

# The Bhagavad Gita

Translation by Shri Purohit Swami.

## ONE: THE DESPONDENCY OF ARJUNA

*The King Dhritarashtra asked: "O Sanjaya! What happened on the sacred battlefield of Kurukshetra, when my people gathered against the Pandavas?"*

*Sanjaya replied: "The Prince Duryodhana, when he saw the army of the Pandavas paraded, approached his preceptor Guru Drona and spoke as follows:*

Revered Father! Behold this mighty host of the Pandavas, paraded by the son of King Drupada, thy wise disciple.

In it are heroes and great bowmen; the equals in battle of Arjuna and Bheema, Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada, great soldiers all;

Dhrishtaketu, Chekitan, the valiant King of Benares, Purujit, Kuntibhoja, Shaibya - a master over many;

Yudhamanyu, Uttamouja, Soubhadra and the sons of Droupadi, famous men.

Further, take note of all those captains who have ranged themselves on our side, O best of Spiritual Guides! The leaders of my army. I will name them for you.

You come first; then Bheeshma, Karna, Kripa, great soldiers; Ashwaththama, Vikarna and the son of Somadhatta;

And many others, all ready to die for my sake; all armed, all skilled in war.

Yet our army seems the weaker, though commanded by Bheeshma; their army seems the stronger, though commanded by Bheema.

Therefore in the rank and file, let stand firm in their posts, according to battalions; and all you generals about Bheeshma.

*Then to enliven his spirits, the brave Grandfather Bheeshma, eldest of the Kuru-clan, blew his conch, till it sounded like a lion's roar.*

*And immediately all the conches and drums, the trumpets and horns, blared forth in tumultuous uproar.*

*Then seated in their spacious war chariot, yoked with white horses, Lord Shri Krishna and Arjuna sounded their divine shells.*

*Lord Shri Krishna blew his Panchajanya and Arjuna his Devadatta, brave Bheema his renowned shell, Poundra.*

*The King Dharmaraja, the son of Kunti, blew the Anantavijaya, Nakalu and Sahadeo, the Sugosh and Manipushpaka, respectively.*

*And the Maharaja of Benares, the great archer, Shikhandi, the great soldier, Dhrishtayumna, Virata and Satyaki, the invincible,*

*And O King! Drupada, the sons of Droupadi and Soubhadra, the great soldier, blew their conches.*

*The tumult rent the hearts of the sons of Dhritarashtra, and violently shook heaven and earth with its echo.*

*Then beholding the sons of Dhritarashtra, drawn up on the battle-field, ready to fight, Arjuna, whose flag bore the Hanuman,*

*Raising his bow, spoke this to the Lord Shri Krishna: O Infallible! Lord of the earth! Please draw up my chariot betwixt the two armies,*

*So that I may observe those who must fight on my side, those who must fight against me; And gaze over this array of soldiers, eager to please the sinful sons of Dhritarashtra."*

*Sanjaya said: "Having listened to the request of Arjuna, Lord Shri Krishna drew up His bright chariot exactly in the midst between the two armies,*

*Whither Bheeshma and Drona had led all the rulers of the earth, and spoke thus: O Arjuna! Behold these members of the family of Kuru assembled.*

*There Arjuna noticed fathers, grandfathers, uncles, cousins, sons, grandsons, teachers, friends;*

*Fathers-in-law and benefactors, arrayed on both sides. Arjuna then gazed at all those kinsmen before him.*

*And his heart melted with pity and sadly he spoke: O my Lord! When I see all these, my own people, thirsting for battle,*

*My limbs fail me and my throat is parched, my body trembles and my hair stands on end.*

*The bow Gandeeva slips from my hand, and my skin burns. I cannot keep quiet, for my mind is in tumult.*

*The omens are adverse; what good can come from the slaughter of my people on this battlefield?*

*Ah my Lord! I crave not for victory, nor for the kingdom, nor for any pleasure. What were a kingdom or happiness or life to me,*

*When those for whose sake I desire these things stand here about to sacrifice their property and their lives:*

*Teachers, fathers and grandfathers, sons and grandsons, uncles, father-in-law, brothers-in-law and other relatives.*

*I would not kill them, even for three worlds; why then for this poor earth? It matters not if I myself am killed.*

*My Lord! What happiness can come from the death of these sons of Dhritarashtra? We shall sin if we kill these desperate men.*

*We are worthy of a nobler feat than to slaughter our relatives – the sons of Dhritarashtra; for, my Lord, how can we be happy if we kill our kinsmen?*

*Although these men, blinded by greed, see no guilt in destroying their kin, or fighting against their friends,*

# 1

Should not we, whose eyes are open, who consider it to be wrong to annihilate our house, turn away from so great a crime?

