.
By it (ignorance) people are deluded.
But for those in whom this ignorance of the Self is destroyed by knowledge, that knowledge of theirs causes the Supreme to shine like the sun.
They whose minds are absorbed in that (i.e. the Supreme),
Whose selves are fixed on that,
Whose basis is that, who hold that as the highest object,
Whose evils have been shaken off by knowledge, go to the end of rebirth.
The wise see the same (Atman)
In a brahman endowed with wisdom
and cultivation,
In a cow, in an elephant,
And even in a dog or in an outcaste.

* Dog-cooker, a type of outcaste, offspring of a śūdra father and a brāhman mother, or offspring of a cāndāla (son of a śūdra father and a brāhman mother), or of a prostitute, or of parents of various foreign mountain tribes, or of parents of a mixed kṣatriya and śūdra lineage, or of mixed kṣatriya and vālēya lineage. Such people served as public executioners and in other menial or unpleasant occupations.
Even here on earth, rebirth is conquered
By those whose mind is established in impartiality.
Brahman is spotless and impartial;
Therefore they are established in Brahman.

inha, here, here on earth.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
tāṁ (m. inst. pl.), by those, by them.
jitas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle ājī), conquered, subdued, controlled.
sargas (m. nom. sg.), birth, coming forth.
yeśāṁ (m. gen. pl.), of whom.
sāmye (n. loc. sg.), in equality, in sameness, in equability, in impartiality, in disinterestedness.
sthitam (n. nom. sg.), established, situated, abiding in, remaining.
manas (n. nom. sg.), mind, thought.
nirdoṣam (n. nom. sg.), guiltless, without evil.
hi, indeed, truly.
samam (n. nom. sg.), impartial, equable, equal, same, dispassionate, disinterested.
brahma (n. nom. sg.), Brahman.
tasmāt (m. abl. sg.), from this, therefore.
brahmaṇi (n. loc. sg.), in Brahman.
te, they.
sthitās (m. nom. pl.), established, abiding in, situated.

* The word “impartial” refers to those who “see the same,” i.e. see that all ātmans are identical with their own (see introductory chapter on Cosmology).
V

20

न प्रहःयेत् प्रियं प्राप्य
not one should rejoice, the cherished
attaining,

नोद्विजेत प्राप्य चाप्रियम्
and not one should shudder, attaining the
uncherished.

स्थिरबुद्धि श्रसंपूर्दः
(with) firm intelligence, undeluded,

ब्रह्माविद् ब्राह्मणि स्थिताः
Brahman knowing, in Brahman (one is)
established.

One should not rejoice upon attaining
what is pleasant,
Nor should one shudder upon
encountering what is unpleasant;
With firm intellect, undeluded,
Knowing Brahman, one is established
in Brahman.

na, not.
prahṛṣyeta (3rd sg. optative act. pra √hṛṣy),
one should rejoice, one should be excited.
prīya (m. acc. sg.), the cherished, the dear,
the preferred.
prāpya (gerund pra √āp), attaining, reaching.
na, not.
udvijeta (3rd sg. opt. act. ud √vij), one should
shudder, one should tremble.
prāpya (gerund pra √āp), attaining, reaching.
ca, and.
apriyam (m. acc. sg.), uncherished, undesired, non-dear.
sthirā (f.), firm, solid, unshakable.
buddhis (f. nom. sg.), intelligence.
(sthirā-buddhis, f. nom. sg. KD cpd., firm
intelligence.)
asaṃmūḍhas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle
a sam √muh), undeluded, unconfused.
brahmavid (m. nom. sg.), Brahman knowing,
a knower of Brahman.
brahmāṇi (n. loc. sg.), in Brahman.
sthitas (m. nom. sg.), established, abiding,
situated.
bāhyasparśeṇvasaktātmā
whose self is unattached to external contacts,

vindatyātmani yat sukham
he finds in the self, who happiness,

sa brahmayogayuktātmā
he whose self is united with Brahman by Yoga,

sukham aksayam aśnute
happiness imperishable he reaches.

He whose self is unattached to external sensations,
Who finds happiness in the Self,
Whose Self is united with Brahman through yoga,
Reaches imperishable happiness.
which indeed contact-born pleasures

wombs (i.e. sources) of pain, they

having a beginning and an end, Son of Kunti,

not in them he is content, the wise man.

Pleasures born of contact, indeed,
Are wombs (i.e. sources) of pain,
Since they have a beginning and an end (i.e. are not eternal), Arjuna.
The wise man is not content with them.
śaknotthāivayah sodhum
he is able here on earth, who, to endure,

prāk śārīravimokṣanāt
before liberation from the body

kāmakrodhodbhavam vegam
desire-and-anger-origination agitation

sa yuktas sa sukhi narah
he disciplined, he happy man.

He who is able to endure here on earth,
Before liberation from the body,
The agitation that arises from desire and anger,
Is disciplined; he is a happy man.
He who finds his happiness within,
his delight within,
And his light within,
This yogin attains the bliss of
Brahman, becoming Brahman.

---

nirvāṇa, from nir \sqrt{\text{tā}}, “blow out” as a candle
is blown out, refers to the final extinction of the
“self,” following the round of rebirths, which the
Hindus (Buddhists of the Theravāda School too)
regard as the ultimately desirable state of non-
being. It is related to the Hindu belief that to be
born at all is a tragedy.
The seers, whose evils have been destroyed,
Whose doubts have been cut away, whose selves are restrained,
Who delight in the welfare of all beings,
Attain the bliss of Brahman.

labhante (3rd pl. pr. indic. mid. √labh), they attain, they acquire, they obtain.
brahmanirvāṇam (n. acc. sg.), the nirvāṇa of Brahman, the extinction of the self in Brahman.
ṛṣayāḥ (m. nom. pl.), the ṛṣis, the seers.
kṣīna (m. p. pass. participle √kṣi), destroyed, passed away, made an end of.
kālmaṣās (m. nom. pl.), sins, evils, wrongs.
(kṣīna-kālmaṣās, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., whose evils are diminished.)
chinnā (p. pass. participle √chid), cut away, severed.
dvāidhās (m. nom. pl.), twofold states, dualities, disputes, doubts, uncertainties.
(chinnā-dvāidhās, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., whose doubts are dispelled.)
yata (p. pass. participle √yam), restrained, controlled.
ātmānas (m. nom. pl.), selves, souls.
(yata-ātmānas, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., whose selves are restrained.)
sarva, all.
bhūta (m.), being, creature.
hita (m. loc. sg. p. pass. participle √dhā), in welfare, in friendship, in favorableness, in benefit, in advantage.
(sarvabhūtaḥ, m. loc. sg., in the welfare of all beings.)
ratās (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle √ram), delighted, content, rejoicing.
To those ascetics who have cast aside desire and anger,
Whose thought is controlled,
Who are knowers of the Self,
The bliss of Brahman exists everywhere.
Expelling outside contacts
And fixing the gaze between the two eyebrows,
Equalizing the inhalation and exhalation,
Moving within the nostrils,
The sage whose highest aim is release;
Whose senses, mind and intellect
are controlled;
From whom desire, fear and anger
have departed,
Is forever liberated.
bhoktāram yajñatapasāṁ
the enjoyer of the sacrificial austerities

sarvalokamaheśvaram
(of) all the world the Mighty Lord,

suhrdāṁ sarvabhūtānāṁ
friend of all creatures,

jñātvā māṁ śāntimṛcchati
having known me, peace he attains.

Having known Me, the enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities,
The mighty Lord of all the world, The friend of all creatures, He (the sage) attains peace.
BOOK VI

śri bhagavān uvāca
the Blessed Lord spoke:

śri bhagavān (n. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord,

uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

1

anāśritaḥ karmaphalam
not depending (on) action fruit

kāryam karma karoti yah
the to-be-done (ritual) action he does, who

sa saṁnyāsī ca yogī ca
he a renouncer and a yogin

na niragnir na cākriyāḥ
not (he who is) without a (consecrated) fire, and without sacred rites.

The Blessed Lord spoke:
He who performs that action which is his duty,
While renouncing the fruit of action,
Is a renunciant and a yogin;
Not he who is without a consecrated fire, and who fails to perform sacred rites.

anāśritaḥ (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle an ā śrī), not resorting to, not depending on.
karmaphalam (n. acc. sg.), action fruit, the fruit of action.
kāryam (m. acc. sg. gerundive √kr), to be done, prescribed duty.
karma (n. acc. sg.), action, ritual action.
karoti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. √kr), he does, he performs.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
sas (m. nom. sg.), he, this.
saṁnyāsī (m. nom. sg.), renouncer, thrower down.
ca, and.
yogī (m. nom. sg.), yogin.
ca, and.
na, not.
niragniḥ (m. nom. sg.), without fire, without consecrated fire, (as BV cpd.) he who is without a consecrated fire.
ca, and.
akriyāḥ (m. nom. sg.), without sacred rites, without ritual action, (as BV cpd.) he who is without sacred rites.
That which they call renunciation,  
Know that to be yoga, Arjuna.  
Without renouncing selfish purpose,  
No one becomes a yogin.
For the sage desirous of attaining yoga,
Action is said to be the means;
For him who has already attained yoga,
Tranquility is said to be the means.

* By karmayoga (the Yoga of Action) one is able to succeed in Yoga because in karmayoga one does not risk being negligent about it. When a man aspires to the contemplation, i.e. to release, karmayoga will cause him to succeed; only when the contemplation of the atman has already been secured, will jñānayoga (the Yoga of Knowledge), i.e. inactivity, cause him to succeed; or, in other words, a man must perform acts until he has attained release. Now, when has a man attained Yoga? When the yogin is no longer able to interest himself in the objects of prakṛti (material nature) differing from the atman, or in corresponding acts, because naturally he does not experience anything but the atman; for then all desires have gone. When a man wishes to attain Yoga, then he can only do so by practicing karmayoga, for at that stage one is still unable not to experience the objects and therefore karmayoga is one's only resource, because karmayoga means practicing one's interest in objects. However, one should save oneself by disengaging one's mind from its interest in objects and not perish by neglecting to do so. – Rāmānuja.
VI

4

yadā hi nendriyārtheṣu
when indeed not in the objects of the
senses

na karmasv anusajjate
nor in actions he is attached

sarvasamkalpasamnyāsi
all purpose renouncing

yogārūḍhas tacocyate
Yoga-ascended then he is said to be.

When he is attached neither to the
objects of the senses
Nor to actions,
And has renounced all purpose,
He is then said to have attained
eyoga.

yadā, when.
hi, indeed, truly.
na, not.
indriyārtheṣu (n. loc. pl.), in the objects of
the senses.
na, not, nor.
karmasv (n. loc. pl.), in actions, in deeds,
anusajjate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. anu
saj
sañj), he is attached, he clings, he hangs
onto.
sarvasamkalpa (m.), all purpose, all resolve,
all determination.
samnyāsi (m. nom. sg.), renouncing, throw­
ing down, casting aside.
(sarvasamkalpasamnyāsi, m. nom. sg. TP
cpd., renouncing all purpose, renouncing
all determination.)
yoga (m.), Yoga.
ārūḍhas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle á
ruh), ascended, climbed.
(yogārūḍhas, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., as­
cended to Yoga, mounted to Yoga.)
tadā, then.
tacocyate (3rd. sg. pr. indic. passive vac), it is
said, he is said to be.

* See footnote previous stanza.
One should uplift oneself by the Self;  
One should not degrade oneself;  
For the Self alone can be a friend to oneself,  
And the Self alone can be an enemy of oneself.

* In the case of one who is saving himself by disengaging his mind from its interest in the objects of sense, the mind (manas) will be his friend; in the case of one who wishes not to perish by neglecting to so disengage his mind, mind (manas) will be his enemy and bring about the opposite of beatitude – freely adapted from Rāmānuja, who thus equates manas (mind) with ātmān (self) in interpreting this stanza.
For him who has conquered himself by the Self,
The Self is a friend;
But for him who has not conquered himself,
The Self remains hostile, like an enemy.

* See previous footnote.
The highest Self of him who has
conquered himself
And is peaceful, is steadfast
In cold, heat, pleasure, and pain;
Thus also in honor and dishonor.

* Highest self, the self which has been exalted by Yoga practice.
The yogin who is satisfied with knowledge and discrimination, Who is unchanging, with conquered senses, To whom a clod, a stone, and gold are the same, Is said to have attained samadhi.

\* Discrimination, i.e. knowledge of the \textit{atman} as well as of the \textit{atman} as a different entity from \textit{prak\textit{\textit{rti}}} (material nature).
He who is equal-minded toward friend, companion, and enemy, 
Who is neutral among enemies and kinsmen, 
And who is impartial among the righteous and also among the evil, 
Is to be distinguished among men.

suhṛd (m.), friend, companion. 
mitra (m.), associate, companion. 
arī (m.), enemy. 
uḍāsīna (m. pr. participle ud ṣās), sitting apart, free from affection or hatred, impartial, disinterested, dispassionate, in-different. 
madhyaśṭha (m.), standing in the middle, neutral. 
dveṣa (m.), enemy, foe. 
bandhu (m.), kinsman, friend, companion. 
(suhṛnmitrāryudāsīnamadhyaśṭhadveṣyabandhūsu, m. loc. pl., impartial toward friend, companion and enemy, and neutral among enemies and kinsmen.) 
sādhuṣu (m. loc. pl.), among the good, among the righteous. 
apī, also, even. 
ca, and. 
pāpeṣu (m. loc. pl.), among the sinful, among the evil ones. 
samabuddhis (f. nom. sg.), impartial minded, (as BV cpd.) he who is of impartial insight. 
visiṣyate (3rd sg. indic. mid. vi śitte), he is to be distinguished, he is preeminent.

* A consequence of contemplation of the ātman exclusively.

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The yogin should concentrate constantly
On the Self, remaining in solitude,
Alone, with controlled mind and body,
Having no desires and destitute of possessions.
Establishing a firm seat for himself
In a clean place,
Not too high, not too low,
Covered with a cloth, an antelope skin, and kusa grass,

\[ \text{\textit{sthiram}} \text{ \textit{asanam}} \text{ \textit{atmanah}} \]

\[ \text{\textit{cailajinakusottaram}} \]

Establishing a firm seat for himself
In a clean place,
Not too high, not too low,
Covered with a cloth, an antelope skin, and kusa grass,

\[ \text{\textit{sucau}} \text{ (f. loc. sg.), in clean, in white, in un­}
\text{defiled, in radiant, in virtuous, in holy, in pure.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{deSe} (m. loc. sg.), in a place, in a region, in a}
\text{spot.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{pratikhapyya} (causative gerund \textit{prati} \textit{\textit{stha}},)
\text{establishing, causing to fix, locating.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{sthiram} (m. acc. sg.), firm, steady.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{asanam} (n. acc. sg.), seat.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{atmanas} (m. gen. sg.), of himself, for him­}
\text{self.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{na}, not.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{atyucchritam} (m. acc. sg. p. pass. participle}
\text{\textit{ati ud} \textit{\textit{\textit{sthi}},}, raised too high, too much el­}
\text{evated.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{na}, not.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{atinicam} (n. acc. sg. from \textit{ati} \textit{ni} \textit{\textit{\textit{a\textendash}ne}}, too}
\text{low, too short, too mean, too base.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{caila} (m.), cloth.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{ajina} (n.), skin of an antelope.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{kusa} (m.), kusa grass, a kind of fragrant}
\text{grass.}
\]
\[ \text{\textit{uttaram} (n. acc. sg.), covering, ultimate}
\text{layer, bottom.}
\]
\[ \text{(cailajinaku\textendash}sottaram, n. acc. sg. BV cpd.,}
\text{whose covering is cloth, antelope hide and}
\text{kusa grass.)}
\]

---

* N.B. The kusa grass is on the bottom, the antelope skin on top of it, and the cloth topmost. This was the proper seat for the meditating yogin.
There, having directed his mind to a single object,
With his thought and the activity of the senses controlled,
Seating himself on the seat, he should practice
Yoga for the purpose of self-purification.

* Directing the mind (concentrating it) on a single point or object is one of the preliminary techniques of Yoga. Its purpose is control of the mind, which tends to wander. It is very difficult for the average person to keep the mind concentrated on a single object for any length of time.
Holding the body, head and neck erect,
Motionless and steady,
Gazing at the tip of his own nose
And not looking in any direction,
With quieted mind, banishing fear,
Established in the brahmacharin vow of celibacy,
Controlling the mind, with thoughts fixed on Me,
He should sit, concentrated, devoted to Me.

praśānta (m. p. pass. participle pra √sam), quieted, made peaceful.
ātmā (m. nom. sg.), self.
vigata (p. pass. participle vi √gam), gone away, disappeared, banished, banishing.
bhīs (f. nom. sg.), fear, apprehension, fright, dread.
(vigata-bhīs, f. nom. sg. KD cpd., banishing fear.)
brahmacārīvrate (n. loc. sg.), in brahmacārin vow, in pledge of chastity, in vow of continence.
sthitas (m. nom. sg.), established, standing.
manas (n. acc. sg.), mind, thought.
sanāyamya (gerund san √yam), controlling, subduing.
maccittas (m. nom. sg.), thinking of me, thoughts fixed on me.
yuktas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle √yu), concentrated, disciplined, steadfast, yoked.
āsīta (3rd sg. optative mod. √ās), he should sit.
matparas (m. nom. sg.), devoted to me, holding me as highest object.
Thus, continually disciplining himself,
The yogin whose mind is subdued
Goes to nirvana, to supreme peace,
To union with Me.
VI

16

not of eating too much, indeed, Yoga it is

and not absolutely of not eating

and not of the too-much-sleeping habit

and of keeping awake not either, Arjuna.

Yoga is not eating too much,
Nor is it not eating at all,
And not the habit of sleeping too much,
And not keeping awake either,

na, not.
atiṣṭhānaḥ (m. gen. sg. pr. act. participle ati । as), of eating too much.
tu, indeed, but.
yogas (m. nom. sg.), Yoga.
asti (3rd sg. pr. indic. । as), it is, there is.
na, not.
ca, and.
ekāntam (adv.), absolutely, of necessity,
solely, only, exclusively.
anaśnatas (m. gen. sg. pr. participle an । as),
of one who does not eat, of one who refrains from food.
na, not.
ca, and.
auśnava (m.), too much sleeping, over-sleeping.
śilasya (m. gen. sg.), of habit, of custom, of usage.
(atuśnavasālaṣya, m. gen. sg. BV cpd., of him who has the habit of sleeping too much.)
jañgate (m. gen. sg. pr. participle jañgṛ),
of keeping awake, of being watchful, of awakening.
na, not.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
ca, and.
arjuna (m. voc. sg.), Arjuna.

* This statement, not dissimilar to the “middle way” of the Buddha, is among several references in the Bhagavad Gītā to extreme practices on the part of some ascetics. The following stanza continues the idea.
For him who is moderate in food and diversion,
Whose actions are disciplined,
Who is moderate in sleep and waking,
Yoga destroys all sorrow.

yukta (p. pass. participle \( \sqrt{yuj} \)), disciplined, moderate, yoked.
\( \text{ah\-} \)a (m.), food.
vi\( \text{h\-} \)a\( \text{r\-} \)a\( \text{y\-} \)a (m. gen. sg.), of sport, of play, of diversion.
(yukt\( \text{a\-} \)\( \text{ah\-} \)a\( \text{v\-} \)a\( \text{r\-} \)a\( \text{y\-} \)a, m. g. sg. BV cpd., one moderate in food and diversion.)
yukta (p. pass. participle \( \sqrt{yuj} \)), disciplined, moderate.
\( \text{ce\-} \)\( \text{t\-} \)a\( \text{s\-} \)ya (m. gen. sg.), of actions.
(yukti\( \text{a\-} \)\( \text{c\-} \)\( \text{t\-} \)a\( \text{s\-} \)ya, m. gen. sg. BV cpd., whose actions are disciplined.)
karma\( \text{s\-} \)u (n. loc. pl.), in actions.
yukta (p. pass. participle \( \sqrt{yuj} \)), disciplined, moderate.
\( \text{s\-} \)\( \text{v\-} \)\( \text{a\-} \)\( \text{n\-} \)a (m.), sleep.
avaboda\( \text{h\-} \)\( \text{s\-} \)ya (m. gen. sg.), of waking, of being awake.
(yukt\( \text{a\-} \)\( \text{v\-} \)\( \text{a\-} \)\( \text{b\-} \)\( \text{h\-} \)\( \text{a\-} \)\( \text{d\-} \)\( \text{h\-} \)\( \text{a\-} \)\( \text{s\-} \)ya, m. gen. sg. BV cpd., who is moderate in sleeping and staying awake.)
yoga\( \text{s\-} \) (m. nom. sg.), Yoga.
bhavati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. \( \sqrt{bh\-} \)), it is, it becomes.
duh\( \text{k\-} \)ha\( \text{h\-} \)a (m. nom. sg. from du\( \text{h\-} \)ka \( \sqrt{han} \)), sorrow destroying.
When he is absorbed in the Self alone,
With controlled mind,
Free from longing, from all desires,
Then he is said to be a saint.

**VI**

yadā, when.
yāntam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle vi
ni √yam), controlled, subdued.
cittam (n. nom. sg.), thought.
admani (m. loc. sg.), in the self.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
avatiṣṭhate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. ava √ṣṭhā), he is absorbed, he abides in, he
remains.
nihṣprhas (m. nom. sg.), free from desire, free from longing.
sarva, all.
kāmebhyas (m. abl. sg.), from desires, from
lust.
yuktas (m. nom. sg.), disciplined, steadfast.
iti, thus.
ucyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive √vac), he is
said to be, he is called.
tadā, then.
As a lamp in a windless place
Does not flicker, to such is compared
The yogin of controlled mind,
Performing the yoga of the Self.
When the mind comes to rest,
Restrained by the practice of yoga,
And when beholding the Self, by the self,
He is content in the Self,
He knows that infinite happiness
Which is grasped by the intellect
and transcends the senses,
And, established there,
Does not deviate from the truth.

sukham (n. acc. sg.), happiness, joy, pleasure.
apyanti (n. acc. sg.), endless, infinite, perpetual.
yad (n. acc. sg.), which.
tad (n. acc. sg.), this, that.
buddhirahyam (n. acc. sg.), grasped by the intelligence.
atindriyam (n. acc. sg.), transcending the senses, beyond the realm of the senses.
vetti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. \textit{vid}), he knows.
yatra, where.
na, not.
c\textit{a}, and.
ev\textit{a}, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
ayam (m. nom. sg.), this, he, this one.
sthitas (m. nom. sg.), established, standing, abiding.
calati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. \textit{cal}), he moves, he deviates.
tattvatas (n. abl. sg.), from “thatness,” from the truth.
Having attained this,
No greater gain can he imagine;
Established in this,
He is not moved even by profound sorrow.
Let this, the dissolution of union with pain,
Be known as yoga; this yoga
Is to be practiced with determination
And with an undismayed mind.

tam (m. acc. sg.), it, him, this.
vidyāt (3rd sg. active optative 霰vid), may it be known, let it be known.
duḥkha (n. nom. acc. sg.), pain.
samjñāya (m.), union, coming together.
viiyogam (m. acc. sg.), dissolution, sundering, moving apart.
(yoga-samjñāya-viyogam, m. acc. sg. TP cpd., dissolution of union with pain.)
yoga (m.), Yoga.
samjñāt (m. acc. sg. p. pass. participle from noun samjñā), known as, called, recognized as.
(yoga-samjñāt, m. acc. sg. TP cpd., known as yoga.)
sas (m. nom. sg.), this, he.
niscaīyena (m. inst. sg. from niś _SLEEP), by determination, with determination, with absence of doubt.
yoktavyas (m. nom. sg. gerundive 霰yuj), to be practiced, to be concentrated on.
yogas (m. nom. sg.), Yoga.
anirvinṇa (p. pass. participle a nir 霰vid), not downcast, undismayed.
cetasas (n. inst. sg.), with mind, with thought.
(anirvinṇa-cetasas, m. inst. sg. KD cpd., with undismayed mind, with thoughts which are not downcast.)
Abandoning those desires whose origins lie in one’s intention, All of them, without exception, And completely restraining The multitude of senses with the mind,

\begin{align*}
\text{samkalpa} & \text{ (m., purpose, aim, intention).} \\
\text{prabhavan} & \text{ (m. acc. pl.), produced, born, come into being, origins.} \\
\text{(samkalpaprabhavan, m. acc. pl. BV cpd., whose origins lie in one’s intention.)} \\
\text{kaman} & \text{ (m. acc. pl.), desires, cravings, lusts.} \\
\text{tyaktva} & \text{ (gerund } tyaJ\text{), abandoning, having abandoned, having forsaken, having renounced.} \\
\text{tyaktva sarv\text{"a}n a\={s}e\=sata\={h}} & \text{ having abandoned all without remainder,} \\
\text{tyaktva sarv\text{"a}n a\={s}e\=sata\={h}} & \text{ having abandoned all without remainder,} \\
\text{manasa\=ivendriyagranam} & \text{ by the mind the multitude of senses,} \\
\text{viniyamya samantata\={h}} & \text{ restraining completely,} \\
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{samkalpa} & \text{ (m., purpose, aim, intention).} \\
\text{prabhavan} & \text{ (m. acc. pl.), produced, born, come into being, origins.} \\
\text{(samkalpaprabhavan, m. acc. pl. BV cpd., whose origins lie in one’s intention.)} \\
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\text{tyaktva sarv\text{"a}n a\={s}e\=sata\={h}} & \text{ having abandoned all without remainder,} \\
\text{tyaktva sarv\text{"a}n a\={s}e\=sata\={h}} & \text{ having abandoned all without remainder,} \\
\text{manasa\=ivendriyagranam} & \text{ by the mind the multitude of senses,} \\
\text{viniyamya samantata\={h}} & \text{ restraining completely,} \\
\end{align*}
by little by little he should cease from action

with the intelligence firmly grasped.

the self fixed, the mind having made,

not anything even he should think of.

Little by little, he should come to rest,
With the intellect firmly held.
His mind having been established in the Self,
He should not think of anything.
Whenever the unsteady mind,
Moving to and fro, wanders away,
He should restrain it
And control it in the Self.
The yogin whose mind is peaceful,
Whose passions are calmed,
Who is free of evil and has become one
with Brahman,
Attains the highest bliss.

praśānta (n. p. pass. participle pra vāsam),
composed, peaceful.
manasam (m. acc. sg.), mind.
(praśāntamanasam, m. acc. sg. BV cpd.,
whose mind is tranquil.)
hi, indeed, truly.
enam (m. acc. sg.), him, this.
yoginam (m. acc. sg.), yogin.
sukham (n. nom. sg.), happiness, joy, bliss.
uttamam (n. nom. sg.), highest, supreme.
upāiti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. upa vṛti), he approaches, he attains, he goes to.
śānta (m.), calmed, pacified, appeased.
rajasam (m. acc. sg.), passion, emotion.
(Sāntarajasam (m. acc. sg. BV cpd., whose passions are calmed.)
brahmabhūtam (m. acc. sg.), one with Brahman, united with Brahman, become one with Brahman.
akalmaśam (m. acc. sg.), without wrong, free of evil.
Thus constantly disciplining himself,
The yogin, freed from evil,
Easily encountering Brahman,
Attains happiness beyond end.
He who is disciplined by yoga sees
The Self present in all beings,
And all beings present in the Self.
He sees the same (Self) at all times.

\* Samadarśana has a special meaning which
the words “seeing the same” scarcely convey.
The ātman, or selves, of all creatures are con­
ceived to be the same once they have been
separated from the material nature with which
they are temporarily conjoined in life. “A person
who has brought his ātman into Yoga, will see
similarity in all ātman when separated from
prakṛti (material nature); he will see that all beings
are in his own ātman; in other words he will see
that his own ātman has the same form as the
ātman of all other beings and contrariwise, so
that he has seen all that is ātman when he has seen
one ātman.” — Rāmānuja.
He who sees Me everywhere,  
And sees all things in Me;  
I am not lost to him,  
And he is not lost to Me.

* Krishna (the Supreme Spirit) is here equating himself with the åtman.
The yogin who, established in oneness, 
Honors Me as abiding in all beings, 
In whatever way he otherwise acts, 
Dwells in Me.

*sarvabhūtasthitam* (m. acc. sg. TP cpd.), abiding in all beings, situated in all beings. 
*yas* (m. nom. sg.), who. 
*mām* (acc. sg.), me. 
*bhajati* (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. √bhaj), he honors, he worships, he resorts to. 
*ekatvam* (n. nom. sg.), oneness. 
*āsthitas* (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle √vṛt), established in, abiding in, resorting to, having regard for, practiced in. 
*sarvathā* in whatever way. 
*vartamaṇṇas* (m. nom. sg. pr. middle participle √vṛt), turning, moving, existing, acting. 
*api*, even, also. 
*sas* (m. nom. sg.), he, this. 
*yogī* (m. nom. sg.), yogin. 
*mayi* (loc. sg.), in me. 
*vartate* (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. √vṛt), he lives, he dwells, he abides, he turns.

---

*I.e. who recognizes that all ātmans are one, and all pervaded by the Supreme Spirit.*
He who sees equality in everything
In the image of his own Self,
Arjuna,
Whether in pleasure or in pain,
Is thought to be a supreme yogin.

* It is perhaps amusing to note the etymology of the words "sukha" (pleasure, comfort, bliss) and "duhkha" (misery, unhappiness, pain). The ancient Aryans who brought the Sanskrit language to India were a nomadic, horse- and cattle-breeding people who travelled in horse- or ox-drawn vehicles. "Su" and "dus" are prefixes indicating good or bad. The word "kha," in later Sanskrit meaning "sky," "ether," or "space," was originally the word for "hole," particularly an axle hole of one of the Aryan's vehicles. Thus "sukha" (a BV cpd.) meant, originally, "having a good axle hole," while "duhkha" meant "having a poor axle hole," leading to discomfort.

† I.e. that pleasure and pain in others is the same as pleasure and pain in himself, since the selves of all beings are equal to his own self, or identical with it.
Arjuna spoke:

This yoga which is declared by You
As evenness of mind, Krishna,
I do not perceive
The steady continuance of this because
of (the mind’s) instability.
The mind, indeed, is unstable, Krishna, Turbulent, powerful and obstinate; I think it is as difficult To control as the wind.

**Transliteration**

cañcalam hi manah krṣṇa
unstable indeed the mind, Krishna,

pramāthi balavat dr̥ham
troubling, powerful, intense,

tasyaḥ nispr̥haḥ maneye
of it I restraining, I think,

vāyor iva suduṣkaram
of-the-wind-like difficult to achieve.
VI

The Blessed Lord spoke:

śrībhagavān uvāca
the Blessed Lord spoke:

35

asamsayam mahābāho
without doubt, O Mighty Armed One,

mano durñigraham calam
the mind difficult to restrain, unsteady;

abhyāsena tu kāunteya
by practice, but, Son of Kuntī,

vairāgyena ca grhyate
and by indifference it is restrained.

The Blessed Lord spoke:
Without doubt, O Arjuna,
The mind is unsteady and difficult to restrain;
But by practice, Arjuna,
And by indifference to worldly objects,
it is restrained.
I agree that yoga is difficult to attain
By him whose self is uncontrolled; but
By him whose self is controlled,
By striving, it is possible to attain
through proper means.
Arjuna spoke:

One who is uncontrolled though he has faith,
Whose mind has fallen away from yoga,
Who does not attain perfection in yoga,
Which way, Krishna, does he go?
kaccıd, is it that?
na, not.
ubhaya (m.), both.
vibhraśtas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle vi bhram), fallen, failed, deserted.
ubhaya-vibhraśtas, (m. nom. sg. TP cpd.,
failed in both.)
chirna (p. pass. participle √chid), cut off,
split, pierced, blotted out, disappeared.
abrham (n. nom. sg.), cloud, thunder cloud.
(chirna-abhrhat, m. nom. sg. KD cpd.,
blotted-out cloud.)
iva, like.
nasyati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. √naś), he is
lost, he is destroyed.
aprastiśhas (m. nom. sg.), having no solid
ground, fluctuating, unsafe.
mahabha (m. voc. sg.), O Mighty Armed
One, epithet here applied to Krishna.
vimūdhas (m. nom. sg. p. pass participle vi
muh), confused, deluded.
brahmanah (n. gen. sg.), of Brahman.
pathi (m. loc. sg.), on the path, on the road.

Is he not lost like a disappearing
cloud,
Having fallen from both worlds,
Having no solid ground, O Krishna,
Confused on the path of Brahman?

* "Both worlds," viz. the here and the here-
after, earth and heaven.
† This is one of two instances in the Bhagav-
ad Gitā where Krishna is addressed as "Mighty
Armed," usually Arjuna’s nickname. The other
instance is in XI 23. The nickname is used
throughout the Mahābhārata as a designation for
eminent warriors.
etan me saṃśayam krṣṇa
this of me doubt, Krishna

chettum arhasy aṣeṣataḥ
to efface thou art able without remainder;

tvadanyah saṃśayasyāsyāḥ
other than thee, of (this) doubt, of it,

chettā na hy upapadyate
an effacer not indeed he comes forth.

You are able, Krishna,
To dispel the totality of this doubt of mine;
Other than You, no one
Comes forth to help me erase this doubt.

etad (n. acc. sg.), this.
me (gen. sg.), of me, my.
saṃśayam (m. acc. sg.), doubt, uncertainty, irresolution.
krṣṇa (m. voc. sg.), Krisha.
chettum (infinitive of chid), to cut away, to efface.
arhasi (2nd sg. pr. indic. act. ārhas), thou art able, thou art capable, please to.
aṣeṣataḥ (adv.), without remainder, wholly, totally.
tvadanyas (m. nom. sg.), other than thee.
saṃśayasya (m. gen. sg.), of doubt, of uncertainty.
asya (m. gen. sg.), of it, of this.
chettā (m. nom. sg.), cutter-away, effacer.
na, not.
hi, indeed, truly.
upapadyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. upa ‘pad), he arrives, he comes forth, he exists.
śribhagavān uvāca
the Blessed Lord spoke:

40

पार्थ सैवृह नामुत्र
pārtha nāveha nāmutra
Son of Prthi, neither here on earth, nor there above

विनासस तस्या विद्यते।
vinaśas tasya vidyate
destruction of him it is found

न हि कल्याणकृत कश्चिद्
na hi kalyāṇakṛt kaścid
not indeed good-doing anyone

durgatim tāta gacchati
to misfortune, my son, he goes.

The Blessed Lord spoke:
Arjuna, neither here on earth nor in heaven above
Is there found to be destruction of him;
No one who does good
Goes to misfortune, My Son.

śribhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.
uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.
pārtha (m. voc. sg.), Son of Prthi, epithet of Arjuna.
na, not, neither.
evā, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
iha, here, here on earth.
na, not, nor.
amutra (adv.), there above, there in heaven.
vinaśas (m. nom. sg. verbal noun from vi √na), destruction, loss.
tasya (m. gen. sg.), of him, of this.
vidyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive √2 vid), it is found, it is to be found.
na, not.
hī, indeed, truly.
kalyāṇakṛt (m. nom. sg. from kalyāṇa + √kr), virtuous, doing good.
kaścid anyone, anyone whatever.
durgatim (f. acc. sg.), misfortune, “hard road,” to misfortune, to the unfortunate goal.
tāta (m. voc. sg.), my son, father (term of affection between seniors and juniors).
gacchati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. √gam), he goes, he walks.

