

## CHAPTER 13

### || THE FIELD AND THE KNOWER OF THE FIELD ||

I cherish God *Ganesha*, who is identical with my Self. Then I bow at the feet of my Master, who is the abode of all lores. Whoever thinks of him, masters the art of poetic composition and holds the lores at the tip of his tongue. He possesses such a sweet eloquence, that it surpasses nectar and the nine sentiments take recourse to all his words. The exegesis discloses its secrets and explains the different doctrines. When our mind meditates upon the feet of the Master, then their meaning dawns upon us, the lucky ones (1-5). Bowing to the feet of his Master, *Jnanadeva* says that the Lord of *Lakshmi*, father of god *Brahma*, spoke thus,

*The blessed Lord said:*

1. *This body, O son of Kunti (Arjuna) is called the Field, He who knows this - him the knowers thereof call the knower of the Field.*

O Partha, listen. This body is called the Field and he who knows this, is said to be the Knower of the Field.

2. *Know Me as the knower of the Field in all the Fields, O Bharata. The knowledge of the Field and its knower is, in My view, true knowledge.*

Know ye definitely, that I am the *Kshetrajna*, who supports the Fields. To know the Field and the knower of the Field, I deem it as the true knowledge.

3. *What that Field is, and of what sort, how it has evolved, and what evolves from it, and who (the knower) is and what his powers are, hear that from Me, in brief.*

I shall tell you now, why this body has been given the name of Field (6-10). Listen, I shall give you in detail its properties, how and where it originates, how it grows and with what modifications, whether it is limited to three and half cubits, how big it is and of what it is, whether barren or fertile and to whom it belongs. The *Vedas* have been talking about it all the time, while logic became loquacious in order to determine it. The six systems of philosophy came to their wits end, but their debates have not come to an end (11-15). It is for this reason that these systems have ceased to interact with one another and discussions have started all over the world, to bring about unanimity among them. So far there is no agreement among them, nor do they hold any reconciliation among the differing views. Reason has been powerless to bring about a consensus in these arguments and counter-arguments. No one knows to whom this Field belongs, but the desire to know it, is so strong that its discussion has caused headaches in every household. As the *Vedas* girded themselves to fight the unbelievers, the latter indulged in senseless chatter. The unbelievers say, that the grandiloquent statements of the *Vedas* are false and without any foundation and that if people disagree with this view, they are willing to accept the challenge and defeat them in a debate (16-20). Some unbelievers practice nudity, while others shave off their heads, but their wordy battles come to naught.

The *yogis* started to protect these Fields, lest they should fall into the clutches of death and go to waste. Being afraid of death, they resorted to solitude and practised self-control and sense-restraint. As the attachment to the Field came in the way of *yogic* practice, *Lord Shiva* abandoned his kingdom and made his home in the cemetery. Because of this pledge, he made the quarters his apparel (*resorted to nudity*) and burnt the cupid who tried to seduce him (21-25). God *Brahma* was endowed with four mouths in order to settle this issue, but he too was unable to know its power.

4. *The sages have sung it variously and severally in different Vedic hymns, and also in aphorisms on Brahman, that is well reasoned and conclusive.*

Some (ritualists) argue that this Field belongs to the individual Self and that the vital air is its tenant. In the house of the vital air labour his four brothers (other vital airs) and the farmer in the form of the mind, supervises their work. The mind has ten pairs of bullocks, in the form of ten sense-organs and toils hard day and night, in the farm of sense-objects. Then, missing the stream of scriptural injunctions, the embodied Self prepares the beds of misdeeds, by sowing the seeds of injustice (26-30). Then he secures an abundant crop of sins, as a result of which he suffers pain in many births. On the other hand, if after making certain of the availability of the stream in the form of scriptural injunctions, he sows the seeds of meritorious deeds, he enjoys happiness in many births.

On this some others (i.e. *Sankhyas*) say that this Field does not belong to the Self and that this matter should be referred to them for a decision. In this Field, they say, the Self dwells as a wayfarer for a short time and the vital air is a Field watchman, who keeps awake day and night and protects him. The Field is the hereditary estate of the beginningless *prakriti*, whose fame is sung by the *Sankhya* thinkers (31-35). Since the *prakriti* has all the necessary implements, she herself cultivates the Field. The three qualities in this created world, which originally cultivated this Field, were only born of her. The seed is sown by the *rajas* quality and it is protected by the *sattva* quality, while the *tamas* quality reaps the crop. Then she prepares the threshing ground of *mahat* (the Great Principle) and gets the crop threshed by a bull, in the form of Time, as a result of which, all the subtle impressions of gross creations get heaped up in the Unmanifest.

But this did not find approval with the intellectuals (the proponents of Divine Will). They said, yours is a modern idea. How can your *prakriti* hold its ground before the Supreme? We shall explain to you, the entire position of the Field, you may well hear it. The Divine Will was lying in a latent state, in the bed-chamber in the form of formless *Brahman*. It awoke all of a sudden, and since it was always active, it found the treasure in the form of the universe, in accordance with its desire. Then because of its exertions the three worlds, which were in a latent form, in the garden of the formless *Brahman*, came to possess name and form. Then he brought together the barren lands in the form of gross elements and created there from four kinds of living beings born from the womb, sweat, eggs and soil (41-45). Then taking different portions of the five gross elements, human bodies were formed and embankments in the form of good and evil deeds were erected on both sides of them, making the barren land fertile. Then the Divine Will constructed underground paths of births and deaths, linking this created world with the supportless *Brahman*. Then that Divine Will in co-operation with

egoism, created animate and inanimate universe. In this way, from the void of *Brahman*, the tree of Divine Will brought forth many branches and so it is the cause of this worldly existence (46-50).

Then hearing these fine words, others (i.e. naturalists) challenged them and said, "How wise of you to say all this! If your Divine Will can be said to remain latent in the Absolute, why should we not allow the *prakriti* of *Brahman*? Leave this alone and keep away from this discussion; we shall explain properly what this Field is. Now tell me, who fills the clouds in the sky with water? Who supports the stars in the sky? Who is it that has stretched the canopy of the sky and when? Whose Will has ordained that the wind should always keep blowing (51-55)? Who sows the seeds which sprout into hair on the human body? Who fills up the ocean with water? Who sends the showers of rain? In the same way, the Field is produced as a result of its natural disposition, and no one has a hereditary right over it. He who looks after it and none else, will reap its fruit."

On this, the advocates of *Kala* (Time as Destroyer) retort in anger, "If what you say is true, then why has *Kala* swayed over this Field? Even after knowing the formidable assault of *Kala*, people stick with pride to their own particular doctrines. This *Kala* is dreadful like a den of lions. If after knowing this, you indulge in empty talk, how will it help you (56-60)? This *Kala* will hold in his fatal grip, all of a sudden, even the blessed denizens of *Satyaloka*, at the final dissolution of the world. He enters the heavenly woods and destroys the eight regents and elephants that guard the eight quarters. In the whirl of this *Kala*, the deer in the form of human beings, become dispirited and wander in the pits of births and deaths. Just see how this *Kala* has spread out his paw and has held in it the elephant, in the form of the world and so the supremacy of this *Kala* over the Field, is the sole truth."

O Arjuna, these are different views about the Field (61-65). It is recorded in the *Puranas*, that the sages in the *Naimisha* forest, held discussions on this Field. The *Vedas* have expounded their theory about this Field, in meters such as the *anushtabha* and people take pride in them in support of their views. Even the *Brihatsama* in the *Vedas*, which is holy from the point of view of its knowledge, does not know this Field. Many learned men have laboured to determine the nature of this Field, what it is, how great it is, and under whose control (66-70). Now I shall tell you in detail about this Field, such as it is.

5. *The (five) gross elements, egoism, intellect and the unmanifest, the ten senses and the one (mind) and the five objects of senses,*
6. *Desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the aggregate, intelligence, firmness, this is the Field as briefly described together with its modifications.*

Five gross elements, egoism, intellect, *prakriti*, ten sense organs and the eleventh mind, ten sense-objects, pleasure and pain desire and hatred, the psychic organism, intelligence and steadiness, these thirty-six principles constitute the Field. Now I shall tell you, one by one what the gross elements, senses and sense-objects are (71-75). It is mentioned that the gross elements are the Earth, the Water, the Fire, the Wind and the Sky. Just as one does not see a dream in the wakeful state, or the moon on the New Moon day, the youth in a child, or fragrance in a bud, in short, O Arjuna, just as fire is hidden in firewood, so egoism is latent

in the womb of *prakriti*. Just as the fever seated in the bones only waits for the faulty diet and then makes itself felt all over the body (76-80), so egoism makes the body dance as soon as the gross elements combine to form a body. This egoism has an unusual feature, namely that it does not affect the ignorant, but seizes the wise man by the neck and makes things difficult for him. Now I shall tell you the characteristics by which you can recognise the intellect, so said the prince of the *Yadavas*. When the desire grows strong and the senses conquer their objects and offer the booty of pleasure and pain to a person, intellect decides what is the proportion of pleasure and pain in the thing so presented (81-85). It distinguishes between pleasure and pain, merit and sin, the pure and the impure. Thus a living being comes to know what is lofty and low, big and small and examines the sense-objects. So, that which is the source of knowledge and is the advanced state of *sattva* quality and which is on the borderline of the Self and its embodied form, that, O Arjuna, is the intellect.

Now hear about the characteristics of the Unmanifest. Know that the Unmanifest is the same as the *prakriti* of the *Sankhyas* (86-90). Earlier (in chapter 7) you have heard about two types of *prakriti* described by Me. The second or the higher type of *prakriti*, designated as *jivadasha*, is also known as Unmanifest. Just as after daybreak, the stars disappear and after sunset activities of living beings come to a stop, or as with the fall of the body, all conditioning factors (*upadhis*) remain, as impressions of past actions, or as the tree remains latent in its seed or as piece of cloth is contained in the yarn-form (91-95), so, that in which the gross elements and their modifications remain in their subtle form, after shedding their gross forms, know that, O Arjuna, to be the Unmanifest.

Now, hear about the senses. Ears, eyes, skin, nose and tongue, are the five sense organs. When these five senses combine to form a sensation, the intellect decides whether the sensation will conduce to pleasure or pain. Besides these, speech, hands, feet, anus and the sexual organ are five more sense organs (96-100), which are known as the organs of action, so said Shri Krishna, the Lord of Liberation. The power of action, which is the mate of *prana*, brings about the activity of the body through these five sense organs. The Lord said, so I have told you about the ten sense organs. Now I shall explain to you clearly the nature of the mind. That which is at the junction of the sense organs and intellect and plays its part in a capricious manner, riding on the shoulder of the *rajas* quality, is the mind. The mind is an illusory thing like the bluish colour of the sky or the unreal wave of the mirage (101-105). When the body is formed from the gross elements, as a result of the union of semen and blood (*ovum*), then the vital air transforms itself into ten kinds. Then these ten kinds of vital air dwell in their respective parts of the body, according to their nature. The pure fickleness, which exists in these ten vital airs, becomes separate from them and gets support from the strength of the *rajas* quality. This fickleness plays a powerful part in between the intellect and egoism. It is given the fictitious name of mind, but it is a mere notion, which is responsible for the embodiment of the Self (106-110), and is the cause of activity. It is that which promotes passion, incites the ego, increases desire, strengthens hope and reinforces fear. It is that which gives rise to the notion of duality, promotes ignorance and pushes the sense organs towards their sense-objects. It is that which creates the world of fancy and immediately razes it, as if forming castles in the air and then pulling them down. It is that which is the house of delusion and the inner essence of the vital air, which has locked up the intellect (111-115). It is this, which is called the mind.

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Now hear about objects of senses with their names. Sound, touch, form, taste and smell are the five objects of the senses. Just as an animal, after seeing green grass, becomes bewildered and runs helter-skelter, so knowledge runs outside through these five outlets. Then the utterance of sound and letters, the action of seizing and casting away, movement and discharge of faeces and urine are the five objects of the senses and through these proceeds the activity of the body (116-120). These are the five sense-objects in the body and I shall now describe the nature of desire.

Desire is that state of the mind, which results from the recollection of a past experience or a sound heard before or it is that state of mind, which arises speedily out of passionate craving when the sense organs and their objects meet. As a result of this, mind runs helter-skelter and tastes the forbidden fruit. That mental state which relishes the sensual pleasures and deludes the intellect, is known as desire (121-125). And the mental state, which arises when the senses are deprived of their sensuous enjoyments, is said to be hatred. Now pleasure is that mental state, which makes one forget other things. When it is attained, it brings to a stop all the activities of the body, speech and the mind; makes the body forget itself, paralyses the vital air, enforces the *sattvika* sentiments and gathers all the functions of the senses in the heart and coaxes them to sleep (126-130). In short, that mental state in which the embodied Self comes into contact with the Self is called happiness. And to live without attaining this state is itself misery. Happiness is not attained when the mind is attached to desires, and in the absence of desire it is a natural and self-existent state. So pleasure and pain depend upon the absence and existence of desire.

Now, O Arjuna, when the body is under the sway of the Self, which is the detached witness of everything, there results what is known as intelligence. It is ever awake, pervading the body from head to feet and remains unchanged in all the three states of wakefulness, dreaming and deep slumber (131-135). It keeps the mind, intellect etc. fresh and the wood in the form of *prakriti* in full bloom as in spring. It pervades without doubt all things, animate as well as inanimate, in more or less proportions. Just as the army under the command of a king, who does not know how big it is, defeats his enemy, or the sea gets its tidal wave with the appearance of the moon; or the iron moves in the proximity of the magnet; or the affairs of the world are carried on in sunlight; or the chick of a female tortoise is fed by her mere glance (136-140), so the inner parts of the body are animated by the presence of the Self, dwelling in it. This is what is known as intelligence. Now listen to the description of the distinctive forms of steadiness. The five gross elements are hostile to one another by their very nature. Does not water denude the earth? Fire dries up the water and is opposed to the wind, while the sky easily swallows the wind. Just as the sky pervades everything, but remains separate without combining with it (141-145), so these five gross elements remain in unison in the body. They give up their mutual strife and help one another with their natural qualities. That which brings about and sustains such unity, which is usually not possible, is firmness.

