

CHAPTER 9

|| *THE ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE* ||

Kindly pay attention to me; then you will become deserving of great bliss. I promise this, please give heed. I do not speak this out of pride, but I am entreating you out of affection in this audience of all-knowing persons to listen to me. Since I have rich parents like you, I am assured of the fulfillment of all my fond wishes and desires. The arbors of bliss are blooming through the coolness shed by your glances and tired that I am, I am resting under full-grown cool shade of your grace. O saints, you are a pool of nectar-like happiness, from which we receive moisture of your grace, as we desire. If I feel shy of entreating you, how shall I get peace of mind (1-5)? When the child begins to lisp or walk with a limping gate, the mother admires it and becomes delighted. I am soliciting your favor with great ardour, so that I can receive the affection of holy men like you. Compared to my ability to speak, listeners are all-knowing. It is like teaching a child of the Goddess of learning to write on a slate. How can the glow-worm, however big, show itself off before the sun? What dishes can you serve along with nectar? Who will fan the moon to keep her cool or sing before the unmanifested sound or adorn the ornaments (6-10)? What should the fragrance smell, where should the sea bathe, and where can the *akasha* find shelter with its big expanse? Who has got the eloquence, which will arrest your attention, and make you say with joy 'What a fine discourse'! But can one not wave the wick light before the sun, which illumines the world, or offer a handful of water as an oblation to the sea? O saints poor that I am, I offer my homage of words to you, who are images of *Lord Shankara* and request you to accept them as *nirgudi* leaves. When the child picks up food from its father's dish to feed him, the father willingly moves his mouth forward to have it from its hand (11-15). If I, therefore, take a little liberty with you out of childlike innocence, I hope you will bear it willingly out of affection. Since you bear me great affection and have accepted me as one of you, you will not feel the burden of my intimacy. When the calf pulls at the udder of its mother, the cow releases more milk, just so love gets an impetus from the anger of a beloved person.

Since I know that I have awakened your dormant grace by my childish prattle, I am emboldened to explain the *Gita* to you. Else has anyone been able to ripen moonlight under pressure, to give speed to the wind, or to cover up the sky (16-20)? As water cannot be diluted or butter churned, so my discourse feels shy of interpreting the *Gita* and turns back. What ability have I, to explain in the local language, the meaning of the *Gita*, which has eluded the words and baffled the *Vedas*? But I have made bold to do this in the hope that I shall endear myself to you by this courageous act. Now fulfill my desire by giving your attention, which cools like the moonlight and enlivens one like nectar. If your glance showers its grace upon me, then my intellect will reap an abundant harvest of the meaning of the *Gita*. But if you are indifferent, it will wither away the sprout of my knowledge (21-25). Please bear in mind that if you feed my eloquence with your attention, then my words will be able to bear the burden of explaining the doctrines of the *Gita*. Meaning will wait for the words to come out to leave its impress and intellect will flower into meaningful interpretation of the *Gita*. If there is perfect accord between the speaker and the audience, the

mind becomes overfull with sentiments, and if the listeners do not pay attention, the sentiments get dried up. The moonstone oozes only with its contact with the moonlight; so the speaker cannot prove his worth without an audience. Does the cooked rice need to entreat the eater to relish it or must the puppets implore the thread-puller to make them dance (26-30)? The puppeteer makes them dance not for their sake, but to show his skill. But why should I bother about this? Then the *Guru* said, "Why do you say all this? We can read your thoughts. Now continue the story". Then *Jnanadeva*, the disciple of *Nivriddhi*, said with pleasure and enthusiasm, "As you wish, My Master; I shall tell you what Lord Krishna said, please listen."

The blessed Lord said:

1. *To you uncavilling, I shall declare this most profound wisdom, together with knowledge, knowing which you shall be freed from evil.*

O Arjuna, I am going to tell you now the seed of wisdom, which is the innermost secret of My heart. You wonder why I should open My heart before you and tell you all this (31-35), then listen. O wise one, you are the very image of faith, and will not disregard what I have to tell you. Therefore, I do not mind revealing to you the secret and saying what I ought not to say; but I feel that I should convey to your mind what is in My heart. O Partha the teat does not taste the milk which is concealed in it; it only satisfies the calf which wants to drink it with a single-minded love. If the seed is sown in a properly ploughed land, can you say that it is completely lost? So one should freely tell one's secret to a person who has a pure mind and refined intellect, who does not cavil at others and is solely devoted to Me (36-40). There is not one else, who possesses these virtues so well as yourself; and, therefore, I feel that I should not withhold this secret from you. Now you must be fed up with this constant talk of secret; so I shall disclose to you this wisdom along with empirical knowledge. If genuine and counterfeit coins are mixed together, they can be determined by the application of appropriate tests. Just as a swan can separate the milk and water with its beak, so I shall distinguish between self-knowledge and phenomenal knowledge. Even as the husk is separated by a strong wind, piling a heap of grain on the ground (41-45), so this wisdom, equating mortal life with the world of name and form leads the spiritual aspirant to the state of liberation.

2. *This is the royal wisdom, the royal mystery, the best and most purifying, capable of direct perception, conforming to duty, very easy to practice and undecaying.*

This wisdom has achieved the highest status among knowledge, and is the sovereign among all secrets, the purest of all pure things. It is the basis of righteousness; the best among the best and it leaves no scope for further rebirth. It is ever present in the heart of every one and comes to him easily as soon as he hears it from the mouth of the spiritual teacher. One can attain this wisdom by easy steps, and when it is attained, all experience comes to an end (46-50). Its realization, which is easy to achieve even on this shore of life, fills the heart with great happiness. Another characteristic of this wisdom is that once it is attained, it is not lost, and even if one experiences it, it does not diminish or wilt. If you reason it out and raising a doubt ask, "how has such an entity been ignored by the people? How is it that those who do not hesitate to jump into fire to earn interest at one percent per menses on their investment, have been negligent in acquiring the joy of self-knowledge? This joy of self-knowledge is pure and pleasant, easily attainable and is in accord with one's duty and conducive to liberation

(51-55). If this is so full of bliss, how is it that people have overlooked it? If such a doubt enters your mind, do not entertain it.”

3. *Men lacking in faith in this way of knowledge, O scorcher of foes, return to the path of the mortal world without attaining to Me.*

O Arjuna, the udder of the cow contains milk, pure and tasty; but don't the ticks ignore it and drink pure blood? The lotus-root and the frog live at the same place, but the bee enjoys its pollen, while the frog is left with mud. An unlucky person may have his house chests full of gold coins unknown to him, but he lives a life of penury. Likewise, though I, the fountain of bliss abide in him, a person deluded by the sense-object hankers after them (56-60). This is like running after a mirage after spitting out nectar, or like throwing away the philosopher's stone after finding a shell. Thus in the hurry and scurry of egoistic activity, these wretches do not reach Me and roll in pain on the banks of birth and death. If you ask Me what I am, I am like the sun always facing you, but I do not share his deficiency of being visible and invisible at times.