* I.e. the uncontrolled man who has arrived at faith but has fallen from Yoga.
Prāpya puṇyakṛtām lokān
attaining of the meritorious doing, the worlds

Uttva sasvatīṃ samāḥ
having dwelt for endless years

Sucaṇāṃ ārmatāṃ gehe
of the radiant and of the illustrious in the dwelling

Yogabhrastō 'bhijāyate
he who has fallen from Yoga, he is born again.

Attaining the worlds of the meritorious,
Having dwelt there for endless years,
He who has fallen from yoga is born again
In the dwelling of the radiant and the illustrious.
Or he may be born in the family
Of wise yogins;
Such a birth as this is very
difficult
To attain in the world.
VI

43

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं
tatra tam buddhisamyogam
there it, intelligence-accretion,

तत्रते पौरवदेहिकम्
labhate paurvadehikam
he receives, derived from a former body,

यत्तते ह ततो भूयः
yatate ca tato bhūyah
and he strives from thence once more

संसिद्धो कुरुनन्दनं
samsiddhau kurunandana
toward perfection, Son of Kuru.

There he regains the knowledge
Derived from a former body,
And he strives onward once more
Toward perfection, Arjuna.
by prior practice, by it,

he is carried on, indeed against will
even, he,

the wishing to know even, of Yoga

word Brahman (i.e. Vedic recitation) he
transcends.

He is carried on, even against his will,
By prior practice;
He who even wishes to know of yoga
Transcends Brahman in the form
of sound (i.e. Vedic recitation).
Through persevering effort and controlled mind,
The yogin, completely cleansed of evil,
And perfected through many births,
Then goes to the supreme goal.
The yogin is superior to the ascetics, He is also thought to be superior to the learned, And the yogin is superior to those who perform ritual works. Therefore, be a yogin, Arjuna.
yoginām api sarveśāṁ
of the yogins even, of all these,

madgatenāntarātmanā
to me by going with inner self,

śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ
full of faith he honors, who, me

sa me yuktatamo mataḥ
he to me the most devoted thought to be.

Of all these yogins,
He who has merged his inner Self in Me,
Honors Me, full of faith,
Is thought to be the most devoted
to Me.

End of Book VI

The Yoga of Meditation

* I.e. whose mind is perpetually fixed on God, or the Supreme Spirit, through bhakti, or love.
sribhagavān uvāca
the Blessed Lord spoke:

1

the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.

uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

sribhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord,

mayi (loc. sg.), in me.

maya āsaktamanāḥ pārtha
in me whose mind is absorbed, Son of
Prthā,

yogaṁ yuṇjan madāśrayah
Yoga practicing, dependent on me,

brasjasya sampratā
without doubt, entirely me;

yathā jñāyasi ṭac chṛṇu
how thou shalt know, that hear!

The Blessed Lord spoke:
With mind absorbed in Me, Arjuna,
Practicing yoga, dependent on Me,
You shall know Me completely,
Without doubt; hear that!

mayi (loc. sg.), in me.

ōsakta (p. pass. participle à √sañj), absorbed
in, intent on, attached to.

manās (n. nom. sg.), mind, thought, devo­
tion.

(āsaktamanās, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., one
whose mind is attached, one whose mind is
absorbed.)

pārtha (m. voc. sg.), Son of Prthā, epithet of
Arjuna.

yogam (m. acc. sg.), Yoga.

yuṇjan (m. nom. sg. pr. participle √yuṣ),
practicing, performing.

madāśrayas (m. nom. sg.), dependent on me,
taking refuge in me.

asamāsrayam (adv.), without doubt, without ir-
resolution, without qualification.

samagram (adv.), wholly, entirely.

mām (acc. sg.), me.

yathā, how, in which way.

jñāyasi (2nd sg. future act. √jñā), thou shalt
know.

tad (m. acc. sg.), that, this.

śṛṇu (2nd sg. imperative √śṛu), hear!
knowledge to thee I, along with discrimination,

this I shall explain without remainder

which, having been known, not here in the world further (anything) other

To you I shall explain in full this knowledge,
Along with realization,
Which, having been understood, nothing further
Remains to be known here in the world.
Of thousands of men,
Scarcely anyone strives for perfection;
Even of the striving and the perfected,
Scarcely anyone knows Me in truth.
bhūmis (f. nom. sg.), earth.
āpas (f. nom. pl.), water, the waters.
analas (m. nom. sg.), fire.
vāyus (m. nom. sg.), wind.
kham (n. nom. sg.), ether, sky, space.
manas (n. nom. sg.), mind, thought.
buddhis (f. nom. sg.), intelligence.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmical filler).
ca, and.
ahaṁkāras (m. nom. sg.), “I making,” consciousness of the self (sometimes, “ego­tism”).
iti, thus, so.
iyam (f. nom. sg.), this.
me (gen. sg.), of me, my.
bhinnā (f. nom. sg. p. pass. participle < bhid), divided, split.
prakṛtis (f. nom. sg.), nature, material nature.
aṣṭadhā (adv.), eightfold.

* These are Sāmkhya categories.
apareyam itas tv anyām
inferior this; but other

prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
nature know of me the highest,

jīvabhūtām mahābāho
the spiritual beings, O Mighty Armed One

yayedam dhiiryate jagat
by which this it is sustained the universe.

Such is My inferior nature,
But know it as different from
My highest nature, the Self, O Arjuna,
By which this universe is sustained.

* God has two prakṛtis, a lower and a higher one. The lower one is the prakṛti of this world consisting of endless various objects, means and occasions of material experience and divided into eight categories" (see stanza 4)..." God's higher prakṛti, however, is not of the same order of this non-spiritual prakṛti which solely consists of the objects experienced by the spiritual beings, but is constituted by the spiritual beings themselves, the jivas." – Rāmānuja.
All creatures have their birth in this,
My highest nature.
Understand this!
I am the origin and also the
dissolution
Of the entire universe.
Nothing higher than Me exists,  
O Arjuna.  
On Me all this universe is strung  
Like pearls on a thread.
rasaḥ ham apsu kāunteya,
the liquidity I in the waters, Son of Kuntī,

prabhāsmit āśīsūryayoh
the radiance I am in that which contains the rabbit,* and the sun,

prāṇavah sarvavedeṣu
the sacred syllable (Om) in all the Vedas

śabdaḥ khe pāuruṣam nyuḥ
the sound in the air, the manhood in men.

I am the liquidity in the waters,
Arjuna,
I am the radiance in the moon and sun,
The sacred syllable (Om) in all the Vedas,
The sound in the air, and the manhood in men.

* "That which contains the rabbit" (āśīn), along with āśāṅka (rabbit marked) one of the most common of all Sanskrit terms for the moon, said to arise because the Hindus saw a "rabbit in the moon."
VII

9

puṇyo gandhā prthivyāṁ ca
and the pure fragrance in the earth,

tējascaṁ vibhāvasāu
and the brilliance I am in the sun,

jīvananāṁ sarvabhūteṣu
the life in all beings

tapascaṁ tapasviṣu
and the austerity I am in ascetics.

puṇyas (m. nom. sg.), pure, pleasant, auspicious, sacred.
gandhas (m. nom. sg.), fragrance, smell.
prthivyāṁ (f. loco sg.), in the earth, of the earth.
ca, and.
tējas (n. nom. sg.), splendor, brilliance, radiance.
ca, and.
asmi (1st sg. pr. indic. √as), I am.
vibhāvasāu (m. loco sg.), in the sun, in flame.
jīvanam (n. nom. sg.), life.
sarvabhūteṣu (m. loco pl.), in all beings.
tapas (n. nom. sg.), austerity, heat, self-denial.
ca, and.
asmi (1st sg. pr. indic. √as), I am.
tapasviṣu (m. loc. pl.), in ascetics, in holy men.

I am the pure fragrance in the earth,
And the brilliance in the fire,
The life in all beings,
And the austerity in ascetics.
VII

10

बीज मां सर्वभूतानां
bijam māṁ sarvabhūtānāṁ
the seed, me, of all creatures

विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम्
viddhi pārtha sanātanam
know, Son of Prthi, primaeval

बुध्दिः बुध्मतः प्रश्नम्
buddhir buddhimatiṁ asmi
the intelligence of the intelligent I am

तेजस् तेजस्विनांष ग्रह्म॥
tetās tetāśvināṁ āham
the splendor of the splendid, I.

Know Me to be the primeval seed
Of all creatures, Arjuna;
I am the intelligence of the intelligent;
The splendor of the splendid, am I.

bijam (n. nom. sg.), seed, germ, primary cause.
māṁ (acc. sg.), me.
sarvabhūtānāṁ (m. gen. pl.), of all beings, of all creatures.
viddhi (2nd sg. imperative act. √vid), know! learn!
pārtha (m. voc. sg.), Son of Prthi, epithet of Arjuna.
sanātanam (n. nom. sg.), ancient, primaeval.
buddhis (f. nom. sg.), intelligence.
buddhimatāṁ (m. gen. pl.), of the intelligent, of those who are intelligent.
asmi (1st sg. pr. indic. ās), I am.
tetās (n. nom. sg.), splendor, brilliance, radiance.
tetāśvināṁ (m. gen. pl.), of the splendid, of the brilliant, of the radiant.
āham, I.
And the might of the mighty I am,  
Which is freed from lust and passion,  
And I am that desire in beings  
Which is according to law,  
Arjuna.
And those states of being which are sattvic,  
And those which are rajasic and tamasic,  
Know that they proceed from Me.  
But I am not in them; they are in Me.

* All these entities with their peculiar individuality and characteristics have originated from God, are ṛṣas (remainders) of God and depend on God inasmuch as they constitute his body, and God himself is modified by all these entities of which He is the ātman. These entities which are of the nature of sattva, rajas and tamaṣ and which exist in this world in the form of body, senses, material objects and their causes, depend on God whose body they constitute. God himself, however, does not depend on them. – Rāmānuja.
All this universe is deluded by these
three states of being,
Composed of the qualities.
It does not recognize Me,
Who am higher than these, and
eternal.

*The three gunas – sattva, or illumination and truth, rajas, or passion and desire, and tamas or darkness, sloth and dullness – were originally thought, by the Sāṃkhya philosophers who first identified and named them, to be substances. Later they became attributes of the psyche. Sattva has been equated with essence, rajas with energy and tamas with mass. According to still another interpretation, sattva is intelligence, rajas is movement and tamas is obstruction. The word guna means “strand,” “thread” or “rope,” and prakṛti, or material nature is conceived as a cord woven from the three gunas. They chain down the soul to thought and matter. They can exist in different proportions in a single being, determining his mental outlook and his actions. A man whose nature is dominated by sattva will be clear thinking, radiant and truthful. A man whose nature is dominated by rajas will be passionate, quick to anger and greedy. A man whose nature is dominated by tamas will be stupid, lazy and stubborn. But most men will be found to have elements of gunas different from their dominating ones, i.e. to be motivated by a combination of gunas. The aim of the upward reaching atman, or self, is to transcend the gunas, break free of their bondage, and attain liberation and union with Brahman. The gunas, moreover, are constituents of that māyā, or power of illusion, possessed by Qualified (Saguna) Brahman. Through the gunas, this Saguna Brahman creates and maintains the world (or the cosmic illusion) by its powers of projection and concealment. All the universe and all the things in it are the creations of Saguna Brahman, and all are subject to the influences of the gunas. Only the sages are able to lift the veil of māyā and perceive the reality that is Brahman behind it. And only those who persevere in meditation, right action and the acquisition of knowledge through many lives are permitted to voyage beyond māyā and the gunas, finally to reach Brahmānirvāṇa or the nirvāṇa of Brahman.
Divine indeed is this illusion of Mine
made up of the three qualities,
And difficult to penetrate;
Only those who resort to Me
Transcend this illusion.
Evil doers, lowest of men,
Deprived of knowledge by illusion,
Do not seek Me,
Attached as they are to a demoniacal existence.
Among benevolent men, four kinds
worship Me, Arjuna:
The distressed, those who desire wealth,
Those who desire knowledge,
And the man of wisdom, Arjuna.

* The common translation “desirous of wealth,” which is favored by many native translators, is obviously so much at odds with the other teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, that it cannot be entertained by the thoughtful reader. Sri Krishna Prem has suggested that “artha” here refers to the paramārtha, or highest spiritual knowledge. Rāmānuja says that the expression arthaṁ (which is the nom. sg. of arthāṁ) refers to “those who aspire to acquire knowledge of the ātman as distinct from prakṛti,” or material nature. The meaning of the last three categories of “benevolent men” is further explained in the next book (VIII) from stanza 8 onward.
Of them the man of wisdom, eternally steadfast,
Devoted to the One alone, is preeminent.
I am indeed exceedingly fond of the man of wisdom,
And he is fond of Me.
VII

18

उदराः स्वं एवंते
udārāḥ sarva evāite
noble all indeed these;

शानी त्वं ग्राह्मेव में मतम् ।
jñānī tv ātmāiva me matam
the man of wisdom, but, the self thus of
me thought to be;

आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा
āsthitah sa hi yuktātmā
abiding in, he indeed, the steadfast self,

माम एवानुम् गतिम् ॥
mām evānuttamāṁ gatim
me, the Supreme Goal.

All these are indeed noble,
But the man of wisdom is thought to
be My very Self.
He, indeed, whose mind is steadfast,
Abides in Me, the supreme goal.
At the end of many births, 
The man of wisdom resorts to Me, 
Thinking “Vasudeva (Krishna) is all.” 
Such a great soul is hard to find.

* Vasudeva, literally “the son of Vasudeva,” or Krishna, whose father was a son of Śūra, descendant of Yadu. At the birth of Vasudeva, the father, the gods sounded the heavenly drums, knowing that an avatār of Vishnu (i.e. Krishna) was to be born into his family. Krishna was a brother of Kunti, mother of the three principal Pāṇḍu princes (see chapter “The Setting of the Bhagavad Gītā”). Here Krishna is identified with Brahman.
by desires, be these and those, bereft of knowledge

they resort to other gods

this or that religious obligation having recourse to

by nature constrained by own.

Men whose knowledge has been carried away
By these and those desires, resort to other gods,
Having recourse to this and that religious rite,
Constrained by their own material natures.
Whoever desires to honor with belief
Whatever worshiped form,
On him I bestow
Immovable faith.
VII

22

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस
sa tayā śraddhayā yuktas
he with this faith endowed

तस्याराधनम् इहते
tasyārādhanaṁ iḥate
of this (source) propitiation he desires,

लभते च तत्तमा
labhate ca tataḥ kāmān
and he receives from thence (his) desires

ययेव विहितन हि तान्
mayāva vihitān hi tān
by me decreed, indeed, them.

He, who, endowed with this faith,
Desires to propitiate that form,
Receives from it his desires
Because those desires are decreed
by Me.

sas (m. nom. sg.), he, this.
tayā (f. inst. sg.), by this, with this.
śraddhayā (f. inst. sg.), by faith, with faith.
yuktas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle yuj),
joined, endowed, yoked to.
tasya (m. gen. sg.), of him, of it, of this.
ārādhana (n. acc. sg. from ā rādh), propitiation.
iḥate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. śīh), he is eager
for, he desires to obtain.
labhate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. śīlabh),
he receives, he obtains.
ca, and.
tatas, from thence, from there.
kāmān (m. acc. pl.), desires, wishes.
mayā (inst. sg.), by me.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
vihitān (m. acc. pl. p. pass. participle vi śdhā),
determined, ordained, decreed.
hī, indeed, truly.
tān (m. acc. pl.), them.

* All religions are subsumed here, and the speaking God explains that all worship, of whatever kind, goes to Him, and that all boons, begged from whatever gods, are granted by Him alone. The stanza is an instance of the strong monotheistic element in the Gītā, also of its religious tolerance.
antavat tu phalam teṣāṁ
temporary, but, the fruit for them
tad bhavatī alpamedhasāṁ
this it becomes, of the small in understanding,
devaṁ devayajo yānti
to the gods, the god-worshipers they go
madbhaktā yānti mām api
the me-worshipping, they go to me surely.

But temporary is the fruit
For those of small understanding.
To the gods the godworshipers go;
My worshippers come surely to Me.
Though I am unmanifest, the
unintelligent
Think of Me as having manifestation,
Not knowing My higher being
Which is imperishable and unsurpassed.

* This stanza discusses idolatry, the worship of
the God “fallen into manifestation,” i.e. as a statue,
image, as a human being, or even an animal or
inanimate object.
I am not manifest to all,
Being enveloped in yoga maya;
This deluded world does not recognize
Me,
The birthless and imperishable.
I know, I, the departed beings
And the living, Arjuna,
And those who are yet to be;
But no one knows Me.
Because of the arising of desire
and hatred,
Because of the deluding (power) of the opposites, Arjuna,
All beings fall into delusion
At birth.

icchā (f.), desire.
dveṣā (m.), hatred, loathing, aversion, antipathy.
samutthena (m. instr. sg. from sam udvāstha), by the rising up, by the coming forth.
(dveṣa-samutthena, m. instr. sg. TP cpd., by the arising of desire and hatred.)
dvandvamohena (m. instr. sg.), by the delusion of the dualities (desire-hatred, heat-cold, etc.).
bhārata (m. voc. sg.), Descendant of Bharata, epithet of Arjuna.
sarvabhūtānī sammoham (n. acc. sg.), delusion, confusion.
sarge yānti paramtapa (m. loc. sg.), at creation, at birth.
yānti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. āyāt), they go, they go to, they fall into.
paramtapa (m. voc. sg.), Scorcher of the Foe, epithet of Arjuna.
VII

28

yeṣāṁ tv antagatam pāpam
of whom, but, come-to-an-end evil,

janānāṁ puñyatām janānāṁ
of men whose actions are pure,

bhajante māṁ dṛḍhavratāṁ
they worship me (with) firm vows.

But those in whom evil has come to an end,
Those men whose actions are pure;
They, liberated from the deluding power of the opposites,
Worship Me with firm vows.
Those who strive toward release from Old age and death, depending on Me, Know Brahman thoroughly, As well as the Self and all action.
VII

30

sadhibhūtaḥ adhidaivam māṁ
along with the adhibhūta,* and the
adhidaiva,* me

sadhiyajīnāṁ ca ye vidūḥ
and along with the chief sacrifice, who
they know

prayānakāle 'pi ca māṁ
and at departure time even me

te vidur yuktacetasah
they know, with steadfast thought.

They who know Me as the Adhibhuta
and the Adhidaiva,
As well as the chief of sacrifice,
They truly know Me with steadfast
thought
Even at the hour of death.

End of Book VII

The Yoga of Knowledge and
Discrimination

* adhibhūta (supreme being) and adhidaiva (supreme god) are sometimes translated as “the penetrating influence of the Supreme Spirit” and “the divine agent operating on material objects” respectively. The two terms are further explained in the following chapter.
BOOK VIII

Arjuna spoke:

What is this Brahman? What is the Adhyatma?
What is action, O highest among Spirits?
And the Adhibhuta, what is it declared to be?
And the Adhidaiva, what is it said to be?
In what manner, and what, is the Adhiyajña?
Here in this body, O Krishna?
And how at the hour of death
Are You to be known by those who are self-controlled?
The Blessed Lord spoke:
Brahman is the supreme imperishable;
And Adhyatma is said to be the inherent nature of the individual,
Which originates the being of creatures;
Action is known as the creative power
(of the individual, which causes him to be reborn in this or that condition of being).

* But Râmânuja says: “Karman (action) is the procreative act connected with a woman which causes a human being, etc., to originate. An aspirant to kāivalya (complete detachment of the ātman from material nature) should know that all this, and all that is connected with it, is to be feared and avoided.” The point is debatable. *Karma* has many meanings.
The Adhibhuta is the perishable
nature of being (or the sphere of the
supreme Spirit in acting on the
individual, i.e. nature).
The Adhidaivata is the supreme
divine Agent itself (the purusha).
The Adhiyajna (Lord of Sacrifice)
is Myself,
Here in this body, O Arjuna.

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* All the terms here are technical and sometimes puzzling. Edgerton regards the language of
these stanzas as grandiloquent. But native commentators take it very seriously, and some of their
definitions are included here.

Rāmānuja identifies the Adhyātman with svabhāva (inherent disposition) or prakṛti (material
nature)—"that which is not the self, but is con-
joined with the self." The Adhibhūta, according
to him, is "the transitoriness of the elements, ether,
etc., of which elements sound, touch, etc., are
developments." The Adhidīvata "connotes the
purusa; it means 'being beyond the pantheon of
Indra, Prajāpati, etc.' The Adhiyajna is God—
He who is to be propitiated by sacrifice."
And at the hour of death, he who dies
remembering Me,
Having relinquished the body,
Goes to My state of being.
In this matter there is no doubt.
Moreover, whatever state of being he remembers
When he gives up the body at the end,
He goes respectively to that state of being, Arjuna,
Transformed into that state of being.

yam yam (m. acc. sg.), whatever.
vā api, moreover, or also.
smaran (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle √smṛ),
remembering, thinking of.
bhāvam (m. acc. sg.), state of being, being.
tyajati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. √tyaj), he
abandons, he gives up.
ante (m. loc. sg.), in the end, at the end.
kalevaram (m. acc. sg.), body, physical body.
tam tam (repetition indicates distribution, m.
acc. sg.), to that, respectively that.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
eti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. √eti), he goes, he
attains.
kāunteya (m. voc. sg.), O Son of Kuntī, ep-
ithet of Arjuna.
sadā, always, invariably.
tad (n. nom. sg.), that, this.
bhāva (m.), state of being, being.
bhāvitas (m. nom. sg. causative participle √bhā), transformed into, caused to be-
come.
(bhāva-bhāvitas, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., trans-
formed into that state of being.)
Therefore, at all times
Meditate on Me,
With your mind and intellect
fixed on Me.
In this way, you shall surely come
to Me.
abhyāsa (m. from abhi \( \sqrt{2} \) as), practice, performance.
yoga (m.), Yoga.
yuktena (m. inst. sg.), by one who is disciplined.
(abhyāsayogayuktena, m. inst. sg. TP cpd., disciplined by the practice of Yoga.)
cetasā (n. inst. sg.), by thought, by mind.
na, not.
anya, other.
gāminā (m. inst. sg.), by going toward, by going.
(nānyagāminā, m. inst. sg. TP cpd., which does not turn to anything else.)
paramam (m. acc. sg.), to the Supreme, the Highest.
puruṣam (m. acc. sg.), Spirit, Soul, Person.
(paramam puruṣam, m. acc. sg., the Supreme Spirit, to the Supreme Spirit.)
divyam (m. acc. sg.), divine, heavenly.
yāti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. \( \sqrt{yā} \)), he, she, it, one goes.
pārtha (m. voc. sg.), Son of Prthâ, epithet of Arjuna.
anucintyan (m. nom. sg. pr. act. causative participle anu \( \sqrt{cint} \)), meditating, thinking of.

With a mind disciplined by the
disciplined, performance.

practice of Yoga,
by the practice of Yoga disciplined,
by thought, by no other going toward,
by going toward, by going.
by going toward, by going.
the Supreme Spirit, the Highest.
the Supreme Spirit, to the Supreme Spirit.
divine, heavenly.
he, she, it, one goes.
epithet of Arjuna.
causative participle anu \( \sqrt{cint} \), meditating, thinking of.

According to Rāmānuja’s commentary,
stanzas 8, 9 and 10 refer to the śivāryārthin
(He who aims at superhuman power), who sees
God in terms of God’s power, and who “remains
fixed on God as the result of daily practice of
Yoga.” He is the “desirous of knowledge” of
VII 16, where he is referred to as the jñānāsu.
VIII

kavim purānam anuśāsitāram*
the poet, the ancient, the ruler

anor aniyāṁsam anusmared yah
than the atom subtler, he should meditate
on, who

sārvasya dhātāram acintyarūpam
of all supporter, the unthinkable form,

ādiyavarnam tamasah parastāt
the color of the sun, from darkness
beyond,

He who meditates on the ancient seer,
The ruler, smaller than the atom,
Who is the supporter of all, whose
form is unthinkable,
And who is effulgent like the sun, 
beyond darkness;

kavim (m. acc. sg.), the poet, the seer. (N.B.
Much Sanskrit religious thought was ex-
pressed in poetry, hence the poet was its
chronicler or expositor.)
purānam (m. acc. sg.), ancient, former, pre-
vious.
anuśāsitāram (m. acc. sg. noun from anu
vīśās), ruler, governor, censor, punisher,
controller, chastiser.
anos (m. abl. sg.), from the atom, than the
atom.
aniyāṁsam (m. acc. sg. comparative), more
minute, smaller, subtler.
anusmaret (3rd sg. optative act. anu śmr),
he should meditate on, he should call to
mind.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
sārvasya (m. gen. sg.), of all.
dhātāram (m. acc. sg.), the supporter, the
one who places or puts.
acintya (n.), unthinkable, unimaginable.
rūpam (n. acc. sg.), form, shape, entity.
(acintyarūpam, n. acc. sg. BV cpd., whose
form is unthinkable.)
ādiyam (m.), the sun.
varnam (m. acc. sg.), color, caste.
(ādiyavarnam, m. acc. sg. BV cpd., whose
color is that of the sun.)
tamasas (n. abl. sg.), than darkness.
parastāt (n. abl. sg.), beyond, further.

* Trīṣṭubh metre.
† "He will attain the āśvarya (power) which
God himself possesses, when he has concentrated
his prāṇa (vital breath) between the brows and
then, in virtue of his daily practiced worship, with
his mind unwavering because all saṃskāras (pre-
paratory reformations of the mind) have been
passed, represents God to himself as the omni-
scent, primaeval Lord of the universe, the creator
of all, subtler than the jīva (monad of the life
principle), whose proper form is of another order
than everything else and who is possessed of a
divine form peculiar to none but Him."—
Rāmānuja.
At the hour of death, with unmoving mind,
Endowed with devotion and with the power of yoga,
Having made the vital breath enter between the two eyebrows,
He reaches this divine supreme Spirit.

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* Trishtub metre continues. The last line is one syllable too long.
† As in several such Yoga techniques, the anatomical elements are vague to the non-yogin.
VIII

11

yad prakśaṁ vedāntaṁ vedaṁ vaidantī
yad aksaram vedavidas vaidantim
which the imperishable the Veda-knowing
that which those who know the Vedas
they call.

viśanti yad yatayo vitarāgāḥ
they enter which the ascetics, the free
from passion,
vitarāgās (m. nom. pl.), free from passion,
yatayas (m. nom. pl.), the ascetics, the strivers,
the performers of austerities.

yad icchanto brahma-caryāṁ carantī
which desiring, a life of chastity they
follow,
icchantas (m. nom. pl. pr. act. participle āśi),
desiring, wishing for.
brahmacaryam (n. acc. act. āśi),
life of chastity, life of a Brahmacarin.
carantī (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. āśi),
they move, they follow.

tat te padam saṁgrahena pravakṣe
that to thee path in brief I shall declare.

That which those who know the Vedas
call the imperishable,
Which the ascetics, free from passion,
enter,
Desiring which they follow a life of chastity,
That path I shall explain to you briefly.
yad (n. nom. sg.), which.
aksaram (n. acc. sg.), imperishable, eternal.
vedavidas (m. nom. pl.), the Veda-knowing,
those versed in the Vedas.
vaidantim (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. āśi),
they say, they call, they say to be.
viśantī (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. āśi),
they enter, they go into, they pervade.
yatayas (m. nom. pl.), which.

Tritūbh metre continues.
Closing all the gates of the body,  
And confining the mind in the heart,  
Having placed the vital breath in the head,  
Established in yoga concentration,
om ity ekākṣaram brahma
“Om” thus, the single-syllabled Brahman

vyāharan mām anusmāran
uttering, me meditating on,

yaḥ prayāti tyajan deham
who he goes forth, renouncing the body,

sa yāti paramām gatim
he goes to the highest goal.

Uttering the single-syllable “Om”
Brahman
Meditating on Me,
He who goes forth, renouncing the body,
Goes to the supreme goal.

om, the sacred syllable, said to embrace all
the secrets of the universe.
iti, thus.
ekākṣaram (n. acc. sg.), one syllabled, single
syllabled.
brahma (n. acc. sg.), Brahman.
vyāharan (pr. act. participle vi ā ṝḥ), uttering, pronouncing, speaking.
mām (acc. sg.), me.
anusmāran (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle
anu ṝṃr), meditating on, thinking about,
remembering.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
prayāti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. pra ṝyā), he
goes forth, he dies.
tyajan (m. nom. sg. pr. participle act. ṝyaj),
renouncing, abandoning.
deham (m./n. acc. sg.), body.
sas (m. nom. sg.), he, this one.
yāti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. ṝyā), he goes, he
attains.
paramām (f. acc. sg.), to the highest, to the
supreme.
gatim (f. acc. sg.), goal, path.

* According to Rāmānuja’s commentary, stanzas 12 and 13 refer to the kāivalyārthīn (seeker of
complete detachment) who seeks the complete
severance of the ātman from the body, and
worships God as the aksara, or indestructible,
eternal essence (Brahman). He is mentioned in
VII 16, as the arthārthīn, or seeker of knowledge
of the ātman as different from prakṛti, or material
nature. This is the “Highest Truth” of VII 16.
ananyaceta (m. nom. sg. BV cpd.), whose mind does not go elsewhere.
satatam (adv.), perpetually, ever.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
mam (acc. sg.), me.
smarati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. √smr), he thinks of, he remembers.
nityasas (adv.), constantly, always.
tasya (m. gen. sg.), of him, for him.
aham (nom. sg.), I.
sulabhas (m. nom. sg.), easy to reach, easy to attain.
pakhir (m. voc. sg.), Son of Prtha, epithet of Arjuna.
nityayuktasya (m. gen. sg.), of the constantly disciplined, of the eternally yoked in Yoga, (as BV cpd.) of him who is constantly yoked.
yoginas (m. gen. sg.), of the yogin, for the yogin.

* According to Ramanuja's commentary, this and stanzas 15 and 16 are devoted to the jñānin of VII 16, the “man of wisdom,” who is never without direct concentration on God, “his mind focussed on God alone because God is incomparably dear to him, and because he cannot sustain his ātman without representing God (to himself).... And God himself, unable to endure separation from his worshipper, will choose him.”

According to the same source, the āśvāyārthin (stanzas 8 et seq.) is reborn. But the kālavyārthin (stanzas 12 and 13) and the jñānin, described in this and the following stanzas, are not reborn, but go to union with Brahman, or God.
Approaching Me, those whose souls are great,
Who have gone to the supreme perfection,
Do not incur rebirth,
That impermanent home of misfortune.

mām (acc. sg.), me, to me.
upetya (gerund upa ʋ), approaching, coming near to.
punarjanma (n. acc. sg.), “again birth,” rebirth.
duḥkha (n.), misfortune, misery, unhappiness.
ālayam (m. acc. sg.), home, abode.
(duḥkha-ālayam, m. acc. sg. TP cpd., home of misery.)
asāsvatam (m. acc. sg.), impermanent, impermanent.
na, not.
āpnuvanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. áp), they incur, they attain, they reach.
mahātmānas (m. nom. pl.), great selves, great souls, (as pl. BV cpd.) those whose selves are great.
saṁsiddhim (f. acc. sg.), perfection, to perfection, to accomplishment, to success.
paramām (f. acc. sg.), highest, supreme.
gatas (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle √gam), gone.
Up to Brahma’s realm of being,
The worlds are subject to successive
   rebirths, Arjuna;
But he who reaches Me
   Is not reborn.
They who know that the day of Brahma
Extends as far as a thousand yugas,
And that the night of Brahma ends
only in a thousand yugas;
They are men who know day and night.

* yuga, an “age” of the world, which is a division of a mahāyuga, or period of 4,320,000 years. There are four yugas: the kṛtayuga, or golden age, which lasts for 1,728,000 years and is named for the side of the die marked with four dots. The tretā yuga, which lasts for 1,296,000 years, which is less virtuous and is named for the side of the die with three dots; the dvāpara yuga, which lasts for 864,000 years, represents a growing predominance of evil over good and is named for the side of the die marked with two dots; and the kali yuga, or dark age, which lasts for 432,000 years, is a period of predominant evil and is named for the side of the die marked with a single dot. It takes a thousand mahāyugas, or 4,320,000,000 years, to make a kalpa, or one day of Brahmā, an equal number to make one night of Brahmā. We are, as this volume goes to press, in the 5,079th year of a kali yuga that began on February 18, 3102 B.C.
From the unmanifest, all manifestations
Come forth at the arrival of (Brahma’s) day;
At the arrival of (Brahma’s) night,
they are dissolved,
At that point to be known as the unmanifest again.
bhūtagrāmasa evāyain
the multitude of existences it this
bhūtābhūtā pralīyate
having come to be again and again, is dissolved

bhūtagramas (m. nom. sg.), aggregate of beings, multitude of existences.
sas (m. nom. sg.), it, this, he.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
ayam (m. nom. sg.), this.
bhūtvā bhūtvā (gerund ṣbhū), coming into existence again and again, having come into being again and again.
pralīyate (3rd sg. pr. pass. pra śī), it is dissolved, it is reabsorbed, it disappears.
ratryagame (m. loc. sg.), at the arrival of night.
avāsas (m. nom. sg.), without will, inevitably, willy-nilly.
pārtha (m. voc. sg.), Son of Prthū, epithet of Arjuna.
prabhavati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. pra ṣbhū), it comes into existence, it arises.
aharāgame (m. loc. sg.), at the arrival of day.

This multitude of beings,
Having come to be again and again,
is dissolved
Helplessly at the arrival of night, Arjuna,
And it comes into existence again at the arrival of day.

This and the previous stanza describe the periodic creation of all beings and their subsequent dissolution. The "night of Brahmā" which lasts for a kalpa (4,320,000,000 years, see footnote to VIII 17), and during this time all life is in latent, "unmanifest" form. At the arrival of the "day of Brahmā," all beings, animal, vegetable and mineral, are created again, to go through their much smaller lives and reincarnations, all of which end at the recurrence of the "night of Brahmā," when they pass into the unmanifest again. The day of Brahmā is equal in length to the night of Brahmā.
But higher than this state of being
Is another unmanifest state of being
Higher than the primeval unmanifest,
Which, when all beings perish, does not perish.
This unmanifest is the imperishable, thus it is said. They call it the supreme goal, Attaining which, they do not return. This is My supreme dwelling place.
This is the supreme Spirit, Arjuna, Attainable by one-pointed devotion, Within which all beings stand, And by which all this universe is pervaded.
yatra  kāle  tv  anāvṛttim
where in time, but, non-return

āvṛttim  cāiva  yogināḥ
and return the yogins

prayātā  yānti  tam  kālam
departing they go, (of) this time

vaksyaṁi  bharatarṣabha
I shall speak, Bull of the Bharatas.