O son of *Pandu*, the combination of these principles together with life, is known as the aggregate, the thirty-sixth principle. I have thus, explained to you clearly the thirty-six principles which taken together, are known by the famous name of Field (146-150). When all the component parts of a chariot come together, they are known as the chariot; so all the limbs of the body from head to feet form the body. Just as the elephants, the assemblage of chariots, horses

and infantry gets the name 'army' and the combination of letters is known as a sentence, when the clouds assemble, they are known as the cloudy sky, so all the worlds form the universe. When oil, wick and fire come together, they get the name of a lamp. In the same way, when these thirty-six principles come together, their assemblage is known as the Field. The cultivation of this physical body yields the crop of merit and demerit and so we call it 'Field' in admiration and some name it 'body'. It has many different names. In fact, all things in this world with the exception of the Supreme Self, take birth and die and constitute this Field. They are born in different species such as gods, human beings, serpents. But they do so, in accordance with their qualities and past actions. These qualities will be described in detail later on (in chapter 14; 156-160). So I have told you all the distinctive characteristics of the Field along with its modifications.

Now I shall explain to you the highest knowledge. For the sake of this knowledge, *yogis* bypass heaven and swallow the sky. Some disregard prosperity and miraculous powers and scorn the hard method of Yoga. Some cross the fortress of austerities, while others may offer many sacrifices and uproot the plants of religious rites (by giving up their fruit). Many follow the path of worship and wander about naked, while others practicing *Hathayoga* go through the secret path of *Sushumna* (161-165). With an intense longing for this knowledge, some rummage the leaves of *Vedas* (to discover the right path). In the hope of acquiring this knowledge through the service of the *Guru*, some surrender their many lives to him. This knowledge destroys ignorance and brings about the union of the embodied Self with the Supreme Self. It closes the doors of the senses, diminishes activity and dispels anxiety of the mind. With the attainment of this knowledge, the sense-duality disappears and the Self realises its identify with the Supreme Self (166-170). That knowledge destroys the ego, devours the great delusion, and banishes all talk of 'mine' and 'others'. It uproots worldly existence, cleanses the impurity of desire and embraces the all-pervading *Brahman*. Its attainment cripples the vital air (*prana*) and under its authority the world carries on its affairs. From its light, intellect derives its vision and life remains on the crest of joy. This knowledge is the sole reservoir of sanctity, which purifies the mind soiled by the objects of senses (171-175). Its attainment is a complete cure for the disease of consumption in the form of delusion, because of which the pure Self thinks itself to be the body.

This knowledge is difficult to explain, but I am going to make it comprehensible to you. It is not true that it cannot be seen by the physical eyes. For when the body becomes permeated by the power of this knowledge, its symptoms become visible through the actions of the sense organs. Just as the blossoming of the trees indicates the advent of the spring, so the actions of sense organs, bear testimony to knowledge. O Partha, one comes to know whether the tree is watered or not from its spreading branches (176-180). The fresh and blooming blossoms bear evidence of the softness of the soil. Birth in a noble family and good breeding of a person can be known from his unimpeachable conduct or friendship becomes apparent from the hospitality shown. If one attains serenity of mind at the sight of a person, he instantly recognises that he has met a saintly person. The camphor in the camphor tree makes its presence felt by its fragrance or a lamp kept in a pane of glass sheds its light outside. In the same way, knowledge in his mind makes itself felt through certain traits, which I shall now explain. Listen carefully.

7. *Absence of pride and hypocrisy, non-injury, forbearance, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness and self-restraint,*

He does not like being compared with anybody, and feels it a burden if anyone calls him great (181-185). If anyone praises his virtues, or shows him respect or describes his caliber, he becomes nervous like a deer blockaded by a hunter or like a swimmer caught in a whirlpool. O Partha, he finds himself in a predicament, if he receives the applause of the people, and he does not want any importance given to him. When he thinks, 'I do not want to see people showing reverence to me or hear my fame from their lips or even like people to remember me specially' how can one pay homage to him or how would he accept it? He feels it a great calamity, if someone bows to him (186-190). Although his knowledge is as encyclopedia as that of *Brihaspati* (the preceptor of gods), he conceals it for fear of becoming a celebrity and behaves like an idiot. He hides his wisdom and greatness, and likes to show himself as an idiot. He feels disgusted at his popularity, is tired of religious debates, and has a great liking for quiet life. He heartily wishes that people should take no notice of him and that his kith and kin should give up worrying about him. He usually performs such actions as will promote modesty and humility in him (191-195). He adopts such a life style, as to make the people care less whether he is living or dead. He wishes that the people should begin to doubt whether he is walking on his legs or borne by the wind. He prays to God that people should ignore his existence and even forget his name and no living being should be afraid of him. He prefers solitude and is glad to see an uninhabited place. He likes to make friends with the wind, to talk to the sky and to hold the trees dearer than his life (196-200). In short, when a person displays these traits, he should be known to have attained knowledge. That quality which is known as absence of pride, should be recognised by these characteristics.

Now I shall tell you my view as to how one should recognise the absence of hypocrisy in a person. A miser never discloses his hidden wealth even under the threat of death; so, O Partha even at the risk of his life, he will not mention his good deeds. A naughty cow withholds its milk or a harlot conceals her advanced age (201-205). A rich man does not put on airs of his wealth, when he is caught in a difficult situation in the forest. A married woman from a good family does not expose her body, and when a farmer sows the corn, he covers it up with soil. In the same way he keeps secret, his charity and good actions. He does not adorn his person, nor implore others for favours nor announce the charities given by him. He does not speak about the favours granted to others, nor boast about his learning and he never sells his knowledge in order to earn fame. He seems niggardly in spending money on his personal enjoyments, but he spends lavishly on charity (206-210). He suffers great want in his home comforts, his body becomes lean and emaciated, but he vies with the wish-yielding tree in giving alms. In short, he is great in doing his religious duties, very generous on right occasions, skilled in debate on self-knowledge, but he behaves like a mad man in other respects. The banana tree appears outwardly light and hollow, but it bears a bumper crop of juicy fruits. Usually the clouds appear light and soft and liable to be scattered by the wind, but it is wonderful how they can send such heavy showers. In the same manner, seeing him so full of wisdom, the heart is thoroughly pleased, but outwardly he seems to be lacking in other things (211-215). Know that the person in whom these traits appear in full measure, has attained wisdom. O Arjuna, that which is known as absence of hypocrisy is nothing else but this. I shall now explain to you the nature of non-violence, listen.

Now non-violence has been defined in different ways by different schools of thought. Just as one constructs a hedge at the foot of a tree by cutting its branches or satisfies one's hunger by cutting and cooking one's hands or builds an enclosure to the sanctuary with the materials obtained by pulling down the temple (216-220), so the *Mimamsakas* (*ritualists*) hold, that when animals are killed in sacrificial rites, this slaughter is tantamount to non-injury. When the people are tormented by famine, they perform sacrifices to get rain; but animals are slaughtered at the very start of these sacrifices. In these circumstances by committing violence how can one see the distant shore of non-violence? How can non-violence grow where only the seeds of violence are sown? But this desire of the ritualists to achieve non-violence through violence, is truly remarkable.

O Arjuna, the Ayurveda also lays down that it is permissible to sacrifice a life to save another life (221-225). This science saw many beings knocked down by various diseases and devised treatment to alleviate their suffering. In this treatment, they dig out roots of trees and in some cases uproot the tree along with their roots and branches. They cut some trees in the middle, strip the others of their barks and bake the pith of some trees in a pot. The innocent trees which bear no enmity to others are cracked all over and thus reduced to a lifeless and dry state. They cut the bellies of live creatures in order to take out the bile and save human beings suffering from diseases (226-230). This is like pulling down homes in order to build temples and shrines, opening free kitchens by robbing people in trade, covering the head by keeping the posterior bare, erecting a pavilion by pulling down a house, or making a fire to warm oneself by burning the blanket or like giving a bath to the elephant or building a cowpen by selling a bull or buying a cage after driving away the parrot. How can one describe it? Is it useful work or mockery? Should one laugh it away or jeer at it? In one (*Jain*) tradition it is the custom to drink water after straining it through a piece of cloth, killing in that process many vermins (231-235). Some do not cook grain for fear of causing injury, but they cause torture to their own bodies, which is itself injury.

Try to understand O Arjuna, this perverse doctrine of the ritualistic, that violence committed in accordance with scriptural injunction amounts to non-violence. I had a mind to tell you all this at the very onset, so that you can know such spurious non-violence properly and avoid it. These views usually figure in any discussion of non-violence. Otherwise, who would like to deviate from the straight-forward course (of explaining one's own views) (236-240)? Moreover, O Arjuna, it is essential to take note of the relevant doctrines of other systems in order to explain one's propositions clearly. This is the usual method of discussion.

Now I shall tell you my own view of non-violence. If one sees these characteristics of non-violence in a person, one can be sure that he has attained knowledge. Just as gold can be tested on the touchstone, so one can judge from his conduct, whether he is imbued with true non-violence or not. Now hear, O Arjuna, how on the attainment of knowledge his mind becomes impressed with non-violence (241-245). Just as the crane fixing its eyes on the prey, swiftly but cautiously treads the water without disturbing and breaking the ripples or as the bee lands lightly on the lotus for fear of crushing the pollens in it, so realising that even the particles of dust are covered by tiny creatures, he (the non-violent person), places his feet cautiously on the ground out of compassion. In whatever direction he goes, he fills it up with affection and takes care of the tiny life under his feet more than his own life (246-250). When



he walks, O Arjuna, in this cautious way, no one can describe the magnitude of his non-violent nature in words. Just as a she-cat holds its kitten in its teeth lovingly without hurting it, or an affectionate mother looks at her infant with a tender glance or a sore eyelid gets relief when it is fanned with a lotus-leaf, he walks over the ground in such a gentle way that if a worm comes into contact with his feet it feels happy (251-255). O Arjuna, if he sees a worm or an ant while walking, he beats a retreat. He turns back without treading upon any tiny creature with the compassionate thought that his noisy step would disturb the sleep of the all-pervading Self in the tiny creature and affect his composure. When he does not tread upon the grass for fear of hurting any life, how is it possible that he would trample over a creature after seeing it? Just as an ant cannot scale the *Meru* mountain or a fly cannot cross the sea, so he would not step over any creature he comes across (256-260).

Just as his walk bears fruit in clemency, his speech is also full of compassion. His breathing is gentle, his mouth the very abode of charm, while his teeth are like sprouts of sweetness. So when he begins to speak, first love oozes out from his mouth and then the kind words follow. To the extent possible, he does not talk to others and if such an occasion arises, he prefers silence, fearing that his speech would offend someone or touch a tender spot, or create a doubt (261-265) in somebody's mind or spoil somebody's plan or startle or cause pain to somebody or someone may disregard his speech or raise his eyebrows and look at him wrathfully. But if anyone makes a request, he speaks with affection and then his speech gives pleasure to the hearer, as if the words were coming from his parents. His speech is then truthful but soft, moderate but straight like nectar, as if the mystic sound has assumed form or the sacred water of the *Ganga* has splashed up or a chaste lady has grown old (266-270). His speech avoids subjects, which are contentious or controversial or likely to cause pain and also words calculated to ridicule, rebuke or touch somebody to the quick. His speech has also shed such faults as stubbornness, excitement, deceit, hope, doubt and fraud.

Similarly his glance is always straight and his eyebrows are never raised in anger. Realising that the Self dwells in every creature, he avoids staring at anyone lest his glance might cause it anguish. Were he by chance to open his eyes with a kind heart (271-275), then the person at whom he looks derives immense satisfaction. It is as though the *ambrosial* moonbeams, though invisible, satisfy the hunger of a *chakora* bird. Even the tortoise does not know this sort of affection in its glance, by which it nurtures its young chicks.

As his glance is pleasing, so his hands are also benevolent. Just as the *yogis* who have attained fulfillment are devoid of desire, so his hands are devoid of activity. Just as a feeble person gives up work, or a fire is extinguished for want of fuel, or a dumb person takes the vow of silence (276-280), there is nothing left for his hands to do and so they remain unoccupied. He does not move his hand, lest they should give a jerk to the wind or scratch the sky with his nails. Then how is it possible that he should drive away the fly on his person or the midges before his eyes or frighten the animals and birds or do such other things? He does not like to carry a rod or a stick in his hand. How then can he think of wielding a weapon? He does not like to rotate a lotus even in play or indulge in flinging a wreath of flowers for fear that it will act like a sling and cause hurt to creatures (281-285). He does not caress anyone for fear of disturbing the hair on his body and grows his nails without cutting them to avoid injury. Usually, he keeps his hands disengaged, but if at all he moves them, it is because he

is accustomed to join his hands in a bow. He is abashed at giving the sign of safety, or lending a hand to a falling person or caressing a person in distress. Even the moonbeams do not possess the tenderness with which he removes the sufferings of others. When compared to his soft touch, even the breeze flowing from the *Malaya* mountain appears harsh, and with the same gentle touch, he caresses the animals (286-290). His hands are always free and unoccupied, but they are like the cool parts of a sandalwood tree, which, though not bearing fruits, are not fruitless. Enough of this rhetoric. The actions of a good person are in perfect harmony with his temperament and character.

How then is his mind? Is it necessary to make a separate mention of it? To whom does all this play that is described, belong? Do not the branches form the tree? Can the sea exist without water? Are the sun and his rays different? Are the limbs separate from the body or is fluid different from water (291-295)? Therefore, know that whatever external activities of the senses have been referred to so far, belong to the mind. Just as the seed which is sown in the soil comes out as tree, so the mind radiates through the senses. If non-violence does not exist in the mind, how will it flow out of the sense organs? O Arjuna, an idea first springs in the mind, and then it finds an expression through the mouth, sight and hands. How can a thing, which is not in the mind issue forth in speech? Can a seedling ever sprout without a seed in the soil (296-300)? When the mind loses its essential nature, the activities of the senses come to a stop, like a puppet without the person who pulls its strings. If the water of a stream dries up at its very source, how can it be in its flow? How can the body move after the life has left it? In the same way, O Arjuna, all the activities of the senses originate from the mind, which acts through them. So whatever desire is held by the mind expresses itself as the activity of the senses. For this reason, if the mind is imbued with non-violence, it is conveyed to the senses, as the smell of a ripe fruit spreads out in all directions (301-305). Borrowing the capital of non-violence from the mind the sense organs deal in it. Just as the sea in tide floods the creeks, so the mind makes over its wealth of non-violence, to the sense organs. In short, as the teacher holding the hand of his pupil, makes him write the letters, so the mind transmits its kindness to the senses and makes them follow non-violence. In this way, O Arjuna, the mind directs the activities of the senses (306-310). Thus, whoever has renounced violence physically, mentally as well as in speech, know that he is the very temple of knowledge. Why say more? He is knowledge in flesh and blood. If anyone wishes to see with his own eyes non-violence about which we have heard so much or which we have discussed on the authority of scripture, he should see this person.

