

moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

The eighth verse again echoes the older teaching, this time in the Upanishad of the Questions: “Life proudly made as if to go out above. And as Life goes out, all the others go out, and as Life returns, all the others return.” And a few verses further down, in the eleventh verse of our book, we have an echo of this passage from the same older scripture: “He warms as fire; as sun, and the rain god; the thunderer, wind, and the earth, substance, the bright one, what is, what is not, and what is immortal.”

This triple division into “what is, what is not, and what is immortal,” has again suggested the closing verses of our book; from the sixteenth to the end: “there are two Spirits in the world, the changing and the unchanging . . . But the Highest Spirit is other than these, it is the Supreme Self, the everlasting Lord.” It is evident that we are dealing with what has been called the threefold form of the Logos, the division of the One into the three stages: the First Logos, the Second Logos, and the Third Logos. The First Logos is the Supreme Spirit; the Second Logos is the Unchanging Spirit; the Third Logos is the Changing Spirit of our poem. The highest form of the Logos is the Oversoul, in which our consciousness is to be blended with the All-consciousness: “Who knows Me thus, free from delusion, loves Me with his whole heart.”

Book XV

THE MASTER SAID:

Rooted above, downward-branching, they say, is that immemorial tree, whose leaves are the hymns; who knows it, knows the Vedas.

Down and upward stretch its branches, grown strong through the powers, and with things of sense for twigs; downward stretch its roots which bind to works in the world of men.

The form of it cannot be so perceived in this world, nor its end, nor beginning, nor its foundation; with the firm sword of detachment cutting this tree, whose roots grow firm,

Let him then follow the path to that resting-place, whither going, they come forth no more, saying: "I enter into the primal Spirit, whence hath flowed forth the ancient stream of things."

They who are free from pride and delusion, who have conquered the fault of attachment; who dwell ever in the Oversoul, who have turned back from desire, who are freed from the opposites called pleasure and pain, go undeluded to that everlasting rest. (5)

The sun shines not there, nor the moon, nor fire; whither going, they return not again, that is My supreme home.

The immemorial part of Me, which becomes life in the living world, draws the mind and the powers of sense and action which dwell in Nature.

When the lord of the body takes a body, and when he departs from it, he goes forth, taking the powers with him, as the wind carries perfumes with it.

Through hearing, seeing, touch, taste and smell, and likewise mind, he partakes of objects of sense.

Fools perceive not him as that which leaves the body or lingers in it, tasting through union with the powers, but those perceive who possess the eye of wisdom. (10)

Seekers of union, who press on, perceive him within themselves; but even pressing on, the uncontrolled, devoid of wisdom, perceive him not.

The light that, dwelling in the sun, illumines the whole world, the light that is in the moon, in fire, know that light to be of Me.

Entering the world and all beings, I support them by my force; and I feed all plants, becoming Soma, the essence of the sap.

I, becoming vital fire, and entering the bodies of all living things, joined with the forward breath and the downward breath, prepare the four-fold food.

And I have entered into the heart of each, from Me come memory, knowledge, judgment; through all Vedas am I to be known, I am the maker of the Vedanta, the knower of the Vedas. (15)

There are two Spirits in the world, the changing and the unchanging; the changing is all beings, the unchanging is that which stands firm.

But the Highest Spirit is other than these, it is called the Supreme Self; it is the everlasting Lord, who, entering the three worlds, upholds them.

As I transcend the changing, and am also more excellent than the unchanging, therefore in the world and in the Vedas I am praised as the Supreme Spirit.

Who knows Me thus, free from delusion, as the Supreme Spirit, he, all-knowing, loves Me with his whole heart, O son of Bharata.

Thus this most secret scripture is declared by Me, O blameless one; who understands this, possesses wisdom, and has attained his goal, O son of Bharata. (20)

Introduction to Book XVI

Leaving for a time the threefold division of life according to the Three Powers, Book XVI approaches the moral problem in a more direct and simple way. The main theme of the book is exactly that of the Epistle of St. James:

“The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. . . .

