

CHAPTER 8

|| THE IMPERISHABLE BRAHMAN ||

Arjuna said:

1. *What is that Brahman, what is the self? What is Action, O Supreme Person? What is called Adhibhuta? What is said to be Adhidaivata?*

Then Arjuna said, I am now listening carefully. Kindly explain to me what I have asked you. Tell me what is *Brahman*, what is named *karma*, and what is called *Adhyatma*? What is *Abhibhuta*, what is *Adhidaivata*? Tell me clearly so that I can understand them.

2. *Who and how is the Adhiyajna here in this body, O slayer of Madhu? and how at the time of death are you to be known by the self-possessed?*

O Lord, what is the *Adhiyajna* in this body, which does not come within the reach of inference? And tell me, O Krishna, how are you to be known at the time of departure with a restrained mind (1-5)? Look, if a lucky person sleeps in a mansion built of philosopher's stones, then even if he blurts something in sleep, it does not become futile. No sooner had Arjuna uttered these words, the Lord said, 'Listen well to this reply to your question';

(*Shri Jnanadeva* says) Arjuna is the calf of the wish-yielding cow, and over him was the shade of wish-bearing trees. It is, therefore not surprising that his desires came to be fulfilled. Even he, whom Lord Krishna kills in wrath, attains to the experience of the Supreme. Then how can one whom he favors with instruction, not attain it? When a person becomes one with the Lord, he becomes the Self; and then the miraculous powers attend upon him in the yard of his desires (6-10). Arjuna had this unlimited love for Lord Krishna and so his desires always bore fruit. For this reason, the Lord, anticipating his intent, served him a dish in the form of a reply. When the infant turns to the breast, the mother knows that it is hungry. Does the infant then tell her in words to suckle it? Therefore, it does not surprise me, if the gracious teacher has such affection for his disciple. Now listen to what the Lord said.

The blessed Lord said:

3. *The imperishable is the Supreme Brahman; it's essential nature is the Self, and that which causes the existence of beings is known as action.*

Then the Supreme Lord said, "The Supreme Self is that which dwells in this hollow body, but does not ever ooze out (11-15). It is not void, although it is so subtle that one can strain it in the fabric of *akasha*, and though it is so very fine and thin, it does not trickle down from the cloak of the world even though thoroughly shaken. And even after the assumption of form, it does not know the vicissitudes of life and does not perish with the disappearance of the form. It continues to exist in its own eternal state; and this inherent nature of *Brahman* is known as *Adhyatma*.

Then just as all of a sudden, simultaneously only knows not how, clusters of clouds of different hues appear in the sky (16-20), so from that pure formless *Brahman* different entities such as *mahat* emerge and the universe takes shape. On the heath of formless *Brahman*, the seed of the primal Will, 'let me be many', takes root and spreads out different primordial eggs. If you look carefully, every primordial egg is full of such seeds, by which countless creatures come into being and fade away. Then different parts of these primordial eggs go on briskly conceiving the Will to become many, giving rise to a flood of creations. But in all this creation abides the Supreme *Brahman* without a second, and the manifold creation, which we see, is like a mirage (21-25). One does not know how these similarities and distinctions have come about. If it is said that this world has come into existence without a cause, we see that there are thousands of species, which have come into existence. One cannot place any limit to the number of creatures and things. But if you try to discover the origin, you know that it is *Brahman*. One does not see the author of this creation nor any rational basis for it; but the creative activity is going on all the same. All that we see is name and form without an apparent originator. The activity that arises from this, is known as *karma*.

4. *The perishable existence is Adhibhuta; the Self is the Adhidaivata. I am Myself the Adhiyajna in this body, O best among men.*

Now I shall explain what is known as *Adhibhutta*. As the cloud appears and vanishes (26-30), so there is an apparent worldly existence, which does not exist in reality; it has come into being through the combination of five elements. It comes into being from their combination, but its name and form etc. vanishes with the separation of the elements. This material existence is known as *Adhibhuta*. The embodied Self is the *Adhidaivata* who enjoys whatever the *prakriti* produces. He is the witness of intelligence, the Lord of the senses and is the resting-place of desire after death, as the tree is the resting-place of birds after sunset. He is none else than the Supreme Self, but being asleep in his egoism, he experiences joy and sorrow from his activities as in a dream (31-35). What is commonly known as *Jiva*, the embodied Self, is the *Adhidaivata*, the presiding deity over the five elements.