4. *All this world is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest form; all beings exist in Me, but I do not exist in them.*

As regards my expansion, am I not this whole universe? Just as when the milk coagulates, it becomes curds, or the seed is transformed into the tree or the gold into ornaments, so this whole universe is nothing but My expanse (61-65). When my unmanifest nature becomes frozen, it takes the form of the universe, and thus I, who am unmanifest, have expanded into these three worlds. All beings from the Great Principle to the bodies appear on Me as foam appears on water. But O Arjuna, there is not water in that foam nor do we see the manifold objects of the dream after waking. So even though these beings appear in Me, I am not in them. I have already given you this elucidation before (7.12). But let us stop here, as I do not wish to repeat what I have said before; but I want you to have an insight into My essential nature (66-70).

5. *Nor do beings dwell in Me; behold My Divine Yoga. Though I do not exist in them, I give them being and sustain them,*

If you wish to see, without misconception, my real nature beyond the *prakriti*, you will realize that the statement that the beings are in Me is false; because I am all this. Because in the twilight of the Divine Will, the mind's eye becomes dim, and in that dim light although I am one, I appear to be different beings. When the dim light of that Divine Will comes to an end I appear in my true nature, as the garland, which appears like the serpent, is seen in its true form. Else do the pitcher, pot etc. happen of their own accord? They are really fashioned by the intellect of the potter or are there mines of waves in the water of the sea? Is it not truly the work of the wind which blows on the water? So also are there bundles of cloth contained in the bales of cotton? The cotton has itself become cloth in the eyes of its wearer. When gold is turned into ornaments, it is not destroyed; it assumes the form of ornaments in the eyes of their user. The echo of the sound that we hear or the reflection in the mirror that we see is that of a real object that exists. So when a person superimposes the beings on My pure nature this superimposition is entirely due to a misconception born of *Maya*. When this misconception ceases, the superimposition comes to an end, and then

My pure nature without form remains (76-80). Just as a giddy person thinks that the surrounding objects are revolving around him, so the beings appear as superimpositions on My indivisible nature. When this misconception ceases, no one can imagine even in a dream, that I exist in the beings or that the beings exist in Me. So to say that I support the beings or that I exist in the beings is like the raving of a person suffering from delirious fever. Thus it is the misconception of an unreal being that makes one think that I am the core of this universe or the support of the beings. Just as one sees the non-existent mirage due to the sun's rays, he thinks that I exist in the beings and the beings exist in Me. But even as the sun and its light are one and the same, so I do not exist apart from the beings. Do you see, O Arjuna, this My Divine power? Tell me, do you see any distinction between Me and the beings? Thus the world is not really different from Me, and so do not ever think that I am different from them.

6. *Nor do these works of creation bind Me, O Arjuna, since I remain like one indifferent, detached from these actions.*

Just as a mound of salt cannot stop a rushing mass of river water, so even if the works of creation ultimately merge in Me, they do not bind Me. How can a cage of smoke stop a blast of wind or darkness enter the sun's disc (121-125)? If a torrential rain could drench things in the bosom of a mountain, then actions of *prakriti* would affect Me. Even though I am the cause of the modifications of *prakriti*, I remain indifferent, not doing anything or making others do it. Just as a lamp kept in the house does not know who is doing what in the house, but is a mere witness to the work which goes on in the house, so although I remain in the beings, I am unconcerned about their works. In how many ways can I elucidate the same thing again and again? But, O Arjuna, keep this in mind (126-130).

7. *With Me presiding over her, prakriti begets the moving and stationary things; for this reason, O son of Kunti, the world revolves.*

Just as the sun is merely the instrumental cause of the world's affairs, so I am, O Arjuna, the cause of creation of the world. Since under My superintendence the *prakriti* creates this world, I am said to be the cause of it. Now if you look at My Divine Yoga in the light of this knowledge, you will know that neither I am in these beings, nor they in Me. I am disclosing to you this secret of Mine, which you should experience in your heart, by shutting the doors of the senses (131-135). Unless you know this secret, you will not realize My real nature, like grain in a heap of husk. People think that they can understand Me with the aid of reasoning, but can the earth become soft with the water of a mirage? The moon's reflection appears to be caught in a fisherman's net in the sea, but when the net is brought to the shore and shaken, where is the reflection? So some persons, on the strength of the words and utterances, pretend that they have attained self-realization; but when they are put to the test, they realize that they have not attained it nor are they likely to attain it in future.

8. *Fools scoff at Me who have taken the human form, not knowing My higher nature as the great Lord of beings does.*

In short, if you are afraid of life and really fond of Me, then you should keep this conclusion in your mind (136-140). To one who suffers from jaundice, the moonlight appears to be yellow; so people see defect in My pure nature. To one who has a bad mouth due to fever, even

milk taste bitter, in the same way people think Me to be human, although I am Divine. Therefore, O Arjuna, I am repeatedly telling you not to forget this secret. There is no point in seeing Me with the gross physical eyes, he does not see the real Me at all, just as one does not become immortal by drinking nectar in a dream. Since the deluded persons know Me with their physical eyes their imperfect knowledge comes in the way of true knowledge (141-145), in the same way as the swan who, thinking the reflections of stars in water as gems, jumps to pick them up and dashing against a rock dies. What use is it to run after a mirage thinking it to be river Ganga or to resort to a babul tree thinking it to be the wish-yielding tree or to pick up a poisonous serpent thinking it to be a necklace of emeralds or to gather flints thinking them to be diamonds, or to collect live coals thinking them to be hidden treasure, or for a lion to jump into the well, thinking his own reflection in the water to be another lion? Thus those who, thinking Me to be human, become absorbed in worldly life with great resolve, have caught hold of the moon's reflection instead of the moon (146-150), their resolve is worthless, like that of a person who drinks gruel instead of nectar and expects to become immortal. So how can they know My truly imperishable nature, if they think Me to possess a gross perishable form? How can a person reach the shore of the Western Sea by going to the East? O great warrior, how can a person recover grain by pounding bran? How can one come to know Me by knowing this ever-changing world? Can one quench his thirst by drinking the foam of water? But because their mind is deluded, they think Me human and attribute to Me birth and work, which do not at all affect Me (151-155).