But at which times the yogins
Return or do not return,
As they depart at death,
Of these times I shall speak, Arjuna.
agnis (m. nom. sg.), fire, god of fire.

jyotis (n. nom. sg.), brightness, bright.

ahar (n. nom. sg.), day.

suklas (n. nom. sg.), the bright lunar fortnight.

śanmāsā (m. nom. pl.), six months.

uttarāyam (n. nom. sg.), upper going of the sun, i.e. the northern phase of the sun.

tatra, there, thither.

prayātās (m. nom. pl. pr. participle pra ṣvā), departing, dying.

gacchanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. ṣgam), they go, they attain.

brahma (n. acc. sg.), to Brahman, Brahma.

brahmavidas (m. nom. pl.), Brahman-knowing.

janās (m. nom. pl.), men.
Smoke, night, and so the dark lunar fortnight,
The six months of the right hand going (southern phase of the sun),
The yogin attaining, he is born again.

When identifying directions, the Hindu faces east where the sun rises. Thus “right hand” means south.
These are the two paths, light and dark,
Thought to be eternal for the universe.
By one he does not return;
By the other he returns again.

* The choice of whether to return or not is apparently up to the yogin. The literature abounds with yogins who have delayed their deaths so as to reach the half-year that will eventuate in either return or non-return. (Cf. the case of Bhīṣma, who delayed his death at the Battle of Kurukṣetra – see chapter "The Setting of the Bhagavad Gītā.")

The existence of the “two paths” (light and dark) must seem rather arbitrary to the Western reader. Rāmānuja refers them to the āsmin and kātvalyaṁthin of VII. 16 on the one hand, and the aśṭavaṁśthin of the same stanza on the other. But this does not explain the element of free will which allows the yogin to fix the time of his death and choose between the two paths.
Knowing these two paths
The yogin is not confused at all.
Therefore, at all times,
Be steadfast in yoga, Arjuna.

na, not.
ete (f. nom. dual), these two.
srti (f. nom. dual), two paths, two roads, two wanderings.
pārtha (m. voc. sg.), Son of Pṛthā, epithet of Arjuna.
jānan (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle ījñā), knowing.
yogī (m. nom. sg.), yogin.
muhyati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. īmuh), he is deluded, he is confused.
kaścana, at all, in any way.
tasmāt (m. abl. sg.), from this, therefore.
sarvesu (m. loc. pl.), at all, in all.
kāleṣu (m. loc. pl.), at times, in times.
yoga-yukta (m. nom. sg. TP cpd. p. pass participle īyuṣ), steadfast, united to Yoga, disciplined, yoked.
bhava (3rd sg. imperative act. ībhā), be!
arjuna (m. voc. sg.), Arjuna.

na, not.
ete (f. nom. dual), these two.
srti (f. nom. dual), two paths, two roads, two wanderings.
pārtha (m. voc. sg.), Son of Pṛthā, epithet of Arjuna.
jānan (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle ījñā), knowing.
yogī (m. nom. sg.), yogin.
muhyati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. īmuh), he is deluded, he is confused.
kaścana, at all, in any way.
tasmāt (m. abl. sg.), from this, therefore.
sarvesu (m. loc. pl.), at all, in all.
kāleṣu (m. loc. pl.), at times, in times.
yoga-yukta (m. nom. sg. TP cpd. p. pass participle īyuṣ), steadfast, united to Yoga, disciplined, yoked.
bhava (3rd sg. imperative act. ībhā), be!
arjuna (m. voc. sg.), Arjuna.
vedesu yajñeṣu tapahṣu cāiva*
in the Vedas, in sacrifices and in
austerities,
dāneṣu yat punyaphalam pradīṣṭam
in gifts, which pure fruit ordained
atyeti tat sarvam idam viditvā
he goes beyond that, all this having known
yogī param sthānam upāiti cādyam
and the yogin to the supreme state he
goes, primal.

The yogin, having known all this, goes
beyond
The pure fruit of action which comes
from study of the Vedas,
Sacrifices, austerities, and gifts,
And goes to the supreme primal
state.

vedesu (m. loc. pl.), in the Vedas.
yajñeṣu (m. loc. pl.), in sacrifices.
tapahṣu (m. loc. pl.), in austerities.
ca, and.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
dāneṣu (n. loc. pl.), in gifts, in charities.
yad (n. acc. sg.), which.
punya (n.), pure, sacred.
phalam (n. acc. sg.), fruit.
(punya-phalam, n. acc. sg. KD cpd., pure
fruit.)
pradīṣṭam (n. acc. sg. p. pass. participle pra
ādiṣ), ordained, commanded, prescribed.
atyeti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. atī ṣ), he goes
beyond, he transcends.
tad (n. acc. sg.), this, that.
sarvam idam (n. acc. sg.), all this.
viditvā (gerund vid), knowing, having
known.
yogī (m. nom. sg.), yogin.
param (n. acc. sg.), to the highest, the su-
preme.
sthānam (n. acc. sg.), state, place, abode,
station.
upāiti (3rd sg. act. upa ṣ), he goes, he at-
tains.
ca, and.
ca, and.
ādyam (n. acc. sg.), primal, ancient, original,
being at the beginning.

End of Book VIII
The Yoga of Imperishable Brahman

* Tristubh metre.
BOOK IX

śrībhagavān uvāca
the Blessed Lord spoke:

This, but, to thee the most secret

But this most secret thing

Knowledge and realization combined,

Having learned which you shall be released from evil.

The Blessed Lord spoke: But this most secret thing I shall declare to you, who do not disbelieve: Knowledge and realization combined, Having learned which you shall be released from evil.

* Sloka metre resumes.
This is royal knowledge, a royal secret,  
A supreme purifier,  
Plainly intelligible, righteous,  
Easy to practice, imperishable.
who do not give faith men,

of this law, of it, Scorcher of the Foe,

not attaining to me, they are born again

in the death transmigration path.

Men who have no faith
In this knowledge, Arjuna,
Not attaining to Me, are born again
In the path of death and transmigration.
This whole universe is pervaded
By Me in My unmanifest aspect.
All beings abide in Me;
I do not abide in them.
And yet beings do not abide in Me.
Behold my divine yoga!
Sustaining beings and not dwelling in beings
Is my Self, causing beings to be.

* The explanation of the apparent paradox follows: “God is the source of all phenomena, but is not touched by them” – Radhakrishnan.
† “God pervades beings by virtue of his will... God supports all beings, but no being is of use to him.” – freely excerpted from Rāmānuja.
As the mighty wind, going everywhere,
Dwells eternally in space,
So all beings
Dwell in Me. Consider this!
All beings, Arjuna,
Go to My own material nature
At the end of a kalpa;
At the beginning of a kalpa, I send them forth.

sarvabhūtānī (n. nom. pl.), all beings.
kāunteya (m. voc. sg.), Son of Kunti, epithet of Arjuna referring to his mother, Kunti or Prthā.
prakṛtim (f. acc. sg.), to material nature, material nature.
yānti (3rd pl. act. yā), they go.
māmikām (f. acc. sg.), my, mine, my own.
kalpaksaye (m. loc. sg.), at the end of a kalpa, at the destruction of a kalpa, at the burning of a kalpa.
punar, again.
tāni (n. acc. pl.), they, them.
kalpadau (m. loc. sg.), at the beginning of a kalpa, at the originating of a kalpa.
visrjāmi (1st sg. pr. indic. act. vi srj), I send forth, I create, I let go.
aham (nom. sg.), I.

* Day of Brahma, see Book VIII 17, note (i.e. 4,320,000,000 years).
Resting on My own material nature,
I send forth again and again
This entire multitude of beings,
Which is powerless, by the power of
My material nature.

* God creates these beings anew (at the beginning of a new \textit{kalpa}), reposing upon his own \textit{prakrti} (material nature), which is capable of development into various shapes. God creates the fourfold creation of gods, men, animals and immovables every now and then because of his bewildering \textit{prakrti} which consists of \textit{guna}s. He develops this \textit{prakrti} into eight forms (cf. VII 4 and following stanza). – Rāmānuja.
And these actions do not bind Me, Arjuna; I sit indifferently, Unattached to these actions.
With Me as overseer, material nature
Produces all things animate and
inanimate.
From this cause, Arjuna,
The universe revolves.
avajânanti māṁ mūḍhā
they despise me, the deluded,

mānuṣīṁ tanum āṣritam
human form assuming

parā bhāvam ajānantō
higher being not knowing

mama bhūtā mahēsvaram
of me, the Great Lord of Beings.

The deluded despise Me,
Clad in human form,
Not knowing My higher being
As the great Lord of beings.

avajānanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. ava √jā),
they despise, they disesteem, they treat
with contempt.
māṁ (acc. sg.), me.
mūḍhas (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle
√mvūḥ), the deluded, the confused ones,
fools.
mānuṣīm (f. acc. sg.), human.
tanum (f. acc. sg.), body, form.
āṣritam (m. acc. sg. p. pass. participle ā
√sṛt), having recourse to, dwelling in, em­ploying, using, assuming.
param (m. acc. sg.), higher.
bhāvam (m. acc. sg.), being, existence.
ajānantas (m. nom. pl. pr. participle act. a
√jā), not knowing, ignorant of.
mama (gen. sg.), of me, my.
bhūtā (m.), being, creature.
mahēsvaram (m. acc. sg.), mighty lord, great
lord.
(mahēsvaram, m. acc. sg. TP cpd., Great
Lord of Beings.)
Those of vain hopes, vain actions,
Vain knowledge, devoid of discrimination,
Abide in a fiendish and demoniacal
nature,
Which is deluding.

*moghāsas (mogha āsās, m. nom. pl. BV cpd.), those of vain hopes, those whose hopes are vain.*
moghakarmānas (m. nom. pl. BV cpd.),
those whose actions are vain, those of vain actions.
moghajñānas (m. nom. pl. BV cpd.),
those whose knowledges are vain, those of vain knowledges.
vicetasas (m. nom. pl.), without thought,
without sense, (as BV cpd.) those whose thoughts are lacking.
rakṣasas (f. acc. pl.), fiendish, evil.
asurī (f. acc. pl.), demonic, pertaining to devils.
ca, and.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
prakṛtim (f. acc. sg.), nature, character.
mohinī (f. acc. sg.), delusive, confused.
sṛtas (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle āsṛtā),
abiding, resorting to, resting on, clinging to.

*p* prakṛtim (nature) is not used here in the usual sense of “material nature,” but is part of a simple attribute.
mahātmanas tu mām pārtha
those whose selves are great, but, me,
Son of Prthū,

mahiitmiinas tu
those whose selves are great, but, me,

miim
me.

piirtha
Son of Prthū,

prakrtim aśritāk
celestial nature abiding in,

aśritās (m. nom. p. pass. participle ā śrī), abiding in, resorting to, clinging to, resting on.

bhajanty ananyamanasas
they worship not other-mindedly,

ananyamanasas (m. nom. pl. BV cpd.), those whose minds are not elsewhere.

bhujatvā bhūtādim aśrayam
knowing (me as) the beginning of beings, the Imperishable.

bhatādim (m. acc. sg.), the origin of beings, the beginning of beings.

āśrī (gerund āśrī), knowing, having known.

āśrayam (m. acc. sg.), imperishable, eternal.

But those whose souls are great, Arjuna,
Partaking of a celestial nature,
Worship Me single-mindedly,
Knowing Me as the origin of beings and as the imperishable.
Perpetually glorifying Me  
And striving with firm vows,  
And honoring Me with devotion,  
Ever steadfast, they worship Me.

satatam (adv.), perpetually, continually.  
kirtayantaś (m. nom. pl. pr. causative participle ∨kirt), glorifying, making mention of, praising, celebrating.  
mām (acc. sg.), me.  
yatantas (m. nom. pl. pr. act. participle ∨yat), striving, stretching.  
ca, and.  
dṛḍha (p. pass. participle ∨dṛh), firm, solid, sincere.  
vrata (n.), vow.  
(dṛḍhavrataś, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., those vows are firm.)  
namasyantas (m. nom. pl. pr. act. participle ∨nam), paying homage to, honoring.  
ca, and.  
mām (acc. sg.), me.  
bhaktyā (f. inst. sg.), with devotion, with piety, with love.  
nitya (adv.), always, ever, eternally.  
yuktas (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle ∨yuj), steadfast, united in Yoga, yoked.  
upāsate (3rd pl. pr. indic. mid. upa ∨ās), they worship, they honor.
And by the wisdom sacrifice,
Others, sacrificing, worship Me
As the one and as the manifold,
Variously manifested, facing in all directions (i.e. omniscient).
I am the ritual, I am the sacrifice,
I am the offering, I am the medicinal herb,
I am the sacred text, I am also the clarified butter,
I am the fire, and I am the pouring out (of the oblation).

aham (nom. sg.), I.
kratus (m. nom. sg.), ritual, intention, plan, ceremony.
aham, I.
yajnas (m. nom. sg.), sacrifice.
svadhâ (n. nom. sg.), offering.
aham, I.
ahuśadham (n. nom. sg.), medicine, medicinal herb, remedy.
mantras (m. nom. sg.), sacred text, formula.
aham, I.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
âjyam (n. nom. sg.), clarified butter, ghee.
aham, I.
agnis (m. nom. sg.), fire.
aham, I.
hutam (n. nom. sg.), the oblation, the pouring out.
I am the father of the universe,
The mother, the establisher, the
grandfather,
The object of knowledge, the purifier,
the sacred syllable “Om,”
The Rig, Sama, and Yajur Vedas.
the goal, the supporter, the Great Lord, the eye witness, the abode, the refuge, the friend, the origin, the dissolution, the staying

The abode, the refuge, the friend, The origin, the dissolution and the foundation, The treasure house and the imperishable seed.
tapāmy aham aham varṣam
I radiate heat, I, I the rain,

nirgrhāmy utsṛjāmi ca
I withhold, and I send forth;

amṛtam cāvya mṛtyuṣca
and immortality thus and death,

gadrasat āham āham arjuna
being and non-being, I, Arjuna.

I radiate heat, I withhold and
Send forth the rain;
And I am both immortality and death,
Being and non-being, Arjuna.
The three-Veda knowers, me, the soma drinkers, the cleansed of evils,

they seek;

they, the pure, attaining the god-Indra-world,

they enjoy divine, in the sky, godly pleasures.

Those who know the three Vedas, the soma drinkers, those whose evils are cleansed,

Worship Me with sacrifices and seek to go to heaven.

They, attaining the pure world of the Lord of the gods,

Enjoy in heaven the gods’ celestial pleasures.

* Tristubh metre.
† This is the only mention in the Gita of the chief of the Vedic gods, Indra, though the surviving mutation of his name in the word "indriya" meaning "sense" or "power" is common, and he is mentioned in X 22, by another name. The use of the name here is in its common meaning, "chief"—thus the Indra or "chief" of the gods.
Having enjoyed the vast world of heaven,
They enter the world of mortals when their merit is exhausted.
Thus conforming to the law of the three Vedas,
Desiring enjoyments, they obtain the state of going and returning.

t (m. nom. pl.), they.
tam (m. acc. sg.), it, this.
bhuktvā (gerund bhu), enjoying, having enjoyed.
svarga (m.), heaven.
lokam (m. acc. sg.), world.
(svargalokam, m. acc. sg. TP cpd., the world of heaven.)
viśālam (m. acc. sg.), wide, spacious, extensive.
ksīne (m. loc. sg. p. participle kṣi), in exhausted, in destroyed.
punya (m. loc. sg.), in merit, in goodness, in virtue, in purity.
martyalokam (m. acc. sg.), mortal world, world of mortals.
viṣanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. viś), they enter.
evam, thus, in this manner.
trayīdharmam (m. acc. sg.), “three law,” law of the three Vedas.
anuprapannās (m. nom. pl. p. participle anu pra vpad), conforming to, following, carrying out.
gatāgatam (m. acc. sg.), going and coming, what comes and goes.
kāmakāmās (m. nom. pl.), desiring objects of desire.
labhante (3rd pl. pr. indic. mid. labh), they obtain, they get.

* Triṣṭubh metre continues.
Those men who worship, directing their thoughts to Me, Whose minds do not go elsewhere; For them, who are constantly steadfast, I secure what they lack and preserve what they already possess.

ananyās (m. nom. pl.), not directed to another.
cintayantas (m. nom. pl. pr. participle cint), directing thoughts to, meditating on.
mām (acc. sg.), me.
(y. nom. pl.), which, who.
janās (m. nom. pl.), men.
parupāsate (3rd pl. pr. indic. mid. pari upa), they worship, they honor.
tesām (gen. pl.), of them, to them.
nitya (adv.), constantly, eternally.
abhiyuktānām (m. gen. pl.), of the steadfast ones, of those united to Yoga.
(yogyakṣemām, m. gen. pl. BV cpd., of those who are eternally steadfast.)
vahāmi (1st sg. pr. indic. act. vah), I lead, I carry, I bring.
aham (nom. sg.), I.
Even those who worship other gods
With faith,
Also worship Me, Arjuna,
Though they do so in ignorance.
I indeed of all sacrifices

the enjoyer and the lord.

not, but, me they recognize

in truth, hence they fall, they.

For I am the enjoyer and the Lord
Of all sacrifices.
But they do not recognize Me in
truth;
Hence they fall.

aham (nom. sg.), I.
hi, indeed, truly.
sarvayajñānām (m. gen. pl.), of all sacrifices.
bhoktā (m. nom. sg.), enjoyer.
ca, and.
prabhu (m. nom. sg.), lord.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
ca, and.
na, not.
tu, but, indeed.
mām (acc. sg.), me.
abhijānanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. abhi jña),
they recognize, they know.
tattvena (n. inst. sg.), by truth, in truth, in
"thatness."
atas, hence, from this.
cyavanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. cyu), they
fall, they deviate, they vanish.
te (m. nom. pl.), they.
Those who are devoted to the gods go to the gods;
Those who are devoted to the ancestors go to the ancestors;
Those who are devoted to the spirits go to the spirits;
Those who worship Me come surely to Me.

yānti (3rd pl. act. √yā), they go, they attain.
devavratās (m. nom. pl.), the god-devoted, those devoted to the gods.
devān (m. acc. pl.), to the gods, the gods.
pitṛn (m. acc. pl.), to the ancestors, the ancestors.
yānti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √yā), they go, they attain.
pitṛrataḥ (m. nom. pl.), the ancestor-devoted, those who are devoted to the ancestors.
bhūtānī (n. acc. pl.), beings, spirits, to the spirits.
yānti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √yā), they go, they attain.
bhūtejyās (m. nom. pl.), the spirit-sacrificing, those devoted to the spirits.
yānti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √yā), they go, they attain.
madyājinās (m. nom. pl.), the me-sacrificing, those who are devoted to me.
apī, even, also, surely.
mām (acc. sg.), me, to me.
He who offers to Me with devotion
and a pure heart
A leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water,
That offering of devotion
I accept from him.

patram (n. acc. sg.), leaf.
puspa (n. acc. sg.), flower.
phalam (n. acc. sg.), fruit.
toyam (n. acc. sg.), water.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
me (m. dat. sg.), to me.
bhaktiyā (f. inst. sg.), with devotion, with love.
prayacchati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. pra yam),
he offers, he presents, he goes toward.
tad (n. acc. sg.), this, that.
aham, I.
bhakti (f.), devotion, love.
upahṛtam (n. acc. sg. p. pass. participle upa ṣkr), offered, presented.
(bhakti-upahṛtam, n. acc. sg. TP cpd., offering of devotion.)
asṇāmi (1st sg. pr. indic. act. ṣaś), I eat, I partake, I accept.
prayata (m. p. pass. participle pra yam),
pure, controlled, dutiful.
ātmanas (m. abl. sg.), of the self, from the self.
(prayatāmanas, m. abl. sg. BV cpd., from him whose self is pure.)

* "I eat." The ancient belief was that the gods actually "ate" part of the sacrificial offering.
Whatever you do, whatever you eat,
Whatever you offer, whatever you give,
Whatever austerities you perform,
Arjuna,
Do that as an offering to Me.
You shall certainly be liberated
From the bonds of action which
produce good and evil fruits;
Liberated, with your mind disciplined
by the yoga of renunciation,
You shall come to Me.
I am the same (Self) in all beings;
There is none disliked or dear to Me.
But they who worship Me with devotion
Are in Me, and I am also in them.

samas (m. nom. sg.), the same, impartial, disinterested.
aham (nom. sg.), I.
sarvabhūtesu (n. loc. pl.), in all beings, to all beings.
na, not.
me (m. gen. sg.), of me.
dveyas (m. nom. sg.), disliked, hated.
asti (3rd sg. pr. indic. √as), there is, it is.
na, not, nor.
priyas (m. nom. sg.), dear, favored.
ye (m. nom. pl.), who.
bhajani (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √bhaj), they worship, they honor.
tu, but, indeed.
māṁ (acc. sg.), me.
bhaktyā (f. inst. sg.), with devotion, with love.
mayi (m. loc. sg.), in me.
te (m. nom. pl.), they.
tesu (m. loc. pl.), in them.
ca, and.
apī, also, even.
aham (nom. sg.), I.

• "Being a refuge for all, God is the same toward all ātmās (selves) of gods, men, animals and immovables, which, according to their class, configuration, nature and knowledge, exist in an infinite plurality of forms." – Rāmānuja. The meaning is that God exists in all ātmās (selves) and is therefore a part, equal in quantity, of all beings, thus "the same" in all beings.
If even the evil doer
Worships Me with undivided
devotion,
He is to be thought of as righteous,
For he has indeed rightly resolved.
ksipram bhavati dharmātmā  
quickly he becomes one whose self is virtuous,

saśvācchāntim nigacchati  
everlasting peace he goes to

kāunteya pratijānīhi  
Son of Kuntī, be aware!

na me bhaktah pranāśyati  
not of me a devotee he is lost.

Quickly he becomes virtuous and goes to everlasting peace.  
Arjuna, know for certain that No devotee of Mine is ever lost.
They who take refuge in Me,
Arjuna,
Even if they are born of those whose wombs are evil (i.e. those of low origin),
Women, Vaishyas, even Shudras,
Also go to the highest goal.

*mām (acc. sg.), me.*
*hi, indeed, truly.*
*pārtha, (m. voc. sg.), Son of Prthā, epithet of Arjuna.*
*vyapāśritya (gerund vi apa ā śṛi), taking refuge in, having recourse to.*
*ye (m. nom. pl.), who.*
*api, even, also.*
*syus (3rd pl. optative act. ās), be they, should they be, they should be.*
*pāpa (m.), evil, wicked, sinful.*
*yonayas (m. nom. pl.), wombs, origins.*
*(papayonayas, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., those whose wombs are evil.)*
*striyas (f. nom. pl.), women.*
*vaiśyās (m. nom. pl.), Vaiśyas, members of the third caste.*
*tathā, even, thus, also.*
*sādṛṣ (m. nom. pl.), Sādras, members of the fourth caste.*
*te (m. nom. pl.), they.*
*api, also, even.*
*yatī (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. yā), they go, they attain.*
*parām (f. acc. sg.), highest, to the highest.*
*gatim (f. acc. sg.), goal, path, to the goal.*

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* vaiśyās — members of the merchant or peasant caste, third in order of rank.
† sādṛṣ — members of the servant caste, fourth in order of rank and lowest of the four original castes.
How much more easily then, the pure Brahmins
And the devoted royal seers!
Having attained this impermanent
and unhappy world,
Devote yourself to Me.
IX

34

manmanā bhava madbhakto
by thought be to me devoted,

madyājī māṁ namaskuru
to me sacrificing to me reverence make!

māṁ evāisyasi yuktvāivam
to me thou shalt come, made steadfast
thus,

ātmānam matparāyanah
thyself (with) me as supreme aim.

With mind fixed on Me, be devoted to
Me;
Sacrificing to Me, make reverence to
Me.
Thus steadfast, with Me as your supreme
aim,
You yourself shall come to Me.

manmanās (m. nom. sg.), me-minded, (as
BV cpd.) one whose mind is fixed on me,
with me in mind, thinking of me.
bhava (2nd sg. imperative act. √bhū), be!
madbhaktas (m. nom. sg.), me worshipping,
of me devoted.
madyājī (m. nom. sg.), to me sacrificing, me
worshipping.
māṁ (acc. sg.), me, to me.
namaskuru (2nd sg. imperative, √mās Jkl:),
make reverence! make obeisance!
māṁ (acc. sg.), me, to me.
eya, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
eṣyasi (2nd sg. future √jī), thou shalt come,
 thou shalt go.
yuktvā (gerund √yuj), made steadfast, stead-
fast, united in Yoga, disciplined, yoked.
evam, thus.
ātmānam (m. acc. sg.), thyself, self.
matparāyanas (m. nom. sg.), with me as su-
preme aim, with me as supreme object.

End of Book IX

The Yoga of Royal Knowledge and of
Royal Mystery
BOOK X

ṣrībhagavān uvāca
the Blessed Lord spoke:

bhūyas, again, once more.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
maḥābāho (m. voc. sg.), O Mighty Armed 
One, epithet of Arjuna and other warriors.
śṛṇu (2nd sg. imperative act. √ṣrṇ), hear!
me (gen. sg.), of me, from me.
paramaṁ (n. acc. sg.), supreme, highest.
vacas (n. acc. sg.), word, advice.
yad (n. acc. sg.), which.
te (dat. sg.), to thee.
aham (nom. sg.), I.
priyamaṇīya (m. dat. sg. pr. mid. participle
√pri), to the delighting one, to the one who
is beloved.
vakṣyāmi (1st sg. future act. √vak), I shall
speak, I shall tell.
hitakāmyayā (f. inst. sg.), with desire for
welfare.

1

bhūya eva maḥābāho
again, Mighty Armed One,

ṣṛṇu me paramaṁ vacaḥ
hear of me the supreme word

yat te 'ham priyamaṇīya
which to thee, I, to the beloved one,

vaṣṭyaṁ hitakāmyayā
I shall speak with desire for (thy)
  welfare.

The Blessed Lord spoke:
Again, O Arjuna,
Hear My supreme word
Which I shall speak to you, who are
beloved,
With a desire for your welfare.
Neither the multitude of gods
Nor the great seers know My origin.
In truth I am the source of the gods
And the great seers.
He who knows Me, the birthless and the beginningless,
The mighty Lord of the world,
He among mortals is undeluded;
He is released from all evils.

**Translation**

**Sanskrit**

Yo mām ajam anādim ca

Vetti lokamaheśvaram

Asammūdhaḥ sa martyeṣu

Sarvapāpāḥ pramucyate

**Meaning**

who me, the birthless and the beginningless

he knows, the World’s Mighty Lord,

undeluded he among mortals

from all evils he is released.

**Notes**

yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
mām (acc. sg.), me.
ajam (m. acc. sg.), unborn, birthless.
anādim (m. acc. sg.), beginningless, without beginning.
ca, and.
vetti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. vid), he knows.
lokamaheśvaram (m. acc. sg.), world’s mighty lord, great lord of the world.
asaṃmūdhaḥ (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle a sam muh), undeluded, unconfused.
sas (m. nom. sg.), he, this.
martyeṣu (m. loc. pl.), in mortals, among mortals.
sarvapāpāḥ (m. inst. pl.), by all evils, from all evils, from all sins.
pramucyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive pra muc), he is released, he is liberated, he is freed.
Intellect, knowledge, freedom from delusion,
Patience, truth, self-restraint, tranquility,
Pleasure, pain, birth, death,
And fear and fearlessness,
Non-violence, impartiality, contentment,
Austerity, charity, fame, disrepute,
The manifold conditions of beings,
Arise from Me alone.

ahimsa (f. nom. sg.), non-violence, harmlessness.
samat (f. nom. sg.), impartiality, equableness.
tu (f. nom. sg.), contentment, satisfaction.
tapas (m. nom. sg.), austerity, heat.
danam (n. nom. sg.), charity, benevolence, gift.
ya (n. nom. sg., here m.), fame, celebrity, good name.
aya (n. nom. sg., here m.), disrepute, bad reputation.
bhavanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. bhav), they are, they arise, they come to be.
bhavas (m. nom. pl.), conditions, states of being.
bhutanam (m. gen. pl.), of beings, of creatures.
mattas (abl. sg.), from me.
eva, alone, indeed (often used as a rhythmic filler).
prthagvidhas (f. nom. pl.), manifold, existing in many forms, placed many times, of many varieties.
The seven great seers of old,
And also the four Manus,
From whom have sprung these
creatures of the world,
Originated from Me, born of My mind.

* Seven legendary seers (rṣis) – Kaśyapa, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra, Gotama, Jamadagni and Bharadvāja – sometimes identified with the seven stars of the Lesser Bear constellation, sometimes with other heavenly bodies. For Kaśyapa see chapter “The Setting of the Bhagavad Gītā.”

† Manus seem to come in various quantities. Fourteen are commonly listed. All are purely legendary figures. One, Manu Vāivasvata, is supposed to have been the great Hindu lawgiver, author of the post-Vedic Mānava dharmaśāstra, and progenitor of the human race.
He who knows in truth
This, My manifested glory and power,
Is united with Me by unwavering Yoga;
Of this there is no doubt.

etām (f. acc. sg.), this.
vibhūtim (f. acc. sg.), manifested might.
yogam (m. acc. sg.), Yoga.
ca, and.
mama (gen. sg.), of me, my.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
vetti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. ākāra), he knows.
tattvatas (n. abl. sg.), in truth, from "that-ness."
sas (m. nom. sg.), he, this.
avikampena (m. inst. sg. from a vi kamp),
by unwavering, by untrembling.
yogena (m. inst. sg.), by Yoga.
yujyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive ākāra), he is joined, he is united, he is yoked.
a, not.
atra, here, in this case.
samśayas (m. nom. sg.), doubt, irresolution, questioning.
aham sarvasya prabhavo
I of all the origin

matva bhajante mam
thus thinking they worship me

budha bhavasamanvita:
the intelligent, endowed with the faculty of meditation.

I am the origin of all;
All proceeds from Me.
Thinking thus, the intelligent ones,
Worship Me.
Those who think of Me, who absorb
their lives in Me,
Enlightening each other,
And speaking of Me constantly,
They are content and rejoice.

maccittās (m. nom. pl. BV cpd.), those who think of Me.
madgataprāṇās (m. nom. pl. BV cpd.), those who have concentrated the vital breath on Me.
bodhayantas (m. nom. pr. act. causative participle √budh), enlightening, causing to enlighten, awakening.
parasparam, each other, one another.
kathayantas (m. nom. pl. pr. participle √kath), speaking of, relating about, explaining.
ca, and.
mām (acc. sg.), me.
nityam (adv.), constantly, eternally.
tusyanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √tus), they are content.
ca, and.
ramanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √ram), they rejoice, they are delighted, they are pleased.
ca, and.
Teṣāṁ satatayuktānāṁ
of them, of those who are constantly steadfast,

Bhajatāṁ pṛiti-pūrvakam
of the worshipping with affection,

dadāmi buddhiyogam taṁ
I give intelligence-Yoga, it,

Yena māṁ upayānti te
by which me they come to, they.

To those who are constantly steadfast,
Those who worship Me with love,
I give the yoga of discrimination
By which they come to Me.
Out of compassion for them,  
I, who dwell within their own beings,  
Destroy the darkness born of ignorance  
With the shining lamp of knowledge.

* This phrase has been variously translated. Edgerton makes it “while remaining in my own true state,” and some others follow him. I prefer the present translation.
Arjuna spoke:
You are the supreme Brahman, the
supreme abode,
The supreme purifier,
The eternal divine Spirit,
The primal God, unborn and
all-pervading.
Thus they call You, all the seers,
The divine seer Narada,
Also Asita, Devala, and Vyasa,
And You Yourself (now) tell me so.

* Nārada, a legendary seer to whom some of the verses of the Rg Veda are ascribed.
† Asita Devala, legendary composer of some other hymns of the Rg Veda.
‡ Vyāsa, legendary compiler of the Vedas and the Mahābhārata. The name means “arranger,” “compiler,” or “divider.”
sarvam etad rtam manye
all this true I believe

yan māṁ vadasi keśava
which to me thou speakest, Handsome Haired One (Krishna)

na hi te bhagavan vyaktim
not indeed of thee, O Blessed One, the manifestation

vidur devā na dānāvāḥ
they know, the gods nor the demons.

All this which You speak to me,
Krishna,
I believe to be true;
Indeed, neither the gods nor the demons, O Blessed one,
Know Your manifestation.
sватам эвата́мана а́тманам
svayam evátmaná 'tmanam
thyself alone through thyself thyself

वेत्ता त्वं पुरुषोत्तम ।
vettha tvam puruṣottama
thou knowest, thou, Highest of Spirits,

भूतभावन भूतेश
bhūtabhāvana bhūteśa
causign welfare in beings, Lord of Beings,

देवदेव जगतपते ॥
devādeva jagatpate
God of gods, O Lord of the Universe.

Supreme Being, O Lord of the universe,
You know Yourself through Yourself alone,
Highest of spirits,
Source of welfare of beings, Lord of beings,
God of gods, O Lord of the universe.
vaktum (infinitive √va), to speak, to tell, to describe.
arhasi (2nd sg. pr. indic. act. √arh), thou art able, thou canst, please do!
asēṣaṇa (m. inst. sg.), without remainder, completely.
divyā (m. nom. pl.), divine.
hi, indeed, truly.
ātmavibhūtāyas (f. nom. pl.), self manifestations, self powers.
yābhis (f. inst. pl.), by which, with which.
vibhūtibhis (f. inst. pl.), manifestations, powers, appearances.
lokān (m. acc. pl.), worlds.
imān (m. acc. pl.), these.
tvam (m. nom. sg.), thou.
vyāpya (gerund vi √āpy), pervading, permeating.
tiṣṭhāsi (2nd sg. pr. indic. act. √ṣthā), thou abidest in, thou are situated in.

Please describe without reserve
The divine self-manifestations
By which You pervade
These worlds, and abide in them.

vaktum (infinitive √va), to speak, to tell, to describe.
arhasi (2nd sg. pr. indic. act. √arh), thou art able, thou canst, please do!
asēṣaṇa (m. inst. sg.), without remainder, completely.
divyā (m. nom. pl.), divine.
hi, indeed, truly.
ātmavibhūtāyas (f. nom. pl.), self manifestations, self powers.
yābhis (f. inst. pl.), by which, with which.
vibhūtibhis (f. inst. pl.), manifestations, powers, appearances.
lokān (m. acc. pl.), worlds.
imān (m. acc. pl.), these.
tvam (m. nom. sg.), thou.
vyāpya (gerund vi √āpy), pervading, permeating.
tiṣṭhāsi (2nd sg. pr. indic. act. √ṣthā), thou abidest in, thou are situated in.
katham (interrog.), how? in what way?
vidyām (1st sg. optative act. √vid), I shall
know, may I know.
aham (m. nom. sg.), I.
yogin (m. voc. sg.), O Yogin.
tvām (m. acc. sg.), thee.
sadā, always, constantly.
paricintayan (m. nom. sg. pr. causative par­
ticiple act. pari √cint), meditating on, re­
flecting on, thinking about.
keśu keśu (m. loc. pl. interrog., repetition in­
dicates distribution), in what various?
ca, and.
bhāveṣu (m. loc. pl.), in states of being, in
aspects of being.
cintyas (m. nom. sg. gerundive √cint), to be
thought, to be imagined.
asi (2nd sg. pr. indic. √as), thou art.
bhagavan (m. voc. sg.), O Blessed One, O
Illustrious One.
maya (m. inst. sg.), by me.
Explain to me further in detail
Your power and manifestation,
O Krishna.
I am never satiated with hearing
Your nectar-like words.
The Blessed Lord spoke:
Listen! I shall explain to you
My divine self-manifestations;
Those only that are prominent,
For there is no end to My extent.

