

## 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.**

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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 13: KSHETRA-KSHETRAJNA-VIBHAGA-YOGA

(Kshetra: Field; Kshetrajna: Knower of the field)

### INTRODUCTION

We are entering into the realms of jnana kanda section of the Vedas. The true realisation of the Atman within is the theme of the last of the triad “Tat Tvam Asi”. We are expected to realise the truth that we are in essence the Atman within and not the physical body with its ego. In this context it is important to note:

We should be able to realise that the Atman within is the real subject that sees all and The objective world including our own physical body is the object.

We are all used to consider that we are the subject and that what we see in the outside world is the object. This is the wrong notion that has to be cleared.

To know this truth is to “experience the truth (Atman) to be nothing than ourselves.”

Mere withdrawing from our identification with the world of objects and continuing to live in the world of our own thoughts and emotions is not the way to reach the “Reality” (Parabrahman). The goal is also not to meditate on the forms of the Lord or to repeat His glory and thereby get into a state of blissful un-awareness of the outer world.

The seeker has to transcend even the formless world of thoughts and ideas to reach the land of our true “Eternal Nature” by:

Actions according to the Karma kanda: Association with the body, conducting actions as the servant of the divine.

Actions according to the Upasana kanda: Meditating on the knowledge (upasana kanda) in association with the jivatma.

Hanuman:

Deha budhyasmi daaso’ham  
Jiva budhya tvamamshakaha,  
Swaatma budhya tvamevham iti me’ nischita matihi.

When I associate myself with the physical body, I am your servant,  
When I associate with the Jivatma, I am wearing suit over You (Atman),  
When I associate with You totally, I am one with You (as Rama.)

We have now entered the third section (Asi) of the sacred text “Sreemad Bhagawadgita” (Tat Tvam Asi - That Thou Art).

What is “That” we are referring to?

“The Supreme Parabrahman” about which the seeker has gone in search of is the “Parabrahman” and it is “Tat”.

“That” dressed up in matter is “Thou.” Undressing the matter leaves the real eternal soul and it is “Asi”.

The masters have expressed their unanimous opinion that “The Parabrahman” is not to be found in any far off place that is not accessible for us, the ordinary human mortals, but a spark of Him is residing within each of us as “The Atman.” So they have said “Thou Art That.”

How can one see “The Atman”?

The answer is simply “no”. We cannot see the Atman.

It is like watching the vast universe through a telescope. However much powerful the telescope is (even if it can show us the entire universe), one thing is common in all telescopes is that the person who is seeing through the telescope cannot see himself. There is “the seer” who is the individual watching through the telescope and “the seen” which is the “universe”.

We, the mortals can look all round, use all sophisticated tools available but cannot see the “Atman” within. No individual can see himself except through the medium of mirrors or water or the pictures taken of him but all these are only his reflection.

The last six chapters bring out this aspect and teach the seeker to learn the art of seeing “The Atman.” When I say, seeing, I mean not seeing with the physical eyes but with the eye of wisdom. We are used to see the world with the instruments of perception we have, namely: deha (body), indriya (senses), manas (mind), buddhi (intellect). “Tatva Vicharana” (analysis of “Tat”) needs “antahkarana suddhi”. Purity by action is “karma” conducted according to the sastras and by clarity of knowledge obtained by study of the sacred texts, The Upanisads and the Gita. The seeker needs blessings of the divine (devata anugraha) which is conduct of poojas and rituals as enshrined in the sastras and by the blessings of the guru (guru anugraha).

The sastras do say that the Atman cannot be seen even with the eye of wisdom. The only way out of this dilemma is “to unite with the Seer” which is “the Atman”. Without the Atman within, we are not alive and if we are not alive we cannot see Atman. The real “seer” in us is “The Atman.”

These last six chapters together are known as “Jnana shatkam” as they deal with the subject of “The Knowledge of the Parabrahman.”

Four out of the six chapters in this triad have a title that ends up with the words “vibhaga yoga”. “Vibhaga” means “separation/division”.

Kshetra Kshetrajna Vibhaga Yoga gives us an idea about the kshetra (field) and kshetrajna (knower of the field) and also the art of filtering away what constitutes the kshetra. Taking away the kshetra by developing the knowledge of the Atman and realising who is “kshetrajna” is the theme of this chapter.

This chapter takes the seeker into the realms of “real knowledge” which is “Jnana”. This chapter is the true “Jnana Yoga” in the spiritual sense. Chapter 4, “The Jnana Yoga” is an introduction to the subject of jnana.

The first chapter started with the scene of the battlefield of Kurukshetra and the war between the cousins Pandavas and Kauravas.

We are now taken into the real battlefield which is “The mind”. The good qualities and bad qualities are both within the same mind and in a sense they are the cousins. The war between good and bad qualities is the real war for the spiritual seeker.

In the spiritual war, the battlefield is “The mind” and the armies on opposite sides are the good and the bad qualities.

We get a hint about this theme in the second chapter. Slokas 41 and 44 in that chapter use the word “vyavasayatmika buddhi”. “Vyavasaya” is “agriculture” and “Vyavasayatmika buddhi” is “field of knowledge in comparison to the agricultural field.”

The word “Kshetra” (field) refers to the “buddhi” (knowledge) and who really makes the “buddhi” function is “The Atman” within who shines the field. The Atman is “Kshetrajna”.

The word “krish” in “Krishna” refers to “krishi” which is “farming”. The Kshetrajna in each of us is “Krishna”.

The word “Kshetra” also refers to “a place.” A place of pilgrimage is usually a holy place. The Supreme who is said to reside in that holy place is “Kshetrajna”.

In this chapter we get a detailed description of “Kshetra” (body) and “Kshetraja” (Atman).

The body composed of five elements comes to life only in the presence of “The Energy” which is the Atman. To know the soul which is “The Atman” we have to learn the art of detaching (undressing) the various components that make up the body. We will learn the various components that make up the “Kshetra” and by learning that whatever we see/hear/touch/smell/taste is not “The Atman” (Neti) we will arrive at the answer for who is “Kshetrajna”. Really speaking the entire universe is only a part of the “Kshetra.”

The soul within (Atman) identifying with the body becomes “Jivatma”. It becomes “jiva” when it forgets its true identity. The chapter will help the seeker to know “Jiva, Jivatma and Paramatma” and move from the stage of Jiva to Paramatma. This involves clearing away the pool of vasanas that are stored in the mind through the several births and deaths and not to entertain the entry of new vasanas into the mind.

The “Jiva” we refer to is not “the Kshetra” (field). He is really “Kshetrajna”. Because of ignorance he has identified with the body and forgotten his true identity.

## **Sloka Zero**

### **Arjuna uvacha:**

**PRAKRUTIM PURUSHAM CHAIVA KSHETRAM KSHETRAJNAM EVA CHA  
ETAD VEDITUM ICCHAMI JNANAM JNEYAM CHA KESHAVA**

### **Arjuna said:**

**O kesava, “prakriti, purusha”, “kshetra, kshetrajna”, “knowledge and that which is to be known”, these I wish to know.**

prakrutim: the nature;  
purusham: the purusha, atman;  
cha eva (chaiva) : and also;  
kshetram: the field;  
kshetrajna: the knower of the field;  
eva cha: and also;  
etad: all this;  
veditum: to know;  
ichami: wish to;

jnanam: knowledge;  
jneyam: which is to be known;  
cha: also;  
keshava: krishna.

Arjuna, the spiritual seeker in the process of clearing his ignorance has heard what the Lord has to say about this subject in the past 12 chapters. He should be looked upon as a sincere student who is not testing his guru but requesting him to help in clearing the ignorance.

He therefore uses the words:

“Icchami: I wish to know”

And not demanding an answer.

Let us not forget that Arjuna was not a beginner in the study of the Vedas. He was familiar with the words “kshetra, kshetrajna, jnana, prakriti and Purusha.” He had not really understood what they meant.

As we have studied before, the words in general have three sets of meaning:

Vakyartha - word meaning;

Lakshyartha - the aim in knowing about the word;

Tatvartha - spiritual significance of the word in the process of uniting with the Supreme.

Arjuna knew the vakyartha and lakshyartha but not the tatvartha.

What he does not know, he must admit the same to his master and ask for help in understanding the same. This is what he is doing now.

Kesava:

One of the names of Lord Krishna, meaning “long haired”. It was given to Krishna after he killed the demon Kesi.

In a different context Kesava also means “light.” It means the “radiant one.”

The Matsya Purana says that Kesava should be worshipped to counteract the effect of bad omens.

## **Sloka 1**

**Sree Bhagawan uvacha:**

**IDAM SHAREERAM KOUNTEYA KSHETRAM ITY ABHIDEEYATE  
ETADYO VETTI TAM PRAHUU KSHETRAJNA ITI TADVIDHAHA.**

**The Lord said:**

**O Kounteya, this body is called the field. He who knows the field is known as kshetrajna. The sages who know both say so.**

idam: this;  
shareeram: the body;  
kounteya: son of kunti, arjuna;  
kshetram: the field;  
ity: thus;

abhideeyate: say so/is said;  
etad: this;  
yah: who;  
vetti: knows;  
tam: him;  
kshetrajna iti: as the knower of the field;  
tat vidaha: knowers of that;  
prahuhu: say.

Sri Krishna says that the body is the “Kshetra” and that who knows the Kshetra is “Kshetrajna”.

To understand this sloka clearly let us take the example of the working of a radio.

The radio is nothing but various components put together by experts so that when connected to the source of power, “Electricity”, it comes to life. It has a mechanism called “tuning” and when this is worked out properly, it aligns itself to a particular wave length and brings out the programmes broadcast in that wave length. It has a knob that controls the sound.

To listen to the programmes on the radio we need:  
To switch it on;  
To tune it to the channel needed;  
To adjust the sound and fine tuning mechanisms.

Suppose the radio is disconnected from the mains power supply or if the batteries are removed, the radio is technically “dead.” The same power supply or the batteries can be used to bring life to another gadget.

The electricity connected to the radio brings out music and connected to a fan gives us the cold air and connected to a heater brings out the warmth. The energy being the same, the manifestations are different.

Similarly the life on earth is manifold but the common source of life is “The energy within” and this is the “Atman.”

Birth of an individual means the flow of life energy through the medium of that body. Death of an individual is departure of that energy from that body. The same energy is responsible for the birth and living of all forms of life on this earth.

The individual forms of life are made up of body, mind and senses.  
As we know the mind is the “band master” for all the bodily functions.

What the Lord is saying in this sloka is:

The mind is brought to life by the Atman and the Atman knows all about the mind. In the absence of the Atman the mind is technically “dead” and does not know itself. As a matter of fact nobody else also knows the mind of the individual.

In this sense,  
The body, mind and the senses form the “Kshetra” which is the field one would like to know about if he has to understand the Atman which is “Kshetrajna”.

In the introduction to this chapter, we have analysed the meaning of the word “jiva”.

“Jiva” is the Atman who has associated with the body, mind and the senses. Because of the attachment to the physical body and the world around, it has forgotten its true identity.

Jiva is truly the kshetrajna but cannot remember its identity. Once the ignorance is cleared, it gets back its memory and knows its true identity.

We are given an introduction to the “Jnana”/knowledge of the individual forms of life which make the field and the power which knows about the field.

Let us not forget the assertion from the Lord who says at the end of the sloka:

The sages who know both say so.

By this statement He is only re-iterating with the opinion of the masters about “Kshetra and Kshetrajna.” The Vedas given to us by the master sages are the authority, the Lord affirms.

The Atman needs the body to express itself and the body needs the Atman to remain alive. What we call “life” is simply an urge to know and experience the physical world around. This urge to know varies from individual to individual depending upon their stored vasanas from previous journey into this world.

The songs from the radio are heard as long as that particular programme is broadcast. When the broadcast is completed what we hear is just a rumbling noise.

On the other hand the Lord is talking to us through the Atman on a 24/7 basis. This is “The song of the Soul”.

We tend not to take notice of it when we are connected to the world around or

We are deaf to the wave length of the inner spiritual broadcast.

The Bhagawadgita is the tool for us to learn to tune ourselves to the “Song of the Soul” and understand what is broadcast on a 24/7 basis.

The attempt to decode the “Song of the Soul” is the sadhana/practice to be mastered by the spiritual seekers under the guidance of the guru and the Jagadguru.

## Sloka 2

**KSHETRAJNAM CHAPI MAAM VIDDDHI SARVA KSHETRESHU BHARATA  
KSHETRA KSHETRAJNAYOR JNANAM YAT TAJJNANAM MATAM MAMA.**

**O Arjuna, know Me to be the kshetrajna in all the kshetras. Knowledge of the kshetra and kshetrajna is real knowledge according to my opinion.**

kshetrajam: as the knower of the field;

cha api: as also;

maam: me;

viddhi: know;

sarva: in all;

kshetreshu: fields;

bharata: arjuna;

kshetra kshetrajnayor: of all the fields and its knower;

jnanam: knowledge;

yat: which;

taj (tad): that;

jnanam: knowledge;

matam mama: my opinion.

There are innumerable number of beings and forms of life and each one of them is “Kshetra” which is a field of experiences on its own merit.

In each one of these forms of life, there is a life force running and it is known as “Kshetrajna”. Only this power within knows all about its field.

If this kshetrajna is all powerful and all knowing, why is it that we do not know about other fields?

The kshetrajna in each field is unique to that field. He is identifying with that field and has become “Jivatma” who is aware of the true identity but still totally involved in that field. In some cases he has become “Jiva” and totally forgotten his true identity.

It is therefore a fact that we do not know of others/other fields. If we can strive for the real knowledge and understand our true identity, live with that understanding, one fine day in our journey of life we will be able to see the same Lord/kshetrajna in all. The universal vision comes only for the rare few and Gita is a guide to strive to get that vision.

Why does the Lord refer to this as “Real knowledge”?

Knowledge of the physical world is essential to continue to live in this world. It is impossible to know totally about all the various types of knowledge in the physical world. One cannot honestly be an engineer and a scientist at the same time and cannot be a cardiac surgeon and an eye specialist at the same time.

All the forms of knowledge related to the physical world give us a means to live and in many cases earn a living.

But, in all situations we do experience happiness and sorrow at different times due to actions and reaction in relation to the work in the community.

The knowledge does gradually wane off as one gets older and loss of memory sets in. The occupational and professional knowledge diminishes as and when one retires from active life.

The knowledge pertaining to the field is actually “a lower knowledge” also known as “apara Vidya (worldly knowledge).”

The knowledge relating to the Atman is “higher knowledge” also known as “Para Vidya” (knowledge of the Parabrahman).

But, learning the knowledge about the kshetra and kshetrajna assists the seeker to make use of that knowledge at every stage of life. It also helps him/her to withstand the difficulties in life.

