

Postings from Sri Oppiliappan Koil Varadachari Sadagopan

Oppiliappan Koil or the Temple of Oppliappan, is dedicated to Sri Venkatachalapathy Swamy at Thirunageswaram. Situated 5 miles east of Kumbakonam, in Tamil Nadu, Oppiliappan Koil is one of the 108 sacred temples of Sri Vaishnu.

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Gîtârtha Samgraha of Sri Yamuna Acharya

- 1) *Introduction*
- 2) *The essence of First Chapter*
- 3) *Essence of second chapter*
- 4) *The Essence of the Third Chapter*
- 5) *The essence of the fourth chapter*
- 6) *Essence of the fifth chapter*
- 7) *Essence of the sixth Chapter*
- 8) *Essence of the seventh chapter*
- 9) *Essence of the eighth chapter*
- 10) *Essence of Ninth Chapter*
- 11) *Essence of Tenth Chapter*
- 12) *Essence of Eleventh Chapter*
- 13) *Essence of Twelfth Chapter*
- 14) *Essence of the thirteenth chapter*
- 15) *Essence of the fouteenth chapter*
- 16) *Essence of the fifteenth chapter*
- 17) *Essence of the sixteenth chapter*
- 18) *Essence of the seventeenth chapter*

19) *Essence of the eighteenth chapter*

20) *Phala shruthi*

1) Introduction

Today, we will commence the study of Vedanta Desika's Tamil Prabhandham entitled Gîtârtha Sangraham. Vedanta Desika, follower of Sri Râmânûja and advocate of Vishishta Advaita Philosophy wrote his works in Sanskrit and Tamil. The book under study (Gitârtha Samgraha) is one of his Tamil works. It is also called Prabandham as it is considered as one of the important and main Tamil works.

Originally, Sri Âlavandâr blessed us with the Sri Sukthi known as "Gitârtha Sangraham " in Sanskrit. It contains the essence of Lord Parthasarathy's teaching to us using Arjuna as an excuse or pretext (*Vyâjam*) at Kurukshetram. Sri Krishna is addressed here as Pârthasarathy, because he is Arjuna's charioteer. Kurukshetram is the place, near Delhi, where the Maha Bhâratha war took place.

Sri Râmânûja, the founder of Vishishta advaita school of Vedanta, wrote a commentary in Sanskrit for Âlavandâr's Sri Sukthi (Sri Gîta Bhâshyam) to make sure that the meanings housed in Sri Âlavandâr's Sri Sukthi are preserved without any distortions.

Sri Âlavandâr is one of the philosophical saints of Vishishtâdvaita.

Sri Vedanta Desika followed the footsteps of Sri Râmânûja and blessed us with his detailed commentary on Gîta Bhâshyam named "Tâthparya Chandrika ". Vedanta Desika rejected the detailed commentary (*viparîtha vyakhyâna*) for Gîta by resting his commentary on Âchârya Râmanûja's commentary. Vedanta Desika went further and created a short commentary on Gitârtha Sangraham named Gitârtha Sangraha Raksha in Sanskrit. Finally, out of his infinite compassion for us, Vedanta Desika blessed us with a Tamil Prabhandham called Gitârtha Sangraham for us to become conversant about the quintessence of Bhagavad Gîta. All the Tamil *Pâsurams* of Gitârtha Sangraham are set in *Kattalai Kalitthurai* metre.

There are two benedictory verses (*Taniyans*) for Vedanta Desika's Tamil Prabhandham. One is set in the metre of *nerisai vennpâ* and the other is set in the shorter *Kural Vennpâ*. The different metres mentioned are the poetic styles used by Sri Vedanta Desika. Each style is set to a melody, a time scale and a corresponding rhythm of singing, all the three in harmony with the content of poem.

Taniyan 1:

*katta porul virittha kâsiniyil nânn marayin
ittap-porul iyampum inn porulaic-chittar thozhum
Vedântha Desikanai mevuvâr tangal Thirup-
paadhâmbhuyam adiyen parru*

Meaning: The lotus feet of Sri Vedânta Desikan, who is worshipped by pious scholars with Bhakti, are my refuge. He is delectable to us through the experience (*Anubhava*) of His Sri Sukthis. He gave us the inner meanings of the difficult passages of the four Vedas for the

residents of this world through his divines poems (*Divya Sukthis*).

Taniyan 2:

*Gîtha mozhintharulum Vedântha Desikanar
paadhâra vinthamalar parru*

Meaning: The lotus feet of Sri Vedânta Desikan who blessed us with the divine prabhandham of Gitârtha Sangraham (the essence of Bhagavad Gîta) are the refuge for us all.

General Introduction

Through that *Charama Shloka*, Bhagavân (the Lord) performed teaching (*upadesham*) for us by using Arjuna as an excuse or pretext (*Vyâjam*). This *charama Shloka* containing the method to observe total surrender to God (*Prapatthi*) is easy to practise for gaining the fruit of Liberation (*Moksha Phalan*). The principle of Total Refuge in God (*Sharanâgathi Shastram*) is housed in the *Charama Shloka* of Bhagavad Gîta, which is the essence of Upanishads. Gîta was blessed to us directly from the lips of Lord Krishna Himself for our betterment. All of our ancient masters (*Purvâchârya*) have therefore helped us to understand the true meaning of Gîta with their comprehensive commentaries. Sri Âlavandâr was the first among our ancient masters to open our spiritual eyes with his *Sri Sukthi* of *Gitârtha Sangraham*. With His incisive intellect, Sri Âlavandâr captured the essence of Gîta Shastram in 32 poems (*Shloka*) and opened the doors for other Vaishnavite Masters (*Âchâryas*) to elaborate on the most important divine science (*Bhagavad Shastram*).

Vedanta Desika with his superb genius captured the essence of the 32 Sanskrit verses (*Shloka*) of Sri Âlavandâr in 21 Tamil verses (*Pâsurams*) including the benefits of reciting these verses (*Phala shruthi*).

There are 18 chapters in Srimad Bhagavad Gîta. Our ancient masters divided these 18 chapters into three subsets consisting of six chapters (*Shathakams*). The first set of six deals with Karma and Jnâna Yoga. The second six chapters covers Bhakti Yoga. The first half of the third six chapters deals with the forms (*Svarupams*) and nature (*Svabhâvam*) of embodied soul (*Chethana*), matter (*Achethanam*) and the created world (*Prapancham*) resulting from their union as well as the true state of the Supreme Lord (*Sarweshvaran*). The second half of the third six chapters (*Shathakam*) covers the ways to observe Karma, Jnâna, Bhakti Yoga and the dependence on Shâstra for an embodied soul (*Chethana*) like Arjuna to understand clearly that Sriman Nârâyana is the Supreme Brahman (*Para Brahmam*) celebrated in Vedanta.

Sri Âlavandâr's summary of the above meanings relating to the entire *Gîta Shastram* has taken the form of the first verse (*Shloka*):

*Svadhârama-Jnâna -VairAgya saadhya-bhakthyEka gOchara:
Nârâyana : Param Brahma GîtasAsthrE Sameeritha:*

Vedanta Desika's First Pâsuram of Gitârtha Sangraham is a wonderful echo of the above summary of Sri Âlavandâr.

The Essence of the Meaning of the Science of Githa (*Gîta Shâsthram*)

karumamum Jnâmum kondu yezhum kâthalukku ohr ilakku yenru

*aru marai ucchiyul aadharitthu othum arum biramam
Thirumahalodu varum Thirumai yenru Thânn uraitthân
dharumam uhantha Dhananjayanukkavan Saaratiye (1)*

(meaning): After anushtânam of Karma Yoga to control one's mind, Jnâna Yoga has to be practised for direct visions of the Soul (*Âthma Sâkshâthkâram*) to pave the way for the application of the principles (*anushtânam*) of Bhakti Yoga. The entire assembly of Vedânta declare that the target of this Bhakti Yoga is the Parabrahmam celebrated as Sriman Nârâyanan. For Arjuna rooted in Dharma, *Kannan* (familiar way of addressing Sri Krishna) revealed that He is indeed that Parabrahmam.

In this *Pâsuram*, the progression of Karma, Jnâna, Bhakti Yoga referred to by Sri Âlavandâr is covered with the following references :

1. *Karumamum Jnânamum kondu* = based on Karma and Jnâna Yoga which are covered in the First Shathakam (Chapters 1 to 6 of Bhagavad Githa).
2. *yezhum Kaathalukku* = Bhakti Yoga, the topic of the second Shathakam is dealt with here. (Chapters 7 to 12 of Bhagavad Githa).
3. *arum Brahmam* = the Brahmam, which is distinctly different from *Chethana* and *Achethana* categories (*varigams*) is the topic of the first half of the third Shathakam. This Brahmam is the One celebrated in Upanishads (*aru Marai ucchiyul aadaritthu odhum arum Brahmam*). This Brahmam is Sriman Nârâyanan appearing with the Goddess Maha Lakshmi (*Thirumahalodu varum Thirumai*).
4. *Dharumam uhantha* = to be bound by the Shâstra is hinted here. This covers the second half of the third *Shathakam*. (Chapters 13 to 18 of Bhagavad Githa)
5. To that Arjuna (Dhananjayan) rooted in righteousness or *Dharmam* (*dharumam uhantha Dhananjayan*), Lord Pârthasârathy revealed that Sriman Nârâyanan is none other than Himself (*arum Biramam ThirumahaLODu varum ThirumAI yenRu ThAnn uraitthAn*).
6. Lord revealed that He is indeed the *lakshyam* (*gochara:*) of that Bhakti Yoga (*yezhum kaathalukku ohr ilakku yenru uraitthân*).