śrībhagavān (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord, the Blessed One.
uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vāc), he said, he spoke.
hanta (exhortative particle), listen! look! let us get on!
te (dat. sg.), to thee.
kathayiṣyāmi (1st sg. future act. √kath), I shall say, I shall tell, I shall explain.
divyās (f. acc. pl.), divine.
hi, indeed, truly.
ätamāvibhūtayās (f. acc. pl.), self manifestations, own manifestations.
prādāhānyataḥ (adv.), chief, mainly, most prominent.
kurusreṣṭha (m. voc. sg.), Best of Kurus, epithet of Arjuna.
na, not.
asti (3rd sg. indic. √as), there is, it is.
antas (m. nom. sg.), end.
vistarasya (m. gen. sg.), of the extent, of the spreading, of the expansion.
me (gen. sg.), of me, my.
I am the Self, Arjuna,
Abiding in the heart of all beings;
And I am the beginning and the middle
Of beings, and the end as well.

aham (m. nom. sg.), I.
ātmā (m. nom. sg.), self.
guḍākeśa (m. voc. sg.), O Thick Haired One, 
epithet of Arjuna.
sarva (m.), all.
bhūta (m.), being, creature.
dāśya (m.), resting place, heart, mind.
sāhayā (m. nom. sg.), abiding in, situated in.
(sarvabhūtāsayaastiha, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., abiding in the heart of all beings.)
aham (nom. sg.), I.
ādis (m. nom. sg.), beginning, start, commencement.
ca, and.
madhya (n. nom. sg.), middle.
ca, and.
bhūtanām (m. gen. pl.), of beings, of creatures.
antas (m. nom. sg.), end.
eva, indeed (often used as a rhythmic filler).
a, and.
evva ca, as well, also, too.)
The Ādityas, originally seven, later twelve in number, were a group of supreme gods.

Marici was the chief of the Maruts or storm gods.

Maruts were the storm gods who helped Indra slay the cosmic dragon, in order to bring water to the world.
Of the Vedas, I am the Sama Veda;
Of the gods, I am Vasava;
And of the senses, I am the mind,
I am the consciousness of beings.

* The Veda concerned with chants.
† One of the names of Indra, the chief Vedic god, mentioned by his usual name only in IX 20.
And of the Rudras, I am Shankara; I am Kubera of the Yakṣas and Rakṣas; I am fire of the Vasus And the Meru of mountains.

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* Rudras, or “roarers,” storm gods and gods of destruction and renewal.
† Śaṅkara, Shiva, god of fertility and destruction.
‡ Vīteśa, otherwise known as Kubera, lord of wealth.
§ Yakṣas and Rakṣas, spirits of vague character, sometimes hostile and sometimes benevolent.
∥ Pāvaka, one of the names of Agni, the Vedic god of fire. The word means “purifier.”
¶ Vasus, a group of eight “bright” gods.
** Mt. Meru was the Olympos of Hindu mythology.
purOdhasam ca mukhyam mAm
and of the household priests, the chief,
Me

viddi partha brhaspatim
know to be, Son of Prtha, Lord of Sacrifice,

senAinim aham skanda
of the commanders of armies, I am Skanda,

sarAsAm asmi sagara
of bodies of water I am the ocean.

Know that I am the chief of household priests,
Bhraspati, Arjuna;
Of the commanders of armies, I am Skanda;
Of bodies of water, I am the ocean.

* Skanda, the god of war, otherwise known as Kàrttikeya.
maharṣīṇāṁ bhṛgur aham
of the great seers Bhṛgu, I,

maharṣīṇāṁ (m. gen. pl.), of the great seers.  
bhṛgus (m. nom. sg.), Bhṛgu, an illustrious  
mythical seer.  
aham (nom. sg.), I.

ɡirām asmy ekam aksaram
of utterances I am the one syllable (Om),
girām (m. nom. pl.), of sacrifices.
asmi (1st sg. pr. indic. as), I am.

aham (nom. sg.), I.

yajñānāṁ japayajño 'smi
of sacrifices the muttered prayer I am,
yajñānāṁ (m. gen. pl.), of sacrifices.

ekam aksaram (n. nom. sg.), the one syllable, the mystic syllable “Om.”

asmi (1st sg. pr. indic. as), I am.

yajñānāṁ (m. gen. pl.), of sacrifices.
japayajño (m. nom. sg.), the muttered prayer.

asmi (1st sg. pr. indic. as), I am.

sthāvarāṇāṁ himālayaḥ
of immovables the Himalaya.

sthāvarāṇāṁ (m. gen. pl.), of immovables, 
himālayaḥ (m. nom. sg.), “abode of snow,” the Himalaya.

Of the great seers, I am Bhṛgu;
Of words, I am the single  
syllable “Om”;
Of sacrifices, I am japa (silent repetition); 
Of immovable things, the Himalayas.

*Bhṛgu, ancient seer, so illustrious that he 
mediated quarrels among the gods.
Among all trees, I am the sacred fig tree;
And of the divine seers, Narada;
And of the Gandharvas, Chitraratha;
And of the perfected, Kapila the sage.

*Narada, ancient seer to whom some verses of the Rg Veda are ascribed.
† Gandharvas, the musicians of paradise.
‡ Chitraratha, heavenly chief of the Gandharvas.
§ Kapila, a sage, founder of the Sāṁkhya school of philosophy, one of the oldest of the Hindu systems.
Know that I am Ucchaishravas of horses,  
Born of nectar;  
Airavata of princely elephants;  
And of men, the king.

* Ucchaishravas, the name of Indra’s horse, or of the horse of the Sun god, born of nectar that was churned from the ocean. The name means “high sounding.”
† Airavata, Indra’s elephant. The name means “produced from the Iravati River.”
Of weapons, I am the thunderbolt;
Of cows, I am the wish-fulfilling cow;
I am the progenitor Kandarpa;
And of serpents, I am Vasuki.

* Kāmadhuk, a mythical cow, able to provide its master with anything desired.
† Kandarpa, god of love or desire, otherwise known as Kāma.
‡ Vasuki, a serpent king.
and Ananta I am of snakes,

Varuṇa of the water creatures, I,

and of the ancestors Aryaman I am,

Yama of the subduers I.

I am Ananta of the Nagas;
Varuna of the water creatures;
Of the ancestors, I am Aryaman;
And Yama of the controllers.

* Ananta, a mythical snake whose coils encircle the earth and who symbolizes eternity. The word means “unending.”
† Varuṇa, originally a Vedic god, the sustainer of the universe. Here, in the later religion, a water god, the “water king.”
‡ Aryaman, chief of the ancestors.
§ Yama, god of death.
Prahlādas cāsmi dāityānāṁ

And Prāhlada I am of the Daityas,

kaṭṭa: kālpatārum brahma
dīnātām aham
time of the calculators, I,

mūrgaṇaṁ ca mṛgendro 'ham

And of the beasts the beast king, I,

vāināteyaśca pakṣinām

And Vāināteya of the birds.

I am Prahlada of the demons;

Time, of the calculators;
Of the beasts, I am the lion;
And Garuda, of the birds.

prahlādas (m. nom. sg.), Prahlāda, a prince of the Dāityas.
cā, and.
asmi (1st sg. pr. indic. ās), I am.
dāityānāṁ (m. gen. pl.), of the Dāityas.
kālas (m. nom. sg.), time personified.
kalayatām (m. gen. pl. pr. participle act. kal), of the calculators, of the reckoners.
aham (nom. sg.), I.
mṛgānāṁ (m. gen. pl.), of beasts, of animals.
cā, and.
mṛgendras (m. nom. sg.), King of Beasts, the lion.
aham (nom. sg.), I.
vāināteyas (m. nom. sg.), Garuḍa, son of Vinatā, the bird vehicle of Vishnu.
pakṣinām (m. gen. pl.), of birds.

* Prahlāda, a Dāitya (enemy of the gods) prince who defected from the Dāityas, became pious and worshipped Vishnu.
† Dāityas, demons at war with the gods.
‡ The word “mṛgendra” (mṛga indra) means literally “king of beasts.”
§ Vāināteya (son of Vinatā), otherwise known as Garuḍa, a fabulous bird, and vehicle of Vishnu.
pavanah pavatām asmi
the wind of purifiers I am,

rāmaḥ sastrabhṛtām aham
Rāma, the weapon-bearer,

jhaśānāṁ makaraścāsmi
of the sea monsters I am Makara,

srotasāṁ asmi jāhnavī
do the rivers, I am the Daughter of Jahnu (the Ganges).

Of purifiers, I am the wind;
Rama of the warriors;
Of the sea monsters I am the alligators;
And of rivers I am the Ganges.

* Rāma, warrior and hero of the epic, the Rāmāyaṇa, or possibly Paraśurāma, see chapter “Setting of the Bhagavad Gītā.”

† Makara, a sea monster sometimes equated with a crocodile, shark or dolphin, the Capricorn of the Hindu zodiac, and vehicle of Varuna.

† So called because when Vishnu permitted the Ganges to flow, the sage Jahnu drank it up. Later he allowed it to flow from his ear.
Of creations I am the beginning
and the end,
And also the middle, O Arjuna;
Of all knowledge, the knowledge of
the supreme Self.
I am the logic of those who debate.
Of letters I am the letter A,
And the dual of compound words;
I alone am infinite time;
I am the Establisher, facing in all
directions (i.e. omniscient).

* dvandva is the simple copulative compound,
where two or more words are joined together.
mṛtyuh sarvaharaścāham
and death all-destroying, I,

and the origin of those things that are
to be,

kīrtih śrīr vāk ca nārīnām
fame, prosperity, and speech of feminine
things,

I am all-destroying death,
And the origin of those things that are
yet to be.
Among the feminine qualities, I am fame,
prosperity, speech,
Memory, wisdom, courage, and patience.

* All these listed nouns are of feminine gender.
Of chants I am the Brihatsaman;
Of meters I am the Gayatri;
Of months, the Marga-shirsha;
And of seasons, the spring, abounding with flowers.
I am the gambling of the dishonest,
The splendor of the splendid;
I am victory, I am effort,
I am the goodness of the good.

* This line may also be translated: I am the truth of truth-tellers. (Sattra means either "good," "true" or "real.")
Of the Vrishnis, I am Vasudeva;
Of the sons of Pandu, Arjuna;
Of the sages, moreover, I am Vyasa;
Of poets, the poet Ushana.

- Vrishnis, a clan from which Krishna himself is descended.
- Vasudeva, patronymic of Krishna himself: "Son of Vasudeva."
- Vyasa, legendary sage supposed to have compiled the Vedas. His identity is chronologically confused. He is supposed to have compiled the Mahabharata, of which the Bhagaved Gita is a part, and he appears in that Epic as the natural grandfather of the Pandava princes. (See chapter, "The Setting of the Bhagavad Gita.")
- Ushanas or Ushana, an ancient seer and poet.
Of punishers, I am the scepter,
And I am the guidance of those desirous of victory;
Of secrets, I am silence and The knowledge of the wise.
And also I am that which is the seed of all creatures, Arjuna;
There is nothing that could exist without
Existing through Me, whether moving or not moving.
There is no end to My divine Manifestations, Arjuna.
This has been declared by Me
As an example of the extent of My manifestations.

* I.e. the preceding declarations.
Whatever manifested being that is
Glorious and vigorous, indeed,
Understand that in every case
He originates from a fraction of My
splendor.
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But what is this extensive
Knowledge to you, Arjuna?
I support this entire universe
constantly
With a single fraction of Myself.

End of Book X

The Yoga of Manifestation
Arjuna spoke:
As a favor to me, You have spoken
About the highest secret
Known as the supreme Self.
With this my delusion is gone.

* The line is one syllable too long, a rarity in the *stotra* stanzas of this poem.
The origin and the dissolution of beings
Have been heard in detail by me
From You, O Krishna,
And also Your imperishable majesty.
evam, thus.
etad (n. nom. sg.), this.
yadhā, in which way, as.
iathā (2nd sg. perf. act. vāh with present meaning), thou sayest, thou tellest.
tvam (nom. sg.), thou.
ātmānam (m. acc. sg.), thyself, self.
parameśvara (m. voc. sg.), Supreme Lord.
drāṣṭum (infinitive vṛṣ), to see, to behold.
icchāmī (1st sg. pr. indic. act. viṣ), I desire, I wish.
te (gen. sg.), of thee, thy.
rūpam (n. acc. sg.), form, shape, figure.
āīśvaram (n. acc. sg.), lordly, godly, princely.
puruṣottama (m. voc. sg.), Supreme Spirit, Highest of Men.

Thus, as You have described Yourself, O Supreme Lord, I desire to see Your divine form, O Supreme Spirit.
If You think it possible
For me to see this, O Lord
Of Yogins, then show me
Your imperishable Self.

manyase (2nd sg. pr. indic. mid. √man), thou thinkest, thou considerest.
yadi, if.
tad (n. acc. sg.), that.
śākyam (n. acc. sg.), possible, practicable.
maya (inst. sg.), by me.
drāṣṭum (infinitive √ṛṣ), to see, to behold.
iti, thus.
prabho (m. voc. sg.), O Lord, O God.
yogeśvara (m. voc. sg.), Prince of Yoga.
tatas, then, thence.
me (dat. sg.), to me.
tvam (nom. sg.), thou.
darśaya (2nd sg. causative imperative act. √ṛṣ), cause to be seen! exhibit! allow me to behold!
ātmānam (m. acc. sg.), thyself, self.
avyayam (m. acc. sg.), imperishable, eternal.
śribhagavān uvāca
the Blessed Lord spoke:

5

paśya me pārtha rūpāṇi
behold of me, Son of Prthi, the forms

śataśo 'tha sahasraśah
a hundred fold, rather, a thousand fold,

nānāvidhāni divyāni
various, divine,

nānāvarṇākṛtīni ca
and of various colors and shapes.

The Blessed Lord spoke:
Behold, Arjuna, My forms,
A hundred fold, a thousandfold,
Various, divine,
And of various colors and shapes.
Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras,
The two Asvins, the Maruts too;
Many wonders unseen before,
Behold, Arjuna!

* Adityas, celestial deities led by the Vedic god Varuṇa.
† Vasus, beneficent gods led by Indra, Agni or Varuna.
‡ Rudras, lit. "roarers," gods who drive away evil.
§ Asvins, celestial horsemen, always a pair, who herald the dawn and are skilled in healing.
|| Maruts, storm gods, friends of Indra, the thunderbolt hurler and chief god of the Vedas.
Behold now the entire universe,
With everything moving and not moving,
Standing together here in My body,
Arjuna,
And whatever else you desire to see.
But you are not able to see Me
With your own eyes.
I give to you a divine eye;
Behold My majestic power!
Sanjaya spoke:
Having spoken thus, O King,
The great Lord of yoga, Hari
(Krishna),
Revealed to Arjuna
His majestic supreme form.
Aneka va ktranaya nam
not one mouth and eye

Aneka dbhuta darṣanam
not one wondrous aspect

Aneka divya bharanam
not one divine ornament

Divya aneka dyad yudham
divine, not one uplifted, weapon,

Of many mouths and eyes,
Of many wondrous aspects,
Of many divine ornaments,
Of many uplifted divine weapons.

Aneka, not one, i.e. many.
Vaktra (n.), mouth, "talker."
Nayam (n. acc. sg.), eye, leading organ.
(Anekavaktranayam, n. acc. sg. BV cpd., having many mouths and eyes.)
Aneka, not one, i.e. many.
Adbhuta (n.), wondrous, marvelous.
Darṣanam (n. acc. sg.), aspect, sight.
(Anekādbhutadarṣanam, n. acc. sg. BV cpd., having many wondrous aspects.)
Aneka, not one, i.e. many.
Divya (n.), divine, heavenly.
Abharanam (n. acc. sg.), ornament, decoration.
(Anekādyabharanam, n. acc sg. BV cpd., having many divine ornaments.)
Divya (n.), divine, heavenly.
Aneka, not one, i.e. many.
Udyata (p. pass. participle ud ṣyam), upraised, uplifted, raised.
Dyudham (n. acc. sg.), weapon, implement of war.
(Divyānekodyatadyudham, n. nom. acc. sg. BV cpd., having many uplifted divine weapons.)
Wearing divine garlands and apparel,
With divine perfumes and ointments,
Made up of all marvels, the resplendent
Lord, endless, facing in all directions.
If a thousand suns should rise all at once
In the sky,
Such splendor would resemble
The splendor of that great Being.

* This was the stanza that occurred to the American nuclear physicist Robert Oppenheimer as he witnessed the explosion of the first atom bomb.
There Arjuna then beheld
The entire universe established in one,
Divided in many groups,
In the body of the God of Gods.
then he, who was possessed by amazement,

whose hair was standing on end, Conqueror of Wealth,

bowing with the head to the god

(with) a reverent gesture he said:

Then Arjuna,
Who was filled with amazement,
Whose hair was standing on end,
Bowing his head to the Lord
With joined palms, said:
I see the gods, of thee, O God, in the body
all, indeed, kinds of beings assembled;

Arjuna spoke:
I see the gods, O God, in Your body,
And all kinds of beings assembled;
Lord Brahma on his lotus seat,
And all the seers and divine serpents.

* Tristubh metre begins as Arjuna commences to describe the Great Manifestation, and continues through most of this book (i.e. until stanza 51).
† Brahmā (masculine), the creator god of the Hindu trinity. Not to be confused with Brahman (neuter), the all-pervading essence.
I see you everywhere, infinite in form,
With many arms, bellies, faces, and eyes;
Not the end, nor the middle, nor yet the beginning of you do
I see, O Lord of all, whose form is the universe.
Crowned, armed with a club and bearing a discus,
A mass of splendor, shining on all sides,
With the immeasurable radiance of the sun and blazing fire,
I see You, who are difficult to behold.

**Kritinam gadinam cakrinam ca**
crowned, armed with a club and bearing a discus

**Tejorasiim sarvato dipimantam**
a mass of splendor, on all sides shining,

**Pastryim tvim durniriksyam samantad**
I see thee who art difficult to behold completely,

**Diptaalarkadyutim aprameyam**
blazing-fire-sun-radiance immeasurable.
You are the unchanging, the
supreme object of knowledge;
You are the ultimate resting place
of all;
You are the imperishable defender
of the eternal law;
You are the primeval Spirit, I
believe.
anādimadhyāntam anantaevīryam
without beginning, middle or end,
infinite power

ananta bāhuma saśīśrayanetram
(with) innumerable arms, rabbit-holder* and-sun-eyed,

svatejasā viśvam idam tapantam
by own splendor all this universe burning.

With infinite power, without
beginning, middle, or end,
With innumerable arms, the moon and
sun being Your eyes,
I see You, the blazing fire Your mouth,
Burning all this universe with Your
radiance.

* saśi, that which contains the rabbit. The Hindus saw a rabbit in the moon, and this is a very common term for “moon.”

† Most translators avoid hutāsa (huta aṣā), “oblation eating,” which refers to the partaking of sacrifice, or render it as “fire,” and translate vaktram as “face.” The present translation, however, coincides with vaktra, “mouth,” in stanza 23, and vaktra means “talker” or organ of speech, as well as “face.”
This space between heaven and earth,  
Is pervaded by You alone in all directions.  
Seeing Your marvelous and terrible form,  
The three worlds tremble, O great Being.

dyāvāpaṛthivyos (f. gen. dual), of heaven and earth.  
ida (n. nom. sg.), this.  
antaram (n. nom. sg.), between.  
hi, indeed, truly.  
vyāptam (n. nom. sg. participle vi √āp), pervaded, filled with, occupied by.  
tvayā (m. inst. sg.), by thee.  
ekena (m. inst. sg.), alone.  
dīṣas (f. nom. pl.), directions, points, spaces.  
ca, and.  
sarvās (f. nom. pl.), all.  
adbhutam (n. acc. sg.), marvelous, wondrous.  
rūpam (n. acc. sg.), form, shape, figure.  
ugram (n. acc. sg.), terrible, mighty, formidable.  
tava (m. gen. sg.), of thee, thy.  
ida (n. acc. sg.), this.  
lokatrayam (n. nom. sg.), the three worlds (heaven, earth, atmosphere).  
prayaḥhitam (n. nom. p. pass. participle pra √yath), trembling, shaking, tremble.  
mahātmā (m. voc. sg.), O Great Self, O Exalted One, (as BV cpd.) O Thou whose Self is Great.
The throngs of gods enter into You,
Some, terrified, with reverent gestures praise You;
Saying “Hail,” the throngs of great seers and perfected ones
Extol You with abundant praises.
The Rudras, Adityas, Vasus, the Sadhyas, 

The Vishve devas, the two Ashvins, the Maruts, and the Ushma pas, 

The throngs of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras, and perfected ones, 

All behold You, amazed.

* Minor gods, see note stanza 6.
† Sadhyas, a group of celestial beings with exquisitely refined natures thought to inhabit the ether.
‡ Viśve devas, a group of twelve minor godlings.
§ Steam Drinkers, a class of ancestors.
∥ Gandharvas, celestial musicians.
¶ Yakṣas, a group of supernatural beings, sometimes benevolent, sometimes not.
** Asuras, a class of demons, enemies of the gods.
Having seen Your great form, which has many mouths and eyes, Which has many arms, thighs, and feet, Which has many bellies, and mouths gaping with many tusks, O Krishna, the worlds tremble, and so do I.

rupam (n. acc. sg.), form, figure, shape. mahat (n. acc. sg.), great, mighty. te (gen. sg.), of thee, thy. bahuvaktranetram (n. nom. sg.), many mouth and eye, (as BV cpd.) which has many mouths and eyes. mahabaho (m. voc. sg.), O Great Armed One, epithet of warriors, usually applied to Arjuna, but here to Krishna. bahu, many. bahu (m.), arm. uru (m.), thigh, shank. padam (m. acc. sg.), foot. (bahubahirupadam, m. acc. sg. BV cpd., which has many arms, thighs and feet, having many arms, thighs and feet.) bahu, many. udaram (n. nom. sg.), belly. (bahudaram, n. nom. acc. sg., many bellied.) bahu, many. dasastr (f.), tusk. karalam (n. acc. sg.) terrible. (bahu-dasastrakaralam, n. acc. sg. BV cpd., having many terrible tusks.) drstyad (gerund drst), seeing, having seen. lokas (m. nom. pl.), worlds. pravyathitás (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle pra vyathi), trembling, quaking, shaking. tatha, also, thus. aham (nom. sg.), I.

* Here referring to Krishna.
Having seen You touching the sky, blazing, many colored, Gaping-mouthed, with enormous fiery eyes; I tremble indeed in my heart, and I find neither courage nor tranquility, O Vishnu!

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* Vishnu, the god of whom Krishna is the *avatār*. 

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And having seen Your mouths, bearing many tusks,
Glowing like the fires of universal destruction,
I lose my sense of direction, and I do not find comfort.
Have mercy! Lord of Gods, abode of the universe!
amī ca tvām dhṛтарाष्ट्रasya putrāḥ

and yonder (into) thee, of Dhṛtarāṣṭra the sons

sarve sahaśivasvanipālasaṅghāḥ

all indeed along with the earth-ruler (king) throngs,

bhīṣmo dronāḥ sūtaputras tathāsva

Bhīṣma, Droṇa and the son of the charioteer (Karna) thus yonder

sahāsmadiyāir api yodhamukhyāḥ

together with ours also, and with (our) chief warriors

And entering into You, all the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
Along with the throngs of kings,
Bhishma, Drona, and Karna, the son of the charioteer,
And also with our chief warriors,
They quickly enter Your fearful mouths,
Which gape with many tusks;
Some are seen with crushed heads,
Clinging between Your teeth.
As the many torrents of the rivers
Flow toward the ocean,
So those heroes of the world of men
Enter your flaming mouths.
As moths enter a blazing flame
To their destruction with great speed,
So also, these creatures swiftly enter
Your mouths to their destruction.
You lick up, swallowing on all sides
All the worlds, with your flaming mouths.
Filling all the universe with splendor,
Your terrible rays blaze forth, O
Vishnu!
Tell me who You are, of so terrible a form.

Salutations to You, O Best of Gods;
Have mercy! I wish to understand You, primal One;
Indeed, I do not comprehend what You are doing.
The Blessed Lord spoke:

I am Time, the mighty cause of world destruction,
Who has come forth to annihilate the worlds.
Even without any action of yours, all these warriors
Who are arrayed in the opposing ranks, shall cease to exist.
Therefore stand up and attain glory! 
Having conquered the enemy, enjoy prosperous kingship.
These have already been struck down by Me;
Be the mere instrument, O Arjuna.
Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, and
Karna too, others also, warrior heroes,
have been killed by Me.
Do not hesitate! Kill!
Fight! You shall conquer the enemy in battle.

Drona (m. acc. sg.), Droṇa.
ca, and.
bhiṣma (m. acc. sg.), Bhīṣma.
ca, and.
jayadrath (m. acc. sg.), Jayadratha.
ca, and.
karna (m. acc. sg.), Karna.
tathā, also, too, thus.
anyān (m. acc. pl.), others.
api, also, even.
yodhavirān (m. acc. pl.), warrior heroes,
fighter heroes, battle heroes.
maya (inst. sg.), by me.
hata (m. acc. pl. p. pass. participle \(\sqrt{\text{han}}\)),
killed, slain.
tvam (nom. sg.), thou.
jahi (2nd sg. imperative act. \(\sqrt{\text{han}}\)), kill! slay!
mā (prohibitive), not, never.
vāthiṣṭhā (2nd sg. injunctive \(\sqrt{\text{vyath}}\)),
tremble, hesitate.
yudhyasva (2nd sg. imperative mid. \(\sqrt{\text{yudh}}\)),
fight!
jetāśi (2nd sg. periphrastic future act. \(\sqrt{\text{ji}}\)),
 thou shalt conquer.
rane (n. loc. sg.), in battle, in joy of battle.
sapatnān (m. acc. pl.), rivals, adversaries.
Samjaya uvaca
Sanjaya spoke:

Samjaya (m. nom. sg.), Sanjaya, the narrator who is describing the scene to King Dhrtarastra.

uvaca (3rd sg. perfect act. \( \sqrt{vac} \)), he said, he spoke.

etad (n. acc. sg.), this.
shrutvai (gerund \( \sqrt{sr}u \)), hearing, having heard.
vacanam (m. acc. sg.), utterance, word, speech.
keśavasya (m. gen. sg.), of Keśava of the Handsome Haired One, epithet of Krishna.
krtaṅjaliḥ (m. nom. sg. BV cpd.), he who made an anjali, he who made a reverent gesture.
vepamanah (m. nom. sg. pr. act. participle \( \sqrt{vip} \)), trembling, quaking.
kiriti (m. nom. sg.), the Diademed One, epithet of Arjuna.
namasprtya (gerund namas \( \sqrt{kr} \)), making a bow, having made a bow.
bhuyayā, again.
evā, thus, indeed (often used as a rhythmic filler).
dhā (3rd sg. imperfect act. \( \sqrt{ah} \)), spoke, be-spoke.
krśnam (m. acc. sg.), Krishna, to Krishna.
sagadgadam (adv.), stammeringly, stutteringly, faltering.
bhūtabhitas (m. nom. sg.), very much frightened.
pranāmya (gerund pra \( \sqrt{nam} \)), bowing low, bowing.

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Sanjaya uvaca
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Arjuna spoke:

Rightly, O Krishna, the universe
Rejoices and is gratified by Your praise.
The demons, terrified, flee in all directions;
And all the throngs of the perfected ones bow before You.

Arjuna spoke:

Rightly, Bristling Haired One, of thee by the fame
the universe it rejoices and it is gratified.

The demons, terrified, flee in all directions;
And all the throngs of the perfected ones bow before You.

arjuna uvāca  
Arjuna spoke:

uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. vac), he said, he spoke.

arjunas (m. nom. sg.), Arjuna.
kasmāc ca te na nameran mahātman
and why to thee not they should bow,  
O Great One?

mahātman (m. voc. sg.), (as BV cpd.) O
Thou whose Self is Great, O Great One, O
Great Self.

garīyase brahmaṇo ’py ādikarte
greater than Brahmā even, to the original
creator,

brahmaṇas (n. abl. sg.), than Brahmā.

ananta devesa jagannivāsa
infinite Lord of Gods, Dwelling of the
Universe,

ananta (m. voc. sg.), unending, infinite.
devesa (m. voc. sg.), Lord of Gods.
jagat (n.), universe, world.
nivāsa (m. voc. sg.), dwelling place, home.
(jagat-nivāsa, m. voc. sg. TP cpd., dwelling
place of the universe.)

And why should they not bow to You,
O great One,
Who are the original Creator, greater even
than Brahma!
Infinite Lord of Gods, you are the
dwelling place of the universe,
The imperishable, the existent, the
non-existent, and that which is
beyond both.
You are the primal God, the ancient Spirit;
You are the supreme resting place of all the universe;
You are the knower, the object of knowledge, and the supreme state.
All the universe is pervaded by you,
O Thou of infinite forms.
Vāyu, Yama, Agni, Varuṇa, the rabbit-marked,

prajāpatis tvam prapitāmahaś ca
Lord of Creatures, thou, original great grandfather,

namo namas te 'stu sahasrakṛtvāh
reverence! reverence! to thee may it be
a thousand times made.

punarca bhūyo 'pi namo namas te
And further again also reverence! rever­ence! to thee.

You are Vāyu, Yama, Agni, Varuṇa, the Moon,
The Lord of creatures, and the great grandfather.
Salutations to You a thousand times,
And again salutations, salutations to You!

vāyus (m. nom. sg.), Vāyu, the god of the wind.
yamas (m. nom. sg.), Yama, the god of death.
aquis (m. nom. sg.), Agni, the god of fire.
varuṇas (m. nom. sg.), Varuṇa, the “sustainer” of the Vedic pantheon, later, and here, god of the waters.
sasāṅkas (m. nom. sg.), the “rabbitmarked,” the moon.
prajāpatis (m. nom. sg.), Lord of Creatures, Lord of Reproduction.
tvam (nom. sg.), thou.
prapitāmahas (m. nom. sg.), original paternal great grandfather.
ca, and.
namo namas (n. nom. sg.), reverence! reverence!
te (dat. sg.), to thee.
astu (3rd sg. imperative act. vās), may it be!
it shall be!
sahasrakṛtas, a thousand times made.
punar, again, further.
ca, and.
bhūyas, again.
api, even, also.
namo namas (n. nom. sg.), reverence! reverence!
te (dat. sg.), to thee.

* Vāyu, the Vedic wind god.
† Yama, literally “going,” the Vedic god of the dead, and punisher of departed spirits.
‡ Agni, god of fire.
§ Varuṇa, Vedic “sustainer of the universe,” later, and here, god of the waters.
|| sasāṅka, the moon, literally the “rabbit marked,” sometimes simply saṁ, “that which contains the rabbit,” favorite Hindu designation for the moon, because the Hindu’s saw a rabbit instead of a “man” in the moon.
nams (n. nom. sg.), reverence, bow.
parastāt (adv.), from in front, from before, from afar.
atha, moreover, and.
prṣṭhatas (adv.), from behind.
te (dat. sg.), to thee.
namas (n. nom. sg.), reverence, bow.
asti (3rd sg. imperative act. ́vas), may it be!
be it!
te (dat. sg.), to thee.
sarvatās (adv.), on all sides.
eva, indeed, also (used as a rhythmic filler).
sarva (m. voc. sg.), O All.
ananta (m.), unending, infinite.
vīrya (n.), valor, heroism.
amita (m.), unmeasured, boundless.
vikramas (m. nom. sg.), might, force.
(ananta-vīrya-amita-vikramas, m. nom. sg.
KD cpd., infinite, heroic, boundless
might.)
tvam (nom. sg.), thou.
sarvam (m. acc. sg.), all.
samāpnoṣi (2nd sg. pr. indic. act. sam ́āp),
thou fulfillest, thou pervadest, thou attainest,
thou penetratest.
tatas, from there, therefore.
asi (2nd sg. pr. indic. ́vas), thou art.
sarvas (m. nom. sg.), all.

Salutations to You from in front and behind,
Salutations to You on all sides also,
O All.
You are infinite valor and boundless might.
You pervade all, therefore You are all.
friend thus thinking, impetuously which said,

he kṛṣṇa he yāda va he sakheti
“Oh Krishna, Oh Descendant of Yādu, Oh Comrade,” thus,

by not knowing the majesty of thee this

by me from negligence or with affection even,

Whatever I have said impetuously as if in ordinary friendship,

“In ignorance of Your majesty, Through negligence or even through affection,
yac ca (yat ca), as if, and as if.
avahāsa (m.), joking, jesting, in jest, laughing.
artham (n. nom. sg.), purpose, aim.
(avahāsa аrtham, n. nom. sg. TP cdp., purpose of jest.)
asatkrta (m. nom. sg.), disrespectfully treated, badly treated.
asi (2nd sg. pr. indic. ās), thou art.
vihāra (m.), diversion, play.
śayyā (f.), bed.
āsana (n.), seated, sitting.
bhojanu (n. loc. pl.), in dining.
(vihāra śayyāāsanabhojāneṣu, n. loc. pl.), in diversion, in bed, while seated and while dining.)
ekas (m. nom. sg.), alone.
athavā, or.
api, even, also.
acyuta (m. voc. sg.), O Unshaken One (Krishna).
tatsamakṣam (adv.), before the eyes, before the eyes of others.
tad (m. acc. sg.), that, this.
ksāmaye (1st sg. causative mid. āksam), I ask pardon, I ask indulgence.
tvām (acc. sg.), thee, of thee.
aham (nom. sg.), I.
aprameyam (m. acc. sg.), the Immeasurable One, the Boundless One.