The destruction of our kindred means the destruction of the traditions of our ancient lineage, and when these are lost, irreligion will overrun our homes.

When irreligion spreads, the women of the house begin to stray; when they lose their purity, adulteration of the stock follows.

Promiscuity ruins both the family and those who defile it; while the souls of our ancestors droop, through lack of the funeral cakes and ablutions.

By the destruction of our lineage and the pollution of blood, ancient class traditions and family purity alike perish.

The wise say, my Lord, that they are forever lost, whose ancient traditions are lost.

Alas, it is strange that we should be willing to kill our own countrymen and commit a great sin, in order to enjoy the pleasures of a kingdom.

If, on the contrary, the sons of Dhritarashtra, with weapons in their hand, should slay me, unarmed and unresisting, surely that would be better for my welfare!"

*Sanjaya said: "Having spoken thus, in the midst of the armies, Arjuna sank on the seat of the chariot, casting away his bow and arrow; heartbroken with grief."*

*Thus, in the Holy Book the Bhagavad Gita, one of the Upanishads, in the Science of the Supreme Spirit, in the Art of Self-Knowledge, in the colloquy between the Divine Lord Shri Krishna and the Prince Arjuna, stands the first chapter, entitled: The Despondency of Arjuna.*

## TWO: THE PHILOSOPHY OF DISCRIMINATION

*Sanjaya then told how the Lord Shri Krishna, seeing Arjuna overwhelmed with compassion, his eyes dimmed with flowing tears and full of despondency, consoled him:*

*“The Lord said:* My beloved friend! Why yield, just on the eve of battle, to this weakness which does no credit to those who call themselves Aryans, and only brings them infamy and bars against them the gates of heaven?

O Arjuna! Why give way to unmanliness? O thou who art the terror of thine enemies! Shake off such shameful effeminacy, make ready to act!

*Arjuna argued:* My Lord! How can I, when the battle rages, send an arrow through Bheeshma and Drona, who should receive my reverence?

Rather would I content myself with a beggar’s crust that kill these teachers of mine, these precious noble souls! To slay these masters who are my benefactors would be to stain the sweetness of life’s pleasures with their blood.

Nor can I say whether it were better that they conquer me or for me to conquer them, since I would no longer care to live if I killed these sons of Dhritarashtra, now preparing for fight.

My heart is oppressed with pity; and my mind confused as to what my duty is. Therefore, my Lord, tell me what is best for my spiritual welfare, for I am Thy disciple. Please direct me, I pray.

For should I attain the monarchy of the visible world, or over the invisible world, it would not drive away the anguish which is now paralysing my senses.”

*Sanjaya continued:* “Arjuna, the conqueror of all enemies, then told the Lord of All-Hearts that he would no fight, and became silent, O King!

*Thereupon the Lord, with a gracious smile, addressed him who was so much depressed in the midst of the two armies.*

*Lord Shri Krishna said:* Why grieve for those for whom no grief is due, and yet profess wisdom? The wise grieve neither for the dead nor the living.

There was never a time when I was not, nor thou, nor these princes were not; there will never be a time when we shall cease to be.

As the soul experiences in this body infancy, youth and old age, so finally it passes into another. The wise have no delusion about this.

Those external relations which bring cold and heat, pain and happiness, they come and go; they are not permanent. Endure them bravely, O Prince!

The hero whose soul is unmoved by circumstance, who accepts pleasure and pain with equanimity, only he is fit for immortality.

That which is not, shall never be; that which is, shall never cease to be. To the wise, these truths are self-evident.

The Spirit, which pervades all that we see, is imperishable. Nothing can destroy the Spirit.

The material bodies which this Eternal, Indestructible, Immeasurable Spirit inhabits are all finite. Therefore fight, O Valiant Man!

He who thinks that the Spirit kills, and he who thinks of It as killed, are both ignorant. The Spirit kills not, nor is It killed.

It was not born; It will never die, nor once having been, can It cease to be. Unborn, Eternal, Ever-enduring, yet Most Ancient, the Spirit dies not when the body is dead.

He who knows the Spirit as Indestructible, Immortal, Unborn, Always-the-Same, how should he kill or cause to be killed?

As a man discards his threadbare robes and puts on new, so the Spirit throws off Its worn-out bodies and takes fresh ones.

Weapons cleave It not, fire burns It not, water drenches It not, and wind dries It not.

It is impenetrable; It can be neither drowned nor scorched nor dried. It is Eternal, All-pervading, Unchanging, Immovable and Most Ancient.

