NOT long ago, an Indian gentleman with an international reputation, while visiting England, was asked the question: "Can you tell us why in spite of our much-vaunted civilization and advancement in science, we are not happier but rather the reverse?" The questioner evidently believed that progress in civilization and science should have enhanced man’s happiness but was disappointed to find that it did not. He possibly also believed that mystic India held a secret about happiness which the material West missed. India, it would appear, did succeed in discovering a kind of happiness that did not depend on so-called civilization or science. That happiness depended on reducing the material needs of the body to the minimum and training the mind so as to make it an organ through which the universal mind might act. People who could reach such dizzy heights affirmed that once you had had a foretaste of such happiness, all worldly happiness would forthwith cease to appeal to you. They said that you could never know true freedom till the mind was freed from the tyranny of matter. Western philosophers have not denied the possibility of the mind gaining such an
ascendancy over matter, though they have denied that such a state could be reached by all or maintained indefinitely by any, so that such happiness was just as shortlived as the happiness that depended on material prosperity alone. The problem has been to combine the goodness of both without the badness of either, that is, to emancipate the mind from the bondage of the body without actually renouncing the world.

In a little poem of 700 couplets, properly called Shreemat Bhagavat Geeta, but shortened as Geeta, the attempt was made to solve the problem some 2,500 years ago. Judging by the popularity of the poem, it would seem that the attempt was eminently successful. During its long existence, it has had a galaxy of noted annotators, commentators and reviewers in India. Perhaps no other book has been read oftener, or published oftener. It was not known to the outside world previous to 1785 when it was first published in English. Its translation in French was published in 1787, in Latin in 1823 and in Greek in 1846. Since then there have been other translations. A Christian author has found resemblances between the Geeta and the Bible in a hundred places.* Another Christian author has been obliged to admire it very unwillingly. He says: ".... in this, at least, there is no fanati-
cism .... this is, at least, a sensible and religi-
ous doctrine .... and would that in the present selfish age, and this Northern active clime, it

*See Geeta Rahasya by B. G. Tilak.
could be applied and successfully carried out by Christians, as we call ourselves! It is the teaching of our Saviour when He bids us hate father and mother, and take up the cross . . . . we, too, should have our final emancipation, our salvation ever as our only desire . . . . we, too, should do our duty in this world without self-interest and attachment, and morally renounce the world. The great outcry against this doctrine is that it is unnatural. Nature bids us take an interest in the world. Nature fills us with emulation and ambition. It is natural to love advancement, prosperity, increase of wealth. It is natural to depend on ourselves alone, and not to put much faith in the promises of God, who will not help us, if we do not help ourselves. All this, it is true, is natural. But it is natural to sin, and very unnatural to act uprightly; and the want of nature is no ground for accusation of our doctrines.” *

Some have considered the Geeta as a “cathartic”, as the psycho-analyst calls it, or a “healthful purging”, as Aristotle calls it. To many a soul, maddened by grief, due to loss of property, relations or position, it has been a celestial balm, the suggestions reaching the unconscious mind and showing where the mistake lay. The hero of the poem exclaims at the end of it: “I see my mistake, for I remember it now, I am confirmed in my faith, I shall doubt no longer.” We are all more or less mad when we make mistakes,

* Bhagavad-Gita by J. Cockburn Thomson.
for Freud has shown that he had the whole of mankind for his patients. The administration of the Geeta in such cases has never been easy, for it is difficult for ordinary men to understand it and it is not easy to believe in the doctrines propounded, except for those who accept it as a sacred book whose authority cannot be questioned. The modern scientific discoveries have thrown a light on it that may make its meaning clearer and the acceptance of its doctrine not altogether impossible for those who can accept nothing but the rational argument. Appearing superficially as a didactic poem, it reconciles the Vedic rites, the Sankhya philosophy of Kapila and the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali with a wonderful theism. It has incidentally raised the question of the relation of mind and matter with soul, creation and God, so that it has interest both for the scientist and the philosopher, whether ethical or religious.

The relation between science and religious philosophy is to-day more cordial than it has ever been during the last hundred years. There was a time during the middle of the last century when they were scarcely on speaking terms. In those days a scientist was necessarily taken as an atheist, and oftener than not, he was an atheist. Later the pendulum began to swing back and though atheism has since been fast vanishing, theism is not quite established. People are now not only willing but anxious to believe in God, only they do not know what sort of God ought to be believed in. And since the discovery of
"the principle of indeterminacy", science and the church have been so intimate that already a warning voice has been raised against such intimacy, and Einstein has dubbed "the principle of indeterminacy" as a temporary "asylum of ignorance". The atom stripped of all matter, and even of "picturability", has nothing left to it but a mathematical specification. The "configuration space" within which the waves representing the electron are confined, are certainly not ordinary physical space for the reason that each electron requires a three-dimensional configuration space for itself. It is evident, therefore, that the configuration space is not a physical reality, nor even a mental, for the human mind cannot conceive of such a space. The assumption has, however, been justified on the ground that it leads to calculated results which are confirmed by experiments. Here science has gone further than philosophy, for it has assumed a configuration space which has no existence, mental or physical, but yet is necessary. Einstein's theory of relativity has immensely simplified the world but the unification of nature is not yet complete. One great set of laws, namely, the electro-magnetic laws that govern the propagation of radiant energy through empty space, have not yet been brought into the scheme. It appears that a more complicated geometry than that of Reimann is necessary to include electro-magnetism. Eddington's attempt to geometrize the world in such a way as to include both gravitation and electro-magnetism ended in his contention that science tells us
nothing about the nature of reality but only about its structure. According to Eddington, the whole universe of matter is a much more subjective affair than we have hitherto supposed. It arises as a result of the mind's selective action on certain raw material. A different mind from ours would fashion a different universe out of this same raw material. There are certain mathematical consequences of the existence of this raw material to which our mind pays no attention. Such consequences do not form features in the universe of our perception. Out of all the different aspects or combinations the mind pays attention only to some. The philosopher, James, in his psychology laid stress on the activity of consciousness or experience, which under the influence of emotional or practical interests, selects for attention only certain things out of a multitude of simultaneous possibilities and in this way carves out a world of its own in the jointless continuity of space and moving clouds of swarming atoms. Any idea which cannot be tested by the fulfilment of sensory expectations we may legitimately "will to believe in" if emotional and practical interests favour it. The idea of God, for instance, is a case in point.

Science to-day believes space to be closed, but there is no complete unanimity as to whether time also is closed. The second law of thermodynamics is supposed to be against the theory of "eternal recurrence", but there are some scientists, at least, who believe that just as energy is being dissipated in some part of the
universe, in other parts where the exact reverse conditions prevail, it is being concentrated. This view is in accord with astronomical observations about the formation of new stars. If the world has always been running down, the question has to be answered as to how the first state of maximum organization came to be. The origin of the universe is not a problem that can be brought within the scheme to which science confines itself. Whether this indicates that the universe has a transcendental origin, or whether it indicates that science, as a scheme, is not yet completely coherent, is at present a matter of opinion.* The transcendental origin has its difficulties too. The adherents of the “block universe” are fast losing ground. Steering clear of these two difficultly maintained views, the mean is an undying, uncreated universe with cycling periods. It is not a nightmare, as many have supposed it to be. The convection currents set up always maintain its novelty and interest, because there is no fixed determinism. The laws of nature are determinate, but they relate only to the resultant behaviour of the assemblage and not to the individuals who are allowed a limited freedom and whose idiosyncrasies cancel each other. This gives a new complexion to fixed fate and free will. There is no indeterminacy as the assemblage behaviour is predictable, which cannot be unless each individual variation is counterbalanced by its opposite. All creation

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is essentially a splitting up of the neuter into positive and negative, into male and female, and recombining again in a different way. The neuter is stable and predictable, whereas its components have a limited freedom. This is well-marked both in the living and non-living. It is the neuter that does most of the observable work, the split-up components having only a short observable existence. That is why we have been so long in discovering the protons and electrons and the *gametes*. The atom, or rather the molecule, is neuter and the body of both the male and female living beings consists mainly of neutral cells or zygotes.

Modern religious philosophy deals with the three rational arguments for the existence of God, known as the ontological, cosmological and teleological. The first proceeds from the idea of God in the mind to infer the reality of God; the second argues from the existence of the cosmos that there must be a first cause or ground; the third reasons from the evidence of purposiveness in the world to the conclusion that there is a purposive mind behind or within it. These arguments are very old and each has its own weakness but they are supposed to have a cumulative corroborative effect. Some distinguished scientists and philosophers have been constrained to postulate mind as the ultimate reality and conceive nature as a complex thought. But few modern philosophers of religion would deny that there is always an act of faith in the affirmation of God's reality. We can never know that
God exists in the sense that we can prove the proposition by a chain of deductions beyond cavil and theoretical possibility of error. In the end there is always an act of will which decides to adopt the "nobler hypothesis", but it is a rational act of the will and is logically no more unreasonable than believing in the existence of other people which itself is incapable of rigid proof.* This act of will is conversion.

In the present position of science and philosophy, a definition of either mind or matter is difficult. The position is summed up in the following facetious dialogue:—

Mr. Science—"What is mind?"
Mr. Philosophy—"No matter."
Mr. Philosophy—"What is matter?"
Mr. Science—"Never mind."

Out of this stalemate, Einstein has lifted us up and given us a true definition of matter and thus has contrasted it with mind. Einstein has been the Columbus of the universe. He has unwittingly stumbled on a truth which he never set out to discover. He had no idea that in trying to map out matter he has mapped out the confines of mind. Matter is limited by time and space but mind is not. A speed greater than 186,000 miles per second is not possible for matter to attain, but mind has no such limit, being swifter than the "winged arrows of light". In a world of matter which has a

radius of at least 2,000 million light years,* light appears to the mind as a snail crawling. In such a world, intercommunication would be impossible if there were not swifter means of communication than light. The law of relativity holds good in a world of matter but not in a world of mind. In a world of mind, the Euclidean geometry and Newtonian law of gravitation hold good. The law of relativity has been called by some as a tour de force. Where space bends on itself, mind and matter meet. Beyond the confines of matter lies the world of mind. A combination of fragmentary mind and matter is an unstable emulsion, known as life, which requires much ado to keep together. Chemical and physical transformation are possible for matter but not for mind.

The combination of two such incompatible ones, as mind and matter, has given rise to many paradoxes. No general proposition about life is completely correct or wrong. Constituted as we are, we can only deal with partial truths. Every attempt to deal with the absolute in anything leads us to difficulties. Some one has said that if ever there was a mind so great as to comprehend the whole of the universe, simultaneously he could, starting with the nebulae, discover all the past, present and future. It is now held that he could not. In trying to ascribe omnipotence to God, we have to answer the question: "Can He make two plus two equal five?" Some say He can, and some say He cannot, while others say that.

* Astronomy by Prof. R. A. Sampson.
He can but does not. As He is perfect, He cannot contradict Himself. That again leads to another difficulty. If He is perfect, why is there so much imperfection in this world? The question that has sorely tried Christian theology is how to reconcile divine perfection with the existence of evil in this world. Some have said that this world was only a school where we were being trained for future work and had, therefore, to be managed between "kicks and kisses", kicks for the naughty and kisses for the good. But if this world is only a school, which is our true sphere of action? Astronomy tells us that there is no other planet in this universe where beings like us can live. It has been suggested that after death we assume a tenuous body* and live and work in other worlds taking with us our school certificate but returning again and again for refresher courses and finally severing our connection with this earth when the training is complete. This school of ours accepts no failure. All its students must pass out. Time counts for little as there is a plentiful supply of it. But feelings do count. Some pass out happily with the least amount of effort, others after very hard labour. Why this partiality of God? The difference arises from the imperious demand of time and space. In a world of matter, simultaneity in space and time is impossible for more than one. Every one has to carry his space and time with him and that is his fate. But justice is done to all if we suppose that we go through the same

*The doctrine of the transmigration of soul.
experience by turn. That, however, is impossible in a universe that is created all at once and after a time is destroyed all at once. That is against the idea of a block universe. It would wonderfully support us in our trials if we could believe that our present trouble was only a passing phase and that there was a mechanism which ensured justice to all. Further, it has been suggested that the idea of injustice was untenable as the person who really suffered was God Himself. We have all of us a spark from God which is our soul and since all feelings are due to the soul, it is really God who suffers or enjoys. The feelings of pleasure and pain are necessary to goad us to work. The feelings do not stay but the work stays and accumulates. The world work is being done by God residing, working and feeling both pleasure and pain with us, but minding neither. Both our feelings and our individuality are myths but not the work. Therefore, we should work and not mind pleasure and pain or individual justice. And we work all the better when we forget our feelings. That does not mean that we can ever get rid of the painful or pleasurable feelings that accompany all our activities. It only means that we refuse to be their bond-slaves, but do not mind free association with them. There is, no doubt, a contradiction in saying that it is our feelings which goad us to work and then saying that we ought not to mind the feelings. The contradiction is apparent, not real. With the broadening of the mind, instinctive interests are subordinated to
rational interests. The necessity of subordinating instinctive interest to rational interest has made us erect the noble edifice of duty. But duty is not one but many. There is the duty to our health, wealth, relations, castes, creeds, nation, man in general, and lastly, to God and the universe. The difficulty arises when these separate duties clash with each other which they frequently do. Whether health should be sacrificed to wealth is not always easy to decide, but the decision becomes easier when we do not exclusively view our own health and wealth but those of others too. There is consolation in the thought that my loss of wealth is what keeps the doctor going and my recovery of health is not only my gain but that of my relations and even of my country. It may just happen that the opposite is the case, sometimes. I may be over-feeding a pampered doctor or thrusting an unwelcome presence both on my relations and my country. In any case, the decision becomes easier and more rational.