“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, psychical, devilish.”

One may state the matter thus: The psychical nature lies between the animal in us and the divine. It is the essence of the psychical nature that it will reflect and mirror in its own substance whatever the attention and the will are set on. Therefore if the thoughts are fixed on the appetites of the body, the animal desires and passions, these will be reflected in the psychical nature. And reflected not in their simplicity, as they are in the wild animal life, but mirrored and broken into a thousand images, distorted, exaggerated out of all semblance of natural likeness or natural purpose. Thus the simple animal impulse of self-preservation will become ambition, selfishness, cruelty; in like manner the animal search for food and water will be mirrored and distorted into psychic gluttony, drunkenness, greed, and the pure animal power of reproduction into lust and passion. This is “the wisdom from beneath,” as St. James calls it, the word “wisdom” translating “sophia,” which means rather “executive force.” This is the impulse which is “earthly, psychical, devilish,” or demoniac, as the Bhagavad Gita puts it.

But if the heart be set on the things of the Spirit, then the psychical nature will reflect and mirror into itself spiritual things. The eternal power of the Spirit will be mirrored as peace, stability; the oneness of the Spirit, in virtue of which the One Life stands at the heart of all living things, will mirror itself as gentle charity, as kindly affection one to another, with brotherly love. The ever-living joy of the Spirit will mirror itself as happiness and peace. Thus shall we have

that wisdom from above, which is “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, full of mercy, without hypocrisy.”

Nor will the direction of thought and will affect the emotional nature only. The intellect will be similarly colored. If the heart be set on the things that are below, then the psychic nature, mirroring the things that are below, will build an intellectual image of a world, material, gross, not ruled by divine law, subject to chance, to death and dissolution. But if the heart be set on the things above, then the intellectual nature will build an image of the world in harmony with the things that are above, and will perceive the world as permeated by divinity, ruled by holy law, made out of the elements of the best in us, and akin to our hearts and souls, not merely to the grossness of our bodies. Thus does our intellectual view of the world depend not at all on logical deductions but on the purity or impurity of our moral natures.

The materialistic mood of mind is dramatically expressed in the passage beginning, “This have I gained to-day; this desire shall I obtain; this much I have, and this shall I have of further wealth; this foe has been slain by me, and I shall slay yet others . . .” and ending “Thus they say, deluded . . . and fall into the impure pit of hell.”

We cannot fail to be reminded of a similar passage:

“This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee . . .”

Book XVI

THE MASTER SAID:

Valor, cleanness of heart, steadfast union with illumination, generous giving, control, sacrifice, study, fervor, righteousness,

Gentleness, truth, freedom from anger, detachment, peace, loyalty, pity for all beings, an unascivious mind, mildness, modesty, steadfastness,

Fire, patience, firmness, purity, good-will, absence of conceit, these belong to him who is born to the godlike portion, O descendant of Bharata!

Hypocrisy, pride, vanity, anger, meanness, unwisdom, these, O son of Pritha, are his, who is born to the demoniac portion.

The godlike portion makes for liberation, and the demoniac for bondage. But grieve not, son of Pandu! Thou art born to the godlike portion. (5)

There are two ways of beings in this world: the godlike and the demoniac. The godlike has been declared at length; hear now from Me the demoniac, O son of Pritha.

Those of demoniac nature know not right action nor right abstinence; nor purity nor discipline nor truth are found in them.

This world, say they, is without truth or firm foundation, without a Lord; not ruled by mutual law, driven only by wilfulness.

Resting in this view, self-destroying, of little wisdom, they come forth violent and hostile, for the destruction of the world.

Taking their refuge in desire insatiable, following after hypocrisy, vanity, madness, through delusion grasping after thoughts of evil, they follow unclean lives; (10)

Given to limitless imaginings stopped only by death, they yield themselves up to the enjoyment of their desires, persuaded that there is nothing else;

Bound by a hundred meshes of expectation, filled with lust and wrath, they seek, for the enjoyment of their desires, to heap up wealth unjustly:

“This have I gained to-day; this desire shall I obtain; this much I have, and this shall I have of further wealth.