It is named the Unmanifest, the Unthinkable, the immutable. Wherefore, knowing the Spirit as such, thou hast no cause to grieve.

Even if thou thinkest of It as constantly being born, constantly dying, even then, O Mighty Man, thou still hast no cause to grieve.

For death is as sure for that which is born, as birth is for that which is dead. Therefore grieve not for what is inevitable.

The end and the beginning of beings are unknown. We see only the intervening formations. Then what cause is there for grief?

One hears of the Spirit with surprise, another thinks It marvellous, the third listens without comprehending. Thus, though many are told about It, scarcely is there one who knows It.

Be not anxious about these armies. The Spirit in man is imperishable.

Thou must look at thy duty. Nothing can be more welcome to a soldier than a righteous war. Therefore to waver in this resolve is unworthy, O Arjuna!

Blessed are the soldiers who find their opportunity. This opportunity has opened for thee the gates of heaven.

Refuse to fight in this righteous cause, and thou wilt be a traitor, lost to fame, incurring only sin.

Men will talk forever of thy disgrace; and to the noble, dishonour is worse than death.

Great generals will think that thou hast fled from the battlefield through cowardice; though once honoured thou wilt seem despicable.

Thine enemies will spread scandal and mock at thy courage. Can anything be more humiliating?

If killed, thou shalt attain Heaven; if victorious, enjoy the kingdom of earth. Therefore arise, O Son of Kunti, and fight!

Look upon pleasure and pain, victory and defeat, with an equal eye. Make ready for the combat, and thou shalt commit no sin.

I have told thee the philosophy of Knowledge. Now listen and I will explain the philosophy of Action, by means of which, O Arjuna, thou shalt break through the bondage of all action.

On this Path, endeavour is never wasted, nor can it ever be repressed. Even a very little of its practice protects one from great danger.

By its means, the straying intellect becomes steadied in the contemplation of one object only; whereas the minds of the irresolute stray into bypaths innumerable.

Only the ignorant speak in figurative language. It is they who extol the letter of the scriptures, saying, 'There is nothing deeper than this.'

Consulting only their own desires, they construct their own heaven, devising arduous and complex rites to secure their own pleasure and their own power; and the only result is rebirth.

While their minds are absorbed with ideas of power and personal enjoyment, they cannot concentrate their discrimination on one point.

The Vedic Scriptures tell of the three constituents of life - the Qualities. Rise above all of them, O Arjuna, above all the pairs of opposing sensations; be steady in truth, free from worldly anxieties and centered in the Self.

As a man can drink water from any side of a full tank, so the skilled theologian can wrest from any scripture that which will serve his purpose.

But thou hast only the right to work, but none to the fruit thereof. Let not then the fruit of thy action be thy motive; nor yet be thou enamored of inaction.

Perform all thy actions with mind concentrated on the Divine, renouncing attachment and looking upon success and failure with an equal eye. Spirituality implies equanimity.

Physical action is far inferior to an intellect concentrated on the Divine. Have recourse then to Pure Intelligence. It is only the petty-minded who work for reward.

When a man attains to Pure Reason, he renounces in this world the results of good and evil alike. Cling thou to Right Action. Spirituality is the real art of living.

The sages guided by Pure Intellect renounce the fruit of action; and, freed from the chains of rebirth, they reach the highest bliss.

When thy reason has crossed the entanglements of illusion, then shalt thou become indifferent both to the philosophies thou hast heard and to those thou mayest yet hear.

When the intellect, bewildered by the multiplicity of holy scripts, stands unperturbed in blissful contemplation of the Infinite, then hast thou attained Spirituality.

*Arjuna asked:* My Lord! How can we recognise the saint who has attained Pure Intellect, who has reached this state of Bliss, and whose mind is steady? how does he talk, how does he live, and how does he act?

*Lord Shri Krishna replied:* When a man has given up the desires of his heart and is satisfied with the Self alone, be sure that he has reached the highest state.

The sage, whose mind is unruffled in suffering, whose desire is not roused by enjoyment, who is without attachment, anger or fear – take him to be one who stands at that lofty level.

He who wherever he goes is attached to no person and to no place by ties of flesh; who accepts good and evil alike, neither welcoming the one nor shrinking from the other – take him to be one who is merged in the Infinite.

He who can withdraw his senses from the attraction of their objects, as the tortoise draws his limbs within its shell – take it that such a one has attained Perfection.

The objects of sense turn from him who is abstemious. Even the relish for them is lost in him who has seen the Truth.