The recognition that there is not one but many duties and that there is an hierarchy of duties, headed by God and ending with my own person is the highest enlightenment. This enlightenment comes with a certain kind of knowledge. According to the evolution of this enlightenment the universe may be graded. The lowest* are so dark that lethargy is scarcely quickened into action by self-interest. The middling are very

*Sankhya theory of the gunas, sattva, raja and tama.
self-interested and most active. In the highest, self-interest is replaced by universal interest, which is no interest, and lethargy, by rational activity. Though the three are readily recognized by their different actions, reactions and predilections, none is completely free from lethargy, activity or enlightenment. All are a combination of mind and matter. The difference is solely due to a progressive increase in the ascendancy of mind over matter. Anything which is pure matter or pure mind is outside our sense-perceptions.

There is no difference of opinion as to our duty to God having precedence over all other duties, but there is in some minds a tie between the duty to God and the duty to the universe. Thorough-going pantheists are entirely in favour of the latter while thorough-going theists are in favour of the former. Modified theism takes cognizance of both and makes God not only include but transcend the universe. The issue must not be confounded with the question of the personality of God which is quite different. With some the personality of God is a matter of necessity, with others it is a reality. It has been said that personal relations were only possible with a personal God, and the idea of God, if it was to be adequate, must be the idea of the highest and best that is conceivable. God cannot be less or lower than personal. So long as it is remembered that "super-personal" includes the "personal" and is not a polite synonym for "impersonal", there ought to be no objection
to consider God as a super-personal being. Yet there are some rare minds who find nothing impossible in an abstract God who is symbolized by a sound, sign or a substance. There is, however, always a danger in symbolizing God. It is what the psychologists have called the transference of feelings from the end to the means. The fact has always to be borne in mind that the symbol is nothing but a symbol and that God never resides in the symbol more than in every other thing. Religion becomes fanaticism when the symbol is mistaken for God. In great minds this attachment to the symbol is never permitted and such men come to realize God in everything. When a man attains to this stage he is liberated from the bonds of matter. He becomes perfectly free, and nothing that he does can be harmful to himself or to others, for everybody and everything, including himself, is a part of God to whom he can do no violence or injustice. He then becomes emancipated, that is, outside the pale of all religion, morality, or society.

It has been said that science could never give us a religion, nor philosophy, a God. Religion must be revealed and God realized, and not made the subject of speculation. The divine messages can only be correctly received if your "receiver" is of infinite range, the "atmospherics" favourable, "enemy-jamming" absent, and the "tuning" correct. The "receiver" is

*Telepathy proves that the brain can function as a wireless set.
the product of heredity, the atmospherics are the "tempora and mores", "enemy-jamming", the passions, and "tuning", sympathy. The right combinations are extremely rare to which fact is due the rarity of revelation. The fact that revelation is rare is no proof of its absence, besides partial messages are of fairly frequent occurrence. Few who sincerely try under expert guidance completely fail to get a message. There exists quite a science of it known as the Yoga system of Patanjali, the Mesmer of the East. The main thing is to get rid of the passions, the "enemy-jamming". If you have even one enemy, all receptions may be jammed. Instead of having any evil thoughts against any one, you are to have a sort of love for not only mankind but for all living beings. After having made "enemy-jamming" impossible, you are to learn the art of tuning, that is, to have the right attitude towards God. What are all discoveries but divine messages that come as a result of intense study, application, attention, undisturbed by any other interest except that of the discovery? Do our scientific discoverers realize just how and when the truth flashes on them as an inspiration? Are not our scientific discoverers prophets who perform miracles? Between a scientific discoverer and a prophet, the difference lies only in the choice of the subject-matter. Science has selected the jugglery side of creation as its subject, which is merely temporal and cannot give lasting satisfaction. The subject of religion is different, requires a different approach and technique. The
revelations partake of the imperfections of the "receiver" and the "atmospherics", and that is why the revelations of no two prophets are exactly alike. But the difference relates to the sciences of the time and country and not to the essentials. We shall be mistaking the prophets if we judge or misjudge them by their scientific inaccuracies. The fact that science cannot recognize parthenogenesis in man, or that the world could not have been created in a week, does not vitiate Christianity. Neither the fact that one religion prescribes one kind of food, drink, clothes or marriage laws which another does not, justifies us in considering one as superior to the other. It is quite possible that each is quite suitable for the particular people and country which the prophet had in view. From this point of view, proselytizing may be very harmful when the religion of one prophet is extended to people in countries which differ materially from the country of the prophet. When the grain is sifted from the chaff, it is astonishing how the different religions agree in the essentials. A religion is to be judged by the abiding peace that it can give to the troubled soul. The privilege of sending out an SOS is the exclusive right of the shipwrecked. If piracy abuses it for its own aggrandizement, the SOS will cease to function, but it is every ship's duty to see that both its "receiver" and "transmitter" are kept in good trim, so that when the crisis comes they do not fail to function.

To what extent the Geeta has been able to winnow the chaff from the grain and has helped us to trim our "receiver" and "transmitter" is for each individual student of the Geeta to discover.
IDEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

The oldest literature of the Indo-Aryans is known as the Vedas, meaning knowledge. As there are three principal Vedas they are called Trayividyas. As inspired revelations they are Sruti in opposition to the later venerable books classed as traditional learning or Smriti. The essential part of each Veda is a Samhita or collection of metrical hymns, prayers, etc. But certain supplementary writings are also considered as part of the Vedas being also inspired. These supplements written in prose are the Brahmanas and the Upanishads. The Brahmanas are theological and ritual treatises designed as manuals of worship and explanation of the Samhitas. The Upanishads, over a hundred in number, are philosophical tracts which belong to the later stage of Brahman literature. Certain of the Upanishads are parts of the Vedas being the foundations of the later and more systematic Vedanta philosophy. The Sutras are compendious treatises dealing with Vedic ritual or customary law, etc. Regarded as mere literature apart from their sacred origin, the Vedas demand from the students of humanity the most respectful attention on account of their remote antiquity, their unique character, and the light they shed upon the evolution of mankind, especially in India. The Vedas might have been written, or rather composed, any time between 4000 to 2000 B.C.
The Vedas were revealed to the "Rishis of whom Schopenhauer says:—"Yet in the early ages, those who stood nearer to the beginning of the human race had both greater energy of the intuitive faculties and a truer disposition of the mind, so that they were capable of a purer, more direct comprehension of the inner being of Nature and were thus in a position to satisfy the metaphysical need in a more worthy manner. Thus originated in the primitive ancestor of the Brahmans, Rishis, the almost superhuman conceptions which were afterwards set down in the Upanishads of the Vedas." The following is the metrical rendering of the celebrated Creation Hymn of the Rigveda by Max Muller:—

RIGVEDA, x, 129

Nor aught nor nought existed; yon bright sky
Was not, nor heaven's broad woof outstretched above.
What covered all? what sheltered? what concealed?
Was it water's fathomless abyss?
There was not death—yet was there nought immortal,
There was no confine betwixt day and night;
The only One breathed breathless by itself,
Other than It there nothing since has been.
Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled
In gloom profound—an ocean without light—
The germ that still lay covered in the husk
Burst forth, one nature, from the fervent heat.
Then first came love upon it, the new spring
Of mind—yea, poets in their hearts discerned,
Pondering, this bond between created things
And uncreated. Comes this spark from earth
Piercing and all-pervading, or from heaven?
Then seeds were sown, and mighty powers arose—
Nature below, and power and will above—
Who knows the secret? who proclaimed it here,
Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?
The Gods themselves came later into being—
Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?
He from whom all this great creation came,
Whether his will created or was mute,
The Most High Seer that is in highest heaven,
He knows it—or perchance even He knows not.

What is merely hinted at in this Hymn of Creation was subsequently elaborated by the authors of the Sankhya philosophy, Vedanta and the Geeta. The points to remember are the latent and patent existence of the creation, the emergence of love or desire and mind and the three mighty powers, nature below, and power and will above, corresponding to matter, vital principle and soul.

Most of the hymns are invocations to the gods, Agni or Fire, Indra, Surya or Sun etc. of esoteric significance. The gods are represented as great and powerful, disposed to do good to their worshippers, and engaged in unceasing conflicts with the powers of the evil. The hymns usually beg for material favours and seek to win the deity’s goodwill by offering prayers and sacrifices. The sacrifices were offered to Fire and usually consisted of various preparations from milk, starch, meat and also drink. The things offered were called Habya, and the act, Ahuti, the whole ceremony being called Yajna. Some of the Yajnas were called Nitya or compulsory as they had to be performed daily and the non-performance of which was considered as a dereliction of duty. Sacrifices performed for a specific purpose were called Kamyas. Others which had to be performed for marriage and other ceremonies were called
Smartha, while others like the horse-sacrifice, were called Sroutha. To have eaten what was left after the sacrifices was to have eaten manna. Sacrifices were also offered to the departed ancestors in the shape of balls of rice, libations of water, etc., at fixed intervals, on which the departed souls were supposed to subsist. The duty to man was discharged by daily entertaining guests, usually travellers, before the mid-day meal. The man who ate that meal without first offering it to a guest, 'ate sin' as the expression was.

The Vedic age was the most glorious period of the Indo-Aryans and kept the men always active with yajnas and looking to a better future as the reward for their sacrifices. Society was divided into classes on an occupational basis. The teachers and the priests formed the Brahmana caste. The military and the ruling classes were the Kshatriyas, to which the hero of the poem belongs. The traders and the agriculturists formed the Vaishya caste and the serving class was called the Shudras.

Certain religious books of the ancient Hindus were a close preserve for only a certain class. The general public and practically all women, with only a very few notable exceptions, had no access to them. This drawback was to a great extent remedied by Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa who wrote the monumental epic poem, Mahabharata of 100,000 couplets and made available to the public at large, in the shape of interesting narrations, the whole of the Hindu religious
literature. This Mahabharata contained the Geeta, the crowning glory of Hindu religious literature. Some, however, are of opinion that the Geeta was a separate production, subsequently introduced into the Mahabharata. But the fact that there are in the body of the Mahabharata seven references to the Geeta and 27 couplets of the Mahabharata are to be bodily found in the Geeta, besides many others of partial resemblances and that the style of the two is very similar, are considerations that have led others to conclude that the Geeta was really a part of the Mahabharata.

