

Newsletter on Bhagavad Gita by Dr. P.V. Nath

The following text is a compilation of the single issues of a regular newsletter by e-mail, composed by Dr. Pathikonda Viswambara Nath. It includes the original slokas of the Gita as well as the transliteration, translation and commentaries by Dr. Nath.

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**OM SAHA NAVAVATU SAHA NAU BHUNAKTU
SAHA VEERYAM KARAVAVAHAI
TEJASWI NAVADHEETAMASTU
MAA VID VISHAVAHAI**

May He protect us both (the teacher and the pupil)

May He cause us both to enjoy (the Supreme)

May we both exert together (to discover the true inner meaning of the scriptures)

May our studies be thorough and fruitful.

May we never misunderstand each other.

The Gita is in the form of dialogue between Krishna, the preceptor and the disciple Arjuna. Sanjaya, the narrator to King Dhritarashtra, intercepts now and then with a comment of his own. There are a total of 18 chapters with 701 verses (slokas.) Each of the chapters has a title and the title ends with the word "Yoga".

The word "**Yoga**" is derived from the word "Yuj" which means "Unite."

Study of every chapter assists the seeker to unite with the Lord and hence the use of the word "Yoga."

The seeker is he/she who is looking for attaining the union with the "Parabrahman" and experience the "Eternal Bliss." In Sanskrit the name for the word "seeker" is "Sadhaka". The efforts of the sadhaka is known as "Sadhana".

To undertake the task, the seeker must have "Faith" and "Devotion" in the subject, the teacher and "Parabrahman."

Chapter 2: SAMKHYA YOGA

Sloka 1

SANJAYA UVACHA

Sanjaya said:

**TAM TATHA KRIPAYAVISTAM ASHRU POORNA KULE KSHANAM
VISHEEDANTAMIDAM VAKYAM UVACHA MADHUSUDHANAHA**

**To him who was thus overwhelmed with compassion and was grieving, his eyes full of tears,
Madhusudhana spoke these words.**

Sanjaya has in one simple line expressed the external appearance of Arjuna in the battlefield. He had decided to fight the battle to get justice for his brother but the mind succumbed to the thought of consequences of the action about to be undertaken. So instead of a determined warrior eager for the fight to begin, we see a weak warrior in grief not at the consequences but at the thought of consequences. He was in grief on thinking of the fruits of action.

Lord Krishna is also known as Madhusudhana for having killed the demon Madhu.

He heard the lamentations of the patient in depression and as a great psychoanalyst giving his opinion and offering remedy for the illness.

Sloka 2

SRI BHAGAWAN UVACHA:

The Lord said:

**KUTASTVA KASHMALAM IDAM VISHAME' SAMUPASTHITASM
ANARYA JUSHTAM ASVARGYAM AKEERTIKARAM ARJUNA**

**O Arjuna, whence is this perilous state come upon thee? This un-aryan, shameful and heaven
excluding?**

Sri Krishna finds faults in Arjuna's statement on three counts.

- a) It is un-aryan.
- b) It is heaven excluding.
- c) It is shameful.

a) Un-aryan:

Quotation from Manu Smriti, the highest authority:

"Performing one's duty as per the sastras and at the same time avoiding forbidden duties is the way of an Arya. Only such highly evolved, cultural men are entitled to be called **Aryans**."

It also states that children born of parents who act with self-control and follow the sastras are Aryans.

It is not a title one can inherit but only a title that comes from the right conduct (so children born only out of lust are un-Aryans).

The Vedas tell us how to become and stay as Aryans. If one becomes and stays an Aryan, he is said to have understood Vedanta. So the word "Aryan" is not meant for a particular race.

Krishna is making an observation only. He states that what you are doing is "un-aryan" and He did not say "You are not an Arya."

b) Heaven excluding:

As we discussed before, Arjuna was a kshatriya warrior. In the olden days, kshatriyas were taught that fighting in war was not out of order. Death in the war would guarantee entry into heaven.

With the decision/uncertainty to fight, Arjuna would be excluded from entry into heaven.

c) It is shameful:

For a competent warrior who can fight with 10000 soldiers at a time, it would have been a topic for ridicule from the fellow friends, family and the future generation to come.

Sri Krishna knowing that the decision not to fight is wrong, has given his reason for that decision.

Sloka 3

**KLAIBYAM MAA SMA GAMAHA PARTHA NAITAT TVAYI UPAPADYATE
KSHUDRAM HRIDAYA DAURBALYAM TYAKTVOTTISHTA PARANTAPA**

O Partha, do not yield to this wretchedness. It does not befit you. Cast off this wretched weakness of the heart. Arise, O scorcher of the enemies.

This is one of the most often quoted verses in the Gita by the experts. Swami Vivekananda who spread the message of Hindu philosophy across the globe and in whose name a number of institutions have blossomed all over says that the two most important words in this sloka are

a) Klaibyam and

b) Utthishta.

He considers that the two words summarise the essence of the Gita.

It is therefore necessary for us to analyse these words in greater detail.

Klaibyam - wretchedness

Arjuna as we know was a highly competent and well-respected soldier holding the highest rank. He was a physically strong warrior and well-versed in archery. Unfortunately, the grief he got himself into considering the consequences of the war, made him mentally weak.

Any well respected individual who does not fit in with the expectation of the society in relation to his duty will be labelled as "wretched." Arjuna was expected to lead the Pandava army and help in defeating the famous warriors like Bheeshma, Drona, Karna and others in the opposite camp. There was no one else in the Pandava army who could take up the mammoth task of defeating the great soldiers in the Kaurava army.

Sri Krishna is ticking Arjuna off for thinking of surrendering to the Kauravas. For a Kshatriya, in the olden days, it is the worst form of criticism. It is like saying "you are impotent."

This state of mental weakness made Arjuna drop his weapon of action and slump to the floor. What a sorry state to see of a great warrior?

So, Sri.Krishna uses the next word: **Uttishta**.
It means “get up.”

It is not physically getting up from the state of slumping down to the floor.
It is getting the mental strength back and determination to take up the task of fighting for the war of righteousness.

In our life, each one of us is expected to fulfil certain duties by the members of our own family and the society in general. We are after all prone to states of grief for some reason or other.

During such times, we must remember this sloka which is a “Mantra” and the words “Klaibyam and Uttishta.” We must with determination bounce back and take up our ordained duties for the welfare of the society.

We must awaken, arise, stand up and fulfil our duties till the goal is reached.
The most important goal of our life is to achieve “Liberation.” No matter what happens in our life, we must not stop proceeding in the spiritual path.

Another word used in this sloka is the title of “Parantapa”. Arjuna was given this title because he was a “scorcher of enemies.”

All our enemies in the spiritual battle are within us. They are “Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (delusion), Mada (pride) and Matsarya (enmity).” When they dominate, the consequence of their predominance is “grief.”

We should learn to scorch these enemies out and do not let grief dominate our life.

There is a famous Upanisad statement: “Nayam Atma Balahenena Labhyate.”
It means “This Atman cannot be attained by the weak.”

We, in the process of realising our true identity with the “Atman” within, should not succumb to grief and develop the weakness.

The entire philosophical text is meant to give us the mental strength to overcome “grief.”

Arjuna uvacha
Arjuna said:

Sloka 4

**KATHAM BHEESHMAM AHAM SANKHYE DRONAN CHA MADHUSUDHANA
ISHUBHIHI PRATIYOTSAMI POOJARHAV ARISUDHANA**

O Krishna, Bhishma and Drona are fit to be worshipped. How can I fight with them in the battle?

Arjuna continues to justify his decision not to fight.

Bhishma and Drona, the two senior most members in the opposite camp had declared their allegiance

to Emperor Dhritarashtra. After having decided to fight, having taken the advice of Lord Krishna, the Pandavas had entered the battlefield.

Arjuna had no business to name the warriors in the opposite camp. He knew that only by killing Bhishma and Drona the Pandavas could regain the lost kingdom. Before the war, these two were fit to be worshipped with reverence but certainly not in the war. This was the fundamental flaw in his thinking.

When the cause is glorious, when one follows the path of dharma, the names and relations in the enemy rank do not carry any meaning.

Sloka 5

**GUROONA HATVA HI MAHANUBHAVAAN
SHREYO BHOKTUM BHAIKHYAM APEEHA LOKAM**

**HATVARTHA KAMASTU GUROONIHAIVA
BHUNJEEYA BHOGAAN RUDHIRA PRADAGDHAAN**

Better is in this world to eat and live on food of beggars than to kill the most noble of the teachers. But if I kill them, I could enjoy only such pleasures as are stained with blood.

With the incomplete knowledge of the sastras Arjuna continues his arguments supporting the decision he has taken. His main case is about killing the gurus and great men like Drona, Kripa and Bhishma. By withdrawing from fighting even at the 11th hour, he thinks unnecessary and sinful bloodshed could be avoided. The price for taking such decision is to forego the right to climb the throne by brother Dharmaraja and go back to the forest. He felt that he would rather take the second option.

He was sure that in order to win, the senior most elders in the opposite camp had to be dead. As long as they lived, Pandavas had no chance of winning the battle. He feels that the pleasures of ruling the kingdom on achieving victory would be tainted with the blood of the gurus and respected elders.

Sloka 6

**NA CHAITAT VIDMAHA KATARANNO GAREEYO YAD VA NO JAYEYUHU
YANEVA HATVAN NA JIJIVISHASMAS TE'VASTITAH PRAMUKHE DHARTRA
RASHTRAHA**

I can hardly say which will be better for us, whether we should conquer them or whether they should conquer us. Those very people, sons of Dhritarashtra, slaying whom we do not wish to live, stand facing us.

Arjuna's mind which was tuned perfectly to the war against their cousins had suddenly gone out of tune. Having decided and prepared for the war, he keeps on expressing his feelings about the outcome of the war. The scriptures clearly state that there should be no thinking of the fruits of action, either good or bad, once a decision has been taken to undertake the task.

It is the turn of his guide, (sarathi) to retune his disciple's mind to the right channel of understanding. He needs to bring out Arjuna's personality to a higher intellectual level.

Sloka 7

**KARPANYA DOSHOPA HATHA SVABHAVAHA PRUCHHAMI TVAM DHARMA
SAMMOODA CHETAHA
YAT SHREYAHA SYAN NISCHITAM BROOHI TAN ME' SHISHYASTEHAM SADHI
MAAM TVAM PRAPANNAM**

O Krishna, my mind is tainted with pity. I am ignorant of the right action. I am confused. I ask you to teach me what is good for me. I am your disciple, I take refuge in you.

Many a times the main problem with psychiatric symptoms is the patient does not recognise that his symptoms are due to psychiatric problems. Once the condition is accepted, it is easy for the specialist to discuss the line of treatment needed to help his patient.

Arjuna, though a strong warrior and a great leader in his own right has realised that there is something wrong with him. Knowing that his problem is depression due to ignorance of the right action in the present battle he was facing, he was feeling sorry for the teachers, elders and family members who were there ready to face death.

The words “teach what is good for me” is extremely important. It is therefore important to note that the sacred text is aimed at helping those who are trained in a particular field of work, achieved competency but unable to continue the work they are trained into. One can realise how much the resources that are put in to train the individual would go into waste. Gita is the manual and guide for men of rajasic temperament who are men of passion and want to achieve something higher in life.

In the case of Arjuna, it was the feeling of “pity” that stopped him from facing the elders in the battle.

The word “karpanya” means “pity”. According to the Upanisads, if we do not strive for spiritual enlightenment, we are bound, like Arjuna, to grieve when we come across problems in our lives. We will become Krpanas.

The other word to note in this sloka is “Sreyas.” Arjuna requests for guidance to help him in the journey of life. There are two words to note in this context. One is “sreyas” and the other is “preyas.”

Sreyas is what is good for the spiritual enlightenment.
Preyas is what is good for the life in the physical world.

Sadhaka should be looking for sreyas rather than preyas.

Arjuna, a true sadhaka is asking for “sreyas.” Not only that, he has come to accept that he is ignorant of the scriptures and needs guidance. Further, he has decided to take refuge in the Lord Himself to clear his ignorance.

The sadhaka needs a guru for guidance. As we go through the Gita we will find slokas that give the qualities to look for the guru and the qualities needed to be accepted by the guru. The Vedas clearly advocate total surrender to the guru by the disciple striving for moksha. Arjuna has fulfilled all the criteria for a true and sincere disciple and hence he was blessed by the Lord who took upon Himself the task of giving the guidance.

Our salutations to Arjuna.

Sloka 8

NA HI PRAPASHAYAMI MAMAPANUDHYAYA

**YACCHOKAM UCCHOSHANAM INDRIYANAM
AVAPYA BHOOMAVASAPATNAM RAJYAM SURANAMAPI CHADIPATYAM**

Even though possessing a prosperous kingdom free from rivals and holding even lordship over the Gods, I do not see that which would remove the sorrow of mine which burns up my senses.

We are now coming to the end of Arjuna's lamentations. Sri Krishna gave him the freedom to express the inner feelings of guilt. Arjuna feels that even if he wins lordship over denizens of heaven he would not find the peace or happiness. The grief of slaying so many loved ones would override the happiness of the lordship over the three worlds.

This disease is at the level of the mind and is not a physical ailment. No amount of external remedy or wealth would suffice to cure it. The only remedy is "Atma Jnana": the knowledge of one's true Self.

We are going to get that medicine in the subsequent chapters.

Sloka 9

Sanjaya uvacha

**EVAM UKTVA HRISHIKESHAM GUDAKESHAHA PARANTAPA
NA YOTSYA ITI GOVINDA UKTVA TOOSNIM BABHOOVA HA**

Sanjaya said:

Having spoken thus to Hrishiksha, the destroyer of foes said to Krishna, "I will not fight" and became silent.

Sanjaya has informed the blind king Dhritarashtra that the mighty Arjuna completed describing in detail his symptoms of grief and sat down saying, "I will not fight."

Even though physically Arjuna was a well trained warrior, he was not trained to fight his own ignorance. The Vedic teaching he received in his younger days did not cover the topic on fighting the ignorance. Sri Krishna now takes up the task of correcting Arjuna's mental state.

Sloka 10

**TAM UVACHA HRISHIKESHAHA PRAHASANNIVA BHARATA
SENAYOR UBHAYOR MADHYE VISHIDANTAM IDAM VACHAHA.**

O King, seeing Arjuna lamenting in the middle of the two armies, Hrishiksha, as if smiling, spoke these words.

Sri Krishna, like a good doctor, has listened patiently the symptoms expressed by the Arjuna. The first requirement for a good doctor is to listen patiently to all the symptoms of the patient. The flow of thoughts of the patient should not be disturbed. The patient should not feel that the doctor has no time for him.

At the same time, doctor's facial expression has to bring confidence to the patient. In this instance, Sanjaya has noticed that Sri Krishna has kept a smiling face and not laughing at the patient's ignorance.

This sloka is depicted as the famous scene of the “Gitopadesham.” In the picture of the same, one can see Krishna the embodiment of dharma, standing in the front of the chariot, with a smiling face holding the whip in his hand depicting the role of the charioteer. Arjuna is seen sitting at the back of the chariot and his face is showing signs of depression.

One can almost say that Krishna is saying to Arjuna “is that all you are crying for?”

We all know that for an ignorant man, a span of ground appears like an ocean and for the wise man the ocean appears like a small ground. The ignorant is frightened to cross the small piece of land and while the wise is not perturbed to cross the enormous ground in front of him. There is an ocean of difference in the knowledge the two possess. Krishna, is the embodiment of the “Supreme Knowledge” and Arjuna is the personification of “utter ignorance.”

Sloka 11

Sri Bhagawan Uvacha

**ASHOCHYANANVA SOCHASTVAM PRAJNA VADAMSCHA BHASHASE
GATASOONA GATASHOONSCHA NANU SHOCHANTI PANDITAHA**

You have grief for whom there should not be any sorrow. Yet, you speak words of wisdom. The wise do not grieve for the dead or the living.

According to the scholars, this sloka is the beginning of sowing the seed of knowledge in the form of Bhagavadgita by the Lord Himself.

It is therefore known as the “Bija Mantra”: The seed of the Gita sowed by the Lord is the most potent remedy for overcoming the grief. The sadhaka has to look after the seed and assist in its growth to become a big useful tree for the society.

Arjuna, as we have seen so far was in a state of despair and had requested the master for guidance towards the right action. The important word in this sloka is: “grief.”

The wise do not grieve for the dead or the living:

Why?

As we have discussed in the beginning the real us is the “Atman”. It does not die at any time. The physical body which covers the atman does die and is born again to fulfil the vasanas stored in its memory bank. Identifying with the physical body and getting attached to it and the surroundings brings out the grief every so often. The ego makes one feel sorry in adverse situations. Knowing this truth makes one a wise man and the wise men do not grieve for the dead.

Why does the Lord say “do not grieve for the living”?

It is only the living beings that experience the grief. The wise are aware of the fact that birth is the beginning of troubles and it goes on till the death. Knowing that it is inevitable after having been born to encounter situations that bring in sorrow, the wise do not grieve for the living.

They remain in a perfect state of equanimity of the mind and do not let it succumb to depression.

In the present context, Arjuna, considered the wise and powerful has talked like a wise man. Really speaking Arjuna is speaking with “half knowledge” and is not truly a wise man. “Act like a wise man

and not just speak as a wise man” is the advice by Sri Krishna for the mankind through the medium of Arjuna.

Each one of us have three limbs that participate in any one action. They are the “mind, speech and the physical body.” In Sanskrit we say: “Trikarana”. All the three should work in unison and the sadhaka has to keep all the three pure and clean.

Arjuna spoke words of a wise man but his mind was not acting perfectly. His physical body dropped the bow and he collapsed down unable to hold on to the weapon of action.

The Lord uses the word “Pandita” in the sloka. Really speaking the true Pandita is he who knows his true identity with the Atman and drops his attachment to the physical body and the world around. The person who has understood the real nature of the Atman is a pandita.

The real nature of the **Atman** is:

Sat - Truth - the Eternal Truth: it was present yesterday in a different form, is present today in the present form and will be present tomorrow in a new form.

Chit - Knowledge: this is the real knowledge of the true identity of the Atman and associating with the Atman and not the physical body.

Ananda - Bliss: knowing the real nature of the Atman who is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent gives one the eternal everlasting bliss. The individual does not succumb to the modifications of the physical body.

This atman gets a covering of the five gross elements which becomes the physical body which undergoes constant changes and experiences happiness and pain at different periods of life and is prone to death sooner or later. It gives a form to the Atman inside, we call it as "Roopa."

The society gives a name to that form for the purpose of identity. This is the "Nama."

So all in all there are five aspects:

Sat-chit-ananda

Nama-roopa

Sat chit ananda refers to the atman and nama roopa refers to the physical body.

Lord Krishna is the master of Yoga and called as "yogeshwara." Yoga is harmony in thought, word and deed. Arjuna wanted to attain Moksha and talked of the Vedas. He did not implement the theory into practice and did not know his true identity of the Atman.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa says: "do not create conflict between word and deed as nothing good comes out of it."

The purpose of the Gita is to enable sadhaka to attain the union of the ego with the Atman and losing the body identity.

Sloka 12

**NA TVAVAHAM JATUM NAASAM NA TVAM NEME' JANADHIPAHA
NA CHAIVA NA BHAVISHYAMAHA SARVE' VAYAMATAHA PARAM**

It is not indeed at nay time was I not, nor these rulers of men. Nor shall we ever cease to be hereafter.

Sri Krishna is reiterating the fact that every living being on earth had a form before and death of that form paved way for birth in a new form. This new birth depends upon the thoughts entertained in past births. As we have learnt before, we carry a number of unfulfilled desires and hatreds in our mind called vasanas.

At the time of death, majority of us still retain a number of those vasanas. Depending on the texture of the vasnas, we are given a new form in a new environment. It could be any form of life on earth.

Again, instead of fulfilling or wiping off of those vasanas, we add new vasanas to the existing pile of vasanas. This again leads to a new birth in a new form.