Know ye, O Arjuna that I am the *Adhiyajna* in this body, who wipes out the identification of the Self with the body. Indeed, I am also the *Adhibhuta* and the *Adhidaivata*, but when pure gold is mixed with an alloy, does it become impure? Even then the pure gold does not get soiled or become blended with the alloy, but so long as it remains mixed, it has to be considered as an alloy, not pure gold. But, when the *Adhibhuta* and *Adhidaivata* are covered by the veil of ignorance, they are regarded as different from Me (36-40). The moment this veil of ignorance is removed, the difference vanishes; and they become one with Me; but were they really different from Me? If a crystal is placed on a bunch of hair, it appears to the eye as split in two. When, however, the hair is removed, the crack in the crystal disappears. Does this mean that the two pieces have been soldered now? The crystal was whole, but appeared to be cracked because it had come into contact with the hair; when the hair was removed, it looked without a crack as before. Similarly, when the ego-sense vanishes, the oneness of the *Adhibhuta* etc. which is already there, is restored. That which is already there, is restored. That with which they become one, is myself, the *Adhiyajna* (41-45). Having this in view, I had told you that all sacrifices are produced by actions. I have disclosed to you the treasure of bliss, which is freedom from actions, where all the souls take rest.

First the aspirant should kindle the fire of senses, and then in its flames he should offer the oblation of ingredients of sense-objects. Then clearing the ground and sitting in the form of the diamond posture, he should form the altar of *mulabandha* under the canopy of his body. Then he should offer in the sacrificial pit the ingredients of senses by reciting the *mantras* of Yoga (46-50). Thereafter by performing the sacrificial rite with the restraint of *prana* and mind, he should propitiate the smokeless fire of knowledge. When he sacrifices his all in the fire of knowledge, he merges in the knowable, which remains in its true form. This knowable is the *Adhiyajna*, so said Lord Krishna and this immediately appealed to intelligent Arjuna. Knowing this, Lord Krishna said, 'O Partha, you listen well'. Hearing these words, Arjuna was very much gratified. Look, only the mother or the *Guru* knows how to feel joy at the satisfaction of her child or his disciple (51-55). Then the *sattvic* emotions crowded in the mind of Lord Krishna even before Arjuna, but controlling them somehow through his intellect, he began a speech, tender and witty, which was like fragrance of ripe happiness or the surge of cool nectar. He said, 'O Arjuna, the prince of listeners, listen'. Then that (knowledge) which destroys *Maya* is itself dissolved.

5. *Whoever departs casting off his body, thinking of Me alone, at the time of death, he attains to My State without doubt.*

What I had told you so far is known as *Adhiyajna*. Those who know Me as *Adhiyajna* from beginning to end, regard the body as a cloak and remain in Me, as the hermitage filled with space, remains in space (56-60). Since they have entered the room of conviction in the bosom of experience, they do not remember worldly matters. When they become one with Me both externally and internally, the scales of the five gross elements drop down without his knowledge. When he is not aware of his body while dwelling in it, how will he feel pain when it drops down? His experience remains firm even at the time of death. This experience is cast in the image of unity, set in the frame of eternity and so washed clean in the ocean of oneness with Me, that it does not get soiled again. When a jar immersed in deep water breaks, does the water inside and outside of it split into two (61-65)? Or when a snake casts off his skin or a person disrobes himself because of heat, do his limbs get broken? When the name and form are destroyed, *Brahman* remains as it is; if the intellect becomes one with it, how will it become confused? So whoever gives up the ghost, knowing Me such, becomes one with Me after death.

6. *Whatever being a person thinks of at the end of life and abandons his body, he attains to that very being, O Arjuna, being steeped constantly in its thought.*

The general rule is that when the time of death arrives, whatever he remembers at that time, he becomes that. This is like a person, running through fright with great speed, suddenly falls in a well (66-70). He is not able to control himself and avoid the fall and so he has no other go but to fall in that well. Likewise whatever thing a person meditates upon at the time of death, he cannot avoid becoming that in any way, whatever thing he thinks of when he is awake, that thing appears before him in a dream when he falls asleep. So whatever longing he has while alive, it becomes augmented when he is on the brink of death. And so, whatever he remembers at the time of death, he attains to that state. Therefore, you should always remember Me (71-75).