The knowledge of the kshetra and kshetrajna if put into practice will make the individual “divine” and lifts him from lower planes to higher planes - tamas to rajas to satva; stone man to god-man.

By making this statement (sarva kshetreshu) the Lord is making it clear that as far as He is concerned there is no differentiation due to religion, caste, creed, sex etc.

This is “My opinion” says Bhagawan.

### **Sloka 3**

**TAT KSHETRAM YAC CA YADRUKCA YAD VIKARI YATASCHA YAT  
SA CHA YO YAT PRABHAVASCHA TAT SAMASENA ME’ SHRUNU.**

**Tat kshetra - what it is, how it is, what are its modifications, and from what and how is it born, and the kshetrajna who he is, what his powers are, all this in brief, hear from me.**

Tat kshetram: that field;  
yat ca: and what (it is);  
yadrukcha: and how (it is);  
yad vikari: how it changes;  
yatascha yat: and from what and how it arises;  
sa cha: and he;  
yaha: who;  
yat prabhava cha: and what power;  
tat: that;  
samasesa: in brief;  
me': from me;  
shrunu: hear.

The Lord has now brought the theme of the two forces in the battlefield.

The body, kshetra as we know is subject to so many modifications on a 24/7 basis every day of one's life from birth to death. We are going to get a brief summary of those modifications.

The life is a journey from the present life we are in to the destination: which is uniting with the power from where we came from by losing our body identity and the attachments we develop in our journey with family, friends, possessions etc.

It is a battlefield of intense force on either sides consisting of "divine" and "un-divine" qualities. The Atman on one side is helping the good qualities to fight the "Ego" assisted by its friends.

To prepare a battle strategy is the duty of every warrior. This involves assessing what true friends/forces one has got, what are their powers and weaknesses and also to assess the strength and battle plan of the opposition forces. There should be plan of action to fight and destroy the enemy totally.

The first half of the sloka is all about the field and its modifications. By knowing the modifications one can prepare the battle plan. The Lord says He will draw the plan and give it to Arjuna.

But, Sri Krishna does not want Arjuna to get frightened and run away from the battlefield.

The second half of the sloka gives information about the hidden divine strength in each of us. By giving the knowledge of "Kshetrajna" Arjuna will not be frightened anymore and will take up the battle with vigour.

It is up to each seeker to know about his/her divine strength and fight the enemy within.

Vikari: the field changes constantly.

Prabhavaha: The Lord is all powerful.

Samasesa: in brief.

After all, the scene is the battlefield of Kurukshetra and there is no time to waste. It is a hint for Arjuna to be attentive and listen to every word the Lord is saying. What the Lord has said is in brief and full of clarity.

#### **Sloka 4**

**RUSHIBHIR BAHUDHA GEETAM CHANDOBHIR VIVIDHAIHI PRUTHAK  
BRAHMASUTRAPADAIS CAIVA HETUMADBHIR VINISCHITAIH.**

**This knowledge is established/sung by the sages in many ways and by the vedas in various distinctive hymns and is declared by the decisive arguments of the brahmasutras also.**

Rushibhihi: by the rishis;  
bahudha: in many;  
gitam: sung/established;  
chandobhir: in vedic chants;  
vividhaihi: various;  
prithak: distinctive;  
brahma sutra padiahi: in the words of the brahmasutras;  
cha: and;  
eva: even;  
hetumadbhihi: full of reasoning;  
vinischitaihi: decisive.

Who is a rishi?

Rishis is he who has conquered his senses and attained the “Brahma Jnana”.

From time immemorial man has been in search of the answers for the questions like “who am I, where do I come from, where do I go after death”. The learned sages who attained the Brahma Jnana during states of intense meditation on the question of “origin of life” did come out with sacred hymns describing the “Supreme Brahman” (without any form and qualities). They did not attribute any authority/copyright to those utterances. Sage poet Veda Vyasa compiled these into the four Vedas. The subject matter of the Vedas is “The Knowledge of the Parabrahman”. The Vedas are well established doctrines of philosophy of life for the Hindus.

Sri Krishna is referring to that knowledge and has described the same to Arjuna as “Kshetra and Kshetrajna”. He has not established a new doctrine but has given it in a format that is easy to understand. Hence he is saying “this knowledge pertaining to the kshetra and kshetrajna is established by the sages and sung in various distinctive hymns”.

The sages have given it in a literary format which is precise in expression and enhanced their beauty by delivering it in a poetic form. The expression which refers to the theory is appealing to the intellect of the seekers and in the music form it is appealing to their hearts.

Is it not true that music awakens the emotions in the listener?

This is the gist of the first half of the sloka wherein there is reference to the Vedas.

What are Brahma Sutras?

The three basic texts of Vedanta are:

The Upanisads;  
The Bhagawadgita;  
The Brahma Sutras.

Together these three are referred to as “Prasthan Traya.”

The Upanisads constitute the revealed texts on the Vedas and are known as “Sruthi Prasthanas.” The subject matter in them was revealed to the masters in a sound format and hence the adjective “Sruthi” meaning “the heard.”

Bhagawadgita is narration by Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. It has been passed down to generation after generation by the masters to their disciples in an oral format. This was because in the olden days there was no recourse to printing and the only way to learn was by memorising what was said by the guru. Bhagawadgita is therefore known as “Smrithi prasthanam.” “Smrithi” meaning “memory”.

Brahma sutras: the Vedas that were handed over from masters to disciples was the subject matter that was discussed in intense debates by the masters. The subject was discussed logically (logic of reasoning) and the approved answers to the logical questions constitute the “Brahma sutras.” As this was a logical conclusion it is also known as “Nyaya Prasthanam”. “Nyaya” meaning “Logic”. It is said that the author of the Brahma sutras is Badarayana (second century AD) whom Indian tradition identifies with Veda Vyasa.

### **Sloka 5 - 6**

**MAHA BHOOTANI AHAMKARO BUDDHIR AVYAKTAM EVA CHA  
INDRIYANI DASHAIKAM CHA PANCHA CENDRIYAGOCARAHA.**

**ICHA DWESHA SUKHAM DUKHAM SAMGHATAS CHETANA DHRITHI  
ETAT KSHETRAM SAMASENA SAVIKARAM UDAHRUTAM.**

**The great elements, ego, intellect and also the un-manifested, the ten senses and the mind, the five sense objects,**

**Desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, aggregate of body and the senses, intelligence, fortitude - all this and their modifications are briefly described Kshetram.**

Maha bhootani: the five great elements;  
Ahamkaro: ego;  
Buddhi: intellect;  
Avyaktam: the un-manifested;  
Eva cha: and even;  
Indriyani: the senses;  
Dasa: ten;  
Ekam: one;  
Pancha: five;  
Indriya agocharaha: objects of the senses;

Iccha: desire;  
Dweshah: hatred;  
Sukham: happiness;  
Dukham: sorrow;  
Samghatah: the aggregate;  
Cetanaha: intelligent;  
Dhriti: fortitude;  
Etat: this;  
Kshetram: the field;  
Samasena: in brief;  
Savikaram: with modifications;  
Udahrutam: is described.

The five great elements are the earth, water, fire, air and the space.

Ahamkara: ego.

The Atman, the life principle in each, projects out through the intellect and gets connected to the gross physical body and the objects around. It then expresses individuality as “Me, Mine etc” and this is “The Ego.” What is projected and connected is “non-Self.” (not the atman) This identification with the intellect forgetting its true divinity is “egoism”. This is known as “Mahat.” The individuality (arising out of relationship with the plurality) is “Aham”.

Buddhi:

It is the determining/reasoning faculty in us, the humans. When it associates with the Atman it is the “consciousness speaking from within” (expresses divinity) and when it associates with the pluralistic world, forgetting its roots, it expresses as “ego”.

Avyaktam: the un-manifested.

It is also known as “maya”. It is the bundle of impressions (vasanas) on the mind that are carried from so many past experiences including past births. They are waiting to get converted into thoughts/actions and become manifest.

The ten senses:

Five sense organs and five organs of action are the ten senses.

Ekam: the mind.

It receives the impulses from the sense organs and responds through the organs of action to the impulses received.

Pancha indriya agocharaha:

The five functions of the sense organs: touch, taste, vision, hearing and smell are the five functions.

The above 24, according to Sankhya philosophy constitute the “24 tatvas.”

To this list of what is “Kshetra”, the Lord has added:

Desire, hatred, happiness, sorrow, the aggregate, intelligence, firmness.

All these are modifications of the mind and are not permanent.

Desire:

That feeling which seeks repetition of the contact with the objects is known as desire as it seems agreeable to the mind and the senses.

Hatred:

Repulsion to the impressions received from the sense objects via the sense organs is hatred.

Sukha and dukha has been described in sloka 38, chapter 2.

Sangahtana: aggregate or a mixture of these four modifications.

Chetana: the intelligence or the power of discrimination.

Dhriti: firm.

The body and the senses have to remain active at all times of the day. That capacity which does this is the dhriti.

One should not consider that the physical body and the objective world around only as kshetras. That which changes is “the field” (kshetra) and that which does not change is “the knower of the field.” (kshetrajna) Hence, all the modifications are included in “kshetra.”

The following sloka 7-11 contain a total of 20 qualities which together constitute what is known as “Jnana”. Jnani is he who possesses all these 20 qualities.

## **Sloka 7**

**AMANITVAM ADHAMBHITVAM AHIMSA KSHANTIR ARJAVAM  
ACHARYOPASANAM SHOUCAM STHAIRYAM ATMA VINIGRAHAHA.**

**Humility, absence of pretension, non-injury, endurance, up righteousness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self- control.**

amanitvam: humility;  
adhambitvam: absence of pretension;  
ahimsa: non-injury;  
kshantir: patience, endurance, forbearance;  
arjavam: uprightness;  
acharya upasanam: service of the teacher;  
shoucham: purity;  
sthairyam: steadfastness;  
atma vinigraham: self-control.

Amanitvam: Humility.

Absence of self-glorification is being humble. This is the first of the 20 qualities for a jnani. The true jnani is in search of realising the Atman within and towards this he has to achieve self-perfection. He should not develop self-esteem in what he is doing and what he has achieved. He should not expect/look for praise from others for his achievements. If he receives any praise from others, he would respond to that praise by being humble. At no time he would be showing off his scriptural knowledge for the sake of showing off and getting praised for his knowledge.

The feeling of “I am the best” would not arise in his mind. Superiority complex is the worst quality in a true seeker of knowledge. It is a form of conceit.

He knows that he has a long way to go to develop self-perfection and remains humble at all times. He is aware that he is not totally perfect and does not pretend that he knows all. The student should not show off his knowledge in front of the guru.

Kshantir: Patience, endurance is the quality in a true seeker of knowledge.

The path to perfection takes a long time and the seeker has to learn to be patient. Not being affected by the wrong done by others knowingly or unknowingly is “kshanti”. The seeker has to look at wrong done by others as a test by the Lord to assess his strength of endurance.

Arjavam: Harmony in thought, word and deed is another quality of a true jnani.

In the 18th chapter, sloka 42, the Lord says that it is one of the qualities of a true brahmana. In sloka 1, chapter 16, He mentions “Arjavam” as one of the divine qualities.

Being straight-forward in thought, word and deed is known as “trikarana shuddhi”. The three form a chain that makes up “the action”. “Truth” and nothing but the “Truth” should be the basis at all the three links of this chain called “Action”. Praising someone and cursing the same person in the mind is wrong. Offering alms to the needy but cursing within is wrong. Jnani with this quality does not utter foul words or entertain foul thoughts in his mind but constantly lives the life of righteousness.

Acharyopasana: Service to the teacher.

It does not simply mean offering physical service to the teacher. Listening with concentration (Sravana), recollecting what has been said (manana) and reflecting on what has been taught and finally putting into practical application the theory taught by the master is true service to the teacher. The teacher through the medium of the sincere student is trying to propagate the knowledge because he knows that he is not eternal and there must be torch bearers of the knowledge. The teacher also would like to see that the knowledge given to his student would result in acts of service to the society by the student and will bring about “Loka kalyana”. The true service to the guru reflects in the receipt of his grace by the student.

Shoucham: Purity.

It is purity in thought, word and deed. It is a social norm to be clean and fresh every day. We brush our teeth, wash our face and body and wear clean clothes every day and it is a social norm. Similarly, purity of the mind and purity in thoughts is a spiritual norm. External purity is visible outwardly. Purity of the mind is not visible externally. It is an act of self-policing and self-analysis of the thoughts that generate in the mind that brings about the purity of mind and this should reflect in purity of speech and actions. Japa, tapas, singing the keertanas on the Lord, reading the scriptures like the Bhagawadgita etc assist in developing purity of the mind.

Sthairyam: Steadfastness.

The seeker has to be firm, resolute and determined in his spiritual journey. In the spiritual journey many a time one finds that there are others that dissuade him from taking up such a journey. There are many who say, “This is not a path to take at this time of your life. There is plenty of time when you retire to contemplate on the God.” This is not true. Secular studies and spiritual studies should go hand in hand and each study would help in progress with the other study. Nobody knows when the death bell knocks at the door, any disease hits him and therefore everyone must start his spiritual sadhana early in life. Do we not start secular studies very early in our life? There must be a steadfast progress in the efforts put in to acquire knowledge.

Views/opinions of others (other than the guru) should not be allowed to weaken the conviction to walk in the spiritual path and uphold “Satya, Dharma”.

Atma vinigrahaha: self-control.

It is not the control of “Self” with capital “S”. “Self” refers to Atman. Whereas “self” refers to the “ego”. Control of the mind and senses is “atma vinigraha.” The teachers stress that the power of “maya” (illusion) is very great and the seeker should not fall a victim to the maya. We have already made a note that “maya” is the bundle of vasanas (thought imprints) that are stored in the mind. The three gunas, satva, rajas and tamas, are lurking within the mind and can burst out any time. The force of the gunas will drag the mind of the seeker away from the spiritual path. Controlling the thoughts that are stored and which are ready to express into actions is “Atma vinigraha.”

## Sloka 8

### INDRIYARTHESHU VAIRAGYAM ANAHANKARA EVA CHA JANMA MRUTYU JARA VYADHI DUKHA DOSHA ANUDARSHANAM.

**Dispassion towards sense objects, absence of egotism, perception of evils in birth, death, old age, sickness and pain.**

indriya artheshu: of sense objects;

vairagyam: dispassion;

anahankara: absence of egotism;

eva: even;

cha: and;

janma mrutyu jara vyadhi dukha dosha anudarshanam: perception of evils in birth, death, old age sickness, pain;

indriyartheshu vairagyam: non-attachment to the sense objects.

What are the sense objects?

Sense objects are the objects in the material world around us and that are taken notice of by the sense organs.