This cycle repeats itself over a period of a number of births and deaths. The final release is when the mind is free of all vasana imprints. Only rare souls achieve this state of Liberty from future births.

Hence, the Lord states - it is not at nay time you were not, nor you will ever cease to be.”

The same principle applies to the Lord. The difference is that He takes incarnations eon after eon to uproot the evil and protect the righteous. Each time He takes a new form and is given a new name. He is not born because of the unfulfilled vasanas but incarnates to protect His children.

This knowledge of the true identity with the Atman and negating the physical body is expressed as a Mahavakya by the ancient seers - “Tat Tvam Asi.”

It means “Thou Art That.” You are the Atman, the masters tell us and advise us not to grieve for modifications and sufferings of the physical body.

Sloka 13

**DEHINOSMIN YATHA DEHE’ KAUMARAM YAUVANAM JARA
TATHA DEHANTARA PRAPTIR DHIRAS TATRA NA MUHYATI**

Just as man in this body goes through the various stages of boyhood, youth and old age, likewise, he passes through another body after death. The wise man does not grieve at it.

Every second of our life is birth of a new life and death of the old. The past is dead and the present is living. We do not realise the subtle changes that happen all along in our lives.

But we do notice gross changes as we grow. From being infant we reach the old age. The changes of infancy, childhood, youth, adult and old age are evident in our external features.

We do not grieve when we move from infancy to childhood and from childhood to adult. We do not realise that the past form for all purposes is dead.

Here we must recollect the law of memory. The law states that:

Experiencer and memoriser must be the same entity. I am the only person who can remember my experiences and nobody else can. I am the only one who knows the thoughts I entertained in my earlier days.

Sloka 14

MATRA SPARSHASTU KAUNTEYA SHEETOSHNA SUKHA DUKHADAHA AGAMAPAYINO NITYAS TAMS TITIKSHASVA BHARATA

The contact of the senses with the objects produces heat and cold, pain and pleasure. Those experiences come and go and are impermanent. Endure them, O Arjuna.

Matra sparsha: contact of the senses with the objects.

Here, we should remember that the term "senses" is used to mean the **Jnanendriyas** or the sense organs.

We do possess five organs of senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin.

The word "objects" refers to all the objects around us which come in contact with the sense organs.

Each sense organ, we have discussed before, has a specific quality.

The ears hear the sound.

The eyes see the form of the objects.

The nose detects the smell.

The tongue experiences the taste.

The skin can feel the objects.

The five qualities: the sound, the touch, the form, the taste and the smell are collectively termed as "**Tanmatras**."

All the sense organs send the details of the objects to the centre of activity: the mind.

The mind analyses these details and experiences a reaction. This reaction could be "pain or pleasure", sensation of "heat or cold."

Different people react differently to the same object and the same object can produce a different reaction at different times.

Some people like coffee and some hate coffee. The same individual who likes an object will not respond the same way another time.

The pleasure of having birth of a new baby is wonderful but the experience of death is very painful. There cannot be birth without subsequent death. The more we get attached to the object, greater will be the pain when the time comes to part with that object.

This proves that the pains and pleasures, heat and cold are not in the objects. They are the experiences at the mental plane of each individual.

It is also a fact that the intensity of these experiences does not remain the same all the time. Like a curve on a graph, the intensity increases slowly or rapidly over a period of time and reaches the peak after some time. After remaining in the peak for a varied length of time, the intensity reduces and after some time there is no such experience.

The Lord hence says that these experiences come and go and are not constantly present.

The human mind being what it is, likes to keep the sensation of pleasure as long as possible. He does

not like the sensation of sorrow and would like it to disappear quickly.

No one can keep the sensation of happiness eternally. Experience of passing exams, getting rank in the exams cannot last for ever. After few days one has to come down to the routine life again.

Our duty is duty to our parents and the society. We have an obligation to conduct our work in a prescribed way and produce results that are expected from our work. During states of happiness or sorrow, the efficiency of the work is reduced and productivity is affected. It is obligatory on our part that the productivity is not affected.

Hence, Sri.Krishna uses the word "Titikshava": it means "endure"

We must learn the art of not over reacting to any situation and have a balance state of mind at all times.

This does not mean we should remain like a stone and not react. We must learn the art of "mind over matter" and control the emotions experienced and divert our mind to the task ahead.

The state of equanimity of mind to the experiences of pairs of opposites is "The Bliss." The one who is in a state of constant peace in himself and does not depend on the outside world to stimulate him is a "**Sthita Prajna**." We will come across this word towards the end of this chapter.

Like the famous saying, "this will also pass away", we must take every experience in this mental frame of mind.

Sloka 15

**YAM HI NA VYATAYANTYETE PURUSHAM PURUSHARSHABHA
SAMA DUKHA SUKHAM DHEERAM SO'MRUTATVAYA KALPATE.**

The firm man who is not affected by pain or pleasure, who remains equal minded, is fit for immortality. O Arjuna, chief of mortals.

Immortal: means "no death."

Every one of us in this world are therefore "mortals." After having been born, we have to die sometime or other.

Sri Krishna considers that his disciple Arjuna is "chief of mortals." He is praising the individual who entered into a state of depression, who wanted to abandon the war and who decided to request for guidance for the "right action". It is human reaction that words of praise have a wonderful effect on people. The teachers at schools, mums at home will be familiar with this. The students, children like to be praised that they are the best.

Krishna, like a good psycho analyst, uses the tactic of praise to lift Arjuna out of the state of depression.

Dheera "individual with the firm determination of mind."

The determination is related towards the goal one is aiming for.

I will not let my mind relax till I complete this portion of revision is the determination that makes one a good student.

Our scriptures advice us all to aim for "Liberation". If we have to achieve the goal, we must fulfil all

the requirements for the same. The main requirement is "equanimity of mind" at all times and constancy in discharge of duties at all times. Dheera, in this context refers to he who withstands the pairs of opposite reactions to the impulses from the world around and conducts all his daily duties.

Let us briefly analyse the word, "immortality."

It means "no death."

Death of what?

The answer will be death of the physical body.

Are we really the physical body?

The scriptures tell us that we are really the "soul" within which keeps the physical body alive. Looking at it this way, the real us, the "soul" is always immortal. It has no death. By wrongly associating with the physical body, we experience the pains and pleasures.

By a firm control over the mind, with the guidance from the intellect assisted by the "inner voice of God," we become immortals. We will not feel the birth or the death.

Sloka 16

**Nasate vidyate bhavo naa bhavo vidyate sataha
Ubhayorapi drishto 'ntas tvanayos tatva darshibhihi.**

The unreal has no being. The real has no non-being. The final truth of these two has been seen indeed by those who have experienced the essence of things.

This is not an easy sloka to understand. It is enough if we know the meaning of it in essence.

The two words to note in this sloka are : Sat and Asat.

Sat: Truth.

Asat: Untruth.

What is truth and what is untruth?

The Lord says that those who have realised the "Truth in essence" only know the difference.

Who are those that have realised the "Truth in essence"?

We should refer to the previous sloka:

The firm man who is not affected by pain and pleasure, who remains equal minded, is fit for immortality.

Truth is defined as that which remains constant at all the three times: past, present and future. That which does not fit in with this definition cannot be the real truth.

Our physical body comparatively is "asat." This is because, I was not there before my birth and I am not there after my death.

Let us look at the five gross elements: the earth, water, fire, air and space.

The earth with its geographical boundaries has been there from time immemorial. But it also has a time span of existence. Compared to my life span it was there for many hundreds of years. But, it is also a fact that the boundaries have changes, water submerged areas of land and so many geological changes have taken place.

The conclusion has to be that it is "asat." It has also a limited existence.

The waters of the rivers and oceans, similarly, are not there constantly. They therefore are "Asat."

The same applies to "fire." The "sun", ball of fire we associate with, also has limited existence in relation to the life of the universe. So many suns come and go.

The "air", using the similar logic is also "asat."

The "space" is the nearest that we can say is "sat" but not really so. The scientists do say that the space also changes.

This leads us to the last one, which is "The Primordial Energy."

This has always been the constant factor. All the rest undergo changes in course of time. Our ancient seers analysed these facts and came to the conclusion that the "Parabrahman", the symbol of "Primordial Energy" is the only "Truth" and everything else is "Untruth."

The body goes through the stages of baby, child, teenager, adult and old age and finally departs this physical world. Each of the stages last few years and we tend to consider each stage as permanent and associate ourselves strongly with the life in that stage.

It is during times of distress that we start questioning about the "creator".

Just like the stages in life, the experiences in each stage are only transient and so not real truth. "Titikshatva", the capacity to withstand the problems in life is the hall mark of "Dheera." Dheera is he who is firm in all situations in life and conducts his obligatory duties to the society.

Sloka 17

**Avinashu tu tad viddhi yena sarvamidam tatam
Vinashinam avyayasyasya na kascit kartum arhati.**

Know that the Atman by which this whole universe is pervaded is indestructable. No one can cause destruction of "That" imperishable.

It is easy to understand the principle behind the "imperishable Atman" by looking at few examples.

We must accept the truth that there is the power of "Atman" inside every living creature on earth. There is no exception to this rule. We may give different names to the "soul" but the principle of "divine energy" is the same in all.

Similarly, the entire universe is pervaded by the "primordial Energy" and we give different names for it.

Electricity is invisible. It can be experienced. It is manifest in different ways like light in bulbs, sound in music system etc. We can destroy the bulbs but we cannot destroy the electricity.

The pots are made up of clay. Pots can be of different varieties but the clay in each of them is same. One can destroy the pots but cannot destroy the clay.

We can destroy the great and tiny buildings. We can never destroy the space those buildings occupied.

Similarly, we have to understand that the Atman, the energy behind our life is indestructible. The body made up of the five gross elements dies on departure of the atman inside.

All forms of life on this earth get destroyed during deluge, (pralaya). The energy behind its survival will not get destroyed.

We can understand this by looking at the screen in the theatre. So many films are projected on the screen. The scenes change, the films change but the screen is the constant factor.

We do not think even for a moment about the screen and get totally absorbed with the events on the screen. Some will be happy events and some will be sad events. Many of us express our emotions in line with the changes. There are very few who do not forget that the events on the screen are only temporary and are not affected by the changes.

Similarly, the lesson to learn is that the atman within us is the constant factor and the body, mind, intellect equipment is ever changing.

Sloka 18

**ANATAVANTU IME DEHA NITYASYOKTA SHAREERINAH
ANASHINO'PRAMEYASYA TASMAT YUDHYASVA BHARATA**

These bodies of the embodied Self, they are subject to destruction. The Self is eternal, indestructible, incomprehensible. Therefore, fight, O Arjuna.

The Atman, Soul inside each one of us is the Life Principle and is responsible for us being alive. The physical body made up of the five gross elements is brought to life by the power of the Soul within. When the Soul departs, the physical body loses all its qualities and becomes lifeless.

The soul on the other hand departs on death with the subtle mind and intellect to the unknown world. It awaits the command from the Paramatma and His blessings to be born again with the body made up of five gross elements. The soul never dies. The final destination for it is to merge with the Supreme Soul and the state is known as "Liberation." Thus say the learned elders and Sri Krishna reiterates the fundamental Truth.

Sri Krishna uses the word "incomprehensible." Why?

We the humans have the physical body which has three planes of comprehension. They are "Intellect, Mind and Senses."

At each level we have the capacity to partially comprehend any object. But each of these tools has a limited capacity to comprehend. It is impossible to comprehend that which has no form, no qualities: "Nirguna, Nirakara." The Supreme Soul, as we have learnt so far is without any form or qualities. However much we try we cannot rise above the planes of senses, mind and intellect to understand "Him." Here again, we use the word "Him" which is not true. But, at our higher level of understanding, ie: the intellect, we can partially comprehend the fundamental Truth.

The only way out is to get merged with the Truth and lose one's sense of identification with the body.

Arjuna is told that all the warriors he is facing have the Atman inside which is indestructible and the physical body which is subject to destruction. "As you are unable to comprehend the Truth of the Atman," "as you have

taken Me as your Guru," "listen to Me and fight".

This is the message from the learned master to his disciple.

Sloka 19

**YA ENAM VETTI HANTARAM YASCHAINAM MANYATE HATAM
UBHOU TOU NA VIJANEETO NAAYAM HANTI AN HANYATE**

**He who thinks that the Self is the slayer or who thinks that Self is slain,
both of these do not know the truth. Self, atman does not slay nor is slain.**

1) He who thinks that the Self is slayer:

Let us not forget that the Self is only a witness to all our thoughts and actions.

The Self is also known as "Sakshi" which means "a witness."

From the time we were first born into the world to the present birth, we have accumulated a number of thought imprints in our mind.

It is due to the contact of our sense organs with the various forms of life around.

The Lord has given the freedom for each individual to learn from the results of his thoughts and actions.

All through the processes of births and deaths, the "Self" is the constant factor, "The physical body" is the changing factor.

Depending upon the type of vasanas, the form we take varies.

In the context of the battle of Kurukshetra, where Arjuna is the warrior and facing other warriors, a number of soldiers will get killed by the actions of the warriors.

The Lord is reiterating the fact that the "Atman" is not the slayer of any soldiers.

To murder somebody and say that the Lord inside me made me commit the act of murder is not correct.

The act of committing the offence solely falls on the individual physical body and not to the Atman.

The Atman only gave the body the life and an opportunity to exhaust the vasanas.

2) He who thinks that the Self is slain:

Let us not forget that the death is only to the physical body and not of the "Atman" inside. The warriors who kill the soldiers on the battlefield are only killing the physical body.

The subtle bodies of the soldiers, depending upon their vasanas, will have to take new forms of life and come into this world.

The soldiers who die on the battlefield, do not get "Liberated."

The innumerable people who die daily on this earth do not attain "Moksha."

"Mano nasha" and "Vasana kshaya" are the prerequisites for "Moksha."

Until and unless we clear all the existing vasanas and do not accumulate new vasanas, we are not eligible for "Liberation."

Thus says the Lord to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

Sloka 20

**NA JAYATE MRIYATE VAA KADACHINNAYAM BHOOTVA BHAVITA VAA NO
BHOOPYAHA
AJO NITYAHA SASHVATOYAM PURANAM NA HANYATE HANYAMANE SHAREERE**

It is not born, nor does it die. After having been, it does not cease to be; unborn, eternal, changeless and ancient. It is not killed when the body is destroyed.

The neutral gender "it" is used to refer to "that" which is not the "physical body."

"It" refers to the "atman" (soul).

Chapter 2, verse 18, Kathopanisad talks of six modifications to the physical body from the time it is born. They are:

Jayate: born

Asti: exists

Vardhate: grows

Parinamate: modifies, changes

Apaksiyate: wears

Vinasyati: is destroyed.

In this sloka the Lord is using the two words "Jayate and Mriyate." It means "Birth and death."

At the time of death, the gross body perishes. The subtle body with the mind, intellect and the atman enters the subtle world of "Moola Prakriti." Parabrahman gives it a new body which goes through all the modifications mentioned above. On death of the gross physical body, again as decided by the Lord, the subtle body enters the "Moola Prakriti" and awaits further births again.

All through this process of births and deaths, the atman inside the subtle body is a constant factor. The gross body is the changing factor. We attribute birth and death to the physical body and the term does not apply to the atman. The atman is encased in the subtle body and will continue to be so till the individual finally realises the Lord, drops the attachment to the physical body and the world around. This is the "Salvation" (Moksha).

There is therefore no birth or death to the atman. The changes we notice are only applicable to the physical body.

This is all in relation to "past, present and future." This body was not present in the past, is present

now and will not be there in the future. The physical body is therefore said to be "not eternal."

Contrary to it, the atman inside the subtle body was present in the past, is present in the physical body now and will have new body tomorrow. This will stop only when one attains "Salvation." Hence, the atman is comparatively "eternal." When the physical body goes through the changes from babyhood to old age, the atman inside will remain the same and does not change.

Sri Krishna is letting Arjuna know that the warriors getting killed in the war are only the physical bodies and not the subtle bodies.

Sloka 21

**VEDA VINASHINAM NITYAM YA YENAM AJAM AVYAYAM
KATHAM SA PURUSHAHA PARTHA KAM GHATAYATI HANTI KAM**

O Arjuna, he who knows that the atman is birthless, real and imperishable, whom can he slay or cause to be slain?

"Who am I?" is the question bogging the mind of those in search of the "Truth".

When awake, we are entrapped by the life around in the material world. Before the "Truth" dawns, alas, we would have developed attachments to those material objects and find it hard to get released from the bondage developed.

When we are asleep, we live in the dream world and experience the sense of attachment to the objects in it.

When we are deep asleep, we lose total body identification and are dead to this world and the world beyond.

Very few are the blessed ones who come to understand that real is the "Atman" and false is the physical body.

We are now in "Samkhya Yoga", summary of the Bhagawadgita by Sri.Krishna to His disciple Arjuna, seeker after the "Truth" of one's own identity. The Lord is making it clear that the atman is birthless, imperishable and eternal.

When this is the truth, those warriors assembled in the battlefield who are going to be killed, cannot be considered as really dead. There is going to be a modification in their physical body and their atman will take a new body depending upon their thought imprints.

Atman cannot kill others and cannot get killed is the lesson to learn from this sloka.

Concerning one's own identification; it is worth recollecting a statement made by Hanuman, the eternal servant of Lord Rama.

It is said that Hanuman was once asked by Lord Rama about his identity. Hanuman's reply was:

1. When I think I am the body, I am your servant,
2. when I think I am the jiva, I am part of you,
3. when I think I am atman, I am you.

Sloka 22

VASAMSI JEERNANI YATHA VIAHAYA NAVANI GRIHNANI NAROPARANEE TATHA SHAREERANI VIHAYA JEERNANY ANYANI SAMYATI NAVANI DEHEE

Just as a man casts off his worn out clothes and puts on new ones, so also the Self throws away its worn out bodies and takes other fresh bodies.

The example of worn out clothes is very easy to understand and hence used to explain the complicated journey of the Self.

As we have learnt so far, on death of the physical body, the Self loses its physical body (gross body) made up of the five elements.

It is like the prayers during burial; "earth to earth, water to water".

The physical body is microcosmic representation of the five gross elements:

Bhoomi - the earth

Apo - the water

Anilo - the fire

Vayu - the air

Antarkisha - space.

The subtle body with the mind and the intellect goes to "moola prakriti" and awaits for the orders from the Parabrahman to take up a new body depending upon the unfulfilled vasanas.

This process goes on till the knowledge dawns and the individual with the blessings of the guru is successful in clearing away all the accumulated vasanas and does not let any new vasana enter his mind.

We are proud on wearing a new suit and look for appreciation from others. The suit in course of time does show signs of wear and tear and we do not think so seriously of discarding the same.

The wise show the same reaction to the births and deaths of their near and dear ones. They know that this process stops only on attaining "salvation." Evolution is therefore a phenomenon for the physical body and not for the Self. Every new birth is like the new suit and death is discarding of the worn out suit.

The question of accidental deaths and death in the early period of one's life is not the theme of this sloka. It covers only the death due to ageing process.

Sloka 23

**NAINAM CHINDANTI SHASTRANI NAINAM DHAHATI PAVAKAHA
NA CHINAM KLEDAYANTYAPO NA SHOSHAYATI MARUTAH**

Weapons cannot cut, fire cannot burn, water cannot wet, wind cannot dry this Atma.

This is one of the most important verses in the sacred text that brings out the nature of the Atman.

The examples given point out to the Pancha Maha Bhootas - the five great elements.

Weapons - this refers to the element "Earth" which is the constituent of any weapon.(Bhoomi).

Fire - refers to the element "Fire".(Anila)

Water - refers to the element "Water".(Apo)

Wind - refers to the element "Air". (Vayu)

The element not brought out here is "Space." (Antarkishaha)

Sri.Ramakrishna gives the following example to understand the subtle meaning in this verse. He says:

Suppose we burn some wood in a room, the smoke that emanates stains the walls of the room but does not affect the space.

This is because the space is actionless.

When a thing is not seen, the experts explain the same in relation to the seen.

Atman is formless. Hence if we throw water, water cannot wet it, weapons cannot cut it and fire cannot burn.