2) The essence of First Chapter

*uhavai adaintha uRavuDayar poraluRRa annAL
tahavudan anbu karai puraLa dharumatthu aLavil
miha uLam anji vizhunthu adi sErntha VisayanukkOr
nahayudan uNmai uraikka amainthanan NaaraNanE---(2)*

Meaning: Arjuna saw the dear relatives like Bhîma, Masters (*âchâryas*) like Drôna assembled opposite him to engage in battle with him. Arjuna's love and compassion (*Daya*) for them overflowed although they had no fitness for that display of affection. As a result, Arjuna concluded that the righteous war with them befitting his status as a Kshathriya was unrighteous (*Adharma*). He was overcome with weakness. He threw down his bow and arrows and sat down with dejection at the foot of his chariot. Next, Arjuna appealed to Lord, his charioteer to

show him the right way. With smile on His face, Lord Pârthasârathy (Sri Krishna) commenced His teaching (*upadesham*) for Arjuna on the real nature of the embodied soul (*Svarupams* of *Jîvâthma*), of the Supreme Soul or God (*Paramâthma*), the means to reach God (*Paramâthma*) and related esoteric meanings of Vedânta. Lord's teaching (*upadesham*) was like nectar for Arjuna and easy to understand.

Sri Âlavandâr's summary of the First chapter takes this form:

*asthâna sneha Kaarunya Dharmâdharmadhiyâ-aakulam
Paârtham prapannam uddhisya Shâstrâvathârâm krutham (5th Shloka).*

Arjuna arrived at the battlefield with the Lord as his charioteer. He directed the Lord to position the chariot in the middle of the armies assembled to battle each other so that he can see all those assembled to fight him and his side. Lord obliged and positioned the chariot in such a place so that Arjuna can have a good look.

As Arjuna looked on and saw his relatives, Masters (*Âchâryas*) and other kinsmen eager to engage in the battle with him, his limbs got weakened, his mouth became dry and he began to tremble. His mind began to reel over the thought of killing his kinsmen, Masters (*Âchâryas*) and others dear to him in the ensuing battle. He told the Lord, His Charioteer, that such a battle is not worth fighting. He threw down his bow and arrows and sat down on the chariot as though he was ready to fast to death.

Arjuna was overwhelmed by compassion for those who did not merit it. He got confused about what is righteous (*Dharmam*) and what is unrighteous (*Adharmam*) and was taken over by sorrow. His mind swirled in the high wind of grief over the prospect of killing his *Âchâryas*, former friends, and kinsmen. Arjuna declared now that he will not fight them because of the unbearable sorrow over the expected loss of those dear to him.

The third poem (pâsuram) of Swamy Desikan's Gîtârtha Sangraham deals with the second chapter (adhyâyam) of Srimath Bhagavath Gîta. This chapter has 72 poems (shloka).

3) Essence of second chapter

Udalam azhinthidum uLL uyir onRu azhiyAthu yenaippOI
vidhumathu paRRu vidAthathu adaittha kirisaikaL
kaduka unakku uyir kAttu(m) ninaivu athanAI uLathAm
vidu mayal yenRu Visayanait-tERRinAn VitthakanE ----(3)

(Meaning): Oh Arjuna! I am Eternal and the Lord of all (Sarweshvaran). There is no question about this matter. Similarly, there is no question about the eternal status of the souls (*Jîvâthma*). They have no death. Souls (*âthma*) inside the body does not age. It does not cease to exist as it moves from one body to the other. It is eternal (nithyan), ever present. No one should think it is non-eternal (anithyam) and sorrow over that thought. The soul (*âthma*) can not be cut up by weapons. It can not be burnt by fire nor dried by the wind. The soul (*jîvan*) is capable of penetrating through every thing in a subtle manner. This soul (*Âthma*) cannot be killed.

The soul or Âthma is indestructible. It is the height of ignorance for one to think that he is the killer of the Âthma and that it (âthma) is capable of being killed. The term death in the worldly parlance is nothing but the departure of the soul (âthma) from one body to enter into another body. Oh Arjuna ! It is appropriate to think that the soul (âthma), which resided in the physical body of your enemies will go to the world of paradise (svarga loka), gain a body better than that it had on this earth and enjoy all the pleasures (bhoga) there. You should be happy reflecting over that thought. Does anyone really regret over casting aside the old and torn clothes for the good fortune of wearing clean and brand new attire?

Oh Arjuna ! You might grieve over the death of the body instead of the soul (âthma). Even that thought is not proper. This body is constituted by the five elements (Pancha Bhuta: prithvi, ap, tejas, vâyu and âkâsha). It is the abode of the eternal soul (jîvan) to experience the fruits of its Karmas. When the Karmas are exhausted, the physical body has no reason to continue its existence. It falls down. It is absolutely natural for the physical body to undergo changes. Oh Arjuna! Even if you do not destroy the body during your war with the enemies, their body (sharîra) will die sooner or later. Therefore, there is no reason for sorrowing over the death of the physical body, the temporary home of the souls (jîvan) in samsâric state (the state of rebirths owing to past actions).

Additional Comments:

1. Lord Pârthasârathy (Sri Krishna) is saluted as vitthakan here. He is addressed so as the mysterious One here because, He performed the teaching (upadesham) for Arjuna here on the battle field, while serving as his charioteer and staff.

2. " vidumathu paRRu vidAthathu adaittha kirisaikaLE ": With the benefit of Shâstra Jnânâ, the Chethanan should comprehend clearly the true nature (svarupa of the soul or âthma and perform one's Karmas with no attachment to their fruits and treat their performance as bhagavath kaimkaryam in the mode of Nishkâmyam (desireless actions). One should only detach from the fruits of the Karmas and should never abandon the prescribed Karmas. To engage in just wars is the duty of a warrior (kshathrian). There is no other lofty Karma for a warrior (kshathrian). Therefore, Oh Arjuna, you should engage in performing this just war, cast aside the fruits of victory (or loss) arising from such a war. When you do so, you will be performing Karma Yoga and will obtain liberation (moksha) at the end.

3. " kaduha unakku uyir kAttum nianivu athanAl uLathAm " : After gaining control of your mind through the practice of this Karma Yoga, you will progress to the stage of Jnâna Yoga, which is an experience (anubhava) of unrelenting reflection on the true nature (svarupa) of the soul (âthma). The subsequent stage is direct experience of the soul (âthma sâkshâthkâram).

Therefore consider that this just war (Karma Yoga) is an aid to the lofty goal of direct experience of the soul (âthma sâkshâthkâram also called kaivalyam) and as a result remove your confusion that the perishable body made up of the five elements is the same as the eternal, imperishable soul (âthma).

4. Swamy Âlavandâr's summary of the 72 Shloka of this Second Adhyâyam takes the following form:

nithyAthma-sanga karmEhAgOcharaa Saankhya-Yogadhee:
dhvitheeyE sTitha-dhee-lakshA prOkthA tann-mOhasAnthayE

" The Knowledge of Sânkhya and Yoga, which comprehend in their scope , the eternal Self and disinterested activity respectively, leading to the state of steady wisdom, is taught in the second chapter for removing Arjuna's delusion ".

5. Âchârya Râmânuja's commentary : Arjuna fell at the feet of the Lord and appealed : " Oh My Lord ! My mind is befuddled with compassion for my relatives and teachers. I am bewildered about my duties. Instruct me, Your disciple (sishtyan), who has sought Your protection as a protégé (Prapannan), and teach me what is certainly auspicious for me to do.

For the benefit of Arjuna, who was totally confused about what is dharmam and what is adharmam due to love and compassion in an inappropriate situation, Gîtâchâryan (the Master of Gîta, another name for Sri Krishna) began the introduction to this science (shastram) to dispel his ignorance. Starting from the Gîta Shloka, II. 12 ("There never was a time, when I did not exist ") to the last poem (charama shloka), XVIII. 66 (" I will release you from all your sins, grieve not"), Lord Pârthasârathy instructed Arjuna about Karma, Jnâna and Bhakti Yoga as " the means for obtaining the highest spiritual fulfillment. (Owing to its importance, this poem is considered the last (charama shloka), even though there are some more poems till the end of the chapter).

Lord Pârthasârathy instructed that the soul (âthma) is "eternal, stable, immovable and primeval, unchanging, unshakable and ancient".

Important poems (shloka) of this Chapter

" To work alone, you have the right and not to the fruits. Do not be impelled by the fruits of work. Nor have attachment to inaction". Acts performed with a desire to fruits (phalan) lead to bondage. The opposite way that is, actions without desire for fruits (nishkâmya karamam) leads to your release from the bonds of Karmas.