Although I am without name, actionless and without body, they ascribe to Me name, actions and physical activities. To Me who am devoid of form, limiting adjuncts and injunction, they attribute to Me form, offer Me worship and perform ceremonial rites. Although I am devoid of caste and qualities and without legs and hands they ascribe to Me caste, qualities, legs and hands. Though I am limitless and all-pervading, they attribute limitations and location to Me. Just as a man in sleep dreams of a forest, he sees Me as having ears, eyes, lineage and form although I never had any of them (156-160). Although I am unmanifest, desireless and self-contented, they imagine in Me manifestation, desires and contentment. Though I am without clothes and ornaments, they dress Me in clothes and ornaments; and they try to discover My origin, although I am the source of all. Though I am self-established, they make images of Me, and though I am self-existent, they consecrate My idol, and though I am eternal, I am subjected to invocation and immersion. Although I am self-evident and formless, they conceive Me as having childhood, youth and old age. Although I am non-dual, they attribute duality to Me and they think Me to be the agent and experiencer, though I am not so (161-165). Though I have no family, they conceive of My family and describe it and though I am eternal, they imagine that I have died and grieve over it. They conceive Me, who abides in the heart of all, as somebody's friend or enemy, though I am full of bliss, they think Me desirous of pleasures; and though I am everywhere, they think that I reside in one place. Though I am the Self of the animate and inanimate world, they tell everyone that I show partiality to some and destroy other in anger. In fact they ascribe to Me all human attributes and so possess contrary knowledge about Me. They worship an idol, thinking that to be Myself, and when it is broken, throw it away without remorse (166-170). In many ways they conceive Me to be of human form and because of this they remain ignorant about My real nature.

9. *With vain hopes, with vain works and with vain knowledge and without sense, they take to delusive natures of fiends and demons.*

Because of this misconception which they have about Me, their birth is in vain like clouds outside of the rainy season, or like the waves of the mirage, fit to be seen only from a distance, or like a horseman made of clay, like magical ornaments or like the empty space in an imaginary city in the sky or like the silk-cotton tree, which is fruitless and hollow though full-grown, or like the neck-nipple of a she-goat. Vain is the life and work of such a fool, like the fruit of the silk-cotton tree, which no one gives or takes (171-175). Then whatever knowledge they acquire is like the coconuts cut by monkeys or like a pearl in the hand of a blind man. Their scriptures are as useless as weapons in the hands of maidens, or like the mystical letters of a *mantra* told to an impure person. Hence whatever they know or whatever they do, O Arjuna, becomes worthless as they lack true knowledge. They have come under the sway of the *demoness* in the form of *tamas*, which destroys their good intelligence and discriminating knowledge. As they have fallen in the mouth of the *tamas* demons, their minds split into smithereens (176-180). The murderous tongue of this *demoness*, licking the lips and extending upto the ears, wallows in the saliva of hope and it chews constantly the meatballs of discontent. This *demoness* roams intoxicated in the valley of heedlessness. Her teeth in the form of hatred, crushes knowledge and she envelops the intelligence as the water-jar-covered sage *Agastya*. Those who fall a prey to this demoniacal disposition sink in the pool in the form of mental delusion. In this way those who fall in the pit of *tamas* do not get the helping hand of knowledge and they go one knows not where (181-185). But why this useless talk about these fools? It will only tire out speech and lead us nowhere. When the Lord said this, Arjuna readily assented. The Lord said “now listen to the story of the devotees, in which speech finds rest.”

10. *But the great souls, O Partha, who partake of Divine nature, worship Me with undivided attention, regarding Me as the immutable source of beings.*

I dwell in the pure heart (of a devotee) like an ascetic at a holy place. Dispassion does not leave him even in sleep. Righteousness regains in his good thoughts and desires and his mind always nourishes discriminating knowledge. Bathing in the river of knowledge, he has attained perfection and he looks like the foliage on the tree of ever-lasting peace (186-190), or the blossoms of the Supreme spirit, or a pillar in the pavilion of fortitude, or an overfull jar dipped in the ocean of bliss. He has attained such ecstasy of devotion that he turns always from liberation and his natural conduct is full of morality. All his senses are filled with perfect peace and his mind has, as it were, wrapped up by My all-pervading being. Such high-souled persons, possessed of Divine endowment, fully comprehend My Divine nature, and they worship Me with great devotional love, without being touched by any sense of duality (191-195). O Arjuna, thus becoming one with Me, they serve Me, I shall tell you the novelty of their devotion, please listen.

11. *These devotees dance in ecstasy while singing My praise, making all acts of expiation superfluous, as in them no trace of sin is left.*

In the case of such devotees, control of the senses and mind become redundant, the holy places become desolate, and the activities of the hell come to stop. Self-control does not know whom to control, self-restraint does not know whom to restrain and the holy waters do not

find even a trace of sin to cleanse. Thus by loudly singing My name, My devotees heal the miseries of all beings and make the whole world resound with bliss (196-200). They give light without dawn, eternal life without nectar and God's vision without *yogic* practices. They do not discriminate between the prince and the pauper or the high and the low, and they open the kingdom of heaven to all creatures. One rarely goes to *Vaikuntha*, but by flooding the world with God's name, these devotees have made this world a veritable *Vaikuntha* (abode of *Lord Vishnu*). The sun shines bright, but has the defect that he sets; the moon is full at times, but My devotees are always perfect. The clouds are generous but they too become empty, so their simile is not apt. My devotees are without doubt like the merciful *Lord Shiva* (201-205). People have to serve Me in thousand births to be able to utter My name even once; but My name dances on their tongue to their great joy. I am, therefore, not to be found in *Vaikuntha* or in the sun's disc; I even pass the minds of those who practice Yoga. O Arjuna, I am positively to be found in the home of My devotees, who constantly sing My praise in a loud voice. Enrapt in singing My virtues, they forget the time and place and become absorbed in the bliss through My *kirtana*. Through the constant utterance of My name, Krishna, *Vishnu*, *Hari*, *Govinda* and the open discourse on My Divine essence, they abundantly sing My praise (206-210) and roam all over the world, singing devotionally to Me.

Then there are others, O Arjuna, who, with great care attain complete mastery over the mind and the five vital airs. Hedging in the external senses with the aid of *yama* and *niyama*, they set up on the rampart of diamond pose and fire the guns of breath-control. Then in the light of the serpent power, and with the aid of mind and the breath, the lake of nectar becomes tilted on one side. The restraint of the senses then shows its mettle by withdrawing the senses in the heart and putting an end to mental disorders (211-215). Then the *yogi* rides on the horse of meditation, destroying the five great elements together with the four-fold source of volition. Then he raises the cry of victory, accompanied by the beating of the drums of meditation, and the shining parasol of union with *Brahman*, is unfurled over his head. After attaining the excellence of uninterrupted deep contemplation, he experiences the bliss of self-realization and is crowned on the throne of spiritual enlightenment. O Arjuna, some worship Me with this difficult eight-fold Yoga.

Now I shall tell you how some other devotees worship Me. They know that I pervade this world, animate as well as inanimate, just as yarn pervades cloth from end to end (216-220). They see Me in all beings right from *Lord Brahma* to a gnat and without discriminating between beings as great or small, sentient or insentient, they bow before them with great devotion, forgetting their own greatness. They like to prostrate themselves before all creatures without any thought as to whether they are worthy of it or not. Just as water fallen from a height flows down to the bottom, they bow before all beings as if it has become second nature with them. Just as the branches of trees laden with fruit bend low almost touching the ground, they bow down their heads before all creatures (221-225). They are ever without self-conceit, humility is their wealth, and they offer this wealth to Me with the cry, 'Glory to you, O Lord'. Because of this humility they lose all sense of honor and dishonor, they become one with Me and worship Me constantly. O Arjuna, I have told you so far about ardent devotion.