(*Jnanadeva* says) I should have told you in one sentence what the Lord said. Pray forgive me for dilating upon it. You might think that as the animal while grazing forgets to go back or a bird flies in the sky along with the wind (311-315), so my intellect was carried away by the warmth of love (for the subject), resulting in the detailed description of the literary sentiments (*rasas*) and that I could not control myself. But, such is not the case; there is a sound reason for this expansion. Otherwise the word *ahimsa* is made up of only three letters and its theory can be expressed only in a few words. But one will get a clear idea of non-violence only on refutation of mistaken views about it. You would not have liked it, if I had presented my view without refuting such mistaken notions of non-violence. Only blackstones (*Shaligrama*) will be sold in the town of jewelers, so one should untie the bundle of such stones and not

try to sell crystals there by praising them (316-320). Where even flour is sold in small quantities, who will care to buy fragrant *camphor* there? Therefore, O my Masters, I felt that you would not like my oration on this subject. You will not even care to hear my statements *en masse*, made without discriminating between ordinary and distinguished hearers. You will lose interest, if the propositions I make, become obscure with doubts. Do the swans ever look at the water covered with moss (321-325)? If the moonbeams come from behind the clouds, the *chakora* bird would not even care to open its beak to enjoy them. If my exposition is not beyond doubt, you will not come to me and hold my work in hand, you will only be cross with me. If, while explaining my point of view, I did not refute the objections of others, such a discourse will not lead to a common bond of amity between us. I am composing this work with the sole object of earning your approbation and keeping you favourably disposed to me.

Truly speaking, I know that you are ardent admirers of the *Gita* and so I have clasped it to my bosom (326-330). You will be able to redeem it only by giving all that you possess. This is, therefore, not a composition, but your deposit kept with me. If you value your possessions more than this deposit, then both the *Gita* and myself will be reduced to the same state (of neglect). I do not wish to say more, I only need your favour and for that, I have started explaining the *Gita*. I mentioned the divergent views on non-violence in order to make this discourse fit for you, because you are an audience of connoisseurs. So this narration has expanded to such an extent that it has digressed from the meaning of the original verse. Please forgive me, your child, for these lapses (331-335). If one takes time to cast out a pebble found while chewing food, it should not be treated as waste of time, as it has to be cast out. If a son has taken a day more, to get rid of a polished thief on the way and returned safe, should the mother get cross with him for the delay or receive him joyfully and wave before him *Neem* leaves to ward off evil? But these illustrations are not appropriate. I should only implore you to bear with my prattle. Now listen to what the Lord said.

The Lord said, O clever Arjuna, give Me your attention. I shall now mention to you, those traits by which you will recognise knowledge. Know that he who extends forbearance to a person without giving him cause for complaint, possesses knowledge (336-340). Just as lotus creepers grow in deep lake, or wealth increases in the house of a fortunate person, in the same way I shall tell you those signs by which one can judge whether forbearance is on the increase in a person. He faces all good or bad situations with the same suavility with which we wear ornaments of our choice. He does not feel bad even when he is harassed by the three-fold afflictions. He rejoices equally with the acquisition of a desirable thing or of an undesirable object. He bears, with composure and equanimity, honour and dishonour, and also pleasure and pain and his mind is not affected with censure or praise. He does not feel the heat of the sun or shiver in cold and has no fear when faced with any situation. Just as the *Meru* mountain does not feel the burden of its peak or the Boar incarnation of *Lord Vishnu*, did not find the earth heavy or the earth does not feel the crowding together of animate and inanimate beings, so he is not troubled by pleasure or pain. Even though many rivers in floods join the sea, the latter holds them in its bosom (346-350); in the same way he not only bears everything quietly but is not even aware of doing so. He accepts all things that befall him as parts of himself and so he does not feel that he is doing anything extraordinary, in bearing

them. He who possesses such unsullied forbearance, brings glory to knowledge. Such a person, O Arjuna, becomes the very life of knowledge.

Now I shall tell you the nature of straightforwardness. This straightforwardness is like the life-breath, which favours all equally without likes or dislikes. Just as the sun does not give light after seeing the faces or the sky provides space to all without discrimination, in the same way he does not treat beings differently whether in his thought or behaviour. He has the acquaintance and long standing kinship with the world, so that he does not make any distinction like 'mine' or 'of others'. He makes friends with every one and he favours all like water. He does not bear a grudge against anyone. His mental attitudes are as straight as the sweep of the wind and he is free from desire and doubt (356-360). Just as a child does not feel any hesitation in approaching its mother, so he does not feel diffident in placing his views, before the world. Just as a flower in bloom, cannot hide its fragrance, so he cannot keep his feelings concealed in a corner of his mind. As a faultless jewel sends forth its sparkle, so the actions issuing from his pure mind are equally pure. Satiated with the experience of the Self, he does not sit cogitating over things. He does not hold his mind in leash nor does he leave it absolutely free. He does not harbour deceit, his speech is not equivocal nor does he bear ill-will to anybody (361-365). All his senses are straightforward, free from deceit and pure and all his five life-breaths are ever free. His heart is as straight as the flow of nectar. In short, he is the very home of all these qualities. Know that such a person is straightforwardness in flesh and blood and knowledge dwells in him.

Now I shall tell you about devotion to the *Guru*; listen, O Prince among the clever. This devotion to the *Guru* is the source of all fortunes and it makes even a care-worn person fit for union with the Supreme (365-370). Now I am going to reveal to you, this devotion to the *Guru*, give me your undivided attention. Just as the river *Ganga* joins the sea with its wealth of water, or the *Vedas* enter the abode of the Supreme or a chaste wife dedicates her life with its good and bad points to her husband, so he dedicates his heart along with his senses to the family of his *Guru* and becomes verily the temple of devotion to him. Just as a wife keeps on thinking of her absent husband, the thoughts of the place where his *Guru* dwells, crowd in his mind (371-375). He welcomes the wind, which blows from the direction of his *Guru's* place and invites him to visit his home. He is crazy because of his devotion to the *Guru* and so he likes to talk to the direction in which his *Guru's* house lies, and he regards that house as his hereditary estate. But like the calf, which is confined in the cowpen being tied with a tether, he has to remain alone in his own village as directed by his *Guru*. He is ever anxious to know when he will be free to see the *Guru* and finds every moment of his separation from him, as long as an epoch. If someone arrives from the *Guru's* place or somebody is sent by the *Guru* himself, he feels like one who, while at the death's door, gets a fresh lease of life (376-380), or like a withering seedling, which receives a shower of nectar, or like a fish in a pond which finds itself in the ocean, or like a beggar who finds a treasure or like a blind man who recovers his sight or like a pauper who secures the lordship of heaven. Likewise he becomes overpowered by joy at the mention of his *Guru's* name, he feels like clasping the sky in his arms. If you see such devotion to his preceptor's family, know definitely that knowledge becomes his steward.

Then with his heart filled with great devotional love for his *Guru*, he practises meditation upon

his image (381-385). He installs his *Guru* as the titular deity in his pure heart and himself becomes with his heart and soul all the articles needed for his worship. He installs the phallus of *Lord Shiva* in the form of his *Guru*, in the temple of bliss within the courtyard of knowledge and sprinkles nectar in the form of meditation on him. When the sun of Self-knowledge dawns upon him, he fills his basket in the form of intellect with flowers of righteous feelings and offers hundred thousand flowers to *Lord Shiva* in the form of his *Guru*. Taking morning, noon and evening as the holy hours of the day, he burns the incense of the body and waves the lamp of knowledge before him. He makes a food offering to the *Guru*, in the form of union with *Brahman* and imagining him to be the phallus emblem of *Lord Shiva*, becomes its worshipper (386-390). On occasions his intellect conceives the *Guru* as the spouse and enjoys his company and love on the bed, in the form of the Self. At times, his mind becomes so flooded with this love for his *Guru*, that he calls that love the *Sea of Milk*. Then he imagines that the happiness resulting from his meditation is the '*Shesha*' bedstead and the *Guru* is the *Narayana* reclining thereon. He imagines himself to be the goddess *Lakshmi*, rubbing his feet and also as *Garuda* who stands nearby (with folded hands). He imagines himself, to be taking birth from the navel of *Lord Vishnu*, in the form of his *Guru* and experiences blissful meditation mentally with devotion to the image of his *Guru* (391-395). On some occasion, he imagines his *Guru* to be his mother and rolls on his lap as a suckling infant. O Arjuna, he thinks his *Guru* as a cow resting under the tree of knowledge and himself as the calf sitting behind her. At times he fancies himself to be the fish swimming in the water of *Guru's* grace. On other occasions, he imagines the *Guru's* grace to be a shower of nectar and himself as a plant in the form of servitude. He entertains such different fancies in respect of his *Guru*. See how limitless is his love! He fancies himself to be the chick, with no eyes and wings (396-400), fed by the beak of the mother-bird in the form of the *Guru*. He imagines the *Guru* to be his swimmer with himself holding on to the tuck of his *dhoti* (while swimming in the sea of life). Just as there arises, waves after waves in a sea in high tide, meditation produces meditation one after another, arising out of his deep love. How can I describe the various shapes which his fancy takes? Thus he enjoys the bliss of meditation, arising from his devotion of love for his *Guru*.

Now I shall explain to you the external service, which he thinks he can render to his *Guru*. He resolves to serve his *Guru* in such a way that he will be pleased and tell him to ask for a boon. If I succeed in pleasing my Master, I shall make this prayer to him (401-405). I shall say to him, 'O my Master, I shall become all your retinue', I shall become each and every article required for his service. I shall seek this boon from the *Guru* and when he says '*Amen*' I shall become all his personal accessories. You will then see the miraculous service, which I render to the *Guru*. My Master is like a mother to many disciples, but I shall put him on oath, that he should extend his motherly love only to me (406-410).

I shall act in such a way that my Master will become full of fondness for me, solely devoted to me and reserve his entire affection for me. In whatever way the wind blows, it is confined within the four quarters; in the same way I shall become the cage for his favour. I shall fancy loyal service to my Master, as my mistress and decorate her with the ornaments in the form of my good qualities. In fact I shall become the sole repository of devotion for the *Guru*. I shall become the land for receiving the showers of my *Guru's* love. In this way, he goes on

building castles in the air of various sorts, in his mind. He says, "I shall become my Master's house and serve him as his houseman (411-415). I shall become the threshold, which the *Guru* crosses, while entering and going out of the house. I shall become all the doors of his house and also the door-keeper. I shall be his wooden slippers and make him wear them. I shall become his parasol as also his parasol-bearer. I shall become his mace-bearer and caution him of the dips and bumps on the way. I shall hold the fly-whisker (*chavari*) over him, also become the hand supporting him and his page walking ahead of him. I shall be his valet, who will hold the goblet of water, with which he can rinse his mouth and also become the basin to receive the spit-out water. I shall give him the roll of betel leaves and also receive the residue chewed by him and make proper arrangement for his bath (416-420). I shall become his seat, his ornaments, his apparel, and the sandal paste etc. I shall be his cook and shall serve him a meal and shall also wave the lamp of my soul before his face. I shall keep him company at mealtime and then I shall offer him the roll of *betel* leaves. I shall remove the plate from which he ate his food, shall spread his bed and massage his feet. I shall become the sofa, on which the *Guru* will sit. Thus, I shall perform my vow to serve him to the best of my abilities (421-425). I shall render him marvelous service by becoming everything which his body will touch. I shall become all the forms which his kind eyes will see. I shall be all the dishes which will please his palate and I shall serve his nostrils by becoming all the fragrances. Thus, he feels that he should extend all such service to the *Guru* (426-430).

*Jnanadeva* says, "I want to render service in this way so long as my body lasts. But I should still wish to serve him even after I lose my body. I shall mingle the earth element of my body with the earth on which my *Guru* treads. I shall mix the water element in the body, in the water touched by my Master. I shall merge the fire element in my body with the light, which is waved before the face of my *Guru*, or which is in the temple of the *Guru*. In the fly-whisker and the fan of the *Guru*, wherever they may be, I shall mingle my life breath and become the wind to serve him (431-435). I shall mix the sky element in my body in the space occupied by the *Guru*, along with his retinue. I will not, whether dead or alive, allow any interruption in service to the *Guru* and will not allow anyone else to render service to him even for a moment. Epochs after epochs will pass in this way in such service rendered by me to the *Guru*."

In his keen desire to serve the *Guru*, he knows neither day nor night nor more nor less and becomes thoroughly pleased if the *Guru* entrusts more work to him. He becomes as great as the sky, in serving his *Guru* and renders all the requisite service, single-handed in time (436-440). In this respect, his body runs ahead of his mind and its actual execution exceeds his fondest wish. At times, he is prepared to sacrifice his life in order to fulfill the playful wish of his *Guru*. He becomes lean in the service of the *Guru*, but is nourished by his love. He becomes the rightful recipient of the Master's command. He thinks himself respectable, because of his association with the *Guru's* family and noble, because of his affection for his brother disciples, and rendering service to the *Guru*, becomes his passion. He looks upon the rites and duties belonging to the tradition of his *Guru*, as the duties in the stages of his life and the service of the *Guru* as his obligatory duty (441-445); The *Guru* is for him the holy place (*tirtha*), he is his God, his mother and father, and he knows no other path leading to liberation. The door of his *Guru's* house is his all and he shows affection to the servants of the *Guru* as if they were his real brothers. He chants esoteric formula (*mantra*) of the *Guru's*

name and he does not touch any scriptures other than the *Guru's* precepts. He considers the water touched by his *Guru's* feet, as equal to the holy waters in all the three worlds. When he gets the left-over of the food, tasted by his *Guru*, to eat, he regards with contempt even the bliss of deep meditation (446-450). He experiences the bliss of salvation by placing on his head, the dust raised by the *Guru* while walking. How much can I dilate upon devotion to the *Guru*? There is no limit to it.