Sloka 24

**ACHEDYOYAM ADAHYOYAM AKLEDYOSHYASHYA EVA CHA
NITYAHA SARVAGATAHA STHANUHU ACHALLOYAM SANATANAHA.**

The Self cannot be cut, nor burnt, nor moistened, nor dried up. It is Eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable and ancient.

This sloka is almost similar to the previous sloka in the meaning it portrays. It reiterates the fact that the Atman is not the five great elements and hence none of the qualities of the elements apply to it.

We have to accept the fact that the "Primordial Energy" without a name and form, known as "Parabrahman" decided to play and brought into play the five great elements and the names and forms that evolved from association of the atomic particles of Parabrahman in conjunction with the five great elements. We cannot trace the origin of "life", the "maya lila" of the Parabrahman.

It is therefore said to be "Eternal and all pervading." In the same vein we can add that it is immovable and ancient.

"Nitya" means "constant." The constant factor in innumerable names and forms is the Atman who is said to undergo the changes which we say "births and deaths" before attaining reunion with the "Parabrahman."

The same Primordial Energy has to be "all pervading". There can be no space in the universe or beyond that has no Primordial energy.

The Atman is formless and changeless which is expressed as "Sthanu."

As we have learnt before, this is compared to the "screen" in a theatre on which are projected innumerable pictures which keep on changing but the screen remains constant and changeless. It fails to be registered in the minds of the viewers of any particular picture.

The Self is:

1. Existence: Truth - Sat.
2. It is Light: Cit.
3. It is Bliss: Ananda.

The Truth is:

Eternal: Nityaha
All pervading: Sarvagartaha
Stable: Sthanuhu
Firm: Achala
Ancient: Sanatanaha.

These are the adjuncts we find in the sloka with reference to the Atman.

Sloka 25

**AVYAKTOYAM ACHINTYOYAM AVIKARYOYAM UCHYATE
TASMAT EVEM VIDITVAINAM NANUSHOCHITUM ARHASI.**

This Self is unknowable by the senses, unthinkable by the mind and is not subject to any kind of change. Knowing this, you should not grieve.

"Avyakoya: unknowable"; "Achintyoyam: unthinkable" "This Self is unknowable and unthinkable" says the Lord.

Anything/object that has a form can be visualised by the eyes;
That has a smell can be recognised by the nose;
That has taste can be recognised by the tongue,
That is tangible can be felt by the skin,
That has a sound can be recognised by the ears.

These five are our sense organs.

They cannot recognise "that" which has no smell, taste, form and sound to it.

"That" which is the "Self" within, which is the primordial energy is therefore "unknowable" by us.

It is like us incapable of visualising the mango tree, the imprint of which is inside the mango seed.

The sense organs send in the impulses to the mind. The mind receives these impulses from the sense organs and with the help of the intellect analyses the same. With its capacity to store these impulses, the mind can think about the objects around us and can imagine the name and forms of the objects around. It can think easily about what is received from the world outside by the sense organs. The sense organs are not capable of giving information about the "Self" within and the "Self around in all forms of life around". Therefore the mind cannot fathom any details of the "Self". Self which has no physical features as such is therefore impossible for the mind to imagine and think about.

The next phrase used is "Avikarya". It means "not subject to any changes." The changes we can perceive start from the birth and go on till the death. Birth, growth, decay, diseases are part and parcel of the physical body. The "Self" does not have any of these properties we can attribute.

The Lord then says "should not grieve." Soka or grief is for that which undergoes changes. Disease, death, parting from the beloved ones etc bring in the grief. By body identification known as "Dehadrishti" we experience the grief.

By raising ourselves to higher intellectual plane, if we can lift ourselves to the level of "Atmadrishti", we will not be subject to the grief.

Soka which is the direct consequence of ignorance of our true nature, can be overcome by "Atma Jnana". It is knowledge of the Self which can extinguish the grief we get subjected to. This can be had by the study of the sastras, guidance and blessings of the Sadguru.

Arjuna was not illiterate. He had studied sastras. Unfortunately he had not completed the study of the Vedas totally and not understood what he had studied. His mind was not ready to grasp the subtle meaning of the subject taught.

Facing the war, imagining the consequences of the act, made him experience the grief. Presence of the Lord who was his own charioteer gave him the once in a life time opportunity to hear the Gita at the appropriate time. Like they say "when the iron is hot."

Sloka 26

ATHA CHAINAM NITYA JAATAM NITYAM VAA MANYASE MRITAMTATHAPI TVAM MAHABAHO NAINAM SHOCHITUM ARHASI

O mighty armed, even if you think of Him as being constantly born, constantly dying, even then you should not grieve.

(Annotation from the organizer: Sri Swamiji translates "the Self" instead of "Him")

Arjuna is referred to as "mighty armed." This could be to encourage or ridicule Arjuna.

Encourage Arjuna by reminding of his physical strength especially in archery.

Or:

Ridicule Arjuna by saying, "what is the use of all your power if you cannot act like a Kshatriya warrior?"

Krishna is also reminding Arjuna the truth about the Atman.

Because of its attachment to the mind/intellect/physical body, (can be referred to as the suit), the atman appears to die one day and be born (with a different body) again another day. It is only the physical body that undergoes the changes.

Wise person, like Arjuna, who had the fortune of spiritual education early in childhood should have understood the meaning of the immortality of the Atman and mortality of the body. It is the only way not to succumb to grief on parting with the physical body/family and friends.

Grief unfortunately drags one down in the spiritual plane.

Let us look at the last word in the sloka - "Arhata."

Arhata means "worthiness", "worthy".

The worthiness of being born as a human is in making proper use of the "intellectual capacity of reasoning." Without the intellect, we are no different to animals. Arjuna was expected to have made use of his intellectual capacity of reasoning but did not do so.

Sri Krishna is advising Arjuna to work according to the job description of a well respected kshatriya warrior of repute. He is reminding Arjuna of his duty by saying "you have no right to be in grief" says the Lord.

We must all learn the art of fulfilling the job description pertaining to our profession.

We have been blessed with birth as humans and the job description according to our sastras is:

"Conduct the work for the society. Do not work for personal gains."

Gains: Moksha is automatically ours if we work diligently and follow the sastras.

Sloka 27

**JATASYA HI DHRUVO MRITYUR DHRUVAM JANMA MRUTASYA CHA
TASMAD APIRIHARYE'RTHE NA TVAM SHOCHITUM ARHASI.**

For certain is death to the born and certain is the birth for the dead. Therefore you should not grieve about the inevitable.

This was the statement made 5000 yrs ago and was not anything new even then. Arjuna attended the guukula ashrama for the basic education. The guru in those days taught the disciples about the Vedas and Upanisads.

It was an accepted fact that majority believed that there was birth after the death.

Of course nobody could question the statement that there is certain death to the born.

The youngsters were taught about the Atman, the vasanas and the bondage developed as a result of vasanas.

Until and unless the vasanas are exhausted and no new vasanas get stored in the mind, the process of birth and death continues.

It is therefore necessary to develop the mental strength to cope with the problems to face in life including the inevitable death to the born.

No one advocates one to be like a stone and not grieve.

The lesson to learn from the Gita is the principle of karma and not get bogged down with grief.

Sloka 28

**AVYAKTADEENI BHOOTANI VYAKTA MADHYANI BHARATA
AVYAKTA NIDHANANYEVA TATRA KAA PARIDEVANA**

O Arjuna, beings are of unknown origin, known middle and of unknown end. Why then lament for it?

Sri Krishna is reiterating the fact that we all had a past and have a future.
We do not remember the past,
are all immersed in the present and
are ignorant of the future.

"Vyakta" means "manifest."
"Avyakta" means "unmanifest."

The sense organs keep us in touch with the world around. The life revolves round the impulses received from the world around by these sense organs. Their effect is so overpowering that we cannot have recollection of the past births.

Manifest means that which can be seen with the physical eyes and understood using the faculty of the other sense organs.

It is therefore to be understood that we have no idea of the past births we have undergone. The mind which is a storehouse of thought imprints also cannot recollect the past births. This is so because of the process known as "forgetting."

If there was no faculty of forgetting, we will all be mad people running around the streets. The Lord says later on in the sacred text that the power of memory and forgetfulness are both his blessings to the mankind.

We do not have any recollection of our past and we do not know our future. What births we had in the past and what births we are going to go through in future is not known and cannot be known.

What we need to have is the faith in the statement that we have to undergo innumerable births and deaths to purify our minds contaminated with attachments to the physical world around.

Finally the Lord says "why then lament for it?"

As it is an inevitable occurrence and we have no control over the process, lamenting is not going to be of any benefit.

The word "lamenting" is to be used to mean "grief" that reduces the efficiency of the present actions. Indirectly we are asked to get on with our day to day duties and fulfil our obligation to the society.

We can understand this by comparison to the bubbles. The bubbles that come from the waves are temporary phenomenon.

They were in unmanifest form in the waters of the waves.

They have a short life span.

The bubbles burst and the water content joins the water in the waves.

They were not recognised in the waves before they manifest and would not be recognised in the waves after they burst. Bubbles keep on coming and going with the force of the waves in the ocean.

Sloka 29

**ASCHARYAVAT PASYATI KASCHIDENAM ASCHARYAVADATI TATHAIVA
CHANYAHA
ASSCHAIRYANAM ANYAHA SHRUNOTI SHRUTAPI ENAM VEDA NA CHAIVA
KASCHIT**

One sees this wonder, another one speaks of it as a wonder, another hears it as a wonder, yet having heard, none understand this at all.

We can see that the three examples quoted here concern the three sense organs: eyes, tongue and ears.

We have learnt so far that the "Parabrahman, the Supreme" is "Nirakara and Nirguna."
He has no form and no qualities.

The other two sense organs "nose and skin" cannot also perceive the Supreme.
We cannot imagine with our mind and the intellect cannot analyse the same.
The Supreme is beyond the sense organs, the mind and the intellect.
Hence, it is impossible to understand the "Parabrahman."

The only way, the saints and scholars help us to reach "that", is via the route of "Transcendental meditation."

We have to learn that we need to drop our physical "I" and dissolve into "It".

Reading the great books concerning the "Supreme", going to the temples, listening to the discourses cannot make us reach the "destination in the spiritual path."

After all it is inside each one of us as the "Life Force", "The Atman."

The journey in life is to attain "Liberation",

learning the art of dropping the "I",

detaching from the attachments to the physical world,

conducting our ordained duties without expecting the benefits from the fruits of action and finally,

prepare to receive the "Prarabdha" which is the results of past actions conducted in ignorance of the "True identity".

One can then ask, "why go to the temples, listen to the masters, the gurus and read the sacred texts?"
The answer is simple:

The masters who have truly understood the "Supreme", dropped the "I", have to teach the ignorant.

This has to be from the primary school level to that of the university education in relation to the spiritual life.

Many a times, we have known that thoughts run faster than words. The masters explain the "Supreme" as a wonder to the uninitiated and ignorant. They talk about the Supreme as a wonder, make us realise to see the same as a wonder and read about the same as a wonder.

But, the ordinary mortals, each one of us, can only look upon the "Supreme" as "a wonder."

With faith, blessings by the guru, we can overcome the "wonder" aspect and merge into Him.

Sloka 30

**DEHI NITYAM AVADHYOYAM DEHE SARVASYA BHARATA
TASMAT SARVANI BHUTANI NA TVAM SHOCHITUM ARHASI**

This Self existing in the body of all beings is never killed. You should therefore not grieve for any creatures, O Bharata.

Dehi: this word refers to the "Atman" encased in all the physical bodies of various forms of life on this earth.

The Lord is reminding us again that "He", as the "Atman" is inside all the living forms of life.

As has been reiterated several times, Krishna ascertains again that the "Atman" thus encased does not get killed at any time. Not just killed, but never gets killed, He stresses.

This verse is the summary of Krishna's description about the immortality of the "Atman."

Let us therefore remember to see "Sat, Chit, Ananda", experience the bliss resulting thereof, and not get attached to "nama and roopa" which is the cause of anger, desire and grief.

Sloka 31

**Svadharmapi chavesya na vikampitum arhasi
Dharmyadi yuddhac chreonyat kshatriyasya na vidyate**

And moreover, looking at your own duty, you should not waver, for there is nothing higher for a kshatriya than a righteous war.

Lord Manu, the progenitor of the human race, postulated what is popularly known as "Manu Dharma Sastra". It is the code of Manu. It consists of a collection of laws based on custom and precedent and the teaching of the Vedas. Basically it defines the law of conduct and its application to all classes of community.

During the period which is over 5000yrs ago, the society was divided into four classes consisting of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vysya and Sudra. Arjuna belonged to the Kshatriya group. The duty of the kshatriya was to protect the land and their leaders who were the rulers of the land.

Svadharmā: it means one's own dharma/duty. The word has a variety of interpretations which we will take up as we proceed with our study. In this context it means the duty of Kshatriya. Arjuna, belonging to the kshatriya group is reminded by Lord Krishna of his duty.

The present war in which Arjuna was engaged to fight was not an ordinary war. It is known as the "war of righteousness." The Pandavas, treated unlawfully by cousin Kauravas had decided to fight for their rights and protect the land from the clutches of unrighteous cousins. Arjuna, who had wholeheartedly given his willingness to fight the Kauravas, suddenly, in the middle of the battlefield, loses his mental composure and was ready to abandon the wish to fight for their rights. Letting the cousin Duryodhana rule the land would have harmed the subjects badly. Sri.Krishna is reminding Arjuna not to waiver from his ordained duty of a kashtriya towards the subjects of the land.

We should now look at the meaning of the word "Sreyas" (in the second line of the verse). Sri Krishna says "this righteous war is good for you". (refer to sloka 7 of this chapter)

Svadharmā, one's own duty fulfilled according to the sastras is a sure way to achieve moksha.

Swadharmā in relation to one's own thought imprints: our dharma is that duty which is suited to our temperament which in turn is due to our vasanas which are nothing but our own thought imprints. Until and unless we clear the stored vasanas (Vasana kshaya) the path to freedom is not clear.

Like a good teacher the Lord is trying to make Arjuna take the right decision to fight by approaching the same subject from different angles.

Sloka 32

**Yadruchaya chopapannam svarga dwaram apavritam
sukhinaha kshatriyaha partha labhante yuddham idrisham.**

For a kshatriya, O Partha, a righteous war of this type which has come of itself, is the open gateway to heaven.

Sri Krishna in trying to explain to his disciple Arjuna, has now come down from the atmic plane to the physical plane. The conclusion is the same. He is reminding Arjuna of the duties of a kshatriya.

It is interesting to note the words of wisdom from Kunti devi, the mother of the pandavas concerning the duties of a kshatriya. Just before the war she sends a message to her children. In it she says: "Tell Arjuna and Bhima that the time has come to justify why any kshatriya mother desires to have sons."

Through these words she is reminding her sons that the duty of a kshatriya is to defend his land and protect the subjects. The death which is also a possibility in the war should not be the reason not to fight. The women of the household of a kshatriya, be a mother, wife or sister, has to let the man of the house go to the war zone and fight.

In these days it was an accepted fact that the one who fought in the war and died would go to heaven. Heaven is a place of happiness and comforts. The kshatriya by winning could enjoy the luxuries on earth or the pleasures in heaven. either way, the pleasure was guaranteed.

In our day to day battle of life, we should fight kama, krodha, the enemies within, be prepared to kill our ego and enjoy the peace emanating from within. This is the duty we owe to our lord who created us and who is protecting us.

In every walk of life, we come across moments when we have to prove ourselves. We should not shirk that responsibility. What we do at the opportune moment will shape our future. We should do the best to our ability and achieve sreyas.

Sloka 33

**Atha chet tvam imam dharmyam sangramam na karishyasi
tatah svadharmam keertim cha hitva papam avapsyasi**

But, if you will not fight this righteous war, then, having abandoned your own duty and fame, you would incur sin.

The gist of this sloka for each of us is:

If we do not discharge our righteous duties, we would have wasted this precious birth as a human and will be born into lower planes of existence in our future births. Having attained a position in the society, we must discharge the righteous duties pertaining to that position we hold.

Arjuna, in this instance, by abandoning the duty of a kshatriya, running away from the righteous war, would be subject to ridicule from the seniors, fellow warriors and the subjects of their kingdom. He would have lost his fame as a great and just warrior.

Papa:

The word means "Sin". Sin is considered to be an act against the injunction of the sastras. Our sastras do not condemn the sinner but condemn the sinful act.

Let us remember the quote:

Every sinner has a future.

Every saint had a past.

We climb up the ladder or fall down the ladder as a result of our own acts or omission of acts.

Sloka 47 in this chapter will give us more insight into the meaning of this sloka.

Sloka 34

**Akeerim capi bhootani kathayishyanti te'vyayam
sambhavitasya cakirtir maranad atiricyate.**

**People too, will speak of your everlasting dishonour and to one who is honoured by his country,
dishonour is worse than death.**

An act of dishonour taints the family's name for generations. It just does not stop at the death of the concerned individual. It is more so for those who achieve great fame and honour from the public in their life

Disgrace for having committed dishonourable act, especially for he, who was honoured for bravery / social service / contribution to the welfare of the society is like living death. Death is only of the physical body, as we have understood so far. But results of acts that bring dishonour could be called as "immortal". They will remain for centuries in books of history for he who was honoured for his services to the society.

History is full of examples of acts by respected elders of the society who brought disgrace for themselves and their country. Those individuals and their acts will remain in the history books for ever.

If Arjuna had decided not to fight, his decision would have tainted the good name of the great Pandu family. It would have been worse than if he had died fighting the righteous war.

Sloka 35

**bhayad ranad uparatam mamsyante tyam maharathah
yesham cha tvam bahumato bhootya yasyasi laghavam**

**Moreover, these great warriors from whom you received honour formerly, would think you
turned away from the battle out of fear and regard you with little respect.**

Sri Krishna is reminding Arjuna of his position and rank in the society. Arjuna was a very famous and well respected warrior in those days. 5000yrs ago the region was ruled by kings who protected the subjects in their territory. The warriors depending on their skill in war and their physical strength, held the ranks. Arjuna had received a number of honours and was a greatly respected warrior. Unknowingly he had even fought with lord Shiva in disguise who presented him the famous bow, the "pashupashastra".

Abandoning the war and letting cousin Kauravas rule the kingdom would have made him and his brothers subject of ridicule not only by the subjects but by all the members of the kaurava clan. The respect he had earned during all those years would have simply vanished.

Arjuna, a kshatriya by birth, would have found it impossible to face such ridicules. Sri Krishna by referring to the future consequences of Arjuna's present actions is trying to make him face the present situation boldly and start the war of righteousness.

Sloka 36

**avachya vadamscha bahun vadishyanti tavahitaha
nindastava samarthaym tato' dukhataram nu kim**

Your enemies will belittle your ability and in various ways speak words of ill fame. What is more painful than this?

It is only a continuity of the theme in the preceding verses. Sri Krishna is painting the same picture of acts of cowardice on so many frames so that for an onlooker the impact of the message will be staring boldly.

As one climbs up the ladder professionally, including the higher ranks in the army, one is recognised for the acts of bravery. The professional equals in that rank develop a high regard to each other. At the same time they do not lose the opportunity to belittle the individual on any mistakes committed. The greatest mistake for a kshatriya is running away from the battlefield.

Even his wife, children and other members of the family also lose the respect for the individual. These insults are painful to bear and might even lead to committing suicide.

Sloka 37

**hato va prapsyasi swargam jitva va bhokshyase mahim
tasmat utthishta kaunteya yuddhaya krita nishchayaha.**

**O Arjuna, if killed in the battle, you will obtain heaven; if you win, you enjoy the world.
Therefore arise, determined to fight.**

So far, Sri Krishna dwelt on the consequences of running away from the battlefield. Now, he is painting the picture of the consequences of facing the battle boldly.

This sloka has to be looked upon by the seekers as a potent mantra.

Arjuna, if killed in the battle would have earned the right to enter the heaven. Kshatriyas are considered as "rajasic", the men of passion. They are on the go constantly trying to fulfil many ambitions.