Yoga: Karmasu kousalam --II. 50

(Meaning): Yoga is skill in action. Therefore strive for Yoga, develop evenness of mind, discard good and evil as well as the here and now. Relinquish the fruits from action and free yourself from bondage of rebirth and ascend to My supreme abode!

Poem (shloka) II. 56

"He whose mind is not perturbed in pain, who has no longing for pleasures, who is free from desire, fear and anger--he is called a sage of firm wisdom ".

Poem (shloka) II. 63

" From anger (krodhâth) there comes (bhâvathi) delusion (sammOha:); from delusion, the loss of memory (smruthi vibhrama:); from the loss of memory, the destruction of discrimination (buddhi nâsha); and with the destruction of discrimination, he is lost (pranashyathi) ".

Poem (shloka) II. 69

"What is night (nisha) for all beings (sarva bhuthânâm), in it the controlled one is awake. When all beings are awake, that is the night to the sage who sees."

4) The Essence of the Third Chapter

*sankam tavirnthu sakam sathir perra Dhananjayane
pongum gunangal punarppu anaitthum puhavittu avarrul
nankann uraittha kirisai yelâm yenavum navinrar
yengum arivarhale yenru nâathan iyampinane (4)*

(Meaning): In the previous poem, Lord pointed out that Karma Yoga has to be practiced first to get the mind under control and then one should proceed to Jnâna Yoga. A question arises here about some one, who is competent to perform Jnâna Yoga directly without the intermediate step of Karma Yoga. The question is why should such a capable person trouble himself with Karma Yoga. The answer is that the gains of Jnâna Yoga can not be realized unless Karma Yoga is mastered first. We have to perform Karma Yoga first and please the Lord by doing actions (*karma*) without anticipation of the fruits of such actions. Sins are destroyed during the practise of such karma Yoga. The mind is cleansed. The power of impediments (*dôsha*) like desire and anger diminish and the senses (*indriya*) come under the influence of the devotee (*sâdhaka*). This leads on to the practise of Jnâna Yoga as the next step. If one does not perform Karma Yoga first and proceeds directly to Jnâna Yoga, it is like some one, who wants to build a seven-tiered tower (*gopuram*) by starting with the seventh tier first. He will become a laughing matter.

Further, no one can stay idle even for a second without doing any *karma* except at the time of dissolution (*pralaya Kâlam*). The soul (*Jîva*) is goaded by one or other of the three *guna* to perform one or other *karmas*. Karma Yoga is easy to practise. Mistakes do not creep in, while one practises Karma Yoga. It is impossible not to be engaged in actions (*Karma*). The bodily existence will be impaired, if we abandon Karma Yoga. Even the great souls like King Janaka, who were fully qualified to jump start their discipline (*sâdhana*) with Jnâna Yoga practised Karma Yoga first to show to the world the correct sequence. If some one sets an example by skipping Karma Yoga, even those, who are not competent to perform Jnâna Yoga will mimic the capable ones and end up in spiritual disaster. This will lead to the accumulation of sins by the trendsetter and he will further lose his grip on the Jnâna Yoga as well.

Additional comments on the words & passages of this poem (*Pâsuram*)

1. "*Sangam Tavirtthu*" : When one performs Karma Yoga, one should do it for the love of the God (Bhagavath prîthi) and not for gaining any fruits that one may desire.

2. *Pongum gunangal punarppu anaitthum avarrul puhavittu*":

Sathva, *Rajas* and *Thamas* are the three *guna* associated with the created world (*Prakrithi*). In the body of the bound soul (*chetana*), they are present in different proportions. They are behind the performance of appropriate *karma* as described in detail in the 14th chapter of Srimad Bhagavath Gîta. The bound soul (*Jîvan*) deludes itself by thinking that it is the doer of the *karma*. This delusion (*Bhrama*) arises from the wrong conviction that the body (*Sharîra*) is indeed the soul (*Âthma*). In contrast to these deluded souls, those who have a clear understanding of the nature of the soul (*Âthma Svarupa*) will know that the ability to perform *karma* is a natural attribute of the soul (*Âthma*) and the association with the three *guna* are the causative factor. This is known as *Karthruthva anusandhânam* .

3. "*Nankann uraittha kirisai yelâm yenavum navinrar yengum arivarhale*":

Those who recognize that all the *karma* are performed by Almighty *Sarweshvaran* through His Servant, the soul (*Jîva*), for the purpose of His own joy. One has to comprehend this principle (*thathva*), while performing “actions in the form of *karma* (*Karma roopa kaimkaryams*). Those who have this practise are considered as the Masters of the essence of all Divine sciences (*Bhagavath Shâsthram*).

Instructing Arjuna in this manner, Lord commanded him to engage in the practise of his *karma* as a Kshatriya and fight his enemies in that righteous war.

4. Swami Âlavandâr's summary of this Third Chapter (Adhyâya) is :

asakthya lokarakshayai guneshvâropya karthrutham
Sarvesware vaa nyasyokthâ thrutheeye karma-kâryathâ

5. Sri Râmânûja's summary: The direct visualisation of the individual soul (*Âthma sâkshâthkâram*) is the precedent for success in practise of Bhakti Yoga. This is explained in the next four chapters starting from the Third Chapter.

The Lord (*Bhagavân*) states that the practise of Jnâna Yoga by plunging headlong is a difficult and dangerous act. The bound soul (*chetana*) in this world cannot exist without action driven by the *guna* born of *Prakrithi*. Anyone who says that he has skipped Karma Yoga and jumped to Jnâna Yoga directly is a hypocrite. There is every fear of downward descent in his case. Therefore, one has no choice but to perform obligatory duties (*niyatha Karma*) without seeking the fruits thereof. By performing *karma* without attachment to the fruits of such *karma*, one attains the Supreme being:

“Therefore always perform action which has to be done, unattached; verify, man attains the highest by performing action unattached.”

- Srimath Bhagavath Gîta: III.19

Sri Krishna (Gîtha Âchârya, another name for Sri Krishna as He is the Master of Bhagavad Gîtha) goes on to say that He is "one who has all of His desires fulfilled" and the Supreme Master of all and yet He goes on working (performing *karma*) for the protection of the world and its beings.

The Lord instructs Arjuna to surrender all of his actions to Him with a mind focussed on Him as the *antharyâmi* (Lord in one's own soul) of all and engage in his battle ahead resolutely without the heat of excitement:

“Renouncing all actions in Me, with your mind resting one the Self, and giving up hope and idea of ownership, fight, being free from fever.”

- Srimath Bhagavath Gîta: III.30

Here, the Lord instructs Arjuna to perform all prescribed *dharma* befitting his role as a Kshatriya free from selfishness and in a mood of not seeking the fruits of such actions. He asks Arjuna to dedicate the fruits of all those required Karma to Him with a clear mind knowing that the Lord is the indweller in all) and never forgetting that Lord is his Master (*Sheshi*) and he is His (Lord's) agent (*Sheshan*). One who has understood and follows this “master-agent” relation (*sheshi-sheshan*) is the one with the spiritually inclined mind (*âdhyâthma chethas*). Lord states that those who do not understand

and follow this principle are lost forever.

During the remaining part of this third chapter, Lord explains the difficulties in the practise of Jnâna Yoga. The Lord (Gîtha Âchârya) stresses the importance of controlling the senses AT THE VERY BEGINNING, so that both *Jnâna* (knowledge) and *Vijnânam* (discrimination) are not destroyed (Bhagavad Gîtha II. 41).

Next, the Lord (*Bhagavân*) rank ordered the adversaries to Jnâna Yogins: The senses (*indriya*) are important opponents (*virodhi*) to gain knowledge (*Jnâna*). Even if the Yogi controls the senses, the mind exerts a dominant role by lusting after the sense objects and becomes a bigger impediment to gaining right knowledge (*Jnâna*). If one controls the mind, the intellect (*Buddhi*) still is a greater impediment than the senses and the mind. Even after controlling the sensory organs and the mind, the Buddhi can play some perverted games and stand in the way of gaining knowledge. Assuming that the senses, mind, and intellect are some how controlled, there is another opponent (*virodhi*), which is the strongest of all: The desire (*Kâma*).

"The senses are said to be superior (to their objects); superior to the senses is the mind; but superior to the mind is the intellect; while that which is superior to the intellect is the Self."
- Sriamth Bhagavath Gîta: III. 42

In the final Poem (*Shloka*) of this chapter (III .43), the Lord instructs Arjuna to recognize desire (*Kâma*) as the top-most obstacle in the pursuit of Jnâna Yoga and directs Arjuna to destroy this enemy (desire) by stabilizing the mind (*manas*) with the help of the intellect (*buddhi*), which in turn is reined in by the practise of Karma Yoga.

Chapter 1 is about " Arjuna"s sorrow and Confusion "
Chapter 2 is about: " Communion through Knowledge ".
Chapter 3 is about " Communion through Action ".
Chapter 4 is about " Renunciation of Action in Knowledge".
Chapter 5 is about « Communion through Renunciation "
Chapter 6 is about " Communion through Meditation "

These are the six Chapters of the First Hexad united together as a self-consistent Unit.