O Arjuna! The mind of him, who is trying to conquer it, is forcibly carried away in spite of his efforts, by his tumultuous senses.

Restraining them all, let him meditate steadfastly on Me; for who thus conquers his senses achieves perfection.

When a man dwells on the objects of sense, he creates an attraction for them; attraction develops into desire, and desire breeds anger.

Anger induces delusion; delusion, loss of memory; through loss of memory, reason is shattered; and loss of reason leads to destruction.

But the self-controlled soul, who moves amongst sense objects, free from either attachment or repulsion, he wins eternal Peace.

Having attained Peace, he becomes free from misery; for when the mind gains peace, right discrimination follows.

Right discrimination is not for him who cannot concentrate. Without concentration, there cannot be meditation; he who cannot meditate must not expect peace; and without peace, how can anyone expect happiness?

As a ship at sea is tossed by the tempest, so the reason is carried away by the mind when preyed upon by straying senses.

## 2

Therefore, O Might-in-Arms, he who keeps his senses detached from their objects – take it that his reason is purified.

The saint is awake when the world sleeps, and he ignores that for which the world lives.

He attains Peace, into whom desires flow as rivers into the ocean, which though brimming with water remains ever the same; not he whom desire carries away.

He attains Peace who, giving up desire, moves through the world without aspiration, possessing nothing which he can call his own, and free from pride.

O Arjuna! This is the state of the Self, the Supreme Spirit, to which if a man once attain, it shall never be taken from him. Even at the time of leaving the body, he will remain firmly enthroned there, and will become one with the Eternal.”

*Thus, in the Holy Book the Bhagavad Gita, one of the Upanishads, in the Science of the Supreme Spirit, in the Art of Self-Knowledge, in the colloquy between the Divine Lord Shri Krishna and the Prince Arjuna, stands the second chapter, entitled: The Philosophy of Discrimination.*

### THREE: KARMA-YOGA - THE PATH OF ACTION

*“Arjuna questioned: My Lord! If Wisdom is above action, why dost Thou advise me to engage in this terrible fight?”*

Thy language perplexes me and confuses my reason. Therefore please tell me the only way by which I may, without doubt, secure my spiritual welfare.

*Lord Shri Krishna replied: In this world, as I have said, there is a twofold path, O Sinless One! There is the Path of Wisdom for those who meditate, and the Path of Action for those who work.*

No man can attain freedom from activity by refraining from action; nor can he reach perfection by merely refusing to act.

He cannot even for a moment remain really inactive, for the Qualities of Nature will compel him to act whether he will or no.

He who remains motionless, refusing to act, but all the while brooding over sensuous object, that deluded soul is simply a hypocrite.

But, O Arjuna! All honour to him whose mind controls his senses, for he is thereby beginning to practise Karma-Yoga, the Path of Right Action, keeping himself always unattached.

Do thy duty as prescribed, for action for duty's sake is superior to inaction. Even the maintenance of the body would be impossible if man remained inactive.

In this world people are fettered by action, unless it is performed as a sacrifice. Therefore, O Arjuna, let thy acts be done without attachment, as sacrifice only.

In the beginning, when God created all beings by the sacrifice of Himself, He said unto them: `Through sacrifice you can procreate, and it shall satisfy all your desires.

Worship the Powers of Nature thereby, and let them nourish you in return; thus supporting each other, you shall attain your highest welfare.

For, fed, on sacrifice, nature will give you all the enjoyment you can desire. But he who enjoys what she gives without returning is, indeed, a robber.’

The sages who enjoy the food that remains after the sacrifice is made are freed from all sin; but the selfish who spread their feast only for themselves feed on sin only.

All creatures are the product of food, food is the product of rain, rain comes by sacrifice, and sacrifice is the noblest form of action.

All action originates in the Supreme Spirit, which is Imperishable, and in sacrificial action the all-pervading Spirit is consciously present.

Thus he who does not help the revolving wheel of sacrifice, but instead leads a sinful life, rejoicing in the gratification of his senses, O Arjuna, he breathes in vain.

On the other hand, the soul who meditates on the Self is content to serve the Self and rests satisfied within the Self; there remains nothing more for him to accomplish.

He has nothing to gain by the performance or non-performance of action. His welfare depends not on any contribution that an earthly creature can make.

Therefore do thy duty perfectly, without care for the results, for he who does his duty disinterestedly attains the Supreme.

King Janaka and others attained perfection through action alone. Even for the sake of enlightening the world, it is thy duty to act;

For whatever a great man does, others imitate. People conform to the standard which he has set.

There is nothing in this universe, O Arjuna, that I am compelled to do, nor anything for Me to attain; yet I am persistently active.