“This foe has been slain by me, and I shall slay yet others. I am a lord, I am master of feasts, I have won success and might and happiness;

“I am wealthy and well-born, what other is like unto me? I shall sacrifice, I shall give gifts, I shall exult;” thus say they, deluded by unwisdom, (15)

Wandering in many imaginings, enmeshed by the nets of delusion, fastened to the feasts of their desires, they fall into the impure pit of hell.

Puffed up with self-conceit, vain, following after the pride and intoxication of wealth, their offerings are no true offerings, full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Clinging to self-conceit, violence, pride, lust, wrath, hating Me in themselves and in others, and full of cavilling;

Them, full of hate, cruel, basest of men in the world, I cast down quickly in their impurity into demoniac wombs.

Entering demoniac birth, deluded in birth after birth, not finding Me, O son of Kunti, they go the lower way. (20)

Threefold is this door of soul-destroying hell: lust, wrath, and greed are its doors; therefore let him shun these three.

The man who gets free from these three doors of darkness, O son of Kunti, reaches happiness of soul, and thenceforth goes the higher way.

He who, scorning the scriptural law, does according to his own lusts, reaches not perfection, nor happiness, nor the higher way.

Therefore the scripture is thy rule, to establish what shall be done, what left undone. Knowing the work appointed to thee by the scripture, deign thou therefore to perform it.

Introduction to Book XVII

The early verses of Book XVII may remind us of something we should never forget: that the speech of the Orient is always symbolical; that, for the Eastern mind, the particular always represents the universal, so that each particular symbol stands for a universal truth. This is the principle on which the mystery language is based, in which all true Scriptures are written; for that alone is a true Scripture, whose writer has clear vision of the universal, the One Eternal, and beholds that Eternal in each individual form.

Thus the words: “Those of Substance worship bright deities; those of Force worship deities greedy and passionate; the men of Darkness worship the hosts of darkness,” mean very much more than that the good worship the Devas, the passionate worship Titans, the sluggish worship ghosts. For we must remember that the Three Powers, Substance, Force, Darkness express much the same truth as the Three Worlds of the Vedantins. So that “those of Substance” really means those whose consciousness has been raised to their spiritual nature, and dwells there. They whose consciousness has thus opened in the spiritual world will aspire toward the bright, divine powers of that world. They will “lay up treasure in heaven.” And their thought of God will be in harmony with that spiritual world; they will conceive of the awful majesty of the Silent One as the heart of love, mightily working for the final good of all. The men of Force are those whose consciousness dwells in the psychic nature; the realm of emotionalism, of the argumentative mind, of ambition, strife, egotism, self-reference. These will worship all that makes for a like activity, a like vibration in themselves. For all these psychic activities are, in one sense, vibratory perturbations of the psychic body, psychic stimulants, for the obtaining of which physical stimulants are taken. These are the “deities greedy and passionate,” worshipped by the “men of Force”; and, in another sense, those who dwell in the psychic realm will picture to themselves deities greedy and passionate, gods jealous and destructive. This is the impulse which leads men to think that their gods will be served by fierce controversies about the gods of others, by campaigns of persecution, whether bodily or mental, in favor of orthodoxy of whatever color; by attempts to force their views of God down the throats of others; in a word, by every sin against the great law of tolerance. Again, the cause is not mental limitation so much as moral perversity; the

consciousness being centered in the psychical nature, which is separatist, self-assertive, prone to hostility and hate.

Then we have, in the enumeration of the Three Foods, another instance of Eastern symbolism. For Food, in the mystery language, is a general name for all experience that is wrought into nature, food of body, food of mind, food of heart and soul. Those who take into themselves spiritual power, drawing into their hearts the divine life above them, eat spiritual food, the mystical “body of the Lord.” This is the symbol on which rests the sacrifice of bread and wine, which was first associated with the death and resurrection of Osiris, and was for ages a mystical rite of Egypt. The body of the sacrificed god is the divine Logos, entered into incarnation, and offering itself inwardly to our souls, in sustenance and support.