And if, with humorous purpose,
You were disrespectfully treated,
While at play, resting, while seated or while dining,
When alone, O Krishna, or even before the eyes of others,
For that I ask forgiveness of You, immeasurable One.
You are the father of the world, of all things moving and motionless.
You are to be adored by this world.
You are the most venerable Guru.
There is nothing like You in the three worlds.
How then could there be another greater,
O Being of incomparable glory?
Therefore, bowing down,
prostrating my body,
I ask forgiveness of You, O Lord;
As is a father to a son, a friend to a friend,
A lover to a beloved, please, O God,
be merciful!
Having seen that which has never been seen before, I am delighted.
And yet my mind trembles with fear.
Show me that form, O God, in which You originally appeared.
Have mercy, Lord of Gods, dwelling of the universe.

 transliteration  

(adṛṣṭa (p. pass. participle a √drṣ), unseen, not seen.  
pūrvam (n. acc. sg.), before, previously. (adṛṣṭapūrvam, n. acc. sg., previously unseen, never before seen.)  
hṛṣitas (m. nom. p. pass. participle √hṛṣ), excited, delighted.  
 asmī (1st sg. pr. indic. √as), I am.  
dṛṣṭvā (gerund √drṣ), seeing, having seen.  
bhayena (n. inst. sg.), with fear.  
ca, and.  
prayāthitam (n. nom. p. pass. participle pra vyath), trembling, quaking, shaking, shaken.  
manas (n. nom. sg.), mind.  
me (gen. sg.), of me, my.  
tad (n. acc. sg.), that.  
eva. indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).  
me (dat. sg.), to me.  
darśaya (2nd sg. causative imperative), cause to see! cause to behold! show!  
deva (m. voc. sg.), O God.  
rūpas (n. acc. sg.), form, shape.  
prasida (2nd sg. imperative act. pra √sad), have mercy! be merciful!  
devēsa (m. voc. sg.), Lord of Gods.  
jagannīvāsa (m. voc. sg.), “universe-abode,” abode of the universe, dwelling place of the universe.
I desire thee to see, I, thus (i.e. as before),

with it with the form four armed

O Thousand Armed One, become,
O Embodiment of All.

I desire to see you wearing a crown,
Armed with a club, discus in hand,
as before;
Become that four-armed form,
O thousand armed One, O You who
have all forms.
The Blessed Lord spoke:

By My grace toward you, Arjuna, this Supreme form has been manifested through My own power, This form of Mine, made up of splendor, universal, infinite, primal, Which has never before been seen by other than you.

Maya (inst. sg.), by me,
prasannena (inst. sg.), by being gracious.
tava (gen. sg.), to thee, toward thee.
arjuna (voc. sg.), Arjuna.
idam (nom. sg.), this.
rūpaḥ (nom. sg.), form, shape, figure.
param (nom. sg.), highest, supreme.
darsitam (nom. sg. p. pass. causative participle), manifested, shown.
ātmayogat (abl. sg.), from own power, from own Yoga.
tejōmayam (nom. sg.), made of splendor, made of brilliance.
viśvam (nom. sg.), universal, all.
anantam (nom. sg.), unending, infinite.
ādyam (nom. sg.), primal, original, from the beginning.
yad (nom. sg.), which.
me (gen.), of me, my.
tvadanyena (inst. sg.), by other than thee.
na, not.
drṣṭapūrva (nom. sg.), seen previously, seen before.
Not by Vedic sacrifice nor (Vedic) recitation, not by gifts,
And not by ritual acts nor by severe austerities,
Can I be seen in such a form in the world of men
By any other than you, Arjuna.
Do not tremble! and not confused state,

Having seen form terrible such of me this

mā (prohibitive), not, never.
tē (gen. sg.), of thee.
vyathāś (2nd aorist subjunctive √vyath), thou
shouldst quake, thou shouldst tremble.
mā (prohibitive), not, never.
ca, and.
vimūḍhabhāvas (m. nom. sg.), confused
state, deluded state of being.
dṛṣṭvā (gerund √dṛṣ), having seen, seeing.
rūpaṁ (n. acc. sg.), form, shape, appearance.
ghoram (n. acc. sg.), terrible, frightful,vener-
erable, sublime.
idṛś, such.
māma (gen. sg.), of me, my.
idam (n. acc. sg.), this.
vyapeta (m. p. pass. participle vi apa √vā),
gone away, disappeared, freed from.
bhīṣ (f. nom. sg.), fear, apprehension, dread.
(vyapetabhīṣ, f. nom. sg. BV cpd., being
without fear, whose fear has departed.)
pritamanās (m. nom. sg. BV cpd.), whose
mind is cheerful, cheered in heart.
punar, again, once more.
tvam (nom. sg.), thou.
tad (n. acc. sg.), this, that.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
me (gen. sg.), of me.
rūpaṁ (n. acc. sg.), form, appearance.
idam (n. acc. sg.), this.
prapāśya (2nd sg. imperative act. pra √paś),
behold! see!
Sanjaya spoke:
Having spoken thus to Arjuna, 
Krishna 
Revealed his own (previous) form again. 
Having resumed His gentle, wonderful appearance, 
He calmed Arjuna, who was terrified.

Sanjaya (m. nom. sg.), Sanjaya, the original narrator who is describing the scene to the blind King Dhr̥tarāśtra.

uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

iti, thus.
arjunam (m. acc. sg.), Arjuna, to Arjuna.
vāsudevas (m. nom. sg.), Son of Vasudeva, epithet of Krishna.
tathā, thus.
uktvā (gerund √vac), speaking, having spoken.
svakam (n. acc. sg.), own.
rūpam (n. acc. sg.), form, shape, aspect.
darśayāṁ āsa (causative periphrastic perfect 3rd sg. √drś + √ās), he revealed, he caused to be seen.
bhūyas, again, once more.
āsvāsāyaṁ āsa (causative periphrastic perfect ā √śvas + √ās), he consoled, he calmed, he caused to take heart, he assuaged.
ca, and.
bhītam (m. acc. sg.), frightened one.
enam (m. acc. sg.), this.
bhūtvā (gerund √bhū), becoming, having become.
punar, again, once more.
sāuṣuma (n. ), gentle, mild, pleasant.
vapus (m. nom. sg.), handsome appearance, wonderful appearance.
(sāuṣuma-vapus, n. acc. sg. KD cpd., gentle, wonderful appearance.)
mahātmā (m. nom. sg.), the Great Self, the Great One, (as BV cpd.) He Whose Self is Great.
XI

Arjuna spoke:

Seeing Your gentle Human form, O Krishna,
Now I am composed
And my mind is restored to normal.

* Here śloka metre resumes.
The Blessed Lord spoke:
This form of Mine which you have beheld
Is difficult to see;
Even the gods are constantly longing
To behold it.
Not through study of the Vedas, not through austerity,
Not through gifts, and not through sacrifice
Can I be seen in this form
As you have beheld Me.
By undistracted devotion alone
Can I be known,
And be truly seen in this form,
And be entered into, Arjuna.

* Sanskrit has no passive infinitive. To form one, the auxiliary जस्य, is used, as here जस्य ज्ञातम् "I can be seen," जस्य ज्ञातम्, "I can be known."
He who does all work for Me,
considers Me as the Supreme,
Is devoted to Me, abandons all
attachment,
And is free from enmity toward any
being,
Comes to Me, Arjuna.

End of Book XI

The Yoga of the Vision of
Universal Form
BOOK XII

1

Arjuna spoke:
The constantly steadfast devotees
Who worship You with devotion,
And those who worship the eternal unmanifest;
Which of these has the better knowledge of yoga?

Arjuna spoke:
Thus the constantly steadfast who,
Devoted, they worship
And also the eternal unmanifest,
Of these which most knowing of Yoga?

Arjuna (m. nom. sg.), Arjuna.
Uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. vac), he said, he spoke.
The Blessed Lord spoke:
Those who are eternally steadfast, who
worship Me,
Fixing their minds on Me,
Endowed with supreme faith;
I consider them to be the most devoted to Me.
who, but, the imperishable, undefinable,

unmanifest they honor

the all-pervading and unthinkable

the unchanging, immovable, constant,

But those who honor the imperishable,
The indefinable, the unmanifest,
The all-pervading and unthinkable,
The unchanging, the immovable,
Controlling all the senses,
Even-minded on all sides,
Rejoicing in the welfare of all creatures,
They also attain Me.

* The substance of stanzas 1, 2, 3 and 4 concerns two aspects of the Lord, and this point has been discussed by several native commentators. Those who worship Him as an imaginary form, fixing their minds on Him are considered the most devoted (stanza 2). But those who worship Him as the ātman, or Brahman, devoid of all attributes and formless (stanzas 3 and 4), also attain to Him.
The trouble of those whose minds are fixed on the unmanifest is greater, for the goal of the unmanifest is attained with difficulty by embodied beings.

*klesa* (m. nom. sg.), exertion, toil, anguish, pain.
*adhikataras* (m. nom. sg. comparative), greater, surpassing.
*tesām* (m. gen. pl.), of them.
*avyakta* (m.), unmanifest, unseen.
*āsakta* (m.), attached, clinging.
*cetasām* (n. gen. pl.), minded, of thoughts, of minds.
(avyaktāsaktacetasām, m. gen. pl. BV cpd., of those whose thoughts are fixed on the Unmanifest.)
*avyaktā* (f. nom. sg.), unmanifest, unseen.
*hi*, indeed, truly.
*gatis* (f. nom. sg.), goal, path.
*duḥkham* (adv.), difficult, with difficulty, hard.
*dehavadbhis* (m. inst. pl.), by the embodied, by embodied beings.
*avāpyate* (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive ava śāp), it is attained, it is reached.
XII

6

ye tu sarvani karmani
who, but, all actions

mayi samnyasya matparah
in me renouncing, intent on me as highest,

ananyenaiva yogena
with undistracted Yoga

mam dhyayanta upasate
me meditating on, they worship:

But those who, renouncing all actions
In Me, and regarding Me as the Supreme,
Worship Me, meditating on Me
With undistracted yoga,

* Again, the two aspects of the Lord, and the two corresponding methods of worship are discussed. Those who worship the Lord as the atman, or self, or, in a larger sense, Brahman (in stanza 5), and those who worship the imaginary image on which the mind is “fixed” or “intent” (in stanzas 6 and 7). The former method is described as the more difficult.
of them I the deliverer

from the death-transmigration-ocean,

I am, before long, Son of Prtha,

whose thoughts have entered into me.

Of those whose thoughts have entered into Me,
I am soon the deliverer
From the ocean
Of death and transmigration,
Arjuna.
Keep your mind on Me alone,
Your intellect on Me.
Thus you shall dwell in Me hereafter.
There is no doubt of this.

*mayi* (loc. sg.), in me, on me.
*eva*, alone, indeed (often used as a rhythmic filler).
*manas* (n. acc. sg.), mind, thought.
*ādhatva* (2nd sg. imperative mid. ā śādā),
keep! place!
*mayi* (loc. sg.), in me, on me.
*buddhiṃ* (f. acc. sg.), intelligence, understanding.
*niveśaya* (2nd sg. causative act. imperative ni \(ūviś\)), cause to enter! cause to approach!
*nivāsiṣyasi* (2nd sg. future act. ni \(ūvās\), thou shalt dwell, thou shalt abide.
*mayi* (loc. sg.), in me.
*eva*, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
*ata ārdhvam* (adv.), henceforth, thenceforward.
*na*, not.
*samsayas* (m. nom. sg.), doubt, question.
Or if you are not able
To keep your mind steadily on Me,
Then seek to attain Me
By the constant practice of yoga,
Arjuna.
If you are incapable even of practice,  
Be intent on My work;  
Even performing actions for My sake,  
You shall attain perfection.

abhyāse (m. loc. sg.), in practice, in continued effort.  
apī, even, also.  
asamarthas (n. nom. sg.), incapable, unable.  
āsi (2nd sg. pr. indic. ās), thou art.  
matkarma (n.), my work, work of me.  
paramas (m. nom. sg.), intent on, holding as highest object.  
(matkarma-paramas, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., intent on my work.)  
bhava (2nd sg. imperative act. bhū), be!  
madartham (m. acc. sg.), for the sake of me, for my sake.  
apī, even, also.  
karmāṇi (n. acc. pl.), actions.  
kurvan (m. nom. sg. pr. participle act. kr), performing, doing, making.  
siddhim (f. acc. sg.), perfection, success.  
avāpsyasi (2nd sg. future act. ava āp), thou shalt attain, thou shalt reach.
But if you are unable even to do this,
Then, resorting to devotion to Me,
And abandoning all the fruits of action,
Act with self-restraint.

atha, or if.
etad (n. acc. sg.), this.
api, even, also.
asaktas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle a
śak), unable, incapable.
asi (2nd sg. pr. indic. ās), thou art.
kartum (infinitive ākr), to do, to perform, to
make.
madyogam (m. acc. sg.), of-me-Yoga, my
Yoga, my power.
asrītas (nom. sg. p. pass. participle ā śri),
resorting to, depending on, adhering to, re­
sting on.
sarvakarmaphala (n.), all action fruit, all
fruit of action.
tyāgam (m. acc. sg. from śtyaj), abandon­
ment, abandoning, relinquishing.
(sarva-karma-phala-tyāgam, m. acc. sg. TP
cpd., abandoning all fruits of action.)
tatas, then, thereupon, from there.
kuru (2nd sg. imperative act. ākr), act! do! perfor­
m!
yatātmavān (m. nom. sg.) with controlled
self, self-restrained, with self restraint.


Knowledge is indeed better than practice;  
Meditation is superior to knowledge;  
Renunciation of the fruit of action is better than meditation;  
Peace immediately follows renunciation.

śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāj  
better indeed knowledge than practice;

jñānād dhyānam viśisyate  
than knowledge, meditation is superior;

dhyānāt karmaphalatīyāgas  
than meditation, action-fruit abandon­ment;

tyāgāc chāntir anantaram  
from abandonment, peace immediately.

śreyas (n. nom. sg.), better, more fortunate, more valuable.  
hi, indeed, truly.  
jñānam (n. nom. sg.), knowledge.  
abhyaśā (m. abl. sg.), from practice, than practice.  
jñād (n. abl. sg.), from knowledge, than knowledge.  
dhyānam (n. nom. sg.), meditation.  
viśisyate (3rd sg. passive vi śīṣ), it is pre­ferred, it is superior.  
dhyānāt (n. abl. sg.), from meditation, than meditation.  
karmaphalatīyāgas (m. nom. sg.), abandon­ment of the fruit of action.  
tyāgāt (m. abl. sg.), from abandonment.  
sāntis (f. nom. sg.), peace, tranquility.  
anantaram (adv.), immediately, soon.
He who hates no being,
Friendly and compassionate,
Free from attachment to possessions,
  free from egotism,
Indifferent to pain and pleasure,
  patient,
The yogin who is always contented and balanced in mind,
Who is self-controlled, and whose conviction is firm,
Whose mind and intellect are fixed on Me,
And who is devoted to Me, is dear to Me.
He from whom the world does not shrink,
And who does not shrink from the world,
Who is freed from joy, envy, fear, and distress,
Is dear to Me.

*yasmān (m. abl. sg.), from whom.
na, not.
udvijate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. ud/vij), it shrinks, it trembles, it shudders.
lokas (m. nom. sg.), world.
lokāt (m. abl. sg.), from the world.
a, not.
udvijate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. ud/vij), he shrinks, he trembles, he shudders.
ca, and.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
harsa (m.), joy, pleasure, happiness.
āmarṣa (m.), impatience, indignation.
bhaya (n.), fear.
udvegaīs (m. instr. pl.), distress, trembling, anxiety.
(harsāmarṣabhayodvegās, m. instr. pl., by pleasure, impatience, fear and distress.)
muktas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle /muc), released, freed, liberated.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
sas (m. nom. sg.), he.
ca, and, also.
me (gen. sg.), of me, to me.
priyas (m. nom. sg.), dear, beloved.

* “A devotee who, through... karma-yoga (the Yoga of action), practices bhakti-yoga (the Yoga of devotion or love) is beloved of God. So is the karma-yogin (practitioner of the Yoga of action) who does nothing to vex the world, who is not vexed by the world because he is not interested in it and who therefore is not joyous, intolerant, fearful and irascible.” – Rāmānuja.
He who is free from wants, pure, capable, Disinterested, free from anxiety, Who has abandoned all undertakings And is devoted to Me, is dear to Me.

**XII**

16

**anapekṣaḥ**  śucir  **dakṣa**
indifferent, pure, capable,

**udāśino gatavyathāḥ**
disinterested, free from anxiety,

**sarvāraṃbhaparityāgī**
all undertakings abandoning,

**yo madbhaktah sa me priyah**
who, to me devoted, he to me dear.

**anapekṣas** (m. nom. sg.), indifferent, impartial, disinterested.
**śucis** (m. nom. sg.), pure, holy, bright.
**dakṣas** (m. nom. sg.), capable, dextrous, able.
**udāśnas** (m. nom. sg.), indifferent, “sitting apart,” unprejudiced.
**gatavyathas** (m. nom. sg.), free from anxiety, free from trembling, (as BV cpd.) whose anxiety is gone.
**sarva**, all.
**ārambha** (m.), undertaking, beginning, commencement.
**parityāgī** (m. nom. sg. from śyaj), abandoning, relinquishing.
**sarvāraṃbhaparityāgī**, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., who has abandoned all undertakings.
**yas** (m. nom. sg.), who.
**madbhaktas** (m. nom. sg.), devoted to me.
**sas** (m. nom. sg.), he.
**me** (gen. sg.), of me, to me.
**priyas** (m. nom. sg.), dear, beloved.
He who neither rejoices nor hates,  
Nor grieves nor desires,  
Has renounced good and evil,  
And is full of devotion, is dear to Me.

\[\textit{bhaktim\text{\textacuten} yah sa me priyah}\]

\[\text{full of devotion, who, he to me dear.}\]
Alike toward enemy and friend,
The same in honor and disgrace,
Alike in cold and heat, pleasure and pain,
Freed from attachment,

samas (m. nom. sg.), alike, the same.
śatrāu (m. loc. sg.), in enemy, toward enemy.
cā, and.
mitre (m. loc. sg.), in friend, toward friend.
cā, and.
tathā, thus, in this way, the same.
mānīpamānayos (m. loc. dual), in honor and disgrace, in good name and bad.
śīta (n.), cold.
usna (m. n.), heat.
sukha (n.), pleasure, happiness.
dukkheṣu (n. loc. pl.), pain, misery.
(sītōnasukhādukkheṣu, n. loc. pl., in cold, heat, pleasure and pain.)
samas (m. nom. sg.), alike, the same, indifferent, unchanged.
saṅga (m.), attachment, clinging.
vivarjitas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle vi-virj), twisted, freed from.
(saṅga-vivarjitas, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., freed from attachment.)
Indifferent to blame or praise,
silent,
Content with anything whatever,
Homeless, steady-minded,
Full of devotion; this man is dear to Me.
Those who honor this immortal law described above,
Endowed with faith,
Devoted and intent on Me as the Supreme;
They are exceedingly dear to Me.

End of Book XII

The Yoga of Devotion
BOOK XIII

Arjuna uvāca
Arjuna spoke:

prakṛtiḥ puruṣam cāiva
material nature and spirit,
kṣetram kṣetrajñam eva ca
the field and the field knower,

jñānam jñeyam ca keśava
knowledge and the to-be-known, O Handsome Haired One.

Arjuna said:
Prakriti and Purusha,
The field and the knower of the field,
Knowledge and the knower of knowledge,
I wish to know about these, Krishna.

* This first unnumbered stanza does not occur in all versions. It may have been deleted in order to make the total number of verses an even seven hundred.

---

arjuna (m. nom. sg.), Arjuna.
uvāca (3rd sg. perfect act. ṛvac), he said, he spoke.

prakṛtim (f. acc. sg.), material nature.
puruṣam (m. acc. sg.), spirit, person, man.
ca, and.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
kṣetram (n. acc. sg.), field.
kṣetrajñam (m. acc. sg.), field knower, knower of the field.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
ca, and.
etad (n. acc. sg.), this.
veditum (infinitive ṛvid), to know.
jñeyam (n. acc. sg. gerundive ṛjñā), the to-be-known, the object of knowledge.
ca, and.
keśava (m. voc. sg.), O Handsome Haired One, epithet of Krishna.
XIII

śrībhagavān uvāca
the Blessed Lord spoke:

This body, Arjuna,
Is said to be the field;
He who knows this is called the
knower of the field
By those who are wise in such things.

*Sages who possess exact knowledge of the body call it the experiencing-ātman's field of experience. A person who knows this body and, because of this very knowledge, must be different from his body which is the object of his knowledge, is called a kṣetrajña (knower of the field) by these sages.” — Rāmānuja.
and the field knower also me, know!

in all fields, Descendant of Bharata

of the field and the field knower, the knowledge

which that (true) knowledge considered by me.

Know also that I am the knower of the field
In all fields, Arjuna;
Knowledge of the field and of the knower of the field,
That is considered by Me to be true knowledge.
This field, what it is, and of what kind,
What its modifications are and whence they come,
And who he (the knower of the field) is,
and what are his powers,
That, in brief, hear from Me:

tad (n. nom. sg.), this, that.
kṣetram (n. nom. sg.), field.
yad (n. nom. sg.), which, what.
ca, and.
yādṛś, what kind, what like, of what nature.
ca, and.
yad (n. nom. sg.), what, which.
vikāri (n. nom. sg.), having modifications, transformations, liability to change.
yatas, whence, from where.
ca, and.
yad (n. nom. sg.), which, what.
sas (m. nom. sg.), he, this.
ca, and.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
yad (n. nom. sg.), what, which.
prabhāvas (m. nom. sg.), power, might.
ca, and.
tad (n. acc. sg.), that.
samāsenā (adv.), with briefness, in brief, briefly.
me (gen. sg.), of me, from me.
śṛṇu (2nd sg. imperative act. śṛṇu), hear! learn!
Sages have sung of it in many ways,
   distinctly,
In various sacred (Vedic) hymns,
And with quotations concerning
   Brahman,
Full of reasoning.

* Edgerton has pointed out that Bādarāyaṇa’s Brahma Sūtra (200 A.D.) probably did not exist at the time the Gītā was written, and that the meaning of “brāhma sūtra padāīs” here is probably therefore more general.
The great elements, egoism, Intellect and the unmanifest, The senses, ten and one, And the five objects of the senses,

* I.e. ether, air, fire, water and earth.
† Eye, ear, skin, tongue, nose and the five organs of action, viz. hand, foot, mouth, anus, genital organ.
‡ The mind.
§ Sound, touch, color, taste and smell. N.B. These are all Sāmkhya concepts, as are the gunas.
Desire, hatred, pleasure, pain,
the body, intelligence, steadfastness
this briefly is described as the field
with its modifications.

icchā (f. nom. sg.), desire, inclination, wish.
dveṣas (m. nom. sg.), aversion, hatred, dislike.
sukham (n. nom. sg.), pleasure, comfort.
dūḥkham (n. nom. sg.), pain, misery, misfortune.
samghātas (m. nom. sg.), multitude, aggregation, whole, organism, organic whole.
cetanā (f. nom. sg.), consciousness, intelligence, mind.
dhṛitis (f. nom. sg.), steadfastness, courage, firmness.
etad (n. nom. sg.), this.
kṣetram (n. nom. sg.), field.
samāsena (m. inst. sg.), briefly, in brief.
savikāram (n. acc. sg.), with modifications, with transformations, with capacity for change.
udāhṛtam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle ud ā ṣṭhat), described, explained, illustrated, announced.

* The physical body.
XIII

7

अमानित्वम् अदम्भित्वम्
amānitvam adambhitvam
absence of pride, freedom from hypocrisy,

अहिंसा क्षांति आर्जवम्
ahīṁsā kṣāntir ārjavam
non-violence, patience, rectitude,

अचार्योपासनम् सौचम्
ācāryopāsanam sāucam
teacher attendance upon, purity,

स्थायिर्यम् अत्माविनिग्रहः
sthāiryam ātmavinigrahaḥ
stability, self restraint,

Absence of pride, freedom from hypocrisy,
Non-violence, patience, rectitude,
Service of the teacher, purity,
Constancy, self-restraint,
Indifference to the objects of sense,
And absence of egotism;
Keeping in view the evils of birth,
Death,
Old age, disease, and pain;

\( \text{indriyārtheṣu vāirāgyam} \)
toward the objects of the senses, aversion,

\( \text{anahamkāra eva ca} \)
and absence of egotism,

\( \text{janmamṛtyujariividyādi-} \)
birth-death-old age-disease-

\( \text{duḥkhasānudarśanam} \)
pain-evil keeping in view,
Non-attachment, absence of clinging
To son, wife, home, and so on,
And constant even-mindedness
Toward desired and undesired events;

asaktis (f. nom. sg.), non-attachment, absence of clinging.
anabhiṣvaṅgas (m. nom. sg.), absence of clinging, non-attachment.
putra (m.), son.
dāra (m.), wife.
grha (m.), home, house.
ādi (m. loc. pl.), beginning with, et cetera.
(putradārgrhādiṣu, m. loc. pl. TP cpd., to son, wife, home, et cetera.)
nityam (adv.), constant, perpetual, as adv. perpetually.
ca, and.
samacittatvam (n. nom. sg.), evenness of mind, steadiness of thought.
isti (p. pass. participle √iṣ), desired.
anīṣa, undesired.
upapattiṣu (f. loc. pl.), in happenings, in events.
(istānistopapattiṣu, f. loc. pl. KD cpd., toward desired and undesired events.)
And unswerving devotion to Me
With single-minded yoga,
Frequenting secluded places,
Distaste for the society of men,
XIII

11

constancy in knowledge of the supreme spirit,
Observing the goal of knowledge of the truth;
This is declared to be true knowledge.
Ignorance is what is contrary to this.

adhyātmajñānā (n.), knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, knowledge of the Supreme Self.
nityatvam (n. nom. sg.), constancy, continuance, perpetualness.
(tattvajñānānityatvam, n. nom. sg. TP cpd., constancy in knowledge of the Supreme Spirit.)
tatvā (n.), “thatness,” truth.
jayā (n.), knowledge, wisdom.
artha (m.!), goal, object, purpose.
darśanam (n. nom. sg. pr. participle ṛdrṣ), observing, seeing, keeping in sight.
(tattvajñānārthadarśanam, n. nom. sg. TP cpd., observing the goal of knowledge of the truth.)
etad (n. nom. sg.), this.
jñānam (n. nom. sg.), knowledge.
iti, thus, so.
proktam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle pra ṛvac), said to be, called, declared to be.
ajñānam (n. nom. sg.), ignorance, absence of knowledge.
yad (n. nom. sg.), which, what.
atas, from this, to this.
anyathā, contrary, not in which way, otherwise.
I shall declare that which has to be known,
Knowing which, one attains immortality;
It is the beginningless supreme Brahman,
Which is said to be neither existent nor non-existent.
sarb\(\varepsilon\)ta\(\varphi\)h\(\varepsilon\)ni\(\varphi\)\(\varphi\)d\(\varepsilon\) t\(\upsilon\)
\(s\)ar\(\varphi\)\(\varepsilon\)ta\(\varphi\)h\(\varepsilon\)ni\(\varphi\)d\(\upsilon\)\(\varphi\)\(\varphi\)d\(\varepsilon\)m\(\upsilon\) t\(\upsilon\)
everywhere hand and foot, this,

sarb\(\varepsilon\)ta\(\varphi\)h\(\upsilon\)\(\upsilon\)\(\varphi\) \(\alpha\)\(k\)i\(\varepsilon\)i\(\varphi\)romukham
everywhere eye, head and face,

sarb\(\varepsilon\)ta\(\varphi\)h\(\upsilon\)\(\upsilon\)\(\varphi\) \(\alpha\)\(k\)i\(\varepsilon\)i\(\varphi\)romukham loke
everywhere having hearing in the world,

sarb\(\varepsilon\)ma\(\varepsilon\) \(\alpha\)\(v\)\(\varphi\)\(\gamma\)\(\tau\)y\(\alpha\) \(\iota\)\(\theta\)\(\iota\)\(\theta\)\(\iota\)\(\iota\)\(\iota\)\(t\)\(i\)h\(\alpha\) 
all enveloping it stands;

Having hands and feet everywhere,
Eyes, heads and faces everywhere,
Having ears everywhere,
That stands, enveloping everything
in the world.

\(s\)ar\(\varphi\)\(\varepsilon\)tas (adv.), everywhere.
\(\varphi\)\(\nu\)\(\iota\) (m.), hand.
\(\varphi\)\(\upsilon\)\(\alpha\) (n. nom. acc. sg.), foot.
\(p\)\(\alpha\)\(\varphi\)\(\upsilon\)\(\alpha\)\(m\) (n. nom. sg. BV cp., having a hand and foot.)
t\(\upsilon\) (n. nom. sg.), this, that.
\(s\)ar\(\varphi\)\(\varepsilon\)tas (adv.), everywhere.
\(\alpha\)\(k\)i (n.), eye.
\(\sigma\)\(r\)\(\iota\)s (n.), head, skull.
m\(\kappa\)\(\nu\)\(\kappa\)\(\mu\) (n. nom. acc. sg.), face, mouth.
\(a\)\(k\)\(\varepsilon\)i\(\varphi\)romukham (n. nom. sg. BV cpd., having an eye, head and face.)
\(s\)ar\(\varphi\)\(\varepsilon\)tas (adv.), everywhere.
\(\sigma\)\(r\)\(u\)\(t\)\(i\)\(m\) (n. nom. sg.), having ears, having hearing.
l\(o\)k\(e\) (m. loc. sg.), in the world, on earth.
\(s\)ar\(\varphi\)\(\varepsilon\)ma (n. acc. sg.), all.
\(\alpha\)\(v\)\(\varphi\)\(\gamma\)\(\iota\) (gerund a \(\varphi\)\(\gamma\)\(\iota\)), enveloping, covering, spreading, pervading.
t\(\iota\)\(\theta\)\(\iota\)\(\iota\)\(t\)\(i\)h\(\alpha\) (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. \(\upsima\)\(\omega\)), it stands, it is present, it remains.

541
sarvendriyagunābhāsāṁ
all sense guṇa appearance,

sarvendriyavivarjitam
all sense freed from,

asaktam sarvabhrē caīva
unattached and all maintaining thus,

nirguṇāṁ guṇabhoktṛ ca
free from the guṇas and experiencing the guṇas;

Shining by the function of the senses,
Yet freed from all the senses,
Unattached yet maintaining all,
Free from the qualities yet experiencing the qualities;

sarva (m.), all.
indriya (m.), sense, power.
guṇa (m.), guṇa.
ābhāsāṁ (n. nom. sg.), appearance, color, semblance.
(sarvendriyagunābhāsāṁ, n. nom. sg. BV cpd., having the appearance of all the guṇas of the senses.)
sarva (m.), all.
indriya (m.), sense, power.
vivarjitam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle vi ṣvṛj), freed from, twisted away from.
(sarvendriyavivarjitam, n. nom. sg. TP cpd., freed from all the senses.)
asaktam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle a ṣaṃj), unattached, not clinging.
sarvabhrē (n. nom. sg.), all-maintaining, maintaining all.
cia, and.
evā, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
nirguṇāṁ (n. nom. sg.), free from the guṇas.
guṇabhoktṛ (n. nom. sg.), enjoyer of the guṇas, experiencer of the guṇas, experiencing the guṇas.
cia, and.
Outside and inside beings,
Those that are moving and not moving,
Because of its subtlety This is not comprehended.
This is far away and also near.

bahir (adv.), outside.
antaś (adv.), inside.
ca, and.
bhutānām (m. gen. pl.), of beings, of creatures.
acaram (n. nom. sg.), unmoving, inanimate.
caram (n. nom. sg.), moving, animate.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
ca, and.
sukṣmatvāt (n. abl. sg.), from subtlety, because of fineness, because of subtlety.
tad (n. nom. sg.), this, that.
avijñeyam (n. nom. sg. gerundive avijñā), not to be known, not to be understood, not to be comprehended.
dūrastham (n. nom. sg.), remotely situated, situated far off.
ca, and.
antike (n. loc. sg.), in the vicinity, near, proximate.
ca, and.
tad (n. nom. sg.), this, that.
Undivided yet remaining as if divided
In all beings,
This is to be known as the sustainer of beings,
Their devourer and creator.

* This and stanzas 13, 14 and 15 are, of course, a description of Brahman and the atman.
Also this is said to be the light of lights
That is beyond darkness;
It is knowledge, the object of knowledge and that which is to be attained through knowledge.
It is seated in the hearts of all.

* "Knowledge, the light of the ātman, illuminates even luminaries – such as the sun, a lamp, etc. – which dispel only that darkness which hinders the contacts of the senses with objects. It is beyond prakṛti (material nature).” – Rāmānuja.
Thus the field, knowledge,
And the object of knowledge have been
briefly described.
My devotee, understanding this,
Enteres into My state of being.
Know that material nature and Spirit Are both beginningless, And know also that the modifications of the field, And the qualities, too, arise from material nature.
Material nature is said to be the cause
In the producing of cause and effect.
The Spirit is said to be the cause
In the experiencing of pleasure and pain.
For the Spirit, abiding in material nature,
Experiences the qualities born of material nature.
Attachment to the qualities
Is the cause of its birth in good and evil wombs.
The highest Spirit in this body
Is called the witness, the consenter,
The supporter, the experiencer, the
great Lord,
And also the supreme Spirit.

* "'The puruṣa (spirit of the individual), when existing in such a body and conniving at its activities, looks on and consents; therefore it is the lord of the body. In the same way it experiences the happiness and unhappiness resulting from the body's activities. So because it rules, supports and exceeds the body, it is a sovereign lord as compared to its body, senses and mind. Likewise it is called the body's sovereign atman – sovereign as compared to the body – and a most sublime puruṣa, i.e. a puruṣa whose knowledge and power are not to be circumscribed by the body. . . . Nevertheless, so long as it is attached to gunas, the puruṣa is sovereign only as compared with the servile body.'"

– Rāmānuja.
He who thus he knows the spirit

And material nature, along with the guṇas

together,

in whatever (stage of transmigration)
existing even,

not be again is born.

He who in this way knows the Spirit
And material nature, along with the qualities,
In whatever stage of transmigration
he may exist,
Is not born again.

*"He who knows that the puruṣa and the prakṛti have the aforesaid natures and who knows the nature of the guṇas—which is still left to explain—he knows discriminatingly. He will not be reborn conjointly with prakṛti but attain the purified ātman characterized by non-circumscribable knowledge, as soon as he dies."—Rāmānuja.
Some perceive the Self in the Self
By the Self through meditation;
Others by the discipline of Sankhya
And still others by the yoga of action.

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*Sāṁkhya*, one of the earliest systems of Hindu philosophy, rational, non-theistic, dualistic, regarding *prākṛti* and *puruṣa* as the ultimate realities of existence, and believing that nothing new is ever created, all things being manifestations of what already exists. See note, II 39.
XIII

25

अन्ये त्व एवम् अज्ञानाः
anye tv evam ajānantah
some, however, thus not knowing,

श्रुत्यावयन्येव उपासते।
śrutvāvanyebhya upāsate
hearing from others, they worship,

ते पि चातिरान्त्व एव
te 'pi cātitaranty eva
they also cross beyond

मृत्यु श्रुतिपरायणाः:||
mṛtyum śruti-paṇāyaṇāḥ
death (what they) hear devoted to.