There are innumerable objects around us and our sense organs bring in the information about these to the mind. Desire to possess what the mind likes out of the impulses received varies from individual to individual. The same object which is pleasing to one may not be so for the other. Once the mind likes a particular object, the chain reaction starts. It involves thinking about the object, analysing ways of getting the same and making efforts to get the same and not to lose it at any time. The desire for objects leads to the destruction of the individual when the attachment to the same gets stronger and stronger. This we have learnt in chapter 2, slokas 61-63. The seeker has to be on guard all the time and should not let the senses drag him down from the spiritual plane climbed.

Finally let me note that to an extent even the physical body is in a way an object and thinking about and dwelling on the same is also included in this word.

Vairagya is dispassion for objects possessed.

The family, friends, wealth etc. are the objects possessed.

The Lord does not say “do not possess” but says “develop dispassion to what you possess.”

Running away from household duties, abandoning family are not correct actions according this principle. This is wrong. While living in the world, while being part of the society, we should learn the art of “detachment in attachment.”

In this sense, even the physical body of ours is also a possession. The next few qualities bring about the relationship with our own body and the ways to handle those relations.

Anahankara: absence of egoism.

Developing the pride in what one has brings the ego into prominence. This is like letting the weed grow inside the garden. Once the weed finds its way, it tends to overtake the beauty of the garden. In the intellectual garden, while trying to sow the seeds of qualities of a jnani, letting the ego inside is like letting the weed in. Soon it will destroy the beauty of the garden.

The seeker has to be on constant vigil to uproot this evil as and when it finds its way. The pride comes in so many ways and the seeker has to be on guard to notice its entry.

The pride of youth, pride of position in society are some of the examples.

Janma mrutyu jara vyadhi dukha doshanu darshanam: refer to sloka 13, chapter 2.

The Lord uses the word “evil” while referring to these modifications from birth to old age.

The evil is in the attachment one develops towards the body. The seeker who rises above the level of body-consciousness can transcend this evil called “attachment”. Towards this objective, the Lord advises the seeker to look at oneself regularly, make a self-analysis and correct faults.

“Anudarshanam”: it is like standing in front of a mirror and looking at oneself and clearing away any faults that are evident.

In the mirror called “life” let us learn the art of looking at ourselves and correcting faults.

Birth of a desire brings in its associates “Anger, greed, delusion, pride and enmity” and these are the evils that destroy the individual. “Dosha” in this sentence applies to these evil associates of desire. Prevention is better than cure. So, do not develop desire and do not get attached to what you possess is the advice by the Lord to the seekers who want to tread on the path of “Jnana.”

The birth as humans is to remember that we should ascend from the level of stone man to that of god man. Towards this objective, we should conduct “anudarshanam” of our thoughts every day. We should look at ourselves as “Atman”, unborn, deathless and free from all modifications of the body and the mind. With this outlook we should transcend the feeling of sorrow which comes from reaching old age, suffering from diseases and reaching the death bed. Unfortunately we do not look at ourselves as “Atman” and develop association with the physical body. The evil of old age, diseases and death referred to is the consequence of “body identification”.

## Sloka 9

**ASAKTIRANABHISHWANGAHA PUTRA DARA GRUHADISHU  
NITYAM CHA SAMACHITTATVAM ISHTANISHTOPAPATTISHU.**

**Non-attachment and non-identification with son, wife, home etc. and constant even-mindedness during desirable and undesirable occurrences.**

asakti: non-attachment (if it is spelt as aasakti it means interest);

anabhiswanga: non-identification of self with (the persons and things mentioned above);

putra: son;

dara: wife;

gruhadishu: home and other possessions;

nityam: always;

cha: and;

sama chittattatvam: equal mindedness;

ishta: desirable;

anishta: undesirable;

upapattishu: occurrences.

Asakti: non-attachment.

Let us analyse this word in some detail as it applies to each one of us at different stages in life. As and when the sense organs bring in information about different objects in the material world with which they come across, the mind makes a note of them. Some of these are probably information of objects which the mind had received in the past and it recognises the same. Some of the others are probably new sensation received.

There is a feeling of “happiness, satisfaction” with some impulses received and feeling of “repulsion” with some others and not take notice of many other impulses received. The reaction can be “like it, dislike it, not interested.” It is a fact that if we register information of every object the senses bring in, soon we will go mad.

When the mind likes the impulse received, it experiences “happiness” and this is “attachment to the objects that makes the mind feel happy.” Stronger the sense of attachment, greater will be the pain of parting with it.

Indirectly, when the mind receives impulses that make it feel “repulsion” towards the same, the feeling of attachment experienced is because of the repulsion. “I do not want it”, “I hate it” is the attachment to such impulses.

In this sloka non-attachment refers to the impulses received which make the mind feel “happy.”

In our progress in life from childhood to adulthood, we get attached to some people/objects at each stage of growth and as we grow older that feeling of happiness gets diminished. The childhood friends and toys, the child feels it cannot part, are a thing of the past when the child goes to the college/gets married. There is a gradual detachment to attachment for many things/people as we grow older.

This chapter is about “spiritual knowledge” and it is for the seekers of the same.

The attachment to the objects of the physical world around is an expression of “ego”. We use the words “me, mine etc” often in relation to the objects we are attached to.

Asakti/non-attachment should be understood as that maturity of mind which would not experience the sorrow on parting association with objects/people.

We are asked to drop this attachment to “ego” and develop the attachment to “Atman”. By identifying with Atman we will be able to see the same Atman all round.

At all times, the basic rule to follow is in learning the art of discharging one’s duty with love and care, not running away from responsibilities in life and developing the capacity to continue to lead the life of responsibility as a citizen of the universe despite the adversities faced in life.

Putra dara gruhadishu:

In continuation of the last quality, the Lord now gives names of those we usually are closely associated. “Son, wife and possessions” are the specific names given. It is not just these but there are many more and for brevity these three are used.

Putra/Son: In olden days and I suppose even now, many take the son as the person to take forward the family name. The daughter marrying acquires husband’s surname. Parting of a son is taken very badly by many.

Dara/Wife: I do not need to say much about this association. The children will grow and soon have a family of their own and lead a life of their own. The parents, grand-parents according to the law of

nature leave the world sometime or other. It is the husband and wife that are the long term life companions. Missing this association is what the Lord refers to in this sloka.

Gruhadishu: home and other possessions

Each one of us is part of a unit called “family” which includes all the different members of that unit. The family live together in one house and have various possessions as the life progresses. It is the attachment to the house, members of the household and the contents of the house that is referred to in this sloka.

It is much more painful to part with these possessions and hence these are named specifically by the Jagadguru.

Anabhishtangaha: non-identification.

Non-identification with the son, wife and possessions is stressed by the Lord. Please note that it is not “non-attachment” but “non-identification”. With the three examples used, the point to note is the predominance of “ego”. “My wife, my son and my house etc” is the attitude that develops after close association with these for years and parting with any of these three brings out the pain of parting as “grief.”

The excess love to any is like intoxication and we all know what intoxication can do.

Let us not forget that the scriptures have given rules for all the members of the household. As a unit, the household has a responsibility for different members of the unit and the unit has responsibilities for other units that make up the society. There is no question of running away from wife, children etc to prevent facing the calamity of separation that comes from identification. Each one of us has a duty to express love for other members of the family unit and show that love towards other families that make up the unit called “society”. Just like being attached to is an expression of “ego” running away from responsibility is also “ego”.

It is not physically abandoning the attachment and identification with others but mentally dropping the attitude of “mine” that is advocated for the seekers. Constantly keeping up the spiritual practice while fulfilling the duties of a householder is the “sine qua non” of a true jnani.

Sama chittatvam: equanimity

Nityam: constantly

Ishtanishtopapattishu: in desirable and undesirable occurrences.

Please note emphasis on “Nityam”. Constantly on a 24/7 basis the seeker has to express equanimity to desirable and undesirable occurrences.

Where and when these occur?

In the household, is the answer.

## **Sloka 10**

**MAYI CHA ANANYA YOGENA BHAKTIR AVYABHICHARINEE  
VIVIKTA DESA SEVITVAM ARATIR JANA SAMSADI.**

**Unswerving devotion in Me by the yoga of non-separation, resorting to solitary places, distaste for the society of men.**

mayi: in me;  
cha: and;  
ananya yogena: yoga of non-separation;  
bhaktir: by devotion;  
avyabhicharini: unswerving;  
vivikta desa sevitvam: resorting to solitary places;  
aratir: distaste;  
jana samsadi: society of men.

Bhaktir avyabhicharinee: (by unswerving devotion) towards Me (Mayi) and the yoga of non-separation.

Let us be clear that to obtain knowledge in any field the individuals seeking that knowledge must develop certain qualities. We are therefore given ideas for practical approach to the knowledge about “self-perfection”.

Let us look at one who would like to become an engineer and enters into the university. To be successful engineering degree holder, he should have love towards the subject of his choice. This is “bhakti” towards the engineering studies and to the degree he is going to work at.

Even though he would love to be an engineer, initially he would have love towards so many other attractions in life. It is like the love to read story books, surfing on the internet, going to the movies, visiting the restaurants etc. By developing unswerving devotion to the subject of engineering studies, his efforts will be rewarded with better results in exams.

We should note the word used “Avyabhicharinee”: “Vyabhichara” is desire for sensual pleasures from different sources.

When the seeker has decided to take up spiritual practice he is expected to divert his love towards the divine both in mind and deed. This is the meaning of the word “unswerving bhakti.”

Another condition attached to the love is: “Ananya yogena” meaning “by the yoga of non-separation.”

“Anya” is “different” and “Ananya” is “not different.” When one is trying to unite with a particular aim in life, his efforts should be directed towards that aim. If he is aiming at more than one objective, the results will not be satisfactory. Yoga is to unite with the “Supreme” and “Ananya Yoga” is “to unite with Supreme alone.”

There are three different way to achieve an objective in life. This chapter is to achieve union with the Supreme. The three ways are:

- 1) I want God.
- 2) I want God also.
- 3) I want God alone.

It is good to develop the idea “I want God”. This will propel the seeker towards information about the God he is trying to unite with.

Just the feeling of “I want God” will not be sufficient.

“I want God also”: It is like trying to get hold of two or more objects at the same time. The efforts towards this objective are not 100% and so the result also is not 100%.

He who approaches with the feeling “I want God alone” will be able to exercise total control over his mind and intellect and concentrate on fulfilling his objective.

This is the meaning of the first half of the sloka: by unswerving devotion and the yoga of non-separation”.

The second half of the sloka is “resorting to solitary places, distaste for the society of men”: After all we live in a society as members of that society. It is impossible to keep away from other people in life. But at the same time it is also a fact that “crowd has no unity of thought.”

So the Lord says: “resorting to solitary places and distaste for society of men.” This might appear like an impossible criterion to fulfil.

It is the mind that gives us all the ideas about society etc. and gets us attached to them. What is needed is therefore “control over the mind”.

Let us not lose our hearts. We can approach this condition step by step.

The slokas 42-43 in chapter 3 gives us information about the army we have in conquering the enemy called “desire”. The army consists of the “senses, mind, intellect” with mind being superior to the senses and the intellect superior to the mind. The Atma is superior to the intellect, the Lord says.

By using our intellectual capacity of reasoning, we should reduce our taste for the society of men. The sastras have given us practical approach to this task. They say that every family should have a quiet room in the house and use it as a temple and also a room for meditation. Learning the art of confining to the prayer room for a certain length of time every day and practicing meditation we can develop the quality that can lead us to achieve “distaste for the society of men.”

The seeker should initially resort to the company of holy men and satsang. Where there are groups of similar minded individuals keen to be on the spiritual path that group will be like a solitary place one should resort to.

Society of men in general will have so many different types each group with their own interest. Resorting to the company of members of satsang is like developing distaste for society of men in general.

As the practice progresses, the seeker then should resort to spiritual books and listening to the masters in the field of study. This is next step towards going for solitary places and developing distaste for the society of men.

Finally, we have examples of those great souls who have resorted to forests, mountains like the Himalayas, caves etc and developed total distaste for the society of men and resort to solitary place. This is not the path for the householder. The householder should follow the previous direction of developing the love for the satsang and meditation in prayer room.

The final aim being union with the Parabrahman, the seeker should learn the art of detachment in attachment. He should remember the fundamental truth: one cannot be united with two things at the same time.

There are two sanskrit words with beautiful meaning to them. They are “vikshepa and kalakshepa”. “Vikshepa” is distraction. “Kalakshepa” is spending time.

The seeker should avoid vikshepa in the earlier part of his sadhana. The instrument for this control is “Mind” and the master over the mind is “The intellect.” The mind should not be allowed to get distracted.

The mind as its nature likes to spend on tasks like playing cards, surfing on the internet, going on facebook, reading story books etc.

Kalakshepa: it is activity conducted for the sole purpose of spending one's spare time.

Many a times this activity does not have any aim and does not achieve any objective. It is lazy way of spending the spare time. The seeker should develop the art of spending his spare time by developing full control over the mind and not get distracted from the spiritual path. Let us remember that "time is precious" and the success in life depends on how we use the precious time allotted to us by the Lord.

Not resorting to kalakshepa and not letting mind distracted (vikshepa) are the tools to fulfil the conditions and achieve the objectives enumerated in the second half of the sloka.

In the olden days there used to be special events in towns and villages where an expert in the art of telling mythological and pauranic stories would narrate the stories to the public. The time spent listening to such narrations was popularly known as "Harikatha Kalakshepa" (spending time listening to the stories of Hari.) In the 20th century this was taken over by going to the films as a means of spending time.

## Sloka 11

### **ADHYATMA JNANA NITYATVAM TATVA JNARARTHA DARSHANAM ETAD JNANAM ITI PROKTAM AJNANAM YAD ATONYATH**

**Constancy in self-knowledge, perception of the ultimate knowledge. All this is declared as Jnanam and what is contrary to it is ajnanam.**

adhyatma jnana: self-knowledge;

nityatvam: constancy;

tatva jnanarthadarshanam: perception of the end of true knowledge;

etad: this;

iti: thus;

proktam: declared/known;

yad: what;

atha anyatha (atonyatha): opposed to this.

Adhyatma: refer to sloka 2, chapter 8.

We have studied about:

Adhyatma

Adhibhoutika

Adhidaivika

Adhyatma jnana nityatvam:

The "Self/Atman" within is referred to as Adhyatma. "adhi" is "beginning". The origin of the "self" (individual/non-self) is Atman which is constant and the physical body changes at each new birth. Let us not forget that the "Self" is the real man and this Self is a spark of Paramatma.

The seeker should remember/keep in mind/not to forget at any time the fact that his true nature is "divinity" and it is his duty to express this "divinity." Expression of divinity is nothing but living the life of dharma.

Expression of divinity is expression of divine knowledge and this is “Jnana”.  
Constantly keep the “light of knowledge” is the advice by the Lord and he who shows this quality is a “Jnani”.