For were I not to act without ceasing, O prince, people would be glad to do likewise.

And if I were to refrain from action, the human race would be ruined; I should lead the world to chaos, and destruction would follow.

As the ignorant act, because of their fondness for action, so should the wise act without such attachment, fixing their eyes, O Arjuna, only on the welfare of the world.

But a wise man should not perturb the minds of the ignorant, who are attached to action; let him perform his own actions in the right spirit, with concentration on Me, thus inspiring all to do the same.

Action is the product of the Qualities inherent in Nature. It is only the ignorant man who, misled by personal egotism, says: 'I am the doer.'

But he, O Mighty One, who understands correctly the relation of the Qualities to action, is not attached to the act for he perceives that it is merely the action and reaction of the Qualities among themselves.

Those who do not understand the Qualities are interested in the act. Still, the wise man who knows the truth should not disturb the mind of him who does not.

Therefore, surrendering thy actions unto Me, thy thoughts concentrated on the Absolute, free from selfishness and without anticipation of reward, with mind devoid of excitement, begin thou to fight.

Those who always act in accordance with My precepts, firm in faith and without cavilling, they too are freed from the bondage of action.

But they who ridicule My word and do not keep it, are ignorant, devoid of wisdom and blind. They seek but their own destruction.

Even the wise man acts in character with his nature; indeed, all creatures act according to their natures. What is the use of compulsion then?

# 3

The love and hate which are aroused by the objects of sense arise from Nature; do not yield to them. They only obstruct the path.

It is better to do thine own duty, however lacking in merit, than to do that of another, even though efficiently. It is better to die doing one's own duty, for to do the duty of another is fraught with danger.

*Arjuna asked:* My Lord! Tell me, what is it that drives a man to sin, even against his will and as if by compulsion?

*Lord Shri Krishna:* It is desire, it is aversion, born of passion. Desire consumes and corrupts everything. It is man's greatest enemy.

As fire is shrouded in smoke, a mirror by dust and a child by the womb, so is the universe enveloped in desire.

It is the wise man's constant enemy; it tarnishes the face of wisdom. It is as insatiable as a flame of fire.

It works through the senses, the mind and the reason; and with their help destroys wisdom and confounds the soul.

Therefore, O Arjuna, first control thy senses and then slay desire, for it is full of sin, and is the destroyer of knowledge and of wisdom.

It is said that the senses are powerful. But beyond the senses is the mind, beyond the mind is the intellect, and beyond and greater than intellect is He.

Thus, O Mighty-in-Arms, knowing Him to be beyond the intellect and, by His help, subduing thy personal egotism, kill thine enemy, Desire, extremely difficult though it be."

*Thus, in the Holy Book the Bhagavad Gita, one of the Upanishads, in the Science of the Supreme Spirit, in the Art of Self-Knowledge, in the colloquy between the Divine Lord Shri Krishna and the Prince Arjuna, stands the third chapter entitled: Karma-Yoga or the Path of Action.*

## SIX: SELF-CONTROL

*“Lord Shri Krishna said: He who acts because it is his duty, not thinking of the consequences, is really spiritual and a true ascetic; and not he who merely observes rituals or who shuns all action.*

O Arjuna! Renunciation is in fact what is called Right Action. No one can become spiritual who has not renounced all desire.

For the sage who seeks the heights of spiritual meditation, practice is the only method, and when he has attained them, he must maintain himself there by continual self-control.

When a man renounces even the thought of initiating action, when he is not interested in sense objects or any results which may flow from his acts, then in truth he understands spirituality.

Let him seek liberation by the help of his Highest Self, and let him never disgrace his own Self. For that Self is his only friend; yet it may also be his enemy.

To him who has conquered his lower nature by Its help, the Self is a friend, but to him who has not done so, It is an enemy.

The Self of him who is self-controlled, and has attained peace is equally unmoved by heat or cold, pleasure or pain, honour or dishonour.

He who desires nothing but wisdom and spiritual insight, who has conquered his senses and who looks with the same eye upon a lump of earth, a stone or fine gold, is a real saint.

He looks impartially on all – lover, friend or foe; indifferent or hostile; alien or relative; virtuous or sinful.

Let the student of spirituality try unceasingly to concentrate his mind; Let him live in seclusion, absolutely alone, with mind and personality controlled, free from desire and without possessions.

Having chosen a holy place, let him sit in a firm posture on a seat, neither too high nor too low, and covered with a grass mat, a deer skin and a cloth.

Seated thus, his mind concentrated, its functions controlled and his senses governed, let him practise meditation for the purification of his lower nature.