We will take up next, the study of the 42 poems (*Shloka*) of the Fourth chapter.

In the third chapter, the emphasis was on the need to practise Karma Yoga with sacrifice for the fruits of action (*phala tyâga*) for both the disciple (*Sâdhaka*) with strong body impulses as well as for the one qualified to practise Jnâna Yoga.

In the fourth chapter, the absolute need for practising Karma Yoga is reiterated and emphasized. Further, the *avathâra rahasyam* (the secret of Lord's incarnation) is touched upon.

5) The essence of the fourth chapter

*Piravâmai tanthidat-thane pirakkum perumaihalum
thuravâk-kirisaikal thoomathi tannâl tulanguhayum
irava uyir nannilai kandidum ulahin nilayum*

marai vazhum mâyavan neyanukku anru arivittanane.

Meaning of the first line of the *pâsuram*

The Lord, who is celebrated by the Vedas decided to give to the embodied souls (*jîvan*) freedom from future births in this world of action (*Karma bhumi*) and instructed them through His friend Arjuna about the secrets relating to His own incarnations (*avathâram*) amidst us.

Those who understand the glories of the secrets of his incarnations (*avathâra rahasyam*) will never ever be born as a result of securing liberation or *moksha* (*Piravamai tanthidathane pirakkum*). Those who comprehend the secrets associated with His incarnations (*avathâram*) have no more births ; those who comprehend the ways in which He performs actions during those incarnations (*avathâram*) will be freed of their own Karma. Swamy Desikan sums up this particular blessings (*Vishesha anugraham*) of the Lord in the first line of the *Pâsuram*:

Piravamai tanthida Thane pirakkum perumai udayan.

To bless us with the non-return to the cycle of births and deaths (*apunarâgamanam*), He Himself incarnates in this world of action (*Karma Bhumi*). Those who comprehend His secrets of incarnations have thus no more births (*ithi janma rahasyam yo vetthi, na asya punarbhava*); as a result, that embodied soul (*jîvan*) gains the bliss of liberation (*moksha sukham*) in *Sri Vaikuntam*, the abode of Vishnu.

What are these secrets of incarnation of the Lord (*avathâra rahasyam*) ? There are six aspects to His secrets:

His incarnation is TRUE and not some kind of unreal, "make believe" magic.

Our knowledge (*jnâna*) in this world (*Karma Bhumi*) is shrunken. In contrast, the Lord's knowledge (*Jnânânam*) during His incarnation (*avathâram*) here is fully blossomed as always and does not suffer from any limitation. He does not lose in any one of His endeavours. He continues to be the Supreme Lord.

His body is not formed by the admixture of the three *Guna* (*Sathva, Rajas* and *Thamas*) as in our case. His body is completely unalloyed pure *sathva* (*Sathva mayam* or *Shuddha Sathvam*).

His birth does not arise from the maturation of His Karmas like us. His birth is a result of His own volition (*sankalpam*).

He chooses His incarnation, when the cosmic order (*dharma*) declines and (*adharma*) or the cosmic disorder ascends. The timing of our birth in contrast is linked to the ripening of our *karmas*.

His birth here has nothing to do with the enjoyment of the fruits of *karmas*, which are a mixture of pleasure (*sukham*) and pain (*dukham*). It is for uplifting the pious people (*sâdhu janam*) ; they can not bear even a moment of separation from Him and He incarnates to protect them from their enemies. He shows them His form (like in the man-lion incarnation or Narasimhan), converses with them (like in Krishna and Gopis), establishes righteousness or *Dharma* (as in Râma) and destroys the unrighteous or *adharma* (as in *Varâha* or the boar incarnation).

Meaning of the second line of the *pâsuram*:

Thuravak-kirisaikal thu umathi tannâl tulanguhayum.

Kirisaikal refers to the different divisions of Karma Yoga such as ritualistic worship of the Lord (*âradhanam*), control of senses (*indriya nigraha*), contemplative breathing (*Prânâyâma*), rituals (*yâgam*), charity (*danam*), sacrificial offerings (*homam*), austerities

(*tapas*), bathing in holy waters, Vedic study and understanding of the meanings of the Vedic passages. These duties or *Karmas* can not be abandoned ; they are prescribed for each social class and stage (*varnam* and *âsramam*). Any one who does not seek the fruits (*phalam*) of these *Karmas* and yet performs them with a detached mind is practising the highest form of Karma Yoga. For such a one, who has cultivated the disassociation with the results of actions (*karma phalam*), the enjoyment of the direct vision of the soul (*âthma Svarupam*) without getting involved in the created world (*prakruthi sambhandham*) becomes possible. The Karma Yoga practised in this way contains inside itself, Jnâna Yoga. Since, the practitioner (*sâdhaka*) considers the performance of all the Karma as the nature of the Supreme Brahma (*Parabrahma Svarupam*), Karma Yoga becomes the nature of knowledge (*Jnâna Svarupam*) (*thumathi tannâl tulanguhayum*). The words *thu math tannâl* refers to the ideal Karma Yoga housing inside it the knowledge (*jnâna*) about the pristine nature of the soul (*âhtma Svarupam*). *Tulanguhayum* alludes to that ideally observed Karma Yoga shining as Jnâna Yoga.

Meaning of the third line of the *pâsuram*

iravâ uyir nannilai kandidate ulahin nilayum.

The knowledge of the Self (*âthma jnâna*) arising from the brilliance of the Jnâna Yoga embedded in the Karma Yoga destroys the embodied soul's good and bad actions (*jîvan's punyams* and *pâpams*) and paves the way for the soul (*jîvan*) to safely cross the terrors of the ocean of birth, life and death (*samsâra*. *Iravâ uyir* is the eternal, imperishable *Âthma*. Direct vision (*sâkshâthkâram*) of that soul (*âthma*) in its true state is a great accomplishment resulting from the proper practise of Karma Yoga that houses Jnâna Yoga inside it.

Meaning of the fourth line of the *pâsuram*

matai vaazhum mâyavan neyanukku anru arivittanane.

Our Lord is a Master of Illusion (*Mâyavan*), who is celebrated by the Vedas. As a mysterious Lord (*Swamy*), He takes on many incarnations. He taught His friend the mysteries (the six secrets or *rahasyam*) behind His many incarnations (*avathârams*) on the first day of the great Maha Bhâratha war (*Bhâratha yuddham*).

Swamy Alavandâr's summary of the 4th chapter

Prasangâth sva-svabhâvokthi: Karmano-akarmathâsya cha bhedhâ Jnanasya mâhâthmyam chathurtâdhyâya uchyathé

Sri Râmânujâ's commentary

In the fourth chapter, the need for practising (elaborated in the third chapter) is confirmed. The purpose of the practice (*anushtânam*) of Karma Yoga is identified as the deliverance of all beings (*jagath uddhâranam*). As Karma Yoga includes within itself, the knowledge of the Self (*âtman*), it is considered that such Karma Yoga includes Jnâna Yoga in its scope.

In addition to that, the nature of Karma Yoga with its divisions (*bheda*) and the dominance of the knowledge (*jnâna*) portion in the Karma Yoga is elaborated in the fourth chapter. The secrets of incarnation (*avathâra rahasyam*) of the Lord are also covered in this chapter.

The following are some of the relevant verses (*shloka*m) of the Fourth Chapter of Bhagavad Githa to reflect upon:

Shloka 8 : For the protection of the pious people (sadhu janam) and the destruction of the evil doers (enemies of My devotees) and for establishment of righteousness in this world, I incarnate in every era (yuga).

Shloka 9: He who comprehends the truths of My divine incarnation and actions during those incarnations (avathâram) has no rebirth and comes directly to Me.

Shloka 11: Whoever resorts to Me in any manner, in the same manner do I favour them; men experience Me alone in different ways.

Shloka 22: Content with what chance may bring, rising above the pairs of opposites, free from ill will, even minded in success and failure, though he acts, he is not bound.

Shloka 23: Of One whose attachments are gone, who is free, whose mind is established in knowledge, who works only for sacrifices, his Karma is entirely dissolved.

Shloka 24: Brahman is the instrument to offer with ; Brahman is the oblation; By Brahman is the oblation offered into the fire of Brahman; Brahman alone is to be reached by Him, who meditates on Him in his Karmas.

Sri Vedanta Desika's commentaries in *Tâthparya Chandrika* are exceptionally beautiful and insightful. In view of the length of this posting, the author will not cover them here.