Now I shall tell you about those who worship Me with knowledge-sacrifice. O Arjuna, the manner in which they worship Me I have already described to you before. To this Arjuna

said, "Yes, I have received this Divine grace before. But when a dish of nectar is served, who will say I have had enough of it (226-230)?" On hearing these words, lord Krishna knew that Arjuna was eager to know about it and was rocking to and fro with the bliss of knowledge. He said, "Well, O Partha, in view of your eagerness I must repeat to you what I have said before, though this is not the proper occasion for it." Then Arjuna said, "O Lord, is the moonlight meant only for the *chakora* bird? Nay, it is the moon's nature to cool down the whole world. Just as the *chakora* bird turns the beak towards the moon in supplication, I am making this small request to you. O Lord, you are the ocean of mercy, the cloud out of its munificence satisfies the thirst of the world. Otherwise as against his downpour how insignificant is the thirst of *chakora* bird (231-235)! But even for the sake of a mouthful of water one has to go to the river Ganga; so you have to satisfy my desire, whether it is large or small." Then the Lord said, "Enough of this talk. I am thoroughly pleased. I am not able to bear any further compliments from you. The attention with which you listen is enough encouragement to me." Commending Arjuna's speech thus, Lord Krishna began to speak:

12. *Others also worship Me with the sacrifice of knowledge, as one and separately as the manifold, with face on every side.*

In this knowledge-sacrifice, the original desire of *Brahman* to be many is the sacrificial post to which the animal is tied. The gross elements form the sacrificial pavilion and the sense of duality is the animal to be sacrificed. The qualities of the five gross elements and the senses and the *prana* are the very materials of sacrifice and ignorance is the *ghee* to be offered as oblation (236-240). The mind and the intellect are the sacrificial pits in which the fire is kindled and equanimity is the altar. The power to grasp discriminating thought constitutes the lofty *Vedic* hymns, tranquility the sacrificial ladle, and the embodied Self, the sacrifice. The latter performs knowledge-sacrifice with the vessels of experience, and by chanting the *Vedic* hymns of discrimination, destroys duality. When the ignorance comes to an end, neither the sacrificer nor the sacrifice remains and he performs the final ablution in the form of union with the Self. Then he comes to know with intuitive knowledge of the Self that the elements, senses and sense-objects are not different but form one whole (241-245). O Arjuna, on waking up a person says, "I had myself become under the influence of sleep the wonderful army in the dream; the dream was all a delusion, and there was nothing but myself, and in the same way he comes to realize that he is all this world." Then all talk about the existence of separate being ends, and his mind becomes full with the unitary experience of *Brahman*. Thus some worship Me with knowledge-sacrifice culminating in the vision of unity. There are others who grant that there are separate but similar beings, who seem different due to their assumption of name and form. This plurality of the world, however, does not affect his unity of knowledge. Just as the limbs, although different, belong to the same body (246-250), or the branches, big and small, belong to the same tree, or the many rays are all of them, of one and the same sun, they know that I am the Supreme unity underlying these different beings, who have assumed diverse names and forms. So, O Arjuna, even though they do believe in the diversity of the world, they still perform the Supreme knowledge-sacrifice. In their wisdom, they keep the knowledge of unity intact, because wherever they cast their eyes, they see nothing except Myself. See wherever the bubble floats, it is always in water and whether it stays or bursts, it remains in water (251-255). When particles of dust are raised by air, they do not cease to

be earthy; and when they fall down, they fall and merge in earth only. So wherever a thing with name and form exists or ceases to exist, it is always of the same nature as *Brahman*. I am ever all-pervading, so is their experience. Therefore, even if they are different as individual beings, they remain in union with everyone, they also remain facing the world without let or hindrance. Their knowledge remains the same, whether this or that side, just as the wind blows here, there and everywhere (256-260). Their existence measures up to My being, which is entire and whole, and, therefore, without any effort on their part, they worship Me. Since I pervade everything, can anyone ever cease to worship Me? But since they lack true knowledge, they fail to reach Me. I have thus told you how they worship Me with knowledge-sacrifice. Whatever actions are done by all creatures, become automatically dedicated to Me; but the fools do not attain to Me for want of knowledge.

13. *I am the Vedic rite, I am the sacrifice, the ancestral libation and the herb. I am the sacred formula, the clarified butter, the sacred fire, and the offering.*

When the knowledge dawns on him, he realizes that I am the *Vedas*; and I am the rites which are enjoined by them (261-265). I am also sacrifice, which springs, O Son of *Pandu*, from the performance of the prescribed rites. I am the offering made to the gods, also to the *Manes*, I am also the *soma* and other plants, the clarified butter and the fire-sticks. I am the *Vedic* hymns, the oblations, and the presiding priest. I am the sacrificial fire and all the things required for the sacrifice.

14. *I am the father of this universe, the mother, the supporter, the grand-sire, the holy object of knowledge, the syllable Om and the Rik, Saman and Yajus.*

I am the father of world, as under My inspiration this eight-fold *prakriti* gives rise to this entire creation. Since the image of *Shiva* is half male and half female, I am also the mother of this animate and inanimate world (266-270). And that which supports the world and promotes life cannot be any other than Myself. Since both *prakriti* and *purusha* have emerged from My unconscious mind, I am the grand-sire of all three worlds, I am also the knowable, the meeting place of the four *Vedas*, in whose sacred abode the different paths leading to knowledge meet, where the different sects come to an understanding, where the different *shastras* come to know one another, where the divergent paths of knowledge coalesce, and which is, therefore, called holy. I am also that *Om*kara, Primeval sound, which has sprouted from the seed of the sacred temple of the manifestation of the *Brahman* (271-275). I am also the three letters *a, u, m*, which emerged from the womb of the *Om*kara and which gave birth to the three *Vedas*. I am, therefore, the three *Vedas*, the *Rigveda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Samaveda*, and the source of all traditions of spiritual knowledge.