8: THE IMPERISHABLE BRAHMAN

7. *Therefore at all times think of Me and fight! With your mind and intellect fixed on Me, you shall attain to Me without doubt.*

Whatever you see with your eyes or hear with your ears, whatever you think of in your mind or speak with your tongue, make Me the object of all that inside and outside; then you will become one with Me at all times. When this happens, you have no fear of death when you leave the body. Then why should you feel afraid of death in war? If you surrender your mind and intellect truly to Me, you will attain to Me; this is My solemn promise to you. If you have any doubt as to how it will come to pass, you should practice Yoga and see for yourself and if you do not succeed, get cross with Me (76-80).

8. *By thinking of Him, O Partha, with the mind engrossed in yogic practice, and not wandering elsewhere, one attains to the Person Supreme and Divine.*

By practicing Yoga make your mind pure and strong, by adopting proper means even a cripple can climb a mountain. Then by this *yogic* practice direct your mind to the Supreme Self; then it matters not whether your body remains or departs. If the mind, which runs after different goals, is lost in the Self, then who will remember whether the body has remained or gone? When the river with its noisy currents joins the sea, does it come back to see what happened after it left? Never! It becomes one with the sea. So the mind also becomes one with *Brahman*, which is of the nature of bliss and which puts a stop to transmigration (81-85).

9. *He who remembers the wise, the ancient ruler, subtler than the subtle, the supporter of all, of inconceivable form, effluent like the sun, beyond darkness,*
10. *At the time of death, with a steady mind, endowed with devotion and power of Yoga, having fixed his breath between the eyebrows, attains to the Person Supreme and Divine.*

The *Brahman* is formless, and without birth and death, and is whole and the witness of all. It is more ancient than *akasha* and subtler than the atom. The universe starts its activity in its presence. It creates all things and sustains the whole universe, is incomprehensible and beyond the reach of reason. Look, as the white ants cannot enter live coal or darkness cannot enter the sunlight, it is not visible to the physical eye during daylight. It is like a heap of sun's rays which looks like dawn to those who know, and the words 'rising' and 'setting' do not apply to it even by way of metaphorical import (86-90). He remembers that spotless *Brahman* at the time of death with a steady mind. He sits in the lotus posture, facing the north, thinking of the joy of *karmayoga* in his mind and hastens to attain the true nature of *Brahman* by collecting his mind and holding it dear. Then he leads his *prana* through the vein known as *sushumna* first into the plexus known as *ajnachakra* and then to the *Brahmarandhra*. When the *prana* enters the *cidakasha*, he sees the combination of body and mind as an unreal appearance (91-95). Then with a steady mind full of devotional love, controlling him through the power of Yoga and keeping his mind steady on the center of the eyebrows, he tries to dissolve his body and mind. Then just as the sound of a bell becomes dissolved in the bell, or the flame of a lamp kept under a vessel is extinguished without anybody coming to know of it, he leaves behind his body in peace. He then attains to the Supreme Self also known as the Supreme Person, and My highest light.

11. *That which the Veda-knowers call Imperishable, which the self-controlled enter free from passion, and desiring which they practice continence, that goal I shall declare to you briefly.*

Those who are a mine of wisdom, which is the consummation of all knowledge, call it the imperishable with full understanding (96-100). The sky is not blown away by a tempest unlike the cloud. Had it been a cloud, would it have withstood the tempest? That which is known and measured by the intellect is perishable and that which is beyond comprehension is Imperishable. This which the knowers of *Vedas* call the Imperishable is the Supreme Self and it is beyond the *prakriti*. Then those who abandon the sense-objects like poison, purify the senses and remaining unattached in the body and full of dispassion wait for Him, whom even the desireless wish to attain (101-105). In order to attain that state, they do not mind taking the difficult vow of celibacy, restraining the senses with severity. I shall tell you again about that state, which those who depart in this way attain, which is fathomless and difficult to reach and in the shallow waters of which the *Vedas* could take only a dip. Then Arjuna said. "O Lord, I was on the point of asking you this, but you granted me this favor. So please tell me, but make it very simple for me." Then said the Light of the Three Worlds, "Don't I know you well? I shall tell you all this in brief, listen (106-110). Therefore, controlling the natural habit of the mind to wander outside, ensure that it remains confined inside your heart."