Author's personal note: *I referred to Tâthparya Chandrika Commentary on Bhagavath Gîta. One of the great Upanyâsakars (experts in discourses on religious texts) and scholars of the time, who received the distinguished title of Sâra SâJ~NAR from Vaikunta Vâsi HH Srimath Injimedu Azhagiya Singar was Vaikunta Vâsi Thirukkallam Swamy. His greatness as the Kalakshepam expertise in Bhagavath Gîta is much celebrated. In this posting, I will summarize/translate the commentary of Thirukkallam Swamy on the FOURTH chapter of Srimath Bhagavath Gîta. By the way , Thirukkallam Swamy was the Father-in-law of Vaikunta Vâsi U.Ve. Mukkur Lakshminrusimhâcchâr Swamy, the great devotee of Mattapalli Narasimha Parabrahmam.*

The summary of the Fourth Chapter

In this chapter, Lord Pârthasârathy (Sri Krishna) states that He revealed the secrets of Karma Yoga to Surya (The Sun God) at the beginning of this era (*manvanthram*). Through this reference, our Lord stresses the greatness of Karma Yoga. He points out to Arjuna that Jnâna Yoga is housed inside Karma Yoga and as a result, Karma Yoga becomes Jnâna Yoga. Lord Krishna speaks about the nature (*svarupam*) of Karma Yoga and its divisions and points out that the portion dealing with Jnâna Yoga is most important (*pradhânam*). As there were some questions about this, Sri Krishna instructed Arjuna about the secret of His incarnations (*Avathâra rahasyams*).

The dialogue (*samvâdam*) between the Lord and Arjuna as His disciple:

Sri Krishna : Oh Arjuna ! Do not think that I am instructing you on Karma Yoga for the purpose of stimulating you to engage in battle. I instructed Surya (the Sun god) at the beginning of this period of Manu (*Manvantharam*) for the upliftment of all souls (*jîvas*). Surya taught it to Manu ; from Manu, King Ishvâku received the teachings (*upadesham*) and from then on the order of revelation of the secrets about Karma Yoga followed the disciplinic succession of Aswapathi, Janaka, Ambarisha and other saintly kings (*râja rishis*). After that, there was no

further propagation. Now, I am teaching you what was lost because you have taken total refuge (*sharanâgathi*) in Me. Out of My affection for you, I have instructed you on Karma Yoga with its different branches (*angams*). No one else can instruct you on this secret knowledge (*rahasya jnâna*) linked to *Vedânta*.

Note: Manu is the name of a celebrated personage regarded as the representative man and father of human race. Also one of the divine beings. The first Manu called Svâyambhuva Manu is supposed to be a sort of secondary creator. Antara is the period of 4,320,000 human years, which is one fourteenth day of Bramha, the Creator. The fourteen Antara also called Manu are: *Svâyambuva, Svârochisha, Autthami, Tâmasa, Raivatha, Châkshusha, Vaivasvatha, Sâvarni, Daksha Sâvarni, Bramha Sâvarni, Dharma Sâvarni, Rudra Sâvarni, Rauchya Daiva Sâvarni, and Indra Sâvarni*. We are at present living in the 7th *Manvantara* called *Vaivasvatha Manvanthara*.

Arjuna: Oh Lord ! Both You and me are born close to each other in time. Surya however was born before the four eras (*chathur yugams*). How is it possible for you to have instructed Surya at the beginning of this cycle of Manu (*Manvantharam*), when You were not even born?

Krishna: Arjuna ! are you asking this question under the assumption that one does not have many births (*janmams*)?

Arjuna: Oh My Lord! No . I did not ask you for that reason.

Krishna: If so, are you saying it is incredible because one can not recall I this birth, what was instructed and memorised in a previous birth?

Arjuna : Oh *Parama Purusha* (The Supreme Person) ! I know that sages like Jada Bharatha had remembrance of their previous births (*purva janma*).

Krishna: Oh Dhananjaya! Are you doubting about my ability to remember what I taught during the beginning of the period of Vaivasvatha (*Vaivasvatha manvanthara*) to Surya be remembered again during this birth as the son of Vâsudevan ?

Arjuna: Oh Lord ! I know You are *Sarweshvaran, Sarvajnan* and *Sarva shakthan* (the principal attributes of Lord). That is no problem for You .

Krishna: Oh Kauntheya (Arjuna) ! In that case, what is the motive behind your question?

Arjuna: Oh Vâsudeva! You are totally free of all faults and blemishes (*dosha heya prathyaneekan*). You banish the births and deaths of those who surrender unto You. How do You then take this Dosham filled birth (amidst us), which is known to have the Doshams of birth, old age and death ? You are the embodiment of auspiciousness. What is the use of birth for One, who is satisfied by the Bliss (*ânandha*) generated by Your own Nature (*svarupam*) ? You are the Supreme Lord (*Sarweshvaran*). There is no one equal to You or above You. If there was some one superior to You, He can command birth and death to You. In such a situation, what is the reason for Your birth here ? You are Omniscient (*Sarvajnan*). You know that the Deva hesitate to place their feet on this world (*Karma bhumi*). How come then, You take birth in this dark *Samsâric* world and mingle with one and all ? You could not have taken Your incarnations here to protect this world since You can accomplish the same with Your will (*Sankalpam*) alone. All Your desires are already fulfilled since You are the Enjoyer of all the desires (*avâptha samastha kâman*). What is the fruit (*prayojanma*) that You anticipate through Your birth here ? Why have You chosen to be born as the son of King Vâsudevan? These are the motives behind my Question.

Krishna: Oh Arjuna ! Is My incarnation (*avathâram*) not real ? Is it a like magic (*Indra Jâlam*) or unreal (*asathyam*) ? Is that your first question ?

Arjuna: Yes, my Lord.

Krishna: Oh Arjuna! You and me had many births. I know very well your previous births and those of Mine. You do not know about them. Just as you think that your previous births did happen and they are real, understand that My previous births did indeed take place and are real (*sathyam*).

Arjuna: Kanna (Sri Krishna)! If your previous births are real, what was your features (*janma Prakâram*) ? Did you leave behind Your divine nature (*svabhavam*) ? Was Your body made up of created matter (*Prâkrutham*) having the three *Guna* or non subject to created matter (*aprâkrutham*) ?

Sri Krishna: I am born out of my own will (*sankalpam*) and maintain my non-created (*aprâkrutha*) divine body in My births. I am born with my divine auspicious form (*divya mangala vighram*) out of My own volition.

Arjuna : When do you take Your incarnations (*avathârams*)? When are You born ?

Sri Krishna : Arjuna ! There are no time limits to My incarnations (*avathârams*). I am not limited by any cyclical rhythms. I create myself when the cosmic order (*dharma*) declines beyond limit and cosmic disorder (*adharmam*) becomes the order of the day.

Arjuna : What are the other reasons for Your incarnation (*avathâram*) ?

Sri Krishna : I am born in every era *yugam* to protect My devotees (*bhaktha*) experiencing danger and to destroy the evil beings who cause them harm. I am also born to re-establish the principle values of the Veda (*sheshta* or *Vaidika Dharma*) in this world.

Arjuna: Oh Lord ! My doubts are gone now. Is there any fruits (*phalan*) in learning about the secrets of Your incarnations (*avathâra rahasyams*) ?

Sri Krishna : Oh Arjuna ! Any one who understands clearly the secret principle (*thatva rahasyams*) behind My incarnations and My divine activities here will never ever be born. That knowledge will remove immediately all sins.

Arjuna: My Lord ! Are there any, who meditated on Your secrets of incarnation (*avathâra rahasyams*)?

Sri Krishna: There are many who performed the penance of Meditation (*dhyâna*) on the secrets of my incarnation and as a result attained My nature (*svabhavam*).

Arjuna: Oh Lord, Your ease of access through your *soulabhyam* (easiness of approach, one of the qualities of God) to one and all during Your incarnations is matchless.

Sri Krishna : Arjuna! It is not that I confine Myself to be born as a God or Human to protect those who seek My refuge. I present Myself to those in the form they want to see Me. If My devotee (*bhaktha*) wants Me to appear as their father, son, charioteer (*Sârathy*), boar (*Varâha Roopi*, Vishnu's incarnation as boar) or lion (*Narasimha Roopi*, Vishnu's incarnation as lion), I take on those desired forms and appear before them as such. Here Lord Krishna emphasises the greatness of God's incarnations.

Arjuna: Oh Lord ! My doubts on the secrets of incarnations (*avathâra rhasyams*) are cleared now. Please instruct me on the way in which Karma Yoga is in the form of Jnâna Yoga.

Swamy Desikan's commentaries in *Tâthparya Chandrika* are exceptionally beautiful and insightful.

Arjuna: Oh Lord ! please explain to me what you started on (viz)., Karma Yoga being in the form of Jnâna Yoga.

Krishna : All sentient beings (*chethanas*) whether interested in Liberation (*Moksha*) or not are very much interested in the fruits (*phalam*) for their Karmas. They also seek quick returns and choose to worship Indra and other gods for that purpose. They fail to worship (*âradhanam*) for Me, who is the indweller of all the demi-gods. I am the enjoyer of the offerings (*Yajna Bhoktha*) made to these demi-gods. These sentient beings (*chethanams*) fearing Samsâra and desiring Liberation (*Moksham*) fail to observe the Jnâna Yoga in the form of Karma Yoga, i.e., worshipping with offering that is suitable to Me (*âradhanam* with *sâthvika tyâga*).