In places the Geeta resembles the Upanishads but does not fully agree with them. The greatest difference between the Geeta and the Upanishads is in the worship of a Personal God. Both the Geeta and the Upanishads agree that the sacrifices or yajnas are the means and not the end of religion, but the Upanishads do not acknowledge the Personality of God, though from the difficulty of contemplating an abstract god, or having communion with Him, the Upanishads admit the worship of such deified natural phenomena as the Sun, Fire, etc. The love of a Personal God, devotion to Him and His worship constitute the highest development of the knowing, willing and feeling, the coping-stone of the Geeta. Yet the Geeta does not ban the yajnas, but on the contrary, recommends them as useful for the purification of the body, provided always that the temporary nature of their results is well borne in the mind.
Knowledge is the principal theme of the Brihadaranyaka and Chandogya Upanishads, yet there is no reference to the Sankhya of Kapila in them, for the Sankhya of Kapila was a later production. The words mahan and avyakta, however, occur in the Upanishads, showing that Kapila was to some extent indebted to the Upanishads for his ideas. Terms, expressions and ideas of the Sankhya occupy such a large portion of the Geeta that for the proper understanding of the Geeta they must be well understood. The following is a brief account of Sankhya:

Maharshi Kapila is the originator of the Sankhya system of philosophy. According to him our unhappiness is due to our inability to realize the difference between Purusha and Prakriti, or soul and body, or mind and matter. Kapila classifies unhappiness into three:—Adhyatmic, Adhibhoutic and Adhidaivic. That unhappiness that is created inside us is called Adhyatmic which is sub-divided into bodily and mental. Bodily unhappiness is due to disease and mental unhappiness is due to desire, anger, covetousness, fear and sorrow. Unhappiness caused by other men or animals or material things is called Adhibhoutic, and that caused by the Devatas of esoteric significance is called Adhidaivic. Complete freedom from these three kinds of unhappiness is called Mukti or liberation. Vivekajnan or the knowledge of Prakriti and Purusha is the means for the attainment of Mukti.

According to Sankhya, our sufferings compel us to seek out that knowledge which tells us
how sufferings can be avoided. Sankhya does so and, therefore, men must listen to it.

The Vedic yajnas can give us happiness but that is mixed with the unhappiness of killing animals which is against ahimsa. Besides, the happiness in heaven that is merited by the performance of yajnas is temporary. But the happiness that Vivekajnan gives is unmixed and is sanctioned by the Vedas.

The contact of the sense organs with the sense objects is called vritti. This vritti has the effect of exciting the sattwa guna (happiness) and of depressing the tama guna (unhappiness). This excitation is called adhyavasaya, contact and knowledge. This knowledge is proof or pramana. That which results from this proof is called prama or understanding. Prakriti has no understanding and buddhi which has emerged from prakriti has no understanding also. Purusha has understanding but it cannot have sensations without the medium of the sense organs. Hence Purusha has to depend on Prakriti for the sensations.

According to Sankhya 'that which cannot be perceived by the sense organs can yet be inferred by the mind and that which cannot be inferred by the mind can be proved by revelation.

The real meaning of Prakriti is that which is the cause of the emergence of something else. That which emerges is called vikriti. A vikriti that is the cause of the emergence of another vikriti is called prakriti-vikriti. And that vikriti which is not the cause of the emergence of
another *vikriti*, is simply *vikriti*. *Prakriti* which is itself not a *vikriti* is the *Mula Prakriti*. It has, therefore, no cause. *Prakriti* is *jara*, that is, it follows the laws of matter and not of mind. *Purusha* is neither *prakriti*, nor *vikriti*. It does not follow the laws of matter. Understanding is its function. The sense organs, the efferent and afferent nerves and the brain (called mind by *Sankhya*) and their excitations by the vibrations of matter, in whatsoever form it may be, are the products of *Prakriti*, but their sensing is impossible without *Purusha*.

The following is the genealogical tree of the 25 categories of Kapila:—

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Purusha × Prakriti

Mahan (sense) also called buddhi, asuri, mati, jnan, khyati. Imperceptible.

Ahankara (sense of separate identity) also called abhimana, taijasa. Imperceptible.

Organs belonging to the psycho-physical world (*sattwic jagat*). Imperceptible.

5 sense 5 action 1 mind. 5 *Tanmatras* (subtle elements). Imperceptible.

5 *Mahabhutas*. Perceptible.

Things belonging to the material world (*tamasik jagat*).
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These 25 categories are divided into four classes:—

1. *Purusha*, neither *prakriti*, nor *vikriti*.
2. *Prakriti*, neither *vikriti*, nor *Purusha*. 
3. 'Mahan, ahankara and the 5 tanmatras—prakriti-vikriti.

4. 5 sense organs, 5 action organs, 1 mind and the 5 mahabhutas—vikriti.

The 5 sense organs are the eyes, ears, nostrils, tongue and the skin. The 5 action organs are the hands, feet, mouth and the two excretory organs. The 5 tanmatras are the causes of the 5 mahabhutas, viz., solids, liquids, gases, light and ether. What Sankhya calls Purusha the Vedanta calls the Superior Self of the Parabrahma and the Geeta calls the Apara prakriti.

Before creation begins, Mula Prakriti is in the avyakta or latent state in which the three gunas, sattwa (happy), raja (not happy) and tama (unhappy) are in equilibrium. Mula Prakriti becomes patent when this equilibrium is disturbed by the conjugation of Purusha with it. This conjugation has been likened to the partnership of the blind with the lame or of the locomotive with the steam. Changes and the laws of matter begin to operate after this conjugation takes place. In the avyakta state there is no change. Purusha is not subject to the laws of matter.

Man, therefore, consists of the following:—

(1) Purusha or soul or mind which has been called jeeva by the Vedanta, (2) buddhi, (3) ahankara, (4) the 11 organs, (5) the 5 tanmatras and (6) the 5 mahabhutas.

What is ordinarily called death is the separation of the five perceptible mahabhutas from the imperceptible ones. Science has now made us familiar with a host of things in the
material world which are imperceptible. These are mainly the invisible radiant energies and the microscopic bodies. If man can exist after death it must be as the invisible radiant energies that he does so. After death the imperceptible categories are supposed to inhere in an imperceptible body called fine body. It reappears in a visible body when it gets a chance to combine with the 5 mahabhutas. The reappearance of the fine body is the rebirth or transmigration of the fine body and not of the soul alone. The nature of the material of the new body is dependent on the past actions of the last body and the consequent disposition of the imperceptible categories at the time of death.

By identifying Purusha with mind and Prakriti with matter we can understand the underlying truth of Sankhya. Between mind and matter they give us the two separate ideas of 'I' and 'ME'. The contact of the organs with the objects gives us the sensations, aided by the mind. The genes in the chromosomes are the microscopic representatives of the invisible elements of the organs.*

*Some very curious discoveries were made by Drs. G. B. Stearns, Mary Stark, a world-renowned genetist and Wm. E. Boyd. In some of the high Homeopathic dilutions of the 30th (100⁻³⁰) and above in which no matter can be detected by physical or chemical means, radiations have been detected which pass through walls. Such radiations have also been detected in living plants and animals. Dr. Stearns' theory is that in the high dilutions which are like high vacuums, matter is emasculated as in the interstellar space and attains what he calls the fourth state of matter, solids, liquids and the gases being the first three. He concludes that when matter has been sublimated to the pure state of energy by means of infinite dilution, its profound effect on living processes makes possible another concept, namely, in the same
Inheritance is a sort of inherence, a rebirth of pre-existing groups of characters. Biology to-day recognizes the role of mind in organic evolution. Self-subordination and materialized ethical processes have been observed in the lower animals. Living implies both individual and racial enregistrations. It is characteristic of organisms that each is affiliated to the past and normally parental to the future.

The five tanmatras are the subtil elements of the five mahabhutas. According to modern science, they are heat which accounts for the first three states of matter, electricity which accounts for all elements and electro-magnetism which accounts for light and ether. The real difference between science and Sankhya to-day is that the former has no evidence which justifies it in inferring that the fine categories after the death of the body inhere in a fine body as an individual. Science makes rebirth the joint responsibility of the predecessors, while Sankhya makes it the sole responsibility of the individual. The difference is not small but the mass result practically is the same. Both agree that the present generation is greatly responsible for the mental and material equipment of the next and

way as the inter-relation of matter makes a living body, the inter-relation of the energies of matter in the fourth state makes up the substance of life. High dilutions have not only cured tumours in the fruit-fly, drosophila melanogaster lethal No. 7, but changed the hereditary lethal factor which occurred in accord with the Mendelian law in every fourth fly.

† Biology and Human Progress by Prof. Sir J. Arthur Thomson.
hence for the latter’s happiness and unhappiness. It is only the ignorant who deny that responsibility.

But there is one great difference between Sankhya and modern science. Sankhya makes both the living and the non-living emerge from the combination of mind and matter, while the tendency of science is to evolve mind from matter, or at least not to recognize the existence of mind apart from matter. Modern philosophers do not all agree with science there.

Vivekajnan, therefore, Kapila argues, is our salvation. He has, however, left the whole kingdom of faith untouched. The gap left by him has been very worthily filled up by Bhagwan Patanjali. He realized the potential power of the mind to transcend matter. The mind can, starting with relative knowledge, reach the absolute. Knowing that there is one thing that is greater than another, we can imagine that there must be one who is the greatest of all. Similarly there must be one who is the most knowing, the longest living, the highest and the best. These attributes cannot belong to separate persons, for then they would lead to chaos. Therefore all the highest attributes must belong to one person. That is the logical conclusion that comes from the unlimitedness of our mind but it is inconsistent with the limitedness of matter. Patanjali exploited the unlimitedness of mind to the full, the word ‘exploited’ being understood in its proper sense.

Faith, however, is not a mentalized understanding but direct seeing into the heart of
things. It is also dynamic and its dynamic character is exhibited in its marvellous performances. It can cure diseases, both mental and physical. It can make us cheerfully endure an incredible amount of suffering. It can send men to the stake and it can cause crusades. Like everything dynamic it has to be handled carefully. Uninformed faith may be dangerous. Though faith and knowledge are different they are yet related. That is why the Geeta has put such emphasis on knowledge and given the highest position to Kapila amongst the munis, as the exponent of the Sankhya doctrine of knowledge and renunciation. The real value of renunciation lies in affording a release from the insurgent ways of life and in intimating us with the divine ways. But contemplation and renunciation can be overdone, for they have their seductions. The history of India in the post-Kapila period bears ample testimony to the truth of it. *Kings and soldiers came under their spell and forsook the religion of their castes for that of the sannyasi. The most notable examples are the authors of the Baudhda and Jain religions. From the national point of view, the desertion spelt disaster to India whose armed strength was unmanned. The conclusion is inescapable that the first part of the Geeta was addressed to these deserters from the lines as represented by Arjuna. Some argue that the Geeta is not an ethical poem but religious, and that is only too true, for it tells us at the very end that all ethics should be given up for the fountain-head of all ethics
and duty replaced by faith. But this ethics of ethics has been gradually evolved starting from worldly ethics at the beginning.

The doctrine of Karmayoga that the Geeta preaches tells us that true renunciation is not the renunciation of matter, which cannot be done so long as we are in the material body, but the renunciation of the bodily or material desires. This renunciation of desires can be fully practised without giving up either society, religion and the proper use of the material necessities of life, provided it is all done in a spirit of detachment. But the merit of the Geeta does not lie there alone. A great deal of its popularity is due to its catholicity and the consummate skill with which not only Sankhya but all the older religions of the Vedas and the Upanishads are telescoped into it. The merit of each of the older religions is not only recognized but extolled and the defects pointed out in a way that takes the sting away. It had the effect of gathering them all under one banner like the manipulation of a great general. But not even this skill is the whole merit of the Geeta, for out of the ashes of cold stones and lukewarm timber of pantheism and the deified forces of nature it has evolved a wonderful personal God of flesh and blood whom we can love, cherish, worship and have intimate personal relations with, a very human God whom all of us can understand, yet of infinite powers, wisdom and extent. But where is this God of flesh and blood to be found and how? He is to be found by unswerving faith as He tells you at the end
of the Geeta, not in books, pictures or idols, but in you and by you. This unswerving faith requires that you should be able to believe nothing impossible of Him. Anything that appears physically impossible to you is possible of Him. If you cannot believe that He can draw an elephant through a needle’s eye, or make two and two equal five, you have not come to have the unswerving faith in Him. But if you have that faith you can find Him, searching with ceaseless endeavour. He will discover to you in a form you most desire, smile, or frown at you, encourage or discourage, answer your questions, touch with His healing hand the sore spots in you, accept from your hand whatever you may offer to Him in worship, be it a flower, fruit, or even a leaf. But some men are so constituted that they cannot have such a faith. For such men there is another approach, but it is the more difficult way—the way of knowledge.