Let him hold body, head and neck erect, motionless and steady; let him look fixedly at the tip of his nose, turning neither to the right nor to the left.

With peace in his heart and nor fear, observing the vow of celibacy, with mind controlled and fixed on Me, let the student lose himself in contemplation of Me.

Thus keeping his mind always in communion with Me, and with his thoughts subdued, he shall attain that Peace which is mine and which will lead him to liberation at last.

Meditation is not for him who eats too much, not for him who eats not at all; not for him who is overmuch addicted to sleep, not for him who is always awake.

But for him who regulates his food and recreation, who is balanced in action, in sleep and in waking, it shall dispel all unhappiness.

When the mind, completely controlled, is centered in the Self, and free from all earthly desires, then is the man truly spiritual.

The wise man who has conquered his mind and is absorbed in the Self is as a lamp which does not flicker, since it stands sheltered from every wind.

There, where the whole nature is seen in the light of the Self, where the man abides within his Self and is satisfied there, its functions restrained by its union with the Divine, the mind finds rest.

When he enjoys the Bliss which passes sense, and which only the Pure Intellect can grasp, when he comes to rest within his own highest Self, never again will he stray from reality.

Finding That, he will realise that there is no possession so precious. And when once established here, no calamity can disturb him.

This inner severance from the affliction of misery is spirituality. It should be practised with determination and with a heart which refuses to be depressed.

Renouncing every desire which imagination can conceive, controlling the senses at every point by the power of mind;

Little by little, by the help of his reason controlled by fortitude, let him attain peace; and, fixing his mind on the Self, let him not think of any other thing.

When the volatile and wavering mind would wander, let him restrain it and bring it again to its allegiance to the Self.

Supreme Bliss is the lot of the sage, whose mind attains Peace, whose passions subside, who is without sin, and who becomes one with the Absolute.

Thus, free from sin, abiding always in the Eternal, the saint enjoys without effort the Bliss which flows from realisation of the Infinite.

He who experiences the unity of life sees his own Self in all beings, and all beings in his own Self, and looks on everything with an impartial eye;

He who sees Me in everything and everything in Me, him shall I never forsake, nor shall he lose Me.

The sage who realises the unity of life and who worships Me in all beings, lives in Me, whatever may be his lot.

O Arjuna! He is the perfect saint who, taught by the likeness within himself, sees the same Self everywhere, whether the outer form be pleasurable or painful.

*Arjuna said:* I do not see how I can attain this state of equanimity which Thou has revealed, owing to the restlessness of my mind.

My Lord! Verily, the mind is fickle and turbulent, obstinate and strong, yea extremely difficult as the wind to control.

*Lord Shri Krishna replied:* Doubtless, O Mighty One, the mind is fickle and exceedingly difficult to restrain, but, O Son of Kunti, with practice and renunciation it can be done.

It is not possible to attain Self-Realisation if a man does not know how to control himself; but for him who, striving by proper means, learns such control, it is possible.

*Arjuna asked:* He who fails to control himself, whose mind falls from spiritual contemplation, who attains not perfection but retains his faith, what of him, my Lord?

Having failed in both, my Lord, is he without hope, like a riven cloud having no support, lost on the spiritual road?

My Lord! Thou art worthy to solve this doubt once and for all; save Thyself there is no one competent to do so.

*Lord Shri Krishna replied:* My beloved child! There is no destruction for him, either in this world or in the next. No evil fate awaits him who treads the path of righteousness.

Having reached the worlds where the righteous dwell, and having remained there for many years, he who has slipped from the path of spirituality will be born again in the family of the pure, benevolent and prosperous.

Or, he may be born in the family of the wise sages, though a birth like this is, indeed, very difficult to obtain.

Then the experience acquired in his former life will revive, and with its help he will strive for perfection more eagerly than before.

Unconsciously he will return to the practices of his old life; so that he who tries to realise spiritual consciousness is certainly superior to one who only talks of it.

Then after many lives, the student of spirituality, who earnestly strives, and whose sins are absolved, attains perfection and reaches the Supreme.

The wise man is superior to the ascetic and to the scholar and to the man of action; therefore be thou a wise man, O Arjuna!

I look upon him as the best of mystics who, full of faith, worshippeth Me and abideth in Me."

*Thus, in the Holy Book the Bhagavad Gita, one of the Upanishads, in the Science of the Supreme Spirit, in the Art of Self-Knowledge, in the colloquy between the Divine Lord Shri Krishna and the Prince Arjuna, stands the sixth chapter entitled: Self-Control.*

## ELEVEN: THE COSMIC VISION

*“Arjuna said: My Lord! Thy words concerning the Supreme Secret of Self, given for my blessing, have dispelled the illusions which surrounded me.*

O Lord, whose eyes are like the lotus petal! Thou hast described in detail the origin and the dissolution of being, and Thine own Eternal Majesty.