Arjuna: Oh Lord ! The sentient beings (*chethanas*) with their bundles of sins weighing them down seek insignificant fruits (*alpa phalams*) and fail to observe the means for Liberation (*moksha*), the Karma Yoga. Please instruct me on the *Jnânakâra Karma Yoga* that will destroy the obstacles to Liberation (*moksha*).

Krishna: Oh Dear one ! I am the Creator, Protector and Destroyer of all sentient and non-sentient beings (*chethana* and *achethana*) from Brahma to the lowly grass. Although I am the creator of all sentient and insentient beings, I am not subject to any changes (*avikâran*) as I am not the Creator.

Arjuna: Madhusodhana (Sri Krishna) ! Your statement is confusing . How can You say that you are both the creator (*kartha*) and not the creator (*akartha*) ?

Krishna : I recognize your confusion. I am indeed the Creator of the sentient and insentient world. I am not however associated with the differences (*vaishamyams, verupadugal*) between say God (*deva*) and Humans or between the humans et others. The differences in births as divine or humans are due to their own specific Karma (*karma vishesha*). Therefore, I am indeed responsible for the creation of all sentient and non-sentient beings (*chethana* and *achethana*), but not for their karmic-related differences among themselves. Therefore, I am consistent in my earlier statement that I am the creator and the non-creator *kartha* and *akartha*.

Any one, who understands this subtle point is released from both the good and bad Karmas (*punya and pâpa*). That one gets rid of the obstacles for the beginning of the Karma Yoga and the ending of the hankering after the desire for fruits. He is not bound by the ancient bundle of good and bad Karma (*Prâchîna karma*).

Arjuna : Mâdhava (Sri Krishna) ! You have now instructed me on the secret to remove the obstacles for the beginning of Karma Yoga. Are there any who have followed this path ?

Krishna : Yes, There are many devotees who desire Liberation (*Mumukshus*) who have observed this type of Karma Yoga. They understood Me as the *kartha* as well as the *akartha*. Vivasvan and Manu are two of such *mumukshu*. Even great scholars and sages have been confused about the Karmas to be observed and the Jnâna housed inside that Karma. I am going to instruct you now on the ways to be released from the bonds of *Samsâra*.

Arjuna: Oh Lord ! Why has the path and structure of the Karmas been difficult to grasp by the Scholars and Sages ?

Krishna : One should get a clear understanding on the Karmas that will be indispensable for Liberation (*moksham*). They should also be clear about the many types of rites (*vikarmas*) such as daily obligatory (*nithyam*), periodical (*naimitthikam*), rites conducted with a view to future fruition (*kâmya karma*) and the accumulation of riches. One should also understand the non-action (*akarma jnâna*). In view of the difficulties in understanding the many aspects of Karmas, it has been a difficult path for many .

Arjuna : My Lord ! It is difficult to comprehend the principle that Karma Yoga is a form of *jnâna* (*Jnânakâram*). Please explain me further.

Krishna : One who does the *nithya karmas* (those that can not be abandoned) with no interest in the fruits thereof, with a mind not distracted by other matters, developing detachment from *prakruthi* and its activities (*loka vasthus*) and having the Self alone as the aim (*prayojanam*) will break the bonds of Samsâra. He does not perform Karma Yoga first and then practise Jnâna Yoga for the visualization of the Self, but instead observes Karma Yoga itself for that result of direct vision of the soul (*âthmâvalokana*). Since this type of Karma Yoga practice (*anushtânâ*) is linked with the nature of the Self (*âthma svarupam*) other than *Prakruthi*, Karma Yoga is of the form of Jnâna Yoga as well.

Arjuna: Kanna (Krishna) ! Please elaborate on this for me !

Krishna : Dhananjaya (Arjuna)! The different branches of Karma Yoga are *Sandhyâ Vandanam* (the three daily prayers to Sun), *Yagam* (ritualistic sacrifices), *Prânâyâmam* (contemplative breathing exercises), control of senses, *Vedâdhyayana* (Vedic recitations), *Vedânta Vicharam* (reflections on the principles of *Vedânta*), *Kruchra* (a type of fasting), *Shânthâyana prâyaschitha* (a particular type of atonement to ward of some of the errors in our religious life).

Note: *Sandhya* is the three phases of the day: day-break, mid-day and sun set. *Kruchra* is a type of penance. There are as many as sixty types of penances. *Prâyaschitha* is an action to make good the defects in the procedure of ritual or sacrifice, or actions undertaken to atone for not doing what is ordained or doing something which is forbidden. It is a type of mental purification. There are different type of atonement.

Arjuna: Krishna ! As one who observes Karma Yoga, should I abandon obligatory and occasional rites (*nitya, naimitthika karmas*) ?

Krishna : For one who does not observe *nithya* and *naimithika* Karmas, the three *purushârtha* of *dharma*, *artha* and *kâma* wont be realized in this world. If this were to be so, how can they even hope for the ultimate *purushârtha* of liberation (*moksham*) ?

Arjuna: Gopâla (Krishna) ! You have instructed that Karma Yoga is of the form of Jnâna (*Jnânakâram*). Among these, is the Karma Bhâgam more important than Jnana Bhâgam ?

Krishna : Among the two forms (*âkâram*) of Karma Yoga, the Jnâna Bhâgam is superior to the Karma Bhâgam.

Arjuna: Oh Rukmani Vallabha (Krishna)! I have clearly understood Your teachings (*upadeshams*).

Krishna : Arjuna ! It is not enough that you understood these subtle aspects now. Time will come before the instructions (*anushtânâ*) bears fruit, when you will experience doubts. At that time, approach great souls, serve them well and ask them indirectly questions about what confuses you . Out of their compassion for you they will give the most straight forward answers to help you progress.

Arjuna : Oh brother of Balarâma (Krishna) ! What is the indication that one has reached that stage of mastery over the instructions Karma Yoga ?

Krishna : When the practionner is not deluded, develops a sense of seeing the nature of âtman (*âthma svarupam*) in all created beings and recognizes Me as their *antharyami*, then the mastery has been attained.

There is nothing that is purer in this world than *âthma Jnânâ*. Those who observe this *jnânakâra Karma Yoga* as instructed by Me will attain *siddhi*. Hence, cut asunder all your doubts with the sword of *âthma jnânâ* and practise Karma Jnâna to gain freedom from *samsaric* afflictions and Liberation (*moksham*).

6) Essence of the fifth chapter

*Kandu yelitham karumam uyir kaatta kaduhuthalum
mandi athan padiyil manam kollum varisaihalum
kandu ariya uyirai-kanalurra ninaivuhalum
vann thuvaresan iyambinan Vaasavan mainthanukke*
--Pâsuram: 6

The Lord of rich Dwâraka (Sri Krishna) taught Arjuna, the son of Indra, how Karma Yoga is rooted in the sacred texts (*Shâstra*) and is easy to practice. Our Lord instructed Arjuna further about (1) the ways in which Karma Yoga hastens to enable the visualization of the Self, (2) the aspects of this Yoga that a devotee should master and (3) the method to earn mature knowledge that leads to the visualization of the Self, whose nature (*svârûpa*) is otherwise not easy to see and experience.

Sri Vedânta Desika's summary in Tamil is based on the Sanskrit poem (*Shloka*) of Swamy Âlavandâr in *Gîthârtha Sangraham* about the Fifth Chapter.

*Karma yogasya soukaryam shaigryam kascchana tadhvidha:
Brahma-Jnâna prâkârasccha panchamâdhyaya uchyathe*
- *Shloka* 9

In the fourth chapter, the instructions (*upadesham*) were about the Karma Yoga being in the form of Jnâna Yoga (Karma Yoga's *Jnânakâram*). The form (*svârûpa*) of Karma Yoga, the different aspects of Karma Yoga and the importance of the Jnâna Yoga portion of the Karma Yoga were covered.

In the fifth chapter, it is stressed that Karma Yoga can help to realize visualization of the Self faster than Jnâna Yoga. The differences in the features (*anga bheda*) of Karma Yoga and that of Jnâna embodied in Karma Yoga are elaborated further.

The key words chosen by Swamy Âlavandâr to highlight the uniqueness of Karma Yoga here are: the ease of practice (*soukaryam*) and the quickness in yielding results (*saigryam*). Swamy Alavandâr instructs us further on the differences in the individual aspects (*anga bheda*) of Karma Yoga and on the knowledge (*jnânâ*) that arises from the practice of Karma Yoga that helps to visualize the Self, which has the nature of knowledge (*jnâna svârûpa*) akin to that of the Para Brahman.

Sri Râmânûja's commentary

In the third chapter (Communion through action) of *Bhagavath Gîtha*, it was revealed that Karma Yoga is better for an aspirant (*sâdhaka*) than Jnâna Yoga since Karma Yoga includes within itself the knowledge of the Self. In the fourth chapter (Renunciation of Action in Knowledge), the Lord's instruction was about (1) the Jnâna Yoga content of Karma Yoga, (2) the essential kinds of Karma Yoga and (3) the importance of Jnâna Yoga enmeshed in Karma Yoga. After laying the groundwork on the importance of Karma Yoga in the two previous chapters, Lord Parthasarathy (Sri Krishna) states in the fifth Chapter that Karma Yoga takes one faster to the desired goal (attaining the Self) than Jnâna Yoga. He gives additional instructions on the ways to meditate on the Self as non-agent, which is embedded in Karma Yoga. Finally, He describes the knowledge (Jnânâ) that is rooted in Karma Yoga.