Yet others, not knowing this,
Worship, having heard it from others,
And they also cross beyond death,
Devoted to what they have heard.

anye (m. nom. pl.), some, others.
tu, but, however.
evam, thus.
ajānantas (m. nom. pl. pr. act. participle a
√jñā), not knowing, ignorant.
śrutvā (gerund √srū), hearing.
anyebhyas (m. abl. pl.), from others.
upāsate (3rd pl. pr. indic. mid. upa √āṣ),
they worship, they honor.
te (m. nom. pl.), they.
api, also, even.
ca, and.
atitaranti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. ati √ir), they
cross beyond, they transcend.
eva, indeed (often used as a rhythmic filler).
mṛtyum (m. acc. sg.), death.
śruti (f.), hearing.
parāyanās (n. nom. pl.), devoted to, holding
as highest object.
(śruti-parāyaṇas, n. nom. pl. TP cpd., de­
voated to what they hear.)

* Death, i.e. the kind of death that eventuates
in rebirth.
yāvat, so much, as much, inasmuch, as.
saṁjñāyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive saṁ jan), it is born.
kīṁcid, any whatever, any.
sattvam (n. nom. sg.), being, existence.
sthāvara (n.), standing still, not moving, inanimate.
jaṅgamam (n. nom. sg.), moving, animate, living.
(sthāvarajaṅgamam, n. nom. sg. DV cpd., standing and moving, standing or moving.)
kṣetra (n.), field.
kṣetrajña (m.), field knower.
sanyogā (m. abl. sg.), from the union.
(kṣetra kṣetra jaṅgasaṁyogā, m. abl. sg. TP cpd., from the union of the field and the field-knower.
tad (n. acc. sg.), this, that.
viddhī (2nd sg. imperative act. vidd), know! learn!
bharatarṣabha (m. voc. sg.), Bull of the Bharatas, epithet of Arjuna.

Know, Arjuna, that
Any being whatever that is born,
Moving or unmoving,
Arises from the union of the field and the knower of the field.

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26

yāvat, so much, as much, inasmuch, as.
saṁjñāyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive saṁ jan), it is born.
kīṁcid, any whatever, any.
sattvam (n. nom. sg.), being, existence.
sthāvara (n.), standing still, not moving, inanimate.
jaṅgamam (n. nom. sg.), moving, animate, living.
(sthāvarajaṅgamam, n. nom. sg. DV cpd., standing and moving, standing or moving.)
kṣetra (n.), field.
kṣetrajña (m.), field knower.
sanyogā (m. abl. sg.), from the union.
(kṣetra kṣetra jaṅgasaṁyogā, m. abl. sg. TP cpd., from the union of the field and the field-knower.
tad (n. acc. sg.), this, that.
viddhī (2nd sg. imperative act. vidd), know! learn!
bharatarṣabha (m. voc. sg.), Bull of the Bharatas, epithet of Arjuna.

* I.e. the union of body (field) and spirit (puruṣa).
samam sarvesu bhutesu
alike in all beings

bhistham paramesvaram
existing the Supreme Lord

vinaSyatsu avinasYantam
in (their) perishings not perishing,

yah pasyati sa pasyati
who sees, he (truly) sees.

He who sees the Supreme Lord,
Existing alike in all beings,
Not perishing when they perish,
Truly sees.
Seeing indeed the same Lord
Established everywhere,
He does not injure the Self by the self.
Thereupon he goes to the supreme goal.

samam (m. acc. sg.), same, equal, similar.
pāṣyam (m. nom. sg. pr. participle act. śpaṣ), seeing, beholding, discerning.
hi, indeed, truly.
sarvatra, everywhere, on all sides.
samavasthitam (m. acc. sg. p. pass. participle sam ava śthā), established, existing.
iśvaram (m. acc. sg.), lord, prince, ruler.
na, not.
hinasti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. śhiṇs), he injures, he hurts.
ātmanā (m. inst. sg.), by the self.
ātmānam (m. acc. sg.), the self.
tatas, then, from there.
yasti (3rd sg. śyā), he goes.
parām (f. acc. sg.), supreme, highest.
gatim (f. acc. sg.), goal, path.

* Since the self (ātman) of others is identical with one's own self, the line means that in injuring the self of others, one injures one's own self.
He who sees that all actions
Are performed exclusively by material
nature,
And thus the Self is not the doer,
Truly sees.

* "When a person perceives that all acts are performed by the prakṛti (material nature), that therefore the atman (self) is non-agent, and that the ātman has the form of knowledge, then he perceives that the ātman's conjunction with prakṛti (material nature), its (the ātman's) directing capacity and its experience of happiness or unhappiness all result from ignorance - effected by kārma (action) —, and then he has an exact perception of the ātman." — Rāmānuja.
When he perceives the various states of being
As resting in the One,
And from That alone spreading out,
Then he attains Brahman.

* "When a person perceives that all different modes of existence of all beings depend on one principle, prakṛti (material nature), and not on the ātman, and that the varieties of new beings issuing from these beings again arise from prakṛti, then he will attain the ātman in its purest form" — Rāmānuja.
This imperishable supreme Self
Is beginningless and without qualities;
Even though situated in the body,
Arjuna,
It does not act, and is not tainted.
As the all-pervading ether, because of
its subtlety,
Is not tainted,
So the Self, seated in the body,
Is not tainted in any case.

yathā, in which way, as.
sarvagatam (n. nom. sg.), all pervading, omnipresent.
sāukṣmyāt (n. abl. sg.), from subtlety, because of subtlety.
ākāśam (n. nom. sg.), space, ether.
nā, not.
upalipyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive upa \(\sqrt{lip}\)), it is smeared, it is polluted, it is befouled.
sarvatra, in all cases, everywhere.
avasthitas (m. nom. sg. p. participle ava \(\sqrt{sithā}\), seated, situated, abiding.
dehe (m./n. loc. sg.), in the body.
tathā, in this way, thus, so.
ātmā (m. nom. sg.), self.
nā, not.
upalipyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive upa \(\sqrt{lip}\)), it is smeared, it is stained, it is befouled.
As the sun alone illumines
This entire world,
So the Lord of the field illumines
The entire field, Arjuna.
The Yoga of Distinction between the Field-Knower and the Field

End of Book XIII
BOOK XIV

Param bhūyah pravaksyāmi
the highest further I shall declare

Jñānānām jñānam uttamam
of knowledges, the knowledge best

Yay jñātvā munayah sarve
which, having known, the sages all

Parāṁ siddhim ito gatāḥ
to supreme perfection from here gone.

The Blessed Lord spoke:
I shall declare, further, the highest
Knowledge, the best of all knowledge,
Having known which all the sages
Have gone from here to supreme
perfection.
Resorting to this knowledge,
And arriving at a state of identity
with Me,
Even at the creation of the world they
are not born,
Nor do they tremble at its dissolution.

* In reading stanzas like this, one must remember that, in the Hindu view, to be born is a misfortune. The ideal is to escape birth, or rebirth, and go on to nirvāṇa, or divine non-existence. Also, in this instance, “beings” are assumed to be born at the creation of the universe and to be constantly reborn thereafter until the dissolution of this particular universe.
mama yonir mahad brahma
for me the womb (is) great Brahman;

tasmin garbham dadhamy aham
in this the seed I place, I,

sambhaval; sarvabhutanam
the origin of all beings

tato bhavati bharata
from that it exists, Descendant of Bharata.

Great Brahma is My womb.
In it I place the seed.
The origin of all beings
Exists from that, Arjuna.
sarvayoniṣu kāunteya
in all wombs, Son of Kuntī,

mūrtayāḥ sāmbhavanti yāḥ/forms come to be which

tāsāṁ brahma mahād yoni
/of them Brahma the great womb.

aham bijapradāḥ pītā
/I the seed-sowing father.

Whatever forms are produced
In any womb, Arjuna,
The great Brahma is their womb,
And I am the seed-sowing father.
Sattva, rajas, tamas, thus,
The qualities born of material nature,
Bind fast in the body, O Arjuna,
The imperishable embodied One
(the atman).

sattva (n. nom. sg.), sattva, truth, virtue.
rajas (n. nom. sg.), rajas, passion, emotion.
tamas (n. nom. sg.), tamas, darkness, sloth.
iti, thus.
gunás (m. nom. pl.), guṇas.
prakṛti (f.), nature, material nature.
sambhavas (m. nom. pl.), born of, originating in, springing from.
(prakṛtisambhavas, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., whose origins are in material nature.)
nibadhnanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. ni śbadh), they bind, they bind down, they fetter.
mahābho (m. voc. sg.), O Great Armed One, epithet of Arjuna and other warriors.
dehe (m./n. loc. sg.), in the body.
dehinam (m. acc. sg.), the embodied, the embodied one, the ātman, the self.
avvayam (m. acc. sg.), imperishable, eternal.
तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्
			
tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt
there sattva free from impurity,

प्रकाशकम् नानामयम्।
prakāśakam anāmayam
illuminating, free from disease,

सुखस्नेन बध्नाति
sukhasaṅgena badhnāti
by virtue attachment it binds

ज्ञानस्नेन चानंध।
jñānasaṅgena cānagha
and by knowledge attachment, Sinless One.

Of these, sattva, free from impurity, Illuminating and free from disease, Binds by attachment to happiness And by attachment to knowledge, Arjuna.

tatra, there, in regard to these.
sattvaṁ (n. nom. sg.), sattva, truth, virtue.
nirmalatvāt (n. abl. sg.), free from impurity, free from dirtiness.
prakāśakam (n. nom. sg.), illuminating, shining.
anāmayam (n. nom. sg.), free from disease, healthy, salubrious.
sukhasaṅgena (m. inst. sg.), by attachment to virtue, by attachment to the good,
badhnāti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. vbaḥ), it binds, in connects.
jñānasaṅgena (m. inst. sg. TP cpd.), by attachment to knowledge, by attachment to wisdom.
cā, and.
anagha (m. voc. sg.), Sinless One, epithet of Arjuna.
Know that rajas is characterized by passion
Arising from thirst and attachment.
This binds fast the embodied one, Arjuna,
By attachment to action.
tamas tv ajñānajam viddhi
tamas, indeed, ignorance-born, know,

mohanam sarvadehinām
the confusion of all embodied ones.

pramādālasyanidrābhīs
by distraction, indolence and sleepiness

tan nibadhniitty bhārata
this it binds down Descendant of Bharata.

Know indeed that tamas is born of ignorance,
Which confuses all embodied beings.
This binds fast, Ajuna,
With negligence, indolence, and sleepiness.
sattva to happiness it causes attachment,
rajas to action, Descendant of Bharata,
knowledge-obscuring indeed tama,
to negligence it causes attachment even.

Sattva causes attachment to happiness,
Rajas to action, Arjuna;
Tamas, obscuring knowledge,
Causes attachment to negligence.
When prevailing over rajas and tamas,
Sattva arises, Arjuna;
Rajas prevailing over sattva and tamas
also comes to be;
Likewise tamas prevailing over sattva
and rajas.

* Three different relationships between, or proportions of, the three guṇas, representing three types of personality, or three phases of behavior, are intended here. The distinction is in the relative proportion of one guṇa to the others in a given personality. The idea is continued in the next three stanzas.
When the light of knowledge shines
Through all the gates of this body,
Then it should be known that
Sattva is dominant.
XIV

12

Greed, activity and the undertaking
Of actions, restlessness, desire;
These are born when rajas
Is dominant, Arjuna.

lobhas (m. nom. sg.), greed, avarice.
pravr̩tis (f. nom. sg.), activity, exertion, progress.
ārambhās (m. nom. sg.), undertaking, setting out, commencing.
karmaṇām (n. gen. pl.), of actions, of deeds.
āsamas (m. nom. sg.), lack of calmness, disquietude, restlessness.
spr̩hā (f. nom. sg.), desire, lust.
rajasi (n. loc. sg.), in rajas, in the guṇa of passion.
etāni (n. nom. pl.), these.
jāyaṇe (3rd pl. pr. indic. mid. ज्ञान), they are born, they arise.
vivṛddhe (n. loc. sg.), in the dominance, when dominant.
bharatarśabha (m. voc. sg.), Bull of the Bharatas, epithet of Arjuna.
XIV

13

aprakāśaḥ 'praavrťtiśca
unenlightenment and inertness,

pramādo mohō eva ca
heedlessness and confusion, thus,

tamasy ētāni jāyante
in tamas these are born

vivrddhe kurunandana
when dominant, Descendant of Kuru.

Darkness and inertness,
Heedlessness and confusion;
These are born when tamas
Is dominant, Arjuna.
When an embodied being goes to dissolution (death)
Under the dominance of sattva,
Then he attains the stainless worlds
Of those who know the highest.
He who goes to dissolution (death)
when rajas is dominant,
Is reborn among those attached to
action;
Likewise, dissolved (dying) when
tamas is dominant,
He is reborn from the wombs of the
deluded.
They say the fruit of good action
Is sattvic and without impurity,
But the fruit of rajasic action is pain,
And the fruit of tamasic action is ignorance.
From sattva knowledge is born,
And from rajas desire,
Negligence and delusion arise
From tamas, and ignorance too.
Those established in sattva go upward;
The rajasic stay in the middle;
The tamasic, established in the lowest quality,
Go downward.

उद्धवं गच्छलि सत्वस्था
urdhvaṁ gacchanti sattvasthā
upward they go, the sattva-established

मध्ये तिष्ठति राजसः
madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ
in the middle they stay, the rajasic

जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था
jaghaṇya-guṇavṛttisthā
lowest guṇa condition established

प्रधान गच्छलि तामसः
adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ
below they go, the tamasic.

urdhvaṁ (adv.), upward, rising.
gacchanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √gam), they go.
sattvasthās (m. nom. pl.), the sattva-established, those established in sattva.
madhye (m. loc. sg.), in the middle.
tiṣṭhanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √sthā), they stay, they remain, they stand.
rājasās (m. nom. pl.), the rajasic, those attached to rajas.
jaghaṇya (m.), lowest, hindmost, last.
guṇavṛttisthās (m. nom. pl.), established in guṇa condition, remaining in guṇa condition.
(jaghaṇya-guṇa-vṛttisthās, m. nom. pl. TP cpd., established in the lowest guṇa condition.)
adhas, below, downward.
gacchanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √gam), they go.
tāmasās (m. nom. pl.), the tamasic, those who are ruled by tāmas.
When the seer perceives
No doer other than the qualities,
And knows that which is higher than
the qualities,
He attains My being.
When an embodied being transcends
These three qualities, which are
the source of the body,
Released from birth, death, old age,
and pain,
He attains immortality.

guṇān (m. acc. pl.), guṇas.
etān (m. acc. pl.), these.
atīyā (gerund aīī √ī), going beyond, transcending.
trīn (m. acc. pl.), three.
dēhi (m. nom. sg.), the embodied, the embodied one, the ātman.
dehasamudbhavān (m. acc. pl. TP cpd.), originating in the body, coming to be in the body.
janma (n.), birth.
mṛtyu (m.), death.
jara (f.), old age.
duḥkha (n.), pain, misery, misfortune.
(janmaṁṛtyuṁjaraṁduḥkhāṁ, n. inst. pl. DV cpd., by birth, death, old age and pain.)
vimuktas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle vi √muc), liberated, released, freed.
amṛtam (n. acc. sg.), immortality.
asinute (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. √as), he attains.

* This would appear on the surface to be one of the Gītā’s slight contradictions. Since the ātman of every being is already considered to be “immortal,” the attainment of immortality through transcendence of the guṇas would seem to be redundant. Rāmānuja suggests that amṛtam, immortality, means the opposite of what it means to us, that is, absorption in Brahman, nīrvāṇa, or divine non-existence. The stanza makes sense if one considers that Brahman is “immortal,” “unchanging” and “permanent.”
Arjuna spoke:

By what marks is he recognized
Who has transcended these three qualities, O Lord?
What is his conduct? And how
Does he go beyond these three qualities?
The Blessed Lord spoke:
He neither hates nor desires
The presence or the absence
Of light or activity
Or delusion, Arjuna.

---

* The characteristic attributes of sattva, rajas and tamas.
He who is seated as if indifferent,
Who is not disturbed by the qualities,
Thinking “the qualities are operating,”
And who stands firm and does not waver,
samaduhkhhasukhaḥ svasthaḥ
(to whom are) the same pain and pleasure,
self contained,

svasthaḥ (m. nom. sg.), self contained, depending on the self.

samaloṣṭāṃmakāṇcanaḥ
(to whom are) the same a clod, a stone and gold

kāṇcana (n.), gold.

samaloṣṭāṃmakāṇcanaḥ, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., for whom a clod, a stone and gold are the same.

samaduhkhhasukhaḥ (m. nom. sg.), being the same in pain and pleasure, being equal in pain and pleasure, (as BV cpd.) he who is indifferent to pain and pleasure.

sama (m.), same, equal.

loṣṭa (m./n.), clod, lump of earth.
aśma (m.), stone, a stone.

samaloṣṭāṃmakāṇcanaḥ, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., for whom a clod, a stone and gold are the same.

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loṣṭa (m./n.), clod, lump of earth.
aśma (m.), stone, a stone.

kāṇcana (n.), gold.

samaloṣṭāṃmakāṇcanaḥ, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., for whom a clod, a stone and gold are the same.

samaduhkhhasukhaḥ (m. nom. sg.), being the same in pain and pleasure, being equal in pain and pleasure, (as BV cpd.) he who is indifferent to pain and pleasure.
To whom honor and dishonor are equal,
Dispassionate toward the side of friend or foe,
Renouncing all undertakings
He is said to transcend the qualities.

मानापमानयोः तुल्यस्
mānapamānayos tulyas
in honor and dishonor equal,

तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः
tulyo mitrāripakṣayoh
impartial toward friend or enemy sides

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी
sarvāraṁbhaparityāgī
even renouncing all undertakings

गुणातितः स उच्चते
guṇātītah sa ucyate
transcending the guṇas, he, it is said.

mānapamānayos (m. loc. dual DV cpd.), in honor and dishonor, in esteem and disesteem.
tulyas (m. nom. sg.), equal, indifferent.
mānapamānayos (m. loc. dual DV cpd.), in honor and dishonor, in esteem and disesteem.
tulyas (m. nom. sg.), equal, impartial, disinterested.
mitrāripakṣayos (m. loc. dual TP cpd.), toward friend or enemy sides, toward the party or faction of friend or enemy (mitra = friend, ari = enemy, pakṣa = wing, side, faction).
sarva (m.), all.
āraṁbha (m.), undertaking, commencement.
parityāgī (m. nom. sg.), renouncing, abandoning.
(sarva-āraṁbha-parityāgī, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., renouncing all undertakings.)
guṇātīta (m. nom. sg. TP cpd. guṇa + p. pass. participle ati of), going beyond the guṇas, transcending the guṇas.
sas (m. nom. sg.), he, this.
ucyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive of), it is said, he is said to be.
And he who serves Me
With the yoga of unswerving devotion,
Transcending these qualities,
Is ready for absorption in Brahman.
brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham
of Brahman indeed the foundation I,

brahmatō hi pratiṣthāham
indeed the foundation I, Brahman

praṇītvam
indeed, truly.

amṛtasya āvyayasya ca
of the immortal and imperishable

pratiṣṭhā (f. nom. sg.), foundation, support, basis.

amṛtasya (n. gen. sg.), of the immortal.

āvyayasya (n. gen. sg.), of the imperishable, of the eternal.

ca, and.

śāsvatasya (n. gen. sg.), of the everlasting, of the perpetual.

dharmasya (m. gen. sg.), of the law, of righteousness.

sukhasya (m./n. gen. sg.), of bliss, of happiness.

ekāntikasya (n. gen. sg.), of absolute, of singular, of unique, of the one and only.

ca, and.

śāśvatasya ca dharmasya
and of everlasting virtue

śāsvatasya ca dharmasya
of the immortal and imperishable

siisvatasya ca dharmaṣya
and of everlasting virtue

siisvatasya ca dharmasya
of the eternal.

dharmasya (m. gen. sg.), of the law, of righteousness.

sukhasya (m./n. gen. sg.), of bliss, of happiness.

ekāntikasya (n. gen. sg.), of absolute, of singular, of unique, of the one and only.

cā, and.

sukhasyāiṅkāntikasya ca
and of bliss absolute.

sukhasyāiṅkāntikasya ca
of bliss absolute.

For I am the abode of Brahman,
Of the immortal and the imperishable,
Of everlasting virtue,
And of absolute bliss.

For I am the abode of Brahman,
Of the immortal and the imperishable,
Of everlasting virtue,
And of absolute bliss.

End of Book XIV

The Yoga of Distinction between the Three Guṇas
BOOK XV

śrībhagavān uvāca
the Blessed Lord spoke:

1

The Blessed Lord spoke:
They speak of the eternal asvattha tree,
Having its roots above and branches
below,
Whose leaves are the (Vedic) hymns.
He who knows this is a knower of the Vedas.

* The *aśvattha* (derived by some from *aśva stha* meaning “where the horse remains” or “where the horse is tied”), is mentioned in the Vedas, but not in this fanciful upside down form, which appears, however, in the later Kaṭha Upanishad (6, 1). It is a sacred tree whose wood, along with that of the pārṇa tree, was used to kindle sacrifices. It belongs to the fig family. The symbol refers to the Supreme Spirit branching downward into the...
Below and above its branches spread,
Nourished by the qualities, with objects
of the senses as sprouts;
And below its roots stretch forth
Engendering action in the world of men.

And below roots stretched forth,
Engendering action in the world of men.

earthly realm. The following stanza seems to blur
the symbolism somewhat by speaking of the
"roots stretched forth below," but the asvattha
tree, like the banyan to which it is related, strikes
roots from its branches. Both trees are considered
sacred in India.

* Trishtubh metre begins again.
Its form is not perceptible here in the world,
Not its end, nor its beginning, nor its existence.
Cutting this asvattha tree, with its well grown root,
By the strong axe of non-attachment,
Then that goal is to be sought
From which, having gone, no one returns.
In that primal Spirit I take refuge,
Whence the primeval energy
streamed forth.
nirmanamohä jitasāngadosā*
without arrogance or delusion, conquered attachment-evils,

prātihārmanitrya vinivrutakāmāḥ
(in the) Supreme Self constantly (dwelling), turned away desires,

द्वांवाय विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसाम्याः
by the dualities released, pleasure-pain-known-as,

gacchanti amūdhāḥ padam avyayam tat
they go undeluded to place imperishable that.

Without arrogance or delusion, with the evils of attachment conquered,
Dwelling constantly in the supreme Self, with desires turned away,
Released from the dualities known as pleasure and pain,
The undeluded go to that imperishable goal.

nirmāna (m.), without pride, without arrogance.
mohās (m. nom. pl.), confusions, delusions.
(jitasaṅgadosās, m. nom. pl. DV cpd., without pride or delusions.)
saṅga (m.), attachment, clinging.
doṣās (m. n. nom. pl.), evils, wrongs.
(jitasāngadosās, m. nom. pl., conquered attachment-evils, with the evils of attachment conquered; as BV cpd., whose attachment-evils are conquered.)
adhyātma (m.), Supreme Self.
nityās (m. nom. pl.), constantly, perpetually, eternally.
(adhyātma-nityās, m. nom. pl. TP cpd., eternally in the supreme self.)
vinnirvāta (p. pass. participle vi ni √vr), turned away, twisted away.
kāmās (m. nom. pl.), desires, lusts.
(vinnirvātakāmās, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., whose desires have been turned away.)
dvandvās (n. inst. pl.), by the dualities, by the pairs of opposites.
vimuktās (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle vi √muc), released, freed.
sukhaduḥkha, pleasure and pain, happiness, and misery.
samjñās (m. inst. pl.), by known as, recognized as.
(sukha-duḥkha-samjñās, m. instr. pl. BV cpd., known as pleasure and pain.)
gacchanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √gam), they go.
amūdhās (m. nom. pl.), unconfused, undeluded.
padam (n. acc. sg.), place, site, abode, to place, to abode.
avyayam (n. acc. sg.), imperishable, eternal.
tad (n. acc. sg.), this, that.

* Tristubh metre continues.
† I.e. Brahman.
na tad bhāsayate sūryo
not that (place) it illumines, the sun,
na šašāṅko na pāvakā
nor the rabbit-marked, nor fire,
yad gatvā na nivartante
to which, having gone, not they return,
tad dhāma paramaṁ mama
that abode supreme of me.

The sun does not illumine,
Nor the moon, nor fire, that place
To which, having gone, no one returns;
That is My supreme abode.

na, not.
tad (n. acc. sg.), that, this.
bhāsayate (3rd sg. causative √bhās), it causes
to shine, it illumines.
sūryas (m. nom. sg.), sun, the sun.
na, not, nor.
šašāṅkas (m. nom. sg.), the “rabbit-marked,”
the moon.
na, not, nor.
pāvakas (m. nom. sg.), fire, flame.
yad (n. acc. sg.), which, to which.
gatvā (gerund √gam), going, having gone.
na, not.
nivartante (3rd pl. pr. indic. mid. ni √vṛt),
they return, they turn back.
tad (n. nom. sg.), this, that.
dhāma (n. nom. sg.), abode, home.
paramaṁ (n. nom. sg.), highest, supreme.
mama (gen. sg.), of me, my.

* Śloka metre resumes.
Merely a fragment of Myself,
Becoming an eternal (individual)
soul in the world of the living,
Draws to itself the senses, of which the sixth is the mind,
That exist in material nature.

* Mind, in Gita psychology, is regarded as the sixth sense.
When the Lord acquires a body,
And also when He departs from it,
He goes, taking them along,
Like the wind blowing perfumes from their source.

* The mind and other senses, to be used in connection with another acquired body.
† "Whatever body the ātman enters and from whatever body it departs, it will always retain those senses with the subtle elements and roam with them as the breeze roams with odors which it has carried from their original abodes." - Rāmānuja. Thus, apparently, the ātman is not totally devoid of characteristics between one incarnation and another.
Presiding over hearing, sight and touch,
Taste and smell, as well as the mind,
He (i.e. the fragment of the Lord incarnated as the individual soul)
Enjoys the objects of the senses.
When He departs, remains,
Or enjoys (sense objects) while
accompanied by the qualities,
The deluded do not perceive Him.
Those with the eye of knowledge see Him.
The yogins, striving, see Him (the embodied fraction of the Lord)
Situated in the Self,
But the unthinking, those of unperfected selves,
Strive but do not see Him.

yatantat (m. nom. pl. pr. act. participle √yat), striving, stretching.
yoginas (m. nom. pl.), yogins.
cà, and.
enam (m. acc. sg.), this, this one.
pasyanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √pas), they see, they perceive.
ātmani (m. loc. sg.), in the self.
avasthitam (m. acc. sg. p. pass. participle ava √sthā), situated, existing, abiding.
yatantas (m. nom. pl. pr. act. participle √yat), striving, stretching.
api, even, also.
arkātmānas (m. nom. pl. from akṛta ātmanas), unperfected selves, of unprepared selves, (as BV cpd.) those whose selves are unperfected.
na, not.
enam (m. acc. sg.), this, this one, him.
pasyanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. √pas), they see, they perceive.
acetasas (m. nom. pl.), the unthinking, the thoughtless ones, the fools.
That brilliance which resides in the sun,
Which illumines the entire universe,
Which is in the moon and which is in fire,
Know that brilliance to be Mine.
Entering the earth, I support
All beings with energy,
And, having become the watery moon,
I cause all the plants to thrive.

There has been much speculation among scholars as to the identity of Soma, the drink of the gods—the juice of a plant with inebriating properties that was drunk by the priests, the laity and the gods during sacrifices described in the Vedas. As the Vedic Aryans moved into India, the knowledge of the Soma plant seems to have disappeared, and, even from late Vedic times, substitutes for it were used—mostly plants of the milkweed family whose juice is not inebriating. Recently R. Gordon Wasson, a mycologist acquainted with the Vedas in translation, has advanced a persuasive but still controversial hypothesis—that the Soma plant was, in fact, a hallucinogenic mushroom (the amanita muscaria) which grew in the Aryans' original homeland in western Asia, and in Southern Asia only in the highest mountains. This circumstance, Wasson thinks, would explain the loss of the Soma as the Aryans migrated southward. It would also explain the rapturous descriptions of the effects of Soma drinking recorded in the Rg Veda. (See "Soma the Divine Mushroom," published by the Stamperia Valdonega, Verona.)
Having become the digestive fire of all men,
I abide in the body of all living beings;
And joining with the prana and apana,
I (digest) the four kinds of food.
I have entered into the hearts of all beings;
From Me come memory and knowledge, as well as their loss.
I alone am that which is to be known in all the Vedas;
I am the author of the Vedanta and the knower of the Vedas.

sarvasya (m. gen. sg.), of all.
ca, and.
aham (nom. sg.), I.
hrdi (n. loc. sg.), in the heart.
sanmi̊ṗśas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle sam ni vîś), entered, seated.
maṭtus (m. abl. sg.), from me.
smṛtis (f. nom. sg.), memory, knowledge.
jiṇānam (n. nom. sg.), wisdom, knowledge.
apohanaṁ (n. nom. sg.), reasoning, objection, denial.
ca, and.
vedās (m. inst. pl.), by the Vedas.
ca, and.
sarvās (m. inst. pl.), by all, with all.
aham (nom. sg.), I.
eva, alone, indeed (often used as a rhythmic filler).
vedyas (m. nom. sg. gerundive ṣvid), to be known, to be recognized.
vedāntakṛt (m. nom. sg.), Vedānta making, Vedānta maker.
vedavīt (m. nom. sg.), Veda knowing.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
ca, and.
aham (nom. sg.), I.

† Vedānta, literally “the end (in the sense of conclusion) of the Veda,” the predominant system of religious thought in India, expressed in the Brahma sūtra of Bādarāyaṇa and the Upanishads, as well as in the present poem. Its formulation dates from approximately 500 B.C. and it has many points of difference from the Vedas of the original Aryans who invaded India circa 1600 B.C. Vedānta means primarily the thought expressed in the Upanishads, and secondarily, a system of philosophy based on it.
There are these two spirits in the world
The perishable and the imperishable.
All beings are the perishable;
The unchanging is called the imperishable.

*dvāu* (m. nom. dual), two.
*imāu* (m. nom. dual), these two.
*puruṣāu* (m. nom. dual), two spirits, two entities.
*loke* (m. loc. sg.), in the world.
*kṣaras* (m. nom. sg.), perishable, destructible.
*eva*, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
*ca*, and.
*aksaras* (m. nom. sg.), imperishable, eternal.
*ca*, and.
*kṣaras* (m. nom. sg.), perishable, destructible.
*sarvāni* (n. nom. pl.), all.
*bhūtāni* (n. nom. sg.), beings, creatures.
*kūṭasthas* (m. nom. sg.), unchanging, immovable.
*aksaras* (m. nom. sg.), imperishable, eternal.
*ucyate* (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive vac), it is called, it is said, it is said to be.

*Śloka metre resumes.*
But the highest Spirit is another,
Called the supreme Self,
Who, entering the three worlds as the eternal Lord,
Supports them.
Since I transcend the perishable
And am higher than the imperishable,
Therefore I am, in the world, and in
the Vedas,
Celebrated as the supreme Spirit.
He who, thus undeluded, knows Me
As the supreme Spirit,
He, all-knowing, worships Me
With his whole being, Arjuna.
XV

20

इति गुह्यतम्म शास्त्रम्
iti guhyatamam śāstram
thus most secret doctrine

इदम् उर्मि मया जनाः
idam uktam mayā 'nagha
this declared by me, O Blameless One,

एतद् ब्रह्मा बुद्धिमान् स्पर्शे
etad buddhiva buddhimān syāt
(to) this having awakened, enlightened
one should be,

कृतकृत्यांशा भारत
kṛtakṛtyaśca bharata
and fulfilled all duties, Descendant of Bharata.

Thus this most secret doctrine
Has been taught by Me, O Arjuna;
Having awakened to this, a man
becomes wise
And fulfills all his duties, Arjuna.

End of Book XV

The Yoga of the Supreme Spirit
BOOK XVI

śrībhagavān uvāca
the Blessed Lord spoke:

abhayam sattvasaṃśuddhir
fearlessness, purity of being,

jñānayogavyavasthitil
knowledge-Yoga persevering in,

dānam damaśca yajñaśca
giving and self restraint and sacrifice,

svādhyāyas tapa ārjavam
reciting sacred texts to oneself, austerity, rectitude,

The Blessed Lord spoke:
Fearlessness, purity of being,
Perseverance in yoga and knowledge,
Giving, self-restraint and sacrifice,
Study of sacred texts, austerity, and uprightness,
Non-violence, truth, absence of anger,
Renunciation, serenity, absence of calumny,
Compassion for all beings, freedom from desire,
Gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness,
Vigor, forgiveness, fortitude, purity,
Freedom from malice, freedom from pride;
These are the endowment of those
Born to a divine destiny, Arjuna.

Vigor, patience, fortitude, purity,
Freedom from malice, not excessive pride,
Birth to a divine destiny

\[ \text{tejas (n. nom. sg.), vigor, splendor, power.} \]
\[ \text{k\'sam\'a (f. nom. sg.), patience, forbearance.} \]
\[ \text{dh\'ritis (f. nom. sg.), fortitude, courage, strength.} \]
\[ \text{s\'aucam (n. nom. sg.), purity, cleanliness of mind and body.} \]
\[ \text{adrohas (m. nom. sg.), freedom from malice, absence of hatred.} \]
\[ \text{na, not.} \]
\[ \text{atim\'anit\'a (f. nom. sg.), excessive pride, high honor.} \]
\[ \text{bhavanti (3rd pl. pr. indic. act. \text{\sqrt{bh\'u}}, they are.} \]
\[ \text{sainpadam (f. acc. sg.), endowment, acquisition, requisite, condition, destiny.} \]
\[ \text{daiv\'am (f. acc. sg.), divine, to the divine.} \]
\[ \text{abhi\'jatasya (n. gen. sg.), of the born.} \]
\[ \text{bh\'arata (m. voc. sg.), Descendant of Bharata, epithet of Arjuna.} \]
Hypocrisy, arrogance, pride,
Anger, insolence,
And ignorance, are the endowment of
those born
To a demoniacal destiny, Arjuna.
The divine destiny leads to liberation;  
The demoniacal to bondage, it is thought.  
Do not grieve! You are born  
to a divine destiny, Arjuna.
There are two classes of created beings in this world
The divine and the demoniacal.
The divine has been explained at length;
Now hear from Me, Arjuna, about the demoniacal.
Demoniacal men do not understand
When to act and when to refrain from action.
Neither purity, nor good conduct,
Nor truth is found in them.
The universe," they say, "is without truth,
Without basis, without a God;
Brought about by a mutual union.
How else? It is caused by lust alone."