What happens when the light is turned off - darkness prevails.  
What happens when darkness ends? - Light shines.  
It is like when the sun sets night enters and when the night ends sun shines.  
Let the knowledge rise and dispel the darkness and this is Jnana.

The knowledge about the duties to be discharged to one’s family, society etc is known as “Prapanchika jnana” (the knowledge of the world).  
The spiritual knowledge about “Atman” is Adhyatmika Jnana.  
Adhyatmika jnana which is theoretical knowledge has to become the practical support for prapanchika jnana.

To put briefly, the meaning for the sentence “adhyatma jnana nityatvam” is:  
Let the light of knowledge shine constantly while conducting the secular duties.

With this practice constantly of the Adhyatma Jnana, one would be able to perceive the “Paramatman” and this is highlighted in the second quarter of the sloka.

Tatva jnanartha darshanam: perception of the ultimate knowledge.

We have discussed before about the meaning of “the words”:  
Vakyartha - meaning of the word,  
Lakhyartha - meaning of the aim in using the word,  
Tatvartha - spiritual aim in using the word.

Jnana:  
Vakyartha: knowledge;  
Lakhyartha: knowledge of spiritual science;  
Tatvartha: knowledge of the “Light of Atman, Paramatman.”

Direct perception of the Light of Parabrahman is the ultimate knowledge to get for the spiritual seeker.

If the seeker develops all the above qualities of a jnani he would be able to perceive the light of Parabrahman which is “Sat Chit Ananda.” (Truth, Knowledge and Bliss)

Constantly keeping the goal in mind the seeker should diligently work at acquiring the qualities of a jnani. This would help in overcoming the power of maya which veils the knowledge.

True jnana comes from “Nitya anitya viveka vicharana” - analysis of what is constant and what is not constant.  
The seeker should then be able to directly experience the “Truth.”

Ajnanam yadato’nyatha: what is not jnana will be ajnana.  
Whereas the spiritual knowledge confers Moksha by Liberation, knowledge of all other sciences binds the individual.

Etad iti proktaha: thus this is declared.  
Again the Lord emphasis that this is the doctrine enshrined in the Vedas and pointing to the Vedas as the final authoritative sources on “knowledge”.

## Sloka 12

**JNEYAM YAT TAT PRAVAKSHAMI YAT JNATVA AMRUTAM ASHNUTE'  
ANADI MAT PARAM BRAHMA NA SAT TANNASAD UCHYATE.**

**That which is brahman to be known, knowing which one attains immortality, I will declare; the beginning-less supreme brahman is said to be neither existence or non-existence, sat or asat.**

yat: what;  
jneyam: to be known;  
tat: that;  
pravakshami: will declare;  
yat: which;  
jnatva: having known;  
amrutam: immortality, moksha;  
ashnute': attains;  
anadimat: beginning-less;  
param brahma: supreme brahman;  
sat tannasad uchyate: not called existence and not called non-existence.

tatva jnanartha darshanam: this sentence was the second quarter of the last sloka and it was about knowledge of "Tat".

From this sloka and the next five after this, we do get a description of "Tat". Having given us description of the "kshetra" and the qualities to know/understand about "kshetrajna" we now get the description of "kshetrajna."

What is the end result of "Tatva jnana" / knowledge about "kshetrajna" one may ask?  
Answer is: Moksha. "Amrutam ashnute".

This is a gradual process wherein the individual has to rise from laziness to passion (tamas to rajas), passion to purity (rajas to satva) and finally from purity to absolute purity (satva to shuddha satva).

We should abandon bad qualities and develop good qualities. Next step is to drop the thought that we are harbouring good qualities and this is like entering the state of "freedom from all qualities (gunatita).

As a matter of fact, we will get further description of the gunas and gunatita in the next chapter.

Anadi mat param: the Supreme is without a beginning.

Beginning and end are for those who are in the confines of "Time". The only one who is beyond the clutches of time and in whose control the time is "Parabrahman." Hence He is Supreme. "He" has been, "He" is and "He" will be and this is the meaning of the word "Anadi". The life started in the universe at a time which the historians have worked at and about which there is still some controversy. This was created by "Parabrahman" and we cannot fix a time for the period when "He" was.

Na sat na asat uchyate: "The divine principle" is not said to be existence or non-existence. As "That (Tat)" is not an object to be perceived "He" cannot be perceived by the senses, not understood by the mind and cannot be analysed by the intellect. Hence the word "Na sat."

It is based on the common notion, "Yes, it is true and hence it is existing" and "yes, it is not truth and hence it is not existing."

"Sat" is what we say in relation to what we perceive by the senses and so "He" is "Na sat."

On the other hand, the sastras do say that all of us are creation by the Brahman. Each one of us is “Tat Tvam Asi” (Thou art That). If each one of us is a representation of Brahman, then we can say “na asat” meaning it is not false.

Let us therefore agree that “Sat and Na asat” are only in relation to our judgement by intellectual analysis. They are only expression of our thoughts about “Him.” In far as Brahman is concerned both “sat and asat” do not apply to Him.

### **Sloka 13**

**SARVATAHA PANIPADAM TAT SARVATO’KSHI SHIROMUKHAM  
SARVATAHA SRUTIMALLOKE’ SARVAMAVRUTYA TISHTATI.**

**With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and faces everywhere, with ears everywhere,  
He exists in the universe having pervaded all.**

sarvataha: everywhere;  
pani: hands;  
padam: feet;  
tat: that;  
akshi: eyes;  
shiro: head;  
mukham: face;  
srutimat: with ears;  
loke’: in the world;  
avrutya: pervaded, enveloped;  
tishtati: exists.

As mentioned in the last verse this is about “Kshetrajna.” We get an answer to the question “what does He look like?”

We have come across this description in “Viswaroopa Darshana”, the last chapter.

Each one of us has hands, feet, eyes, head, face and ears and we exist in this universe.

With these organs we are able to move, pick objects, see, hear and speak.

How can we do so?

Who is the one who can do all of these?

The answer would be:

“The life principle” within is “The Atman.” Without the Atman none of these organs can function even for a second.

Whatever we do is actually by “His” blessings.

What are we actually doing?

We have forgotten that we are “Tat Tvam Asi” and think that we, the individuals are doing all these actions. The “ego” is dominating in all of us.

Why?

Because we are veiled by “Maya” which blocks “The Light of Knowledge.”

What should we understand by this sloka?

The Lord who is gracing us with “The Life Principle” is actually a witness for whatever we do.

By giving a form and qualities to the Lord with no form and qualities we are given the means to understand Him.

“He” exists in the universe - “Tishtati”:

“He” as the trillions and trillions of forms of life on this universe, exists, supporting all.

“Sarvam avrutya”:

“He” pervades all.

In “Purusha Suktam” there is a hymn that says:

“Atya tishtati dashangulam”:

Meaning that “He” the “Purusha” is 10 inches beyond the entire universe we know of and that we do not know of. Whatever new discoveries we make of the universe, whatever new planets we discover, “He” is 10 inches beyond that new land we will discover.

Slokas 14-17 give us the description of what is to be known (jneyam), namely “The Brahman” (Kshetrajna). Sage poet Veda Vyasa has brought in a number of contradictory statements in these four verses which should not confuse the seekers. The main point to remember is that “Kshetrajna” is without any form or qualities (Nirakara, nirguna). As it cannot be perceived by the senses (including the mind and the intellect) it is humanly impossible to describe. Hence an attempt has been made by making use of the negatives to explain the same.

As the aim of the seeker is to attain Brahman, the seeker should be given an idea of what Brahman is. The knowledge to acquire about the Brahman “Jneyam” is the attempt made by the poet in here. The 17th verse has a word “Jnanagamyam” which means “The goal to be realised”. Let us be clear in that the seeker has to develop the qualities of a jnani enumerated in slokas 8-12 but the jnana in acquiring the qualities is not the goal. The goal being “Uniting with the Kshetrajna.” The sacred text is giving us the path to attain the goal.

Let us try to analyse these four verses.

## **Sloka 14**

**SARVENDRIYA GUNABHASAM SARVENDRIYA VIVARJITAM  
ASAKTAM SARVA BRUCHAIVA NIRGUNA GUNA BHOKTRU CHA.**

**Shining through the functions of all, yet without senses, unattached, yet supporting all (senses), without qualities, yet experiences all qualities.**

sarvendriya: of all the senses;

gunabhasam: the functions of;

vivarjitam: devoid of;

asaktam: un-attached;

sarva bhruva cha eva: and also supporting all;

nirgunam: without qualities;

guna bhoktru cha: and experiencer of qualities.

Sarvendriya gunabhasam sarvendriya vivarjitam:

The Brahman shines through the functions of all the senses and yet is without the senses. He is said to be un-manifest form of Supreme Energy and so does not shine by Himself. He expresses His subtle

energy through the senses by bringing them to life and gives them manifest energy. Without the power of life the senses have no life of their own. When they do not function, one uses the description like “there is no life”.

We can understand this by taking the example of the steam train.  
The steam engine is like the physical body with the sense organs.  
The steam is the power that makes the engine move forward.

Steam functions through the medium of the engine. We cannot say that the engine is the steam. The engine is only a medium to express the force of the steam. The power of the steam comes out as the power of the engine that moves forward. The steam engine is said to shine by functioning and the function is the power of the steam.

Similarly, the Brahman, (Life energy) makes the sense organs function and this is called as “life principle illuminating the sense organs and (apparently) making them shine.” Brahman is not the sense organs and the sense organs are not Brahman. One is the power and the other is the machine.

This section is about the connection between the sense organs and the Atman.

We say “brilliant light” when the power is switched on but the brilliance is only due to the power entering into the filaments of the bulb.

Asaktam sarva bhrichaiva: Un-attached and supporting all.

This section is about the connection between the mind and the Atman.

Brichaiva:

The word “Bharta” means supporter (husband) and the word Brichaiva (bhrit eva is Brichaiva) has to be understood in this context. Just as the bread-winner of the family the Lord supports all. How does this happen?

The Atman which is the soul is the life’s energy and the body functions only in its presence. Atman is only a witness to the thoughts waves in the mind and yet the mind does not function without the Atman. The Atman is the unseen support of them all. The individual is responsible for his/her own actions and thoughts. The Lord, out of compassion, continues to stay with the body in its sojourn of births and deaths. Physical death is only the death of the physical body but not that of the subtle body. The subtle body composed of the mind and the intellect comes to life when the Parabrahman decides to send it back to the physical world giving it a new body.

So the statement “He is un-attached but supports all”.

It is like the ocean and the waves.

The ocean is constant but the waves come and go. From the ocean they arise and into the ocean they merge. There is no support as such for the waves. The ocean is not attached to the waves but the waves are attached to the ocean and cannot survive without its presence.

Nirgunam guna bhoktru cha:

Without qualities yet experiencing all qualities.

The Atman identifying with the intellect which is connected to the mind, the seat of all gunas. He is then known as the jivatma. Seemingly “He” experiences all the qualities. When the qualities are experienced “He” is the Jivatma, and bereft of the qualities “He” is “The Atman.”

Let us take one more example to understand this sloka.

In a cinema theatre, the picture is screened on to the screen. By getting screened on to the screen the picture comes to life. The screen is the support of the film and the film cannot come to life without the screen. All that shines on the screen comes because of the screen but the screen itself does not shine on its own. It has no qualities as such.

The connections/no connection between the Atman and the three instruments namely: the intellect, the mind and the senses has been brought out in this sloka.

### Sloka 15

**BHAHIR ANTASCHA BHOOTANAAM ACHARAM CHARAMEVA CHA  
SUKSHMATVAAT TAD AVIJNEYAM DURASTHAM CHA ANTIKE' CHA TAT.**

**Exists within and without all beings; un-moving and also moving; because of its subtlety it is un-knowable, near and far away - is that.**

bahir: without;  
antas: within;  
bhootanaam: all beings;  
acharam: un-moving;  
charam: moving;  
eva: also;  
cha: and;  
sukshmatvat: because of its subtlety;  
tad: that;  
avijneyam: un-knowable;  
durastam: far;  
antike': near;  
cha: and;  
tat: that.

Bahir antascha bhootanaam:  
Exists within and without all beings.

After having advanced to the 13th chapter, the reader should accept that the Atman, Kshetrajna in the context of this chapter is within each one of us. Hence it is said that "He exists within".

In what form does He exist outside all beings?  
He exists all round each one of us in two different ways:

- As the Atman within all forms of life that are around us and
- as the subtle energy that pervades the entire universe.

For each individual all the other forms of life are also "The Atman" with a physical body. The energy within each of the pancha maha bhootas is also atman.  
Without the presence of the power of energy both inside and outside no individual can survive.

Caram acaram eva cha: moving and yet un-moving.

Each one of us move from place "a" to place "b". The Atman is static and is within the body. So, one can say the Atman has also moved from "a" to "b" but technically speaking "He" has not moved.

On a train journey, the passengers remain static but the train moves. The passenger is technically not moving but has moved from a point to another point on the route of the train.

A thing can move if it has a shape and it occupies an area within that space. If it occupies the entire area of that space, there is no way it can move.

Can we see the truth?

The Parabrahman pervades the entire Universe and occupies the whole space we know of. How can He move in that space? If for argument sake we say the Parabrahman has moved, that means, the space He has left will not have Parabrahman in it and all the forms of life in that area where He is absent would be dead. Hence, he is “not Moving”. We, the manifold forms of expression of divine move about in the space and it appears therefore that He is moving.

Another additional explanation for this statement: Brahman is present both in moving and also in non-moving forms of life (trees.)

Sukshmatvat avijneyam:

Because of subtlety He is unknowable.

“He” is so subtle that our senses cannot perceive Him. Even with the most powerful magnifying microscope no individual can see Him. Our eyes can only see as big as the lens of our eye permits. Even the electronic gadgets will not give us a picture of Him.

Durastham antike ca tat: He is far and yet near.

Because of the covering of “maya” due to ignorance of His true nature, He is beyond our perception and so we look upon Him as being too far from us.

But with the power of the intellectual eye of wisdom one can perceive Him within and also in all forms of life around and so He is very near. The entire spiritual sadhana/effort is to understand that He is so near to us all.

A thing that is not understood remains far off from our reach. With the blessings of sadguru, it can be understood and comes to be near us.

He is far off from the mental plane of perception and near to one’s grasping power of the intellect.

## Sloka 16

**AVIBHAKTAM CHA BHOOTESHU VIBHAKTAMIVA CA STHITAM  
BHOOTA BHARTRU CHA TAT JNEYAM GRASISHNU PRABHAVISHNU CA.**

**That brahman is undivided and yet exists in all beings as if divided. It is the supporter of all beings. It is worthy to be known, it is destroying and also generating.**

avibhaktam ca: and indivisible;

bhooteshu: in the beings;

vibhaktamiva: as if divided;

sthitam: exists;

bhoota: beings;

bhartru: supporting;

tat jneyam: that to be known;

grasishnu: devouring;  
prabhavishnu ca: and generating.