You have to know what energy is, congealed and uncongealed. You have also to learn what the Supreme Energy is, that is neither congealed, nor not-congealed. You have to realize that you are built up of both congealed and uncongealed energy; that congealed energy is mechanistic but that uncongealed energy in you representing your mind, or soul can transcend the congealed energy, or matter in you. This transcending of the material is to be done by a mental and moral training called yogabhyaśa. By yama and niyama your sense organs have to be got perfectly under control and the mind purged of all evil thoughts
of injuring others. A love of all created beings must pervade you that will make you one with the universe. In short, you have to bring yourself up to the cosmic level and feel the cosmic tremor that will open the gate of the Supreme energy and effect a junction. Nothing will then be unavailable to you. Beauty will then be more beautiful, holiness holier, and truth acquire a divine meaning. The inertia of your nature, the play of forces that prevents the complete revelation of your nature as dynamically one with God will then vanish. You will realise God as you never could otherwise, but not a personal God. That is yoga which every chapter of the Geeta is; that is yoga which was systematised by Patanjali, the Mesmer of the East, as the West has wrongly called him, for mesmerism differs from yoga as much as anaesthetized unconsciousness from healthy sleep. The word yoga has been the stumbling-block to many a student of the Geeta. It has been used in so many different senses. We have been told that Sanjaya who was the mouthpiece of the Geeta, was by the yoga power of Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa gifted with television and telephony by virtue of which he was able to see and hear what happened in the distant field of Kurukshetra from Hastinapur. The caption of each chapter of the Geeta ends with the word yoga. It has been explained that Shree Krishna was in a state of yoga or junction with the Supreme Being when he was speaking to Arjuna and that was why each chapter begins and ends with the word yoga. Again maya or creation
has been called the *yoga* power of God. In another place dexterity in action has been called *yoga*. In other places *yoga* has been used to denote the *Karmayoga* of the Geeta, its special doctrine. In one place equanimity has been called *yoga*. In the 700 couplets of the Geeta, the word *yoga* occurs about 80 times, alone or in conjunction with other words. Alone it occurs about 33 times, 16 occurring in the 6th chapter alone. In only about 6 places it has been used in the sense of Patanjali. The radical meaning of the word is junction, from which have come the meanings addition, meeting, company and the means, reasoning or skill in attaining it. The student of the Geeta would be well-advised to remember all these meanings.

The student of the Geeta has also to understand what is meant by the phrase "snapping the bonds of action". The *Mimansakas* or the commentators on the Vedas have divided actions into four classes: 1. *Nitya* or obligatory; 2. *Naimittika* or occasional; 3. *Kamya* or purposive; and 4. *Nishiddha* or forbidden. The daily actions must be performed, there is no getting out of them. The occasional actions also must be performed to meet emergencies. By going through the *Nitya* and *Naimittika* actions, we expiate our sins of the past to which we were affiliated, and by cancelling the affiliation we buy exemption from rebirth. Forbidden actions must not be performed, for they lead to hell. If in addition *Kamya* actions are also not performed,
both heaven and hell are excluded and we are led to *moksha*. This theory of the *Mimamsakas* is called *Naishkarma siddhi* or *Karma mukti*. That state in which the performance of actions does not bind is called *Naishkarma*. Both the *Geeta* and the *Vedanta* do not accept this theory. Both also deny the possibility of gaining *Naishkarma siddhi* by renunciation. Besides, residence in heaven is temporary. Therefore, they say that the only way to "snap the bonds of action" is to acquire the knowledge of the laws which govern actions. The laws governing actions are that the laws of matter or congealed energy are inexorable. Once you are in its clutches, you are endlessly to revolve with the wheels of its machinery. The body, so far as it consists of matter, is a slave to that law, but the mind or uncongealed energy, not being confined to the space-time continuum, is independent of the body. The body is mechanical but not the mind. The freedom of the will is obtained by realizing the oneness of the soul with the Universal Soul. It will be recalled that the first effect of the activation of *Prakriti* by *Purusha*, or the fixation of energy in the space-time continuum, was the emergence of *mahan* or *buddhi* and the next, *ahankara*. The realization of the oneness of the soul with the Universal Soul is the snapping of the bond. It is a victory of the mind over matter, the true liberation. With this enlightenment it is possible for the soul to act in co-operation with the body without being attached to it by material desires. It enables us to do
the world's work without sordid desires. That is the doctrine of *Karmayoga*.

Though knowledge is the first step for the realization of the soul, it is not the only one. The giving up of sordid desires is always difficult and can only be done by the co-operation of the mind with the body. Both the body and the mind must be gradually trained by the long and patient performance of the *yajnas, yamas, niyamas* and other practices. They are the drills.

What exactly is meant by the *gunas* has also to be well understood. Remembering that though they appear with the creation but are yet not included in the categories, we may presumably conclude that they are not things *per se* but the condition of all things, caused by the inter-relations of the categories. Evolution is like the progress of an air-balloon from the bottom of the ocean to the surface. Man, the last in the evolutionary process, is the balloon on the surface of the ocean. Three courses are open to him—up, down or horizontal. The direction of his course is determined by the expansion or contraction of his soul, the former being in inverse proportion to the thickness of his outer cover or body. The movement from the bottom of the ocean to the surface is automatic. Further expansion that would carry him from the surface upwards is rational and based on 'self-exertion. To remain satisfied with the position on the surface is to take the horizontal direction—to take the good with the bad, the buffets of winds and waves-
with the serenity of a calm sea. To try to thicken the outer coating is to go down under the waves again. The popping up from under the waves and the going down under them set up the convection currents that are the romances of life or samsar, called creation.

The three directional movements—up, down and horizontal—profoundly affect everything in us—our thoughts, actions and predilections, so much so that by studying these one can predict in which direction a man is moving. The Geeta has, therefore, devoted a large space to them.

The word Brahma has been used in the Geeta about 40 times but not always in the same sense. The different meanings are due to the different conceptions of Brahma. The phenomenal world is called jagat. It is evanescent, not eternal, but it is the basis of all our sense perceptions and hence of direct knowledge as we wrongly call it. From its changing nature it was early seen that it was not a true representative of the fundamental truth. The fundamental truth underlying the phenomenal world or jagat was called Brahma by the Vedanta. The question arose as to what its relations were to the soul and God. Sometimes it has been used in the Kapilian sense of Prakriti where it is female, as also when it is spoken of as the womb of God. These ideas have come from the Vedas. The soul is the real knower of all things and the real knowledge is Brahma or the truth underlying jagat or the phenomenal world. The
soul is, therefore, called the \textit{jnata} \footnote{Jnan, jnata and jneya have been used here in their special senses. Ordinarily \textit{jnata} is \textit{jeeva} or subject. \textit{Jneya} is the phenomenal world, object. And \textit{jnan} is the relation between the two or the act of knowing.} or the knower. The phenomenal world is called \textit{jnan} or knowledge, and \textit{Brahma} is called \textit{jneya} or the thing to be known or real knowledge. The distinction between these three—\textit{jnata}, \textit{jnan} and \textit{jneya}—is due to \textit{ahankara}. The soul is a part of God who alone can know. The soul is uncongealed energy and matter, the subject of apparent knowledge is congealed energy. The congelation is due to the fixation in the space-time continuum. Now if the link between space and time could be somehow eliminated, the difference between \textit{jnata}, \textit{jnan} and \textit{jneya} would disappear and the three would coalesce. When this happens, that is, when the soul observes no differences between itself and other bodies, it comes to be one with the universe. This state is called \textit{Brahmatmaikya}, the sameness of the soul with the \textit{Brahma}. It is the highest perfection which enables one to feel for others as he feels for himself. In that state no man can harm another in thought, speech or action. All human problems find a solution in that state. It causes \textit{Brahmanirvana}. What matter divides, mind unites. And God unites them both.

The doctrine of renunciation spread from India to Europe after the invasion of India by Alexander, as noticed in the change in Greek philosophy. Post-Aristotelian philosophy is predominantly ethical or religious and commended the cultivation of equanimity or peace of mind, and self-emancipation
from the bondage of matter. Stoic pantheism, in part at least, was the first fruit of the new contact between Greeks and Orientals in Alexandria which was founded by Alexander in 322 B.C. In Alexandria too were some Jewish philosophers and traces of their influence are to be found in the Bible. The resemblance between the Bible and the Geeta has been traced by some to this contact between the East and the West, though disputed by others. It really does not matter who the real author of the doctrine is. It is quite possible that the ideas occurred independently, and if that be true, the truth discovered was doubly true, because for two prophets to have discovered the same truth meant that it was to some extent independent of time and place.
PROPER INTRODUCTION

About a quarter of the Mahabharata is occupied with the war between the Kuru and the Pandava. The Kuru were a branch of the Indo-Aryans who were of sufficient importance to disturb the whole of the north of India with their factions, and to make its battles the theme of the longest epic poem of olden time. At the time when the plot of the Mahabharata was enacted, the Kuru were occupying the plain of the Doab, which one of their ancestors cleared of forests and brought under the plough, and was called the plain of the Kuru, or Kurukshetra. Satisfied with the worship of one of the Kuru, the god Indra blest it, so that any one dying there was sure to gain heaven. That accounted for the greatest number of wars having been waged there and also gained for it the name of ‘sacred plain’.

The capital of the country was Hastinapura, near modern Delhi, and there reigned a king called Vichitravirya, son of Shantanu and Satyavati and half-brother of Bheeshma. His two wives, Amba and Ambica, had two sons, Dhritarashtra and Pandu. The former had one hundred sons, the eldest of whom was Duryodhana. The latter married Pritha or Kunti and Madri. The three sons of Kunti were Yudhishthira, Bheema and Arjuna and the two sons of Madri were Nakula
and Sahadeva. The eldest brother, Yudhishthira, was extremely scrupulous, while Bheema was a giant and Arjuna, the most skilful warrior.

Dhritarashtra was blind, yet retained the throne, while his son Duryodhana really directed the affairs of the state. The latter was a contentious intriguer and prevailed upon his father to banish his cousins, the Pandava princes, from the country. After long wanderings and varied hardships, these princes collected their friends around them, formed by the help of many neighbouring kings a vast army and prepared to attack their unjust opponents, who had in like manner assembled a bigger force. Bheeshma, whose real sympathies were with the Pandavas, was obliged to side with the Kurus, as also Drona, a Brahman military instructor to all the princes, both Kuru and Pandava. Krishna, a Kshatriya king, was the friend, philosopher and guide of the Pandavas and volunteered to be Arjuna's charioteer. Bheeshma, the oldest warrior, commanded the Kurus, while Bheema commanded the Pandavas.

The scene of the poem now opens and remains throughout the same—the field of battle. Krishna is presented as the personification of the Divine Wisdom.
CHAPTER I

THE SORROW OF ARJUNA¹

Dhritarashtra² spoke:

What did my people and the Pandavas³ do, when assembled for the purpose of fighting on the sacred plain Kurukshetra⁴, O Sanjaya?⁵ ¹

Sanjaya spoke:

When king Duryodhana⁶ beheld the army of the Pandavas⁷ drawn up in order, he then approached his preceptor⁸ and spoke these words:

Behold, O Preceptor, this huge army of the sons of Pandu, drawn up by thy clever pupil, the son of Drupada.⁹

A translation of the Geeta, not so literal as to turn away the average reader, is here presented and the reader is left free to interpret it as best as he may, for the spirit has been disputed by many annotators according to their own lights. The reader should not forget that it is a poem that he reads and all the poetic licences are admissible with the rather peculiar mode of Sanskrit expression and repetition of the same ideas in different forms.

At the end of the heading of each chapter occurs the word yoga, the meaning of which has been differently interpreted. Some one has said that Shree Krishna was in a state of yoga or junction with God when He spoke. Hence each chapter is a yoga. As the word is common to all the headings it will be omitted.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. See Proper Introduction.

9. Drupada, king of Panchala, near modern Chumbal, and father of Dhristadyumna, Shikhandin and Krishna or Draupadee and hence father-in-law of the five Pandava princes.
In it are warriors with huge bows, equal to Bheema and Arjuna in battle, namely, Yuyudhana and Virata, and Drupada, a maharathi; Dhristaketu, Chekitana, and the valiant king of Kashi, Kuntibhoja Purujit and Shaivya, chief of men; and Yudhamanyu the strong and Uttamauja the brave, the son of Subhadra, and all the sons of Draupadee, all maharathas.