Important poems (*shloka*) of the fifth Chapter:

There are 29 Poems (*shloka*) in this chapter. The second poem (*shloka*) defines the features of an eternal renounced (*nithya sanayâsi*): He who neither hates nor covets and who is beyond the opposing pairs (*dvandvam*) is an "ever-renouncer". This *nithya sanyâsi* marches easily towards Liberation (*Moksha*).

In the seventh poem (*shloka*), Lord Krishna states that one who has conquered his mind and senses and has become the self of all beings, is untouched by the fruits of actions (*karma phalam*) even while he is engaged in performing actions (*karmas*).

Such a renounced person (*nithya sanyâsi*) sees, hears, touches, smells, eats, moves, sleeps, breathes and yet he acknowledges that " I do not at all do anything ". . . *Bhagavad Gîtha* V.8.

He performs his actions (*karmas*) without attachment and transposes all actions to *Prakruthi* like a water drop on lotus leaf (not wetted by water) and is free from identification with the body - *Bhagavad Gîtha* V.10.

A Karma yogi discarding the fruits of action attains enduring peace. . . (*Bhagavad Gîtha* V.12).

Shifting of agency (doership) to *Prakruthi* (out of which the body came to be) is next covered by the Lord. The Karma yogi as embodied self renounces all actions (*karmas*) to the city of nine gates (nine openings: 2 openings of the eyes, 2 of the ears, 2 of the nostrils, 1 of the mouth, 1 of the genital organ and 1 of anus) i.e., the body. He becomes self-controlled and gains the understanding that all actions result from " the conjunction of the Self with the body, which is rooted in previous Karmas " and their subliminal impressions (*vâsana*) and is not driven by its (the self) nature (*svarupa*)"- *Bhagavad Gîtha* V.13.

The Self (*Jîvan*) is embodied and exists in conjunction with *prakruthi*. The pristine Self (*Jîvan*) does not create agency (*karthruthvam*), nor actions, nor the affiliation with the fruits (*phalam*) of those actions. Karma yogi obtains discriminative knowledge about this principle (*tatthvam*) and concludes that the agency is brought about by the subliminal impressions (*vâsana*) originating from *Prakruthi* generated from the flow (*Pravâha*) of past actions (*purva Karma*) linked to beginningless time. (*Bhagavad Gîtha* V.14)

Shloka 18:

*Vidya vinaya sampanne brahmane gavi hasthini
suni chaiva svapake cha pandithah samadarshinaha.*

The accomplished Karma yogis look with equanimity on all defined by dissimilar embodiments. They see the Self in them all, be they a scholar blessed with learning (*vidya*) and humility (*vinayam*) or a mere Brahmin or a cow or an elephant or a dog or a dog-eater. To such a yogi, all of the above with different bodies due to the relation with the created world (*prakruthi sambhandham*) have one thing in common: Same form of knowledge (*Jnâna*) in their nature (*svarupa*) as the Self. All these Selves, though look different due to their external bodies, possess the same form of knowledge at the level of the Self.

In Poem (*shloka*) 20, Lord Krishna teaches the way of life practiced by Karma yogi. Knowing Brahman and abiding in Brahman, such a Yogi will not rejoice or grieve as he experiences pleasant and unpleasant things, since such experiences are transitory and owe their origin to

Prakruthi. He dwells in Brahman and he enjoys undiminishing bliss. These transitory pleasures and pains have a beginning and an end (*âdhyanthavantha*:). The wise do not get elated or grieve over them - *Bhagavad Gîtha* V.20 to 22.

The accomplished Karma yogi freed from the influence of the pairs of polar opposites (*dvandvams*) have minds under full control and devote their time to the well being of all embodied souls (*chethana*). They are freed from all blemishes and attain the bliss of Brahman. For such yogis, the Bliss and Beatitude of Brahman is near. Such a yogi is indeed liberated forever (*Bhagavad Gîtha* V.25, 26 and 28).

In the final Poem (*shloka*) of this Chapter (*Adhyâyam*), Lord Krishna says: Such a yogi knows me as His Supreme Master and the Lord of all the worlds and as the enjoyer of all sacrifices (*yajna*) as well as the friend of every being. The Lord declares :Knowing Me this way, this type of yogi attains tranquility.

Key points from Swamy Vedanta Desika's *Tâthparya Chandrika* (5th Chapter)

(1) The end result (*phalan*) of both Karma and Jnâna Yoga are the same. Of the two, Karma Yoga is easy to practice. Karma Yoga gives the results (*phalan*) rapidly. Only those whose minds are focused unwaveringly on the Self are qualified to practice Jnâna Yoga.

(2) Both Karma and Jnâna Yoga are the different routes to arrive at the soul (*Âthma*). Karma Yoga is a short national highway. Jnâna Yoga is rough road. It has many bandits, who populate it and interfere with progress made by the practionner (*sâdhaka*). It is longer than Karma Yoga.

(3) The multitude of souls (*Âthma*) in different created beings are similar but not the same. The forms (*svarupa*) of these souls (*Âthma*) are not different in the various embodiments. The only difference is in the bodies that they are housed in and their past impression (*vâsana*) resulting from previous Karmas.

(4) The same Karma will feed *samsâra*, when one performs it with desire for fruits (*phalam*). When done without seeking the fruits of actions, the same Karma will grant one *Moksha*.

(5) *Sharîra* has nine openings (7 above neck and two below neck): "*Nava Dvâre Pure* " (mentioned) in the 13th Shloka. *Sharîra* is also called *Brahmapuram* since it is the place of residence of the Lord as *Antharyami*. *Kathopanishad* describes the body (*sharîra*) as the one with 11 openings. That view includes the navel and *Brahma Randhra*. Since the body is a city with nine entrances and an equal number of exits, it is *sâyavayam* (with parts). The *Âthma* on the other hand has no parts or openings (*niravayavam*). *Sharîra* is big and the *Âthma* is atomic in size.

(6) *Pandithah samadarsina*: Even if there are differences in size, shape, color and other features of the embodied souls (*chethana*), the souls (*âthma*) inside their bodies are similar.

(7) The differences arising from physical features, *guna* and *karmas* are from the impressions of the previous lives (*poorva janma vâsana*). These differences are not natural (*svâbhâvika*).

(8) The pure soul (*âthma vasthu*) untainted by association with *Prakruthi* is like Brahman and that is why those who experience the nearness of the soul to God (*âthma sâmya*) are understood as those who see Brahman.

(9)The true Karma yogi will not acquire the 5 kinds of blemishes (Dosha) associated with human enjoyments (*manushya bhoga*) :

1. *Ârjana Dosha*: the difficulties in earning wealth,
2. *Rakshana Dosha*: The effort in protecting the acquired wealth,
3. *Kshaya Dosha*: The impermanency and the transcient nature of the accumulated wealth,
4. *Bhoga Dosha*: As one enjoys the pleasure of acquired wealth (*bhoga*), the desire for enjoying more develops and when one does not get them, one engages in acts that lead one to lower births,
5. *Himsa Dosha*: Violence to others, in one way or the other, (*para himsa*) is part of seeking these above pleasure (*bhoga*).

7) Essence of the sixth Chapter

*Yoga murcchiyum yogil sama nilai naalvahayum
Yogin upâyamum yogu tanāl varum peruhalum
Yogu tanil tann thiramudai yogu tann mukkiyamum
Naahanai yogi navinranan mudi veeranukke.
- Vedānta Desika's Gîtârtha Sangraham 7*

Meaning: The Lord, who is engaged in his Divine Sleep (*Yoga Nidra*) on Primal Serpent (*Ādishesha*) instructed Arjuna wearing the splendid crown on (1) the methods of performing Yoga to visualize Jîvâthma, (2) the four kinds of Yoga that leads to equality of vision (*sama darsanam*), (3) Yoga as a means for the aim of life of a human being or *purushârtha* (*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksha*), (4) the fruits (phala) resulting from practising Yoga and (5) the importance of Bhakti Yoga, which is far superior to the four kinds of Yoga to develop the knowledge of equality of vision in all (*sama darsana rupa jñāna*).

Note: The four *purushârthas* are: *dharma* (eternal laws), *artha* (wealth as one of the objects of human pursuit), *kāma* (desire for material wealth) and *moksha* (the final liberation of soul).

Swamy Âlavanthâr's Summary of the 6th Chapter

*Yogabhyāsa-vidhir-yogee chathurthā Yoga-sādanam
Yoga-siddhi : svayogasya pāramyam shashta uchyaathe.
- Swamy Âlavanthâr's Gîtârtha Sangraham 10. Âlavanthâr is another name for Yāmunāchārya.*

Meaning: The prescribed ways of practising Karma Yoga and Jñāna Yoga to obtain the direct visualisation of the Self (*āthāvalokana*), the four different kinds of yogis, the aids for direct visualisation of the Self such as practice and detachment, the fruits of practising such Yoga and the greatness of Yoga that is focussed on the Lord are described in the Sixth Chapter.