This symbolic meaning of food is found in the oldest Upanishads. Thus, in the teaching of the father of Shvetaketu, we read:

“Learn from me, dear, the meaning of hunger and thirst. When a man hungers, as they say, the Waters guide what he eats. And as there are guides of cows, guides of horses, guides of men, so they call the Waters the guides of what is eaten. Thus you must know, dear, that what he eats grows and sprouts forth; and it cannot grow without a root. And where can the root of what he eats be? Where but in the world-food, Earth? And through the world-food, Earth, that has sprouted forth, you must seek the root, the Waters. And through the Waters that have sprouted forth, you must seek the root, Radiance. And through Radiance that has sprouted forth, you must seek the root, the Real. For all these beings, dear, are rooted in the Real, resting in the Real, abiding in the Real.”

Here, it is evident, we have the exact equivalent of the teaching of Spirit and the Three Powers. The Real of the Upanishad is Spirit. Radiance is the same as Substance; the Waters are the same as Force; Earth, the world-food, is the same as Darkness. From the Real, the Higher Self, are emanated the spiritual, psychical and animal natures. Or, as the Upanishad says, from the Real the Radiance sprouts forth; from the Radiance the Waters sprout forth; from the Waters the world-food, Earth, sprouts forth. And each realm of our being is ruled by the realm above it. The experience of the bodily nature is guided and ruled by the powers next above, the psychical or astral powers, while the

experience of the psychical nature is ruled by the spiritual powers. Or, as the symbolic language of the Upanishad says:

“When a man hungers, as they say, the Waters guide what he eats. And when a man thirsts, as they say, the Radiance guides what he drinks. And as there are guides of cows, guides of horses, guides of men, so, they say, the Radiance guides the Waters. Thus you must know, dear, that what he drinks grows and sprouts forth; and it cannot grow without a root. And where can the root of what he drinks be? Where, but in the Waters? And through the Waters that sprout forth, you must seek their root, the Radiance. And through the Radiance, dear, that sprouts forth, you must seek its root, the Real. For all these beings, dear, are rooted in the Real, resting in the Real, abiding in the Real. And how these three: the world-food, Earth, the Waters, Radiance, coming to a man, become each threefold, threefold, this has been taught already.

“And of a man who goes forth in death, formative Voice sinks back into Mind; Mind sinks back into vital Breath, vital Breath to Radiance, and Radiance to the higher Divinity. This is the soul, the Self of all that is, this is the Real, this is the Self, That Thou Art, O Shvetaketu.”

Thus hunger and thirst mean the impulses of bodily and psychical experience. When all experience has been consecrated by sacrifice, so that we see in all things the life of the higher Divinity, then food and drink are also consecrated; all experience becomes divine, and we partake of the mystical bread and wine.

The same spirit of symbolism underlies what is further said of gifts, penance and sacrifice: exactly the same spirit that finds expression in the words:

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free?”

The teaching of the righteous gift, to one who will not return it, finds a parallel in the words: “But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee. . . .”

Book XVII

ARJUNA SAID:

They who, neglecting the scripture ordinance, nevertheless sacrifice full of faith, what is their basis, is it Substance, Force or Darkness?

THE MASTER SAID:

Faith is of three kinds; it is according to the innate character of embodied beings, either of Substance, or of Force, or of Darkness. Hear it thus:

Everyone is according to the nature of his faith, O descendant of Bharata. For man is formed of faith; what his faith is, that verily is he.

Those of Substance worship bright deities; those of Force, deities greedy and passionate; the others, the men of Darkness, worship the hosts of darkness, the spirits of night.

They who submit themselves to penance not appointed by scripture, and terrible, their hearts full of hypocrisy and vanity, following after lust, rage, violence, (5)

Foolishly afflicting the lives that dwell within their bodies, and Me also within their inner selves, know these to be of demoniac mind.