15. *I am the goal, the protector, Lord and witness, the abode, refuge and friend; I am the origin, dissolution and support, the resting place and the eternal seed.*

I am the Supreme goal where rests the *prakriti* in which is stored this world, both animate and inanimate. I am that by which the *prakriti* lives and by presiding over which, I enjoy its qualities. O Arjuna, I am the Lord of the cosmic creation and the Master of all the three worlds (276-280). It is by My command that the sky spreads out everywhere, the wind blows unceasingly, the fire burns and the rains come. It is by My command that the mountains

do not stir from their sites, the seas do not cross their limits, and the earth bears the creatures. It is because of Me, that the *Vedas* speak and the sun moves, the *prana* stirs and sets the world in motion. It is under My direction that the God of death destroys the world; and so, O Son of *Pandu*, all things happens as I command. I am the omnipotent Lord of the universe and I am the witness of everything such as *akasha* (281-285). I pervade and support this universe of name and form. Just as water gives rise to ripples and fills them, I support this entire universe and abide in it. I free My devotees from the bondage of birth and death, and am the refuge of those who have surrendered themselves to Me. Although one, I assume manifold forms through the qualities of *prakriti* and I abide as the life of the universe. Just as the sun becomes reflected equally in a sea or a pond, I am the friend of all creatures including *Brahma* (286-290). I am, O *Pandava*, the fountain of vitality of the universe, the root-cause of the creation and destruction of the world. The seed grows into a tree, which in turn is stored in the seed; so this universe is created from My will and become totally reabsorbed into it. I am the abode of this Will, where the seed of the universe rests in the form of latent impressions at the end of the cycle. Then the name and form as also classes and individuals, all caste-distinctions cease to exist along with all forms. I am the treasure-house where this everlasting primeval Will, desires and latent impressions retire, ready to burst forth in the next creation (291-295).

16. *I give heat and hold back rain and send it forth. I am immortality and death, as also being and non-being, O Arjuna.*

When I heat up the world as sun, it dries up, and when I send showers as *Indra*, it is flooded. When the fire consumes fuel, the latter becomes fire, and so the one who is killed and the killer are of My very nature. Whatever is mortal in this world is also My form, and that which is immortal is indeed My being. Without being prolix, I shall say it in a nutshell, that I am both what is manifest and what is unmanifest; therefore, O Arjuna, is there any place where I am not? It is indeed a pity that creatures are unlucky and fail to see Me (296-300). Is it not surprising that just as the waves should dry up without water and sun's rays cannot be seen without a lamp, My very forms should not recognise Me. I fill this world in and out, which is all My being, but fate comes in the way of mortals and makes them blind towards Me. If one who has fallen into a well of nectar wants to be taken out of it, what can you do about such an ill-starred person? Just as a blind person, running in search of food, stumbles upon a philosopher's stone and kicks it away, such indeed is the lot of persons who give up wisdom. So whatever actions they do without wisdom, are not worth the name (301-305). Of what avail are wings of eagle if they are given to a blind man? So good actions not based on wisdom are only wasted effort.

17. *The knowers of the three Vedas, who by drinking soma are purified of sins, worship Me with sacrifices and pray for heaven. Reaching the holy world of the king of Gods (Indra), they enjoy in heaven all celestial pleasures.*

O Arjuna, the *Vedic* scholars worship Me with sacrifices according to their stage of life and provide the standard of performing them. The *Vedas* nod with approval at the sacrificial rites performed by them; and the fruit of such rites presents itself before them. Such sacrificers who drink *soma* become themselves sacrifice incarnate; but know that they have accumulated sin, falsely known as merit. Because, after studying the three *Vedas* and performing hundreds

of sacrifices, they prefer heaven to Me, who am the goal of such sacrifices (306-310). This is like the unlucky person who sits under a wish-fulfilling tree and, knotting his cloth into a wallet, goes out begging in penury. If after offering Me hundred sacrifices they long for heaven, how can you call it merit? It is sin and nothing else. To attain heaven without Me is the meritorious path for the ignorant. The wise, however, regard it as an impediment, leading to a fall. Heavenly life, no doubt, is reckoned as full of happiness, when compared with life in hell, but everlasting and faultless bliss ensues only from Me. On the way to My abode, O great warrior, there are two by-paths of waylayers which lead to heaven and hell (311-315). One leads to heaven through sin mixed with merit and the other leads to hell through unmixed sin. But pure merit alone brings the embodied Self to Me. How is it that the tongue does not fall, which praises any action as meritorious even when it leads men astray from My Divine nature, though they are rooted in it? But enough of this, I shall now turn to the main theme.

In this way, these sacrificers worship Me seeking celestial pleasures. Then on the strength of rituals which do not lead to Me, and which are, therefore, sinful, they go to heaven where they have immortality as their throne, the elephant *Airavata* to ride upon and the metropolis of *Amaravati* to dwell in (316-320). There they have treasures of occult powers, cellars of nectar and cow-pens containing herds of wish-yielding cows, where deities stand in attendance upon them and, where the roads are paved with philosophers' stones, where the pleasure gardens abound in wish-yielding trees, where the *Gandharvas* sing, celestial dancers like *Rambha* dance and divine nymphs like *Urvashi* attend on their pleasure, where the God of love serves them in their bed-chamber, the moon sprinkles water in the courtyard and they have messengers as swift as the wind, where there are priests like *Brihaspati* as their house-priests to give blessings, and many gods as bards (321-325), where stand in a row guardians of the world and where there are expert cavaliers and the caparisoned horse, *Uchchaishravas*. The sacrificers in this way enjoy the highest pleasures as of *Indra*. This enjoyment, however, lasts so long as they have a little merit left to their credit.

18. *Having enjoyed that vast heavenly world with their merit exhausted, they enter this mortal world. Thus by following the duties prescribed by the three Vedas and craving enjoyments, they go to heaven and come back.*

No sooner is their merit exhausted, their heavenly joy comes to an end and they start coming back to the mortal world. When a person has squandered his last penny on a whore, he is not permitted by her even to tap her door. Such indeed is the pitiable plight of these sacrificers. Thus those who craved for heavenly enjoyments were lost to Me, who am eternal bliss. Their ascent to the immortal world becomes fruitless, as they have to return to the mortal world in the end (326-330). Born and baked in the mother's wombs full of muck for a period of nine months, they are born over and over again and die. As one gains a treasure in a dream, which vanishes when he wakes up, so ephemeral is the heavenly joy of these sacrificers. O Arjuna, even a master of the *Vedic* lore lives an empty life like the chaff which is hollow and without the grain. So all these rites prescribed by the three *Vedas* are utterly worthless without Me. Even if you know naught but Me, you will enjoy eternal bliss.

19. *But as for men who worship Me, thinking of Me alone and none else, to them ever absorbed in*

Me, I grant Yoga and eternal bliss.

There are others, however, who dedicate their heart and soul to Me, without stirring into action like the fetus in the womb (231-235). They do not hold anything dearer than Me and they have dedicated their whole life to Me. Those who remember Me with such exclusive devotion and worship, I too become their willing servant. When they begin to follow My path of devotion, it becomes incumbent upon Me to care for them and to perform the tasks which they wish to be done. Just as a bird-mother lives to take care of its chicks without wings, or a mother exerts herself for the sake of the child unmindful of her own comfort, so I provide for those who have devoted their lives to Me (336-340). If they crave for union with Me, I fulfill their desire; and if they wish to serve Me, I vouchsafe to them deep love for Me. In this way I provide for them whatever they desire and also preserve for them whatever they have got. As regards those who have taken refuge in Me, their 'well-being' becomes My chief concern.