They were bred to realise that the duty of kshatriya is to fight the enemy. Death or victory were both accepted with grace. They were made to understand that death in the battlefield was an honourable result. They would go to heaven and enjoy the life of luxury. On the other hand, if they come back successfully after the war, they would be treated as heroes. They would then enjoy the life of luxury on earth.

Arjuna had requested for guidance on the right action to take. On this basis, Krishna is only informing the facts of life. He is not giving any commands. If commanded by Krishna, Arjuna would have gladly taken up the bow and arrows and fought bravely. But, he would not have learnt any lessons.

Also, it is a fact that when we analyse the rights and wrongs of any actions and take the decision, our input will be much stronger and the results would be that much stronger. Sri Krishna uses the word "utthishta." He wants Arjuna to stand up.

Decision to fight is equal to standing up.

Spiritually the same rules apply. If successful, we achieve "moksha." We must learn to face the problems in life boldly with the sword of knowledge and devotion.

Sloka 38

**sukha dukhe same' kritva labha labhou jaya jayou
tatho yuddhaya yujyasva naivam papam avapsyasi**

Having an equal mind in happiness-sorrow; gain-loss; victory-defeat; engage in battle and thereby you will not incur sin.

This is the secret of karma yoga which means yoga of action.

Detachment and equanimity are essential for the spiritual seeker.

Work as such does not bind any but it is the attachment to the results of actions (fruits of action) that binds the individual.

Life is full of waves of happiness and sorrows. Whether we like it or not, we want it or not, we are born on to this world and have to face the pains-pleasures; experience happiness-sorrow and victory-defeats as a consequence of our actions.

Learning the art of swimming in the ocean of life is the secret of reaching the shore by the seeker of truth.

Considering that it is directed to Arjuna in the battlefield:

There is bound to be deaths on either side in the battlefield of those Arjuna had loved and respected in his life. This would automatically bring in sorrow.

There is bound to be death of the ones Arjuna wished to be killed because they were the real enemies. By these, we mean the Kaurava brothers, Karna, Shakuni etc. This would bring in happiness.

Arjuna and his brothers would gain the entire kingdom back if victorious or on the other hand lose control of all land and wealth if defeated. This is "gain-loss."

Finally, the gain is considered as victory and loss is considered as defeat. It is victory and defeat.

These are the three outcomes of Arjuna's actions on the battlefield.

In our own life, if we consider it as a battle, we will experience these feelings.

The most important word to understand is: "same' kritva." It means "Equanimity in action."

We must continue to discharge our ordained duties irrespective of the results of our actions. This way the work automatically becomes an act of worship.

To conduct any work, we need to fulfil the following criterion:

- we need basic education;
- qualify for the work undertaken;
- follow the job description;
- conduct work pertaining to the speciality;
- continue to discharge daily household duties.

We have to work to the best of our capacity whatever may be the situation in life. Of course there is time for grief, time for elation. But these should not deter one from work. Within reasonable period one must resume duties.

Every action has a reaction.
Actions towards progress is "sadhana." (spiritual effort).
It is the reaction to the actions that hinder our progress.

The results to be experienced/to be faced could be immediate or delayed. It could also be in later births.

When successful, like passing exams, we feel elated.
Waves of elation unbalances the mind.
On facing failure, like failing exams, we get dejected, depressed.
Waves of depression unbalances the mind.

It is also a fact that the events in our life with the beloved ones also brings in happiness or sorrow.
When elated, we lose concentration on the work ahead and when depressed we do not have the mood to work.
These apply to social, moral and religious actions.

It is good idea to consider that success now is not only the result of present actions but also grace of the lord for presenting us with the results of good actions in the past including past births. By developing this view, the ego that comes out of success is diminished.

In a similar vein, we should consider that failure now is also the lord's verdict on results of past actions either in this life or previous lives. We should then say, thank god, at least one of my bad actions in the past has had its results. I have now paid for that mistake and let me try not to commit mistakes in future.

"papa" means "sin": Sin is an act against the injunction of the sastras.
The lord has said: "you will not incur sin."
He did not say: "you are a sinner."
Our sastras are very clear on this issue: they condemn the sin but not the sinner. They pray lord to bless the sinner and make him not commit such acts again.

Sloka 39

**yesha tebi hita samkhye buddhiyoge tvimam shrunu
buddhya yukto yaya partha karma bandham prahasyasi**

O Arjuna, this, which has been taught to you, is Samkhya yoga, about the Atman. Now listen to karma yoga, having known which, you shall cast off the bondage to work.

We have, in the beginning of this chapter, learnt that the word "Samkhya yoga" means, "complete knowledge." So far in this chapter we are taught about the identity of the "atman" which is the real entity in us. We must know all about the "atman" because it is the real "us" and without which we are non existent. Just knowing about the atman is not sufficient. We must know how to live in this world.

In our day to day life in this world, what we learn during our earlier days of education from the teachers at educational institutions is "attaining complete knowledge." With the qualifications achieved, we become eligible to take up work to earn a living.

Life is not just attaining the knowledge.(Jnana) the knowledge has to be used to gain wisdom. (Vijnana) wisdom comes from practical application of the theory. We tend to commit mistakes while

putting theory into practice and learn from the mistakes. Perfections in work takes a long time to achieve and rare are those who are totally perfect in all their actions.

In this instance, we are talking about conducting all our daily actions using the knowledge. If the final aim is to attain "moksha", the actions have to be in the spirit of "no bondage." Basis has to be acquiring the knowledge first and preparing for the practical living in this world. Getting attached to the work and its results which bring "sukha, dukha" are the causes for bondage. The teaching of the gita is to learn the art of working and in cutting the bondage to work. Sri Krishna says, the cutting of bondage to work is "karma yoga." No doubt, when we proceed to study more about the sacred text and learn to read it repeatedly, we will learn the true meaning of the word "karma." From this sloka we are now taken into the summary of karma yoga.

Practical work, putting the theory into practice is "karma yoga". Sri Krishna has made it abundantly clear in this sloka that we all have to conduct "karma". We all have to do our obligatory duties, whatever stage of life we may be in. There is no escape from "actions." Our duty is to learn the secret of karma yoga which is "non attachment." "Buddhi" is the reasoning capacity that should remind us of this magical word "non attachment." (karma bandham prahasyasi)

Up to sloka 46, we will get the introduction to karma yoga. It is therefore, still theory only and hence it is to be taken as part of "samkhya yoga." From sloka 47 we will get into the doctrine of true karma yoga.

Sloka 40

NEHABHIKRAMANASO'STI PRATYAVAYO NA VIDYATE SWALPAMASYA DHARMASYA TRAYATE MAHATO BHAYAAT

There is no loss of effort in this karma yoga. Even if it is stopped in the middle, no harm is produced. Even a little of this knowledge, even a little practice of this yoga, protects man from great fear.

The experts say that some of the words in the slokas have a deeper intellectual meaning to them. Understanding such words helps one to learn the sacred text more clearly.

The two words we must understand in this sloka are: "iha" and "asya dharmasya".

"IHA": it means "in this."

"Asya Dharmasya": it means "of this principle dharma."

Both the words refer to the word "Karma Yoga" referred to in the previous sloka. There we analysed that the Lord meant "Karma Yoga" as the art of "correct action" which comes from learning the theory of Atman first. Only actions that follow after "samkhya" (complete knowledge of the Atman) will guarantee the results mentioned in this sloka.

Such of those actions that one conducts after obtaining the theoretical knowledge of the Atman first will protect the individual. It is like saying, "go to the school, the college and complete the educational requirements. Get the degree/qualification for a particular profession and use that knowledge in the field of work you pursue."

We must not forget that the sacred text is all about "Moksha" and "Liberation from the cycle of births and deaths." Lord's promise is concerning this "Moksha."

Every individual who makes an attempt in understanding about the "Atman", one's true identity as the "Atman" (Divinity within) will find the benefit of such understanding in course of time. We must have

faith in the principle of "every action has a result and we will experience the result in this birth or future births." Faith in the scripture which is on the principle of "rebirths till one attains absolute purity" will help in understanding the sacred text.

The sincere attempt in understanding about the "Atman residing in all forms of life" will in course of time, may be in this birth or several births later, will confer "Liberation." The Lord promises, "There is no loss of effort." One should not feel that what good he has done is of waste if he does not get the positive results which he/she can experience in this birth. For many, it is not just experiencing in this birth, but the desire to experience immediately on completion of the work.

The beneficial results of such practice will come at the time decided by the Lord and we must have strong and unswerving faith in it.

Finally, the Lord says, "Protects from great fear." What is the great fear?

Fear of inability to continue the sadhana for whatever reason, (death and parting from the near and dear ones) is the great fear of most of us.

Learning about the true identity of "the divine Atman" will vanish such fear. The true spiritual seeker will then take up the practice with joy and keenness and nothing in this world will distract him/her from such practice. This is true "Karma Yoga."

Sloka 41

**Vyavasayatmika buddhir ekeha kurunandana
Bahu shaka hy anantasca buddhaya vyavasayinam.**

O Arjuna, there is only one faith and thought for those who practice this Karma yoga. The minds of others are divided into various branches and their thoughts are endless.

The important word to understand in this sloka is:
Vyavasaya.

One of the meanings for this word is "Agriculture."

The farmer is an agriculturist and he works with single pointed concentration to get the maximum yield for his effort. Let us analyse his work briefly.

Farmer deals with seeds, the seeds for good crops. To get the best results he conducts the following tasks:

Selects the seed that is suitable to sow in the land.

Tills the land and makes it ready to sow the seeds.

Learns about the time to sow the seeds and the preparation of the land for the same.

Knows about the average weather pattern for different seasons.

Takes steps to protect the tender shoots in the earlier days from adverse weather conditions.

Clears all the weeds that grow and also takes precautions from other animals that might ruin the crop at any stage of the development.

With all these efforts and with God's grace he gets the yield which feeds him and becomes a source of his income.

To get the final result of getting a good income, he has to wait a long time from the time he sows the seeds.

At any one time his thoughts will be on to do during that period and not live day dreaming for the final results.

The knowledge of what to do at each period of the growth, conducting such acts that are needed at that time, hard dedicated work from morning till evening each day of the week will contribute to the final successful yield of the crops. Of course, he is aware of the adverse weather condition he might have to face and prays the Lord to prevent such calamities.

This is true "Karma yoga" put into practice.

This is the faith and thoughts for those who practice karma yoga as enumerated in this sloka.

The sacred text is all about the sowing of the good seeds of thoughts in the human mind. The human mind is to be compared to the land into which the seeds of thoughts are to be sown.

The parents have a duty to get the minds of their children ready ("till" the land) for sowing the seeds of thoughts.

Early education into good conduct with examples from ancient mythological stories should give children the knowledge of sowing the seeds of good thoughts. Carefully guarding the land (mind), the seeds (thoughts maturing to become actions), removal of weeds (impure thoughts) with faith and dedication will guarantee the yield of good citizens of the land that herald peace and prosperity for the region.

This is the "Karma Yoga" or yoga of action which the Lord is referring to. Majority of us unfortunately do not fit into this category as our minds are filled with endless thoughts of desires and hatreds.

Slokas 42 - 44

**YAMIMAAM PUSHPITAAM VAACHAM PRAVADNATY AVIPASCHITAH
VEDA VAADA RATAAHA PARTHA NANYAD ASTITI VADINAH**

O Arjuna, the unwise utter flowery speech. They take pleasure in the eulogising words of the Vedas (e.g. express words of praise for the sake of praising only - not having totally understood the true meaning) and say, "There is nothing else but pleasures."

**KAMATMAANAHA SVARGAPARAHA JANMA KARMA PHALA PRADAAM
KRIYA VISHSHA BAHULAAM BHOGAISHWARYA GATIM PRATI**

They are full of desires, their highest goal is heaven, leading to new birth as reward for their actions, and engage themselves in specific works for the purpose of acquiring enjoyments and prosperity.

**BHOGAISHWARYA PRASAKTANAAM TAYAPA HRITA CHEATASAAM
VYAVASAYATMIKA BUDDHIHI SAMADHOU NA VIDHEEYATE**

The minds of such men who are drawn away by attachment to pleasures and wealth cannot be concentrated to remain fixed in divine contemplation and samadhi.

We need to take the three slokas together to understand the true import of the words used by the Lord.

To understand clearly the true meaning of the slokas, we should recollect some basic principles of spiritual education.

The subject matter of the ancient method of spiritual teaching was "The Vedas."

The learning of the Vedas was to assist the spiritual seeker in "realising the Eternal Truth which is nothing but the Eternal Happiness abiding within each one of us."

The Vedas, as we have discussed in the beginning are broadly divided into three sections. They are:

Karma Kanda

Upasana Kanda.

Jnana Kanda

Karma Kanda deals with various rituals and gives the benefits from conduct of such rituals.

Upasana Kanda deals with methods of Sadhana that assist in concentrating on the "Supreme" and controlling the mind from getting distracted to worldly pleasures.

Jnana Kanda is the final section that deals with acquiring the wisdom about the Supreme, dropping the feeling of "me and mine" and uniting back with the Supreme. It is realising the "Tat Tvam Asi" which is popularly known as "Moksha."

If we compare this three-tier system of Vedic education to our present day education system, we can understand the implications more clearly.

Before the education, one is considered as "ignorant." The ignorant lives in darkness. He/she is lazy and/or not interested in acquiring knowledge. (tamasic living)

We, the elders in the society have to tempt (bribe) the young kids who are keen to spend their time on playing and enjoying themselves to accept the need for education. To do so, we have to tempt them with rewards like sweets, gifts etc for showing progress in learning. With the progress in education, the need for giving rewards for success has to get less and less. Instead of rewards as the motive for good work, maturity should bring in the attitude that the knowledge acquired for welfare is the reward for hard work.

The Karma Kanda section of the Vedas deals with various rituals and the benefits one can get by performing them. They offer the promise of "heavenly pleasures" for those who conduct the rituals. This is like inducement to show interest in learning the Vedas.

The Upasana Kanda takes the spiritual seeker a step higher and gets him/her to concentrate more on the end result of acquiring the total knowledge that leads to the path of "Moksha".

Finally, the "Jnana Kanda" that takes the seeker away from worldly pleasures and gives the end result of "Moksha."

It is important to remember that the Vedic education is to dissuade the seeker from running after the personal pleasures and to live the life of "Peace and Contentment."

They say that "heaven" is an intermediary plane of experiencing higher forms of pleasures. They also teach that the pleasures experienced in heaven are not permanent and are directly proportional to the amount of spiritual effort put in.

It is like spending the money saved by hard work to relax and go for holidays. As soon as the savings are exhausted, we cannot remain in the resort we enjoyed previously and have to start working and saving for next period of holidays.

Heaven is to be looked upon as a place of reward for good deeds done on earth. The one who is looking for pleasures in life, albeit, in an honest way, will experience the heavenly pleasures in relation to the good deeds conducted. As soon as the benefits proportionate to the good deeds are exhausted, he/she has to work again to acquire more spiritual points.

The highest goal for man is to know and realise the Eternal truth. Every benefit that he/she gets for the efforts which comes short of the final end result is of no consequence. Heaven is not the goal. Those who go after the pleasures of heaven will unfortunately fall down to earth on exhausting good spiritual points acquired by hard work. They have to go through many more cycles of births and deaths before reaching the final goal. This is what the texts say as "samsara."

Let us now look at the three slokas in question.

"The unwise utter flowery speech."

The wise are those who go for knowledge and learn practically from the knowledge acquired and become wise. Unwise are those who go for knowledge but do not learn from the lessons in life.

This sloka refers to those who take up the spiritual path and start to learn the Vedas. They do not proceed beyond the "Karma kanda". They are tempted by the heavenly pleasures that come by conducting the various rituals and do not proceed to the next section of "Upasana." They boast about the Vedic knowledge acquired. This is what is meant by "the unwise utter flowery speech."

"They take pleasure in eulogising words of the Vedas."

It means that they take pleasures in talking about the benefit of the various rituals mentioned in the Karma kanda.

"They say that there is nothing but pleasures."

It refers to the heavenly pleasures that are for the taking for those who conduct the rituals as described in Karma kanda.

"They are full of desires-----."

They conduct the rituals wishing for the desired results from the conduct of such rituals. As a consequence they exhaust the merits of good work conducted and fall into the cycle of births and deaths.

"The minds of such men are drawn away by attachments to pleasure and wealth---."

They concentrate on the beneficial and pleasurable results of the good work conducted. They go for such higher and higher pleasures but stop short of final pleasure of "Moksha."

They cannot conduct Upasana on the "Eternal Truth." Their minds cannot remain steady on the contemplation of the "Eternal Truth".

Desires distract the mind and we should not go after desires is the Lord's message for the spiritual seekers.

"Vyavasayatmika buddhi samadhou na vidheeyate" (sloka 44):

Refer to sloka 41 for the explanation on "Vyavasayatmika buddhi."

"Samadhi" is total single pointed contemplation on the "Supreme" and cutting away totally from worldly distractions. Those who go after the pleasures cannot fix their mind on the Supreme and cannot attain "Samadhi."

Sloka 45

TRAIGUNYA VISHAYAA VEDA NISTRAIGUNYO BHAVAARJUNA NIRDVANDO NITYA SATVASTO NIRYOGA KSEMA ATMAVAAN

The Vedas deal with three gunas O Arjuna. Transcend the three gunas, become free from the pairs of opposites. Remain ever in pure satvika state and be firmly established in Atman.

Sri Krishna has brought in the subject of "**Gunas**." Arjuna was already familiar with the word "Gunas".

Let us briefly analyse the meaning of this important word.

We will have more opportunity to learn about it as we proceed further. Chapter 14 is dedicated totally to the subject of "Gunas."

"Guna" means "Quality." "Quality" is the outward expression of our inherent nature.

This is influenced by the reaction to the impulses brought in by the five sense organs to the mind, the reaction by the mind to such impulses received and the amount of influence the intellect has on the mind. It is not just the impulses received at present but to the impulses received from the past.

The gunas are three in number:

Satvic - pure

Rajasic - passionate

Tamasic - lazy, indolent.

Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to transcend the three gunas. Why?

Tamasic guna which is "laziness and indolence" does not assist in the upward progress for the spiritual seeker. On the other hand, it is the cause of downfall of the seeker to lower levels of existence.

Rajasic guna brings in the thirst for more desires. Desires in turn lead to many more actions, subsequent reactions and the cycle goes on and on. This is the cause for innumerable births into this world. Depending upon the quality of desires, the birth could be into one of the many different forms of life.

Satvic guna even though pure in nature, has the pitfall of making the seeker feel that he is a pure soul and as a consequence develop the feeling that "I am superior to others." It brings in "ego" which is the cause for rapid and great fall from spiritual heights achieved.

Arjuna had climbed up from tamasic to the rajasic level. Arjuna by birth was a kshatriya and a man of action. His pure nature by association with revered elders in the family like Bheeshma and with Krishna had lifted him to higher levels of rajas. The next step for him was to lift himself up to satvic level of purity.

As a true guru Krishna wanted his sincere disciple not to develop the ego of being "satvic". Hence, his advice "Transcend the three gunas."

"Remain ever pure in Satvika and be established in Atman" is the advice. This state, the learned elders say is "Suddha Satva."

"Suddha Satva" is total purity of thoughts. The spiritual seeker having overcome reacting to pairs of opposites like happiness and sorrow; pains and pleasure gets firmly established in the "Atman."

This state is the same as "**Sthitaprajna**" which means "Man of steady wisdom." We are going to get an elaborate description of the qualities of "Sthitaprajna" towards the end of this chapter.

Sloka 46

**YAAVAAANARTHA UDAPANE SARVATAHA SAMPLUTODAKE
TAAVAAN SARVESHU VEDESHU BRAHMANASYA VIJAANATHAHA**

To an enlightened person, who has known the Self, all the Vedas are as useful as a reservoir of water in a place where there is a flood.

What is the role of reservoir of water in any town?

The reservoir is meant to store the water and make it simpler to provide water to the needy.

During times of drought and similar situations the water in the reservoir can be directed to the place of the needy.