Avibhaktam cha bhooteshu vibhaktamiva ca sthitam.  
It is undivided and exists in beings as if divided.

Vibhaktamiva: as if divided  
The word “iva” denotes “as if.”

Brahman as we know is infinite and pervades the entire universe. We, the mortals who are the inhabitants of the universe are all alive because of the spark of Brahman in each one of us as the Atman. As far as we are concerned, “jagat satya”: the world is real.  
Why?

Because we are veiled by the gunas which act as a screen that prevents the entry of light, we perceive ourselves as separate individuals. From the pure “Advaitic” point of view, maya is unreal but appears as real. (Jagat Mithya, Brahma satya) There is no such thing as the Brahman and the created universe. There is only one single entity and that is “Brahman” who is without any form or qualities.

We can understand this by looking at the example of the “Sun.”

There is only one single sun who shines brilliantly. We see the reflection of the same sun in lakes, pots of water and in the ocean. We all agree that the reflection of the sun is not real sun. The real sun is constant and shines all the time with his glory. The reflection exists as long as the medium exists. If the pot is broken, there is no more reflection of the sun in it. The movement of the clouds, ripples in the rivers, lakes make the reflection disappear.

Similarly, we are just mediums like the pots of various shapes and forms. We are transient in relation to the life span of Brahman who is “eternal.”

Hence, the post fix “iva” to vibhaktam meaning “as if divided.”

The highest philosophical truth is that there are no two entities as “you and me” but it is all one single entity and it is “Parabrahman”.

It is like the individual cells in a human body. The cells can be looked upon as “individual forms of life” that exists in the body. The cells, in relation to the life span of the body live only for a short period of time. The energy that is sustaining the entire body by pervading all, appears as residing inside each cell and making it as separate entity. We look upon the individuals as “one single entity” and the cells are part of that entity.

The subject which is the body is only one, but the objects, the individual cells appear as many but only “appear as” separate entities. It is all one single subject and no objects as such. There exists only one single body in the pool of trillions of cells that constitute a body.

Bhoota bhartru cha: supporter of all beings.

Taking the example of “the human body and the individual cells”: each cell is supported by the life energy. On physical death when the energy departs, there is no more existence for all the cells that constitute the body.

“Bharta” is “he who supports.” In the days gone by when the man was the bread winner and supporter of the family unit, he was called as “Bharta”.

Tat jneyam: that which is to be known.

The seeker who has approached the master for dispelling the ignorance and attaining “Moksha” is told by the master “it is that which is to be known.”

Mundaka upanisad is on the theme of the answer by the master for the question by the disciple: “O Master, tell me that by knowing which all else is known.” The upanisad ends with the statement by the master, “knowing Parabrahman, all else is known.”

Grasishnu: devouring.

We have studied in the 11th chapter that the Lord, “Parabrahman” in His universal form is devouring all. That which is created has to have a life span and has to die sooner or later. The entire universe, our scriptures say revolves round the circle of creation and dissolution. There is a period between creation and destruction that the object appears as an item of existence. The act of devouring is making room for the entry of the new one.

Growth, destruction and new growth is the cycle that goes on in this universe. Everything that is born has to die sooner or later. It is the law of nature.

If there is no destruction, there will be no room for the new entrants on to this earth and the energy that nourishes the individuals will not be sufficient to feed all. This is what we are experiencing now. The population is multiplying rapidly, the life span is getting longer and longer due to advent of modern science. There is therefore a need for the dissolution of that which is created. In Hindu belief Lord Shiva is given the role of He who devours all.

Prabhavishnu ca: generating.

The Parabrahman is generating new forms of life onto this universe. Lord Brahma is given the role of “creating”. Brahma who creates, Vishnu who sustains and Shiva who destroys are the three facets of the one and the only “Parabrahman” with no form and qualities.

## Sloka 17

**JYOTISHAM API TAD JYOTIHI TAMASAHA PARAM UCHYATE  
JNANAM JNEYAM JNANA GAMYAM HRUDI SARVASYA VISHTITAM**

**The brahman is the light of the shining objects (like the sun, moon and fire). It is beyond darkness, it is knowledge, the knowable and the goal of knowledge, in the heart of all beings it is seated.**

jyotisham: of shining objects (like the sun, moon, fire);

api: even of;

tad: that;

jyotihi: light;

tamasaha: darkness;

param: supreme;

uchyate: is said;

jnanam: knowledge;

jneyam: the knowable;

gamyam: the goal of;

hrudi: in the heart of;

sarvasya: of all;  
vishtitam: is seated.

Jyotisham api tad jyothihi:  
That light which is the light of even the shining objects.  
The shining objects we are familiar with are the sun, moon and the stars.

The Brahman is the light of all, so say the Vedas and the Upanisads. The awareness is absent when there is no light. Light makes us aware of things around. The awareness is absent in darkness when there is no light.

The light inside us is “the consciousness within” which makes us aware of the material world and the experiences in relation to it. This is “Brahman” known as “The Self” within that keeps us alive and lets us experience the world. The Self is the light of all lights because without it we cannot see the sun, moon or the stars even. The light which shines to make us aware of sun, moon and the stars even is the “Light of the Atman.”

As the “Light of Brahman” (Self, Atman) is the source of life, it is said to be the light of all lights.

The senses perceive, the mind feels and the intellect cognizes because of the Light of the Atman within.

Tamsaha param: Beyond darkness.

It goes without saying that light dispels darkness and the “Atman” which is the light of all lights dispels the spiritual ignorance.

Sree Ramakrishna says “He who realizes Iswara in his heart is able to realize Him outside too.” He, who is unable to see the Iswara within him is said to be living in the world of “Tamas” and cannot see the Iswara outside also.

Jnanam, jneyam, jnanagamyam:

Jnanam: knowledge

Jneyam: that which is to be known, meaning “the Atman within and the Parabrahman pervading all”.

Jnana gamyam: knowledge leads to understanding of Brahman, which is the goal for the spiritual seekers.

Slokas 8-12 in this chapter gives us the full understanding of the word “Jnanam”. By developing the qualities of a true jnani enumerated in those slokas one can attain the knowledge (“jnanam”) of “Brahman”.

In brief: the knowledge of the Atman and Paramatman has to be the goal of all spiritual seekers.

Hridi sarvasya vishtitam: this knowledge is seated in the hearts of all beings.

The Brahman which is the “Knowledge to be known” is seated as “Atman” within each of us and in all forms of life. It is not the organ heart that is referred to in this sloka. The intellectual part of the mind is spiritually speaking, “The Heart”. We, the humans with the intellectual capacity of reasoning are therefore able to visualise the “Atman” within. He who does not cognize the “Atman” within and “the Atman all around”, who lives in the world of tamas cannot reach Him. Develop the knowledge of “The Self”, strive for developing the qualities of a true jnani is the message from the Lord for all the seekers.

Sloka 61, chapter 18 re-iterates the same message. It says, “iswaraha sarva bhootanaam hruddesherjuna tishtati”.

## Sloka 18

**ITI KSHETRAM TATHA JNANAM JNEYAM CHO'KTAM SAMASATAHA  
MADBHAKTAHA ETAD VIJNAYA MADBHAVA YOPAPADYATE.**

**Thus the field as well as the knowledge and that which is to be known have been described briefly. My devotee knowing this becomes fit to enter into my being.**

iti: thus;  
kshetram: the field;  
tatha: as well as;  
jnanam: the knowledge;  
jneyam: that which is to be known/knowable;  
cha: and;  
uktam: is said (cha uktam: choktam);  
samastaha: briefly;  
mad bhaktaha: my devotee;  
etad: this;  
vijnyaya: knowing;  
mad bhavaya: to my being;  
upapadyate: is fit.

Having briefly enumerated various aspects of the field, knower of the field, knowledge, the knowable (kshetra, kshetrajna, jnanam, jneyam) the Lord proceeds to tell Arjuna the benefit of the spiritual efforts (sadhana) by the seekers.

Herein, the Lord emphatically uses the word “Mad bhaktaha” meaning My devotees. A true devotee is he who fits in the criterion of a bhakta as enumerated in chapter 12 (slokas 13-19). He says: “madbhaktaha etad vijnyaya” meaning “My devotee knowing this”.

It refers to those seekers who are in search of the light of knowable (Chit) which is “Parabrahman” who is the abode of eternal truth and bliss (Sat, Ananda) and that is “Moksha” which is liberation from earthly bondage.

The fruit of such an effort is:  
Mad bhavaya upapadyate: to enter into My being.

Please note: “enters into My being”. He does not say that the seeker will gain entry into heaven, Vaikunta, kailasa and such places which many express their interest in entering into.

What is “My being”?

It is “Sat, Chit, Ananda” - Truth, Knowledge and Bliss and the abode of righteousness (dharma).

The Lord is not granting any special rewards for the efforts but says,  
“Upapadyate” meaning: fit to enter into.  
This is the secret (guhya) word in this sloka.

The seeker becomes fit to enter into the abode of the Lord by developing the wisdom of a true jnani and he has to learn the art of perseverance in expressing those qualities (and the qualities of a bhakta).

Taking the scenario of an agricultural field:

The field;

The sowing of the seeds;

The efforts in letting the seeds grow into tree and deliver the fruits.

The field being the human mind,

Seeds of jnana which are the qualities of jnani enumerated in the earlier section of this chapter.

Sowing the seeds meaning:

The efforts in ploughing the land and planting the seeds, using the proper manure (teaching by the guru and the knowledge of the scriptures), and watering the same.

Efforts in letting the seeds grow into tree and deliver fruits meaning:

Keeping a constant vigil and

Protect the saplings from adverse weather conditions (results of various actions of present and the past) and

Making sure to clear the weeds that grow so quickly and damage the crops.

It is the flowers of devotion which give the fruits of knowledge namely, “Moksha”.

The seeds of good qualities (jnana and bhakti)

Become the intellectual flowers,

The flowers offered to the Lord who grants the fruits of such action which is “Moksha”.

The Lord has already said: dadami buddhi yogam - I grant the knowledge (buddhi) to such seekers.

The buddhi He refers to is the knowledge of kshetra and kshetrajna.

Devotion to the guru and the sacred scriptures is a strong pre-requisite to get the best results.

It is not simply a theoretical knowledge but the wisdom from making use of such knowledge that is needed to get the best results.

Es ist nicht einfach ein theoretisches Wissen sondern die Weisheit daraus, solches Wissen umzusetzen, welche benötigt wird, um die besten Ergebnisse zu erlangen.

## **Sloka 19**

**PRAKRUTIM PURUSHAM CHAIVA VIDHYANAADI UBHAVAPI  
VIKARAMSCHA GUNAMS CHAIVA VIDDI PRAKRITI SAMBHAVAAN.**

**Know that prakriti and purusha are both beginning-less. Know also that modifications and qualities are born of prakriti.**

prakritim: of prakriti;

purusham cha eva (chaiva): and also purusha;

ubhou api (ubhavapi): even both;

anaadi: beginning-less;

viddhi: know;

vikaramscha: and modifications;

gunaam cha eva: and also the qualities;

prakritir sambhavaan: born of prakriti;

viddhi: know.

The Lord is making some categorical statements to Arjuna concerning purusha and prakriti. It will be difficult for a beginner to understand the full import of this statement. As this statement is included in the third Shatka of the sacred text, (13th chapter), one has to take it that the seeker in quest of the eternal truth has to make a lot of progress in his efforts and reach higher level of spiritual studies to understand the same.

Poet Veda Vyasa has omitted an important word from this sloka not deliberately but expecting that the senior students will make an analysis of it using their intellect.

The sloka says that both prakriti and purusha are beginning-less but has not said that they are both endless. We all know that the Lord is said to be “anaadi and ananta” (without beginning and without an end). On the other hand prakriti is anaadi but has an end.

Let us analyse this further:

Purusha and prakriti are not two different entities.

Purusha without a beginning had a desire to play and create the world.  
The purusha as the Atman in the individual projected Himself into this world.

He did so with the medium of the intellect and the mind and with the help of the sense organs and the organs of action.

There is no definite date available to say when He decided to play and therefore both Himself (Purusha) and what He created (prakriti) are said to be beginning-less.

The effect of maya in the form of the three gunas brings about the ignorance. The Atman by becoming the jivatman forgets its original identity as Atman and starts enjoying the world He created.

As soon as the knowledge dawns of the true identity, the jivatman sheds off the ignorance and merges back into the Atman. Different people take different times to reach this level of intellectual maturity depending upon the vasanas they accumulated in their life’s journey consisting of several births and deaths.

So the prakriti and maya He created are said to have an end.

When we enter into the deep sleep state we forget the entire physical world and live in dream world. We cannot say when the dream started. But as soon as we wake up the dream ended. The waker and dreamer are therefore without a beginning but the dreamer has an end and the waker gets back to the physical world he is part of.

The reality, which is Atman is said to have two phases of existence. First phase which is its true nature is “Aham Brahmasmi”.

When it gets associated with the imaginary physical world it created, it enters into the phase of “I” which is the expression of “ego”.

As one cannot say when this phase of “ego” started, both the Atman and the ego are said to be without a beginning.

By the dawn of knowledge, the ego disappears into thin air and it reverts back to its original state of Atman. Hence it is said that the ego has an end.

The phase of “Aham Brahmasmi” is the state of “Self-assertion.”

The state of “ego” is “self-expression.”

Let us now analyse the second half of this sloka:  
The modifications and qualities are born of prakriti.

This subject has already been discussed in slokas 5-6 of this chapter.

The physical body including the mind is “the field” (the kshetra”) which is “prakriti”. The thought imprints on the mind are due to the impulses from the world around brought in by the sense organs and so are said to be born of prakriti.

The vasanas are the three gunas we express in the form of satva, rajas and tamas. The next chapter is dedicated totally to the gunas. The qualities we express are the gunas and as the gunas are born of prakriti, the qualities are also born of prakriti. All of these undergo modifications. The same logical explanation applies to these modifications and we have to conclude that these are born of prakriti too.

Desire, hatred; pleasure, pain; intelligence, fortitude the Lord has said in slokas 5-6 are some of the qualities we express. These are born of prakriti and undergo constant changes.

## **Sloka 20**

**KARYA KARANA KARTRUTVE HETUHU PRAKRUTIR UCHYATE  
PURUSHAHA SUKHA DUKHANAAM BHOKTRUTVE HETUR UCHYATE.**

**In the production of the body and the senses prakriti is said to be the cause. In the expression of pleasures and pains purusha is said to be the cause.**

karya: effect;  
karana: cause;  
kartrutve: in production of;  
prakriti: nature/maya;  
hetuhu: cause;  
uchyate: is said;  
purushaha: the purusha;  
sukha dukhaanaam: of joy and sorrow;  
bhoktrutve: in the experience of/expression of;  
hetur: cause;  
uchyate: is said.