I believe all as Thou hast declared it. I long now to have a vision of thy Divine Form, O Thou Most High!

If Thou thinkest that it can be made possible for me to see it, show me, O Lord of Lords, Thine own Eternal Self.

*Lord Shri Krishna replied: Behold, O Arjuna! My celestial forms, by hundred and thousands, various in kind, in colour and in shape.*

Behold thou the Powers of Nature: fire, earth, wind and sky; the sun, the heavens, the moon, the stars; all forces of vitality and of healing; and the roving winds. See the myriad wonders revealed to none but thee.

Here in Me living as one, O Arjuna, behold the whole universe, movable and immovable, and anything else that thou wouldst see!

Yet since with mortal eyes thou canst not see Me, lo! I give thee the Divine Sight. See now the glory of My Sovereignty.”

*Sanjaya continued: “Having thus spoken, O King, the Lord Shri Krishna, the Almighty Prince of Wisdom, showed to Arjuna the Supreme Form of the Great God.*

*There were countless eyes and mouths, and mystic forms innumerable, with shining ornaments and flaming celestial weapons.*

*Crowned with heavenly garlands, clothed in shining garments, anointed with divine unctions, He showed Himself as the Resplendent One, Marvellous, Boundless, Omnipresent.*

*Could a thousand suns blaze forth together it would be but a faint reflection of the radiance of the Lord God.*

*In that vision Arjuna saw the universe, with its manifold shapes, all embraced in One, its Supreme Lord.*

*Thereupon Arjuna, dumb with awe, his hair on end, his head bowed, his hands clasped in salutation, addressed the Lord thus:*

*Arjuna said: O almighty God! I see in Thee the powers of Nature, the various creatures of the world, the Progenitor on his lotus throne, the Sages and the shining angels.*

I see Thee, infinite in form, with, as it were, faces, eyes and limbs everywhere; no beginning, no middle, no end; O Thou Lord of the Universe, Whose Form is universal!

I see thee with the crown, the sceptre and the discus; a blaze of splendour. Scarce can I gaze on thee, so radiant thou art, glowing like the blazing fire, brilliant as the sun, immeasurable.

Imperishable art Thou, the Sole One worthy to be known, the priceless Treasure-house of the universe, the immortal Guardian of the Life Eternal, the Spirit Everlasting.

Without beginning, without middle and without end, infinite in power, Thine arms all-embracing, the sun and moon Thine eyes, Thy face beaming with the fire of sacrifice, flooding the whole universe with light.

Alone thou fillest all the quarters of the sky, earth and heaven, and the regions between. O Almighty Lord! Seeing Thy marvellous and awe-inspiring Form, the spheres tremble with fear.

The troops of celestial beings enter into Thee, some invoking Thee in fear, with folded palms; the Great Seers and Adepts sing hymns to Thy Glory, saying `All Hail.'

The Vital Forces, the Major stars, Fire, Earth, Air, Sky, Sun, Heaven, Moon and Planets; the Angels, the Guardians of the Universe, the divine Healers, the Winds, the Fathers, the Heavenly Singers; and hosts of Mammon-worshippers, demons as well as saints, are amazed.

Seeing Thy stupendous Form, O Most Mighty, with its myriad faces, its innumerable eyes and limbs and terrible jaws, I myself and all the worlds are overwhelmed with awe.

When I see Thee, touching the Heavens, glowing with colour, with open mouth and wide open fiery eyes, I am terrified. O My Lord! My courage and peace of mind desert me.

When I see Thy mouths with their fearful jaws like glowing fires at the dissolution of creation, I lose all sense of place; I find no rest. Be merciful, O Lord in whom this universe abides!

All these sons of Dhritarashtra, with the hosts of princes, Bheeshma, Drona and Karna, as well as the other warrior chiefs belonging to our side;

I see them all rushing headlong into Thy mouths, with terrible tusks, horrible to behold. Some are mangled between thy jaws, with their heads crushed to atoms.

As rivers in flood surge furiously to the ocean, so these heroes, the greatest among men, fling themselves into Thy flaming mouths.

As moths fly impetuously to the flame only to be killed, so these men rush into Thy mouths to court their own destruction.

Thou seemest to swallow up the worlds, to lap them in flame. Thy glory fills the universe. Thy fierce rays beat down upon it irresistibly.