This detailed talk is due to the outburst of my feeling of devotion to the *Guru*. He who has a keen desire for devotion, does not consider anything more important than service to the *Guru*. He is verily the home of knowledge of the Self, and because of him, this knowledge gains dignity and becomes his devotee, regarding him as its deity. In this way, knowledge dwells in such a person, which is sufficient to satisfy the needs of the whole world and is freely accessible to everyone (451-455). (*Jnanadeva* says) I have described this devotion for the *Guru* at such length, since I have an overwhelming fondness for it. In regard to the service of the *Guru*, I am armless even though with arms, blind to his devotional songs even though with eyes, more sluggish in his service than a cripple, dumb in describing his glory and a lazy one who has to be fed without any return. But I have intense love for my Master, and so I had to give such an elaborate description of him. Please relish this elaboration and give me an opportunity to serve you, so that I shall give you the correct interpretation of this work (456-460). Hear, O hearers, *Lord Vishnu*, who bears patiently, the burden of world's troubles, is talking and Arjuna is listening.

Just as camphor is clear both within and without, so the man of wisdom is pure both internally and externally. Like the jewel which is pure both in and out or like the sun who is equally brilliant both within and without, so he has become externally pure by means of his pious works and internally pure by knowledge. He makes his body pure by washing it with earth and water and by the recitation of the *Vedas* (461-465). Just as a mirror can be cleansed of its dust, by the intelligent use of a cleansing powder or the stains on linen are removed in the laundry, so know that his body is washed in the same way. His interior is also illumined by the lamp of knowledge and purified thereby. Otherwise, O Arjuna, it is ridiculous to keep the body clean, when the heart is impure. It is like adorning a corpse with ornaments, bathing the donkey in holy waters, or plastering a bitter gourd with jaggery, or decorating a deserted house with an ornamental arch or besmearing food on an empty stomach, or putting the mark of red powder (*kumkum*) or minium (*shendura*) on the forehead of a widow (466-470). Fie upon the tawdry brilliance seen on the gilded hollow dome of a temple, what use can one make of painted fruits, which contain only cow-dung inside? So it is the case with pious works. A thing of bad quality cannot fetch a higher price. A pitcher filled with wine, cannot be made holy by dipping it in the water of the *Ganga*. So if the mind is pure, external purity follows automatically. Otherwise, how can you find pure knowledge and pure work together? For this reason, O Arjuna, he who has cleansed his exterior by pious works and removed the internal stains by knowledge, becomes purified in and out. Why say more? There remains only purity in him (471-475). Just as a light in a pane of glass is seen to move inside, so his pure thoughts become manifest in the activities of his sense organs. Even if he sees, hears or comes across matters which create doubts, or false notions or yield sprouts of inaction, it produces no effect upon him. Just as the colours of the clouds do not stain the sky, so even

if his senses come into contact with their objects, his mind remains uncontaminated with any emotions. Even if he comes across a beautiful lady or a woman of the lower caste, he takes no notice of her and remains indifferent (476-480). When a young woman embraces her husband and son, she has no sexual feeling for the son. His heart is as pure as that and it fully appraises desire and doubt, good and bad actions. Just as a diamond does not get wet by water, or a pebble is not cooked in boiling water, so he does not become tainted by impure thoughts. O Arjuna, this is what is known as purity and wherever you see it in full, know that knowledge exists in him.

He whose mind has attained steadiness, is the very life of knowledge (481-485). Although he carries on outwardly the affairs of the world, according to his disposition, his steady mind is not disturbed. Just as when the cow goes to the pasture for grazing, she does not take her love for the calf with her or the chaste wife who immolates herself in the funeral pyre of her husband, is not aware of the formalities performed at that time or a greedy man's mind is always on his hoard wherever he goes, so even when his physical activities are going on, his mind does not swerve from knowledge. Just as the sky does not run with the rushing clouds, or the Pole star does not move with the other stars, or the road does not walk with the traveller or the trees do not come and go (486-490), so the movements of the body made up of the gross elements, do not ruffle his mind. Just as the earth does not totter by the impact of the whirlwind, so his mind does not become depressed by calamities. Want and misery do not vex him nor do fear and sorrow shake him and he does not feel frightened even when death is imminent.

When he is tormented by inordinate hopes, vexations, old age or disease, he does not lose his mental balance. His mind does not vascillate, when he has to face slander, dishonour or punishment or the consequences of intense passion or greed. His mind does not become perturbed, even if the sky comes down crashing or the earth gets dissolved in the oceans. Just as an elephant does not retreat when he is attacked with flowers, so he is not perturbed when he is assailed by foul words. Just as the *Mandara* mountain is not shaken by the waves of the *Milky Sea* or the sky is not burnt by the forest conflagration, so his mind does not get upset by the waves of passions, but remains intact till the end of the epoch. O intelligent Arjuna, that which goes by the name of steadiness, is nothing but this (496-500). He, who is endowed with this firm steadiness, is really a store of knowledge.

Just as a serpent does not forget the house of one who has teased it or the warrior his weapon or a greedy person his hoard, or just as the mother cares immensely for her only child, or the bee is greedy for its honey, that man of wisdom, O Arjuna, guards his senses and does not allow them to run after the sense-objects. He is afraid, that the goblin in the form of passion would hear about it or a female spirit would set her eyes on it, imperiling his life (501-505). He keeps a watch over his mental states like a sturdy husband who keeps his wanton wife, confined at home. He consciously restrains his senses, even at the risk of emaciating his body and keeps guards at the gate of the mind namely self-control (*yama*) and sense-restraint (*dama*). Then fixing the three *bandhas*, *Mula*, *Udiyana* and *Jalandhara*, he concentrates his mind in the *sushumna nadi* and keeps meditation bound in *samadhi*. Then his mind becomes one with the Self and merges in it (506-510). O Partha, this is what is called self-control and wherever it exists, there dawns knowledge. Know that he is knowledge itself in human form, whose



command is obeyed by all with great reverence.

8. *Dispassion towards objects of senses, as also absence of self-conceit, and insight into misery and evil of birth, old age, ill-health and death,*

O Partha, dispassion for the sensuous pleasures is ever awake in his mind. Just as no one hankers after vomited food or goes forward to embrace a dead body or likes to drink poison or enters a burning house or goes to live in the den of a tiger (511-515) or leaps into the red-hot melted iron, or sleeps making the python his pillow, so, O Partha, he does not like even the mention of sense-objects and does not allow them to come into contact with his sense-organs. He is indifferent to sensuous enjoyments and his body is lean and emaciated. Then he cherishes self-control (*shama*) and sense-restraint (*dama*) and is always performing austerities and observing vows. If he has to remain in company of men, he regards it as a calamity encountered at the time of the dissolution of the world. He takes great pleasure in solitude and practice of Yoga and he finds the crowd unbearable. He regards worldly enjoyments like lying on a bed of arrows or rolling in the mire of pus. He considers even the celestial joys like rotted dog's meat. This kind of indifference to the sensuous enjoyment is a characteristic of attainment of knowledge, and it makes a person fit for the bliss of *Brahman*. Know that knowledge dwells in a person, who loathes worldly and heavenly joys like this. Like a person full of desire, he performs sacrifices and constructs gardens, tanks etc., but does not entertain the pride, that he has done them (521-525). He leaves nothing undone in regard to the day-to-day life, but he never harbours the conceit that he has performed a particular action or successfully completed it. Just as the wind blows freely everywhere or the sun gives light without self-conceit or the *Vedas* preach naturally or the *Ganga* flows without any motive, so he behaves without any pride. His mental attitude towards work is like that of a tree, which is unmindful of bearing fruits (526-530). All self-sense has dropped down from his mind, behaviour and speech, as the pearls drop down when the connecting thread is removed from the necklace. Just as the sky remains unattached to the clouds, so he feels no attachment even while performing actions. Like the drunkard who is unmindful of his clothes, or like the picture which has no use for the weapons in it, or like the bull who knows nothing of the books it carries, he does not remember his very existence in the body. This mental attitude of his is known as freedom from egotism. It is indisputable that knowledge dwells in him who has this attribute in full (531-535).

Just as the exorcist takes care to ward off possession by an evil spirit, or the *yogi* avoids obstacles in the path of Yoga or the mason uses the plummet to ensure that the wall is straight, he remains vigilant even when birth, death, misery, diseases, old age and sins are distant. Just as a serpent retains the memory of its enmity from a previous birth, in the same way he remembers the misery experienced by him in his previous birth and takes steps to avoid future birth. Just as a particle of dust which has gone into the eye or the point of an arrow with which a person is wounded, does not get dissolved there, so he does not forget the misery suffered by him in his previous birth. He says to himself, 'Alas! I was conceived as the semen entered the pit of polluted blood and came out through the urethra. Then after birth, I licked with relish the sweat on the mother's breast' (536-540). He feels nausea for birth and decides that he will not perform any actions which will result in future birth. Just as a gambler plays with care after losing a bet, or the son takes revenge on his father's enemy, or a person avenges

the death of his elder brother, with the same tenacity he fights against rebirth. Just as an insult rankles in the mind of a respectable person, so the sense of shame of his birth never leaves him. Even though he thinks that his death may not occur for a long time, he remains alert from his very birth (541-545), like an expert swimmer who, coming to know that the river water is deep in the middle, ties a gourd to his waist on the bank itself or like a warrior who prepares himself before going to the battle-field and puts forward his shield to ward off a blow or like a traveller who is cautious that his companion, a polished thief, will not rob him at the next camp or like a patient who rushes for prompt medical help, while he is still alive. Otherwise, it is not possible to dig a well, when the house is on fire and extinguish the fire with its water. If, like a stone which falls and sinks in deep waters, he founders in the sea of worldly existence and raises a shout at the time of drowning, no one hears it and so who will tell that he is drowned (546-550)? Just as one who has incurred deadly enmity with a powerful foe is ready throughout the day, brandishing the sword or just as a betrothed girl prepares herself to leave her mother's home or a monk is indifferent to his household, so he remains indifferent to the world while alive, thinking of the death to come. So in this very life he checks death and wards off rebirth and remains merged in the Self. Thus, the knowledge of one who has got over the pain from birth and death, does not diminish.

Similarly even when he is in the prime of youth, he begins to think of the approaching old age (551-555). He says to himself, "My body which is hale and hearty today, will become later like a sliced vegetable, dried in the sun. My hands and feet will stop like the business of an unlucky person. All the strength, which I possess so far, will be feeble like the power of a king without a prime minister. The nose which smells flowers now, will be like the hump of a camel. The condition of my head will be like the swampy ground treaded by cattle-hoofs. My eyes, which at present vie with lotus petals, will go deep and become like a ripe snake-gourd (556-560). The eye-lashes will hang down like the frayed bark of a tree and the chest will be wet with the tears and start rotting. Just as a chameleon rubs the trunk of a gum-arabic tree with saliva, so my mouth will be full of spittle. Just as dirty water collects in front of the cooking fire-place with bubbles in it, so the nose will be smeared with mucus. A mass of phlegm will come out of the mouth, which I now colour with betel-roll and show my teeth while smiling, and with which I can make a fine speech, while the molar and other teeth will fall out (561-565). Just as farming suffers due to the burden of debt, or the cattle sitting in the rain do not feel like getting up, so my tongue will gel feeble and become unable to move. Just as bristles are blown away by the wind on the heath, so the hair of my beard will drop down. Just as the mountain peaks ooze water in the month of July, so will saliva flow out from the clefts of my teeth. My speech will be incoherent, my ears will not hear distinctly and the condition of my body will be like that of an old baboon. Just as a scarecrow made of grass swings in the wind, so all my body will quiver in old age (566-570), the legs will totter and old age, destroying the beauty of youth, will make me dance like a marionette. The vents of excreta will be like leaky pots and my neighbours will pray to God for my early death. Seeing my plight, people will spit at me with disgust, my kinsmen will be tired of me and death will not come early. Women will call me a ghou, children will faint at my sight and people will loathe me. Hearing my dry cough at night my neighbours will say 'We do not know how long this old man is going to trouble us' (571-575)."

Being forewarned of the old age in youth itself, he will feel disgust for it and say to himself,

'If I spend my youth in physical pleasures, I will be left with nothing, with which to secure good in old age'. Therefore, he hears whatever is worth hearing, before he becomes deaf. He goes on pilgrimage so long as his body is under his full control. He sees whatever he wants to see, until his sight is intact. He commits to memory memorable sayings before his speech leaves him. He performs acts of charity before his hands are paralysed (576-580). Anticipating that his mind will become demented in old age, he thinks about the knowledge of Self. He feels that it is better to dispose of one's wealth before it is robbed by a thief, as it is better to keep all things in their proper places, before the light is put out. So he takes all proper care that his old age will not go waste and renounces all things, which lead to rebirth. If a traveller, after seeing that the birds have returned to their nests and knowing that the evening has set in, does not take shelter in a fort on the way, he will definitely be robbed. So death will swoop upon him and all his life will have been in vain. Who can anticipate that he will live hundred years (581-585)? If the empty follicles of sesame are thrashed again, they will not yield any sesame. Will the fire which is reduced to ashes burn again? So if he, anticipating old age in his youth itself, does not come under its clutches, know that knowledge dwells in him. Just as a wise man takes proper care of his health, before his body becomes a prey to various diseases, or throws away food chewed by a serpent, so he gives up attachment to objects, separation from which gives rise to pain, distress and sorrow, and remains indifferent to the world (586-590). When he sees that the senses will involve him in sinful acts, he closes their doors with stones in the form of self-restraint. Only he, who behaves in this fashion, becomes the master of the wealth of knowledge. Now I shall tell you. O Arjuna, one more unique characteristic of a wise man, please listen.

9. *Non-attachment, non-involvement with son, wife, house and the like, and constant even mindedness in desired and undesired things*

He is indifferent to his body like a wayfarer who stays in an inn with apathy. He feels even that much attachment for his household, as one would have for the shade of a tree under which he rests on the way (591-595). As a person is not aware of his shadow, in the same way he is not attracted to his wife. He regards his sons like visitors who stay in his house or like cattle resting under a tree. Although he is rolling in wealth, he looks indifferently at it, as if he is a passer by. Like a parrot in cage, he lives in the world in fear of the *Vedic* injunctions. So one who does not feel any attachment to his wife, children and household, is the repository of knowledge (596-600), Just as the ocean remains full in the rainy season as well as in summer, so pleasant and unpleasant things do not affect him. Just as the three periods, morning, noon and evening do not affect the sun, so his mind is not disturbed by pleasure and pain. Know that knowledge dwells in him, who retains an even temper like the sky.