12. *Closing all the doors of the senses, confining the mind in the heart, fixing the prana within the head, resorting to yogic concentration,*

This will happen only when the doors of the senses are shut with the lock of restraint. When the mind is so confined, it remains stay put in the heart, just as a cripple does not leave the precincts of his home. When the mind comes to rest, then you should control the breath meditating on *Om* and then take the *prana* gradually to the recess of the heart and hold it through concentration so that it stops short of merging in *akasha*, until the three syllabic feet of *Om* sink in its half (111-115). He should hold the *prana* in the *chidakasha* and when the syllable *Om* unites with it, it remains at peace in the *chidakasha*.

13. *Whoever departs, relinquishing his body, thinking of Me and uttering the sacred syllable Om, attains to the highest goal.*

Then the remembrance of *Om* stops and the *prana* also become merged in it and then only the blissful *Brahman* remains at the end of *Om*. Therefore, *Om* is My only name - nay it is *Brahman* in the form of one letter. He, who remembering this Supreme nature of Mine abandons his body, positively attains to Me. Then there remains nothing else beyond Me for him to attain. But, Arjuna, a doubt may arise in your mind, as to how a person could bring himself to remember Me at the time of death (116-120). When the senses become sluggish, the pleasure in living is lost and the signs of death become manifest both within and without, then who can assume a posture, restrain his senses and meditate on *Om* and with whose mind? you should not entertain this doubt in your mind. If you render service to Me at all times, I shall be your servant at the time of your death.

14. *He who constantly thinks of Me, without thought for another, I am easy to attain, O Partha, for that ever controlled yogin.*

15. *After reaching Me, the great souls do not get rebirth, the abode of impermanent pain; (for) they have reached the highest perfection.*

Those who have renounced sensual pleasures and restrained their senses, they keep Me in their heart and enjoy bliss. While enjoying this bliss, they do not feel hunger and thirst, then who cares for the poor senses such as the eyes (121-125)? If even those who have become united with Me heart and soul, and worship Me after becoming one with Me, have to remember Me at the time of death for Me to go to their help, then of what use is their worship? O Partha, When a needy person in danger invokes Me for help, don't I feel distressed and hasten to give him relief? And, if I give My devotees the same treatment, who will hanker after Me? Therefore, do not entertain this doubt in your mind. If I were to run to them only when they remember Me, I will not be able to endure the obligation, which I owe to them (126-130). In order to repay the debt due to them, I wait upon them at the time of their death. In order that My delicate devotees should not suffer the pangs of separation from the body, I keep them in the cell of self-knowledge. I keep them in the cool and quiet shade of My remembrance, so that their mind will always remain concentrated on Me. Therefore the peril of death does not affect My devotees and I bring them to Myself, safe and sound. Divesting them of the covering of their body and shedding the dust of their false pride and keeping intact their pure desires, I gather them to Me (131-135). And since the devotees are not identified with the body, they too do not feel pain at the separation of the body. Since they have already attained to Me, they do not expect Me to meet them at the time of death and draw them to Me. Truly speaking, their existence is a mere reflection in the body, just as the moonlight, though reflected in water, remains in the moon. So I am easy to attain for those who are constantly absorbed in Yoga, and they become one with Me without doubt after death.

This body, O Partha, is a bower of trees in the form of afflictions. It is the pan of live coals in the form of three kinds of miseries. It is an oblation offered to the crow in the form of death (136-140). It sustains misery, enhances fear of death and is a store-house of all kinds of unhappiness. It is the source of wicked thoughts, the fruit of bad actions and the perfect embodiment of delusion. It is the basis of transmigration, the garden of passions, and the dish served for all diseases. It is the leftover food for death, or the beaten track of birth and death. It is the embodiment of delusion cast in the stuff of fancies and is, as it were, a cellar full of scorpions (141-145). It is the den of a tiger, friendship of a whore, the means of sensual enjoyment acceptable to all. It is like the sympathy of a female goblin, like the cooled drink of poison, or like feigned friendship of a polished thief. It is like the embrace of a leper, like the softness of a deadly serpent, or like the music played by a hunter to ensnare birds and animals. It is like the hospitality of an enemy, like the (outward) respect shown by wicked men, in short, the sea of all calamities. It is like a dream seen in sleep, like a forest grown on mirage water, or the sky fashioned out of particles of smoke (146-150). Those who have attained My infinite nature, will never be united with this body.