And the favorite food of each is also divided threefold, and likewise the sacrifice, penance, gifts. Learn the divisions of these:

Foods that increase the life-force, power, strength, health, well-being, happiness, foods that are savory, mild, strengthening, vigorous, are dear to the men of Substance.

Foods that are acrid, bitter, salt, over-hot, sharp, stinging and burning, are the foods dear to the men of Force, and bring pain and sorrow and sickness.

Foods that are stale, whose savor has departed, which are decayed and corrupt, things that are leavings and impure are the choice of the men of Darkness. (10)

The sacrifice that is offered according to law, by those who are not seeking reward, but whose only thought is, that it is right to sacrifice, is the offering of the men of Substance.

But what is offered through desire of reward, or through hypocrisy, know this, O best of the Bharatas, to be the sacrifice of Force.

The sacrifice that is offered contrary to law, at which no food is distributed, where there are no chants nor gifts, the sacrifice that is without faith, is declared to be of Darkness.

Reverence for divine beings, for the twice born, the spiritual teacher, the wise, purity, righteousness, chastity, gentleness, this is declared to be the true penance of the body.

Speech that brings peace, true, friendly and kind, and assiduous study are declared to be the true penance of word. (15)

Quietness of heart, amiability, silence, self-control, purity of nature, this is declared to be the true penance of the mind.

This threefold penance, offered with perfect faith by men who seek no personal reward, who are joined in union, is declared to be the penance of Substance.

But the penance that is offered to gain a name for piety, for fame or respect, and in hypocrisy, this is declared to be the penance of Force, unstable and infirm.

The penance that is offered with a deluded heart, through suffering self-inflicted, or in order to destroy another, this is declared to be the penance of Darkness.

What gift is given because it ought to be given, to one who will not repay it, at the right time and place, to the right person, this is recorded to be the gift of Substance. (20)

But the gift that is given for the sake of a benefit in return, or for some personal reward, or by constraint, this is recorded to be the gift of Force.

The gift given at the wrong place and time, to the wrong person, not through kindness, but haughtily, that is declared to be the gift of Darkness.

“Om That True,” this is recorded as the triple symbol of the Eternal; through this of old were Brahmans and Vedas and sacrifices ordained.

Therefore reciting “Om” are sacrifices, gifts and penances performed, according to ordinance, by those who know the Eternal:

With thought of “That” are the rites of sacrifices and penance and giving, in all their forms, performed by those who seek liberation. (25)

“True” is used to indicate the Real and the Good; the word “true” is likewise used, O son of Pritha, for auspicious work.

Steadfastness in sacrifice, penance, gifts is declared to be “true”; and whatever work makes for these is also declared to be “true.”

Whatever sacrifice is offered, whatever gift is given, whatever penance is performed, whatever is done, without faith, that, O son of Pritha, is declared to be “untrue”; neither in the other world nor in this does it avail.

Introduction to Book XVIII

Though the longest in the poem, Book XVIII needs very little comment. It by no means follows that it needs little study, or that it will scantily repay study. On the contrary, no part of the poem is richer in immediately practical wisdom, in counsel applicable to the needs of daily life. But this counsel students must dig out for themselves, rather than receive it ready-made from a commentator.