If there is flood, water is to be seen everywhere. (Let us not get into the argument of health hazards and other problems at this stage. This is only an example and no example can give us a true picture of the Supreme.)

The enlightened person is compared to the place that is flooded. His mind is flooded with the name, form, qualities of the Divine. With faith, bhakti he has understood the Supreme. For he, who has understood the Supreme, the Vedas are of no further use. As the Vedas are for understanding the Supreme, the enlightened person need not have to go to classes for understanding the Vedas. There is no need for him to take up the rituals in karma kanda. After all, the karma kanda rituals are for experiencing the heavenly pleasures.

For a post graduate fellow who has mastered the knowledge there is no need to go back to the university to acquire further knowledge.

Indirectly the message for us all from the Lord is, "Get enlightened, carry on doing your duty. Do not go for worldly pleasures and do not strive for heaven."

Another important word to note is "vijanataha". "Janataha" means "who knows." "Vijanataha" means "who knows very well." It is not enough to know the subject well but it is important to know it fully well and understand completely.

This is the prelude for the most important sloka in the sacred text: "Karmanye vadhikarasthe."

Sloka 47

**KARAMANYAVADHIKARASTHE MAA PHALESHU KADACHANA
MAA KARMA PHALA HETUR BHURMA TE SANAGOSTVAKARMANI**

**You have the right to work only
but never to its fruits.
Let not the fruits of action be your motive.
Nor let your attachment be to inaction.**

This sloka has to be divided into four quarters to understand it fully and is one of the most important as it summarises the entire philosophy of "karma." It demands that the seeker develops the knowledge of "right action." Jnana and Karma have to mingle and together they take the seeker to higher planes of spiritual enlightenment.

- a) Karmanyē vadhikaraste: you have a right to work only
- b) Maa phaleshu kadachana: no right for the fruits thereof.
- c) Maa karma phla-heturbhuh: let not the fruits be your motive.
- d) Maa te sangostv akarmani: let not be attached to inaction.

"**Adhikara**" is the most important word in this sloka and we must understand it clearly. It means "right", "entitlement."

The student who has gained entry into a school, paid the fees is entitled to enter the school and attend the prescribed classes. He has "adhikara" to be in the school during the classes.

The consultant at a particular hospital, selected by the panel, gets the right to enter the premises and work in the appropriate ward.

The M.P having won the confidence of the electorate has a right to enter the House of Parliament. He has the "adhikara" to do so.

On this basis, due to our past karmas, the Lord has given us the "Adhikara" to live as "humans" on this earth.

Each one of us, by His blessings, as a result of actions performed both in the past births and in this life, have attained a certain position in family/society we live in.

Like a director of a film/play, we have been given different roles to play.

"You have a right to work only" and "no rights for the fruits thereof" has to be understood in this context. We have to work according to the rules of the position we are given. Our sastras call it as "Ashrama dharma". A child has to follow the rules of childhood and the student has to follow the rules of education. We have a duty to fulfil that role.

What we get from our work, as we will understand when we proceed to the other chapters is to share with family/society.

Life starts from being in debt from childhood itself.

We are in debt to our parents for the love and affection they put in our upbringing and for the sacrifices they undergo.

To the society who provide the basic needs like education, medical care, water supply, electricity etc during the period of education from kindergarten to university. (Our parents fee towards the education is a paltry sum in relation to the contribution by the society.)

When we understand this way, we realise that the pay packet we receive should include repayment to the society for the debts incurred. If we work out how much it costs the society to give full education to a child, the young adult from the time of graduation has to work without pay for the rest of his/her life.

So, what we really get from our work as pay/fee cannot be called as "my money".

The second quarter of the sloka "no rights for the fruits thereof" has to be understood on this basis.

The word "**adhikara**" can be understood as "right of inheritance" also. Unless we are entitled to, we cannot inherit any property from our ancestors.

From our parents, we have inherited the "Divine Soul" with a physical body to conduct the actions as servants of the "Divine."

Both the Soul and the physical body are precious inheritance and we must look after them carefully. After being born as "humans," we have a duty to work "humanely."

The result, the Lord says will come on their own accord. But they do depend upon how we conduct the duties. We must know the "job description" of any job we are selected for and work accordingly. Breaking the job description as we know results in expulsion from that job.

As we proceed further and understand the sacred text clearly, we will learn that the results of our actions have to be shared with family/friends/society and not just for personal gains and personal pleasures.

We do get wealth in one form or other from our actions. Students gets the wealth of education, (jnana) and the employees gets pay packet for their actions. We have to consider that the wealth we get from our actions and what we hold on to is only as "caretakers" of that wealth and not as the sole owners. The bank manager with responsibility of large sums of money works only as its caretaker. Using it for personal gains and pleasures is equal to having committed a crime and face the consequences of the same.

"Let not the fruits of action be your motive":

We have to read it as "Nishkama karma". There should be no desire for the results of the actions.

Of course it is a fact that each job has its set standard of pay/benefits. Having graduated and appointed as a teacher, the job comes with a pay packet at the end of each month. The pay packet should not be the motive for the job is what we must understand. Working with the thought on the reward at the end of the work automatically reduces the work efficiency. Single pointed concentration on day to day's work will bring in the maximum result in any job undertaken.

The society we are in now has deteriorated so fast that we have started to live not with the money earned yesterday but using the money we hope to get tomorrow. It is the era of "plastic cards, credit cards." We enter into the trap of "Debt" by borrowing the tomorrow's money for today.

"I am going to be the "Prime Minister" and I am going to enjoy the benefits of the office " should not be the attitude to work. On the other hand, it should be: "I am going to be the servant of the public and work for the welfare of the society."

Each days work has to be given its importance and the work fulfilled to one's maximum potential. The pay packet will come on its own accord at the end of the month. Working with the monetary benefit in

mind will dilute the efficiency of the work. If the work is not satisfactory, there is a possibility of losing the job also.

Single pointed dedicated work becomes "Divine work." This is "dhyana" in its true sense.

"Nor let your attachment be to inaction":

There may be some, who by not understanding the sloka properly come to think that actions lead automatically to attachment. No one can live without work even for a second. To give up work is a sign of laziness and it becomes "Tamasic." The parents have parental duty towards their children and cannot escape from the same.

Spiritual seeker must know that he has to burn the existing vasanas. By not burning the inherited vasanas, he will not make any progress.

Arjuna wanted to escape from the war, go to the forest, become a sanyasi. He did not want to face the terrible consequences of war. Sri Krishna is categorically warning him not to do so.

For a short while Arjuna might find peace in the forest but soon would get involved in the life of forest and his kshatriya tendencies will manifest again.

Another explanation for the word "**Adhikara**": this applies to seekers at higher plane of perfection on the spiritual path.

All the spiritual practices contribute to the purity of the mind. The spiritual seeker in search of "Liberation" has to gain the knowledge. Towards this goal he has to pass through the four gates of entry that finally leads him into the temple of knowledge. These four gates of entry are collectively known as "Sadhana Chatusthaya." Let us have a brief glimpse into what these four gates are and what do we mean by them.

Sadhana Chatusthaya (four spiritual practices):

Viveka

Vairagya

Shatsampatti

Mumukshatva.

Viveka:

The first gate of entry is "The power of discrimination." This enables the seeker to distinguish between the permanent and impermanent. We mean, between "Eternal Truth and non Eternal Truth." The seeker wishing to become one with the Eternal Truth must develop viveka. It is the first pre requisite for the spiritual seeker.

Vairagya:

Once the philosophy of life that leads to the final goal of moksha is accepted, the seeker has to develop the art of detachment from the lower that bind him and prevent him from moving to higher states of perfection. In other words it is the art of "letting go of the lower to reach the higher." The young child in higher school with the aim of going to the college for higher education, has to develop the art of detachment from the attachments in the high school. Spiritually it is the absence of all worldly passions and freedom from all desires except the desire for "Liberation."

Shatsampatti:

It means six treasures. They are:

Sama:

The mind is fickle by nature. It gets attracted to many objects around this world. The art of controlling this fickle nature of the mind is "Sama."

Dama:

It is control of the sense organs. The horses on a chariot are compared to the sense organs. Unless the charioteer gets the reins and the reins are under the control of the charioteer, they fail to run in the direction desired by the charioteer. They tend to run hither and dither.

Uparathi:

For contemplation on the divine, the seeker not only has to develop sama and dama and stop moving towards the desire for worldly objects but also has to learn the art of contemplating on the Atman within. He must practice turning the search light from outer world to the inner world. Uparathi is the art of settling the mind within the heart. Absolute calmness of the mind comes from learning the art of uparathi.

Thithikshatva:

It is the power of endurance. We have discussed this in sloka 14 of this chapter (week 15 in 2006). While progressing in the spiritual path, one is bound to experience trials and tribulations in life. Total freedom from anxiety and mental anguish is essential for progress. Contented life comes when one can master the art of endurance.

Sraddha:

It is absolute faith in the higher. What is the point of studying for a degree in engineering if one does not have faith in the benefit one gets from the degree? What is the point of spiritual practice if one does not have faith in the higher? Sraddha as we have discussed before acts as a fuel for progress.

Samadhana:

This is the process where there are no more thought generating in the mind. It is the state of perfect tranquillity.

Mumukshatva:

It is the burning desire for "Moksha" or Liberation from worldly bondage.

The true spiritual seeker who has acquired the wealth of "Sadhana Chatushtaya" is the "Adhikari" to conduct actions as described in this verse and acquire knowledge of the Atman.

Sloka 48

**YOGASTHAHA KURU KARMANI SANGAM TYAKTVA DHANANJAYA
SIDDHY-ASIDDHOH SAMO' BHOOTVA SAMATVAM YOGAM UCHYATE**

O Arjuna, do your work, be steadfast in yoga, giving up all attachment, unmindful of success or failure. Such equanimity of the mind is "Yoga."

In continuation of the theme from the previous sloka, we now are given instructions about the work and the results from the same. After having been told about "Karmanye vadhikarasthe", the Lord says: "Do the work with total concentration. The results will follow the actions." We will succeed in some actions and it makes us feel happy. Some actions do fail and we feel depressed. Balance of mind on facing such results and continuing to fulfil the duties to the family and society is the summary of this sloka.

Yogasthaha kuru karmani:

Do your work, be steadfast in yoga. Yoga in this context refers to "Karma Yoga" or "Yoga of right action."

Whatever action we conduct, must be carried out with total 100% concentration on the same. There should not be any disturbances from the world around. Work has to become an act of worship.

The sense organs are bound to bring in a number of impulses that can easily distract from the work ahead. We do instruct our children to concentrate on the road while walking to the school. We are expected to take care of the traffic around when we are driving a motor vehicle. Failure by the child to take note of oncoming traffic would result in accident. Similarly, failure on our part to concentrate on driving can easily end up in nasty accident.

We not only have to do our work but also do the same with full concentration and not get distracted. This is the message of the first quarter of this sloka.

Sangam tyaktva:

Giving up all attachments.

Attachment to the results of actions,

Attachment to the work itself,

Attachment to the distractions that come during the work,

All should be given up.

This is not easy. If we accept that what we are doing is God's work and as servants of the Lord, it becomes easier.

It is very difficult to accept the statement "do not be attached to the work." Of course it is important that we do perform the various duties in life, both personal and professional. What is needed is that we should not be feeling proud of our position we hold in society and the work we do in relation to it. By god's grace we got to where we are and what we do should be only as His servants. The work then becomes a "duty", an act of worship.

The sense organs and the mind are very powerful. We, the humans, are blessed to have got the buddhi which is the reasoning capacity. Even while working, the sense organs will be receiving impulses from the surroundings. Some of those might be strong enough to distract us and take us away from the work in progress. Without our knowledge we get attached to the new impulses received. Dropping of attachments to the new impulses while conducting any work with total concentration is the meaning for the word "Sangam tyaktva."

While driving, momentarily the mind gets distracted on something else and we do lose concentration on the road ahead. It is a fairly common experience for most of us. It is easy to let the mind wander off into its dream world. The Lord is telling us that we must not let the mind get distracted by the impulses brought in by the sense organs and should not let it go into the treasure house of memories. Attachment easily develops to these impulses/thoughts which reduce the efficiency of work and which could easily cause harm.

Attachment could also be to the fruits of actions. This we have discussed fully in the previous sloka.

Siddhy-asiddhyoh samo' bhootva:

Unmindful of success or failure.

Every action ends in a result. We could succeed or fail in the work we conduct. What we need to do is to prepare ourselves fully to the work. Let us also clear all doubts concerning the work.

The student wishing to sit for exams and get a degree has to concentrate on the studies first. He should clarify the doubts that crop up in the mind every so often. With the knowledge gained in the classroom and by the revision work, he has to sit for exams. While writing the answers in the examinations he should not be thinking of success in exams and the benefits from the same. He should also not worry about failure.

As we have discussed before, putting the best efforts is our job. The results are His grace.

The results depend on two issues:

- a) the efforts put in conduct of the work and
- b) the result of actions conducted in the past including past births.

To worry about the results to come is like living in tomorrow. Let us learn to live in the present and not in the future.

Samatvam Yogam uchayate:

"Samatvam" is equal mindedness under all circumstances. The thought of the results that are going to come or the results when come, either pleasing or not pleasing, should not reduce the efficiency of the present work.

The end result of union of the Jivatman with the Paramatman is "Yoga."

To achieve this result, first of all the ego has to vanquish. Technically speaking, ego has to lose all its identification and merge with the Atman. This is also "Yoga."

Equanimity of mind to achieve this result is also "Yoga."

Sloka 49

**DOORENA HYAVARAM KARMA BUDDHI YOGAT DHANANJAYA
BHUUDDHOU SHARANAM ANVICHHA KRIPANAHA PHALAHETAVAHA.**

O Arjuna, work with attachment is far inferior to nishkama karma. Seek refuge in desireless actions with equanimity of mind. Those who work for fruits are wretched.

Doorena hyavaram: very inferior indeed.

Karma in the context of the first quarter of the sloka refers to "actions with attachment." (desire fulfilling actions).

The word "Buddhi yogat", in the second quarter of the sloka refers to actions conducted using the reasoning faculty. It is about "Nishkama karma."

We are told by the Lord that "Desireless actions are far superior to desire prompted actions."

Attitude to work is far more important than the actual value of the work.

When the thought flow is controlled the mind remains serene and calm. Such a mind is called "The intellect". It takes over the reins for the work to be conducted. The experts say that it is "Nischayatmika", which means "clear mind." (intellect)

If the intellect is not brought in to control the thought process generated in the mind or if the intellect is not brought in to control the new impulses received by the mind, agitations develop and the experts say it is "samshayatmika". (the doubting mind)

"Buddhi yoga" is the process wherein the clear intellect reins supreme and the doubting mind is under control.

When one becomes a master over his own mind, like a search light, the mind can be turned away from the external world and diverted towards the Atman inside. We are asked to become masters over our own mind because it leads us to experience the "Eternal Bliss".

Failure to control the mind leads to sorrow and distress. We have to go through many more births and deaths.

"Kripana" means "wretched." Those who conduct desire prompted actions, the Lord says are "Kripanas."

Sloka 50

**BUDDHIYUKTO JAHATEEHA UBHE SUKRUTA DUSHKRUTE
TASMAD YOGAYA YUJYASVA YOGAHA KARMA SU KOUHALAM**

Endowed with the wisdom of evenness of mind, one releases himself from good and bad even in this life. Therefore strive for nishkama karma with an equal mind. Skill in action is yoga.

The important word in this sloka is "releases himself."
We can lift ourselves or ruin ourselves from our actions.

"The evenness of mind born of wisdom": the results of actions, both good and bad, come because of our actions. If we use our wisdom, bring in the reasoning capacity prior to any actions, control the senses and the wandering mind, we will prevent any adverse reactions. There is no need to go for help from external sources.

To achieve such state of mind, we should not conduct desire prompted actions.
This is the skill in yoga the Lord is referring to.

The intellect must guide us from discrimination of good from bad and also give us the determination to carry out the task properly.

Great souls have conducted acts of welfare to the society on this principle. They had no personal benefit motive from their actions. We see such men/women probably once in a century or so.

Skill in action is yoga: the capacity to remain detached and equal minded while engaged in any action in the world is the skill Lord is referring to.

We are responsible for our actions.
Our actions bring in results, both good and bad.
The Lord is actually giving us advice on "Preventive medicine."

Pains and pleasures we experience in our life are because of "desires." When the work is conducted with some desire or other in the mind, the mental balance at the time of work is disturbed. This we have discussed in detail in the preceding slokas.

Lack of concentration on the work ahead is another reason for experiencing painful end results.

The Lord is applying the same rule for "good" also. He says "release from good and bad." As we have studied before, the good brings in a sense of elation and makes us feel proud of ourselves. This is probably the more dangerous enemy in our spiritual path.

Sloka 51

**Karmajam buddhi yukta hi phalam tyaktva maneeshinaha
Janma bandha vinmuktaha padam gachanti anamayam**

Wise men, possessed of knowledge, having obtained the fruits of action, go to the abode beyond all sorrow and evil.

The word "manisha" refers to men of wisdom.

The one who knows the true meaning of "viveka" (refers to sloka 47, meaning of sadhana chatushtaya) is considered to be a wise man. Wise man knows how to differentiate between "Transient and Eternal."

We are not far off from learning about "Sthitaprajna", man of steady wisdom.

So far we have discussed about "Karma."
Karma as such means work or actions we conduct.

Karma yoga is about actions that will help us to unite with the "Eternal Truth." The one who has jnana of actions as described by the Lord, is the true wise man and is "Manisha." He is the true karma yogi.

The Lord is saying that the wise men also act in this world . They conduct all their duties as an act of worship. They do so with equanimity of mind and not work for the fruits of actions. But they are still entitled to the benefits of their actions.

As they do not have any worldly desires, their meritorious points for good work are not wasted. The Lord Himself decides on what benefit they should get. "They go to the abode beyond all sorrow and evil", He says. It simply means that they attain "Liberation" and do not have any rebirths into this world of maya.

Sloka 52

**YADA TE MOHA KALILAM BUDDHIR VYATIRISHYATI
TADA GANTASI NIRVEDAM SHROTAVYASA SRUTASYA CHA**

When your mind crosses the mire of delusion, you will attain to indifference as to what has been heard and what has to be heard.

The mire of delusion for us, the humans, is the "Maya". It is the illusion. Covered by ignorance, as it were, we fail to see the "Truth." This is because of our attachment to the impulses brought in by the sense organs about the world around. These impulses as we have studied so far will give us the experience of happiness or sorrow, both of which are temporary.

It is useful at this juncture if we can recollect one of the guru mantra:

”Ajanantimirandasya jnananjana shalakhayaha chakchurum meelitam ena tasmai sri gurave namamha.”

“Ajnanatimirandhasya” means crossing the ocean of ignorance.

The spiritual seeker has to cross over both the happiness and sorrows in life, develop an indifference to both and will then experience the “Bliss” within.

This is again the description of “Sthitaprajna”. From sloka 55 onwards, we are going to find out more about the qualities of a man of “steady wisdom.” This sloka is a preparation process to make us understand about such a man of steady wisdom.

“Nirvedam” means “indifference.”

“Nirvedam shrotavysa srutasya cha”: indifference to what has been heard and what is to be heard.

This sounds confusing and needs to be clarified.

We can look at it from 2 angles.

a) For majority of us, who have yet to attain perfection is the spiritual practice: “what has been heard and what is to be heard” has to be understood as the sum total of all impulses received from the “jnanendriyas.”

“The impulses received from the five sense organs and the impulses to be received in future by the five sense organs” is the true meaning of “what is heard and what is to be heard.” “Heard” in this sense includes all the impulses received from sense organs. We should not confuse it to mean only what is heard by the ears.

When we learn to develop indifference to the impulses received, we will overcome the end result of happiness or sorrow.

b) Another explanation for the expression used (if we consider that the Lord is referring to the Vedas):

To those who have succeeded in their spiritual practice and reached the state of “Sthitaprajna”: there is no further need to hear or think about the “Truth” as enshrined in the Vedas.