10. *Unflinching devotion to Me, through exclusive Yoga, resort to secluded spots and distaste for the company of men,*

He is fully convinced that there is no other thing superior to Me in this world. He declares by body, speech and mind on oath, that there is no other goal in this world than Me (601-605). His mind is so enamoured of Me, that he has become one with Me. Just as a wife does not feel any reserve in approaching her husband, so he has dedicated himself to Me. Just as the river *Ganga* continues to join the sea, so even after he has become one with Me,

he continues to worship Me. The splendour of the sun comes into being with the sunrise and vanishes with sunset. When the water rises on the surface of the river, it is called a ripple, but it is in fact water only (606-610). So he who worships Me, with dedication and becomes one with Me, is himself knowledge incarnate. He prefers to live in holy places, or the banks of a sacred river, in a fine hermitage or a cave on a mountain or the bank of a lake. He does not like to live in a city, has a liking for solitude and distaste for human habitation. Know that he is knowledge in the human form. O intelligent Arjuna, I shall tell you some more characteristics of a wise person in order to elucidate knowledge clearly (611- 615).

11. *Constant pursuit of knowledge of Self, and insight into the aim of true wisdom, all these are known as (the means of) knowledge. Everything else is ignorance.*

He is firmly convinced that the knowledge through which one experiences the Supreme Self, is true knowledge and that the knowledge which leads to worldly prosperity and heaven, is nothing but ignorance. He does not long for heaven, neglects his worldly affairs and becomes engrossed in the thoughts about Self. Just as a wayfarer, makes careful enquiries at the crossroads and avoids the by-path, he fixes his mind and intellect on the knowledge of the Self (616-620). Then his intellect becomes steady like the mountain *Meru* with the conviction, that the knowledge of the Self, is the only true knowledge and every other knowledge is delusive. Just as the pole star remains steady in the sky, he keeps his mind steady on the knowledge of the Self. There is no doubt that knowledge dwells in such a person.

When his knowledge of Self becomes impressed on his mind, he becomes one with Me. When a person has just sat down, you cannot say that he is seated, the same is the case with knowledge, unless knowledge becomes firmly implanted in his own mind, one cannot call him a man of wisdom. Then he sets his sight on the fruit of that knowledge, which is the knowable (*Brahman*) (621-625). If one does not realise the knowable, then he cannot be said to have attained knowledge. Of what use is a lamp in the hand of a blind man? So if he acquires knowledge but does not realise the knowable, then his knowledge becomes worthless. If the intellect does not reach *Brahman* in the light of knowledge, then it is blind. He longs to attain that knowledge by which he sees the supreme *Brahman* everywhere and then he becomes endowed with that spotless knowledge by which he realises *Brahman* (626-630). The development of his intellect keeps pace with the development of this knowledge. Then it does not need to be said in so many words, that he has become knowledge incarnate. He, whose intellect comes into contact with this knowledge, experiences the touch of God. Is there any wonder if I say that he has become of the very nature of knowledge? Is it necessary to point out the sun as the sun?

Then the hearers said, "Enough of this. It is not necessary to describe this knowledge further. Why do you delay the exposition of the meaning of *Gita*? You have entertained us by your eloquent discourse and given us full information about knowledge (631-635). You have adopted the poetic style of giving an eloquent description of the subject. Then why, after inviting us, do you disappoint us and cause our opinion to become unfavourable to you? If the lady runs away with the cooked food when people have sat down for a meal to be served, of what avail is her other polite behaviour to them? Who will feed a cow, who is good in other respects but is given to kicking, while being milked? We do not know why persons who have not understood knowledge, go on prattling about it. But you have done us well. That knowledge,

a particle of which many persons try very hard to attain, by the practice of Yoga etc., is very satisfying and you have also given us a good exposition of it (636-640). Who will complain, if the rain falls continuously for seven days? If days of happiness are plentiful, who will become tired of it and keep counting the days on his fingers? If the night of the full moon lasts for an epoch, will the *chakora* birds be tired of enjoying the moon-light? Who will, therefore, be tired of hearing your eloquent discourse on knowledge? If a lucky guest arrives and the lady of the house happens to be a good cook, both of them will feel that the meal should be prolonged as long as possible. The present occasion is like that. For we are very keen about knowledge, and you also like to preach about it. (641-645). Our interest in this subject has increased fourfold and we cannot help saying that you are a seer of knowledge. Therefore, please enter the inner recess of your intellect and give us an accurate interpretation of the verses”.

Hearing these words of the sages, *Jnanadeva*, disciple of *Nivriddhi*, said, “I also hold the same view. Now that you have commanded me, I would not prolong the talk needlessly”. In this way, the Lord explained the eighteen characteristics of knowledge to Arjuna (646-650). Then the Lord said: knowledge should be known by these characteristics. This is also the view of all wise men. I have explained to you this knowledge as clearly as you can see the myrobalan fruit on the palm of your hand.

O talented Arjuna, now I shall tell you about what is known as ignorance along with its characteristics. If a person knows knowledge, he easily knows ignorance also, because that which is not knowledge is ignorance. When the day ends, it is the turn of the night; there is no third course (651-655). But I shall tell some special characteristics of ignorance. If a person lives only for repute, longs for honour and becomes overjoyed if he is treated with respect and out of pride never climbs down from his exalted position like a mountain peak, ignorance dwells in him. Just as some people hang an arch made of strings of grass woven with leaves of holy fig tree or keep a broom tied to a stick erect purposely in the temple for everyone to see, so he announces his acts of piety and shows off his learning, and undertakes all actions to achieve greatness (656-660). He besmears his body with ashes, sandal paste etc. and cheats his followers. Know that such a person is a mine of ignorance. Just as all things, both animate and inanimate, are burnt to ashes in a forest conflagration, the whole world is harassed by his conduct. His normal speech inflicts a deeper wound than a spear and all his plans are more fatal than poison. Ignorance dwells in such a person; in fact, his whole life provides a haven to violence. As the bellows get puffed up when air is pumped in and get empty when air is pumped out, so he becomes elated or despondent according as he is united or separated from his dear ones (661-665).

As the dust caught in a whirlwind rises high in the sky, he becomes thrilled with praise and miserable if he is slandered. Like mud which becomes moist with a little water and dries up with a light breeze, he becomes affected by honour and dishonour. Ignorance dwells fully in a person who cannot bear such upsurge of feelings. He has a knotty mind, although outwardly his social conduct appears frank. He seems on friendly terms with one but helps another. Just as a hunter feeds animals and birds in order to trap them, so he supports simple-minded persons somehow in order to deceive them and earns the disapprobation of good people (666-670). His actions look outwardly good, like a flint covered with moss or a ripe fruit of

a *Neem (margosa)* tree. Ignorance dwells in such a person without doubt.

He feels ashamed of his preceptor's family, becomes tired of rendering service to him and after receiving instruction from him, does not respect him. The mere mention of such a person is like taking food in the house of a pariah. But such a mention of his name became necessary in the course of explaining the characteristics of an ignorant person. Now I shall atone for this sin, by taking the name of a devoted disciple. As the name of such a disciple is illuminating like the sun (671-675), it will efface the sin incurred in taking the name of a recalcitrant disciple. The fear arising from uttering the name of a contumacious disciple is removed by taking the name of a good disciple.

Now listen to some more characteristics of ignorance. An ignorant person neglects his work and has a mind full of suspicion. He is impure both inside and outside, like a foul well in a forest, which is covered with thorny bushes at the top and is full of bones of dead creatures at the bottom. Just as a dog eats food without ascertaining whether it is properly covered or not, so in his greed for wealth, he does not stop to think whether it is rightfully his or belongs to someone else (676-680). As a dog does not consider whether a place is suitable or not for sexual intercourse, in the same way he is not punctilious in his dealings with women. He never feels sorry if he misses the proper time for performing his work or neglects to do his obligatory duties. He is not ashamed of his sinful deeds, nor does he like to perform meritorious deeds. His mind is full of suspicions and he keeps a greedy eye on riches. Such a person is the very image of ignorance.

Just as the grass-seed is displaced with the jerk of an ant, he deflects from his good resolve for a little gain. Just as a puddle becomes dirty with the dipping of a foot in it, he becomes terrified at the thought of imminent danger. The gourd caught in a flood, goes where the current takes it, so his mind is carried away in a forceful current of desires. Just as smoke rises to a great distance in the sky along with a strong wind, so his mind becomes agitated on hearing a sad news. Like a dust storm, he never remains steady at one place; and he never makes up his mind to stay at a place of pilgrimage or of holy waters, or in a town. Just as an excited chameleon moves up and down the tree (686-690), or a big jar does not remain steady unless it is half-buried in the ground, so the ignorant man keeps on wandering unless he remains stay put in one place. In fickleness he looks like a brother of a monkey. In such a person ignorance dwells in abundance.

He does not exercise any control over his mind. Just as a flooded brook breaks through a dyke of sand, he is not afraid of performing prohibited actions. He breaks his vows in the middle, transgresses his religion and disobeys the rules laid down by the scriptures (691-695). He does not become tired of committing sinful actions, nor has he any liking for good actions and in this he gives up all sense of shame. He turns his back on family tradition, keeps away from the injunctions of the *Veda* and is unable to decide between proper and improper actions. He is uncontrolled like a bull dedicated to God or like a strong wind or like a flooded canal which has breached its banks. He runs amuck after sensuous enjoyments, like a blind elephant in a rut or a conflagration on a mountain. What is not thrown in a rubbish-heap? Who can control an unrestrained bull dedicated to God? Who does not cross the threshold of the village gate (696-700)? Just as anyone can take food in a free kitchen or an ordinary person invested

with authority exercises it recklessly, or anyone can enter the shop of a merchant, so all kinds of thoughts crowd in his mind. Know that ignorance has increased in such a person.

He does not give up his sensuous desires; whether alive or dead and tries to acquire merit on this earth in order to gain enjoyments in heaven. He toils hard all the time to gain sensual pleasures, prefers optional rites in order to fulfill his desires and if he sees a holy man, he feels defiled and takes a bath with clothes on. Even if the sense-objects turn away from him, he never tires of them and becomes alert. Just as a leper eats with his rotted hand (701-705), or a male donkey does not let go the female donkey, even if he is kicked by her in the nose. So he leaps into a burning fire (i.e. he is prepared to run any risk) to gain sensuous enjoyment and flaunts his views as if they are his decorations. As a deer runs after a mirage when it suffers agony for a sip of water and does not know that the mirage is not real water but an optical illusion, so he toils from birth to death for the sake of sensuous enjoyments and never getting tired of them, he pursues them with greater love. In his childhood, he is madly fond of his parents. When that is over he feels strongly attracted to the person of his wife (706-710). When old age sets in, while he is enjoying the company of his wife, he transfers his affection to his children. Like a person blind from birth, he spends all his time in the company of his children, but he never feels tired of sensuous enjoyments till the end of his life. Know that there is no limit to the ignorance of such a person.

Now I shall tell you some more characteristics of such an ignorant person. He performs all his actions in the belief that he consists of only the body and becomes dejected or pleased according as he performs any deficient or efficient action (711-715). He walks erect and stiff in the flush of his youth and learning, just as a devotee (*bhagat*) starts cooing when the idol is placed on his head. He says to himself, 'I am great and rich. Who else is equal to me in conduct and practice? No one is as great as myself. I am all-knowing, adored by the people', and he swells with pride with a superiority complex. Just as a patient does not relish sweets, he cannot bear to see anyone prospering. O Partha, a burning lamp consumes the wick and the oil and wherever it is placed, it blackens that place with soot (716-720). It makes a cracking sound, if water is sprinkled over it and is extinguished with a breeze. If it touches anything, it does not leave even a blade of grass unburnt and it gives less light and more heat. Like such a lamp, he is a man of bookish learning. Just as milk, given as medicine aggravates the enteric fever, or snake fed with milk vomit poison, so he is envious of virtuous men and full of conceit, for his learning and austerities. He becomes puffed up like a pariah who has become a prince, or like a python that has swallowed a pillar. He never bends like a rolling-pin (721-725). His heart never melts like a stone and even a good man cannot hold him in check, as snake-charmer cannot cure the bite of an asp. In short, I shall tell you positively that his ignorance is on the increase.

O Arjuna, he does not think of his household, body, wealth and his present birth. An ungrateful, wretch forgets the favours done to him or thief forgets the capital given to him for his business or a shameless person forgets the praise offered to him. When a vagrant dog is driven away from the house with its ears and tail cut, it comes back dripping blood (726-730). A toad, swallowed by a snake goes on eating innumerable flies, without realising its imminent death. In the same way, he is not distressed by the fact that, he is suffering from a cutaneous disorder brought on by the discharges from the nine gates of his body. He does not realise why he

has reached such a stage. He does not remember how he seethed nearly for nine months in the womb of his mother full of filth, the afflictions which he suffered in the womb and the pangs of birth. He does not find it loathsome when he sees a child lying in his lap and rolling in its faeces and urine (731-735). He does not feel distressed by the fact that his present life will come to an end and he will have to be born again.

In the first flush of youth he never starts worrying about his approaching death. He feels so confident that his life will continue in its present state, that he does not think that he will have to face death in future. The fish sticks on to his pond in the fond hope that it will never go dry and does not think of going to a place of deep water. A deer enchanted with music does not see the approaching hunter. The fish swallows the bait without realising that it contains a deadly hook (736-740). The moth dazzled by the light of the lamp, does not realise that the lamp will burn it. A lazy and foolish person does not, while enjoying sleep, pay any attention to his house when it is burning or a person swallows food without knowing that it is cooked in poison. In the same way, a person does not realise, while enjoying sensuous pleasures, that death has come to him in the guise of life. He considers as real the growth of his body, the passing of day and night and the enjoyment of objects of senses.

But the poor fellow does not realise that a whore surrenders all that is hers to him only to plunder him (741-745), that friendship with a polished thief would spell his death or that to bathe a statue made of clay, is to destroy it or the swollen body of a jaundiced person is a sure sign of approaching death. So the ignorant person, being engrossed in eating and sleeping, does not know that he is doomed. A person sentenced to death does know that every step of his towards the gallows, brings his death nearer. In the same way as the body grows old, as more days pass, the craving for sense-objects becomes stronger and in the end death overtakes him. Just as salt gets dissolved in water (746-750), his life wastes away and he does not know when the god of death will approach him and take him briskly away. O Arjuna if a person does not realise, being deluded by the sensuous pleasures, that his body is succumbing to death every day, know for certain, that he is the king of the country in the form of ignorance.