20. *As for the devotees who worship other deities with faith, they too worship Me, O Arjuna, though contrary to the rule.*

But there are others, who, without realising My all-pervading nature, offer sacrifices to deities such as fire, *Indra*, sun and the moon according to their tradition. These sacrifices ultimately come to Me, since I am this entire universe. But their worship is not straight forward, but devious (341-345). The branches and leaves all spring from one and the same seed; but the tree has to be watered at the root, which alone can suck the water. All the ten senses belong to the same body, and all the sensations they receive go to one and same point (the mind). How would it do, if we were to stuff delicious food into the ears or tie food on to the eye – nay, it is for the mouth to relish the food and for the nose to smell fragrance, and so I must be worshipped in My own being. Else whatever worship is done without knowing Me becomes fruitless; and, therefore, only action backed by knowledge becomes flawless (346-350).

21. *For I am the enjoyer and the Lord of all sacrifices; but they do not know My true nature and so fall.*

Moreover, know that none but Me, is the enjoyer of all these sacrificial offerings made to the deities. I am the origin and the end of all sacrifices; but not knowing this, these benighted persons worship deities. The holy water of the *Ganga* offered to the Gods and forefathers has to be offered in the *Ganga* alone. So they offer to Me whatever is mine, but in a different way. They therefore, do not, O Partha, attain to Me at all, and go to the deities in whom they have placed their faith.

22. *Those who take vows of deities go to the deities; those who take the vows of forefathers go to the forefathers, those who worship the spirits go to the spirits. And only those who worship Me come to Me.*

Those who are devoted to the Gods in thought, speech and body, become united to the Gods after death (351-355). And those who take up vows of ancestral worship, go to the abode of *manes* at the end of their life. Those who worship petty deities and spirits, regarding them as Supreme gods, to acquire magical charms, they join them with the fall of their bodies. In this way, their acts bear fruits appropriate to their desires. My devotees, however, see Me with their eyes, hear My praise with their ears, meditate on Me with their minds and sing

My praises with their tongues. They prostrate themselves before Me and perform all their acts of charity for Me alone (356-360). Their learning is centered in Me, they are both internally and externally satisfied with Me and their entire life is dedicated to Me. Whatever little ego they have, it is to extol My Divine glory and if they care for any thing in the world, it is to know Me. If they have passion and love, it is for Me alone; and being intoxicated with Divine madness, they become indifferent to the world. Whatever scriptures they study, whatever incantations they utter and whatever actions they perform are entirely devoted to Me. Surely even before death they are already united with Me. How then will they go anywhere after death (361-365)? Therefore, those who sacrifice to Me and have dedicated all their actions to Me, have attained oneness with Me. No one can attain devotional love for Me without self-surrender, nor can one attain to Me by performing mere rites. He who says that he knows Me knows nothing; he who flaunts his perfection is far from being perfect; and he who boasts of self-realization is dumb. Similarly, O Arjuna, all tall talk of sacrifice, charity or penance has no more worth than straw. Just see, is there any one here who excels the Vedas in knowledge or who is more loquacious and eloquent than the *Shesha* (366-370)? The *Shesha* has hid himself under My bed and the *Vedas* have turned their back by saying 'Not this, Not this' and sages such as *Sanaka* became confused. Who among the great ascetics can hold a candle to *Lord Shiva*, but he too, dropping all pride, bears on his head the holy water of My feet. Then who is there richer than *Lakshmi*, the goddess of wealth, in whose home deities of prosperity (*riddhi*) and of miraculous powers (*siddhi*) work as maids of honour. And when these maids build toy houses, they become beggars. The trees at which they cast their glance become wish-yielding trees (371-375). Even their mistress, the Goddess *Lakshmi*, who has at her beck and call such powerful maids, does not command respect here. When she too, shedding her pride, served Me with heart and soul, she got her lucky break of being entrusted with the duty of washing My feet.

Therefore, cast off all ideas of greatness, and forget all your learning. When you humble yourself before the world, then you will come close to Me. When the moon pales before the sun of thousand rays, how can a glow-worm show off its light? Where the greatness of Goddess *Lakshmi* or the austerities of *Lord Shiva* pale into insignificance, how can an ordinary mortal enter My kingdom (376-380)? So let him surrender to Me, the pride of his physical strength, his virtues and the vanity of riches to become worthy of Me.

23. *Whoever offers Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I enjoy that offering made with devotion, by a pure soul.*

When a devotee offers Me a fruit of any tree out of unbounded love and joy, then I clasp it with both hands and swallow it, stalk and all. If he offers Me a flower as a token of his devotion and love, I should smell it, but I thrust it into My mouth and relish it, and why talk of a flower, even if a leaf, fresh or dry of any tree (381-385), is offered to Me out of deepest love, I enjoy it with as much pleasure as a hungry person experiences with a drink of nectar. But if, perchance, it happens that one does not find even a leaf, there should be no difficulty in getting water at any place. It can be had for nothing anywhere, and if he procures and offers it to Me as his all, I appreciate it as though he has built for Me big temples, grander than *Vaikunth* or offered to Me gems more sparkling than the *Kaustubha*, or has made for Me abundant beds as fascinating as the *Milky Ocean* (386-390), or he has burnt before Me

incense-sticks of sandalwood and *camphor* as big as the *Meru* Mountain, or made for Me a row of wick-lamps as lustrous as the sun, or has provided Me with vehicles like *Garuda*, gardens of wish-yielding trees or herds of wish-yielding cows; or has served Me dainties more delicious than nectar. I am so pleased with a drop of water offered to Me by My devotees what more need I say, O Arjuna? You have seen with your own eyes that I untied the knots of the bag containing parched rice brought by *Sudama*. I recognize only devotion and make no distinction between high and low. I prize beyond all things, only devotion and love from My devotee (391-395). After all, a flower, or fruit is a mere token of devotion, which is of no avail without deep love for Me. O Arjuna, listen, there is a simple way to acquire it; have trust in Me and establish Me in the shrine of your mind.

24. *Whatever you do, whatever you eat, sacrifice or give, whatever penance you do, O Arjuna, offer that to Me.*

Whatever work you do or whatever things you enjoy, whatever you offer in sacrifices of various kinds, whatever gifts you give to eligible persons or servants, or whatever penance you practice or vows you observe, whatever things that you do in the natural course of your life, you offer them to Me with love (396-400). But do not keep any remembrance of whatever you do and so cleansing your deeds thus, you dedicate them to Me.

25. *Then you shall be free from the bonds of good or bad deeds. Then if you remain intent on Yoga of renunciation, you will come to Me.*

Just as the seed roasted in fire does not sprout, so all actions dedicated to Me do not fructify and bind. Otherwise if an action has to bear fruit in the form of pleasure and pain, then one has to take recourse to a body to expiate it. If that action is surrendered to Me, he escapes rebirth and along with it the trials and tribulations of life. Therefore, lest you should lose time by deferring the action till the morrow, I have disclosed to you this simple way of renunciation (401-405). You should not, therefore, fall into this bondage to the body, or immerse yourself in the sea of pleasure and pain, but by resorting to this path merge yourself in My blissful being.