But mark those, who are the most distinguished amongst us, the leaders of my army, O Best of Brahmans. I will name them to thee that thou mayest know them.

There are thyself, and Bheesha, and Karna, and Kripa victorious in battle, Ashwatthama.

10. Yuyudhana, son of Satyaka and hence also called Satyaki, belongs to the tribe of Yadu, the same to which Krishna belongs.
11. One who could engage ten thousand bowmen at a time was called a maharathi.
12. Son of Shishupala, king of Chedi.
13. A king belonging to the tribe of Yadu.
15. Kuntibhoja Purujit is one person. He was maternal uncle to the first three Pandava princes.
16. King of the Shibis, supposed to be the Sibae of the Greeks.
17 and 18. These guarded the two wheels of the chariot of Arjuna.
20. Karna was the king of the Ananga but he was really a step-brother to the Pandavas, but neither he, nor the Pandavas had any suspicion of the truth which was only known to their mother Kunti. He joined the Kurus and was as great a fighter as Arjuna himself.
21. Kripa was the king of the Panchalas.
22. Ashwatthama was the nephew of Kripa and son of Drona.
and Vikarna, Saumadatti too, and many other heroes who risk their lives for my sake, armed with diverse weapons, all experienced in war.

This army of mine, commanded by Bheeshma, is very great; but that army of theirs, commanded by Bheema, is smaller and do each of you in your respective positions, guarding the approaches, protect Bheeshma alone.

Then, in order to encourage him, the ardent old ancestor of the Kurus, after making a loud sound like the roar of a lion, blew his conch-shell.

Then on a sudden, trumpets, horns and different kinds of drums were sounded. That noise grew to an uproar.

And standing on a great car drawn by white horses, Krishna and Arjuna blew their celestial conch-shells.

Krishna blew his conch-shell called Panchajanya, Arjuna blew his Devadatta, Bheema blew his great Paundra.

King Yudhisthira, the son of Kunti, blew Anantavijaya; Nakul and Sahadeva blew Sughoṣa and Manipushpaka.

23. Vikarna was the third son of Dhritarasṭhra.
24. Saumadatti was the son of Saumadatta.
25. Refers to the custom of shouting and sounding the conch-shell as a signal for beginning the battle, something like the war-cry.
26. The conch-shell served the purpose of the bugle or war-trumpet and often received a "nom-de-guerre" from its owner.
27. Panchajanya, Devadatta, etc., were "noms-de-guerre".
28, 29, 30. See Proper Introduction.
The king of Kashi, renowned for the excellence of his bow and Shikhandi,\textsuperscript{31} the maharatha, Dhristadyumna,\textsuperscript{32} and Virata\textsuperscript{33} and Satyaki,\textsuperscript{34} unconquered by his foes; and Drupada and the sons of Draupadee, all these, O king of earth! and the strong-armed son of Subhadra,\textsuperscript{35} each severally blew his conch-shell. 17-18

That sound lacerated the hearts of the sons of Dhritaraschtra, an uproar resounding both through heaven and earth. 19

O king of earth! then seeing order restored amongst the Dhartrarashtras and the arrows about to be shot out, Arjuna raised his bow and addressed these words to Krishna: “Place my chariot, O Achyuta!\textsuperscript{36} between the two armies that I may examine these men drawn up and anxious for battle, and see with whom I have to fight in this strife of war and see those well-wishers of the evil-minded sons of Dhritaraschtra, who are assembled here.” 20-23

Sanjaya spoke:

O Bharata!\textsuperscript{37} Krishna being thus addressed by Arjuna drew up that best of chariots between the two armies; before Bheeshma and Drona and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31} Shikhandi was the brother of Draupadee, wife of the Pandavas.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Dhristadyumna, brother of Shikhandi.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Virata, king of the Matsyas.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Satyaki, same as Yuyudhana.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Sister of Krishna and wife of Arjuna.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Achyuta means the eternal one, that is, Krishna.
\item \textsuperscript{37} “Bharata” means any descendant of Bharata from whom India has come to be called Bharatavarsha. Here it means Dhritaraschtra whom Sanjaya is addressing.
\end{itemize}
all the kings of the earth, he said: "Behold O Partha, these Kurus assembled here." 24-25

Standing there, Partha⁸ and beheld uncles, grand-
uncles, preceptor, maternal uncle, brothers, sons,
grandsons, friends, fathers-in-law and acquaintances
in both the armies. Gazing on all these relations
drawn up in battle array, the son of Kunti, moved
by extreme compassion, spoke with sadness as
follows:

Arjuna spoke:

Now that I have beheld these kinsmen standing
here near together for the purpose of fighting,
my limbs give way and my mouth is dried up.
My body is trembling and my hair stands on end,
my bow Gandiva⁹ slips from my hand and my
skin burns. Nor am I able to remain upright,
and I perceive, O Krishna! evil omens. Nor do
I foresee any good even when I shall have slain
these relations in battle. I seek no victory, Krishna,
nor a kingdom, nor pleasures. What should we
do with a kingdom, Govinda! what with enjoyment
or life itself when these very men on whose
account we might desire a kingdom, enjoyments
or pleasure—are assembled for battle risking their
lives and riches, preceptor, uncles, sons, grand-
uncle, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons,
brothers-in-law, also relations—these I would not
wish to slay, though I were slain myself,

38. "Partha" is a metronymic name for Arjuna.
39. "Gandiva" is the "nom-de-guerre" for Arjuna's
bow.
O Madhusudana\textsuperscript{40}—not even for the sake of sovereignty of the triple\textsuperscript{41} world, much less than for that of this earth. When we had killed the Dhartarashtras what pleasure would we have, O Janardana?\textsuperscript{42} We should incur a crime by killing these villains.\textsuperscript{43} 26-36

Therefore we ought not to kill the Dhartarashtras, our own relations, for could we be happy after killing our own kindred, O Madhava?\textsuperscript{44} 37

Even if they whose reason is obscured by covetousness do not perceive the crime committed in destroying their own tribe, nor a sin in the oppression of their friends, should we not know how to recoil from such a sin—we, who look down upon the slaughter of one's tribe as a crime, O Janardana?\textsuperscript{45} 38-39

\textsuperscript{40} “Madhusudana” is a name given to Krishna for his having killed the giant Madhu.

\textsuperscript{41} “The triple world” means heaven, earth and the underworld.

\textsuperscript{42} “Janardana” means Krishna.

\textsuperscript{43} The Kurus were guilty of practising six kinds of villainies against the Pandavas, \textit{viz.}, incendiaryism, poisoning, throat-cutting, stealing, robbing land, and insulting wife.

\textsuperscript{44} “Madhava” means Krishna.

\textsuperscript{45} People unaware of the splendid records of Arjuna’s military achievements might mistake this weakness of Arjuna for effeminacy. He shows his selflessness when he thinks more of his kinsmen and clan than of himself. The fallacy of his argument was the same that prompted the princes of his time to give up war and take to philosophy, not unlike the present argument of the “conscientious objector”. When the soldier comes to be a philosopher, all order comes to an end. But even from the philosophic point of view Arjuna was wrong, because he was mistaken about the hierarchy of duties. The duty of the king to his country was superior to the duty to his clan, kinsmen or self. On no consideration whatsoever
In the destruction of a tribe, the eternal institutions of the tribe are destroyed. These institutions being destroyed lawlessness prevails throughout the whole tribe. 

From the existence of lawlessness the women of the tribe become corrupted, Krishna, and when the women are corrupted, O Varshneya! confusion of castes takes place.

Confusion of castes leads to hell both the destroyers of the tribe and the tribe itself, for their fathers are deprived of the rites of the funeral cakes and libations of water and thus fall from heaven.

By the crimes of the destroyers of a tribe, and by those who cause confusion of castes, the eternal institutions of castes and tribe are subverted.

could Arjuna justify his making over the administration of the country to the tender mercies of his villainous kinsmen. The only way he could do so was to renounce the world when he would be beyond the pale of the duties to his country. It was just this kind of renunciation that the author of the Geeta wanted to stop. True renunciation was the renunciation of the selfish desires, attachment to worldly goods. But of this anon. See p. 30, l. 17.

46. Fighting being restricted to one caste. viz., the Kshatriyas, a sudden great diminution in their number would by force of circumstances lead to inter-marriage between the different castes and thus cause blood mixture, which many nations at all ages have regarded as a most serious evil, but particularly those who like the Aryans, the Jews and the Scotch were at first surrounded by foreigners very different to themselves and thus preserved the distinction and genealogies of their races more effectively than any other.

47. See p. 21, l. 7.

48. The women who marry men of other castes.
We have heard that a sojourn in hell necessarily awaits those who subvert the institutions of their tribe, O Krishna.

Alas! we have determined to commit a great crime, since, from the desire of sovereignty and pleasures, we are prepared to slay our own kin.

Better were it for me, if the Dhartarashtras, being armed would slay me, armless and unresisting, in the fight.

Sanjaya spoke:

Having thus spoken in the midst of the battle, Arjuna whose heart was troubled with grief, let fall his bow and arrows and sat down on the chariot.

Thus ends the first chapter, called the Sorrow of Arjuna in the episode of Krishna-Arjuna in the science of Yoga of the Supreme Spirit in the Upanishads, called the Holy Lay of Bhagavat.

49. The sojourns in hell and heaven are temporary and lasts according to the characters of the crimes and virtues. On the expiration of the allotted period, the souls have to be reborn on earth. See p. 11, l. 15.

50. A similar statement is made at the end of each chapter, which for the sake of economy will not be repeated.
CHAPTER II
SANKHYA

Sanjaya spoke:

To him thus filled with compassion, with his troubled eyes full of tears and sunk in grief, Madhusudana spoke these words:

The Holy One spoke:

O Arjuna, how come you to have this delusion at this crisis, so unbefitting an Aryan and leading neither to heaven,¹ nor to glory? ²

O Partha, do not be unmanned. That does not become thee. Cast off this mean effeminacy of heart and arise, O Parantapa. ³

Arjuna spoke:

How should I, O Madhusudhana, contend in battle with my shafts against Bheshma and Drona, both worthy to be honoured, Arisudana? ⁴

For it were better to eat even the bread of beggary⁵ in this world, and not to slay these venerable men of great esteem. To kill these

¹ A soldier who falls fighting goes to heaven or wins glory, if he survives.
² Conqueror.
³ Refers to renunciation, called sannyasa. The mention of beggary gives an opportunity to discuss the Sankhya philosophy of Kapila. It was only by turning a sannyasi that Arjuna could repudiate the duty to his caste.
venerable men, even though they are mercenaries, would be eating of banquets smeared with blood.

Nor do we know which of these two would be the better for us that we conquer them, or they conquer us; those very men, the Dharma-rashtras whom if we slay we shall not wish to live ourselves, are drawn up opposite to us.

Through niggardliness and vice my natural wits are in a state of bankruptcy. I am under a delusion about my duties. Tell me for certain what I ought to do. I am thy disciple. Teach me who now implore thee.

For I do not see how even the complete and unrivalled sovereignty of the earth and command over the gods can dispel my grief which parches my senses.

Sanjaya spoke:

Gudakesha, conqueror of his foes, thus addressed Krishna, and said to Govinda: “I will not fight” and became silent.

Then between the two armies, Krishna smilingly addressed these words to him thus downcast:

4. Bheshma commanded the respect of all by his age, character and military abilities, and Drona as the preceptor, but both of them were mercenaries as they were in the pay of Dhritarashtra.

5. Arjuna now unreservedly places himself under the guidance of Krishna.

6. Senses here mean the organs of perception.

7. Conqueror of sleep.

8. Krishna.
The Holy One spoke:

Thou hast grieved for those who need not be grieved for, but thou utterest words of wisdom! The wise
9 grieve not for the dead or living. 10-11

But never at any period did I, or thou, or these kings of men, not exist, nor shall any of us at any time henceforward cease to exist. 12

As the soul in this body undergoes the changes
10 of childhood, prime, and age, so it obtains a new body hereafter; a sensible man is not troubled about that. 13

But the contacts of the senses with the objects, O Kaunteya, which bring cold and heat, pleasure and pain, which come and go, are temporary, these thou endure, O Bharata. 14

For that man whom, being the same in pleasure and pain, and ever constant, these elements do not afflict, O Purusharshava, is fitted for immortality. 11 15

There is no existence for the unreal, nor is there any non-existence for the real. But even

9. The immortality of soul and the mortality of the body, i.e., the distinction between matter and mind is thus brought forward.