For the rest of us, there is a dire need to continue to hear and think about the Vedas.

The only way to cross this mire of delusion is by understanding the correct meaning of “Nishkama karma” and continue to work as described in sloka 47 “Karmanyavadhikarasthe” and thereby purify the mind of all existing vasanas.

Sri Madhvacharya, the founder of “Dwaita” philosophy has given a beautiful explanation for the word “Nirvedyam.”

He says that that the word means “maximum profit.” In the spiritual path, if we can master the art of indifference to the impulses received and to be received, we will reap maximum benefit and experience “The Bliss.”

“Maya”, the delusion is like electricity. It is not perceptible and acts in a number of different ways. At the intellectual level of perception, maya acts like a film that obstructs the true understanding of the Self within us.

The sastras use the word “Avarana sakti” to express the power of maya over us.

As a consequence, the “Self”, Atman, becomes “Jivatman” by identifying with the physical body and forgets its true identity.

Sloka 53

SHRUTIVVIPRATIPANNA TE YADA STHASYASI NISCHALA SAMADHAVACHALA BUDDHIS TADA YOGAMAVAPSYASI

When your intellect, though perplexed by what you have heard, becomes steady and immovable in the self, then you shall attain self-realisation.

The mind as we have learnt so far, is like a monkey, jumping from one branch to another. It is difficult to keep it steady and under control. The process of controlling the mind steady is “nischalatvam” (the last word in the first line of this sloka).

To do so, one should hear of Atman, think of Atman and meditate on the Atman. In course of time, the sadhaka will be able to merge totally in the Atman.

Sri Sankaracharya defines “samadhi” as the state when the mind is merged into the Atman.

Arjuna had spent his earlier days in the gurukula ashrama and was given the introduction to the Vedas.

The course, if we can call so in those days for pupils like Arjuna was the “Karma Kanda” of the Vedas. They were not initiated into the Upasana and Jnana kanda section of the Vedas.

Karma kanda in a way is hearing about the various rituals, yajnas and the benefit from conduct of the same.

Upasana kanda is thinking and meditating on the Atman and Jnana kanda is final realisation and union with the Atman.

Krishna says that karma kanda section of the Vedas when heard is perplexing. But, meditating on the Atman, analysing the principle behind all rituals and yajnas, one can steady the mind. His intellect will take over and dictate over the mind and controls the mind. Only then the sadhaka can remain steady on the thought of the Self.

This is the path to “Self-Realisation” and the seeker is on the road to freedom.

Another interpretation to the sloka:

The jnanendriyas bring in the impulses to the mind. Even though it is the ears that hear, we can say that the mind hears whatever the senses bring in.

Taking this meaning, we can say that “what you have heard” means, all the experiences from the past.

After all the experiences from the past are responsible for the present. If one uses the intellectual capacity of reasoning and thinks in terms of sanchita karma, one can easily say what is happening now is only “Prarabdha” karma. The seeker then develops the titikshatva for what is happening in his life and concentrates on the task ahead. The task being, “union with the Supreme.”

Sloka 54

Arjuna uvacha,

**STHITAPRAJNASYA KAA BHASHA SAMAADHISTASYA KESHAVA
STHIDADEEHI KIM PRABHASHETA KIM ASEETA VRAJETA KIM**

Arjuna said,

O Krishna, what are the characteristics of a man of steady wisdom while he is merged in the “super-conscious state”? How does such a man speak, sit and move?

He, who is merged in the ”Super-conscious state” is said to be in “samadhi.” Samadhi is the last limb of the “Patanjali Ashtanga Yoga”, the eight limbed yoga of Patanjali. (see below)

Samadhi is also the word used to denote “the grave” or “the tomb”. When the Soul departs from the body, there are no more activities left in the body. The jnanendriyas and the mind do not function.

In this sloka, the word is used to denote the state of that individual who is a man of steady-wisdom. His jnanendriyas and the mind are alive but technically speaking they are “dead.” The individual is still alive.

The spiritual seeker who, by constant practice has subdued his senses lives like a man in the grave as far as his reactions to the outer world are concerned. The state of “deep meditation” he is in is “samadhi.” Such a seeker who has reached this state is a “Jivan mukta.” He is a liberated soul while still alive.

Arjuna asks Krishna for the means of identification of such an individual. He was aware of great souls of his time who had gone to remote corners like the Himalaya and entered into a state of samadhi. He was not sure of any who were living and moving about the world after reaching the pinnacle of sadhana.

He wanted to know such an individual’s daily activities and how to recognise him?

Wearing of an ochre robe is not the sign of such jivanmukta.

Truly speaking a man’s character is recognisable by the way he speaks and moves about in the society. He is a learned person and knows the sastras. One finds peace, purity and divinity in a jivan mukta.

We, the rest of us, have not reached such state of perfection. While there are no problems in life, one can express calmness in his actions and speech. As soon as he experiences problems in life or when he has achieved success in his task, he tends to lose the purity and calmness.

We are attached to the material world around us.

For the sake of information:

The ashtanga yoga is:

Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi.

We will discuss these in chapter 4.

Mahatma Gandhi is a strong advocate of the qualities of a “sthitha Prajna.” He used to recite the subsequent slokas 54-72 from this chapter every day. He not only recited them but understood them and practised them.

Sloka 55

Sri Bhagawan Uvacha

**PRAJAHATI YADA KAMAAN SARVAAN PARTHA MANOGATAAN
ATMANY EVATMANA TUSHTAHA STHITAPRAJNAS TADOCHEYATE**

The Lord said:

When a man renounces completely all the desires of the mind, when he is fully satisfied with his mind fixed in Atman, O Partha, he is then declared to be a Sthitaprajna.

He,

> who has renounced completely all the desires of the mind,

And

> mastered the technique of fixing his mind on the Atman within,
is sure to be totally free of all fears and sorrows.

Such a person will then be expressing untainted and perfect bliss. One needs to be associated with such a perfect master to recognise the “perfect blissful state he is living.”

This is the first and foremost sign with which one can recognise a ”sthithaprajna.”

"Desire" is the capacity of the mind to see ahead of itself. “Desires” are the root cause for all the ills of life. The store house of all the desires is the mind.

We will in the subsequent chapters learn about the gunas and their influence on the seeker. Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic gunas influence the progress of the seeker either to his spiritual heights or spiritual decline.

In the earlier stages of sadhana, it is imperative that there should be desires to move from lower tamasic gunas to higher satvic gunas.

Only on reaching the satvic heights of purity, the seeker has to consider his future and abandon all desires.

Sthitaprajna is he who has climbed up the spiritual ladder and reached higher planes than the satvic state of purity of the mind.

At this early stage of learning, let us not be carried away by the qualities of “Sthitaprajna.” As this chapter is the summary of the entire Gita, the qualities of “Sthitaprajna” are brought out in this chapter. We should not, like Sthitaprajna, start abandoning all desires. Let us harbour desires to purify our minds of impure thoughts.

The mind is the seat of all activities.

On the one side, it is receiving from the jnanendriyas the impulses from the objective world around. On the other side, it is also receiving the message from the “antahkarana” (the Divine inner voice). Overriding the message from the antahkarana, it gives prominence to the impulses from the objective

world. It analyses these and classifies them as “I like it”, “I do not like it”, “I hate it” etc. It then sends its army of karmendriyas to get the object of desires.

This process of receiving the impulses and acting accordingly has been going on from birth. Also, as we have studied so far, at birth, the mind is already having a set of stored impulses not acted upon from the previous births. (Of course one need to have belief that we have undergone several births in the past and will have to go through several more births in future.)

Every day of our life we receive several impulses from the world around. We cannot react to all the impulses at the same time. Some of them get stored for action at a later date. The mind thus becomes a store house of all the impulses not acted upon. These remain dormant for an indefinite period. Depending upon the strength of the stored impulses or receiving repeatedly the impulses from certain objects, the desire gets stronger and stronger and the mind puts the karmendriyas into action.

“Renounces completely all the desires of the mind” (PRAJAHATI YADA KAMAAN SARVAAN PARTHA MANOGATAAN):

In the pathway of receiving the impulses and acting upon the same, the mind really is not the boss. It cannot consider itself to be the master and do what it pleases. Its rank is below that of the intellect. It has to follow the guidance from the intellect. Only by letting the intellect guide it, the mind can learn the art of purifying itself and thereby renouncing all the desires.

Every desire arising within, before it is put into action, has to be submitted to its high command, the intellect.

The picture of Gitopadeshm has to be recollected at this point. It depicts Lord Krishna holding on to the reins and Arjuna standing behind Krishna is ready to fight. Lord Krishna represents the pure intellect and Arjuna the mind.

The next lesson to learn for the mind:

The mind has to realise that it has a duty to fix its sight on the Atman inside. Forgetting this rule, makes the mind turn into the demon “Ego.”

He who fulfils these two criterion,
> controlling constantly all the desires,
> fixing the mind constantly on the Atman,
makes the individual a “Sthitaprajna.”

We see that many a times the devotees flock to the master and ask the question,
“Swamy, when will I be free from the problems I encounter in this life?”

The true master uses this sloka to give his answer.

He makes it clear that the liberation from the ills of life does not come by magic. The Lord cannot wave His magic wand and say “I clear you of all your past sins and grant you Moksha.” Each one of us has to work for ourselves to come out of the whirlpool called “samsara.”

The Gita, the sastras, the masters are all there to guide us.

This can come only from unswerving faith and devotion and by carrying out the spiritual discipline. The mind has to remain in constant state of equanimity.

The seeker has to cast off permanently all the desires totally.
Giving up some desires or giving up desires for certain period of time will not suffice.

True knowledge is the capacity of the mind to visualise the dangers/problems ahead and conducting proper actions under the guidance of the pure intellect.

The aim of Vedanta in general and the Gita in particular is to remove the veil of ignorance about the Self within which is the seat of “Eternal and Everlasting Bliss.”

Practising renunciation is the first step. It is the sadhana.
Experiencing Paramananda is the result. It is “Sadhya.”
Sthitaprajna shows this in his actions.

Atmany evatma tushtaha - contented in Atma only, by the atma.

In this statement, the word “Atma” is used twice and the two have different meaning.

The first “Atman” refers to the “Self” (Soul) within and is depicted with capital “A”.
The second “atman” refers to the “mind”. It is the “ego”, the seat of all desires.

The mind has to accept that the pure intellect is the master and be subordinate to it. The pure intellect is subservient to the “antahkarana” and the “Atman” inside. In the final stages of spiritual progress, even the intellect gets merged with the “Atman”. It then reflects total purity and remains in constant bliss.

Sloka 56

**DUKHESHV ANUDVIGNA MANAHA SUKHESHU VIGATA SPRUHAHA
VEETARAGA BHAYA KRODHAA STHIDADEEHI MUNIRUCHYATE**

He whose mind is not troubled by sorrow, who does not go after pleasures, who is free from attachment, fear and hatred is called a sage of steady wisdom.

Let us remember that these qualities are that of a perfect master of wisdom. Such knowledge does not come overnight. We, the ordinary mortals cannot avoid but go after pleasures and cannot escape sorrows in life due to the attachments we develop to our own physical body and the objects around the world. As the sastras declare, we have to undergo many births before we can dream of reaching this state of perfect wisdom.

This section of this chapter is not for the seekers in the earlier stages of spiritual sadhana. Like young children, we need to be bribed with sweets so that we like the spiritual science and become seekers after “Eternal Truth.”

Three qualities of Sthithaprajna are brought out in this sloka:

- 1) Dukheshu anudvigna manaha
- 2) Sukheshu vigata spruhaha
- 3) Veetaraga bhaya krodhaha.

1) Dukheshu anudvigna manaha:

Whose mind does not get troubled by the sorrows.

In the context of past, present and future this aspect refers to “Past and present.”

The mind as we know is like the band master. We are what our minds are.

It is a fact of life that each one of us goes through various experiences in life and some experiences hurt and bring sorrow in our life. There cannot be one individual who can say that he has not experienced sorrow in his/her life.

There is an episode in the life of Buddha worth recollecting at this stage.

When Buddha left His palatial residence he went and meditated under the shelter of the Bodhisatva tree. Enlightenment dawned in course of time. His fame spread far and wide. Once a woman in great distress at the death of her young child came to him and begged him to bring the child back to life. Buddha agreed to do so but only after she fulfilled one condition. He requested her to get a fistful of rice from a household where there was no death.

The lady went out in great delight. She did not consider this as a great problem. Soon, she realised that there was no household which did not go through death in their family at sometime or other.

The moral of the story is: everyone will experience sorrow sometime or other in their life. The period of grief varies from individual to individual depending upon their outlook. If everyone would be in grief indefinitely, the world cannot progress. The sorrow has also a beginning and an end with a peak in somewhere along the curve. We all have to put in our input in moving the wheel that makes the society move forwards.

The intellect has to remind the mind that it has to get on with the duties to the body, to the family, friends and the society.

2) Sukheshu vigata spruha

Vigata spruha: without hankering.

This aspect refers to the “future.” The Lord is advocating the seeker to not hanker after pleasures.

Like sorrow, we do also experience happiness. We have discussed before about the consequences of actions following experience of the pleasures.

The individual experiencing the pleasure will remain in a dream world of his own. His mind automatically will long for more of the same. “Spruhaha” means “longing” for (objects of pleasure.)

Sthithaprajna is “Vigata spruhaha” - he does not long for such pleasures.

He, a Jivanmukta, lives constantly in the state of “Atmananda.” Having united with the “Atman” within, having experienced the “Bliss within,” he lives in constant state of contentment.

He is in a state of constant equilibrium for the results of all past actions, conducts the present actions in the same frame of mind and will remain so in future.

One can compare the intellect to the sun and the mind filled with the vasanas to the clouds. The clouds block the sun only temporarily. The sun will remain the same bright sun constantly. The clouds do not disturb it in any way.

The troubles that can bring obstacles in the path to realise the Atman can be classified into:

- a) God sent: lightning, thunder etc, (adhi daivika)
- b) Natural catastrophes: fire, flood, landslides etc, (adhibhoutika)

c) Man made, subjective such as acts due to laziness and other negative tendencies from within. (Adhyatmika)

3) Veetaraga bhaya krodaha: he is free from attachment, fear and anger.

Raga - attachment

Bhaya - fear

Krodha - anger.

Raga is attachment to objects of desire. Attachment to one's own modifications of the physical body, to family, friends, material wealth, position in the society etc.

Thought of injury, illness, physical death etc to own body or to the body of the loved ones; fear of losing the loved material possessions brings in an element of fear. When one loses the object of desire or when someone else gets the object first brings in anger. Anger in turn could lead to total disaster. (this subject is graphically described in slokas 63 and 64 of this chapter.)

As far as he is concerned, the sthitaprajna continues to discharge his duties but does so without the attachment, fear and anger. His actions fit in with the principle of "Karmanye vadhkarasthe". (sloka 47)

When the same Atman is there in everyone where is the question of getting attached to any particular object/individual?

Attachment, fear and anger can come only when there is more than one. Having realised the same Atman in all, having developed the knowledge of seeing that Atman, there is no question of a separate second thing/object/individual as far as the sthitaprajna is concerned. He has no delusion or sorrow.

Sthitadeehi munir uchyate:

Such an individual of steady mind is called "Muni."

"Mounam charati iti munihi" - the one who walks in silence is "Muni."

The sthitaprajna is engaged in speechless absorption in the Self within, enjoys the Self all around and hence he is a "Muni."

Sloka 57

**YAHA SARVATRANABHISNEHAS TAT TAT PRAPYA SHUBHASHUBHAM
NABHINANDATI NA DWESHTI TASYA PRAJNA PRATISHTITA.**

He who has no attachment to anything and anywhere, who does not rejoice or hate, his wisdom is fixed.

Anabhisneha: without attachment.

Let us not forget that "Sthitaprajna" is he who has achieved in reaching the "Self-state." Whatever qualities we attribute to the "Atman" is to be found in the "sthitaprajna." Equanimity is his hall mark.

Another point of importance to note is the word "Yaha." It means "who". It implies that the Lord is not referring to any individual in particular. Caste, creed, nationality or sex are not a barrier to learn the

sacred text. We should look at such statements as referring to “Universality” of the message from the Gita.

“Maya” or delusion is the tool of the Lord. He is beyond maya and it has no control over Him. On the other hand, it has a firm control on all of us. To come out of the clutches of maya is possible only when we lose our individual identity and become one with the “Atman.”

Sthitaprajna has achieved the state wherein he has no attachment to anything and anywhere. It applies both to the people around him and to the situations he faces in life. He remains as part of the society and not an escapist by nature.

Many a times frustration makes one feel like running away from people/situations. Mere detachment is only a negative existence of escaping from life. Running away is not a sign of true detachment. It is actually a hidden sign of cowardice. Facing the challenges in life and clearing the vasanas from the past is the way forward. Challenges in life should be met with courage, equanimity and the knowledge of the Self.

On the other hand to live in attachment is like being a slave to the pleasures of life.

This sloka is in reply to Arjuna’s question: “How does a sthitaprajna speak?”

Sthitaprajna speaks through his actions. He does not show signs of depression or excessive elation whatever may be the situation he faces.

As we have discussed before both depression and elation reduce the efficiency of work. After having been born on this earth, we have certain duties to conduct and thereby clear the existing vasanas and move forward towards achieving union with the “Parabrahman.” This should be our goal in life.

Arjuna wanted to escape from the war and its consequences. He thought that life in forest would be peaceful.

He does not hate:

It is a very important quality to develop for the spiritual seeker. We must learn the art of forgiving. The sanskrit word for forgiving is “Kshama.” We will have an opportunity to learn more about this in chapter 12 when we will discuss about qualities of a true devotee of the Lord.

Sloka 58

**YADA SAMHARATE CHAYAM KOORMONGANEEVA SARVASHAHA
INDRIYANEENDRIYARTHEBHYAS TASYA PRAJNA PRATISHTITA**

When the yogi, like the tortoise drawing back its limbs into its own shell, withdraws all the senses from the sense objects, his wisdom is fixed. He is a sthitaprajna.

The commander in chief of the bodily instruments of cognition is “the intellect.” The intellect pointing outwards gets trapped with the life around. The same intellect pointing inwards and concentrating on the Atman within is said to be a sthitaprajna whose “wisdom is fixed.”

The concentration achieved by the spiritual seeker who has attained mastery over the multitude of distractions from the objective world is explained using an example in this verse.

The Lord has given the example of the tortoise. We see normally a tortoise with its head and neck and limbs protruding out of its shell and moving about in water where it is living. On encountering any objects, the first reaction by it is the withdrawal of all its limbs into its own shell. Once it does

withdraw its limbs, it does not get injured by any objects that it comes in contact with. We can throw a brick at it and the brick does not cause any bodily harm to it.

Technically it is a sthitaprajna. It continues to live in the water but does not get perturbed by the world outside. Let us remember that it is not really a sthitaprajna and it is only an example and no examples can give us the true picture of the Atman.

What does a sthitaprajna do?

He continues to live and be part of the society he belongs to. He does not run away into the jungle to escape from distractions.

What are the limbs the Lord is referring to?

The limbs of the tortoise are a comparison to the five sense organs and the life around in the pool of water for the tortoise is compared to the objective world. Our senses do get us the contact with the objective world. The reaction to the contact is made by the mind with or without the help of the intellect. These reactions make us feel pain/pleasures.

The sense organs do perceive, the mind does the duty of feeling and the intellect thinks. Withdrawal from the outer world means not to react to the impulses received by the sense organs, not to feel through the mind and not to think using the intellect. His intellect at the same time has changed its mode of action and deals with the “chaitanya” (consciousness) within. It receives the “ananda” (happiness, peace) from the contact with the chaitanya and lives a life of contentment. The individual carries on all the worldly duties and takes over the obligations to the family and the society. The results of whatever action he conducts, he offers to the Lord by uttering “Sri Krishnarpanamastu.”

Each of the sense organs is like the door to the house. The thief can enter from any door and steal our possessions. The sense organs are the doors for us to receive the impulses that steal our peace.