The fundamental principle to be remembered is that there will be no effect without a cause. The cause is “Karana” and the effect “karya”.

For example, we feel hungry. Hunger is the effect and the cause is the living physical body. There is no smoke without a fire. Smoke is the effect and the fire is the cause.

These 13 constitute the prakriti which is nature:

The five sense organs bring in the impulses from the world around formed of the five great elements (together they are ten in number);  
The mind which reacts to these impulses, (11th);  
The intellect that gives an analysis to the mind, (12th);  
The ego”I” ness in us that asserts these interpretations by the intellect, (13th).

These thirteen are the “Karanam” (cause) for the formation of the physical body (effect/karyam) that experiences the pains and pleasures referred to in the second half of this sloka.

What makes us experience the pleasures and pains? The physical body constituted of these 13 items is the effect that experiences the pains and pleasures.

We are alive and hence experience the pains and pleasures. Does a dead person experience these? Definitely “no”.

What makes one alive?

We are alive because of the “life force” within us. The energy which keeps us alive is “Brahman” who is inside each of us as “the Atman.” In this sloka the Lord says it is “The Purusha”. Purusha, Atman and the life force are all different expressions pointing to the same energy that keeps us all alive and thereby experience pains and pleasures.

Really speaking, the scriptures declare that the Purusha is only a witness and does not experience anything. Because of the apparent association with prakriti and forgetting His original nature He is said to be experiencing the changes.

The second half of the sloka refers to this aspect.

## Sloka 21

**PURUSHAHA PRAKRUTISTHO HY BHUNKTE PRAKRUTIJAN GUNAN  
KARANAM GUNASANGOSYA SAD ASAD YONI JANMASU.**

**The purusha seated in the prakriti experiences the qualities born of prakriti. Attachment to the qualities is the cause for his birth in good and evil.**

purushaha: the purusha;  
prakritistho: seated in prakriti;  
hy: indeed;  
bhunkte: enjoys;  
prakritijan: born of prakriti;  
gunaan: gunas;  
karanam: the cause;  
gunasangaha: attachment to the gunas;  
asya: of his;  
sat asat yoni janmasu: of birth in good and evil wombs.

On the face of it this sloka may appear confusing to the un-initiated. This is because, on the one hand the vedas declare that the Atman is only a witness to all the various modifications that take place in the mind and which leads to the different types of actions and reactions.

In this sloka we are told that the Atman experiences the qualities born of prakriti. This sloka is about the association of the Atman with the physical body and the next sloka deals about the Atman who remains only as a witness for the bodily modifications.

There are two phases concerning the Atman we should understand:

First phase is “Self-assertion”.

The second phase is “self-expression.”

Let us understand what is “Self-assertion”.

To do so, we should look into the four great proclamations from the four Vedas which are collectively known as “Maha vakyas”.

The “Self” as we know is Atman which is a spark of Parabrahman.

The spiritual seeker in search of the answer to the question of “who am I” (his true identity) has to approach the guru with faith and devotion for an answer.

The master starts by defining what is Brahman. He starts off with the proclamation “Prajnanam Brahma”. (knowledge is Brahman)

Next, the master turns towards the seeker and roars the truth “Tat Tvam Asi”. (Thou art that) This is the upadesa (teaching) from the master who then goes into the detailed study on the subject and lets the student meditate on the statement.

The seeker meditating on the truth, examining himself analytically comes to the conclusion “Ayam Atma Brahma”. (This Atman is Brahman) This comes from anubhava. (experience)

The seeker comes back to the master. The master enquires on what he has learnt from the teaching. The seeker after having experienced the Truth and living constantly aware of the Truth happily pronounces the last of the maha vakyas: “Aham Brahmasmi” (I am Brahman).

“Self-assertion” is asserting the true identity which is “spark of Brahman” and expressing divinity in all the actions.

Self expression:

The Atman on the other hand apparently gets associated with the mind and the intellect of the body (jivatman) it gives life to, and goes on to experience the various vasanas imprinted on that mind. This aspect is “self-expression”.

Seated in the prakriti: (Kshetrajna/atman living in the kshetra/field/physical body).

It is the Atman encased in the physical body to which it has given life to and living in the world of objects. The physical body and the world around is the prakriti it is seated in.

Experiencing the qualities born of prakriti: the qualities are satvic, rajasic and tamasic.

We will have the entire next chapter dedicated to these qualities. Expressing the thought imprints stored in the mind is the way of life of that individual. The Atman becoming the jivatma associates with the mind apparently experiences these qualities.

Actions conducted according to the thought imprints stored leads in turn to reactions. Happiness, sorrow; victory, defeat; gain, loss are the experiences.

Birth in good womb means birth in the surroundings where the outcome is the experience of good reactions (happiness, victory, gain).

Birth in evil womb means birth in the surroundings where the outcome is experience of sorrow, defeat, loss. This is the gist of the second half of the sloka.

Because of association with the qualities, the Atman forgets its true identity and comes to be known as “jiva.”

That which is “self-expression” is “Apara Purusha” (lower purusha) which is “ego”.  
Which is “Self-assertion” is “Para purusha” which is Parabrahman who is Ksherajna.

Knowledge, (viveka, jnana) and detachment (vairagya) lets the jiva drop off the shackles of bondage and eventually rediscover its true identity as “Atman”.

## Sloka 22

### UPADRASHTANUMANTA CHA BHARTA BHOKTA MAHESWARAHA PARAMATMETI CAPI UKTO DEHESMIN PURUSHAHA PARAHA.

**The supreme purusha in the body is also called the witness, the one who permits. He is also the supporter, the enjoyer, the great lord and the supreme self.**

upadrashta: the witness;  
anumanta: he who permits;  
cha: and;  
bharta: the supporter;  
bhokta: enjoyer;  
maheswaraha: the great lord;  
paramatma: the supreme self;  
iti: thus;  
cha: and;  
asmin: this;  
dehe: in the body;  
purushaha: the purusha;  
paraha: supreme.

The characteristics of the “Para Purusha” (refer to the comments in the final section of the last sloka) who is Kshetrajna are given in this verse.

Each one of us has inside us the “Atman” who is the Kshetrajna and his apparent modification as “ego”. (because of association with the world around through the medium of the intellect, mind and the senses). The Atman is absolutely pure and remains as a witness to all bodily modifications. The ego is covered with kalmasha (dirt) due to the vasanas which are a combination of the three gunas.

Upadrashta is a vedic terminology. In the performance of the yajnas, usually there is one senior priest who acts as a witness and oversees the proceedings and he is the Upadrashta. He gives permission to the junior priests to perform the yajna. He remains a silent witness while the juniors conduct the rituals. Suppose the junior makes a mistake, the upadrashta just utters words like “Om” and the junior immediately gets the clue and correct their fault. Similarly to proceed from one step of the proceedings to the next step they are given permission by the upadrashta to do so. At no stage the upadrashta takes up the task of physically conducting the yajna.

The Atman remains as a permanent witness who gives permission for the mind to perform its duties.

The point to note is that “he gives only permission” and has nothing to do with the rights and wrongs of any actions. These are the domain of the ego. Performance of good actions would lead to good results and performance of bad actions lead to bad results (refer to last sloka).

In relation to actions conducted against dharma there is usually an inner voice of consciousness that says it is wrong but unfortunately we do not take notice of it. The voice of the inner consciousness is that of “Upadrashta.”

Performance of actions is one way of burning the accumulated thought imprints. The atman thereby is really giving permission to clear the stored vasanas.

There are many critics who misinterpret this word and say that because “He” has given permission, the individual who conducted the wrong act is not to be judged guilty. This is a totally wrong notion.

The conditioned soul (ego) is given an opportunity to burn off all the existing vasanas and attain union with the Parabrahman. The permission in this context is therefore the freedom to the individual to do what they like and indirectly gives the individual an opportunity to attain “Moksha.”

He is not just a witness but acts as a “neutral (unbiased) witness.” In any court of law the evidence given by the neutral witness has a greater value. This is because the neutral witness has nothing to gain or lose. The evidence of a neutral witness at a scene of accident allows the judge to make a decision whether the accused is guilty or not guilty.

The judge in the court of law gives permission for the advocates/barristers to proceed with the arguments of any case and remains as a witness to the proceedings.

The Lord is like the Chief Justice for the universe who gives permission for all to conduct actions and thereby burn their existing vasanas.

It is like Her Majesty, the Queen giving permission to start the parliamentary proceedings and remains as a neutral witness to the rest of the proceedings.

Bharta: (refer to sloka 16). Bharta is the supporter. “He” as the Atman supports the physical body and as “Parabrahman” supports the entire universe. He not only supports but also materially aids in lifting up the individual from the lower worlds to higher worlds. He gives aid in survival of life on earth too.

For us the individuals, “He” supports us in the conduct of all actions and does not interfere in what we do. After all because “He” is inside us we are alive and so are able to do the various duties. As we have discussed before, “He” supports us in conducting good actions and lets us climb the spiritual path to Moksha.

He also supports us in conduct of bad actions so that:

- we develop wisdom from the results of wrong actions, and
- at the same time exhaust the vasanas, and not let new vasanas enter into our mind, and
- finally leads us in the spiritual path to Moksha.

As Bharta, He has the interest of all in His heart and would love us to unite with Him.

Bhokta: the word has two meanings. Enjoyer and experiencer.

Taking the meaning as “Enjoyer”:

One can say that He does enjoy the good actions conducted by all as it leads to welfare of life on earth. He also enjoys the bad actions because ultimately, one fine day the individual who conducts bad actions will turn round and walk in the path of spiritual progress. After all He has the interest of all the life on earth.

Therefore He is “Maheswaraha”.

Iswara is that aspect of Parabrahman who has the welfare (kalyana) of the life on earth. He is therefore known as “Jagat Kalyana karta.” (who looks after the welfare of all forms of life on this earth.) He

leads all ultimately to His abode. Many of us take several births to reach Him but will ultimately reach Him.

Taking the meaning of “Experiencer”:

The Lord is said to experience the family life of the universe He created taking the role of the creator and caretaker of the universe.

Paraha: the word means “Supreme”. But it also has another meaning which is appropriate in the context of this sloka. It means “different”. All the facts mentioned in this sloka make it clear that “He” is different to the jiva.

### **Sloka 23**

**YA EVAM VETTI PURUSHAM PRAKRUTIM CHA GUNAIHI SAHA  
SARVATHA VARTAMANO’PI NA SA BHOOPYOBHIJAYATE.**

**Whoever, in this way knows the purusha and prakriti with the gunas,  
he, in whatsoever way acting, is not born again.**

ya: whoever;  
evam: in this way/thus;  
vetti: knows;  
purusham: the purusha;  
prakrutim: the prakriti;  
cha: and;  
gunaihi: gunas;  
saha: with;  
sarvatha: in all ways;  
vartamano: living/present;  
api: also;  
na: not;  
sa: he;  
bhooyaha: again;  
abhijayate: born.

Whoever in this way:

Knows what is kshetram (field): slokas 5-6,  
Who having understood the qualities of a true jnani (sloka 8-12),  
Having understood who is the kshetrajna (slokas 14-18),  
Knows what is the fruit of such knowledge (sloka 19),  
Knows what is prakriti and purusha (sloka 20, 21),  
Union of prakriti with purusha is the cause of birth (sloka 22),  
Knows that the jiva is really Purusha (and not the ego).

What happens to that person while living this present life is given in this sloka.

“Whoever” is an important word to note.

He/she could be Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Jew, Buddhist or from other religious denomination, could be Brahmana, Kshatriya, vaishya, sudra,  
Could belong to any sect,  
Youth, householder, retired or a sanyasi,

None of the above is a barrier.

In this way: The one who really knows in essence the gist of these slokas, knows the purusha and prakriti,  
Not only prakriti, the manifest physical world but prakriti with the three gunas of satva, rajas and tamas.

Sarvatha vartamano'pi: In what so ever way acting at present:

Conducting actions for being a member of the society (following the principle of karmanye vadhikarasthe: sloka 47, chapter 2).

This applies to good actions and not forbidden (nishiddha karmas). He is not expected to conduct any acts contrary to the sastras. His actions always follow the principle of dharma at spiritual, moral and social planes of existence.

Is not born again:

The other word for this statement is "Jivanmukta".

The individual is liberated while living in the present.

Let us recollect:

Sanchita - past

Prarabhda - present

Agami - future.

All his past vasanas are burnt, present actions do not produce any new vasanas and so there is no motive power to produce a new body after death.

## Sloka 24

**DHYANENATMANI PASHYANTI KECHID ATMAANAM ATMANAA  
ANYE SANKHYENA YOGENA KARMAYOGENA CHAPARE.**

**Some see the atma in themselves with purified mind by dhyana yoga; others by the yoga of knowledge and yet others by the karma yoga.**

dhyanena: by dhyana;

atmani: in the self;

pashyanti: sees/beholds;

kechid: some;

atmaanam: the Self;

atmanaa: by the self/themselves;

anye: others;

sankhyena yogena: by the yoga of knowledge;

karmayogena: by the yoga of karma;

cha: and;

apare: others.

We have reference to dhyana yoga, jnana yoga and karma yoga in this sloka. There is no mention of which of the three paths is the best. The path to take is entirely up to the seeker and it depends on his mental texture. (mind-set) For some dhyana, some jnana and for some others karma yoga is suitable.

Also note the play of words "self" (small case "s") and "Self" (large case "S").

The word "self" with a small case is used twice and "Self" with a large case is used once.

“Self” with capital “S” denotes the Atman and  
“self” with small “s” denotes the conditioned Atman.

Atmani (in the self)  
atmanaam (the Self)  
atmanaa (by the self/themselves)

kechid (some) pashyanti (behold):

Some behold the Atman (atmanaam/the Self) in the self (atmani/ego/the physical body) by themselves, (atmanaa) by dhyana yogena (by the yoga of dhyana/meditation,) Others behold the Atman by themselves (atmanaa) by the yoga of knowledge and by the yoga of action.

The common factor in all the three is:  
Atmanaa pashyanti: behold by themselves.  
behold what?  
Atmanam pashyanti: behold the Atman

The sacred texts, the guru can only help by lighting the knowledge but the individual has to get realisation by themselves. The guru and the scriptures are only the guides. It is their grace. Self-effort, self-analysis, self-perfection lead the seeker towards beholding the Atman within. It is “Atma sakshatkaram”.

The guru/scriptures can hold a mirror in front of the seeker and say that “the reflection is you” but the seeker has to see and recognise his reflection in the mirror.

Let us now look briefly at the three methods for the seekers.