The beginning of Book XVIII contains the moral teaching which is most characteristic of the Bhagavad Gita, the teaching which has the distinctive note of Krishna as a spiritual leader. It is the teaching of Renunciation, or of genuine disinterestedness, to express the same thing in another way. The ideal of ancient India has ever been Liberation, whether we speak of the ancient Upanishads, or of the Buddhists, or of their close kinsmen the Jainas. The only question has been as to the way in which Liberation is to be gained. The extremists among the ascetics held that Liberation should be sought by giving up the world in the most literal way, by dwelling in the forest far from human habitations, by living on wild herbs and water, by cutting oneself loose from all intercourse with one's fellowmen. Thus, and thus only, said the extremists, can one get free from the bondage of works, which we are ever suffering and ever renewing. In answer to these ascetics, the Buddha taught the doctrine of the Golden Mean, the path of righteousness, gentleness, humanity. To the same problem Krishna had already given an answer equally valid, and with a marked individual coloring. The true way of Liberation, he said, is disinterestedness. Work for the love of the work, and not that you may gain a reward. Work is imperative and not to be escaped; what should be escaped is bondage to work. And it is to be escaped, not by selfish calculations, whether called ascetic or ritual, but by a clear and selfless spirit, by self-forgetfulness, by doing all work as to the Most High, and thus ridding oneself of the heresy of separateness, self-centered vanity and egotism. It may be thought that, when this is done, the individuality becomes pale and diaphanous. The truth is just the contrary. When this is done, the individuality for the first time has real being, for the first time emerges clearly into the light of day. Genuine happiness, genuine cheerfulness, genuine mirth come first with this clear and disinterested spirit, when all work is done as to the Master, when all self-reference is left behind. This teaching of work with disinterestedness is

the first theme of Book XVIII, and the most distinctive moral feature of the Bhagavad Gita.

Then comes a further exposition of the Three Powers, and their application to different phases of life. Here again is most fruitful material for study. The clue already given should be used, it being held in mind that the Three Powers correspond to the Three Bodies, or the Three Worlds of the Vedanta, as set forth, for example, in the Mandukya Upanishad. Students should make the application for themselves. Thus, verse 20 tells us that, when the consciousness has been raised to the spiritual body, as St. Paul calls it, then “one eternal nature will be perceived in all beings, undivided, though beings are divided.” In like manner, when the consciousness is centered in the psychic body, one will see “in all beings various natures according to their variety.” In other words, the psychic nature sees diversity where the spiritual nature sees unity. The one divides where the other unites. In the same way should be worked out the threefold divisions of work, doer, firmness and happiness, set forth in the verses that follow.

Then comes the close of the poem, with its blessing to all who hear and further the same teaching, a blessing which we, as hearers of it, hope to share.

Book XVIII

ARJUNA SAID:

The truth of Renunciation, O mighty-armed one, I would learn of Thee, and of Resignation, with their difference, O Thou demon-slayer of flowing locks!

THE MASTER SAID:

The renouncing of works done through desire, sages have called Renunciation; and the wise have declared that ceasing from all desire of personal reward for one's work is Resignation.

Some of those who follow after knowledge have declared that every work is to be abandoned, as being faulty; but others say that works of sacrifice, gifts and penance are not to be abandoned.

Learn therefore from Me the certain truth concerning Resignation, O best descendant of Bharata; for Resignation, O tiger of men, is declared to be of three kinds.

Works of sacrifice, gifts and penance are not to be abandoned, but are to be performed; for sacrifice, gifts and penance are the purifiers of those who seek wisdom. (5)

But even these works are to be performed with abandonment of attachment and the desire of reward; this, O son of Pritha, is My sure and excellent decision.

But the renunciation of necessary work is not right; the ceasing from such work comes of delusion, and is declared to be the fruit of Darkness.

Whoever ceases from any work through fear of bodily weariness, and saying: "it is painful," he, making the renunciation of Force, does not gain the fruit of renunciation.

Whatever necessary work is done, O Arjuna, from the thought that it ought to be done, without attachment or desire of reward, this is held to be the renunciation of Substance.

He hates not unhappy work, nor is attached to happy work, the wise renouncer, who is pervaded by Substance, whose doubts are cut. (10)

For it is impossible for an embodied being to abandon all work without exception; but he who has given up the love of reward, he indeed has made the true renunciation.

The fruit of works is threefold, desirable, or undesirable, or mixed; it follows those who have not abandoned desire, but not those who have made renunciation.

Learn from Me, O mighty-armed one, these five causes, which are declared in the Sankhya teaching, for the accomplishment of all works.

They are: the material instrument, the doer, the organ of whatever kind, the different impulses, and fifthly, Destiny.