26. *I am the same to all beings; none is hateful or dear to Me, but those who worship Me with devotion, they are in Me and I am in them.*

If you ask Me what I am, I am ever the same to all beings, without distinction between My own and another's devotee, but those who know Me thus, breaking the bond of egoism and worship Me wholeheartedly in thought and deed, they do not remain in their bodies, even though they appear to do so. But they abide in My being, and I abide in them. Just as an expanding banyan tree is contained in its small seed, which has itself sprung from a banyan tree (406-410), that is the bond between us. We differ outwardly in name only, but in truth, if we consider their inner state, they and I are one. Their assumption of a body is as empty and meaningless, as the wearing of borrowed ornaments by a lady. Their body lasts till the end of their life span, as a flower deprived of its fragrance by a breeze remains on its stalk. With his self-sense being entirely merged in My being, he has entered My Divine eternal Self.

27. *Even if a person of vilest conduct worships Me and not other, he too must be reckoned good, for he is rightly resolved.*

He who worships Me with love never resorts to the body again, even though he belongs to a lower caste (411-415), O Great Warrior, even if his previous conduct is that of a great sinner, he has taken, at the end of life, to the path of devotion. Since his understanding at the time of death determines his future life, therefore, if he has dedicated his life to devotion at the close of life, know him to be the best of all, even though he was dissolute before. He is like one, who about to be drowned in a heavy flood, has come out safe. As he has come safely to the same shore, he was not drowned at all; so his previous sinful acts have been washed away by his devotion at the end of his life. Therefore, if a dissolute person takes a dip in the holy water of penitence, he enters My being through his exclusive devotion (416-420). Then his family becomes pure, noble and spotless and he himself attains the highest goal of life. He is to Me like a learned person who has practiced penance and the eight-fold discipline of Yoga. He, who is full of devotional zeal for Me, crosses the sea of worldly life and action, for all his acts of mind and intellect are offered to Me with single-minded devotion and self-surrender to Me.

28. *He soon becomes righteous and finds everlasting peace. Be assured O Son of Kunti, that My devotee does not perish.*

Do not for a moment think that he will become like Me in course of time. How can one immersed in nectar suffer death (421-425)? So long as the sun does not rise, it is called night. Should we not then reckon as great sin whatever is done without devotion to Me? Therefore, the mind of My devotee reaches out to Me and attains truly My Divine nature. Just as a lamp, which lights another lamp, cannot be marked off from the latter, so whoever is devoted to Me with all his heart, remains inseparable from My eternal self. Then he attains to eternal peace and becomes lustrous, and he lives absorbed in My life.

How often should I repeat to you the same thing again and again? If you wish to attain Me, do not shrink from devotion to Me (426-430). One need not boast of a high family or bask in the splendour of a noble birth and why should one crave needlessly for learning? Why pride oneself on one's youthful charms, why blow the trumpet of one's wealth? All this is so much vain talk without devotion to Me. Of what use is a good crop of corn without grain, or a splendid but unpopulated city or a lake which is dry, or the meeting of two sufferers in a forest, or a tree with profuse blossoms but without fruit? All that wealth, high birth, family, caste, respect are worthless, like a body of beautiful limbs without life in it (431-435). Cursed is that life, in which there is no devotion to Me. Are there not many stones on this earth? Just as the wise avoid the shade of a prickly pear, even so merit turns away from a person without devotion. When the *neem* tree becomes laden with fruits, it provides a feast to the crows; so a life without devotion to Me becomes a seedbed of vices. Just as a rich dish served in a broken earthen pot and kept in a thoroughfare becomes a feast to the dogs, similar is the life of a non-devotee. Not knowing piety even in a dream, he drinks the bitterest cup of sorrow (436-440). So one need not have a noble birth; one may belong to the lower caste or be endowed with the body of a beast. You know how an elephant seized by a crocodile devoutly and piteously prayed to Me and, through My favor, got rid of its beastly life and attained to Me.

29. *Even if those who are low-born, women, the Vaishyas and the Shudras take refuge in Me, O Partha, they reach the highest goal.*

O Partha, there are many who are low-born, the billets of the vile, slow-witted and born in sinful wombs, they may be as stupid as stones, but have unflinching devotion to Me. Their speech sings My glory, their eyes enjoy My form, their minds ever think of Me and of nothing else (441-445). Their ears hear nothing but My famous deeds and they think that their bodies are aborted by service to Me. Their knowledge is indifferent to sense-objects and conscious only of Myself; if they cannot have a life like this, they are low-born and are not learned in the scriptures, they are not a bit inferior when compared to Me. See, with the wealth of their devotion, the demons scoffed at the Gods; and I had to incarnate myself for the glory of *Prahlada* (446-450). He suffered great tortures for My sake and I had to provide him with whatever he wanted. Even though he was born in a demon family, he excelled *Indra* in glory. Therefore, devotion to Me alone counts and not caste. When a piece of leather bears the royal seal, not even gold or silver, has the power to make the piece of leather the measure of value with which to buy things. So a person attains greatness and infinite knowledge, if his mind and intellect are full of devotion to Me (451-455).

Therefore, noble family, color and caste are of no account; what is of vital significance is to have love for Me. If devotion of whatever kind enters his mind and fills it with love for Me, then all his past life is effaced thereby. Streams remain as streams so long as they do not meet the Ganga; but they become one with the Ganga after joining it. We can distinguish wood as sandalwood or *catechu*, so long as they are not consumed by fire. Even so men are known by their different castes as *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, women or the lower caste knows men, so long as they do not attain to Me (456-460). This distinction by caste or as an individual becomes naught, when they become merged into Me through devotion, like salt merged into the sea. Rivers and streams are known to be flowing East or West, only until they join the sea. By whichever path a devotee's mind enters My Divine being, it becomes one with Me of its own accord. When iron is used to break the philosopher's stone, the moment it touches the stone it changes into gold. Did not the minds of milkmaids of *Gokul* become united with My eternal being, through love (461-465)? Did not *Kamsa* attain to Me out of fear or *Shishupal*, the king of *Chedi*, through prolonged enmity. The *Yadavas* and *Pandavas* attained union with Me through ties of kinship, and *Vasudeva* and others through filial love. *Narada*, *Dhruva*, *Akrura*, *Shuka* and *Sanatkumara* attained to Me through devotion. O wielder of the bow, *Gopis* attained to Me through love, *Kamsa* through fear and *Shishupal* and others through their wicked intentions. I am the final goal for one who seeks Me by whatever path, through devotion, renunciation or through enmity (466-470). Therefore, bear in mind, O Partha, that there is no dearth of means with which one can enter into My being. In whatever caste one is born, whatever be his ruling passion, whether love or hatred he should direct it to Me. By whichever path you wish to belong to Me, you will surely become one with Me in due course. Therefore, O Arjuna, if a person whether of vile birth, or *Vaishya* or *shudra* or woman worships Me, he or she enters My eternal abode.