Just as he does not pay attention to the approaching death in the exuberance of life, so in the flush of youth he is reckless about the approaching old age also. He does not foresee that he will meet the same fate in old age, as a cart rolling down a precipice or a boulder released from a mountain peak does not know what is ahead of it (751-755). Just as a stream in the desert place gets flooded or the buffaloes fight, so he is infatuated with youth. With old age, his plump body becomes lean and feeble, his complexion loses its lustre, his neck and head begin to shake, his beard becomes white and his neck becomes slack, but even then, he goes on increasing his wealth. Just as a blind person does not see the pillar in front of him, until he actually knocks against it or a lazy person becomes very pleased when his eyes become dim (hoping that he will be able to take rest), so, O Arjuna he who does not, in the midst of youthful enjoyments, think about the approaching old age is really and truly ignorant (756-760). If he then happens to see a cripple or a hunchback, he proudly grins and mouths at him. The thought does not occur to him that he is also going to be like that one day. Even if he enters old age which is a forerunner of death, he does not give up the delusions of youth. Know for certain, that he is an ignorant person.



Now, I shall tell you some more characteristics of ignorance. A bull which has come back hale and hearty after grazing in the forest inhabited by a tiger, again goes there for grazing without fear. When a person retrieves safely the treasure from the hole of a serpent, he does not believe that a serpent was guarding it (761-765). So even when one or two mishaps occur, a person does not know that there is great risk to life in going on the way he does. He who becomes reckless in the belief that the enmity has come to an end, when in fact his enemy has gone to sleep, he loses his own life and his children also meet the same fate. In the same way, as long as he has good appetite, sleeps well and is in good health, he does not take precautions against any (possible) ailments. The more he acquires riches while enjoying the company of his wife and children, the more his eyes become dimmed by the smoke screen of his wealth. He does not foresee the misery, which will befall him, when he suddenly loses both his children and riches (766-770). Know, O Arjuna, that such a person is ignorant, as also one who allows his senses to wander freely.

In the flush of youth he truly indulges in sensuous pleasures without any thought as to whether they are fit for enjoyment or not. He does what he ought not to do, longs for impossible things and ponders over unthinkable thoughts. He enters where he should not enter, he demands things which he should not receive, handles things which he should not touch and does all things which he should not even think about. He goes to places, sees spectacles and eats food, which he ought to avoid and enjoys doing so (771-775). He keeps company and develops contacts with those he should shun, follows the path which he should avoid and hears what he should not hear and talks of things which he should avoid and yet he does not see the evil arising out of such conduct. He performs actions which give pleasure to his body and mind, without caring whether he is doing the right thing or not. He does not pause to think whether in doing so, he should incur sin and suffer agonies in hell. In his company ignorance spreads so fast, that it harasses even the wise (776-780).

I shall tell you some more characteristics by which you will come to know what ignorance is. He is fond of his house as a bee is attractive to a sweet smelling lotus. Just as a fly sitting on a heap of sugar, never thinks of leaving it, his mind hovers around his wife. He remains attached to his house with his heart and soul like a frog which remains in a pond or like a fly which gets stuck in the snot or like an animal which has sunk in the mire. Even after death he becomes a serpent and lives in the open space of the house. He remains firmly attached to his house, like a husband held in a close embrace by his wife. He takes proper care of his house, as a bee exerts itself to gather honey. He is as fond of his house as the parents are fond of their only child born late in their old age. He does not hold anyone dearer than his wife. He is attached to the person of his wife with his heart and soul, utterly unmindful of who he is and what he ought to do (786-790).

Just as the mind of a great soul becomes merged in the Supreme Self with the stoppage of all his activities, so his senses come under sway of his wife, without caring for public censure. He always curries favour with his wife and dances to her tune like the monkey of a juggler. Just as an avaricious person amasses wealth by himself, undergoing hardships and hurting the feelings of his kith and kin, so he gives less in charity, scales down his religious rites, and cheats his relatives, but spares no money for the comfort of his wife (791-795). He worships his deities in a perfunctory manner, beguiles his preceptor with tall talk and gives the excuse

of scanty means to his parents. But he purchases for his wife all creature comforts and all the best things that he sees. He serves his wife with as much attention as a loving devotee worships his deity. He gives to his wife the best and costly presents, but does not provide enough money for the maintenance of his other relatives. He feels as if it is the end of the world, if anybody leers at his wife or misbehaves with her (796-800). Just as people worship the snake with vows to ward off ringworm, he dances to the tune of his wife. In short, his wife is all-in-all to him and loves specially her progeny. He values more than his life all the things which belong to her including her wealth. Such a person is the source of ignorance, which grows in strength, nay, he is ignorance incarnate.

Like a boat, which rocks up and down a stormy sea (801-805), he becomes delighted or despondent according as the situation, which he has to face, is pleasant or unpleasant. Such a person, who even though intelligent, who feels anxious because of favourable and unfavourable situations, is an ignorant person. He is devoted to Me, but he offers worship to Me and desires its fruit. Just as one becomes an ascetic to make money or an unchaste woman tries to gain the favour of her husband in order to go to her paramour, he makes a show of his devotion to Me, when all the while he is hankering after sensuous enjoyments (806-810). If he does not gain the desired object with such worship, he calls his deity false, and gives up its worship. Like an unlettered farmer, he installs new deities, but treats them with scant regard like the former deity. He joins that sect, of which the head priest puts up an impressive show and takes his initiation, completely disregarding others.

He treats living beings cruelly, but adores idols made of stone. But he is never exclusively devoted to one deity. He gets prepared an idol of Mine and after installing it in one corner of the house, he goes on a pilgrimage to other deities (811-815). He worships Me everyday, worships his family deity for success in his undertaking and on special festive occasions, he worships other gods. He installs Me in his home, but he makes vows to other gods. He worships his forefathers on their death anniversaries but on the eleventh day of each fortnight of the lunar month, he worships Me. He worships the cobra on the *Nagpanchami* day and *Lord Ganesh* on the *Ganesh-Chaturthi* day. Then on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, he worships goddess *Durga*, saying 'O Mother, I am your devotee'. He abandons his obligatory duties and on the *Navaratra*, he recites *Navachandi* in praise of goddess *Durga*, while on Sundays, he offers hotchpotch food to *Bhairoba* (an aspect of *Lord Shiva*) (816-820). Then on Monday, he runs to *Lord Shiva* in his phallus form to offer his Bel leaves. In this way he worships all gods somehow. Just as a harlot pretends her love to all and sundry, he worships all deities without a moment's respite. Know that he who runs after all deities ever now and then, is ignorance incarnate.

He who feels dislike for a quiet penance grove, holy places of waters and riverbanks is also full of ignorance. He who likes to stay in an inhabited place, feels pleasure in society and fond of gossiping, he too is an ignorant person (821-825). Being a learned fool, he speaks with derision of the scripture, which leads to the vision of the Supreme. He does not even look at the *Upanishads*, has no liking for the science of Yoga and his mind is not attracted towards the knowledge of the Self. He dismantles the protective wall of intellect, which makes him turn to philosophical knowledge and his mind roams at random like stray cattle. He is fully conversant with the *Vedic* lore, which deals with ritual works and observances; he

knows by heart all the *Puranas* and knows astrology so well, that all his predictions come true. He is skilled in the arts of sculpture and cooking and he has at his fingertips, the magic of *Atharvaveda* (826-830). He knows everything about the science of love, he gives discourses on the epic of *Mahabharata* and all other lores stand before him with folded hands. He is conversant with the science of ethics, is an expert in the science of medicine and no one can compete with him in his knowledge of poetry and drama. He can hold discussion on the ancient law books (*smritis*), knows the art of jugglery and has mastery over the *Vedic* lexicon. He is proficient in grammar and logic, but he is ignorant of the knowledge of the Self. He is regarded as an authority, in respect of all lores except the one relating to the knowledge of the Self. Fixed upon his knowledge, which is like a child born under the *Mula* Star (considered inauspicious), does not pay any attention to it (831-835).

His knowledge is like the eyes spread over the plumage of a peacock, none of which has vision. If one can secure even a small portion of the root of the *Sanjivani* plant, which restores the dead to life, of what use are the cartloads of other medicinal herbs? It is simply mockery to have auspicious marks on the palms without long life, to bedeck a headless body with ornaments or to start a marriage procession without the bride and the bridegroom. In that way, O Partha, all other lores with the exception of the one relating to the knowledge of the Self, lack authority. So, O Arjuna, bear in mind that the body of the learned fool, who has not attained the true knowledge of the Self (836-840), has grown from the seed of ignorance and his learning is the plant of ignorance. What he talks, is the flower of ignorance, and the virtuous deeds which he performs, are the fruit of ignorance. Does it need to be said that one who has scant regard for spiritual knowledge is incapable of understanding its import? How can he, who returns without reaching the shore on this side, know anything of the other shore? How can he, whose head is caught in a niche at the very threshold, see what is inside the house (841-845)? He who has not even a nodding acquaintance with the knowledge of the Self, cannot know the true import of that knowledge. It is not necessary to demonstrate to you mathematically, that such a person does not understand the real essence of knowledge.

If you feed a pregnant woman, you automatically feed the child in the womb. In the same way, the characteristics of knowledge which you were told before, imply characteristics of ignorance which are exactly their opposite. When a blind man is invited to a meal, it includes an invitation to his guide. So when the characteristics of knowledge were described, it was not necessary to state separately the qualities of ignorance. But I have mentioned again the characteristics of ignorance as the opposites of the distinguishing marks of knowledge such as absence of pride etc. (846-850). Ignorance appears in its true form when the eighteen characteristics of knowledge are stated negatively. In the fourth quarter of the last stanza, Lord Krishna had said, 'These are the characteristics of knowledge, and their opposites constitute ignorance'. Following this dictum I have explained in detail the characteristics of ignorance. Otherwise, is there any sense in increasing the volume of milk by adding water to it? I have only tried to amplify the meaning conveyed in the original verse without being prolix and without transgressing its original sense. Then the hearers said "O, you inspirer of the poets, there is nothing objectionable in your discourse. Why do you worry unnecessarily (851-855)? You have been told by the Lord to divulge the secret meaning of his talk. If we say that you have clarified his meaning admirably, it will only overwhelm you. Therefore we would not

say it; but this much we say, that we have thoroughly enjoyed this ride in the boat of knowledge, hearing your discourse. Now tell us promptly what the Lord said further.”

Hearing these words of the holy men, *Jnanadeva*, the disciple of *Nivritti* said, ‘Hear now what the Lord said’ (855-860). He said, “O Arjuna, the characteristics which you have heard now are of ignorance. You should now turn your back on this ignorance and fix your mind firmly on knowledge. Then you will attain to the knowable (the Supreme) through that spotless knowledge.” Hearing this, Arjuna longed to know it and divining this wish of Arjuna, the omniscient Lord said: I shall tell you now, what that knowable is.

12. *I shall now declare to you the Knowable, by knowing which one enjoys immortality. It is the beginningless Supreme Brahman, which is said to be neither existent nor non-existent.*

The Supreme is called *Jneya*, as it is not knowable by any other means than knowledge (861-865), and as after knowing it, nothing remains to be known. With the attainment of this knowledge, a person becomes one with the Supreme and after renouncing the world, remains absorbed in eternal bliss. That knowable has no beginning and no end and so is known as the Supreme. If you say that it is non-existent, it becomes manifest in the form of the universe and if you say that the universe is the Supreme Self, it is only His *Maya*. It has no form, colour or shape. It is not seen nor does it see, so who can say that it exists and how (866-870)? Well, if you say that it does not really exist, then how did the Great Principle (*mahat*) and the other evolutes come into being? Since no one could definitely say that it is or it is not speech, becomes dumb and the power of thinking too, comes to a dead halt. Just as clay appears in the form of a large earthen vessel, a pitcher and a dish, so the Supreme has become the universe and has completely pervaded it.

13. *With hands and feet stretching everywhere, with eyes, mouths and heads facing all sides, with ears hearing everything in the world, it remains pervading all.*

The knowable is at all places and times and is not separate from them. So whatever actions are carried on by gross and small beings are its hands. It is for this reason that the *Brahman* is said to be having hands everywhere, because it gets all actions performed everywhere in all forms (871-875). Since it abides at all times and at all places, it is named ‘having feet everywhere’. The sun does not have different organs such as eyes and as it is the seer of all forms, it is cleverly called by the *Vedas* as ‘having eyes everywhere’. Since it rules over the heads of all beings, in its eternal form, it is said to be ‘having heads everywhere’. O Partha, the Fire constitutes its mouth, through which it enjoys all things (876-880) and for this reason the *Vedas* call *Brahman* ‘having faces everywhere’. As the *akasha* pervades all things, so its ears pervade all words and so we call it ‘having organs of hearing everywhere’. Because of its omnipresence we have described it in this way, otherwise how can one speak of it, which is devoid of all forms as having hands, feet and eyes (881-885)? When a wave rises in the sea, and swallows another small wave, is the swallowing wave different from the swallowed wave (both being water)? In the same way as *Brahman* is the same everywhere, how can it possess dualism as the pervader and the pervaded. But in order to explain what it is, it became necessary to adopt the notion of dualism. Just as a small dot is used to denote ‘zero’, the language of duality has to be used in expounding unity in words. Otherwise, O Arjuna, the institution like the preceptor and disciple (in which instruction is imparted by one to another) will cease

to exist, and all talk about unity will come to an end. It is for this reason that *Vedas* have adopted the language of dualism to expound the truth of monism (886-890). Now hear how the *Brahman* abides, pervading all forms that we perceive.

14. *Although devoid of all senses, it seems to possess their qualities. It is unattached and yet supports all. Though beyond the qualities, it experiences them.*

O Arjuna, that *Brahman* is like this. Just as the sky pervades all space, or yarn assumes the form of cloth, liquidity assumes the form of water, or light assumes the form of lamp, as the fragrance of camphor remains in the form of camphor, or action remains in the form of the body or gold remains in the form of a granule, so this *Brahman* pervades all things (891-895). But when the gold is in the form of a granule, it remains gold. O Arjuna, even when the current of water is crooked and runs in a zigzag way, the water flows straight and always gives pleasure. When the iron becomes red-hot by heat, does it cease to be iron? The sky enclosed in a round pot, appears round, but it looks quadrangular in the quadrangular space of a hermitage; but the sky is neither round nor quadrangular. So *Brahman* does not become modified by its apparent modifications. It appears as if *Brahman* has become modified into mind, senses, etc. and the three qualities (*gunas*) (896-900). But just as the sweetness does not reside in the lump of jaggery, but in jaggery itself, so the senses and the qualities do not constitute *Brahman*. O Arjuna, clarified butter exists in milk in milkform, and yet milk is certainly not the clarified butter. So *Brahman* pervades senses and qualities, but the latter do not constitute *Brahman*, just as although gold takes different forms as ornaments, it remains as pure gold in any form.