Whatever work a man initiates, by body, speech or mind, whether it be righteous or the contrary, these are its five causes. (15)

As this is so, whoever views the Self, the lonely one, as the doer, he, confused in thought, sees not rightly through defect of understanding.

Whose nature is not selfish, whose vision is not stained, even though he slays the whole world, such a one kills not, nor is he subject to bondage.

The knowing, the thing to be known, the knower, make the threefold driving-power of works; the organ, the thing done, the doer, make the threefold content of works.

The knowing, the thing done, and the doer, divided threefold according to the powers, are declared according to the enumeration of the powers. Hear thou rightly these:

The knowledge whereby one eternal nature is perceived in all beings, undivided, though beings are divided, know that knowledge to be of Substance. (20)

But the knowledge which sees in all beings various natures according their variety, know that knowledge to be of Force.

But the knowledge which attaches itself to one thing, as though that were the whole, lacking the right motive, without true perception, narrow, know that to be of Darkness.

The work that is done because it is necessary, without attachment, without lust or hate, by one who seeks no reward, is declared to be the work of Substance.

But work done by one seeking his desire, and selfishly, and with abundant toil, is declared to be the work of Force.

What work is begun without regard for consequences, for the loss it may cause, or injury to others, or waste of power, through delusion, this is declared to be of Darkness. (25)

The doer who is free from attachment, without vanity, who has firmness and will, who is not changed by success or failure, such a one is declared to be of Substance.

The doer who is full of desire, who seeks the reward of his works, who is greedy, who harms others and is impure, who falls into exultation or sorrow, is famed to be of Force.

The doer who is without union, brutish, conceited, malignant, unfair, slothful, despondent, temporising, is declared to be of Darkness.

Hear thou the division of understanding and of firmness, threefold according to the powers, declared completely according to their differences, O conqueror of wealth.

The understanding which knows action and abstention, what is to be done, what left undone, what is to be feared and what not, and also bondage and freedom, that, O son of Pritha, is of Substance. (30)

The understanding which distinguishes not truly between law and lawlessness, what should and should not be done, is of Force, O son of Pritha.

The understanding which, enwrapped in darkness, sees the unlawful as lawful, and all things as opposite to their true nature, that, O son of Pritha, is of Darkness.

The firmness whereby one firmly holds the emotional nature, and the actions of the life-powers, unwavering in union, that, O son of Pritha, is the firmness of Substance.

But the firmness, O Arjuna, whereby one desiring reward holds firmly to duty, desire, riches, that, O son of Pritha, is the firmness of Force.

But the firmness through which one of foolish mind will not let go dreams, fears, grief, despondency, arrogance, that, O son of Pritha, is of Darkness. (35)

Hear now from Me the three kinds of happiness, O bull of the Bharatas, through following which one finds delight, and makes an end of pain.

That which at the beginning is as poison, but in the outcome is like nectar, that is the happiness of Substance, springing from clear vision of the Soul.

The happiness which springs from the union of the senses with the objects of desire, in the beginning like nectar, but in the outcome like poison, that is declared to be the happiness of Force.

The happiness which, in the beginning, and to the end, causes blindness to the Soul, springing from sleep, sloth, negligence, that is declared to be of Darkness.

Neither on earth, nor in heaven, nor among the gods is there any being which is free from these Three Powers born of Nature. (40)

The works of Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, O consumer of the foe, are apportioned according to the powers inherent in the character of each.

Peace, control, penance, purity, patience, and also rectitude, wisdom, knowledge, affirmative faith, are the Brahman's work, according to his nature.

Heroism, fire, firmness, skill, and refusal to flee in battle, giving of gifts, governing, are the works of the Kshatriya, according to his nature.

Ploughing, tending cattle, commerce, are the natural work of the Vaishya; work which consists in service is the natural work of the Shudra.

By devotion each to his own work, every man gains true success; how each finds success through devotion to his own work, learn thou: (45)

From Whom all beings come, by Whom all this is stretched forth, Him honoring, each by his own work, the son of man finds success.

Better is one's own duty even without excellence than the duty of another well carried out; doing the work imposed by one's own nature, he incurs no sin.