*aparasparasambhūtam* is sometimes translated as "brought about by mutual union of man and woman," i.e. by sex, an interpretation favored by some native translators which does explain the fourth line better than the common translation. However, if one accepts this version of the line, the last line becomes redundant. The idea that sexual passion was the cause of all beings was held by the *lokayatikas*, followers of a *nāstika*, or atheist and anti-orthodox school of philosophy which may be the object of this denunciation.
Holding this view,
These men of lost souls, of small intelligence,
And of cruel actions, come forth as enemies
Of the world for its destruction.
Attached to insatiable desire,
Full of hypocrisy, arrogance, and pride,
Having accepted false notions through delusion,
They work with unclean resolves,

$kāmam$ aśrīya duṣpūram
insatiable desire, adhering to,
duṣpūram (m. acc. sg.), “difficult to fill,”
hungry, voracious.
dambhamānāmadānvitāḥ
hypocrisy, arrogance, insatiable, voracious.
māna (m.), arrogance, pride.
mada (m.), lust, intoxication, hilarity, drunkenness.
pravartante sucivratāḥ
they proceed (with) unclean purposes,
asuci (m.), unclean, impure.
vratās (n. m. nom. pl.), vows, purposes, rules, customs.

(kāmam (m. acc. sg.), desire, lust.
aśrīya (gerund a śrī), adhering to, attached to, depending on.
duṣpūram (m. acc. sg.), “difficult to fill,” insatiable, voracious.
dambhamānāmadānvitāḥ hypocrisy, arrogance, lust attended by,
duhā (f.), reality, truth.
māna (m.), arrogance, pride.
mada (m.), lust, intoxication, hilarity, drunkenness.
pravartante sucivratāḥ they proceed (with) unclean purposes,
asuci (m.), unclean, impure.
vratās (n. m. nom. pl.), vows, purposes, rules, customs.)
Clipping to immeasurable
Anxiety, ending only in death,
With gratification of desire as their
highest aim,
Convinced that this is all;

cintām (f. acc. sg.), thought, care, anxiety.
aparimeyām (f. acc. sg.), beyond measure, immeasurable.
ca, and.
pralayāntām (f. acc. sg. noun from pra \+ antām), ending in death, dissolution and death, dissolution and end.
upāsritā (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle upa d tīri), clinging, adhering to.
kāma (m.), desire, lust.
upabhoga (m.), gratification, enjoyment.
paramās (m. nom. pl.), highest aim, holding as highest object.
(kāmopabhogaparamās, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., holding gratification of desire as highest aim [pl. refers to “those of lost selves,” stanza 9].)
etāvat, so much.
itī, thus.
niscitās (m. nom. pl.), convinced, having no doubt.
Bound by a hundred snares of hope,
Devoted to desire and anger,
They seek to obtain, by unjust means,
Hoards of wealth for the gratification
of their desires.

- āśāpāśa (m.), hope-snare, trap of hope.
- sataiś (m. inst. pl.), by a hundred.
- (āśāpāśa-sataiś, m. instr. pl. TP cpd., a hundred (of hope-snares.)
- baddhaś (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle bandh), bound, fettered.
- kama (m.), desire, lust.
- krodha (m.), anger, wrath.
- parāyaṇaś (m. nom. pl. ifc.), devoted to, holding as highest aim.
- (kāmakrodhaparāyaṇaś, m. nom. pl. BV cpd., devoted to desire and anger.)
- ihante (3rd pl. pr. indic. mid. vihit), they seek, they wish for.
- kāmabhogārtham (m. acc. sg.), aim of the gratification of desire, desire-gratification goal.
- anyāyena (m. inst. sg.), by other than proper, by unjust, by erroneous.
- artha (m.), means, method, aim, object, wealth.
- saṁcayān (m. acc. pl.), hoards, accumulations, quantities.
- (artha-saṁcayān, m. acc. pl. TP cpd., hoards of wealth.)
XVI

13

idam adya mayā labdham
“this today by me obtained,

idam prāpsy manoratham
this I shall attain wish,

idam astidam api me
this it is, this also mine

bhavīyatī punar dhanam
it shall be, again, wealth;

This has been obtained by me
today;
This desire I shall attain;
This is mine, and this wealth also
Shall be mine.
“That enemy has been slain by me, 
And I shall slay others too; 
I am a lord, I am the enjoyer, 
I am successful, powerful, and happy,

asāu (m. nom. sg.), that, yonder.  
maya (m. inst. sg.), by me. 
hatas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle √han), 
slain, killed. 
śatrus (m. nom. sg.), enemy, foe. 
hanisyen (1st sg. fut. mid. √han), I shall slay, 
I shall kill. 
ca, and. 
aparān (m. acc. pl.), others. 
api, also, even. 
iśvaras (m. nom. sg.), lord, God. 
aham (nom. sg.), I. 
aham (nom. sg.), I. 
bhogi (m. nom. sg.), enjoyer, eater. 
siddhas (m. nom. sg.), successful, accomplished, fulfilled. 
aham (nom. sg.), I. 
balavān (m. nom. sg.), powerful, mighty. 
suhkī (m. nom. sg.), happy, blissful.
XVI

15

श्राद्यो भिजनावनः श्रस्मि

ādhyaḥ 'bhijana-vān asmi

"wealthy, high-born I am.

को ज्यो जिन्न सदृशो मया।

ko 'nyo 'sti sadṛśo mayā

what other there is such as me?

वस्म्ये दास्यामि नपिण्य

yakṣye dāsyāmi modiṣya

I shall sacrifice, I shall give, I shall rejoice."

इत्य यज्ञविमोहिताः II

ity ajñāna-vimohitāḥ

thus those who are deluded by ignorance.

"I am wealthy and high born.
Who else is equal to me?
I shall sacrifice, I shall give, I shall rejoice."

Thus, they are deluded by ignorance.

ādhyaḥ (m. nom. sg.), wealthy, opulent.

abhijana-vān (m. nom. sg.), high born, aristocratic.

asmī (1st sg. pr. indic. √as), I am.

kas (m. nom. sg.), what? who?

anyas (m. nom. sg.), other.

asti (3rd sg. pr. indic. √as), there is, he is, it is.

sadṛśas (m. nom. sg.), like, resembling, such as.

maya (m. inst. sg.), me, by me.

yakṣye (1st. sg. mid. fut. √yaj), I shall sacrifice, I shall worship.

dāsyāmi (1st sg. act. fut. √dā), I shall give, I shall be charitable.

modiṣya (sāndhi for modiṣye, 1st sg. mid. fut. √mud), I shall rejoice, I shall be merry.

iti, thus (often used to close a quotation).

ajñāna (n.), ignorance.

vimohitās (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle vi √muh), the deluded, those who are deluded.

(ajñānavimohitās, m. nom. pl. TP cpd., those who are deluded by ignorance.)
Led astray by many imaginings,
Enveloped in a net of delusion,
Attached to the gratification of desires,
They fall into a foul hell.

aneka, not one, i.e. many.
citta (n.), thought, imagining.
vibhrantā (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle vi śvram), led astray, carried away, wandering away.
(ānekacittavibhrantā, m. nom. pl. TP cpd., led astray by many imaginings.)
mohajāla (n.), net of delusion, trap of delusion.
samavṛtās (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle sam ā √vṛ), enveloped, covered.
(mohajālasamavṛtās, m. nom. pl. TP cpd., enveloped in a net of delusion.)
prasaktās (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle pra √sañj), attached, clinging.
kāmabhogeṣu (m. loc. pl.), in desire-gratifications, to the gratification of desire.
patanti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. √pat), they fall.
narake (m. loc. sg.), into hell.
aśucā (m. loc. sg.), unclean, impure.
Self-conceited, stubborn,
Filled with the pride and arrogance of wealth,
They perform sacrifices only in name,
With hypocrisy, and not according to Vedic injunction.

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With hypocrisy, and not according to Vedic injunction.

Self-conceited, stubborn,
Filled with the pride and arrogance of wealth,
They perform sacrifices only in name,
With hypocrisy, and not according to Vedic injunction.

Self-conceited, stubborn,
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They perform sacrifices only in name,
With hypocrisy, and not according to Vedic injunction.

Self-conceited, stubborn,
Filled with the pride and arrogance of wealth,
They perform sacrifices only in name,
Clinging to egotism, force, insolence, Desire, and anger, Those malicious people hate Me In their own and others’ bodies. 

ahamkāram (m. acc. sg.), egotism “I making.”
balam (n. acc. sg.), force, might.
darpam (m. acc. sg.), insolence, haughtiness, arrogance.
kāmam (m. acc. sg.), desire, lust.
krodham (m. acc. sg.), anger, wrath.
ca, and.
saṁśritās (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle saṁ śrī) clinging to, attached to.
mām (acc. sg.), me.
ātmaparadeheṣu (m./n. loc. pl.), in own and others’ bodies.
pradviṣantas (m. nom. pl. pr. participle act. pra śvīś), hating, loathing.
abhyasūyakās (m. nom. pl.), the envious, the indignant, those who are envious, those who grumble.
Those cruel haters,
The worst of men, I constantly hurl
Into the wombs of demons
In the cycles of rebirth.
Having entered the wombs of demons, Those who are deluded, not attaining Me In birth after birth, Arjuna, From there go to a condition still lower than that.
This is the threefold gate of hell,
Destructive of the self:
Desire, anger, and greed.
Therefore one should abandon these three.
etāṁ (m. inst. pl.), by these.

vimuktas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle vi mumc), released, liberated.
kūntēya (m. voc. sg.), Son of Kuntī, epithet of Arjuna.
tamodvārāiś (n. inst. pl.), by tamas gates, by doors of tamas.
tribhis (n. inst. pl.), by three.
naras (m. nom. sg.), man, a man.
ācārati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. ā ācar), he does, he moves, he behaves.
ātmanas (m. gen. sg.), of the self, for the self.
śreyas (m. nom. sg. superl.), best.
tatas, then, from there, thereupon.
yāti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. yāti), he goes, he proceeds.
parām (f. acc. sg.), highest, supreme.
gatim (f. acc. sg.), goal, path.

Released from these three gates to darkness,
Arjuna,
A man does what is best for himself.
Then he goes to the highest goal.
He who acts under the impulse of desire,
Casting aside the injunctions of the scriptures,
Does not attain perfection,
Nor happiness, nor the highest goal.
Therefore, determining your standard by the scriptures,
As to what is and what is not to be done,
Knowing the scriptural injunction prescribed,
You should perform action here in this world.

End of Book XVI

The Yoga of the Distinction between the Divine and the Demonic Destinies
BOOK XVII

-arjuna uvāca

Arjuna spoke:

ye śāstravidhim utṣṛjya
who, scripture injunction casting aside,

yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
they sacrifice, faith filled with,

teṣām niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa
of them the standing, indeed, what
Krishna?

sarvam bhrāhī rajas tamaḥ
sattva, which? rajas, tamas?

Arjuna spoke:
Those who sacrifice
Casting the injunctions
aside, but filled with faith,
What is their condition, Krishna?
Is it sattva, rajas, or tamas?
The Blessed Lord spoke:
The faith of embodied beings is of three kinds, Born of their innate nature; It is sattvic, rajasic, And tamasic. Now hear of this.
Faith is in accordance
With the truth (nature) of each,
Arjuna.
Man is made of faith.
Whatever faith he has, thus he is.
ypajante sāttvika devān
they sacrifice, the sattvic, to the gods

yaksaraksāmsi rājasāh
to the spirits and demons the rajasic

pretaṁ bhūtagaṇāṁścānye
to the departed and the hordes of ghosts, the others,

ypajante tāmasā janāḥ
they sacrifice, the tamasic men.

The sattvic worship the gods,
The rajasic worship the Yakshas and demons;
The others, the tamasic men, worship
The ghosts and the hordes of nature spirits.
XVII

5

aśāstravihitam ghoram
not scripture enjoined, terrible,

tapyante ye tapo janāḥ
they undergo, who, austerities men

dambhāhaṁkārasaṁyuktāḥ
hypocrisy and egotism joined with,

kāmarāgabalānvitāḥ
desire, passion and force along with,

Men who undergo terrible austerities
Not enjoined by the scriptures,
Accompanied by hypocrisy and egotism,
Along with desire and passion,
The unthinking, torturing within the body
The aggregate of elements,
And also torturing Me thus within the body,
Know them to be of demoniacal resolves.

This and the preceding stanzas constitute one of several injunctions in the Bhagavad Gitâ against exaggerated austerities, or mortifications of the flesh. These injunctions are interesting because they show that such abuses were common enough to arouse denunciation.
food but also of all
three kinds it is preferred
sacrifice austerity also gift
of them the distinction, this hear.

But also the food preferred by all
Is of three kinds,
As are their sacrifices, austerities, and
gifts.
Hear now the distinction between
them.

āhāras (m. nom. sg.), food.
tu, but.
api, also, even.
sarvasya (m. gen. sg.), of all.
trividhas (m. nom. sg.), triple, of three kinds.
bhavati (3rd sg. pr. indic. ।bhā), it is, it comes to be.
priyās (m. nom. sg.), dear, preferred.
yajñās (m. nom. sg.), sacrifice, worship.
tapas (n. nom. sg.), austerity, heat.
tathā, also, thus.
dānam (n. nom. sg.), gift, charity.
tesām (m. gen. pl.), of them.
bhedam (m. acc. sg.), distinction, difference, “splitting.”
imam (m. acc. sg.), this.
śṛṇu (2nd sg. imperative act. ।śṛu), hear!
Promoting life, virtue, strength, health, happiness, and satisfaction, which are savory, smooth, firm, and pleasant to the stomach; such foods are dear to the sattvic.
Causing pain, misery, and sickness,
Bitter, sour, salty, excessively hot,
Pungent, dry, and burning;
Such foods are desired by the rajasic.
Stale, tasteless, putrid, rotten,
And refuse as well as the impure,
Is the food which
Is dear to the tamasic.

* It is not difficult to detect in this and the preceding two stanzas the hand of the brāhmaṇ caste, insisting on its superiority to an extent that is almost comic. It has been pointed out by historians that, though the Mahābhārata is primarily an epic of the kṣatriya, or warrior, caste, the Bhagavad Gītā, along with some other interpolations of a moral or religious character, was probably inserted into the poem later by the priestly caste of brāhmans.
Sacrifice which is offered, observing the scriptures, By those who do not desire the fruit, Concentrating the mind only on the thought “this is to be sacrificed”; That sacrifice is sattvic.
But sacrifice which is offered
With a view to the fruit, Arjuna,
And also for the purpose of ostentation;
Know that to be rajasic.

abhisamdhāya (gerund abhi sam √dhā),
having in view, having in mind, seeking.
tu, but.
phalam (n. acc. sg.), fruit.
dambhāṛtham (m. acc. sg.), fraudulent aim,
(as TP cpd.) for the purpose of hypocrisy,
with hypocritical aim.
api also, even.
ca, and.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
yad (n. nom. sg.), which.
ijyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive √yaj), it is
offered, it is sacrificed.
bharataśreṣṭha (m. voc. sg.), Best of the
Bharatas, epithet of Arjuna.
tam (m. acc. sg.), this, him.
yajñam (m. acc. sg.), sacrifice, offering.
viddhi (2nd imperative act. √vid), know!
learn!
rājasam (m. acc. sg.), rajasic, pertaining to
him who is characterized by the guṇa of
rajas.
Sacrifice devoid of faith,
Contrary to scriptural ordinances,
with no food offered,
Without mantras and without gifts (to
the presiding priest),
They regard as tamasic.

vidhihīnām (n. acc. sg.), scripture discarded, scripture lacking.
asṛṣṭā (p. pass. participle a √srṣ), not offered, not let go.
amann (n. nom. acc. sg.), grain, food.
(asṛṣṭa-annam, n. acc. sg. KD cpd., unoffered food.)
mantrahīnām (n. acc. sg.), sacred formula discarded, sacred formula lacking.
adaksīnām (n. acc. sg.), without fee, fee not being paid.
sraddhāvirahitam yajñam (n. acc. sg. p. pass. participle sraddhā vi √raḥ), devoid of faith, faith deserted.
yajñam (m. acc. sg.), sacrifice, worship.
tāmasam (m. acc. sg.), tamasic, pertaining to him who is characterized by the guna of tamas.
paricakṣate (3rd pl. mid. pari √cakṣ), they regard as, they see as.
Worship of the gods, the twice-born, teachers, And wise men; purity, rectitude, Celibacy, and non-violence; These are called austerities of the body.

deva (m.), god.
dvija (m.), twice-born, member of one of the three highest castes.
guru (m.), teacher, elder, master.
prájña (m.), wise man, man of wisdom.
pújanam (n. nom. sg. from √puj), revering, reverencing.
(devadvijaguruprájñapújanam, n. nom. sg. TP cpd., revering the gods, the twice-born, the teacher and the man of wisdom.)
sáucam (n. nom. sg.), purity, cleanliness of mind and body.
árjavam (n. nom. sg.), rectitude, virtue.
brahmacaryam (n. nom. sg.), continence, chastity, keeping the vow of the brahma-cárin.
ahiňña (f. nom. sg.), non-violence, harmlessness.
ca, and.
sáráram (adv.), bodily, of the body.
tapas (n. nom. sg.), austerity, heat.
ucyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive √vac), it is said to be, it is called.
Words that do not cause distress, 
Truthful, agreeable, and beneficial; 
And practice in the recitation of sacred texts; 
These are called austerities of speech.
Peace of mind, gentleness, 
Silence, self-restraint, 
Purity of being; these 
Are called austerities of the mind.
This threefold austerity
Practice with the highest faith by men
Who are not desirous of fruits and are steadfast,
They regard as sattvic.
Austerity which is practiced with hypocrisy
For the sake of honor, respect, and reverence;
That, here in the world, is declared to be
Rajasic, unsteady, and impermanent.
Austerity which is performed
With deluded notions and with self-torture,
Or with the aim of destroying another,
Is declared to be tamasic.

muṣṭha (p. pass. participle √muḥ), deluded, confused.
grāhena (m. inst. sg.), by notion, by grasp, with notion.
(muṣṭhagratheṇa, m. inst. sg., with deluded notion.)
ātmanas (m. gen. sg.), of the self.
yad (n. nom. sg.), which.
pādayā (f. inst. sg.), with torture, with torment.
kriyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. pass. √kr), it is performed, it is done, it is made.
tapas (n. nom. sg.), austerity, heat, self-denial.
parasya (m. gen. sg.), of another.
ustādana (pr. participle ut √sad), destroying, overturning.
artham (n. nom. sg.), aim, purpose.
(parasyotsādanarthaḥ, n. nom. sg., TP cpd., with the purpose of destroying another.)
vā, or.
tad, that, this.
tāmasam (n. acc. sg.), tamasic, pertaining to the guna of tamas.
udāḥṛtam (n. acc. sg. p. pass. participle ud ā √hr), declared to be, said to be.
The gift which is given only with the thought “it is to be given,”
To a worthy person who has done no prior favor,
At the proper place and time;
That gift is held to be sattvic.
yad (n. nom. sg.), which.
tu, but.
pratyupakāritham (m. acc. sg.), with the aim of recompense, with the purpose of gaining reward.
phalam (n. acc. sg.), fruit, result.
uddhiṣya (gerund ud vdiṣ), pointing to, with regard to.
vā, or.
punar, again.
diyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive vdiṣ), it is given, it is bestowed.
ca, and.
parikliṣṭam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle pari vklis), unwillingly, grudgingly.
tad (n. nom. sg.), that, this.
dānam (n. nom. sg.), gift, charity.
rājasaṁ (n. nom. sg.), rajasic, pertaining to the guṇa of rajas.
smṛtam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle vsmr), remembered as, recorded as, thought to be.

But that gift which is given grudgingly, With the aim of recompense Or gain, with regard to fruit, Is considered rajasic.
That gift which is given at the wrong place and time
To the unworthy,
Without paying respect, or with contempt,
Is declared to be tamasic.

adeśakāle (m. loc. sg.), in wrong place and time.
yad (n. acc. sg.), which.
dānam (n. acc. sg.), gift, charity.
apātrebhyas (n. dat. pl.), to the unworthy, to unworthy persons.
cā, and.
dīyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive √dā), it is given.
asatkrtam (adv.), without paying respect.
avajñātam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle ava √jñā), with contempt, without wisdom, with disrespect.
tad (n. nom. sg.), that, this.
tāmasam (n. nom. sg.), tamasic, pertaining to the guṇa of tāmas.
udāhṛtam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle ud dā √hr), declared, said to be.
"Om tat sat" this has been taught as The threefold designation of Brahman. By this the brahmans, the Vedas, And the sacrifices were created in ancient times.

* om, the sacred syllable or one-syllable mantra.
  * tad (n. nom. sg.), that, this.
  * sat (n. nom. sg.), true, real, good.
  * iti, thus, so.
  * nirdeśas (m. nom. sg.), designation, command, order, instruction.
  * brahmaṇas (n. g. sg.), of Brahman.
  * trividhah (m. nom. sg.), threefold, of three kinds.
  * smṛtas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle śmr), remembered, known, called to mind.
  * brāhmaṇās (m. nom. pl.), the Brāhmans.
  * tena (m. inst. sg.), by this, with this.
  * vedās (m. nom. pl.), the Vedas.
  * ca, and.
  * yajñās (m. nom. pl.), sacrifices, religious ceremonies.
  * ca, and.
  * vihitas (nom. pl. p. pass. participle vi dhā), ordained, apportioned, arranged, determined.
  * purā (adv.), anciently, ancient, in olden times, prior.

* om tat sat ("om that [is] real") is a common mantra, or sacred utterance, among Hindus. It begins with the sacred syllable "om" which is made up of three sounds - a, u, m - representing the three Vedas, the "three worlds" (heaven, atmosphere, earth), the three principal deities (Brahmā, Vishnu and Śiva) and the beginning, middle and ending of all things. The rest of the mantra is an affirmation of the existence of Brahman, for which "om" is a designation, but see commentary on "tat sat" in stanzas 25 and 26. "Sat" in Sanskrit has the meanings of "real" or "true" and that of "good."
Therefore, acts of sacrifice, giving, and austerity
Are always begun uttering the syllable “Om”
By the students of Brahman,
As prescribed in the Vedic injunctions.
Uttering “tat” and without aiming at Fruits, acts of sacrifice and austerity And acts of giving of various sorts Are performed by those who desire liberation.

tad (n. nom. sg.), this, that, here simply “tat.”
iti, thus, so.
anabhisamādhāya (gerund an abhi sam dhī), not aiming at, without interest in.
phalam (n. acc. sg.), fruit, result.
yajna (m.), sacrifice, worship.
tapas (n.), austerity, self-denial.
kriyās (m. nom. pl.), actions, acts, religious actions.
(yajñatapahkriyās, m. nom. pl. TP cpd., acts of sacrifice and austerity.)
dānakriyās (m. nom. pl.), acts of giving, acts of charity.
ca, and.
vividhās (m. nom. pl.), of various kinds, varied, of many sorts.
kriyante (3rd pl. pr. indic. passive kr), they are done, they are performed, they are made.
mokṣa (m.), release, liberation.
kāṅśibhis (inst. pl.), by the desirous, by those who are desirous.
(mokṣakāṅśibhis, m. inst. pl. TP cpd., by those who desire release, by those who desire liberation from the cycles of re-birth.)
“Sat” is used
In its meaning of “reality” and in its meaning of “goodness.”
Also the word “sat” is used
For an auspicious act, Arjuna.

sat (n.), truth, reality, goodness.
bhāve (m. loc. sg.), in meaning, in intention.
(sat-bhāve, m. loc. sg. TP cpd., in the meaning of “reality.”)
sādhu (n.), straight, right, good, goodness.
bhāve (m. loc. sg.), in being, in intention, in meaning.
(sādhu bhāve, m. loc. sg. TP cpd., in the meaning of “goodness.”)
ca, and.
sat (n. nom. sg.), reality, truth, goodness (here simply “sat”).
iti, thus, so, in this way.
etad (n. nom. sg.), that, this.
prayujyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive pra √yuj), it is used, it is employed.
prasaste (n. loco sg. p. pass. participle pra √śams), in praiseworthy, in laudable.
karmāni (n. loco sg.), in action, in act.
tathā, thus, also, even.
sat (n.), truth, reality, goodness (here simply “sat”).
sabdas (m. nom. sg.), sound, word.
(sat-sabdas, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., sound of “sat”).
pārtha (m. voc. sg.), Son of Pṛthā, epithet of Arjuna.
yujyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive √yuj), it is used, it is employed, it is pronounced.
yajnē tapasi dāne ca
in sacrifice, in austerity and in giving

yajnē (m. loc. sg.), in sacrifice, in worship.
tapasi (n. loc. sg.), in austerity, in self-denial.
dāne (n. loc. sg.), in giving, in charity.
ca, and.
sthitis (f. nom. sg.), steadfastness, dependability.
sat (n. nom. sg.), truth, reality, goodness
(here simply “sat”).
iti, thus, in this way (often used to close a quotation).
ca, and.
ucyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive √vac), it is called, it is said to be.
karma (n. nom. sg.), action.
ca, and.
eva, indeed, likewise (often used as a rhythmic filler).
tadarthiyam (n. nom. sg.), relating to that, serving the purpose of that.
sat (n. nom. sg.), truth, reality, goodness
(here simply “sat”).
iti, thus, in this way (often used to close a quotation).
eva, indeed, likewise (often used as a rhythmic filler).
adhidhiyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive abhi √dhā), it is designated, it is proclaimed.
An oblation offered or an austerity practiced  
Without faith  
Is called “asat,” Arjuna,  
And is nothing in the hereafter or here in the world.

End of Book XVII

The Yoga of the Distinction of the  
Three Kinds of Faith
BOOK XVIII

Arjuna spoke:

I wish to know the truth
Of sannyasa, Krishna,
And of renunciation,
And the difference between them.

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* mahābāho, "O Mighty Armed One," usually an epithet of Arjuna, is here applied to Krishna. It is a general epithet of distinguished warriors.

† The asura Keśin was slain by Vishnu (Krishna) in another part of the Mahābhārata. (See chapter on "The Setting of the Bhagavād Gītā").
The Blessed Lord spoke:
The relinquishment of actions prompted by desire
The sages understand as sannyasa;
The relinquishment of the fruit of all action
The wise declare to be renunciation.

*sribhagaván* (m. nom. sg.), the Blessed Lord
uváca (3rd sg. perf. act. √vac), he said, he spoke.

*kāmyānām* (n. gen. pl.), of desiderative, of springing from desire.
karma (n. gen. pl.), of actions, of acts.
nyāsam (m. acc. sg. from *ni 2 as*), renunciation, throwing down, relinquishment.
saṃnyāsam (m. acc. sg. from *sam ni 2 as*), renunciation, relinquishment, lit. “throwing down.”
kavaya (m. nom. pl.), the poets, the chronicles, the seers.
vidu (3rd pl. perf. act. √vid with present meaning), they understand, they know.
sarva, all.
karma (n.), action.
phala (n.), fruit, result.
tyāgam (m. acc. sg.), abandonment, desertion, giving up.
(sarvakarmaphalatyāgam, m. acc. sg. TP cpd., abandonment of all fruit of action.)
prāhus (3rd pl. perf. act. pra √ah with present meaning), they say, they declare.
tyāgam (m. acc. sg.), abandonment, desertion, leaving behind.
vicaksanās (m. nom. pl.), the clear-eyed, the clear-sighted, the sagacious.

* The words are clear enough, but, to avoid any misunderstanding, what is said is that renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*) is the relinquishment of all action which is aimed at a desired result; abandonment (*tyāga*) is the relinquishment of the *results* of action, and thus does not imply non-action as renunciation does.
Some men of wisdom declare
That action is to be abandoned and is full of evil,
And others say that acts of sacrifice, giving, and austerity
Are not to be abandoned.
Hear My conclusion in this matter
Concerning renunciation, Arjuna.
Renunciation is declared
To be of three kinds:

niścayam śṛṇu me tatra
the conclusion hear of me there

tyāge bharatasattama
concerning abandonment, Best of the Bharatas,

tyāgo hi puruṣavyāghra
abandonment indeed, Man-Tiger,

trividhal; samprakīrtitah
threefold designated.

niścayam (m. acc. sg.), conclusion, conviction, ascertainment.
śṛṇu (2nd sg. imperative act. śṛṇu), hear! learn!
me (gen. sg.), of me, my.
tatra, there, in this case.
tyāge (m. loc. sg.), in abandonment, concerning abandonment.
bharatasattama (m. voc. sg.), O Best of the Bharatas, epithet of Arjuna.
tyāgas (m. nom. sg.), abandonment, desertion, giving up.
hi, indeed, truly.
puruṣavyāghra (m. voc. sg.), Man-Tiger, Tiger among Men, epithet of Arjuna.
trividhas (m. nom. sg.), threefold, of three kinds.
samprakīrtitas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. particle sam pra kīrt), designated, enumerated.
Acts of sacrifice, giving, and austerity
Are not to be abandoned, but rather to be performed;
Sacrifice, giving, and austerity
Are purifiers of those who are wise.

yajña (m.), sacrifice, worship.
dāra (n.), giving, charity.
tapas (n.), austerity, heat.
karma (n. nom. acc. sg.), action.
yajñadānatapaḥkarma, n. nom. sg. TP cpd., actions of sacrifice, giving and austerity, sacrifice-giving-austerity-action).
nā, not.
tyājayam (n. nom. sg. gerundive √tyaj), to be abandoned, to be left behind.
kāryam (n. nom. sg. gerundive √kr), to be done, to be made, to be performed.
eva, indeed, rather (often used as a rhythmic filler).
tad (n. nom. sg.), this, that.
yajñas (m. nom. sg.), sacrifice, worship.
dānam (n. nom. sg.), giving, charity.
tapas (n. nom. sg.), austerity, heat.
ca, and.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
pāvanāni (n. nom. pl.), purifiers, cleansers.
maniśinām (m. gen. pl.), of the wise, of the thoughtful, of those who are wise.
These actions, however, are to be performed
Abandoning attachment to the fruits.
This is My definite
And highest belief, Arjuna.
But renunciation of obligatory action
Is not proper;
The abandonment of it through
delusion
Is proclaimed to be tamasic.
He who abandons action merely because it is difficult,
Or because of fear of bodily suffering,
Performs rajasic renunciation.
He does not obtain the fruit of that renunciation.
When action is done because it is a duty, Arjuna, 
And abandoning attachment to the fruit, 
Such renunciation is thought to be sattvic.
The man of renunciation, the wise man
Whose doubt is cut away, filled with goodness,
Does not hate disagreeable action,
Nor is he attached to agreeable action.

na, not.
dveṣi (3rd sg. act. √dviș), he hates, he dislikes.
akușalam (n. acc. sg.), disagreeable, inauspicious.
karma (n. acc. sg.), action.
kuśale (n. loc. sg.), in agreeable, in auspicious.
na, not.
anuṣaîjate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. anu √saîj), he is attached, he clings.
tyāgī (m. nom. sg.), abandoner, giver up.
sattva (n.), goodness, truth, reality.
samāvīṣṭas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle sam √viș), filled with, entered into.
(sattva-samāvīṣṭas, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., filled with goodness.)
medihāvī (m. nom. sg.), wise man, learned man, pāṇḍit.
chinnasayas (m. nom. sg.), doubt, irresolution.
(chinnasamaṣṭayitas, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., whose doubt has been cut away.)
not indeed by the body-borne able

indeed, truly, by body-borne beings, by the body borne, by those inhabiting the body, by creatures.

able, capable, possible.

to abandon, to give up.

actions, without remainder.

who then the action-fruit abandoner,

he, this.

he is called, he is said to be, he is designated as.

Indeed embodied beings are not able
To abandon actions entirely;
He, then, who abandons the fruit of action,
Is called a man of renunciation.
The fruit of action for those who have not renounced
When they depart (die) is threefold:
Evil, good, and mixed;
But for the renouncers there is none whatever.
Learn from Me, O Arjuna,
These five factors,
Declared in the Sānkhya doctrine
For the accomplishment of all actions:

\* \* \* 

* See note to stanza 39, Book II, for explanation of the Sānkhya system.
XVIII

14

adhisthānam tathā kartā
the body also the agent

tathā, also, thus, so.
karta (m. nom. sg.), maker, doer, agent.

karaṇam ca prthagvidham
and the instrument of various kinds,

and the various separate activities

prthak (separate, distinct).

vividhās (f. nom pl.), various, manifold.
ca, and.

prthak, separate, distinct.

vividhāsca prthakcesṭā
and the various separate activities

vividhāsca prthakcesṭā
and the various separate activities

and divine providence, in this matter, the fifth.

The seat of action (the body), the doer,
The various organs,
And the various separate activities,
With the presiding deities as the fifth;

* adhisthāna (seat of action) is interpreted by most commentators as the physical body.
† The word “agent” is used here and elsewhere in this book in the meaning of “one who acts,” an actor or doer.
Whatever action a man undertakes
With his body, speech or mind,
Either right of wrong,
These are its five factors.

* Again, in Gitā psychology the mind acts, and so does speech.
This being so, he who sees His Self
As the doer does not really see,
Because of the fact that
He has not perfected his understanding.
He whose state of mind is not egoistic,
Whose intellect is not tainted,
Even though he slays these people,
He does not slay, and is not bound (by his actions).

yasya (m. gen. sg.), of whom.
na, not.
ahamkrto (m. nom. sg.), egoistic, haughty.
bhavo (m. nom. sg.), state, condition.
buddhis (f. nom. sg.), intelligence, discernment, intuition.
yasya (m. gen. sg.), of whom.
a, not.
lipyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive /lip), he is befouled, it is smeared, it is defiled.
harvā (gerund /han), slaying, having slain, having killed.
api, even.
sas (m. nom. sg.), he, this.
imān (m. acc. pl.), these.
lokān (m. acc. pl.), worlds, people.
a, not.
hanti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. /han), he slays, he kills.
a, not.
nibadhyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive ni /bandh), he is bound, he is bound down, he is fettered.
Knowledge, the process of knowing, and the knower
Are the threefold impulse to action;
The instrument, the action, and the doer
Are the threefold basis of action.
It is declared in Sankhya that
Knowledge, action, and the doer
Are of three kinds, distinguished
according to the qualities.
Hear about these also:
sarvabhiiteśu yenaikam
in all beings by which one

bhāvam avyayam ikṣate
being imperishable one sees,

avibhaktam vibhakteśu
undivided in the divided;

taj jñānam viddhi sattvikam
that knowledge know to be sattvic.

That knowledge by which one sees
One imperishable Being in all beings,
Undivided in separate beings;
Know that knowledge to be sattvic.
prthaktvena tu yaj jñānam
as separate but which knowledge

prthagvidhan niinii bhaviin
different beings (of) various kinds

vetti sarvesu bhūteṣu
it knows in all beings;

prthagvidhan jñānam viddhi rājasam
that knowledge know to be rajasic.

But that knowledge which sees
In all beings
Separate entities of various kinds,
by differentiation,
Know that knowledge to be rajasic.
yat tu kṛṣṇa-vad ekasmin
which but as if it were all, in one

kāryaṁ saktam āhātu-kām
in the to-be-done attached, without concern for cause,

atattvārthavat alpam ca
without real purpose and small (in value or significance)

tat tāmasam udāhṛtam
that tamasic declared to be.