Tell me then who Thou art, that wearest this dreadful Form? I bow before Thee, O Mighty One! Have mercy, I pray, and let me see Thee as Thou wert at first. I do not know what Thou intendest.

*Lord Shri Krishna replied:* I have shown myself to thee as the Destroyer who lays waste the world and whose purpose is destruction. In spite of thy efforts, all these warriors gathered for battle shall not escape death.

Then gird up thy loins and conquer. Subdue thy foes and enjoy the kingdom in prosperity. I have already doomed them. Be thou my instrument, Arjuna!

Drona and Bheeshma, Jayadratha and Karna, and other brave warriors – I have condemned them all. Destroy them; fight and fear not. Thy foes shall be crushed.”

*Sanjaya continued:* “Having heard these words from the Lord Shri Krishna, the Prince Arjuna, with folded hands trembling, prostrated himself and with choking voice, bowing down again and again, and overwhelmed with awe, once more addressed the Lord.

*Arjuna said:* My Lord! It is natural that the world revels and rejoices when it sings the praises of Thy glory; the demons fly in fear and the saints offer Thee their salutations.

How should they do otherwise? O Thou Supreme Self, greater than the Powers of creation, the First Cause, Infinite, the Lord of Lords, the Home of the universe, Imperishable, Being and Not-Being, yet transcending both.

Thou art the Primal God, the Ancient, the Supreme Abode of this universe, the Knower, the Knowledge and the Final Home. Thou fillest everything. Thy form is infinite.

Thou art the Wind, Thou art Death, Thou art the Fire, the Water, the Moon, the Father and the Grandfather. Honour and glory to Thee a thousand and a thousand times! Again and again, salutation be to Thee, O my Lord!

Salutations to Thee in front and on every side, Thou who encompasseth me round about. Thy power is infinite; Thy majesty immeasurable; thou upholdest all things; yea, Thou Thyself art All.

Whatever I have said unto Thee in rashness, taking Thee only for a friend and addressing Thee as ‘O Krishna! O Yadava! O Friend!’ in thoughtless familiarity, no understanding Thy greatness;

Whatever insult I have offered to Thee in jest, in sport or in repose, in conversation or at the banquet, alone or in a multitude, I ask Thy forgiveness for them all, O Thou Who art without an equal!

For Thou art the Father of all things movable and immovable, the Worshipful, the Master of Masters! In all the worlds there is none equal to Thee, how then superior, O Thou who standeth alone, Supreme.

Therefore I prostrate myself before Thee, O Lord! Most Adorable! I salute Thee, I ask Thy blessing. Only Thou canst be trusted to bear with me, as father to son, as friend to friend, as lover to his beloved.

I rejoice that I have seen what never man saw before; yet, O Lord! I am overwhelmed with fear. Please take again the Form I know. Be merciful, O Lord! thou Who are the Home of the whole universe.

I long to see Thee as thou wert before, with the crown, the sceptre and the discus in Thy hands; in Thy other Form, with Thy four hands, O Thou Whose arms are countless and Whose forms are infinite.

*Lord Shri Krishna replied:* My beloved friend! It is only through My grace and power that thou hast been able to see this vision of splendour, the Universal, the Infinite, the Original. Never has it been seen by any but thee.

Not by study of the scriptures, not by sacrifice or gift, not by ritual or rigorous austerity, is it possible for man on earth to see what thou hast seen, O thou foremost hero of the Kuru-clan!

Be not afraid or bewildered by the terrible vision. Put away thy fear and, with joyful mind, see Me once again in My usual Form."

*Sanjaya continued:* "Having thus spoken to Arjuna, Lord Shri Krishna showed Himself again in His accustomed form; and the Mighty Lord, in gentle tones, softly consoled him who lately trembled with fear.

*Arjuna said:* Seeing Thee in Thy gentle human form, my Lord, I am myself again, calm once more.

*Lord Shri Krishna replied:* It is hard to see this vision of Me that thou hast seen. Even the most powerful have longed for it in vain.

Not by study of the scriptures, or by austerities, not by gifts or sacrifices, is it possible to see Me as thou hast done.

Only by tireless devotion can I be seen and known; only thus can a man become one with Me, O Arjuna!

He whose every action is done for My sake, to whom I am the final goal, who loves Me only and hates no one - O My dearest son, only he can realize Me!"

*Thus, in the Holy Book the Bhagavad Gita, one of the Upanishads, in the Science of the Supreme Spirit, in the Art of Self-Knowledge, in the colloquy between the Divine Lord Shri Krishna and the Prince Arjuna, stands the eleventh chapter, entitled: The Cosmic Vision.*