Let not a man withdraw from his natural work, O son of Kunti, even if it be faulty; for all initiatives are subject to fault, as fire is wrapped in smoke.

With thought everywhere unattached, self-conquered, from longing free, through renunciation he gains supreme success, free from bondage to works.

And how, having gained success, he gains the Eternal, learn thou of Me, hearing briefly, O son of Kunti, what is the supreme seat of wisdom. (50)

With soul-vision kept pure, firmly self-controlled, detached from sounds and other sense-objects, and discarding lust and hate;

Seeking solitude, eating little, with speech, body and mind controlled, given up to union through soul-vision, following ever after dispassion;

Getting free from vanity, violence, pride, lust, wrath, avarice, without desire of possessions, full of peace, he builds for union with the Eternal.

Become one with the Eternal, with soul at peace, he grieves not nor desires; equal toward all beings, he gains highest love of Me.

Through love he learns Me truly, how great and what I am; then knowing Me truly, he straightway enters that Supreme. (55)

Even continuing to perform all works, taking refuge in Me, through My grace he gains that everlasting home.

In heart renouncing all works in Me, devoted to Me, following after union through soul-vision, keep thy heart ever set on Me.

With heart set on Me, through My grace thou shalt cross through all rough places. But if through vanity thou wilt not hearken to Me, thou shalt perish.

When through self-assertion thou thinkest: "I will not fight!" thy determination is a delusion, for Nature will constrain thee.

Bound, O son of Kunti, by thine own natural work, what thou desirest not to do through thy delusion, thou shalt do against thy will. (60)

The Lord dwells in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, through His divine power moving all beings, as though guided by mechanism.

Take refuge in Him with thy whole heart, O descendant of Bharata; through His grace thou shalt gain supreme peace, the everlasting resting-place.

Thus to thee that wisdom which is more secret than all secrets is declared by Me; fully pondering on it, as thou desirest, so do!

Hear further My ultimate word, most secret of all; thou art exceeding dear to Me, therefore will I speak what is good for thee.

Set thy heart on Me, full of love for Me, sacrificing to Me, make obeisance to Me, and thou shalt come to Me; this is truth I promise thee, for thou art dear to Me. (65)

Putting aside all other duties, come for refuge to Me alone; grieve not, for I shall set thee free from all sins.

This is never to be told by thee to him who is without fervor, without love, to him who seeks not to hear it, or who cavils at Me.

Whosoever shall declare this supreme secret in the company of those who love Me, showing the highest love for Me, he shall certainly come to Me.

Nor does any among mankind do aught dearer to Me than he; nor shall any in the world be dearer to Me than he.

And whosoever shall study this righteous converse of Me and thee, such a one sacrifices to Me the sacrifice of wisdom; such is My thought. (70)

And whosoever shall hear it, full of faith and without cavil, he also, set free, will gain the shining worlds of those of holy works.

Say then, O son of Pritha, whether thou hast listened in singleness of heart; say whether thy delusion of unwisdom is destroyed, O conqueror of wealth!

ARJUNA SAID:

Gone is my delusion; I have come to right remembrance through Thy grace, O unfallen one! I stand, with my doubts gone. I shall fulfil thy word!

SANJAYA SAID:

Thus did I hear the converse of the son of Vasudeva and the mighty-souled son of Pritha, marvellous, causing the hair to stand erect with wonder.

Through Vyasa's grace I heard this supreme secret, this union, from the Lord of union, Krishna himself, relating it. (75)

O king, ever and anon remembering this marvellous converse, this holy talk between him of the flowing locks and Arjuna, I exult again and again.

And ever and anon remembering Lord Hari's marvellous form, great dismay comes on me, O king, and I exult again and again.

Wherever are Krishna, Lord of union, and Pritha's son, bearer of the bow, there are fortune, victory, blessing and steadfast law; this I maintain.

THUS THE BHAGAVAD GITA IS COMPLETED.

MAY IT BE WELL WITH ALL BEINGS!