That (knowledge), however, which is attached to one single effect
As if it were all, and without reason,
Without a real purpose and small in significance,
Is declared to be tamasic.
That action which is ordained and free from attachment,
Performed without desire or hate,
With no wish to obtain fruit,
Is said to be sattvic.
But that action which is performed
   with a wish to obtain desires,
With selfishness, or, again,
With much effort,
Is declared to be rajasic.

yat tu kāmepsunā karma
which, but, with desire wishing to obtain,
   action,

sāhamkāreṇa vā punah
with selfishness, or again,

kriyate bahulāyāsam
it is performed (with) much effort;

tad rājasam udāhrtam
that rajasic declared to be

yad (n. nom. sg.), which.
tu, but, however, indeed.
kāma (m.), desire, lust.
ipsunā (m. inst. sg. desiderative adj. from
vāp), wishing to obtain, desiring to get.
karma (n. nom. sg.), action.
sāhamkāreṇa (m. inst. sg.), by selfishness,
   with egotism with self-centeredness.
vd, or.
punar, again, further.
kriyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. passive √kr), it is
done, it is performed.
bahula (m.), much, many.
dyāsam (m. acc. sg.), effort, exertion, toil.
(bahula-dyāsam, m. acc. sg. KD cpd., much
effort.)
tad (n. nom. sg.), that, this.
rājasam (n. nom. sg.), rajasic, pertaining to
   the guna of rajas.
udāhrtam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle ud
   √hr), declared, said to be.
That action which is undertaken
because of delusion,
Disregarding consequences, loss, or
injury to others,
As well as one’s own ability,
Is said to be tamasic.
Released from attachment, free from ego,
Endowed with steadfastness and resolution,
Unperturbed in success or failure;
Such a doer is said to be sattvic.
Passionate, desiring the fruits of action,
Greedy, violent-natured, impure,
Subject to joy or sorrow;
Such a doer is proclaimed to be rajasic.

rājasaḥ parikfrtitah rajasic proclaimed to be.

Passionate, passionate, head-long. 
karma (n.), action. 
phala (n.), fruit. 
prepsus (m. nom. sg. desiderative adj. from pra vāp), desiring to obtain, wishing to get. 
karmaphalaprepsus, m. nom. sg., TP cpd., desiring to obtain the fruit of action.
lubdhas (m. nom. sg.), greedy, desirous, avaricious.
hiṃsāmakas (m. nom. sg.), violent natured, bent on injury.
aśucis (m. nom. sg.), impure, polluted.
harṣa (m.), joy, happiness, bliss.
soka (m.), sorrow, mourning, pain.
anvitas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle anu √i), accompanied by.
(harṣaśokānvitas, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., accompanied by joy and sorrow, filled with joy and sorrow.)
kartā (m. nom. sg.), agent, doer.
rājasas (m. nom. sg.), rajasic, pertaining to the guṇa of rajas.
parikfrtitas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle pari √kirt), proclaimed to be, declared to be, celebrated as.
Undisciplined, vulgar, obstinate, Wicked, deceitful, lazy, Despondent, and procrastinating; Such a doer is said to be tamasic.
understanding the distinction, and also of firmness

according to the guṇas, threefold, hear,

set forth without remainder

separately, Conqueror of Wealth.

Now hear the threefold distinctions of intellect
And also of firmness, according to the qualities,
Taught completely
And separately, Arjuna:

buddhes (f. gen. sg.), of intelligence, of discrimination, of understanding.
bhedam (m. acc. sg.), distinction, splitting, difference.
dhṛtes (f. gen. sg.), of steadfastness, of courage, of firmness.
ca, and.
eva, also, indeed (often used as a rhythmic filler).
guṇatas (adv.), according to the guṇas, in reference to the guṇas.
trividham (m. acc. sg.), threefold, of three kinds.
śrnu (2nd sg. imperative śṛṇu.), hear! learn!
procyamānam (m. acc. sg. pass. pr. participle pra śac), set forth, proclaimed, explained.
asēṣena (m. inst. sg.), without remainder, wholly, completely.
prthaktvena (m. inst. sg.), separately, distinctly.
dhanamjaya (m. voc. sg.), Conqueror of Wealth, epithet of Arjuna.
That intellect which knows
when to act and when not to act,
What is to be done and what is not to be done,
And what is to be feared and what is not to be feared,
Along with the knowledge of bondage and liberation, Arjuna, is sattvic.

pra\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{v}}}}}}r\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{v}}}}}}tim (f. acc. sg.), activity, progress, exertion.
c\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}, and.
niv\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{v}}}}}}r\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{v}}}}}}tim (f. acc. sg.), inactivity, non-exertion.
c\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}, and.
k\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}} (gerundive \textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}), the to-be-done, the object of action.
ak\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}} (gerundive \textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}), the not-to-be-done, not to be performed.
k\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}} (n. acc. dual gerundive DV cpd. \textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}, the to-be-done and the not-to-be-done, what is to be done and what is not to be done.)
bhay\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}} (n. acc. dual DV cpd.) the to-be-feared and the not-to-be-feared, what is to be feared and what is not to be feared.
b\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}} (m. acc. sg.), bondage.
mok\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}} (m. acc. sg.), liberation, freedom.
c\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}, and.
y\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}} (f. nom. sg.), which.
vetti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. \textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}, \textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}), \textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}, \textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}, it knows, it perceives.
buddhis (f. nom. sg.), intelligence, discrimination, understanding.
s\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}} (f. nom. sg.), it, this, she.
p\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}} (m. voc. sg.), she of Pr\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}, epithet of Arjuna.
s\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}} (f. nom. sg.), sattvic, pertaining to the gu\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}}\textit{\textv{\texti{\texti{\texti{\texti{a}}}}}} of sattva.
That intellect which distinguishes incorrectly
Between the right and the wrong,
And between that which is to be done
and that which is not to be done,
Is rajasic, Arjuna.
XVIII

32

adharmaḥ dharmam iti yā
the wrong right thus which

manyate tamasaṁvṛtā
it imagines, darkness-enveloped,

sarvārthān viparitāṁśca
and all things perverted

buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī
understanding, that, Son of Prthā, (is) tamasic.

That intellect which, enveloped in darkness,
Imagines wrong to be right,
And all things to be perverted,
Is tamasic, Arjuna.

adharmaṁ (m. acc. sg.), wrong, unlawful, contrary to usage.
dharmaṁ (m. acc. sg.), right, righteous, lawful.
iṁ, thus, in this way.
yā (f. nom. sg.), which.
manyate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. ṣman), it thinks, it imagines.
tamasā (n. inst. sg.), by darkness.
vṛtā (f. nom. sg. p. pass. participle ṣvr), enveloped.
sarvārthān (m. acc. pl.), all things, all aims.
viparitāṁ (n. acc. pl. p. pass. participle ṣ pari ṣ), perverted, turned backward.
ca, and.
buddhis (f. nom. sg.), intelligence, discrimination, understanding.
sā (f. nom. sg.), this, she, it.
pārtha (m. voc. sg.), Son of Prthā, epithet of Arjuna.
tāmasī (f. nom. sg.), tamasic, pertaining to the guṇa of tamas.
dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate
by firmness by which one holds

manahprāṇendriyakriyāḥ
mind, vital breath and sense functions

yogenāvyabhicārīyāḥ
by yoga unswerving

dhṛtīḥ sā pārtha sattvikā
firmness that, Son of Prthū, (is) sattvic.

The unswerving firmness by which, Through yoga, one holds fast
The functions of the mind, vital breath, and senses,
That firmness, Arjuna, is sattvic.
But the firmness by which one holds to Duty, pleasures, and wealth,
With attachment and desire for the fruits of action,
That firmness, Arjuna, is rajasic.
That firmness by which a stupid man
Does not abandon sleep, fear, grief,
Depression, and conceit,
Is tamasic, Arjuna.

yayā (f. inst. sg.), by which, with which.
svapnam (m. acc. sg.), sleep.
bhayam (n. acc. sg.), fear.
sokam (m. acc. sg.), sorrow, grief.
viṣādam (m. acc. sg.), depression, lassitude.
madam (m. acc. sg.), pride, conceit, intoxication.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
ca, and.
na, not.
vimuṇcati (3rd sg. act. vi √muc), he aban­
dons, he relinquishes.
durmedhā (m. nom. sg.), the dull witted, the
stupid man, one whose wit is dull.
dhṛtis (f. nom. sg.), firmness, steadfastness,
courage.
sā (f. nom. sg.), this, it, she, that.
pārtha (m. voc. sg.), Son of Prthā, epithet
of Arjuna.
tāmasī (f. nom. sg.), tamasic, pertaining to
the guṇa of tamas.
sukham tv idānīṁ trividham
happiness but now threefold

sukham (n. nom. sg.), happiness, joy.
tu, but, indeed.
trividham (m. acc. sg.), threefold, of three
kinds.

srnu me bharatarśabha
hear from me, Bull of the Bharatas,

bharatarśabha (m. voc. sg.), Bull of the
Bharatas, epithet of Arjuna.

abhyāsaś ca nīgacchati
from practice one enjoys, where

abhyāsaś (m. abl. sg.), from practice, from
exercise, from repetition.

a kartantaṁ ca nīgacchati
and suffering-end one come to.

duḥkhāntam ca nīgacchati
and suffering-end one come to.

duḥkhāntam (m. acc. sg.), end, termination.

nīgacchati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. ni √gam),
he goes to, he comes to, one comes to.

And now, hear from Me, Arjuna,
The threefold happiness
That one enjoys through practice,
And in which one comes to the end of
suffering.
yat tad agre viśam iva
which that in the beginning poison-like

parināme 'mṛtopamam
when transformed, nectar semblance;

tat sukham sāttvikam proktam
that happiness satvic declared to be

ātmabuddhīprasādajam
own spirit (and) tranquility born.

That which in the beginning is like
poison
But in the end like nectar;
That happiness, born from the
tranquility of one’s own mind,
Is declared to be sattvic.
That which in the beginning, through contact
Between the senses and their objects,
is like nectar,
And in the end like poison;
That happiness is declared to be rajasic.

viṣāya (m.), sense-object, object of the senses, sphere of activity.
indriya (n.), sense (as in the five senses).
saṁyogat (m. abl. sg.), from joining together, from contact.
(viṣayendriyasāṁyogat, m. abl. sg., TP cpd., from contact between the sense and the sense-object.)
yad (n. nom. sg.), which.
tad (n. nom. sg.), that, this.
agre (n. loc. sg.), in the beginning, at the start.
amrta (n.), nectar, immortality.
upānam (n. nom. sg.), resemblance, likeness, semblance.
(amṛtopānam, n. nom. sg. BV cpd., whose resemblance is nectar.)
parināme (m. loc. sg.), in transformation, when transformed.
viṣam (n. nom. sg.), poison, venom.
iva, like.
tad (n. nom. sg.), that, this.
sukham (n. nom. sg.), happiness, delight, joy.
rajasam (n. nom. sg.), rajasic, pertaining to the guṇa of rajas.
smṛtam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle √smṛ), remembered as, recorded as, known as.
That happiness which both in the beginning
And afterwards deludes the self,
Arising from sleep, indolence, and negligence,
Is declared to be tamasic.
There is no being, either on earth
Or yet in heaven among the gods,
Which can exist
Free from these three qualities born of material nature.
The duties of the brahmans, the kshatriyas, the vaishyas, and the shudras, Arjuna, are distributed according to the qualities which arise from their own nature.
Tranquility, restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, and uprightness, knowledge, wisdom, and faith in God are the duties of the brahmans, born of their innate nature.
Heroism, majesty, firmness, skill, 
Not fleeing in battle, 
Generosity, and lordly spirit 
Are the duties of the kshatriyas, 
born of their innate nature.
Plowing, cow-herding, and trade
Are the duties of the vaishyas, born of their innate nature.

Service is the duty of the shudras,
Born of their innate nature.

kṛṣi (f.), plowing, cultivation, agriculture.
gāurakṣya (n.), cow-herding, cow protecting.
vāṇīyam (n. nom. sg.), trade, commerce.
(kṛṣigāurakṣyavāṇīyam, n. nom. sg., DV cpd. plowing, cow-herding and trade.)
vāīṣya (m.), vāiṣya, pertaining to the third, or merchant-fanner caste.
karma (n. nom. sg.), action.
(vāīṣyakarma, n. nom. sg., TP cpd. vāiṣya action.)
svabhāvajam (n. nom. sg.), born of innate nature.
paricāryā (f. determinative noun from pari √car), service, doing service.
ātmakam (n. nom. sg. ifc.), type, of the nature of, consisting of.
(paricāryātmakam, n. nom. sg., TP cpd. consisting of service, “service-selved.”) karma (n. nom. sg.), action.
śūdrasya (m. gen. sg.), of the śūdra, of the members of the fourth or lowest caste, of the servant caste.
api, also, even.
svabhāvajam (n. nom. sg.), born of innate nature, arising from innate nature.
Devoted to his own duty,
A man attains perfection.
Hear then how one who is devoted
to his own duty
Finds perfection:

svakarmaniratah siddhim
own action contented with, perfection

yathā vindati tad chṛṇu
how he finds, that hear!

sve sve (m. loc. sg.), in own repeated.
karmā (n. loc. sg.), in action.
abhiratasya (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle 
abhī ṛṣayam), contented, satisfied, pleased.
samsīddhitā (f. acc. sg.), perfection, success,
fulfillment.
labhate (3rd sg. pr. indic. mid. ṛlabh), he 
attains, he obtains.
naras (m. nom. sg.), man, a man.
svakarma (n.), own action, own deeds.
niratis (m. nom. sg.), content, satisfied, 
pleased.
(svakarma-niratis, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., 
content in own action.)
siddhitā (f. acc. sg.), perfection, success, 
fulfillment.
yathā, how, in which way.
vindati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. ṛvid), he 
finds.
tad (n. acc. sg.), that, this.
śṛṇu (2nd sg. imperative act. śṛu), hear! 
learn!
From whom the origin of beings, by whom all this universe pervaded, by one's own action him worshipping, perfection he finds, man.

By worshiping with his own proper duty
Him from whom all beings have their origin,
Him by whom all this universe is pervaded,
Man finds perfection.

yatas (m. abl. sg.), from whom.
pravrttis (f. nom. sg.), origin, coming forth.
bhūtānām (n. gen. pl.), of beings, of creatures.
yena (m. inst. sg.), by whom.
sarvam idam (n. nom. sg.), all this, all this universe.
tatam (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle śtan),
pervaded, stretched, diffused.
svakarmanā (n. inst. sg.), by own action.
tam (m. acc. sg.), him, it.
abhyarceya (gerund abhi vṛc vṛc), worshipping, praising.
siddhim (f. acc. sg.), perfection, success, fulfillment.
vindati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. ātī vid), he finds.
mānavas (m. nom. sg.), man, a man, a human being, a descendant of Manu, the primal patriarch.
Better one’s own duty, though imperfect,  
Than the duty of another well performed;  
Performing the duty prescribed by one’s own nature,  
One does not incur evil.

śreyān (m. nom. sg. comparative), better, superior, preferable.
svadharma (m. nom. sg.), own duty, own caste duty.
vigunaś (m. nom. sg.), imperfect, lacking, wanting.
paradharma (m. abl. sg.), than another’s duty, than the duty of another caste.
svanuṣṭhitāt (m. abl. sg. su anuṣṭhitāt), well done, well performed, well executed.
svabhāva (m.), own nature, own being.
nyātam (n. acc. sg.), prescribed, controlled, subdued.
(svabhāva-nyātam, n. nom. sg. TP cpd., prescribed by one’s own nature.)
karma (n. acc. sg.), action.
kurvan (n. nom. sg. pr. act. participle √kṛ), performing, doing.
na, not.
āpnoti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. √āp), he incurs, one obtains, he attains.
kilbiśam (n. acc. sg.), guilt, fault, sin, evil.

* Caste duty is meant here.
XVIII

48

सहजं कर्मं कौन्तेरः
sahajam karma kāunteya

together-born action, Son of Kunti,

सदोषम् ग्रःपि न त्यजेत्
sadoṣam api na tyajet

with deficiency even, not one should abandon.

सर्वार्था हि दोषेण
sarvārthā hi doṣena

all undertakings indeed with deficiency

धूमेनाग्नि इवावृत्तः
dhūmenāgña irāvṛtāḥ

with smoke fire-like, enveloped.

One should not abandon the duty to which one is born

Even though it be deficient, Arjuna.

Indeed, all undertakings are enveloped by evil

As fire is by smoke.

sahajam (n. acc. sg.), together-born, inborn.
karma (n. acc. sg.), action.
kāunteya (m. voc. sg.), Son of Kunti, epithet of Arjuna.
sadoṣam (n. acc. sg.), with deficiency, with fault.
api, even, also.
na, not.
tyajet (3rd sg. optative act. √tyaj), one should abandon, he should abandon.
sarvārambhās (m. nom. pl. from sarva √rambh), all undertakings, all beginnings, all commencements.
hi, indeed.
doṣena (n. inst. sg.), with deficiency, with fault, with error.
dhūmena (m. inst. sg.), with smoke, by smoke.
agnis (m. nom. sg.), fire, god of fire.
iva, like, similar.
āvṛtās (m. nom. pl. p. pass. participle √vr), enveloped, veiled, hidden.
With his intellect unattached at all times,
With conquered self, free from desire,
By renunciation, one attains
The supreme state of freedom from action.
siddhim prāpto yathā brahma
perfection attained, how brahman

tathāpnoti nibodha me
also one attains, learn from me,

istribhā samāsenāv kaunteya
briefly, Son of Kunti,

nīṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā
state of knowledge which highest.

Learn from Me briefly, Arjuna,
How one who has attained perfection
Also attains Brahman,
Which is the highest state of knowledge.

siddhim (f. acc. sg.), perfection, success, fulfillment.
prāptas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle pra ṛāp), having attained, obtained.
yathā, how, in what way, in which way.
brahma (n. acc. sg.), Brahman.
tathā, thus, also.
apnoti (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. ṛāp), he attains, one attains.
nibodha (2nd sg. imperative act. ni ṛbudh), learn!
me (gen. abl. sg.), of me, from me.
samāsenā (adv.), briefly, in brief.
eva, indeed (used as a rhythmic filler).
kaunteya (m. voc. sg.), Son of Kunti, epithet of Arjuna.
nīṣṭhā (f. nom. sg.), state, condition, position.
jñānasya (n. gen. sg.), of knowledge, of wisdom.
yā (f. nom. sg.), which.
parā (f. nom. sg.), highest, supreme.
Endowed with a pure intellect,
Controlling the self with firmness,
Abandoning sound and the other objects of sense,
Casting off attraction and hatred,

*buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto*

with intelligence pure yoked

*dhrtyātmānaṁ niyamya ca*

and with firmness self controlling

There are five objects, or “provinces” (viśayās), of the senses (indriyān):

1. *sabda* or *śruti viṣayā* (sound) for the ear.
2. *sparśa viṣayā* (tangibility) for the touch.
3. *rūpa viṣayā* (form) for the eye.
4. *rasa viṣayā* (flavor) for the tongue.
5. *gandha viṣayā* (smell) for the nose. And these are often referred to as the guṇas respectively of: (1) ether; (2) air; (3) fire; (4) water; (5) earth.
Dwelling in solitude, eating lightly, Controlling speech, body, and mind, Constantly devoted to yoga meditation, Taking refuge in dispassion,

vivikta (p. pass. participle vi √vic), separated, isolated, solitary.
sevi (m. nom. sg. ifc.), inhabiting, dwelling, frequenting.
(vivikta-sevi, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., dwelling in solitude.)
laghu (m.), light, lightly, easily digested.
āśi (m. nom. sg. ifc.), eating, consuming.
(laghu-āśi, m. nom. sg. TP cpd., eating little.)
yāta (p. pass. participle Vyām), controlled, subdued.
vāc (f.), speech, talk.
kāya (m.), body, bodily frame.
mānasas (n. nom. sg. ifc.), belonging to the mind, thought.
(yatāvākkāyamānasah, m. nom. sg. BV cpd., whose speech, body and mind are controlled.)
dhyāna (n.), meditation.
yoga (m.), Yoga.
paras (m. nom. sg. ifc.), devoted to, holding as highest object.
(dhyāna-yogaparas, m. nom. sg., TP cpd. devoted to meditation-Yoga, devoted to the Yoga of meditation.)
nityam (adv.), eternally, constantly, perpetually.
vāirāgyam (n. acc. sg.), dispassion, disinterest, impartiality.
samupāśritas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle sam upa ā śṛi), taking refuge in, being supported by.
ahamkāram bālam darpam
egotism, force, arrogance,

kāmam krodham parigraham
desire, anger (and) possession

Relinquishing egotism, force,
arrogance,
Desire, anger, and possession of
property;
Unselfish, tranquil,
He is fit for oneness with Brahman.

ahamkāram (m. acc. sg.), egotism, "I making," ego-consciousness.
bālam (n. acc. sg.), force, might, strength.
darpam (m. acc. sg.), arrogance, pride.
kāmam (m. acc. sg.), desire, longing.
krodham (m. acc. sg.), anger, fury, wrath.
parigraham (m. acc. sg.), grasping, laying hold of, possessing, possession of property.
vimucya (gerund vi √muc), relinquishing, abandoning.
nirmamas (m. nom. sg.), unselfish, "not mine," not acquisitive.
sāntas (m. nom. sg.), tranquil, calm, at peace.
brāhma (n.), Brahman.
bhūyāya (n. dat. sg.), to oneness with.
(brāhma bhūyāya, n. dat. sg., to oneness with Brahman, for Brahman's being.)
kalpate (3rd pr. indic. mid. sg. √kalp), he is fit, he is adapted, one is fit.
Absorbed in Brahman, he whose self

is serene

Does not mourn, nor does he desire;

Impartial among all beings,

He attains supreme devotion to Me.

* Impartial, lit. “the same,” i.e. regarding his own átman (self) as identical with the átmans of all beings.
By devotion to Me he comes to know
Who I am in truth;
Then having known Me in truth,
He enters Me immediately.

bhaktyā mām abhijānāti
by devotion to me he comes to know

yāvān yasciṁ tattvatal
how great and who I am in reality,

tato māṁ tattvato jñātvā	hen me in reality having known

viśate tadanantaram
he enters (me) immediately.
Performing all actions,
He whose reliance is always on Me,
Attains, by My grace,
The eternal, imperishable abode.
Mentally renouncing
All actions in Me, devoted to Me as the Supreme,
Taking refuge in the yoga of discrimination,
Constantly think of Me.
Fixing your mind on Me, you shall pass over
All difficulties, through My grace;
But if, through egoism, you will not listen,
Then you shall perish.

maccitas (m. nom. sg.), thinking of me, with mind on me.
sarva, all.
durgāni (n. acc. pl.), difficulties, “hard goings,” obstacles.
matprasadāt (m. abl. sg.), from my grace, from my favor.
tarisyasi (2nd sg. act. future act. √ṛ), thou shalt pass over, thou shalt transcend.
atha, but, however.
ced, if.
tvam (nom. sg.), thou.
ahamkārāt (m. abl. sg.), from egoism, from “I making.”
na, not.
sroṣyasi (2nd sg. future act. √ṣru), thou shalt hear, thou shalt listen, thou wilt listen.
vinaṅkṣyasi (2nd sg. future act. vi √naṣ), thou shalt be lost, thou shalt perish.
If, filled with egoism,
You think, “I shall not fight,”
Your resolve will be in vain;
Your own material nature will
compel you.
svabhāvajena kāunteya
by born of own nature, Son of Kunti,

nibaddhaḥ svena karmā
bound by own karma

kartiṇaṃ necchasā yān mohāt
do not thou wishest, what, from delusion

karisyaṣṭi avasāś 'pi tat
thou shalt do, against will, even that.

What you wish not to do, through delusion,
You shall do that
Against your will, Arjuna,
Bound by your own karma, born of your own material nature.

svabhāvajena (n. inst. sg.), by own nature born, by originating in own nature.
kāunteya (m. voc. sg.), Son of Kunti, epithet of Arjuna.
nibaddhaḥ (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle ni bandh), bound, bound down.
svena (inst. sg.), by own, by one's own, by thine own.
karmā (n. inst. sg.), by action, by karma.
kartum (infinitive ākr), to do, to make.
na, not.
icchasi (2nd sg. pr. indic. āis), thou desirest, thou wishest.
yad (n. nom. sg.), what, which.
mohāt (m. abl. sg.), from delusion, from confusion.
karisyaṣṭi (2nd sg. act. future ākr), thou shalt do, thou shalt perform, thou shalt make.
avasāś (m. nom. sg.), without will, against will, willy-nilly.
apī, even, also.
tad (n. acc. sg.), that, this.

* I have left the word "karma" untranslated here, as it refers in this case, not to action in general, but to fate resulting from action in a previous incarnation. Arjuna is foredoomed to certain actions by the laws governing his "material nature" as a kṣatriya, or member of the warrior caste.
The Lord abides in the hearts
Of all beings, Arjuna,
Causing all beings to revolve,
By the power of illusion, as if fixed on
a machine.

* Like puppets fixed to a merry-go-round, an interpretation made by Śaṅkara (circa 800 A.D.).
XVIII

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tam eva śaraṇām gaccha
to him alone, the refuge, go!

sarvabhāvena bhārata
with (thy) whole being, Descendant of Bharata,

tatprasadat param santim
from that grace supreme peace

sthānam prāpsyasi ūśvatam
abode thou shalt attain, eternal.

Fly unto Him alone for refuge
With your whole being, Arjuna.
From His grace, you shall attain
Supreme peace and the eternal abode.

tam (m. acc. sg.), to him, him, it.
eva, indeed, alone (often used as a rhythmic filler).
śaraṇam (n. acc. sg.), refuge, shelter, place of rest.
gaccha (2nd sg. imperative act. √gam), go!
sarvabhāvena (m. inst. sg.), with whole being, with all being.
bhārata (m. voc. sg.), Descendant of Bharata, epithet of Arjuna.
tatprasadat (m. abl. sg.), from that grace, from this favor.
parām (f. acc. sg.), supreme, highest.
śāntim (f. acc. sg.), peace, tranquility.
sthānam (n. acc. sg.), home, abode.
prāpsyasi (2nd sg. future, act. pra √ap), thou shalt attain, thou shalt reach.
ūśvatam (n. acc. sg.), eternal, imperishable.
Thus the knowledge that is more secret
Than all that is secret has been expounded
to you by Me.
Having reflected on this fully,
Do as you please.
Hear again My supreme word,
Most secret of all.
You are surely loved by Me;
Therefore, I shall speak for your good.

sarvaguhvatamam bhūyah
of all most secret again,

śṛṇu me paramam vacah
hear of me the supreme word;

iṣṭo 'si me dṛḍham iti
loved thou art of me surely;

tato vāksyāmi te hitam
therefore I shall speak (for) thy good.

sarvaguhvatamam (n. acc. sg. superl.), of all most secret, most secret of all.
bhūyas, again, further.
śṛṇu (2nd sg. imperative act. śṛṇa), hear! learn!
me (gen. sg.), of me, my.
paramam (n. acc. sg. superl.), highest, supreme.
vacas (n. acc. sg.), word, discourse, doctrine.
īśas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle īśa), loved, desired.
asi (2nd sg. pr. indic. ās), thou art.
me (gen. sg.), of me, by me.
dṛḍham (adv.), surely, firmly, closely.
iti, thus, so.
tatas, from there, therefore.
vāksyāmi (1st sg. future act. vācāmi), I shall speak, I shall disclose.
te (gen. sg.), of thee, thy.
hitam (m. acc. sg. p. pass. participle dhī), advantage, benefit, good.
Fix your mind on Me, worshiping Me,
Sacrificing to Me, bowing down to Me;
In this way you shall come truly to Me,
I promise, for you are dear to Me.
Abandoning all duties,
Take refuge in Me alone.
I shall liberate you
From all evils; do not grieve.
This shall not be spoken of by you
    to one who is without austerity,
Nor to one who is without devotion,
Nor to one who does not render service,
Nor to one who does not desire to listen,
Nor to one who speaks evil of Me.

idam (n. nom. sg.), this.
te (gen. sg.), of thee, from thee.
nā, not.
atapaskāya (m. dat. sg.), to one who neglects austerity, to one who fails to perform austerities.
nā, not.
abhaktaya (m. dat. sg.), to one who neglects worship, to one who is not devoted.
kadacana, at any time, at any time whatever.
nā, not.
ca, and.
asūṛūṣāve (m. dat. sg. from desiderative śru), to one who does not desire to hear, to one who wishes not to listen, to the non-obedient.
vācyam (n. nom. sg. gerundive vac), to be said, what is to be said.
nā, not.
ca, and.
mām (acc. sg.), me.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
abhayasāyati (3rd sg. pr. indic. act. verb derived from abhi āsāya), he speaks evil of, he shows indignation toward, he sneers at.
He who shall teach this supreme
Secret to My worshipers,
Having performed the highest
devotion to Me,
Shall come to Me, without doubt.
And no one among men shall
Do more pleasing service to Me than he,
And no other on earth
Shall be dearer to Me.
And he who shall study this
Sacred dialogue of ours,
By him I shall have been worshiped
With the wisdom sacrifice; such is
My conviction.

adhyesyate (3rd sg. future mid. adhi √i), he
shall study, he shall recite.
ca, and.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
imam (m. acc. sg.), this.
dharmyam (m. acc. sg.), sacred, lawful,
righteous.
samvadādam (m. acc. sg.), dialogue, “together
speaking,” conversation.
āvayos (gen. dual), of us two, of ours.
jñānayajñena (m. inst. sg.), by the knowl-
edge sacrifice, with the knowledge sacri-
fice.
tena (m. inst. sg.), by him, by this one.
āham (nom. sg.), I.
iṣṭas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle √iṣ),
desired, loved.
syām (1st sg. optative act. √as), I should be,
might I be.
iti, thus, in this way, so.
me (gen. sg.), of me, my.
matis (f. nom. sg.), thought, belief, opinion,
mind.
Even the man who hears it
With faith and free from malice,
He also, liberated, shall attain
The happy worlds of those whose actions are pure.

śraddhāvān (m. nom. sg.), full of faith.
anasūyas (m. nom. sg.), not scoffing, not sneering, not speaking evil.
cā, and.
śrūyāt (3rd sg. optative act. śru), he should hear, he should listen.
api, even, also.
yas (m. nom. sg.), who.
naras (m. nom. sg.), man, the man.
sas (m. nom. sg.), he, this one.
api, also, even.
muktas (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle muc), liberated, released.
śubhān (m. acc. pl.), happy, joyful.
lokān (m. acc. pl.), worlds.
prāpnyāt (3rd sg. optative act. pra āp), he should attain, he should reach.
punya (n.), pure, cleansed, purified.
karmaṇām (n. gen. pl.), of actions.
(punya karmaṇām, n. gen. pl. BV cpd., of those of pure actions, of those whose actions are pure.)
Has this been heard by you, Arjuna, With a concentrated mind? Have your ignorance and delusion Been destroyed?

\textit{kaccid} (n. nom. sg. interrog.), has it? 
\textit{etad} (n. nom. sg.), this. 
\textit{srutam} (n. nom. sg. p. pass. participle \textit{\textbf{\textsl{sru}}}), heard, been heard. 
\textit{pärtha} (m. voc. sg.), Son of \textit{Pṛthā}, epithet of Arjuna. 
\textit{tvaya} (inst. sg.), by thee. 
\textit{ekāgreṇa} (n. inst. sg.), with concentration, concentrated on one point. 
\textit{cetasā} (n. instr. sg.), with thought, with mind. 
\textit{kaccid} (n. nom. sg. interrog.), has it? have they? 
\textit{ajñāna} (n.), ignorance. 
\textit{saṁmohā} (m. nom. sg.), delusion, confusion. 
\textit{pranāṣṭas te dhanamājaya} (m. nom. sg. TP cpd., delusion of ignorance.) 
\textit{praṇāṣṭas} (m. nom. sg. p. pass. participle \textit{pra \textbf{\textsl{naś}}}), destroyed, lost. 
\textit{te} (gen. sg.), of thee, thy. 
\textit{dhanamājaya} (m. voc. sg.), Conqueror of Wealth, epithet of Arjuna.
Arjuna spoke:

My delusion is destroyed and I have gained wisdom
Through Your grace, Krishna.
My doubts are gone.
I shall do as You command.
Sanjaya spoke:
Thus I have heard from Krishna
And the great-souled Arjuna,
This wondrous dialogue
Which causes the hair to stand on end.
By the grace of Vyasa I have heard
This supreme and most secret yoga
Which Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, has
divulged
Directly, speaking Himself.

vyāsa (m.), Vyāsa, legendary sage, who is supposed to have compiled the Vedas as well as the Mahābhārata, and who is the natural grandfather of the Pāṇḍava princes.
prasādāt (m. abl. sg.), from grace, from the grace, from the favor.
svayam (m. acc. sg.), himself, own.
pratiṣṭhāt (m. abl. sg. TP cpd. from the Lord of Yoga.)
śruti (n. nom. sg.), hearing, one who has heard.
param (n. acc. sg.), supreme.
yogam (m. acc. sg.), Yoga.
yoga (m.), Yoga.
śākṣat (adv.), before the eyes.
śākṣat (m. abl. sg.), from Krishna.
kathayatas (m. abl. sg. pr. participle ḍkath), speaking, narrating, relating.
svayam (m. acc. sg.), himself, own.

Vyāsa, legendary sage, compiler of the Vedas; also, according to legend, the natural father of Pāṇḍu and Dhiṛtarāṣṭra, thus the grandfather of Arjuna, as well as of the Pāṇḍava princes along with the hundred sons of Dhiṛtarāṣṭra. Vyāsa is also said to have compiled the Mahābhārata including the Gītā, though he must have existed before most of the events recounted in these works.
rajan samsmrtya samsmrtya
O King, recollecting again and again

sanvadam imam adbhutam
dialogue this marvelous

kesavarjunaḥ punyam
of the Handsome Haired One and Arjuna,
holy,

ḥṛṣyāmi ca muhur muhūḥ
and I rejoice again and again.

O King, remembering again and again
This marvelous and holy dialogue
Of Krishna and Arjuna,
I rejoice again and again.

rajan (m. voc. sg.), O King (refers to King Dhṛtāraṣṭra, to whom the poem has been narrated).
samsmrtya (gerund sam √smṛ), recollecting, remembering. (samsmrtya samsmrtya, recollecting again and again.)
sanvadam (m. acc. sg.), dialogue, conversation, “together speaking.”
imam (m. acc. sg.), this.
adbhutam (m. acc. sg.), marvellous, miraculous.
keśava, The Handsome Haired One, epithet of Krishna.
arjuna, Arjuna.
(keśavārjunayos, m. gen. dual, DV cpd. of the Handsome Haired One and Arjuna.)
punyam (m. acc. sg.), pure, sacred, holy.
hṛṣyāmi (1st sg. pr. indic. act. ṛṣya), I rejoice, I am excited.
ca, and.
muhur muhur, again and again, constantly, at every moment.
And remembering again and again
That marvelous form of Krishna,
My amazement is great, O King,
And I rejoice again and again.
Wherever there is Krishna, Lord of Yoga,
Wherever there is Arjuna, the archer,
There will surely be
Splendor, victory, wealth, and	righteousness; this is my conviction.
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PRAISE FOR THIS CLASSIC TRANSLATION

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