Dhyana yogena: by the yoga of dhyana.

This has been discussed in detail in chapter 6. This method needs the mind to express least agitations. The ocean which is mind has to be totally calm and still. The thought imprints in the mind are like the waves. There should be least number of vasanas in the mind (waves in the ocean). Their mind should not be disturbed by the thoughts about the various sense objects around the physical world. The mind should use its authority and take control of the impulses that are brought in by the sense organs. The mind should be directed towards the Atman within. The search light in search of the Atman has to be directed inwards and not pointing to the world outside. By this method they do not actually see the Atman within by the physical eyes but see the same with the eye of knowledge. This comes from perfect state of purity of the mind.

Control the number of impulses brought in by the senses,  
Transform the impulses from tamasic to rajasic and from rajasic to satvic,  
Transcend from the satvic to suddha satvic - total purity,  
And thereby develop the capacity to behold the Atman within.

Others see the Atman by the Sankhya yoga.

Sankhya yoga is yoga of knowledge. Knowledge is acquired by the grace of the guru and the sacred texts, by a deep analytical study of the same and putting theory into practice and developing Vijnana. By this method the seeker develops the purity of mind to visualise the Atman.

Karma yoga is for those with a temperament for being active and on the go.

By taking up the path of nishkama karma and karma phala tyaga (desire-less actions and offering the results of actions at the lotus feet of the Lord) they develop a steady mind that can contemplate on the Atman.

Why there is no mention of bhakti yoga in the sloka?

We have to accept that for all the three paths devotion and faith are essential pre-requisites. We have discussed this in chapter 12.

### **Sloka 25**

**ANYE TVEVAM AJANANTAHA SHRUTVANYEBHYA UPASATE  
TE'PI CHATITARANTYEVA MRUTYUM SHRUTI PARAYANAHA.**

**Yet others, not knowing (the god) in this way, worship having heard (of it) from others. Believing sincerely what they have heard as the supreme, they also cross over death.**

anye: others;  
tu evam (tvevam): yet in this way;  
ajanantaha: not knowing;  
shrutva: having heard;  
anyebhyaha: from others;  
upasate: worship;  
te'pi cha: and they also;  
atitaranti eva: verily cross over;  
mrutyum: samsara in the form of death;  
shruti parayanaha: having heard as the supreme.

In relation to any speciality there are:

- Those who really know the subject;
- Those who think they know but really do not know;
- Those who do not know the subject but are aware of the subject and are willing to listen to the masters with faith and devotion and would like to put what they have heard into practice.
- Lastly there are those who do not know and are not keen to know.

This sloka is concerning those belonging to group “c”.

Those belonging to group “a” have developed the capacity to understand and follow one of the paths of Karma, Jnana and Dhyana.

There are probably those who think they know all about these paths but unfortunately they do not know it at all. These are to be considered as “hypocrites”.

Is there any chance for those belonging to group “c” to attain Liberation?

This sloka gives us an answer for this question.

The Lord is saying that they are not barred from knowing about Him or achieving Moksha. He wants them to listen faithfully to the advice of the elders and learned masters. But there is a condition

attached. He wants them to develop “Sincere faith and Bhakti” in Him and develop the desire to know Him. Towards this aim He wants them to listen to the experts whose only wish is “universal welfare”. He wants them not only to listen to them but also sincerely follow what has been preached.

Following the benefits of the various yoga practices mentioned in the last verse one may wonder what happens to those who cannot follow the paths of Dhyana, Karma or Jnana is another way of interpreting this sloka.

Yes, they can and the means to attain Liberation for such people is given in this sloka.

What power makes such people also cross over the ocean of death?

The power is:

Sraddha and Bhakti.

It is like the patients going to the doctor with faith and meticulously following the advice and taking the prescribed medicines. They do get cured of their illness.

He specifically says:

Atitaranti eva: verily cross over

Mrutyum: samsara in the form of death.

“Death” in this context refers to: Liberation from pains and sorrows of the life. By listening to the masters with faith and supreme bhakti towards the Lord they develop the capacity to withstand the pains and sorrows.

To achieve success in the spiritual path the advice for the seekers is:

Listen to the masters faithfully and worship the Lord.

## **Sloka 26**

**YAVAT SANJAYATE KINCHIT SATVAM STHAVARA JANGAMAM  
KSHETRA KSHETRAJNA SAMYOGAT TAD VIDDHI BHARATARSHABHA.**

**O best of bharatas, whatever being, moving or non-moving is born in this world, know that to have been produced from the union of kshetra and kshetrajna.**

yavat kinchit: whatever little;

sanjayate: is born;

satvam: being;

sthavara: un-moving;

jangamam: moving;

samyogat: by the union of;

tad: that;

viddhi: know;

bharatarshabha: best of bharatas.

Indirectly this sloka is a statement by the Lord to the effect that whatever form of life is on this earth, moving or un-moving, He, the kshetrajna is the one who has blessed it with life. “He”, the one with no form or qualities brings life to that which has no life of its own.

What appears as a form of life really is an inert matter made up of the five great elements, the earth, water, fire, air and space.

The steam locomotive needs the power of the steam to propel the locomotive to move forward. The locomotive as such has no capacity to move. The steam is “Kshetrajna” and the locomotive is “kshetra.”

The association between the kshetra and kshetrajna leads to “name and form” (nama, roopa). We, the humans, develop the body identification so strongly and this leads to development of “ego”. To realise the God, one has to develop dissociation from bodily attachment.

The result of union between the kshetra and kshetrajna is:  
That which has no life of its own (sthavara jangamam/kshetra) appears to have life.  
The immovable primordial energy (acalam/kshetrajna) appears to be born, grow and die.

The ignorant gets confused concerning the role of kshetra and kshetrajna.

## **Sloka 27**

**SAMAM SARVESHU BHOOTESHU TISHTANTAM PARAMESHWARAM  
VINASHYATSVAVINASHYANTAM YAHA PASHYANTI SA PASHYATI.**

**One who sees the Supreme Lord equally in all beings, the imperishable within the perishing, he (indeed) sees.**

Samam: equally;  
Sarveshu: in all;  
Bhooteshu: beings;  
Tishtantam: existing;  
Vinashyatsu: among the perishing;  
Avinashyantam: the non-perishing;  
Yaha: who;  
Pashyanti: sees;  
Saha: he;  
Pashyati: sees.

To understand this sloka we must recollect what the Lord has said in the previous verse.

In the last verse He has said:

Whatever being, moving or un-moving is born in this world, know that to have been produced from the union of kshetra and kshetrajna.

“He” The Supreme Lord is the kshetrajna and we, the physical bodies are kshetra.

“He” is therefore inside all that is born in this world.

The Supreme Lord is “only one” and has been given so many different names by us, the humans. Different religions have given different specific names to the Lord and the Hindus have a number of different gods. This is only to develop love and reverence to the Supreme.

Hence, the Lord stresses: “one who sees the Supreme Lord equally in all beings.” The important word to note is “samam” meaning “equally.” “He” is equally present in a Hindu, Christian, Muslim and in the followers of other faiths and equally present in those who worship Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti. There should not be any feeling of one particular form of God as superior to other forms. There should not be any quarrels in the name of religion, sect or creed.

Yaha pashyanti sa pashyati: who sees, he sees.

Here seeing is not with the physical eye and not with the mind that receives the impulses from the eyes but,

The centre for real seeing is “intellect”, with the intellectual eye of wisdom. The intellect guided by the inner conscience should be the master over the mind and the sense organs in all the activities that are undertaken by the body.

Vinashyatsvavinashyantam: The undying in the dying or the imperishable among the perishable.

The perishable (nashyanti) refers to the kshetra or the field. The field goes through the various modifications starting from birth till death and goes through so many births and deaths. The constant factor in all the modification is “Kshetrajna, the Supreme Lord.”

Unless we understand this philosophy, we are nothing but book worms and not making any progress in the spiritual journey.

The ignorant consider the physical body and the world as real and the Supreme remains unknown to them.

Whereas, the true Jnani does not give importance to the physical body and the surroundings as he is aware it is perishable and goes through many modifications. Of course, he still conducts all his duties for being part of a family, a society and a nation, but only in the spirit of “detachment in attachment.” Names and forms of the life on this earth should not influence the reactions to the external world. Universal Love, universal brotherhood, respects for all beings and all forms of life is stressed by the Lord for all the sincere seekers.

## Sloka 28

**SAMAM PASHYANHI SARVATRA SAMAVASTHITAM ISHWARAM  
NA HINASTY ATMANATMANAM TATO YATI PARAM GATIM.**

**Seeing the lord everywhere equally dwelling, he does not destroy the self by the self, he attains the supreme goal.**

samam: equally;  
pashyan: seeing/realising;  
sarvatra: in all beings;  
samavasthitam: equally dwelling;  
iswaram: the lord;  
na hinasty: destroys not;  
atmanam: the self;  
atmana: by the self;  
tato: so;  
yati: attains;  
param gatim: supreme goal.

This sloka is still a continuation of the theme from the last two slokas. The Lord, as a painter, is making some modification to the picture he has painted on the canvas (referring to the last two slokas) with a few strokes here and there (in this sloka), so that the message He is trying to depict is much clearer in the minds of the seekers.

Samam sarvatra samavasthitam: Equally present in all beings and is the same (in all).

“Every form of life we see around us in this universe is alive and so He is equally present in all” is the way to understand this statement.

Whether he “be a sinner or a saint”, the Lord continues to be present in both as long as they are alive. “He” does not say, “you are a sinner and I will move out of this body”. By continuing to stay in the body of the sinner, He is giving an opportunity to that soul to realise his crimes, burn the accumulated vasanas and recognise the presence of the Atman constantly with him and finally uniting with Him. This may take many births but the fact is “he will unite with the Supreme”.

Pashyan: seeing

As we said before, “seeing” is with the intellectual eye of wisdom and not with the physical eye or the mind.

Everywhere: (sarvatra)

It means in all parts of the universe we know of and we do not know of. It also means in all forms of life we know of and do not know of.

Does not destroy the Self by the self.  
Does not destroy the Atman by the ego.

The seeker should not misread the message “destroys the Self”. Forgetting the existence of “The Self” is equal to destroying “The Self” is what the Lord implies in this statement.

Vakyartha: The word meaning is that the Self or Atman is not destroyed by the ego in the individual.

Our lakshya, aim is to realise Him and unite with Him.  
So we should take up the “Tatvartha” (spiritual essence/meaning).

When the aim is uniting with the Supreme, it should be clear that the Supreme is “Eternal” and is not destroyed at any time by any individual.

So why is this statement one may ask?

I would say that the Gita and the scriptures are to guide the man in the correct direction and at the same time to tame the brute in man.

Ganya: destination.  
Where does the scriptures guide us to?  
They guide us towards the Supreme goal.

Tato: so  
Param gatim: Supreme goal  
Yati: attains

The end result of such actions that reflect “Seeing the Lord everywhere, equally dwelling” is: “The seeker attains Supreme Goal”. It is uniting with the Supreme which is equivalent to uniting with “Satyam, Dharmam” (Truth and righteousness).

By constantly keeping the vision of the Universal Lord and by expressing divinity in actions one attains the Supreme Goal which is “Moksha”.

## Sloka 29

**PRAKRUTYAIVA CHA KARMANI KRIYAMANANI SARVASHAHA  
YAHA PASHYATI TATHATMANAM AKARTARAM SA PASHYATI.**

**One who sees that all actions always are performed by prakriti only and that the self is the non-doer he indeed sees.**

prakrutya eva: by prakriti only;  
cha: and;  
karmani: actions;  
kriyamanani: are performed;  
sarvashaha: in all ways;  
yaha: he;  
pashyati: sees;  
tatha: thus;  
atmanam: the atman;  
akartaram: actionless/non-doer;  
sa pashyati: he sees.

We have discussed/studied already that the Atman is only a witness to bodily actions. The centre for the bodily actions is the mind which is the band master. This is the seat of “ego”-individuality. The body made up of the five great elements comes to life in the presence of the “Life principle” within.

To understand this truth using the intellectual eye of wisdom is the real seeing.

There should not be any blame attached to the God to the results of actions performed. He who sees thus is “the seer” referred to in this sloka. He is the true man of knowledge (jnani). He who does not see thus is “ignorant”.

To make this point clear the Lord has post-fixed “eva” to prakriti. He is saying that only prakriti is conducting actions.

We have discussed before that the car moves because of the power of the fuel inside. If there is any accident on the road, it is not the fault of the fuel but the driver and the vehicle. If it reaches the destination properly it is because of the fuel inside. The state of the car, the state of the road and the correct technique of driving by the driver contribute in reaching the destination safely. The fuel is the “Atman” inside, The car is the physical body, The driver is the “individual” (ego), The road is the path taken by the seeker, Destination is “Moksha”.

If we, the humans take the correct spiritual direction, keep our body fit and concentrate on the road at all times (single pointed concentration) the Lord will surely bless us in reaching the goal: “Moksha”.

## Sloka 30

**YADAA BHUTA PRUTHAG BHAVAM EKASTAM ANUPASHYATI  
TATHA EVA CHA VISTARAM BRAHMA SAMPADYATE TADA.**

**When he sees clearly the manifold world as resting in the one and projecting forth from Him only, he attains brahman.**

yada: when;

bhuta pruthag bhavam: the manifold universe (the entire variety of life consisting of moveable and un-moveable (chala-achala) in this universe we know of and which we do not know yet);

ekastham: resting in the one;

cha: and;

tataha eva: from that only;

vistaram: projecting;

anupashyati: sees well/clearly;

tada: then;

saha: he;

brahma: the brahman;

sampadyate: attains.

The vision obtained by the sense organs is short compared to that of the mind. The mind can reach many parts of the world which the sense organs cannot do.

The intelligence can take us that much farther than that of the mind. To reach the abode of Parabrahman, the tool needed is "Clear/pure intellect.

To visualise the Brahman from whom all forms of life project forth and all will eventually merge into needs intellectual eye of wisdom. We have studied that Arjuna got the vision of the "Viswa Roopa" only having been blessed by the Lord to have "Intellectual Eye of Wisdom."

With faith in the Lord's teaching and with "Para bhakti" (Supreme devotion to the Lord) we can enter into this vision which the Lord refers to in this sloka:

"He" says: when he sees. The word used is: anupashyati meaning "sees well/clearly".

This is true "Jnana" of the Brahman. What we learnt in Jnana yoga, chapter 4 was just an introduction to Jnana and a tool to develop bhakti. By putting the knowledge into action and developing the wisdom (Vijnana) from such actions the seeker will be able to make progress in his spiritual quest of "seeing" the Brahman.

The result of such a vision completes the quest and the seeker becomes one with the sought. This is "Brahma sampadyate."

"Brahma Jnana" is realising the truth of "oneness" which is the philosophy of "Advaita".