We can understand by looking at the example of a deaf person. The deaf person does not hear what others are talking about but stays in company of others. The insults thrown at him by some will not register in his mind and he does not get upset. He is not worried about the abuses spoken by others.

For this one needs to develop “Vyavasayatmika buddhi” about which we have already discussed in sloka 41 of this chapter.

Another point to note from this sloka is that withdrawal of the sense organs from the sense objects does not stop the hankering of the mind which is a store house of results of the past actions. We will see how the mind can be controlled in the next sloka.

Sloka 59

**VISHAYA VINIVARTANTE NIRAHARASYA DEHINAH
RASAVARJAM RASOPYASYA PARAM DRISHTVA NIVARTATE.**

When a man rejects the sense objects by withdrawing the senses, he becomes free from the sense world only. Even his longing also is removed on intuiting on the Supreme.

“Rasavarjam” is rejecting the sense objects as described in the previous verse and it does not remove the taste for the objective world. The word “rasa” in this sloka refers to the “taste” for the world of objects.

Realization of the “Absolute” will remove the “taste” for the world of objects. Unless one develops sraddha, bhakti on the “Supreme” and learns the art of “meditation” wherein the mind is made to concentrate on the “Supreme” it is impossible to experience “the Bliss.”

The mind of the beginner in sadhana has after all experienced the sense world for a long time. Therefore there is a latent longing for the pleasures from the same within the mind. This, the elders say is “Raga”. Realization of the Supreme is complete only when the vasanas of the past are burnt out completely. This can be achieved either by: a) gradually making its impact of the vasanas less by postponing the actions for further desire prompted actions and finally making them disappear on their own accord. Or b) the individual has to concede to the demands of the mind and then experience the results. In course of time which takes probably many births and deaths, every individual is going to realize the temporary nature of the pleasures and pains. There is no fixed time for experiencing this “Bliss” which is the last step in the path towards “immortality.”

Destruction of the mind, “Mano nasha” and burning out all vasanas is “Vasana kshaya.” These two steps are a must for final success.

“Nirahara” means “no food”. In this context the food means all the sense objects of the world.

By constant application of the intellect without looking for the fruits of actions is the means for “Moksha.”

“Visyaha” means “the objective world”; “vinivartante” means “recede”.

What happens when it is not possible to control the mind is taken up in the next few slokas.

It is true that without knowing the “Brahman” one cannot eliminate the attachments. At the same time knowledge of the Brahman cannot arise without the elimination of attachments. Implementing the art of discrimination is the only step to overcome the attachments to the sense objects. This needs constant practice and the method is known as “Dhyana.” Keeping the constant memory of the Supreme and continuing to discharge one’s duty in course of time brings in success in the spiritual path.

Sloka 60

**YATATO HYAPI KAUNTEYA PURUSHASYA VIPASCHITAHA
INDRIYANI PRAMATHANI HARANTI PRASABHAM MANAHA**

O Arjuna, the turbulent senses do violently carry away the mind of an intelligent man, though he is striving to control them.

Vipaschitaha: intelligent.

The spiritual seeker, an intelligent person, in quest of “Moksha” does try his best to keep on the spiritual path. He knows what he is looking for and works hard at it. He does succeed in making progress because of his determination to achieve the goal. But, the force of habit before taking up the spiritual journey does topple him now and then.

This is because his mind has experienced the pleasures from the material world around him. The sense organs as we know do bring in a barrage of impulses about the objects around. The mind which has experienced the pleasures from some objects is keen to go and get more of those objects that bring in the sensation of happiness. There is a constant battle in the mind of the seeker between the impulse to go after the objects of pleasure and the intellect that warns against such a move.

The initial success in controlling the mind does bring in a sense of pride to the seeker. This pride (ego) becomes his weakness and he falls down from the heights achieved by his efforts. His mind gets carried away from being subordinate to the intellect to becoming slave to the desires.

The Lord is warning that the senses are very strong and they do not stop easily. They have such a great influence on the mind that the intellect becomes a weak force and the mind surrenders to the enemy. The enemy in this case is “Kama and krodha”.

Sthitaprajna is he who does not fall prey to the enemy (senses). He remembers the strength of the senses and is constantly on vigil.

During turbulence, the wind is so strong that it violently sweeps away many objects. The impulses received from the sense organs is compared to the wind and sometimes the impulses from one or many of the five sense organs gathers great force and become turbulent. The mind in such situations surrenders to this turbulence and does not listen any more to the voice of the intellect.

The seeker therefore has to remember that the first enemy in his path is his own sense organs. The master is he who prepares the proper battle plan and is ready to attack the enemy before the enemy attacks him.

Sloka 61

**TAANI SARVANI SAMYAMYA YUKTA ASEETA MATPARAHA
VASHE HI YASYENDRIYANI TASYA PRAJNA PRATISHTITA**

Having restrained all the senses, he should sit steadfast intent on Me. His wisdom is steady, whose senses are under control.

The Lord has given two steps towards attaining perfection in sadhana.

- a) Restraining all the senses.
- b) Sitting steadfast intent on Him.

Restraining all the senses means controlling all the five sense organs, the jnanendriyas. This has been discussed by us in detail already.

We are now advised about the intention of such an act. The wise man is he who remembers why he is carrying out a particular task. In this instance, it is the sadhaka in the process of attaining perfection in the art of total concentration on the Lord and attaining Moksha.

Let us remember about the meaning of the word “Upasana.” The upanisads, Gita being the summary of the upanisads, are about sitting near the feet of the master, at a lower level than that of the master and keenly listening to his teaching.

The second step given in this sloka refers to the art of upasana. Just sitting in front of the master does not in itself give the final end result. When the Lord says “sit steadfast intent on Me”, it means the mind of the seeker has to be diverted towards the thought on the Lord. The mind should not be wandering. Apart from controlling all the senses, the seeker has to think of the Lord. Keeping the mind blank and controlling the senses does not help in achieving the Moksha. “Sitting steadfast intent on Me” does not mean just sitting down in front of the master. The mind should not dwell on its stored vasanas or recollect events from the past. It should meditate on the various aspects of divinity and enjoy the art of contemplation. The mind should be sitting and not wandering.

“Tasya prajna pratishtita” refers to the seeker’s intellect. The intellect, master over the mind has to contemplate on the divinity.

The intellect of the sthitaprajna, the Lord says, fulfils this criterion and so the sthitaprajna should be considered as “Jivanmukta.” He is a liberated soul while still living in this world.

What we see in the outer world is known as the “objective world.” It is “Drishya”.(seen)
The “Atman” which the seeker is contemplating on, is the “subjective world.” It is the “Drashta.”
(seer)

Controlling the senses on their own does not make the seeker “a man of knowledge.” If it were true, all of us would be “men of knowledge” during our sleep. The mind should not be blank but should with joy seek the Atman within. The “shoonya” (voidness) philosophy of the Buddhists is not totally achievable. Apart from the rare few great men, we, the ordinary mortals need a point of concentration.

Sloka 62

**DHYAYATO VISHAYAN PUMSAHA SANGASTESHOO PAJAYATE
SANGAT SANJAYATE KAMAHA KAMAT KRODHOBHIJAYATE**

Brooding on the objects of the senses, man develops attachment to them; from attachment comes desire; from desire anger sprouts forth.

Sloka 63

**KRODAD BHAVATI SAMMOHAHA SAMMOHAT AMRITI VIBHRAMAHA
SMRITI BRAMSAD BUDDHI NASH BUDDHI NASHAT PRANASHYATI**

From anger proceeds delusion; from delusion, confused memory; from confused memory the ruin of the reason; due to the ruin of reason, he perishes.

These two slokas give a graphic description of the fall of the individual who looks for pleasures from the sense objects of the world. They are often quoted by masters while teaching their students/disciples and are considered as two of the best slokas in the entire Hindu philosophy. The gradual process of self-destruction is portrayed in here with great accuracy. All spiritual aspirants must recollect the meaning of these two slokas every day of their lives. They should always be on guard and look out for enemy in the guise as desires, entering the house(mind of the seeker), taking over the entire house (seeker’s life) and finally destroying the owner(spiritual seeker) of the house.

Dhyayato: thinking/meditating

Vishayan: about the objects

Pumsaha: the individual

Dhyanam in its truest sense is continuous contemplation on one object only and that object being “The Supreme Parabrahman.” This could be “Nirakra Nirguna Parabrahman or Sakara Saguna Parabrahman.”

In this context the word “dhyayato” has been used with reference to the material world. The object of desire remains as a vasana imprint on the mind of the seeker. The strength of the vasana imprint depends upon the intensity of the thought. Repeated input of the thought imprint from the same object

assists in further strengthening of the vasana. This is the meaning of the first quarter of the sloka: “Dhyayato vishayan pumsaha.”

This “Brooding on the object of the senses” will involuntarily make the seeker get attached to that thought. The process of attachment is “Sanga.” This is the meaning of the second quarter of the sloka: “sangasthe shoopajayate.”

The next step in progress of the thought is development of desire for the object. Stronger the attachment to a particular thought, more chances of it becoming a strong desire: “Sangat sanjayate kamaha.” “Kama” is desire for objects not possessed.

The objects of the senses that end up as desires could be anything from what we see, hear, smell, taste or feel from the world around us as perceived by the five sense organs and transmitted to the mind.

What happens next to these impulses?

- a) The mind does not take notice of any,
- or
- b) the mind might like particular object/objects,
- or
- c) it does not like the object / hates the object / is frightened of the object.

The brooding on the objects referred to in these slokas is towards the objects of desire.

Let us now draw a graph of the sequence of events:

- 1) Impulses received by the mind from sense organs.
- 2) The mind of the seeker likes the impulse (gets attached to that feeling: sanga) and stores the same in its memory bank.
- 3) Seeker starts feeling that it would like more of the same and wishing for it. (desire: kama)
- 4) He becomes frustrated and angry (krodha) because
 - does not get it
 - someone else gets it
 - gets it but loses it.
- 5) Delusion sets in during states of extreme anger. (sammoha)
- 6) He loses power of discrimination and forgets his status, the surroundings and shouts abuses not realizing what he is saying and who he is dealing with. (smriti bramsha)
- 7) He ends up by being the architect of his own destruction. (pranashyati)

This is the graphic description of the path to hell as painted by the Lord.

Kama and krodha are the two eternal comrades of evil. They cannot stay separately. Frustration in the process of fulfilling the desire brings in anger that ends up with acts that ruin the individual.

Let us not forget that the desire is not in the object, it is not the defect of the object but it is in the mind of the perceiver.

Mahabharata, our epic, is a beautiful example to understand this sloka. Prince Duryodhana who developed a strong thirst to rule the kingdom did not get his wish fulfilled. He ended up on the battlefield of Kurukshetra that saw nearly ruin of the dynasty, massive destruction and death of soldiers in 18 battalions and finally his own death.

Let us therefore understand that we should “Work for tomorrow but do not for pleasures that tomorrow will/can bring. Depending on the work of today and depending upon the actions of the past days (including past births) tomorrow will bring the results automatically.”

Sri Ramakrishna says:

“Beware of your thoughts and everything will be all right with you.” It simply means that we should analyze the thoughts by making use of our intellectual capacity of reasoning before converting any of them into actions.

In a different way we can say that the contemplation on the “Divine” constantly would help in developing “Desire for the Divine”. Contrary to the sensual world, it would bring in a sense of “Peace and tranquility.”

Sloka 64

RAGA DWESHA VIYUKTAIS TU VISHAYAAN INDRIYAIS CARAN ATMAVASAIR VIDHEYATMA PRASADAM ADHIGACHATI

But, the self-controlled man, free from attraction and repulsion, with his senses under restraint, though moving among objects, attains peace.

Two words of note in this sloka are:
Vidheyatma and atma vashai.

Vidheyatma refers to the control over the mind, and
Atma vashai refers to the restraint over the senses.

“Moving among objects”: it refers to the result of association with life. Life is living and about association with people/objects. To live and sustain ourselves in this world we have to associate with the life around. It is all about either attraction or repulsion to the ones we get attached to. “Raga” is attachment and “dwesha” is hatred towards the individual/objects possessed.

The life will be peaceful for he, who does not experience either attraction or repulsion. The sloka is about the method of experiencing the “Peace” while living in this world. Such an individual is a “Sthitaprajna”.

How can one honestly have such a control?

We have to look at the life in the army. The army has different cadres from officers of highest rank to the foot soldiers. There is an order of living among these soldiers. There is peace abiding in the army camp. Members of every cadre carry on their duties and at the same time there is control over each cadre from the ones immediately higher rank. There is an orderly control over each cadre.

Our body has also the different cadres. We have:

The Atman.

The intellect.

The mind with “Kama, krodha, lobha, moha” in every individual.

The sense organs.

The life is understood when we compare it to the chariot.

The chariot is a means to take the rider from place “a” to “b”.

The horses run the chariot.

There is a need for charioteer to control and guide the horses.

The individual wishing to move from place “a to b” will be inside the chariot and will have to carry his tool of action.

The chariot has to pass through the busy life and take the individual to his destination.

Let us now get back to the individual:

Each one has to move from place “a to b” in our lives.

The learned elders say that the final place to reach is where there abides everlasting “Peace.”

All the stations in life before the final destination of “Peace” will have a mixture of happiness and sorrow.

The final destination of “Peace” is “Moksha”. (salvation)

The desire to reach the final destination should be “kama”;

Anger at what prevents us from reaching the destination should be “Krodha”;

Greed at wishing to attain salvation should be “Lobha”;

Delusion towards the beauty of the final destination should be “Moha.”

These are the four horses on our chariot of life.

The horses as we know can run riot. Kama, krodha, lobha and moha can run riot and destroy us if directed towards anything other than salvation.

The “reins” on the horses are to control the horses.

The sense organs are the reins in our body.

The intellect is the charioteer and

The mind is the individual on the chariot wishing to reach the destination.

In the army, the junior cadre of soldiers obey the senior cadre officers diligently. They are not allowed to run amuck. There will be no order in that camp where the rules of each cadre are not followed.

Similarly, our senses have to be under the control of the mind, the mind under the control of the intellect and the intellect under the control of antaratma.

The sloka refers to the control of the senses: “atma vashai”. Restraining the senses by the mind is implicit in this word.

The sloka also refers to control of the mind: “Vidheyatma”. The mind has to be obedient to the intellect is implicit in this word.

The self-controlled man free from attraction and repulsion:

The mind receives the impulses from the material world and keeps a store of what it likes and dislikes in its memory bank. It has the capacity to go into this bank and recollect those feelings. When it does so, it loses track of its progress to destination. By falling prey to either of these two feelings, it fails to experience the “Peace.”

Where the intellect comes into play and controls the mind from falling prey to the attractions and repulsions, the mind can carry its ordained duties and the seeker will finally experience the Peace.

The charioteer has to hold on to the reins and control the horses.
The individual has to hold on to his tool of action and carry on his duty.

The mind is the “individual” and
The intellect is the “charioteer.”

The word “Self control” used in this sloka refers to the control of the mind. The mind should be under the control of the intellect and not slave to the senses. The intellect has to say, “you do your duty and I will control the senses.”

We can also say “Be a master over yourself.” Without such self-mastery, Self-realisation is not possible. The Atman should be the guide for the seeker in his daily activities. This is the sure way to success.

Sloka 65

**PRASADE SARVA DUKHANAAM HANIRASYOPA JAYATE
PRASANNA CHETASO HYASHU BUDDIHI PARYAVATISHTATE**

In tranquillity, all the sorrow is destroyed. For, the intellect of the tranquil minded is soon anchored in equilibrium.

Prasada in this context is to be understood as the tranquil state of the mind.

After all, as we know by now that the mind due to its association with the material world around comes to experience happiness and sorrow in various proportions depending upon the karmas of the past.

It is also true that in states of happiness we do not ponder on anything other than the happiness experienced. We are not worried. On the other hand we would like the experience to be ever lasting. But, alas, the experience of happiness from the material world can never be eternal. In course of time the happiness is followed by sorrow, it has “a birth, growth, decay and death.”

The sloka therefore takes us only to “Sarva dukhanaam”. (it does not say “sarva sukhanaam.”) It means “during all the sorrows.” It is only during times of sorrow that we ponder about why, what, why only me etc. Many a times we do not have an answer for the same. We might go to all available sources to get answers to our question and still we will not get any satisfaction.

Only in tranquillity all the sorrow is destroyed, the Lord says.
How?

“The intellect of the tranquil mind is soon anchored in equilibrium” is the Lord’s explanation.

The answer to the question “why” will be found by the reasoning capacity, the intellect. The intellect that is pure and in contact with the “antaratman” is able to have a firm control over the mind. The mind that works as subordinate to the intellect is content to be subservient to its immediate boss. It is happy to accept the sloka 38 in this chapter, “Sukha dukhe same’ kritva” (see week 40 in 2006). It is the meaning of the word “tranquil minded is soon anchored in equilibrium.”

Keeping the mind even under all circumstances is the only means to gain purity. The pure mind does not get troubled by the sorrows in life.

By directing the mind to the intellect, by letting the mind be subservient to the intellect, by the intellect keeping in constant contact with the “Light within of the Atman”, no sorrows will hinder the spiritual progress of the aspirant.

The aspirant will have an easy ride on his boat that carries him on the ocean of samsara and reach the shore at the other end. No wave is strong enough to disrupt the passage of the boat. The seeker will be calm and collected in all sorts of adverse weathers that affect his life as he is sure that his Lord will make him reach the destination. It is the “Prasada” by the Lord for the tranquil state of the seeker.

Such an aspirant is “Sthitaprajna.”

Let us ponder into the various types of sorrows that we experience in our lives and see what the sastras have to say about the same.

The sastras declare that all sorrows and sufferings could be traced to one of the following three sources. All the upanisads teach us to utter the mantra “Shanti” three times at the end of every prayer. They are the blessings we request the Lord to help us to overcome the problems that hinder us in our path to attain “Salvation.” They are:

- a) Adhyatmika
- b) Adhibhoutika
- c) Adhidaivika.

Adhyatmika: these are the problems arising subjectively in the sense like laziness, lack of faith, insincerity and other negative thoughts/actions.

Adhibhoutika: these are the problems arising from the phenomenal world. By this I mean, fires, floods, landslides etc. It is no exaggeration to say that these are man made. Some of them made over the centuries with utter disrespect to the nature.

Adhidaivika: these are problems we face by the wrath of the supreme power above about which we either are ignorant or do not care to know of. “Panchamaha bhootas” in their interaction can bring about problems like lightning and thunder that bring us sorrow.

Peace is attained by control of all sense-organs constantly and by constant meditation on the Self. This gives the mind purity. In course of time, such a mind dissolves in the Atman and that is called liberation.

The first half of the verse says that equanimity in pain and sorrow makes one peaceful. Happiness is peace. Peace is happiness. This peace of mind is also termed prasada because it is the grace of God.

All the turbulent rivers lose their turbulence when they merge into the ocean. Similarly, a man who can control the agitations caused by the sense-organs and the mind (by absorbing himself in the contemplation of the Atman) will attain peace. He is said to have merged himself in the ocean of bliss.

Sloka 66

**NAASTI BUDDHIR AYUKTASYA NA CHAYUKTASYA BHAVANA
NA CHABHAVAYATAHA SHANTIR ASHANTASYA KUTAHA SUKHAM**

To the unsteady mind there is no knowledge of the Self. To the unsteady mind there is no meditation. To the unmeditative no peace and to the man without peace, how can there be happiness?

The Lord is teaching us the positive by bringing in the negatives.

When we say "Peace" many a times we do not really mean the "Peace" from the spiritual point of view. The word "Peace" is used many a times without actually knowing its true meaning.

Peace could be:

- Negative peace;
- Positive peace.

Negative peace:

After the passage of experience of deep sorrow which all of us go through in our lives, many a times there is a period when there are no more events that bring in new waves of sorrow. At the same time there are no events that mask the sorrow by bringing in happiness. We tend to say "I am peaceful now". This is "negative peace." Absence of sorrow is wrongly interpreted by many as "Peace." The peace here is conditioned by sorrow.