30. *How much more so then holy Brahmins and devout royal sages? Having come to this impermanent joyless world, worship Me.*

Much more so will the *Brahmins* attain to that Divine abode; for they bear royal insignia among the castes, have received divine gifts and are the fountain of sacred lore (471-475). They are Divine beings on the earth, the very embodiment of austerities and because of them the sacred waters have attained their glory. In them the sacrifices have their eternal home and the *Vedas* form their strong armors, and suspiciousness is nourished in their loving glance. The moisture of their faith fosters virtuous actions, and truth survives because of their firm resolve. By *Vedic mantras* the fire enjoys long life and in order to gain their affection, the sea provided a haven for it. I parted company with Goddess *Lakshmi* to gain the dust of their feet, took off My *Kaustubha* gem from My breast and laid it bare before a worthy *Brahmin* (*Bhrigu*) to receive his footprint, (476-480). Ever since, O Arjuna I have preserved and borne that footprint on My chest, which I received through My good fortune. The wrath of the *Brahmins*, O Great Warrior, is verily the home of the destructive deities of death, fire and *Rudra*, and from their benediction flow the eight miraculous powers. Then do I need to tell you that such holy *Brahmins*, who are passionately devoted to Me, attain to Me, in course of time? For know ye, not that even the *neem* trees, which are wafted by the breeze flowing from the nearby sandalwood trees, become fragrant and adorn the foreheads of the deities? How then can you feel a doubt that the sandalwood tree would not do so? Do I have to tell this to you in so many words to convince you (481-485)? God *Shiva* ever bears on his forehead the crescent moon in the hope that it would cool him down. How then should the sandalwood, which is perfectly soothing and fragrant, not be considered worthy of covering his whole body? When the street waters joining the Ganges reach the sea, how can the river have a different destination?

Therefore, if a devotee, be he a royal sage or a *Brahmin*, takes refuge in Me, I grant his liberation and become his support. How can one remain carefree if he boards a boat with a hundred leaks or face a volley of missiles with a bare body (486-490)? Should not one shield oneself from stones hurled at him? And how can one suffering from an ailment be indifferent to treatment? How can one not escape, O Son of *Pandu*, from a conflagration threatening him from all sides? So how can a person fail to worship Me after coming to this world full of troubles? With what strength can he hope to live without devotion to Me, and how can he feel secure in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures? Without devotion to Me, how can a being count upon youth and worldly wisdom to yield the full measure of happiness? All the sensuous pleasures are for the sake of the body; but that body itself is wasting away into the jaws of death (491-495). After unloading goods in the form of miseries and experiencing a number of deaths, one has arrived in this market of the mortal world. How can you purchase happiness in this transient life? Can one kindle a light by blowing up ashes? As well can a person hope to become immortal, if he crushes poisonous roots and drinks the juice, calling it nectar? Sensuous pleasure is, therefore, nothing but pain; but somehow man, fool that he is, is never fed up with it.

Happiness in this mortal world is as good as healing the footnote with the head after cutting it (496-500). Where can one hear the tale of happiness in this mortal world? How can one expect to enjoy sound sleep on a bed of embers? In this world the moon wanes and the sun rises, only to set; and misery torments the world in the guise of happiness. Rot overtakes an auspicious thing even before it starts, and death stalks the womb to seize the fetus. While

man is brooding over trifles, he is suddenly snatched away by death and taken to an unknown place. No one has seen the return of footprints of those who have departed. The *Puranas* are full of only stories of the dead (501-505). One cannot do justice to the impermanence of this world, even if one were to talk about it till the end of *Brahma's* life. One is surprised to see the carefree manner in which persons who are born in this world live. They do not spend even *pice* for things, which will bring them benefit in this or the other world, but they will spend millions of rupees on harmful things. They think a person happy when he is absorbed in sensuous enjoyments and a person wise, who is oppressed by the burden of desires. They respect and bow before an elderly person even when his working life is finished and his strength and intellect have waned (506-510). As a child grows, they fondle it with great joy and do not grieve that its life is getting reduced. A child comes under the sway of death from its very birth, but they celebrate its birthday with great pomp. O Partha, people cannot bear to hear the name of death and mourn when a relation dies. But they do not foolishly consider how their life is getting spent. When the serpent is swallowing the frog, the latter is catching flies with its tongue. In the same way, beings increase their desires. Alas! How foul and perverse are the things of this mortal world! O Partha, even though you are born in this world by mere accident (511-515), spurn it and take to the path of devotion, by which you will come to My eternal abode.

31. *Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me: sacrifice to Me and prostrate yourself before Me. You shall surely come to Me by practicing Yoga, with Me as your Supreme goal.*

Fix your mind on Me and develop a liking for My worship and bow to all, knowing that I dwell in them. He, who destroys his desires, fixing his mind on Me, is said to be My devotee. When you are endowed with this Yoga, you will attain to My being. I have told you this secret of my heart. By knowing this secret, which I have kept concealed from all others, you will be filled with happiness.

Sanjaya said, "In this way, Lord Krishna of light complexion, who fulfils the desires of his devotees like the wish-yielding tree, instructed Arjuna, listen, all of you. But the old king remained as quiet as the buffalo, which remains seated in the river even when it is in floods. Then *Sanjaya*, nodding his head, said to himself, 'We are having a shower of nectar here, but this old king is sitting as if he is in a different town. But he is the provider of food to us and so I do not wish to pollute my speech by talking ill of him. But what can I do? He is made that way. But how lucky I am that the great sage *Vyasa* entrusted this work to me' (521-525). When he was brooding thus in his mind, he could not control the eight emotional states, which surged in his mind. His mind which was immersed in the conversation became steady, his speech stopped at that very spot and his body was thrilled from top to toe. Tears of joy began to flow from his half-shut eyes and he felt tremors in his body arising out of inner joy. As spotless drops of sweat flowed from his pores, he looked as if he was wearing a necklace of pearls. He lost his body consciousness in this flood of great joy and it became impossible for him to discharge the task entrusted to him by sage *Vyasa* (526-530), But just then the ringing voice of Lord Krishna entered his ears and he came to his senses. Then he wiped off his tears and sweat and spoke to *Dhritarashtra*, 'O King, listen'. Now the seed of Lord Krishna's speech was fertilized by the pure emotional states of *Sanjaya* and so the hearers will receive a harvest of philosophical truths. If you give the scantiest attention to this

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conversation, you will become overjoyed. For, fortune has become favorable to the organs of hearing today. And so, Krishna, the Lord of all perfected beings, will relate the manifestations of God. *Jnanadeva*, the disciple of *Nivrattinatha* says, 'Now listen to that story' (531-535).