We can understand this sloka by taking the example of our dream state.

When we enter into the dream state, we develop an imaginary name and form and believe that state to be true. We start enjoying or suffering depending on the type of dream we had.

As soon as we wake up from the dream state, we are aware of our true identity and become one with our true self (in relation to the world we live in).

Let us look briefly into the waves and the ocean. The waves are all in the ocean and have no independent existence. The potential energy in the ocean brings forth the waves which appear as separate.

Similarly the world we live in is like the dream world and this is the life of ignorance.

When the spiritual ignorance is cleared we can see our true nature which is “Aham Brahmasmi” and this is becoming one with the Brahman.

The potentiality of Brahman (Maya Shakti) expresses itself as the manifold universe resting in Brahman. Maya Shakti is just an expression of the Brahman and has no existence of its own without His blessings.

### **Sloka 31**

**ANADITVAAN NIRGUNATVAAT PARAMATMA AYAM AVYAYAHA  
SHAREERASTHO'PI KOUNTEYA NA KAROTI LIPYATE.**

**O kounteya, being without beginning, being devoid of qualities, the paramatma, the imperishable, though dwelling in the body, does not act and is not tainted.**

anaditvaan: without beginning;  
nirgunatvaat: devoid of gunas/qualities;  
paramatma: the brahman;  
ayam: this;  
avyayaha: imperishable;  
shareerasthaha: dwelling in the body;  
api: though;  
kounteya: arjuna;  
na: not;  
karoti: acts;  
na lipyate: is not tainted.

Slokas 31-33 summarise qualities of Brahman. Let us not forget that He is without any qualities and form but for the sole purpose of letting the human mind grasp the idea of the Supreme Purusha our ancient masters/teachers have given these as a means to understand “Him.” Maya as Prakriti has veiled us under the influence of the gunas. The sense organs, the mind and the intellect are only the medium to unite with Him.

Anaditvaan: “Adi” is beginning and “anadi” is without a beginning.

That which has a beginning has to have a cause. Without cause there is no effect. We, the life on this earth have come from “Parabrahman” who is our father, our protector, our guide and who guides us to the path of Salvation. We have therefore a beginning (adi) and an end (anta). The Supreme has no beginning and no end.

Anaditvaan: „Adi“ ist der Anfang und „Anadi“ ist ohne Anfang.

Nirgunatvaan: without any qualities.

The Supreme Parabrahman as such is without any qualities but through the medium of mythology, epics and Puranas, for giving us, the humans, an opportunity to understand Him, the ancient seers have described Him with a form and qualities.

Avyayaha: the imperishable.

The pots are made up of mud. The pots are perishable but the mud they are made up is imperishable. Similarly, we, who have come from Him and dissolve back into Him are perishable but He is imperishable.

Shareerasthopi: dwelling in the body.

He, as Atman (Soul) with association to the five inert elements has taken the form of a physical body which gets a name and form. Association of the Atman with the body brings out the effect of “ego”. The ego carries out the activities under the illusion that it is the body. He is supposedly the dweller in this physical body. Really speaking, this body is not ours and how can we say He is the dweller? As the entire universe is His, we, the physical body are also part of Him. The Atman is Him and the body is His.

An important deduction from this statement is:

“He”, the Paramatma is inside the body. Automatically the body becomes a “temple” and hence it is “Kshetra” and “He” the “kshetrajna”.

Just as we show respect and conduct good actions when we go to the temple (temple of God) let us follow the same principle with regards to the actions we conduct in the world we live in because the world we live in is a massive temple. The house we live in is also a temple and our body is also a temple. We should learn to respect the temples in our lives.

Na karoti: does not act.

He, after giving the life to the body, lets the mind be the band master. The mind with its stored vasanas and association with the physical world conducts the various actions for the survival of the body and survival in the universe. “He” remains as witness by giving the mind free rein to carry on all activities. “He” is not the doer of any actions is a fact we should never forget.

“As an indweller, “He” made me do this act” is a wrong notion.

Na lipyate: is not tainted.

Any actions have a good or bad associated with the result of such actions. The results affect the progress of the physical body’s travel. Good results take us in the right upwards direction and bad results take us in a downward slopy path. “He” in no way is affected or tainted by our actions. But, the principle for us to follow is, “Thank Him for the good results and offer such results to Him. Let us take the blame for bad results and do not point to Him as the one responsible for our pains and sorrows”.

### **Sloka 32**

**YATHA SARVAGATAM SAUKSMYAD AKASHAM NO’PALIPYATE  
SARVATRAVASTHITO DEHE TATHATMAA NO’PALIPYATE.**

**As the all-pervading ether is not tainted because of its subtlety, so too the paramatma, pervading the body everywhere is not tainted.**

yatha: as;

sarvagatam: the all-pervading;

saukhmyad: because of its subtlety;

akasham: the ether/sky;

na: not;

upalipyate: tainted;  
sarvatra dehe': in the body/in all the bodies;  
avasthito: seated/pervading;  
tatha: thus/so;  
na: not;  
upalipyate: tainted.

In continuation of the theme concerning the qualities of the Parabrahman we now have the example of the ether to understand the nature of "not getting tainted".

The ether is the sky and this is compared to the Atman/Parabrahman.  
Among the five great elements in order of subtle to gross are:  
Water is subtler than earth,  
Fire is subtler than water,  
Air is subtler than fire,  
Ether is the subtlest.

Let us take the example of water. When frozen it is solid and when boiled fully it becomes vapour.  
One can stain the water with colours.  
One can stain the ice cubes.  
But it is not possible to stain the vapour because it is so subtle.

We use the microscope to see particles that are very subtle and cannot be seen by the physical eye.  
We use the magnification to see smaller particles.  
When it comes to very subtle particles that cannot be magnified the technician uses the clever method of staining. The subtlest particles do not get the stain but the surrounding particles take the stain. This makes us get a picture of the subtlest particles we are trying to see. This is on the principle of subtlest particles do not get tainted.

Now let us take the sky (ether) used as an example in this sloka: it is the subtlest of the five great elements. It does accommodate everything in the universe.

We can build a large multi-storeyed building which occupies the space. It does not take the space away. Space remains the same superimposed by the building. Because the space is so subtle, it does not get pushed up by the building block. If the space was going to be pushed out by the building, there would be a build-up of pressure due to the space being pushed out. There is no building up of pressure when the building is built. At the same time, when the building is demolished, the space will be restored.

The clouds appear to occupy the space when they come and go away leaving the space as it was before they came. Trillions of people are born and occupy the space and when they die the space remains the same.

Gas, vapours, chemicals etc. remain in the space but the space is not tainted by them.

Sarvavasthito dehe: The Atman like the space pervades the entire body and the Parabrahman pervades the entire universe. How?

As Atman, He provides accommodation for all the parts of the body but the parts of the body does not push Him away.

Parabrahman, like the space provides accommodation for all the various forms of life in this universe but none of these can take away the Parabrahman. When everything goes as in total dissolution (Pralaya) Parabrahman remains.

Please note again that there is no reference to any religion, caste or creed.

The body is born and dies in course of time. It goes through various gross and subtle modification but none of these modifications affect the Atman. Our qualities, both good and bad, expressed as actions only affect the jiva and not the Atman.

The prakriti/nature goes through so many modifications. Seasons come and go, life comes and goes but the Parabrahman remains the same.

Lightning, thunder and rain come but as soon as they go away, clear sky remains. Similarly each one of us get experiences like lightning, thunder and rain in our lives which may be frightening to experience but they do go away in course of time and we will come back to original state at the end. The same principle applies to the nature and the world we live in.

All of this explanation is to bring the reality to our experience. Let us be clear that it is only an example and ether cannot be the Parabrahman. The nearest to the ether/akasha in our body is “Chit-akasha”. It is the “knowledge” and it is like the ether used in this example.

“Na Upalipyate: Not getting tainted.

All types of actions, good and bad and the subsequent results of such actions do not affect the Parabrahman. “He” remains ever pure and taintless. Our actions both good and bad take us either in an upward path to reach Him or downward path away from Him.

### **Sloka 33**

**YATHA PRAKASHAYATI EKAM KRITSNAM LOKAM IMAM RAVIHI  
KSHETRAM KSHETREE TATHA KRUTSNAM PRAKASHAYATI BHARATA.**

**O bharata just as the one sun illumines the whole world, so also the lord of the field illumines the whole field.**

yatha: as;  
prakashayati: illumines;  
ekam: one;  
krutsnam: whole/all this;  
lokam: world;  
imam: this;  
ravihi: the sun;  
kshetram: the field;  
kshetree: the lord of the field;  
tatha: so;  
krutsnam: whole;  
prakashayati: illumines;  
bharata: arjuna.

The last sloka was about “all pervasive” (omnipresence) nature of the Parabrahman. This verse is about “all-luminous” (omniscient) nature of Him.

The last sloka used “space” as a comparison and this sloka has “sun” as a comparison.

As we have discussed several times before, no comparison can even be the “reality”. The “reality” is beyond the grasp of the senses, the mind and the intellect. The comparisons are only for us to get an idea of the “reality.” The entire Vedic and Upanisad teaching is on the principle of “ne’ti”, meaning, “not this, not this”.

The sun and the space are not “Parabrahman”.

The sun illumines the entire world and when the sun-set takes place, that part of the world is clothed in darkness.

The sun shines equally on all beings and gives us the “physical light.”

Parabrahman shines equally on all beings. He is seated in the heart of all beings. He gives us “spiritual luminosity.”

What we, the individuals do in the presence of “day light” varies. Some carry on good activities that help themselves and/or others. Some carry on activities that harm themselves and/or others. The sun is definitely not responsible for what each one of us do. It is us, the individuals who are responsible for good acts or bad acts.

It is also the fact that the clouds in the sky do not take away the sun light but just hide it from view.

Similarly, the Lord who is seated in the hearts of all is only a witness to what we do. We get either plus or minus points for what we do. Our tamasic and rajasic qualities hide the “Pure Satvic” nature of “Parabrahman” within.

We can keep the inside of our house in total darkness by closing all doors, windows and not letting light in. We cannot complain that the sun is not blessing us.

Similarly, by our own qualities we block the “Light of Knowledge” and remain in darkness which is known as “ignorance”. We cannot complain that the Lord has not blessed us.

The sun gives us all the light and “Parabrahman” is “The Light” of all.

With this explanation we can understand the true meaning of the word “Krutnam” (whole/all this).

This chapter is “Kshetra Kshetrajna” yoga, the field and the knower of the field.

There are three sets of three in relation to our body and life. The word “Krutnam” refers to all of these three.

Past, present and future,

Wakefulness, dream and deep sleep,

The intellect, mind and the physical body.

All the three are illumined by the “Light of Atman”.

“He” illumined us and we are awake,

“He” illumined us but we are in dream world,

“He” illumined us but alas we are in deep slumber.

“He” illumines the intellect (reasoning capacity). We either keep our intellect in the path of knowledge or keep it in darkness.

“He” illumines our mind. We either keep our thoughts pure or in darkness.

“He” illumines our sense organs. We either use the light or let the organs go their own way in enjoying the objects in the sense world.

“He” was with us in the past, present now and will be there tomorrow and “He” is constantly shining.

All of this is leading us to the next chapter which gives in detail a description of the “Gunas” (qualities).

### Sloka 34

**KSHETRA KSHETRAJNAYOR EVAM ANTARAM JNANA CHAKSHUSHA  
BHUTA PRAKRITI MOKSHAM CA YE VIDUR YANTI TE' PARAM.**

**Those who, with the eye of knowledge, know the difference between kshetra and kshetrajna, and of liberation from the prakruti of being, go to the supreme.**

kshetra: the field;  
kshetrajna: the knower of the field;  
yor: of the;  
evam: thus;  
antaram: difference/distinction;  
jnana chakshusha: with the eye of knowledge;  
bhuta: being;  
prakrutir: the nature;  
moksha: liberation;  
ca: and;  
ye: those/who;  
viduhu: know;  
yanti: go to;  
te': they;  
param: the supreme.

With the eye of knowledge: (Jnana chakshusha).

Let us understand this first. There is a special word in “spiritual dictionary” and it is “chit-akasha”. This is the nearest one to the Atman within. “chit” is knowledge and organ of knowledge is “The intellect.” The intellect of the seeker after going through the spiritual teaching by the guru, self-study, self-analysis and self-policing comes to know the all-pervasive nature of the Parabrahman. When the wisdom of the difference between what is “real/eternal” and what is “not real and not eternal” dawns, that intellect/buddhi is “The chit-akasha”. This is the “eye of knowledge” referred to in this sloka.

In the 24 tatvas according to the Sankhya philosophy, there are: (refer chapter 2, introduction)

Pancha maha bhutas

Tanmatras

Karmendriyas

Jnanendriyas

Manas

Ahamkara

Buddhi/mahan

Prakruti

In relation to the physical body:

Prakruti is the basic creative power;

Mahan/buddhi is the cosmic intelligence which is “chit-akasha”;

When the buddhi/reasoning capacity is tainted with individuality/ego it becomes “Ahamkara” and it blocks its discriminatory power. It does not know how to differentiate between “The Seer and the seen” (Drik, Drishya meaning kshetra and kshetrajna). It associates with the physical body and forgets the Atman.

The next word of importance in this sloka is: Evam - thus.

This refers to what has been described in this chapter about “Kshetra and Kshetrajna” which is “Real Knowledge.” It also refers to “bhakti”:

Sloka 10, chapter 10:

Teshaam satata yuktanaam - dadaami buddhi yogam

To them ever steadfast in worshipping Me with love, I give them the yoga of discrimination.

It refers to “Dhyana” which is constant meditation on what has been said so far in the 13 chapters.

Bhuta prakrutir moksham: Liberation from prakruti of beings.

This refers to “The three gunas” which is the “maya” (illusion) that veils real knowledge. “He” will liberate us from the clutches of maya. He will lift us from tamas to shuddha Satva state.

Yanti param: go to the Supreme.

“The Supreme” being is “Sat-Chit-Ananda.” It applies to all sincere sadhakas who understand the essential spiritual meaning of every word in this chapter and there is no discrimination on any grounds.

Without the discriminatory eye of knowledge,

We do not recognise the Truth and this is “non-apprehension” of the Reality.

We live in the world of illusion which brings about mis-representation of Reality and is known as “mis-apprehension.”

**Iti srimadbhagawadgeetasupanisatsu brahmavidyayaam yogasastre  
srikrishnarjuna-samvade kshetra-ksetrajna-vibhaga-yogo nama trayodasho‘dhyayaha.**

Thus ends the thirteenth chapter, “KSHETRA-KSHETRAJNA-VIBHAGA-YOGA “, from Srimad Bhagavadgita, which is Upanishad, Brahma Vidya and Yoga Shastra, in the form of a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.