16. *Right from the realm of God Brahma, the worlds return again and again, O Arjuna; but after reaching Me, O son of Kunti, there is no more rebirth.*

Now even for the swaggering *Brahma*, there is no escape from birth and death. But just as the dead man cannot suffer stomach-ache, or a person, after waking up, cannot get drowned in a flood which he dreamt in sleep, so those, who have attained to Me, do not get smeared

with the taint of worldly existence. Even for the eighth part of a day of *Brahmaloka*, which is the best among the worlds and the summit of the universe and which stands at the head of all durable things, the life of *Indra* does not last and fourteen *Indras* come and go in a Day of *Brahma* (151-155).

17. *Those who know that the Day of Brahma ends after a thousand epochs, and that the Night also does the same, are the knowers of Day and Night.*

The Day of *Brahma* lasts for four thousand epochs, and so does his Night. Those fortunate persons who live in this world having such Days and Nights do not return to this mortal world and enjoy a long life in heaven. What can one say about the longevity of other Gods, when there are fourteen *Indras* in a Day of *Brahmaloka*? those who see with their eyes the Day and Night of *Brahma*, are called the knowers of day and night.

18. *From the Unmanifest all manifestations emerge at the coming of Brahma's Day; at the falling of Night they dissolve in that Self-same thing called the Unmanifest.*

19. *And this multitude of beings comes into being again and again, and dissolves helplessly, O Partha, at the coming of the Night, it is born again at the advent of the Day.*

When the day of *Brahma* dawns, then this Unmanifest manifests itself as the universe (156-160). When the Day is over, this sea of name and form dries up and when it dawns, it begins to take shape. At the beginning of autumn the clouds disappear in the sky, and at the end of summer, they begin to appear again. Likewise, at the start of the *Brahma's Day*, this universe comes into being and lasts until the end of four thousand *Yugas*. Then when the night of *Brahman* starts, the universe becomes merged in the unmanifest and resumes its present form when the Night ends. My reason for telling you all this is that the origination and dissolution of the universe takes place in a Day and Night of the *Brahma's world* (161-165). See the measure of its greatness. It contains the seed of creation but becomes subject to recurrence. O Arjuna, this universe begins to expand at the beginning of the Day and then when the Night comes, it begins to dissolve in its original state. Just as the tree is contained in the seed or the cloud dissolves in the sky, so that in which this manifold universe dissolves, is known as the state of equilibrium.

20. *But higher than this Unmanifest, there is another being, Unmanifest and eternal, which, when all beings perish, does not perish.*

In this state of equilibrium, nothing does exist, nor can one say that similar or different things exist. Just as when milk turns into curds, it loses its name and form, so with the dissolution of its form the world disappears (166-170). But it continues to exist as it was before creation. This is known as Unmanifest; when it takes shape it becomes the manifest world; the one implies the other and so they are not two different things. When the gold is melted, it is known as a bar of gold, but its bar form vanishes, when it is turned into ornaments. Just as these two modifications take place in gold, so the manifest world and the Unmanifest are the two forms of *Brahman*. But that *Brahman* is neither manifest nor unmanifest, neither eternal nor perishable, but it is the self-same pure, being beyond both modifications, abiding forever. *Brahman* becomes the world, but does not perish with the world, just as the meaning is not lost when the letters are erased. Look, even when the waves come and go, water remains

unaffected; so this *Brahman* retains its imperishable form, even when beings perish. Just as gold remains even when the ornaments are melted, so even when beings die, it remains immortal.

21. *It is called the eternal Unmanifest; they speak of it as the highest goal. After reaching it, they do not return; that is My Supreme abode.*
22. *But that Supreme Person, O Partha, is attainable only through exclusive devotion. In Him all beings dwell and out of Him all this is woven.*