For examples:

- The eerie peace after a major tragedy.
- The peace before the storm (like the volcanic eruption - appearance of peace outwardly but boiling up with disturbances within.)
- The scenario of cold war.

Tragedy: Deep grief followed by a period of no further tragedies - feeling that one is peaceful after the events of that tragedy - through contrast from sorrow, one experiences mental tranquility.

Positive peace:

It is the peace that emanates from within the soul of the seeker and has no bearing with preceding state of sorrow. The seeker may go through states of sorrow or states of happiness but is not perturbed by either. He is "at peace with himself" at all times.

Meditating on the world of objects does not bless us with "Positive Peace". The peace experienced is only momentary.

Even for success in the material life, to get the final end result of success, there has to be a long period of education both theoretical and practical. There also, the student has to learn to curb his desires brought in by the senses during the period of study. He needs a steady mind to get the knowledge in the specialty chosen.

To an unsteady mind, (for a student) there is no gain of knowledge towards the specialty of his choice.

Constantly meditating on the subject to study is pre-requisite for success. The mind can either be towards the world of senses or towards the subject. It cannot be in two places at any one time.

The same rule has to be applied towards the spiritual study for the seeker. His mind has to be in constant meditation towards the atman within which is a treasure house of "Ananda."

To summarise the same:

Sadhana: effort in life towards fulfilling the objectives both short term and long term.

Long term objective: experience of everlasting happiness - "Peace".

Positive Peace is a state of experience of everlasting peace.

To get the Peace need to gain the knowledge of the Atman.
To gain the knowledge of the Atman, need to meditate on the same.
Without meditation and determination, concentration is not possible.
Success in meditation is “Yuktaha”
Failure to concentrate is “Ayuktaha.”
Success is possible by developing “sadbhavana” on the Atman.
At the same time, should not dwell on happiness from the objects around.
Control of the wandering mind from multiple objects around to one single “Atman” is the only means.

Meditating on the “Atman within” gives “Positive Peace.” It is everlasting peace.
Hence the last quarter of this sloka: "to the unmeditative no peace, and to the man without peace, how can there be happiness?"

Another interpretation to: “To the unsteady mind there no knowledge of the Self.”

The mind will be unsteady in he who has a number of desires. Due to contact with the physical world, it is but natural to get more and more desires. These in turn bring in more desires. We have already discussed the problems about desires.

If the same mind is directed towards the Atman within the unsteady boat can be steadied easily. There is less room for disturbing the mind when the object of desire is only one and remains the same constantly.

Those who have fulfilled the desires of the past and wiped off the vasana imprints and do not allow new imprints to be formed in their minds are known as: ”Aptakamahas.”

The state of perfection will be seen in that sadhaka where there shall be not be a cause or suffering either to others or to himself either in the outer world or inner world. This state can be achieved only on annihilation totally of ignorance. This is a blessing from the Lord when one truly and sincerely requests Him for “Jnana Prasada.”

It is no use simply to talk of “Peace” and pray for “Peace”. It has to be implemented with actions to bring in peace.

Such a positive Peace is to be seen in the “sthitaprajna.” (man of steady wisdom - see sloka 55, week 10, et sqq.) As he has dropped his ego and succeeded in merging the mind with the Atman through the process of steady contemplation, his constant companions will be “Peace and Happiness.”

Sloka 67

**INDRIYANNAM HI CHARATAAM YANMANONU VIDHEEYATE
TADASYA HARATI PRAJNAAM VAYUR NAVAM IVAMMBHASI**

For, the mind that follows the wandering senses, carries away the discrimination, just as the wind carries away a boat on the waters.

The boat: Life that carries us to the destination of our choice is compared to the boat. The destination referred to in the sloka is “Salvation.”

The wind: This refers to the gale force/turbulent impulses from the world around sometime or other in the passage of life.

A spiritual aspirant with a good control over the mind will be sailing along the seas smoothly.

When the senses send in impulses of choice or when the mind suddenly starts dwelling on the stored memories of the past, the calmness is disturbed. The influence of the results of past actions is responsible for the gale force that sets in. The control over the boat is proportionately reduced. The aspirant will continue to use the oar to navigate in the stormy weathers but the distraction will direct the boat in another direction.

The tug of war between the impulses and control of the mind can lead the aspirant away from the destination or the boat itself might sink. When it sinks the aspirant and anybody who is also carried on the boat will have to swim to the shore. Many a times death or serious injury befalls on such victim/victims.

The mind on one side is exposed to the outer world via the senses. On the opposite side it has the intellect with the Soul within.

Directing constantly to within using the power of intellectual's discrimination and controlling the senses firmly and steadily is the secret to success.

The periods of turbulence has to be looked upon as the "test" by the Lord. The master has to test his student not only during the final exams but like the present day education, test is on a "continuous assessment" basis and sudden on the spot tests without giving any notice.

Instead of feeling sorry for himself, the aspirant has to feel happy during periods of turbulence in his life. The fact that the Lord has not forgotten His devotee, the aspirant should be prepared to face the test and pass the test with merit. With total control over the mind during periods of struggle the sthitaprajna achieves success.

Govern your mind is the message from the Lord through this sloka.

Sloka 68

**TASMADYASYA MAHABAHO NIGRUHEETANI SARVASHAHA
INDRIYANNENDRIYARTHEBHYAS TASYA PRAJNA PRATISHTITA**

Therefore, O Arjuna, his knowledge is steady whose senses are completely restrained from the sense-objects.

Let us note clearly that when the Lord says "restrain the senses", we must know that the senses include both the five sense organs and the mind.

We are asked clearly "to restrain" the senses and not asked to close the senses and direct the thought towards the Atman within. The Lord has sent us into this world blessed with five working sense organs and the working mind. He is advising us to learn the art to control them, not partial control, but total control. The senses should not be made defunct. They should be in perfect working order constantly.

We have the "Antararjyothi", the "Inner Light of Wisdom." It is our duty to keep it constantly lit and at the same time steady. It should neither be switched off nor its light be blocked. This is essential to be on the pathway to Liberation and to reach the destination safe and sound.

What is good to reach the destination is the lesson to learn for all. At the same time, what is evil and which prevents us from reaching the destination is also the lesson to learn. The attitude with which the senses are directed towards the sense objects is the deciding factor in achieving success or failure in our mission of life. To perceive an object with lust and covetousness is sin. To perceive the same

object with adoration and beauty created by the Lord is virtue. To see the body of a person as an object for fulfilling the lustful desires is a sin and to see the same body as a temple of God is the virtue.

The success in our mission of life is achieved when we learn the art of sanctifying the five sense organs and the mind. Thus we can contact only divinity in the world around with our senses.

The Lord is reminding us repeatedly to be vigilant. Control the sense organs and the mind is His constant reminder to the spiritual seeker. These organs take us from preyas to sreyas. By directing towards the world of objects, we travel in the path to preyas. By directing to the world of divinity, we can travel in the path to sreyas.

Please learn the art of: What to see, how to see, why to see, is the instruction by the master. The word “Seeing” does not just mean “eyes” only but all the sense organs and the mind.

Going back to the scene of Gitopadesham, let the reins on the horses be in the hand of the charioteer, let the charioteer be the Lord and let Arjuna, the mind stand up and fight the evil and uphold the dharma.

Step one in the study by the student is to have the candle light lit within the room, see that the windows are open to let the air in, close the curtains to stop from getting distracted with the scenes outside and also not to let the air blow out the candle light within the room.

Step two is to see that all his books are at hand and to concentrate on the study.

By following this principle, he is in the right path of understanding the subject under study and mastering the same.

Sloka 69

**YAA NISHA SARVA BHOOTANAAM TASYAAM JAGRATI SAMYAMEE
YASYAAM JAGRATI BHOOTANI SAA NISHAA PASHYATO MUNEHE**

That which is night to all, in it the sage is awake. Where all beings are awake, that is the night for the sage who sees the Self.

“Jagat Mithya and Paramatma Satya” is the message from the learned seers to their disciples. It simply means that the only reality is “The Parabrahman who pervades all.” The rest is only an illusion. The world as such does not exist from the point of view of “Advaitin” (non dual philosopher.) This is the vision of the realised soul.

Whereas majority of us perceive the world as real and are immersed in worldly activities. We are attached to objects of the world and are caught in the net of “Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya.”

In this second group, there are few that are aware of the Parabrahman but are unable to grasp its significance.

There is another group of men that are oblivious to the idea of the God and live the life pursuing the pleasures. We can say that they are “egocentric”.

From the point of view of the Advaitin, “Maya” or “Illusion” is ignorance. Ignorance is compared to darkness and knowledge to brightness. On this basis of understanding, the “sage” referred to in this sloka is a man of true knowledge and knows the difference between the real and false. (Nitya and

Anitya - Eternal and Impermanent) He is said to be “Awake” as he is living in “light of spiritual knowledge.” To the rest who live in world of attachments it is the night as far as the knowledge of the Atman is concerned.

This is the meaning of the first half of the verse.

"Where all beings are awake that is the night for the sage who sees the Self": This refers to the physical day light as compared to the spiritual day light for the sage.

Technically speaking majority of us are awake during day time. It is the time we are involved in various activities that bind us to the world around us. During the physical daytime, the sage is spiritually living in night because he is not attached to the world around him. He is totally immersed in the “Atman” and does not see the world around him. (living in night.)

There are some sages who spend their nights in meditation and sleep for few hours in the daytime. The second half of the sloka refers to these also.

There are some other realised souls, who have mastered the art of withdrawal from the physical world and are still awake during the daytime. They are said to be in the world but not truly living in the world. They are physically awake in daytime but spiritually sleeping in relation to the physical world.

Physically awake - spiritually ignorant: majority of us. Conditioned by the time of the day and immersed in worldly activities. Unaware of the Atman within and all around.

Physically sleeping but spiritually awake to the Atman within and all around: this is the way of living of the realised soul.

This does not mean that the yogi should remain awake at night and sleep during the day. He must learn the art of meditation with self-discipline and can still be part of the world and work for its welfare. This is the true picture of a “sthitaprajna.”

Sloka 70

**APPORYAMAANAM ACHALAPRATISHTAM SAMUDRAMAAPAHA PRAVISHANTI
YADVAT
TADVAT KAAMAA YAM PRAVISHANTI SARVAM SA SHANTIMAAPNOTI NA KAAMA
KAAMEE.**

He attains Peace into whom all desires enter as waters enter the ocean, which is filled from all sides, and remains unmoved. But not for the man who craves the desires.

The beauty of “Peace” experienced and lived by a man of true wisdom, “Jnani” is explained with reference to a simile of an ocean.

Many a times we hear people using the word “Ocean of Peace.” This sloka gives us its explanation.

How do we describe the sea for a young and inquisitive child?

The reply should be:

The waves, ripples, foam you see now and which lie beyond your vision around the world, in every seashore are all in the ocean. You can also see storms and disturbances now and then in the ocean. Apart from these, ocean also has a number of different forms of sea animals in it. Know that these are only on the surface of the ocean. Deep, very deep in the sea, it is all quiet and serene. The sunlight

does not penetrate so deep and the storms do not disturb the serenity. Still deeper lie the treasures of the ocean like the rich pearls.

Imagine the vastness of the sea, its deep bed, miles of width, receiving the water from the rivers flowing into it and also from the rainfall. Despite all the waters entering, it seems to be quiet and motionless. One cannot add or subtract the total volume of the ocean. All the waters that enter into it as rivers, does not increase its volume. If the rivers cease to flow, the expansion of the ocean will be the same.

At the same time, the sun absorbs the water from the sea that is the precursor for the rains. But, the process does not shrink the sea and it still seems to be quiet and motionless.

Compare this to the tanks, small wells and lakes. They overflow and sometimes burst their banks when the flow of water into them is beyond their capacity to withstand. When the heat of the sun is too strong, many a times, they go dry too.

In a yogi full of peace within himself, like the ocean, despite the bombardment of the sensuous impulses from the world around, there is no disturbance. He is not perturbed. The rivers of desires get absorbed within him but the sea of peace remains ever calm.

But the peace within the majority of us is like the small well or a lake. Our reservoir of peace is too small and shallow. The desirous impulses apparently make the well of peace within overflow but soon the banks burst and the peace is shattered.

What we need to understand from this sloka: Keep the ocean of peace within you full. Let your mind be ever calm. You have the great ocean of peace within you. Do not let the worldly desires and hatreds disturb that peace abiding within you. Let your desires be less and less and let your attitude be “Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu.” (Peace for all in this universe.) The noble desires of universal welfare do not make us lose the peace.

The Lord is advising us not to harbor selfish desires but to give joy to others. Selfish desires make us spiritually poor and desires of universal welfare make us spiritually rich.

A sthitaprajna, the Lord says is constantly in a state of peaceful joy, like the ocean. He is a jnani and he does not seek for worldly pleasures. He absorbs every joy that the life brings to him but absorbs the same in his state of “Brahmananda.”

Let us therefore learn the art of the spirit of detachment in attachment to the worldly desires.

Sloka 71

**VIHAAYA KAMAAN YAHA SARVAAN PUMAMS CHARATI NISPRUHAHA
NIRMAMO NIRAHANKARAHA SA SHANTIM ADIGACCHATI**

That man who, abandoning all desires, lives without longing for them, without the sense of “I” and “mine”, attains “Peace.”

The Lord has given three conditions to be fulfilled for the seeker who is longing for “Peace.” They are:

- a) Abandoning of all desires.
- b) No longing for the desires.
- c) Dropping the sense of “I” and “Mine”.

Abandoning all desires means:

Freeing from the compulsions of desires from past experiences in life and no craving for the new impulses that enter into the mind through the sense organs.

The true goal for the spiritual seeker is “Peace”, the “Eternal Peace”, while living in this world of objects. So far, from the 55th sloka in this chapter, the Lord has enumerated the qualities of the “Sthitaprajna”, the man of steady wisdom.

How to recognise a “Sthitaprajna” was the question by Arjuna.

The reply through these slokas is:

The Sthitaprajna does not have a name plate in front of his house with the board: “Sthitaprajna’s house.”

He lives in constant peace within himself and still is an active member of the society. He has reached such a state of mental maturity wherein he has transcended the desire for “Peace.” He has realised that the peace is within himself in abundance.

When we say that the true goal for the seeker is “Peace”, we must accept that the initial steps have to be taken with a purpose of attaining the peace. There should be a desire for the same.

To experience the peace, the seeker has to get up from the state of *tamas* and move up to *rajas*. He should have a yearning to be successful in his quest to find peace. This can be compared to the earlier part of one’s education. We start off with a definite motive to take up the study in any selected field.

By making a successful progress, we reach the stage of higher studies. It is like entering from “Ph.D.” to “Post Doctorate” level of study. Only a successful student who has reached that stage will understand the meaning of “no further desire to get the Post Doctorate degree.” He will be working in his lab like an absent-minded professor, deeply immersed and happy with this work in the laboratory.

When the Lord says, abandoning all desires, living without longing for them, without the sense of “I” and “mine”, the advice is directed to such sincere seekers who have reached the level of entry into the Post Doctorate Fellowship.

This is in truest sense, “*sanyasa*” of all the desires. Hence this sloka is considered by the experts as the summary of “*Sanyasa Yoga*” in this second chapter. This chapter, *Samkhya Yoga* has summary of all the four main paths of *yogas*: *Karma*, *Jnana*, *Bhakti* and *Dhyana*.

Dhyana yoga is also known as *Sanyasa yoga*.

In our day to day experience, when we are in deep sleep there is no trace of ego left. We do not have any more “I” and “mine” sense only in that state. We are dead to the world of objects. We are so peaceful in deep sleep without any trace of happiness or sorrow.

The seeker who would like to experience and live in this state of “eternal peace” has to be constantly asleep to the experiences of the phenomenal world brought in by the senses and stored in the mind.

Only by dropping the longing for the desire to attain peace, the seeker will reach the state of “*sthitaprajna*.” He is truly the man with true wisdom. He is a real *jnani*. He has no sense of agency and ownership to the objects of the world including his own physical body.

Another important point to note in this sloka: the Lord does not put any condition of caste, sex, religion or creed to experience the “Peace.” “Peace” is not the birth right of any one individual or any one group of individuals. It is the universal right for every individual who is born into this world and everyone has a right to long for it and work to attain it.

Sloka 72

YESHA BRAHMI STHITHI PARTHA NAINAAM PRAPYA VIMUHYATI STHITVA SYAAM ANTAKALEPI BRAHMA NIRVANAM RUCHATI

O Arjuna, having obtained this Brahmi state, man is not deluded. Being established in this even at the end of life, man attains oneness with Brahman.

Brahmi sthithi: state of Brahman.

What is Brahman?

It is "Satyam, Jnanam and Anantam" the Vedas declare.

It is "Truth, Knowledge and Infinite."

Brahman is "Infinite Peace" contrary to fleeting pleasures of the worldly life.

Attaining the knowledge of this Eternal Truth and living in "Infinite Peace" abiding within oneself while living this life on this earth is "Brahmi Sthithi."

The Lord asserts that establishing in this state is the means to attain oneness with the Brahman - the word used is "Brahma Nirvanam." It is what the Vedas label as "Moksha."

The delusion as we have discussed before is due to the fleeting pleasures and pains from the objective world. When one looks upon an unreal as real it is labelled as delusion. Considering the pleasures from the physical world as permanent happiness is delusion. This delusion disappears on obtaining the "Brahmi sthithi." An individual who thought of himself as a separate entity and realised that he is no other than an amsha of "Parabrahman", (Tat Tvam Asi) is said to have obtained "Brahmi sthithi."

The second half of the sloka refers to establishing in such a state even at the end of life. The word "even" is to be noted carefully. It is a well known fact that the result comes from actions. Actions first and results later. Some results come quickly and some take a long time. The result, "Brahma Nirvanam" has to come also from our actions. But, it does take a long time and it is hard work to achieve this result. This knowledge has to dawn on us. It may dawn on in this birth or in future births depending upon our past karmas. As soon as it dawns, we are said to be on the path to Liberation. Even when this happens near the end of the present life, man attains Brahma Nirvanam, the Lord reiterates.

This is the message from the Lord to all seekers. He wants us to constantly remember this truth and work at achieving the end result. It does not matter when the result comes. Even if it dawns towards the end of one's life, he is sure to unite with the Parabrahman.

Most of our actions are due to our attachment to our own physical body, family and friends and the objects of the world. By following the Lord's teaching and working on the principle of "Karmanyevaadhikarasthe maa phaleshu kadachana" we can succeed in our mission of life. The struggle to achieve the end result is worthwhile. Freedom from earthly desires and egotism is the recipe to the end result, "Moksha"

There is a Sanskrit word "anubhooti" which means "experience."

Brahma Nirvanam is experience of the "Brahman."

All our experiences are due to the inferences at the level of mind and intellect. These are the inferences to the sense objects of the world brought in by the sense organs. Experience of Brahman through such experiences is termed as "Aparoksha anubhhoti." It will not give full picture of Brahman and is not a true experience. There is no such thing as experiencing Brahman. It is only becoming one with the ultimate reality.

To experience the “Brahman” in total we have to transcend the mind and intellect. That experience is known as “Paroksha anubhhoti.”

He who apparently experiences “Aparoksha anubhooti” is the jivatman. He is the atman attached to the body due to ignorance. The world of objects cannot give a direct experience of the Brahman.

He who experiences “Paroksha anubhooti” is “Jivanmukta”, a liberated soul. Sthitaprajna, whose qualities described by the Lord in these slokas is a “Jivanmukta”. Through the process of negation from the known to the unknown he has “Paroksha anubhooti” of the Brahman while living in the world of objects and has discarded all worldly pleasures.

Iti Srimad Bhagawadgitas Upanishadsu Brahma Vidyayam Yoga Sastre Sri Krishnarjuna Samvade Samkhya Yoga Naama Dwiteeyodhyayha.

Thus completes the second chapter, The Samkhya Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, in the Srimad Bhagawadgita which is a Upanisad, Brahma Vidya and Yoga Sastra.

Jaya Guru Datta
Hari Om Tat Sat.
Sri Guru Charanaravindarpanamastu.
Sri Krishnarpanamastu.