10. The reference is to the doctrine of the transmigration of soul. In its broader sense it means evolution. See p. 28, l. 15.

11. Here the author introduces the chief doctrine of practical Yoga, the impassibility to be acquired towards all external influence and equanimity in regard to the internal influences of passion. The practice of Yoga by effecting union with the supreme spirit confers real immortality, since heaven and the gods must have an end.
of both of these, those who discern the truth perceive the true end.\textsuperscript{12}  

Know this, that that\textsuperscript{13} by which all this universe is permeated is indestructible. No one can cause the destruction of this inexhaustible thing.

These finite bodies have been said to belong to an eternal and infinite\textsuperscript{14} spirit. Therefore fight, O Bharata.

He who believes that this spirit can kill, and he who believes that it can be killed, both of these are wrong in judgment.

It neither kills, nor is killed. It is not born, nor dies at any time. It has had no origin, nor will it ever have an origin. Unborn, changeless, eternal both as to future and past time, it is not slain when the body is killed.

How can that man, O Partha, who knows that it is indestructible, constant, unborn and inexhaustible, really cause the death of any body or kill any body himself?

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\textsuperscript{12} "True end" here means the realization of the truth about them. The idea is that the phenomenal world is not a reality. The basis of it is a reality. For instance, if it be true that the atom is nothing but two electrical charges, then the only thing that really exists is electricity. Everything else is unreal and an unreal thing cannot be called as something existing, while electricity can never be called as non-existing.

\textsuperscript{13} The basis of the universe is indestructible. It is the neuter, Brahma. The two electricities may indeed go out in a flash and destroy the phenomenal universe, but the electricity itself will not cease to exist and could always be developed again but not by unaided nature. Here we have to postulate another agency for the revival.

\textsuperscript{14} The infinite spirit is Brahma.
As a man abandons worn-out clothes and takes other new ones, so does the soul quit worn-out bodies and enter other new ones.

Weapons cannot cleave it. Fire cannot burn it, nor can water wet it, nor can wind dry it.

It is uncleavable, incombustible, incapable of being wetted or dried. It is constant, present everywhere, firm, immovable and eternal.

It is said to be invisible, incomprehensible, immutable. Therefore, knowing it to be such, thou art not right to grieve for it.

And even if thou deemest it born with the body and dying with the body, O Mahabaho, thou art not right to grieve for it.

For to everything born death is certain, to everything dead rebirth is certain. Therefore thou art not right to grieve for a thing which is inevitable.

All things which exist are invisible in their primeval state, visible in their intermediate state and again invisible in their final state. What cause is there for bewailing this?

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15. The reference is to the doctrine of the transmigration of soul and the metaphor of clothes is an old one.

16. Here a new line of argument is taken up.

17. The reference is to the conservation of energy.

18. The reference is both to the body and to matter which are phenomenal only between the periods of creation and destruction which periodically happen. In the intermediate state it is the Vyakta Prakriti, the beginning and the end being Avyakta Prakriti. See p. 26, l. 14.
One looks on the soul as a miracle, another speaks of it as a miracle, another hears of it as a miracle, but even when he has heard of it, not one comprehends it.

The soul in every creature's body is always invulnerable. Therefore thou art not right to grieve for any one.

And considering thy own duty thou art not right to waver. For there is nothing better for a Kshatriya than lawful war.

O Partha, happy are the warriors who undertake such a war as is spontaneously offered—an open door to heaven.

But if thou wilt not join in this lawful fight, thou abandonest thine own duty and glory and contractest a crime.

And mankind will, moreover, relate of thy imperishable infamy. And to a nobleman infamy is worse than death.

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19. The three kinds of people referred to here are: 1. The Yogi who says that he can see the soul. 2. The philosopher who philosophises on the soul. 3. The student who yet cannot quite comprehend it. The author merely points out the difficulty of comprehending the soul.

20. On the argument that the soul is invulnerable, it may be said that any body is free to kill any body and it did not matter who killed whom. Therefore the question of duty is introduced here. Duty prevents one from causing wanton destruction of life.

21. The Hindu believed in lawful war. They did not say that everything was fair in love and war. A soldier might legitimately refuse to engage in an unlawful war.

22. Refers to the belief that the soldier who dies on the battle-field is wafted directly to heaven.

23. The crime is against the duty or religion of his caste.

24. This is another line of argument in which appeal is made to the worldly wisdom, apart from religion, or philosophy, or ethics.
The great warriors will think that thou hast retired from the battle out of fear and thou wilt undergo the contempt of those by whom thou wast greatly esteemed. 

And many abusive words will thy enemies utter sneering at thy prowess. What can be more wretched than that?

If slain thou wilt go to heaven, or if victorious thou wilt enjoy the earth. Therefore arise, O Kaunteya, make up thy mind for the fight.

Looking on pleasure or pain, loss or gain victory or defeat as the same, gird thyself for the battle and thus thou wilt not incur sin.

This reasoning has been set before thee in accordance with Sankhya doctrine. Now hear it in accordance with Karmayoga doctrine, imbued with that reasoning thou wilt discard the bonds of action, O Partha.

In this Karmayoga there is no loss of, or detriment to one's efforts; even a little of this religious practice delivers one from great peril.

25. This is in accord with the Sankhya, but according to it also when a man reaches the ideal of viewing pain and pleasure as same he is to renounce the world. Therefore though Sankhya goes as far as making a man unattached to the world, this unattachment prevents him from fighting. Hence Arjuna's problem is not completely solved by it.

26. Therefore Karmayoga is here introduced which is the special doctrine of the Geeta.

27. See p. 34, l. 21.
O Kurunandana, in this you must be single-purposed by discrimination. Undiscriminating you will have countless different purposes.

The flowery speech that the unwise utter, O Partha, clinging to the word of the Vedas, saying there is nothing else, ensouled by desire and longing after heaven, that offereth only rebirth as the fruit of action, that is full of various rites for the sake of enjoyments and sovereignty—the thought of those misled by that speech, cleaving to pleasures and lordship, not being inspired with resolution, is not engaged in contemplation.

O Arjuna, the Vedas are for those who are not free from the impulses of sattwa, raja and tama. Be thou free from them. Be free from doubts and be self-possessed, untroubled by the acquirements and retention of properties, always reposing on sattwa.

28. The Pandavas were a branch of the Kurus, hence Arjuna is a descendant of the Kurus.

29. The practical life of a karmayogin necessitates the acceptance of an object in life to which all others must be subordinated. Difficulties must necessarily arise when there is more than one to consider. The object must be selected with a great deal of care.

30. The slur is on those who refuse to see the limitations of the karmakanda of the Vedas and not on the Vedas themselves. The purpose of the Vedas was to supplant first tama with raja and then raja with sattwa. They made people active instead of idle and also made them look up to heaven instead of to the earth but the Vedas could not lead to salvation.

31. True salvation was to get rid of the three gunas, viz., sattwa, raja and tama.
The enlightened Brahma has no more use for the Vedas than what any one has for a well when all the country is flooded. You are only entitled to work but never to its result. Never let the result be your motive, nor be eager to avoid work.

O Dhananjaya, work in union with the divine, renouncing attachments and balanced evenly in success and failure. Equilibrium is Yoga.

O Dhananjaya, this equable state of mind is superior to work. He who works with a desire in view is pitiable.

One with an equable mind on this earth, minds neither sin nor virtue. Therefore be a Karmayogi. Proficiency in work is Karmayoga.

The wise man with an equable mind discards the results of his work and reaches the domain.

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32. When a Brahma has received divine enlightenment, that is, when he has been able to realize God, the Vedas have nothing more to give him. Neither Kapila, nor the author of the Geeta has, however, repudiated the Vedas.

33. This is one of the most oft-quoted couplets of the Geeta. All we can do is to try our best. Our success does not depend on our own efforts alone. It depends on so many factors. Besides, it involves a psychological truth to which Freud has drawn our attention. We work best when we do not think too much of the result. “Ours is but to do and die. Ours is not to reason why.” That is about the best that a soldier can say. After you have deliberately chosen a path, it is scarcely good halting in the middle to reconsider your choice.

34. Yoga.

35. This mental equipment is more difficult to attain than working.

36. Here he asserts for his system what is generally asserted at the outset in most Hindu philosophic maxims—the power of releasing their followers from the necessity of transmigration and ensuring final emancipation. It is the perfect beatitude.
where no sorrows dwell, and has not to be born again.

When thy mind transcends the mire of illusion, thou wilt mind neither what thou hast heard, nor what thou mayest yet hear. 37 52

When thy mind distracted by all that thou hast learnt from the Vedas 38 becomes quiet and motionless in deep contemplation, then wilt thou attain Yoga. 53

Arjuna spoke:

How do you know the mentally steadfast, 39 deep in contemplation? How does he speak, dwell and walk? 54

O Partha, when a man banishes all desires from his mind and is satisfied in himself by himself, he is called mentally steadfast. 55

He whose mind is untroubled by sorrows and unattracted by pleasures and free from passion, fear and anger, and constant in meditation, is called a mentally steadfast muni. 40 56

He whose mind has been detached from everywhere, and is neither sorry nor pleased to meet pains and pleasures as they come, is mentally steadfast. 57

37. These refer to the Vedas and the interpretations put on them by others, such as the Mimansas and Vedanta.

38. The mind must be purged of preconceived wrong ideas for the reception of truths that he is going to reveal.

39. The Sanskrit word for it is Sthitaprajna.

40. A muni is a saintly person who has through a course of meditation attained a state of semi-spiritualism.
He is mentally steadfast who draws in his senses\(^{41}\) from the objects of sense, even as a tortoise draws in its limbs completely inside.\(^{58}\)

Though the man who fasts withdraw his sense-organs from food,\(^{42}\) his desires still persist. It is only the realization\(^{43}\) of God that can quench desires.

O Kaunteya, for often the agitated senses of a prudent man, even though he strives to subdue them, carry off his mind by violence.\(^{44}\) \(^{60}\)

The mentally steadfast, controlling all the senses, becomes attached to me.\(^{45}\) He is mentally steadfast whose senses are all under his control.

He who thinks of sensual gratification becomes attached to the senses. From this attachment come desires, and from desires comes anger.\(^{46}\) \(^{62}\)

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41. This is technically called *pratyahara*.

42 and 43. Fasting has been recommended by more than one religion as a means of purifying the body. The author of the Geeta seems to hold the view that too much fasting may be harmful. Anyway he is against any forcible subjection of the body. Men forced to fast have reacted by becoming greedy afterwards. The desires continue till man comes to realize God. Once he has tasted of that sublime happiness he forthwith ceases to care for any earthly happiness, but never before that.

44. The difficulty of controlling the sense-organs is here emphasised. Prudence, education, religious injunctions are by themselves insufficient to absolutely control the senses and desires. Such control can only come as a divine gift when man has tasted of the happiness that knows no surfeit. It is only the highest happiness that can quench the desire for the lower ones.

45. "Me" here means the Godhead. This is the first reference to the theism that follows later. Steadfastness in faith is the pre-requisite.

46. Any one may verify the truth of this if he analyses his own anger.
From anger comes delusion, from delusion, forgetfulness, from forgetfulness comes indiscretion and from indiscretion, damnation.

But he whose senses are under control, free from likes and dislikes, can yet be tranquil in the enjoyment of the sense-perceptions.

In this tranquillity there springs up in him a separation from all troubles. For the mind of him whose thoughts are tranquil soon becomes steady.

The man who is not steadfast is neither discriminating nor thoughtful. He who is not rational cannot have peace and how can one be happy without peace?

When a man's mind is after his roaming senses, it snatches away his steadfastness as the wind does a ship on the waves.

Therefore, O Mahabahu, he is mentally steadfast whose senses are entirely withheld from objects of sense.