If we call it Unmanifest, we do not praise it properly; because it cannot be comprehended by the mind of the intellect. Even if it assumes form, it does not lose its formless nature. And with the disappearance of its form, its eternity is not affected (176-180). It is, therefore, called the Imperishable, known as eternally present. Since there is nothing beyond it, it is the final destination of human life, but it is present in this body, as if asleep, as it does not perform any function either itself or through others. However, all the activities of the body go on without stop, and the sense organs are free to go their own way. When the sense-objects are presented to the mind, a measure of pleasure and pain reaches it. When the king enjoys his sleep, the activities in his kingdom do not stop; and his subjects continue to do their work according to their desires (181-185). The decision making by the intellect, the activities of the mind and the senses, and the flow of breathing - all these functions of the body go on without any action on its part, just as the people go their way, without being moved by the sun. O Arjuna, since the Self remains as if asleep in the body, he is called *purusa*. He is also known as *purusa*, as *prakriti* is his faithful wife. The *Vedas* do not enter even its courtyard, and it is so all-pervasive that it covers the sky (186-190). Knowing thus the great *yogis* call it the highest of all things, and it comes in search of the house of all things, and it comes in search of the house of one, for whom it is the sole resort. It presents to them who think of nothing else with body, speech and mind, a reward, like a fertile field, for their single-minded devotion. O son of *Pandu*, it is the hermitage for the believer, who sincerely believes this universe to be the form of the Supreme Self. It is the dignity of the humble, the knowledge of the *gunatita* and the kingdom of bliss for the desireless, the dish served to the contented, the asylum to the helpless, whose destination is reached through the royal road of devotion (191-195). O Arjuna, why should I waste My time in describing all this to you? When the Self reaches that state, he becomes one with it. Just as hot water becomes cool when the cool breeze blows; or darkness becomes light when the sun rises, so when empirical existence reaches that abode, it turns into liberation. Just as when firewood is burnt in fire, no one can recover it again, or not even a clever person can change sugar again into sugarcane (196-200) or after iron is transformed into gold by the touch of philosopher's stone, the gold cannot be turned back into iron, or when ghee is made out of milk, it cannot be turned again into milk, so there is no return for a person who has reached that place. That place is truly My Supreme abode; I am laying bare this inner secret of Mine to you.

23. *Of that time wherein yogis depart to return again or never to return, of that I shall speak, O best of Bharatas.*

One can easily know where the *yogis* go after knowing the time when they leave their bodies. Sometimes it so happens that a *yogi* leaves at an improper time and then he has to become

embodied again (201-205). Therefore, if he dies at an auspicious time, he becomes one with *Brahman*; but if he dies at an improper time, he returns to the mortal world. So return and non-return are both dependent on time. I shall now tell you incidentally the proper time for dying. Listen, O great warrior, when a person is overtaken with the stupor of death, the five great elements go their own way. Since he has put on the armour of the experience of God, his intellect remains undeluded, his memory strong and his mind active. This whole sentient group remains fresh at the time of death (206-210). In order that this group remains alert and continues to be so till the time of death, he must receive the help of fire. O Partha, if the lamp is extinguished either by wind or water, will one be able to see anything, even if one's sight remains intact? when the body is overtaken by an excess of wind and phlegm, the fire in the body loses its warmth at the time of death. When the *prana* has no life, what can the intellect do then? Therefore, consciousness does not remain in the body without warmth. If the warmth leaves the body, it is only a lump of wet clay; he will then spend the rest of his life in darkness (211-215). Then how can he keep the remembrance of his previous *yogic* practice at that time and become one with the *Brahman* after death? At that time he loses his consciousness and all his remembrance, past and present, in the mire of phlegm. So all his *yogic* practice perishes even before death, just as the lamp is extinguished even before the treasure is found. In short, know that knowledge is dependent on heat of the body; therefore, it is necessary to have the help of full warmth at the time of departure.

24. *Fire, light, daytime, the bright fortnight, the six months of the (sun's) Northern course departing by this path, the Brahman-knowers go to Brahman.*

When there is heat of fire in the body, the bright fortnight and the day outside, and any one of the six months of the (sun's) northern course (216-220), the knowers of *Brahman* who leave their body at such a propitious time, become one with *Brahman*. Know, O Arjuna, this occasion has such power that it is the royal road to reach the destination. Here the first step is fire, the second its flame, third is the day-time, the fourth the bright fortnight, the last step the six months in the northern course, going by which the *yogis* attain the state of liberation. This is the best time to depart, called the *Archira* path. I shall now tell you the inauspicious time, listen (221-225).

25. *Smoke, night, the dark fortnight, the six months of the (sun's) Southern course - (departing) then, having reached the lunar light, the yogi returns (to the mortal world.)*

If at the time of departure wind and phlegm become excessive, then the mind becomes enveloped in darkness. Then the senses become inert, remembrance becomes confused, the mind becomes benumbed and the *prana* becomes suffocated. The fire loses its blaze and remains as smoke only, by which the consciousness of the body becomes engulfed. When the moon is hidden by the cloud, there is dim light and semi-darkness. He is neither dead nor fully alive and his life, being arrested, stands on the brink of death (226-230). Thus, when the senses, mind and intellect become engulfed by smoke, the Yoga achieved by life-long effort is destroyed. When what is in hand is lost, then what hope is there to achieve something new? This is his condition when he departs from this world. While this is his internal condition, externally there is the night, the dark fortnight and a day in the six months of the sun's southern course. When there is a concatenation of such things at the time of death, how will he get the glimpse

of self-realization? when a *yogi* leaves his body at this time, he goes to the region of the moon, but returns from there to this mortal world (231-235). This, O Arjuna, is what I call the improper time. By taking the path of smoke one gets involved in the recurrence of birth. The other one is the *Archira* path, which is easy, naturally good and conducive to happiness and release.