Plainly speaking, *Brahman* is entirely distinct from the senses and qualities. All distinctions such as name, colour, relation, species and action etc. are all attributes of form and do not apply to *Brahman* (901-905). The *Brahman* is neither the qualities nor is connected with them in any way, but the latter appear to be so connected. It is because of this, that the ignorant ascribe these qualities to *Brahman*. But to conceive qualities in *Brahman*, is to attribute clouds to the sky or the reflection in the mirror to the mirror or to think of sun's reflection in water as the sun or of mirage as existing in the sun's ray. In the same way the notion that *Brahman* supports the universe without contact, is due to delusion and so is of no value (906-910). Just as when a pauper becomes a prince in a dream, it is all-unreal, so to say that the *Brahman* devoid of qualities experiences qualities, is all due to delusion. It is for this reason, one cannot say that the *Brahman* is associated with qualities or experiences them.

15. *It is within and without all beings, whether stationary or moving. It is hard to conceive due to its subtleness. It is far away and also nearby.*

O son of *Pandu*, *Brahman* abides in all created beings, whether moving or stationary. It is one, just as heat is the same in the sparks of fire, though they are of different forms. That which is imperishable and remains pervading the universe in a subtle form, is the knowable. It is within the body and without it, it is near as also far, it is one without a second (910-915). It is not the case that the *Milky Sea* is sweeter in the middle and less sweet near its shores. In the same way, it pervades all things equally. It remains completely pervading the various orders of beings, such as the insect class. O Arjuna, best of all hearers, the moon reflected in different pots filled with water appears different, but in reality it is one. Even if the heaps

of salt are different, their saltiness is the same. In all sugarcanes the sweetness is the same.

16. *Though undistributed among beings, it stands as if distributed. The Knowable is the sustainer of all beings, as also (their) devourer and creator.*

In the same way, the knowable is pervading all the beings singly and is also the first cause of the universe (916-920). Just as the sea is the support of its waves, so the *Brahman* is the support of all beings and forms. It, therefore, supports all beings as the body supports childhood, youth and old age. It remains the same without a break in all the stages of creation, just as the sky remains unaltered at any time of the day, whether it is morning, noon or evening. O dear friend, when the Supreme *Brahman* creates the universe it is known as God *Brahma*, when it maintains it, it is called *Lord Vishnu* and when it destroys it, it is known as *Lord Shiva*. When all the three qualities disappear, we call it the void (*akasha*) (921-925) and that which destroys the three qualities and swallows the void of *akasha*, is the formless *Brahman*, which is accepted by the *Vedas*.

17. *It is the light even of Lights; It is said to be beyond darkness. It is knowledge, the Knowable and attainable by knowledge. It abides in the hearts of all.*

That knowable kindles the fire, provides nectar to the moon and gives vision to the sun to oversee the affairs of the world. By its light the starry sky is illumined, and the sun moves at pleasure in the universe. It is the origin of the origin, the expanse of the expansion, the intelligence of the intellect and the life of the living. It is the mind of the mind, eyes of the eyes, ears of the ears, the faculty of speech of the tongue (926-930). It is the life-breath of the life-breath, the feet of the movement and that which activates the actions. O son of *Pandu*, it is that which gives form to the form, enables the expansion to expand and the destruction to destroy. It is the primal principle of the earth, and is the water of water, and it is that by which the splendour is illumined. It is the very breath of wind, the interspace of the sky and in short that by which all things become existent. O Arjuna, so this knowable is the first cause of the universe and does not admit of duality (931-935). With its vision, the seer and the object of seeing, merge in each other and become one. It is the knowledge, the knower and the knowable and it is also the goal to be attained through knowledge. When the balance sheet is prepared after tallying all the books of accounts, the latter have served their purpose. So with the attainment of *Brahman*, the goal and the means of attaining it, are united. This *Brahman* has no connection whatsoever with duality and abides in the hearts of all.

18. *Thus the field, the knowledge and the knowable have been described in brief. My devotee knowing this becomes fit to attain My being.*

In this way, O my friend, I have given you a clear exposition of the Field (936-940). Then I explained to you, the essential nature of knowledge in such a way, that you can easily comprehend it. Thereafter I described to you admirably, the characteristics of ignorance until you were thoroughly satisfied and said 'Enough of it'. Now I have expounded to you the knowable after offering cogent reasons. O Arjuna, after considering all these matters and longing for union with Me, My devotees come to Me. After renouncing the body and other paraphernalia, they fix their minds on Me (941-945). O Arjuna, such devotees of Mine, after attaining My knowledge and after surrendering their individuality to Me, become one with Me. In this

way, I have devised the easiest way to attain union with Me, in the same way as one constructs or climbs a precipice after constructing steps, reaches a higher point by raising scaffolding or crosses a deep river in a boat. O great warrior, if I had told you simply that there is only the Supreme Self, it would not have carried conviction to you. But knowing the limitations of your intellect, I had to explain it to you in its four different aspects (946-950). One has to split a morsel into twenty parts to feed a child; so I had to explain to you in its four aspects. After judging your mental capacity, I explained *Brahman* to you in its four aspects, namely the Field, knowledge, the Knowable and Ignorance. If, even after all this effort, your mind is not able to comprehend it, I shall explain it to you in a different way.

Now instead of describing it to you in its four aspects or treating it as single aspect, I shall explain it to you in two parts as Self (*purusha*) and not-Self (*prakriti*). But you do one thing, give me your sole attention and listen to what I say (951-955). Hearing these words of the Lord, Partha was thrilled. Then the Lord said, 'Do not get so excited'. Seeing him in that excited state, the Lord also was overwhelmed, but restraining himself somehow, said, O Arjuna, I shall explain to you *Brahman* in its two aspects, the *purusha* and the *prakriti*. The *yogins* call this the *Sankhya* doctrine. I incarnated Myself as sage *Kapila* to expound it. Now listen to the flawless discourse on the discrimination between *prakriti* and *purusha*, so said Lord Krishna, the *Primeval Person*.

19. *Know that prakriti and purusha are both without beginning, and know that the qualities and modifications are born of prakriti.*

The *purusha*, the Self, is without beginning and the *prakriti*, the not-Self is co-existent with Him; and they are like day and night (956-960). The shadow has no form, but co-exists with form. In the same way, O *Dhananjaya*, an ear of corn contains both the grain and the husk. So the *prakriti* and *purusha*, are a famous pair existing from the very beginning. Thus *prakriti* and *purusha* are the same as the Field and the knower of the Field, about whom I spoke to you before. Even if their names are different, the subject is the same: so bear always this in your mind (961-965). O son of *Pandu*, that which is existent is the *purusha* and the *prakriti* is the source of activity. Intellect, senses and the mind, which give rise to modifications, and the three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are all products of the *prakriti*, which is the source of activity.

20. *In the case of effect, cause and agency, prakriti is said to be the cause. Of the experience of pleasure and pain, purusha is said to be the cause.*

Desire and intelligence (residing in the *prakriti*) produce first egoism and then lead the embodied Self to the act of willing. The means which have to be employed to gain an object, is known, O *Dhananjaya*, as action (966-970). When the desire grows strong, it activates the mind and sets the senses to work. This is the agency of the *prakriti*. So this *prakriti* is the source of effect, cause and agency, so said the Lord, the prince among the *Siddhas*. Through this triad, *prakriti* gets into activity, but it acts according to the dominant quality. The action in which the *sattva* quality is predominant is good, that in which the *rajas* quality is predominant, is ordinary or mixed and that which arises from a dominant *tamas* quality, is irreligious and prohibited. In this way good and bad actions arise from *prakriti*, resulting in pleasure and

pain. Bad actions cause pain and good actions conduce to pleasure. The pleasure and pain felt by the *purusha* constitutes his experience. The *prakriti* continues its activity as long as it gives rise to pleasure and pain and the *purusha* has to experience it. The *prakriti* and *purusha* manage their affairs in a very peculiar manner, in that what the *prakriti* earns, the *purusha* enjoys it without doing anything. It is really a wonder how the *prakriti* gives birth to universe, without mating with her spouse.

21. *For purusha, dwelling in prakriti, experiences the qualities born of prakriti; his attachment to the qualities is the cause of his birth in good or evil wombs.*

He (the Self ) is bodyless and crippled, indigent and single and the oldest of the old. He is known as *purusha*, but one cannot say whether he is male, female or neuter. He does not have eyes and ears nor hands and feet nor form and he does not have a name or any organs. He is the spouse of *prakriti* and has to experience pleasure and pain. Although he is inactive, indifferent and a non-enjoyed, *prakriti*, his faithful consort, makes him experience sensuous pleasures (981-985). The *prakriti* sports with him wonderfully, by cajoling him with her beauty and qualities. As she consists of qualities, she is known as *gunamayi*, nay, she is the quality incarnate. She assumes new forms, changing every moment and her energy energises even the inert things. She gives publicity to names, makes love lovable and makes the sense organs sensible. Although the mind is neuter, she makes it roam all over the world such is her extraordinary feat (986-990). She is an isle of enchantment, an all-pervasive presence, which gives rise to emotions galore. This *prakriti* is the bower of creepers, in the form of desires and the spring in the woods of infatuation and is well known by the name of Divine *Maya*. It is she, who expands the scope of literature, gives name and form to the formless, and she carries on the raids of worldly existence. She is the source of all arts and lores, of desires and passions and of knowledge and activity. She is the mint of sonorous sound and the home of miracles, in fact the panorama of the world is her Divine play (991-995). The creation and dissolution of the world, are her morning and evening sports. In this way, she is a wonderful enchantress. She is the mate of lonely *purusha*, the companion of the unattached Self and she herself stays happily in the void i.e. the *Brahman*. Such is the sweep of her happy wifehood, that she can control the uncontrollable *purusha*. In reality, the *purusha* has no limitation (*upadhi*) right from the beginning; yet *prakriti* herself becomes all that pertains to him. *Prakriti* herself is the origin of the embodiment of the Self-existent and she gives form, continuance and habitation to the formless (996-1000). She becomes the desire of the desireless, the contentment of the complete, and the race and kin of the raceless (and kinless). She becomes the sign of the indescribable, the measure of the measureless and the mind and the intellect of the mindless. She herself becomes the form of the formless, the activity of the actionless and the egoism of the egoless. She becomes the name of the nameless, the birth of the birthless and the action of the actionless. She becomes the quality of the qualityless, the feet of the footless, the ears of the earless, the eyes of the eyeless (1001-1005), feelings of the feelingless, the limbs of the limbless - in fact she becomes all the limiting attributes of the *purusha*. In this way, the *prakriti* makes the changeless *purusha* become of changeful nature. Just as the lustre of the moon vanishes on the new moon day, such becomes the state of the *purusha*, because of *prakriti*. Just as gold has less purity when mixed with alloy, or a pious man becomes crazy when possessed by a ghost, a bright day becomes a bad day (1006-1010) when clouds



gather in the sky, so the *purusha* loses his splendour when he comes under the sway of *prakriti*. He is then like milk in the udder, like fire in the firewood, like the brilliance of a jewel covered with linen, like a king under subjection to another, or like an ailing lion. Just as a man wide awake, is overpowered by sleep and experiences pleasure and pain in a dream, so when the *purusha* identifies himself with the *prakriti*, he has to experience the qualities. Just as when a person indifferent to the world, comes under the influence of a woman, he becomes entangled in worldly affairs, so the birthless and eternal *purusha*, when he identifies himself with the *prakriti* becomes associated with her qualities and suffers the pangs of births and deaths (1011-1015). O Arjuna, if you ask Me how this happens, it is like this. When red-hot iron is struck with a hammer, it is said that the strokes of hammer are suffered by fire. When people see the many reflections of the moon in moving water, they ascribe this plurality to the moon. When one looks into a mirror, he sees two faces (his own and his reflection in the mirror). When a crystal is placed on red powder (*kumkuma*), it looks reddish. In the same way it appears that the birthless *purusha* takes birth, but it is certainly not true. Just as a monk dreams that he is born in the low caste, so the *purusha* thinks that he has taken birth in a good or bad womb (but it is really not so) (1016-1020). So the *purusha* does not experience the vicissitudes of life, but feels like that, due to his association with the qualities.

22. *The great Lord is the witness, the consentor, sustainer and enjoyed. This Supreme person in the body is also styled as the Supreme Self.*

Just as the jasmine creeper needs the support of a pole, so the *prakriti* requires the support of the *purusha*. But they are poles apart, like the earth and the sky. O Arjuna, this *purusha* stands firm and immovable like the *Meru* Mountain on the bank of the river in the form of *prakriti* and casts his reflection in it, but he does not drift in the current. Even though the *prakriti* appears and vanishes, he remains eternal. He is the ruler of all created beings, right from god *Brahma*, and *prakriti* exists because of him, creates the world under his authority and so is his consort (1021-1025). O Arjuna, this universe which exists as her creation from time immemorial, becomes dissolved in him, at the end of the epoch. He is the Lord of the *prakriti* also known as *mahad-brahman* and is the controller of the universe. It is he, who with his pervasive power measures the worldly affairs. He is what is designated as the Supreme Self in the body. O son of *Pandu*, when people talk of one and only one *purusha* beyond the *prakriti*, he is that *purusha*.

23. *He who knows the purusha and the prakriti with its qualities, in whatever condition he may be, is not born again.*

He who knows that this *purusha* is one and that all the actions of the qualities belong to the *prakriti* (1026-1030), and is convinced that they are like form and its shadow or water and mirage, he knows how to discriminate between the two. Although he is physically performing works, he is not tainted by them, just as the sky does not get defiled by the dust rising high. He, who is not infatuated with his body when it exists, does not have rebirth after it falls. Thus in this marvelous way, the discriminating knowledge between the *prakriti* and *purusha* conduces to his spiritual benefit (1031-1035). Now, I shall tell you the various means by which this discrimination will dawn in your mind.