The muni whose senses are under control, is awake in that which is night to all others;

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47. "I forgot myself" is what we say when our better judgment shows our mistake.
48. Literally, extinction.
49. People who have tasted of this tranquillity would not exchange it for anything else. It is something like "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest".
50. The steadfastness is the result of a rational choice.
51. "Passion-tossed" expresses the sense very well.
52. The difference between the two is due to the two different planes of consciousness.
that in which others are awake is night to him. 69

He into whom all desires enter as the waters enter the ocean 53 which nevertheless remains at the same level, remains peaceful but not the man who is full of desires. 70

The man who in his behaviour to others is desireless, selfless and unattached, obtains peace. 71

O Partha, that is the state of Brahma. Once you are there you can have no illusion. To die 54 in that state is salvation or union with the Supreme Being.

Thus ends, etc. ...............Sankhya Yoga.

53. The idea is that peace is not incompatible with work.
54. To be in that state at the time of death is to be in that state always because nobody knows when he will die.
CHAPTER III

KARMA (WORK)

Arjuna spoke:

O¹ Janardana, if knowledge be deemed by thee superior to action, why dost thou direct me to this dreadful deed, O Keshava? 1

Thou bewildere²st my mind by thy ambiguous words. Tell me, therefore, only one thing for certain by which I may profit. 2

The Holy One spoke:

I have already declared to thee, O sinless one, that there are two modes of life in this world—that of the Sankhya through spiritual knowledge and that of the followers of the Karmayoga³ through work. ³

Abstention from work does not necessarily confer on you naishkarmya,⁴ that is freedom from the fetters of action, nor can you by renouncing work attain perfection. ⁴

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1. Briefly, the line of argument followed in the last two chapters is this: The soul is eternal and death of the body is inevitable. The death of the body is, therefore, not regrettable. But that does not give us leave to kill anybody and everybody, because we have our duties to perform. In the performance of our duties we ought not to mind our pains and pleasures. This equable state of mind only can give us peace and happiness and is better than work. So Arjuna asks: "Why fight then?" ²

2. The argument is a bit confusing. ²

3. The Karmayoga is the special doctrine of the Geeta. ³

4. Naishkarmya literally means worklessness. It is to be understood here as that condition of mind or knowledge which deprives all work of its bondage or limitations. ⁴
For one cannot even for a single moment exist without doing some work. Our inborn nature forces us always to do some kind of work.

The fool, who physically restraining the organs of action mentally contemplates the actions, is false to himself.

But he who unattached and mentally restraining his sense-organs, engages in Karmayoga his organs of action, is praiseworthy.

Do thou regularly work, for work is better than no work. Also thou canst not carry on the functions of the body without work.

In this world all work except that of offering sacrifices, binds us in action. O' Kaunteya, do thou work for sacrifices but unattached.

5. The Spirit or Purusha is an idle spectator who does no work. All the work that the body does, is the work of Prakriti or nature. Her laws are imperious. So the idea of determinism is there.

6. It is the hypocrite who conforms to the letter of the religion but disobeys the spirit on purpose. He is false to the religion. The fool mistakes the letter for the spirit. He deceives himself.

7. He is wise because he understands and practises the spirit of the religion and has the courage of his conviction to discard the letter. He is neither a fool nor a knave.

8. Perhaps ‘regulated work’ would better convey the meaning.

9. According to the Mimansa the work of sacrifices does not bind.

10. Son of Kunti.

11. But since the sacrifices are done with a desire, the fulfilment of the desire is binding. Hence the Geeta advises the performance of the sacrifices in a spirit of detachment which would nullify the bonds.
The Creator, when of old He had created mortals together with the sacrifices, said to them: "By means of the sacrifice ye shall multiply. It shall be to you a cow of plenty." 10

By means of it do ye support the gods, and let the gods support you. Supporting one another mutually, ye will obtain the highest felicity. 11

For being nourished by sacrifices the gods will grant you your desired enjoyments. He who eats the food given by them, without offering some to them first, is a thief indeed. 12

Good men who eat what remains after the sacrifices, are liberated from all their sins but those bad men who cook for themselves only, eat sin. 13

Beings are nourished by food. Food has its origin from rain. Rain is the fruit of sacrifice. Sacrifice has its origin in work. 14

Know that work proceeds from Brahma or Mula Prakriti, and that again from the unchangeable principle, Akshara. Therefore the

12. She could give a man all he could desire.
13. Not to pay for goods received is a kind of theft.
14. Sacrifice to the rain-god could cause rainfall.
15. Annotators differ as to the meaning of Brahma here. Brahma is often used in the sense of the absolute. In chapter III, Sl.14, it is said that Brahma is the organ of creation and is hence synonymous with nature or Mula Prakriti. In Chapters VII and VIII it has been said that Prakriti was God's expression. In this the Geeta differs from Sankhya which makes both Prakriti and Purusha eternal.
16. Akshara is hence synonymous with God, because Prakriti is derived from Him.
all-pervading Brahma is present in all efforts or yajna. 15

O Partha, he who in this world does not follow this revolving cycle, leads a sinful life to no purpose, indulging in his senses. 16

But the man who delights in his own soul and finds both satisfaction and contentment in it has no work left for him to do. 17

Thus in this world neither work, nor abstention from work, is of any moment to him. Neither, also, is his interest attached to any created thing.

Therefore always, do thou perform thy duteous work; for he who performs his duties unattached, attains the highest goal. 19

Janaka and others in this way obtained their salvation through work. Even if thou only considerest the good of mankind thou shouldest work. 20

17. Of give and take.
18. The motive for all work is desire. The man without any desire has nothing to work for.
19. Since he is not attached to anything, he can have no preference for anything, either work or no work.
20. The idea of duty here is not exactly the categorical imperative. It is rational since it is based on the psychological fact that we do our duty best when the bargaining spirit is the least present.
21. Janaka was a king and a rishi or sage at the same time. He carried out all the duties of a king yet was a philosopher who had no attachment to worldly things. He was a contrast to those kings who turned philosophers and left the throne or kingdom, like Buddha and other princes of the time. The Geeta was a protest against such conduct. According to the Geeta, it was a
The ordinary man follows the example of the acknowledged superior. What he acknowledges as exemplary, the world follows.

O Partha, in the three worlds I have nothing that I am obliged to do. Nor is there anything unobtainable by me which I want to obtain, yet I am constantly working.

O Partha, for if I were not to work continuously and indefatigably, all mankind would follow my example.

Were I to cease working, mankind would perish. And I should be destroying these men and be the author of confusion of castes.

Just as the unlettered people work from self-interest, so should the enlightened people work.

dereliction of duty. By holding up Janaka as a model, the Geeta tells us that duties need not be divorced from religion. It is possible not only for the ordinary man but even for kings to do their duties without forsaking their religion. The bad example of the kings was no doubt followed by the people as is evident from what follows. If the advice given in the Geeta was followed, the fighting strength of India would not have been so weakened. What with the sannyasism of Kapila, the contemplationism of Buddha and the extreme compassionism of the Jainas, India was truly unmanned and the first advice that was given by Krishna to Arjuna, a Kshatriya, was “do not be unmanned”. The burden of the song is ‘fight’, repeated at the end of each chapter, and the fight was to be clean, lawful, against unjust aggression, but never for self-aggrandisement and always from a sense of duty, with the good of mankind in view. You must fight, your nature will force you to fight. But there is something better even than fighting and that is what the Geeta tells us at the end.

22. Heaven, earth and the underworld which is however not the hell. The three worlds mean the universe.
but unattached and wishing to do good\textsuperscript{23} to mankind.

The wise must not create misunderstanding\textsuperscript{24} in the minds of the ignorant who work from self-interest. They should devoutly\textsuperscript{25} work and make the people work gladly.\textsuperscript{26}

It is nature's qualities\textsuperscript{26} working within us that incite us to work. The soul that is deluded by ahankara\textsuperscript{27} thinks that it is he himself that is working.

But O Mahabahu, he who understands that the gunas\textsuperscript{28} and the actions are different from him, is not attached because he knows that the whole thing is due\textsuperscript{29} to the interplay of the senses and their objects.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} People work from self-interest but the wise have the interest of mankind in view. Both work but the view-points are different.
\item \textsuperscript{24} The Sankhya philosophy was not for the masses who were too ignorant to understand the real meaning of renunciation. For the ordinary man renunciation was equivalent to a life of idleness and beggary. The real meaning of renunciation was the giving up of desires. When you have given up desires you need not work. The people who went in for sannyasism without understanding it were misled.
\item \textsuperscript{25} As a yogin.
\item \textsuperscript{26} The gunas: sattva, raja and tama.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Consciousness of individuality as separate from the rest of the universe.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Sattva, raja and tama.
\item \textsuperscript{29} The soul is inactive and it is Prakriti or nature that really works. Prakriti can work but without the Purusha or soul cannot sense. Prakriti is blind and the soul is lame, but their conjugation or combination has the effect of making us feel as if the body senses and the soul works which is the reverse of reality. The wise know the truth.
\end{itemize}
People deluded by nature's gunas are attached to the senses and their work. Let not the men who know all these mislead the dull and ignorant people.

Spiritually-minded, do thou trust me for all thy actions and putting away all morbidness, fight, untramelled by hopes and selfishness. The faithful and non-fault-finding who always follow this my advice also transcend the bonds of action.

But know that those who finding fault with this my advice do not follow it are absolutely ignorant and spiritually dead.

Even the wise man inclines towards that which agrees with his nature. All created things have to obey nature. Forcible subjugation can do but little.

Our sense-organs have their natural likes and dislikes towards their objects. They are our enemies. We should not submit to them.

30. To be all-knowing is to be a jnani or buddhu, according to Sankhya or Buddha. The religion of such men can only be well understood by the intelligent after a thorough education. The uneducated and ignorant are misled by it.

31. Literally, repose your actions on me. This is once again a reference to the wonderful theism that is the culmination of the Geeta and the sublimation of desires.

32. Enlightenment comes from the soul, for the body cannot see. The soul is dead that cannot see, capitulating to the body.

33. Nature's supremacy over the material body must be acknowledged.

34. The likes and dislikes.

35. The acknowledgment of the existence of enemies does not necessarily imply that we have to submit to them. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.
It is better to follow one's own religion even partially than to follow that of another fully. It is better to die in following one's own religion, but that of another is always dangerous.\(^\text{36}\)

Arjuna spoke:

Instigated then by what does man incur sin even against his will, O Varshneya, impelled, as it were, by force?\(^\text{37}\)

The Holy One spoke:

They are desire and anger, sprung from \textit{raja}\(^\text{38}\) \textit{guna}, all-devouring and sinful. Know that they are the enemies in this world. \(^\text{37}\)

All the \textit{universe}\(^\text{3}\) is covered by them, as fire is by smoke, the mirror by dust and the foetus by the womb. \(^\text{38}\)

O son of Kunti, they are the constant enemies of the wise, engulfing all enlightenment, fiery and insatiable passions.\(^\text{40}\)

The sense-organs, mind and intellect are their citadels. By involving wisdom they delude men. \(^\text{40}\)

\(^{36}\) This is another of the oft-quoted passages. Religion is here to be understood as the duties of one's profession. No good putting the square man in a round hole. Professional etiquette requires that you should not interfere in others' business. Let the priest be priest and the soldier, soldier.

\(^{37}\) It is a very pertinent question to ask what is the cause of such interference. What is the motive behind it?

\(^{38}\) Analysis shows that it comes from selfishness.

\(^{39}\) Selfishness is universal, embracing both animate and inanimate beings.

\(^{40}\) There is no end to our desires unless we control them.
Therefore do thou, O best of the Bharatas, restraining thy senses first, kill this sinful destroyer of jnana\(^4\)\(^1\) and vijnana.\(^4\)\(^3\) 41

The sense-organs are fine\(^4\)\(^8\) but the mind is finer than they. Buddhi is finer than all these and that which is finer than even buddhi is the soul. 42

Understanding thus the soul\(^4\)\(^4\) as superior to buddhi and restraining thy own self, do thou slay the intractable enemy in the guise of desires. 48

Thus . . . . . . . . . . Karmayoga.

41 & 42. Jnana is knowledge and vijnana is specialised knowledge, science. This is the modern meaning of the two words but at the time of the Geeta real knowledge always meant spiritual knowledge.