26. *For these two, the bright and the dark, are the eternal paths of the world. By one, a person does not return, by the other he returns.*

I have shown you these two eternal paths intentionally; one is a straight path, the other is a by-path. You should then know which is the right and which is the wrong path, what will do you good and what will cause you harm, so that you will adopt the good. If a person sees a boat, will he jump into deep water or knowing the straight road, will anyone take to a by-path (236-240)? As a person who knows poison and nectar, will not give up nectar, so a person who knows the straight path will not choose the by-path. One should carefully examine what is true and what is false, so that one does not come to harm when the occasion arises. otherwise, if there is confusion between the paths, one may come to evil, and then all the life-long spiritual practices will come to naught. If a person, missing the path of light, goes by the path of smoke, he will be bound to the worldly existence and roam from birth to birth. In order to enable a person to escape these travail of life, I had to disclose to you these two paths of Yoga (241-245). One of them leads to God-realization, the other to transmigration. But either of these two paths falls to one's lot at the time of death.

27. *Knowing these two paths, O Partha, the yogi is not deluded, therefore, at all times, O Arjuna, remain engrossed in Yoga.*

But how can one be sure by which path one will go after death? Why should one depend upon the right path for God-realization? Whether one remains in body or departs, one is of the nature of *Brahman*. Because even if a rope appears like a serpent, it is really a rope. Is the water ever aware of the ripples, which come and go? It remains at any time with or without ripples as water only. Therefore, those who have become *Brahman* while living, are known as disembodied (246-250).

There does not remain now even a trace of body-consciousness in him; then how can he die at any time? Why then, should he search for any path and where can he go, when space and time have become his very Self? Look, when the jar breaks, has the space in it, to find its way to meet the Infinite space outside? Will it otherwise miss it? The truth is that when the jar breaks, only its form is lost; but the space inside it, has always been part of the space outside. With this knowledge, the *yogi* who has attained to oneness with *Brahman*, does not bother which path he should take (151-155). For this reason, O Arjuna, I urge you to become possessed of Yoga, by which you will acquire equanimity at all times. Whether his bondage to the body remains or goes, his free and eternal unity with *Brahman* remains unaffected. He is not born at the beginning of the epoch nor dies at the end of it, nor is he tempted by the pleasures of heaven or earth. He who has attained to this knowledge properly becomes a *yogi* who, discarding the pleasures of life, has attained his Self, he abandons, O Arjuna, as worthless the Lordship of *Indra* and other gods, which receives acclaim everywhere (256-260).

28. *Whatever reward the Vedas assign to ritual, austerities and almsgiving, the yogi knowingly transcends them all and attains the Supreme primal state.*

Whatever fruit is attained by studying the *Vedas* or by performing Yoga or by practicing austerities, or by giving in charity, even if it is done in abundance, it does not bear comparison with the pure bliss of *Brahman*. When the joy of heaven, acquired through *Vedic* sacrifices, is weighed against the eternal bliss, it does not seem less. Since it does not wilt or come to an end and gives full satisfaction, it appears to the ignorant to have kinship with the Supreme bliss. Even though this joy of heaven is sensual, it depends on providence and so cannot be acquired by performing even hundred sacrifices (261-265). When the great *yogi*, by his keen and extraordinary insight, weighs it against bliss, he finds it trifling. Then, O Arjuna, by making this heavenly joy his footstep, he mounts the seat of the Supreme *Brahman*. Thus, spoke to Arjuna, Lord Krishna, the glory of the *Yadu* race, who is the destiny of moving and non-moving beings, the object of worship of *Shankara* and *Brahma*, the treasure enjoyed by the *yogis*, the promoter of all arts, the Supreme bliss in human form, the sap of the universe and the source of all knowledge (266-270). So *Sanjaya* gave to king *Dhritarashtra* the news of *Kurukshetra*. *Shri Jnanadeva* says, listen to the events that followed (271).