24. *Some see, through meditation, this Self in themselves by the Self (mind); others by the Yoga of*

*knowledge and still others by the Yoga of action.*

O best among the warriors, some burn in the crucible of reason the impure gold and by removing the alloy of impure thoughts through hearing, study, reflection and meditation, purify the gold in the form of Self. They determine the pure Self by the elimination of the impure thirty-six principles, which are entirely different from the Self and then see the Self in their own heart through the vision of meditation. Others, through good luck, meditate upon him through the Yoga of knowledge or the Yoga of action (1036-1040).

25. *Then there are those, who though ignorant of this, hear from others and worship; they too overcome death, adhering to what they have heard.*

And in such ways they cross the ocean of worldly existence. But there are others, who giving up all conceit, place their faith in the words of the *Guru*. They hear with great attention and reverence the words of such a person, who knows what is good or bad for them, who removes their misery with solicitude and after enquiry, makes them happy. They surrender to him, their very body and mind, set aside their other work to hear his words and wave their very lives on his advice (1041-1045). In this way, O Arjuna, they cross safely the ocean of worldly existence. Thus there are many ways of realising the Supreme *Brahman*. I shall now give you the quintessence of all these ways, obtained by churning the scriptures. This will enable you to attain the spiritual nature of *Brahman* and become one with it without much effort. I shall now tell you the supreme pure Truth by eschewing all dissenting views with the aid of intelligence (1046-1050).

26. *Whatever being is born, whether moving or stationery, know, O best of Bharatas, that is due to the union between the Field and the knower of the Field.*

This whole universe springs from the union of the knower of the Field and the Field, which I have already taught you. Just as waves are produced when water comes into contact with the wind, or mirage appears on the barren plains heated by the sun's rays or sprouts come forth when the earth receives showers of rain, so know that this union produces every thing, whether moving or stationary, and which is called the living organism (1051-1055). For this reason, O Arjuna, all things and beings are not different from this Self and primal matter.

27. *He who sees in all beings, the Supreme Lord equally present, not perishing when they perish, he sees truly.*

The fabric is not yarn, but it is made up of yarn. In this manner, you realise this unity by your inner vision. All these beings emanate from one source (i.e. the Supreme Self) and you should get experience of it. Their names are different, their conduct too is different and they dress differently. If after seeing these different forms, you entertain the notion of their distinctness, you will not attain release from this worldly existence for umpteen years (1056-1060). Just as the gourd creeper bears gourds of different shapes, some long, some crooked and some round to serve different uses, or the jujube tree is the same whether its branches are straight or crooked, so all beings of whatever form, spring from a uniform source, the Supreme Self. Just as sparks of fire of different forms have the same heat, so the Supreme Self, which abides at the core of manifold beings, is one and the same. O warrior, although

rain falls in showers from all parts of the sky, it contains the same water, in the same way, although the beings are of different forms and shapes, the Self which abides in them, is the same. Although the earthen jars or the hermitages are of different shapes, they contain the same space. In the same way, one and the same Self abides in beings of different forms (1061-1065). Just as gold out of which ornaments such as armlets are fashioned has the same purity, so this illusory aggregate of beings perishes, but their indwelling Self is imperishable. In this way, he who knows that the indwelling Self does not possess the attributes of a being and yet is not distinct from it is a seer among all wise men. Such a one is the very eye of knowledge, a man with a vision. O great warrior, this is not a formal praise: such a person is fortune's favourite.

28. *Seeing indeed everywhere the same Lord equally present, he does not debase his Self and so attains the highest goal.*

This body, consisting of the three humors (phlegm, wind and bile) is made up of the five gross elements. It is a terrific bag of qualities and senses. It is like a scorpion with five stinging tails and it is beset with five kinds of fires. The Self is confined in the body like a lion caught in a snare (1066-1070). Notwithstanding this, why does not one pierce his dagger of knowledge of the eternal Self into the bowels of the body (i.e. destroy body-consciousness). Only an enlightened person, O Arjuna, though dwelling in a body, never harms himself and attains to the abode of the Supreme Self. To attain to that *Brahman*, *yogis* cross numerous births through the practice of Yoga and get rid of the consciousness of their bodies. All the goals including liberation come to rest in that Supreme Self, which is beyond the universe of name and form, which is on the other side of sound, and which is in the inner chamber of the *samadhi* state, in the same way as the river Ganga and other rivers merge into the sea (1071-1075). He, who does not see any distinction among beings, though of different forms, comes to experience the bliss of the Supreme Self in this very body. Though lamps are of different shapes, they give the same light. In the same way, he who sees the Supreme Self from the beginning as all-pervasive, with an even mind, does not get into the clutches of death. So I, off and on, praise such a fortune's favourite, who has settled down in life, with an evenness of mind.

29. *He who sees that by prakriti alone are actions performed in various ways and that the Self is not the agent, he sees truly.*

He knows fully well that the *prakriti* performs all actions through the agency of the mind, intellect, senses and the organs of action (1076-1080). The occupants of a house move about in the house which does nothing. Similarly, although clouds move in the sky, the sky remains still. In the same way, the *prakriti* play-acts in the light of the Self, who remains steady like a pole. The *yogi*, however, has the conviction in the light of knowledge that the Self is not the agent.

30. *When he perceives the diversity of beings as rooted in the One (Brahman), and as spreading from that One alone, then he becomes Brahman.*

O Arjuna, he who perceives that the beings of different forms are not distinct, knows that he has attained *Brahman*. Just as there are ripples in water, particles of dust in the earth, rays

in the sun's disc (1081-1085), or organs in the body, feelings in the mind and sparks in the fire, in the same way all beings have their origin in One and the same Self. When he is fully convinced about this, then one can say that the ship containing the wealth, in the form of the Supreme *Brahman* comes into his possession. Then wherever he casts his glance, he discovers that all that, is pervaded by *Brahman*; in fact, he enjoys Supreme bliss. In this way, one should be able to attain full experience of the relation between *prakriti* and *purusha*. This achievement of yours, is as important as the acquisition of sip of nectar or the sight of a treasure (1086-1090). But O spouse of *Subhadra*, please do not make up your mind yet, on the basis of the experience. For I am going to tell you a couple of My thoughts; so lend your ears to Me and try to understand these thoughts of Mine. Saying so, the Lord began his speech, which Arjuna heard with rapt attention.

31. *Being beginningless and devoid of qualities, this immutable Supreme Self, although existing in the body, O Arjuna, does not act nor is it attached.*

Just as the sun reflected in the water remains dry, so the Supreme Self exists in the body in his pure form. O Arjuna, the sun remains the same before and after reflection, but to others he appears reflected in the water (1091-1095). In the same way, it is not true to say that the Self exists in the body; he remains where he was earlier. Just as when one looks into the mirror he sees his face reflected in it, so it is said that the Self exists in the body. To say that the Self is united with the body is meaningless. Can you imagine the wind and the sand meeting together? How could fire and cotton be woven together in a thread? How can the sky and the cliff be joined together? If a person starts going East and another going West from the same place, they cannot meet. The relation between the Self and the body is like that (1096-1100). Know that there is no relation between them whatsoever, as between light and darkness or between a dead and a living person or between night and day or between gold and cotton. The body is fashioned from the five gross elements and it is woven in the thread of action and revolves on the wheel of births and deaths. The body is like a lump of butter thrown into the mouth of the fire, in the form of Death-god, where it disappears in the short time taken by a fly to flap its wings. If it falls into the fire, it is reduced to ashes, and if it falls into the clutches of a dog it is turned into dung (1101-1105). If it escapes from both these fates, it becomes the prey of germs and insects, and in fact, it meets with a repulsive end. But the Self is eternal, Self-existent and without beginning. As he is devoid of qualities, he is neither possessed of parts nor partless. He is neither active nor inactive, neither fat nor lean. Since he is formless, he is neither visible nor invisible, neither luminous nor non-luminous; neither minute nor extensive. As he is without attributes (void), he is neither empty nor full. He is neither bereft nor possessed of anything, he has neither form nor is he formless (1106-1110). As he is the Self, he is neither joyous nor joyless, neither one nor many, neither bound nor liberated. As he is without a mark, he is neither this much nor that much, neither self-made nor made by another, neither talkative nor dumb. He is neither created along with the universe nor is he dissolved at the end of the world, being himself the ground of existence and non-existence. As he is immutable, he cannot be measured or described, he neither increases nor decreases, neither fades nor dies. O dear, this is the real nature of the Self. To say that he dwells in the body, is like talking of the sky as being limited by the quadrangle of a hermitage (1111-1115). Since he is all-pervasive and uniform, he does not assume or give up the form of the body, but remains self-existent. Just as nights and days come and go, so the bodies

come and go in regard to the Self. So even while abiding in the body, he neither does anything nor gets anything done by others, nor is he occupied with any physical actions. In this way, he does not undergo any change, either of diminution or increase in his aspect, and so while dwelling in the body he remains unaffected.

32. *As the all-pervading space is not affected because of its subtleness, even so the Self is not affected, though present everywhere in the body.*

O Arjuna, is there any place where space does not exist or where it does not enter? Even so it does not become defiled (1116-1120). In the same way, although the Self dwells in the body, he does not become polluted by the body. Always bear in mind, that the self is distinct from the body.

33. *Even as the one sun illumines the entire world, so the Lord of the Field illumines the whole Field, O Bharata.*

When the magnet moves the iron by its mere proximity, the iron does not become the magnet. Similar is the relation between the body and the Self. All the domestic affairs are carried on in lamp-light: but there is a great difference between the house and the lamp. O Arjuna, there exists fire in a latent form in wood; but the wood is not fire. The Self should also be viewed in this manner (i.e. as different from the body) (1121-1125). Just as there is a great difference between the sky and the clouds or between the sun and the mirage, it is so in the case of the Self and the body. Just as the sun illuminates singly the entire world, so the knower of the Field illumines all the Fields. Do not have any doubt about it.

34. *Those who know with the eye of wisdom, the difference between the Field and the knower of the Field thus, and also the (means of) release from the prakriti of elements, attain to the Supreme.*

O you Arjuna, who grasps the meanings of words, that intellect which realises the distinction between the Field and the knower of the Field, sees truly and grasps the meaning of worlds. In order to realise this distinction between the two, the spiritual aspirants wear away the thresholds of the men of wisdom (1126-1130). It is for this that learned men amass the wealth of tranquility and study the scriptures. Some undertake the yogic discipline and move heaven and earth with the hope of knowing him. Some hold in contempt their bodies and other possessions and render devout service at the feet of the saints (literally carry their wooden slippers on their heads). By employing such various ways, they become free from sorrow. And some attain to the discriminating knowledge between the Field and the knower of the Field, which I value more than My own knowledge (1131-1135). They know the real nature of the illusory *prakriti*, which decks herself in different forms, such as the gross elements and seems to affect the embodied Selves according to the maxim of the parrot and the tube (in which the parrot who, although in no way bound to the tube, imagines through fright that he is bound to it and clings to it frantically). Just as one knows the real nature of a flower wreath, when the delusive knowledge of its being a serpent disappears or one recognises the shell when the delusive knowledge of its being silver vanishes, in the same way those who know the *prakriti* as distinct from the *purusha*, attain to Supreme *Brahman* (1136-1140). They become, O Partha, that Supreme Truth, which is more pervasive than the sky, which is beyond the *prakriti*, which, when attained, leaves no room for such feelings as identity or distinction and which remains in the non-dual form with the elimination of form, individuality and duality.

Such persons know the difference between the *prakriti* and *purusha* and in this respect are like swans (which separate milk from water).

*Shri Jnanadeva* says, in this way did the Lord unravel the mysterious doctrine of *prakriti* and *purusha* to his bosom friend Arjuna. The Lord imparted this knowledge to him, as one pours water from one jar into another (1141-1145). But who imparted it to whom, since they are both *Nara* and *Narayana*? Lord Krishna himself said that he is Arjuna (10.37). But why should I say this without being asked? In short, the Lord gave to Arjuna his all. Yet the mind of Partha was not satisfied, he longed to hear more and more of the Lord's talk. Just as the lamp flares up with the addition of oil, his longing to hear the Lord became intense. When the hostess is expert in cooking and liberal in serving food and the guest is fond of good food, the hands of both remain busy in serving and eating to their full satisfaction (1146-1150); so it was in the case of the Lord and Arjuna. Seeing Arjuna's intense longing to hear more and more, the Lord was greatly thrilled and encouraged to prolong his discourse. Just as with favourable wind, the clouds gather and pour rain or with the rising of the full moon, the sea gets into full tide, the speaker's eloquence waxes with the response of the audience.

O King, now listen to the elocution of the Lord, which will make the whole world full of joy. This dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, which has been narrated by sage *Vyasa* with his unlimited talent in the *Bhishmaparva* of *Mahabharata*, I shall now render in beautiful *ovi* verse in the local language (1151-1155). I shall now narrate the tale full of the serene sentiment, which will surpass even the erotic sentiment. I shall use such beautiful diction, that it will rebound to the credit of literature and even make nectar insipid in sweetness. My soft cooling phrases will even surpass the moon (who makes the moonstone ooze) and by their captivating eloquence, will muffle the Divine resonant sound. If persons with a demoniacal bent of mind were to hear them, they will be filled with *sattvic* sentiments and those with a Divine bent of mind will enter into *samadhi*. Dallying with speech, I shall fill the world with the import of *Gita* and make the whole world a pleasure-ground (1156-1160). May the poverty of discreet thought vanish, may the ears and the mind attain fulfillment, and wherever one sees, may one see the mine of the *Brahmic lore*. May the Supreme Truth come within the vision of everyone, may the happy festive occasions come within the reach of all and may the knowledge of the Self become plentiful in the world. I shall now give such a fine discourse that it will bring about all that I have said, for I have come under the wing of my *Guru Shri Nivrittinatha*. I shall explain every word in the text clearly, employing poetical language and similes in rich profusion. My magnanimous preceptor has made me proficient in all the lores (1161-1165) and it is because of his grace, that whatever I say receives your approbation. Any capability that I possess to explain the meaning of *Gita*, to an audience like this, is entirely due to his favour. Now that I have taken refuge at your feet, there is no obstruction in my way. O Masters, is it ever possible that the goddess of speech will have a dumb child? It is also not possible that goddess *Lakshmi* will lack auspicious signs on her palm. How then, can it ever happen that a person who has taken refuge with you, remain ignorant? I shall now sprinkle all the nine sentiments (*rasas*) copiously in my discourse. But, O Saints, give me some respite so that I shall give a detailed exposition of the *Gita* (1166-1170).