43. See the genealogical tree of the 25 categories, page 25.

44. The acknowledgment of the authority of mind over matter, of the soul over the body.
CHAPTER IV
JNANA (KNOWLEDGE)

The Holy One spoke:

I delivered this imperishable *Karmayoga* to Vivaswat.1 Vivaswat told it to Manu2 and Manu told it to Ikshwaku.3

Thus the *rajarshis*4 learnt it, handed down from one to another. During a considerable period of time, this doctrine had been lost5 to the world, O Parantapa.

As thou art both my friend and worshipper, I have told you to-day this ancient doctrine, which is a very great secret.

Arjuna spoke:

Thy birth was posterior, that of Vivaswat was anterior. How do I know that thou didst tell him before?

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1. Having said in the foregoing chapter that work must be done but without attachment and from a sense of duty, with a view to the good of mankind, the Geeta wants to invest the *Karmayoga* with the authority that hoary antiquity gives. Vivaswat was the sun.

2 & 3. Manu was the father of Ikshwaku.

4. The other sages.

5. The four Hindu ages are *satya, treta, dwapara* and *kali* which is the present age. The ages were probably separated by destructive floods or upheavals which accounted for the loss of the doctrine. It would appear from other records that Vivaswat gave this doctrine to Manu in the beginning of *treta*, and the *Kuru-Pandava* war was at the end of *dwapara*.
The Holy One spoke:
I and thou, O Parantapa, have passed through many transmigrations. I know all these. Thou dost not know them, O Arjuna. 5

Even though I am unborn, eternal and the lord of all that exists, yet, residing* in my own nature I am born by my own mystic7 power. 6

For* whenever religion comes to be tainted, O Bharata, and irreligion comes into being, I am born.7

6 & 7. According to Sankhya, Prakriti and Purusha were separate and eternal but according to the Geeta, Prakriti is God’s expression; so nature is a part of God and hence it is possible for God to manifest Himself in the material body. This He does by the mystic power of creation, called maya.

8. This and the next sloka are also amongst the oft-quoted passages. The avatars or the incarnations of God appear when the world is troubled greatly by a powerful miscreant who defies the law and order of God. The prophets are born just when the world needs them most, as if the necessity mothered the invention. At the bottom of it is the law of action and reaction which science recognizes but cannot account for. This law of action and reaction governs not only the animate and inanimate worlds but also society, politics, economics, etc. Neither science, nor philosophy, nor religion has paid much attention to this law. The study of this law may one day give us direct evidence of a directing Providence which has up to now been a matter of faith. That great man, Hahnemann, who applied this law to the healing art most successfully, prophesied “nations like the Germans, who have for centuries been gradually sinking deeper and deeper in soulless apathy and degrading servitude, must first be trodden still deeper in the dust by the Western Conqueror, until their situation became intolerable.” Modern Germany is the reaction. A Hitler is required to offset a Bonaparte. But the offsetting does not stop the eternal waves of action and reaction and prevent the sea of life coming to a rest, for that would be the death of the world. World work requires such action and reaction and it is only when the waves are badly timed and come to a head, that they cause one of those cataclysmic upheavals that necessitate divine intervention.
To succour the pious, to destroy the evildoers and to re-establish religion, I am reborn age after age. 8

O Arjuna, he who thus truly comprehends my divine birth and action has not to be reborn after quitting this body but is absorbed in me. 9

Many, freed from attachment, fear and anger, devoted to me, and taking refuge in me, purified by knowledge and asceticism, have entered my being. 10

Whatever be the modes of worship different men follow, I grant each man what he prays for. In every way they follow my path, O Partha. 11

Desiring success for their actions, worshipping the gods in this world, men quickly succeed by their sacrifices. 12

I instituted the four castes, classifying men according to their nature and work. Though I have instituted them, I am not really their author, I the eternal. 13

My work does not bind me, nor am I attached to the results of my work. He who knows me, thus is himself not bound by his action. 14

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9. The final emancipation.
10. No sincere prayer offered in good faith is futile.
11. All roads lead to Rome. The end of all religion is God. It is this catholicity that has endeared the religion of the Gèeta to so many. But the question has to be answered why different people follow different paths. And the Gèeta does so.
12. The worship of the gods of nature that the scientists do is met with quick success but it is short-lived, because it does not solve the bigger problems of life. Success here is worldly success.
13. It is disinterested or spiritual work.
14. The bond comes from the attachment. No attachment, no bond.
The ancients,\textsuperscript{15} knowing this, worked for their salvation. Do thou, therefore, work as the ancients did.

Even\textsuperscript{16} the sages have erred in deciding what is work and what is not. I will therefore tell you what work is, knowing which, thou wilt be spared from evil.

Action, inaction and wrong action, each has to be well understood. Inscrutable are the ways of action.

He\textsuperscript{17} who sees action in inaction and inaction in action, is the wise one amongst men. He is devoted and performs all his duties.

Him the learned call wise whose efforts are all without desire for the result and whose actions are purified\textsuperscript{18} by the fire of knowledge.

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\textsuperscript{15} Work therefore is not a hindrance to emancipation, as the \textit{sannyasi} would say.

\textsuperscript{16} The reference is to the conflicting opinions on \textit{karma}. According to the followers of \textit{sannyas} all \textit{karma} or work, or sacrifice, is bad and ought to be given up, because all actions have some defects and therefore bind and stand in the way of emancipation. The followers of the \textit{Vedas} say that the work of the Vedic sacrifices does not bind. The \textit{Geeta} says that they too bind when they are done with a specific purpose, and it is impossible to be absolutely without work. Therefore we should work and offer sacrifice but unattached, from a sense of duty, unmindful of the result. Action is due to the \textit{raja guna} which makes us work through our desires. Inaction is due to \textit{sattva guna} because it springs from a desire for emancipation. Wrong action is due to \textit{tama guna} because it springs from ignorance.

\textsuperscript{17} The \textit{karmayogi} who accepts the \textit{Geeta} creed has no objection to doing any work, hence he does all kinds of work.

\textsuperscript{18} The knowledge that work done without expectation is tantamount to inaction is what purifies action into inaction.
He who is unattached to the result of his action, always contented and unattached, really does no work\(^\text{19}\) though engaged in every way in work.

He who, without expectation, restraining his mind and abandoning all possessions,\(^\text{20}\) lets only his limbs work, does not incur sin.

Contented with what he receives unsought, free from antagonism, without envy, the same in success and failure, even though he works, he does not incur the bonds of action.\(^\text{21}\)

He who is unattached, unfettered, equable in mind through spiritual knowledge and only works for sacrifice, dissolves away all\(^\text{22}\) the bonds of action.

*Brahma*\(^\text{23}\) is the offering. *Brahma* is the offered thing. *Brahma* is he who makes the offering. Therefore he to whom all sacrifice is *Brahma*, attains *Brahma*.

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19. Because his activity is tantamount to inactivity.
20. Does not necessarily mean *sannyasa*.
21. See Chapter III, Sl. 9.
22. According to the *mimansakas* the work of sacrifice does not bind but merits heaven. According to the Geeta even meriting heaven is a kind of bondage. The aim of the Geeta is *moksha* or emancipation for which even heaven has to be sacrificed.
23. Before one can be fit to be absorbed in the Supreme Spirit, he has to acquire the spiritual outlook and identify everything with the Supreme Spirit. Here are described the sacrifices that are done without expectation. In the next, sacrifice with expectation is described.
Some yogis offer sacrifices to the gods, and others offer the sacrifice itself as an offering to the fire of Brahma.

Some sacrifice the sense of hearing and other senses, in the fire of restraint, others offer the sense-objects, such as sound, in the fire of the senses.

Others sacrifice all their sense-actions and vital actions in the sacrificial fire of self-restraint, enkindled by spiritual knowledge.

Thus the different severe ascetics offer as sacrifices material things or tapa, or yoga, or daily worship, or spiritual knowledge.

Others proficient in pranayama, sacrifice inspiration of breath in expiration and expiration in inspiration, by restraining both.

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24. These are not without expectations.
25. The reference here is to Rigveda 10, 90, 16, which describes the great sacrifice of the Virata Purusha by the gods at the beginning of creation. The sense is that since the Supreme Spirit pervades everything, all sacrifice is the sacrifice of Brahma. Having spoken of the God’s sacrifice, the author is now going to speak of the yoga practice according to Patanjali which is also a kind of sacrifice.
26 & 27. This is a poetical way of expressing the act of self-control.
28. This is starving the sense-organs.
29. As is evident from Manusmriti this new meaning of yajna came into use before the time of the Gṛeta.
30, 31, 32 & 33. Every means of salvation being a yajna, all these could be called sacrifices.
34. These are the deep-breathing exercises of Patanjali.
35. Technically called poorak or filling up.
36. Technically called rechak or dilating. The inspired breath is called apan and the expired, pran. Both may be effected by alternately blocking one of the nostrils. Sacrifice here is to be taken in the general sense of means of salvation.
Others sacrifice their vital energy by regulating food in the fire of life. All of these being proficient in sacrifice have their sins destroyed by their sacrifices.

Those who eat of the ambrosia left from a sacrifice pass into the eternal Supreme Spirit. Those who do not offer sacrifice, O best of Kurus, cannot succeed in this world. How can they in the next?

Sacrifices of so many kinds are performed in the presence of Brahma. Know that all of them spring from action. Knowing this thou wilt be emancipated.

O Parantapa, sacrifice by knowledge is better than the sacrifice of material things. Because, O Partha, all work, without exception, leads in the end to knowledge.

37. The regulation of food was a part of self-control.

38. The idea underlying all these is that for the common good of mankind we have to sacrifice both our personal liberty and predilections, for which both mental and bodily training are necessary. And these training and sacrifices as means of salvation could be called yajna. They purify our body and mind.

39. Refers to the practice of eating the remnants of yajna.

40. Literally, mouth. Fire is the mouth of the gods. In reality all sacrifices are offered to the Supreme Spirit.

41. The mimansakas' idea of offering sacrifices to the gods is restricted. To see in all sacrifices the sacrifice to the Supreme Spirit is the real knowledge.

42. The acquisition of knowledge as a means of salvation is a yajna.

43. The knowledge of experience as opposed to book-knowledge.
Acquire this knowledge by humbly approaching, inquiring of and serving the wise who know the real truth and will teach you.

Knowing which, O Pandava, thou wilt not again be deluded, and by which knowledge thou wilt see all created beings in self and in me.

Even if thouwert the most sinful of all sinners thou wouldest cross over all sins in the bark of spiritual knowledge.

As fire when kindled, reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes all actions.

For there is no purifier in the world like knowledge; he who has succeeded by Karmayoga, in time finds that self-knowledge without effort in himself.

44, 45 & 46. The teacher who does not command respect is not believed in. The student must acknowledge the authority of his teacher. No one can learn if he has not the spirit of inquiry. As no fees were paid by students in those days, personal service was paid in lieu thereof.

47. This idea will again be expressed in Chapter VI, Sl. 29. The soul in all created beings is a part of God. The realization of this is the highest position that man can attain which makes us all wonderfully akin.

48. At the bottom of all sins, all sufferings, lies ignorance. That was what Kapila preached and his remedy for everything was knowledge. In all that follows this we see the influence of Kapila.

49. The bonds of action, both physical and psychical.

50. This knowledge is self-acquired through work undertaken without any expectation. In the next sloka the author says how the knowledge can be gained by those who cannot acquire it without help. It can be gained by faith under proper tuition.
The man of faith, the man of self-restraint and devotion will get knowledge. After acquiring that knowledge he soon attains the supreme tranquillity.

The ignorant, unfaithful and doubtful, perish. He who hesitates loses not only this world and the next but also beatitude.  

The man who hath renounced action by yoga, whose doubts hath been dispersed by knowledge and who is ruled by his soul cannot be bound by his action, O Dhananjaya.

Therefore, sever this doubt that springs from ignorance and is in thy heart, with thy sword of knowledge and relying on yoga, arise, O Bharata.

Thus... Jnana-Karma-Sannyasa-Yoga.

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51. It is only a fortunate few who can acquire this knowledge by themselves. For the great majority of mankind the royal road is through faith under expert guidance, earnestly followed with self-control.

52. The supreme happiness that knows no surfeit is impossible without faith. The Geeta holds out hope even for the greatest sinner but it holds out no hope for those who cannot have faith.

53. Knowledge is good, work is necessary to acquire knowledge, but as work binds, the bonds should be cut through by sannyasa, that is, working without expectation. Therefore, the three, knowledge, work and disinterestedness should be combined.