Some of the highlights of Rāmānuja's commentary on the 6th Chapter

In the Fifth Chapter Lord Krishna taught to Arjuna the means of Karma Yoga with all its ancillaries.

In the Sixth Chapter named Dhyāna Yoga, Sri Krishna teaches the requirements for the practice of Yoga for the vision of the Self through Karma Yoga and Jñāna Yoga. He emphasises the involvement of the principles of Jñāna Yoga in those of Karma Yoga which leads to the visualisation of the Self.

Bhagavad Gīta VI.29

*Sarvabhuthastamāthmānam sarvabhuthāni chāthmani
Īkshathe yogayukthāthma sarvathra samadarsana:*

Meaning: He whose mind is fixed in Yoga sees equality everywhere ; he sees him self as abiding in all beings and all beings in his self.

Swamy Ādidevānanda's translation of Rāmānuja's commentary on the above : "On account of the similarity between one self and other selves when they are separated from *Prakruthi* (i.e the body), all selves are by themselves only of the nature of knowledge. Inequalities pertain only to *Prakruthi* or the bodies they are embodied in. One whose mind is fixed in Yoga has the experience of the sameness of the nature of all the selves as centres of intelligence, the perceived differences being caused only by the body .

When separated from the body all are alike because of their being forms of centres of intelligence. An enlightened yogi therefore sees himself as abiding in all beings and all beings abiding in himself in the sense that he sees the similarity of the selves in himself and in every being. When one's self is visualized, all selves become visualized, because of the similarity of all selves. This is supported by the statements : "He sees sameness everywhere " (*Bhagavad Gīta*: 6.29).

The same is again referred to in, "This Yoga of equality which has been declared by you " (*Bhagavad Gīta* 6.33)"

*Yo mām pashyathi sarvathra sarvam cha mayi pasyathi
tasyāham na pranasyaāmi sa cha me na pranasyaathi
- Bhagavad Gīta 6.30*

Meaning: To him who sees Me in every self and sees every self in Me, I am not lost to him and he is not lost to Me.

Lord Krishna assures Arjuna that any one who after practising Yoga has fallen away from it will not be lost and that he will be born in the house of noble and wise yogis in his next birth. He will strive to continue from where he left off in his previous birth. Even if he had gone astray once, the accumulated merit earned in previous births (*janmas*) would propel him towards the supreme goal of Liberation (*Moksha*).

8) Essence of the seventh chapter

First Hextad

We stated earlier that *Bhagavad Gīta* is split by commentators into three hextads (*Shathakams*). The first *shatkam* covers Chapters 1 to 6; The first hextad dealt with the soul (*jīvāthma*) and the methods of visualizing it through Karma and Jñāna Yoga. It was pointed out that Karma Yoga is the grand road that is suited for all aspirants (*sādhakās*) to gain Moksha. Performance of one's Karmas without seeking the fruits there of is true Karma Yoga. The dispassion (*vairāgya*) and control of senses to pursue Karma Yoga arise from " one must have the knowledge of being the *Athman* at the core and not the body-mind. To that extent, Jñāna Yoga is involved in Karma Yoga".

Second Hextad:

The second *shatkam* covers Chapters 7 to 12. This hextad elaborates on the doctrine of devotion (Bhakti Yoga). It "deals with the Supreme Lord, who is *Śrīman Nārāyana*, the seat of all power and auspicious attributes. He alone can grant us salvation, which is a matter of His grace. None the less, one has to be worthy to be the recipients of that grace. That worthiness is

attained through the practice of Bhakti, which develops with dawn of knowledge of the Self preceded by the performance of duties (Karma Yoga)".

Vedānta Desika's summary of the 7th Chapter of *Bhagavad Gīta*

Vedānta Desika's deft summary of the 30 poems (*Shlokas*) of the 7th chapter has taken on this form in his *Gīthārtha Sangraha*

*thānn ninra unmayait-tann-tani māyai maraitthamayum
tānn anri māyaitanait-tavirppān virahu atramayum
mel ninra bhattarkal naalvaril Jñāni tann menmykalum
ten ninra sem-kazhalān telivitthanan pārthanukke.*

- Vedānta Desika's *Gīthārtha Sangraha* 8

Meaning of First line of the *Pāsuram*:

The Lord with the Sacred Feet abundant with honey (nectar) and reminding one of the beautiful red lotus, explained clearly the following principles (*tatthva*) about Him :

- He is distinctly different from the sentient and insentient entities in many ways
- He has both sentient and non-sentient as His property (*shesha*) and as enjoyable things (*Bhoga vasthu*),
- Ishvara is the cause behind them (*chethana* and *achethana* – sentient and non-sentient) ; both dissolve in Him (*laya*),
- They become His body (*Sharīra*),
- He is the abode of all auspicious qualities (*kalyāna guna*). By every measure, the Lord as Ishvara is the superior most principle (*thatthva*). There is no one or nothing that is greater than Him. His Māya serves as a curtain to conceal these auspicious attributes of the Lord from us. This Māya also known as *Prakruthi* is also a creation of Lord Nārāyana and is made up of different admixtures of the three *Guna*: *Sathva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*.. This *Prakruthi* transforms in to body and senses (*sharīra* and the *indriya*) for us, the bound souls (*chethana*).

Meaning of the second line of the *Pāsuram* :

This Māya (*Prakruthi*), which hides the glories of the Lord has to be overcome and one has to go beyond it through meditation and initiation (*upāsana* and *anushtānam*). The means for overcoming His Māya is to select the means (*upāya*) of Self-surrender (*Sharanāgathi*) at His sacred feet. There are no other means to overcome this Māya except Self-surrender (*Sharanāgathi*) at His sacred feet.

The Meaning of the Third line of the *Pāsuram* :

Those who reach the Lord and perform Self-surrender (*Sharanāgathi*) to Him are of four kinds : (1) *Artha* (2) *Arthārthi* (3) *Jijñāsu* and (4) *Jñāni*.

Arthi is the one, who has lost his wealth and wishes to have it back. One who wishes to have wealth for the first time is *Arthārthi*. *Jijñāsu* is the one who wishes to attain the untainted Form of the Self (*Āthma Svarupam*). *Jñāni* is the one, who comprehends his *Āthma Svarupam* as eternally serving the Lord as its Master. He enjoys his *Āthma Svarupam* without the blemish of *Prakruthi*. He (the *Jñāni*) does not stop there with just the enjoyment of the Self. He proceeds further to enjoy the experience of the Lord (*Bhagvath anubhavam*) without interruption and is completely absorbed in it.

3rd Line: The Supremacy of *Jñāni* among the types of four superior devotees (*Paramekānthi*)

All these four categories of devotees (*sādhaka*) devote themselves solely to Lord Nārāyaṇa. They are unlike others driven by their deluded minds to worship demi-gods like Indra and others. It is indeed rare to see in this world these four groups of devotees who worship Srīman Nārāyaṇan alone.

Among these four types of devotees (*sādhaka*), *jñāni* is the foremost in glories. The other three will stay focused on the Lord until they gain their desired results (*phalam*). They (the first three) had to focus on Him (the Lord) to gain their sought after boons. The *jñāni* on the other hand will not seek any fruits from the Lord and will always be engaged in the meditation on His Lord. Such a devotee's devotion and love for the Lord is immeasurable. Such a devotee will not bear to live even one second away from the Lord. The Lord also can not bear even a moment's separation from the *Jñāni* and has the *jñāni* as His life force (*uyir*). Being the servant of the Lord is recognized by the *jñāni* as the inherent nature (*svarupam*) of the soul (*Āthma*). The *jñāni* knows that the surrender without condition at the Lord's sacred feet can result from the progression through many fortunate births (*Punya janmas*). To come across such a *jñāni* - dearest to the Lord - for us is the rarest of the rare happening .

The meaning of the fourth line of the *Pāsuram*.

Lord Krishna with ambrosia present in His sacred lotus feet clearly instructed Arjuna on five principal doctrines :

1. The real nature (*svarupam*) of the Supreme Being, who is the object of one's worship (*āradhana*),
2. The concealment of that Supreme One by *Prakruthi*,
3. The means of Self-Surrender (*Upāyam of Sharanāgathi*) to remove that concealer,
4. The four kinds of devotees of the Lord and
5. The superiority of *Jñāni* among the set of four devotees of the Lord.

Lord Parthasarathy (another name for Sri Krishna) taught these principles to Arjuna in the Seventh Chapter of *Bhagavad Gīta*.

Swamy Ālavanthār's Summary of the Seventh Chapter

Svayātāthmyam prakruthyāsyā tirodhi: Sharanāgathi:

Bhaktha-bhedha: prabhuddhasyasraishtyam saphama uchyatehe.

- *Gītārtha Sangraham* of Yāmunachārya 11

Meaning: In the seventh chapter is taught the exact knowledge of Himself. His concealment by the *Prakruthi*, the surrender to Him as the means to overcome the *Prakruthi*, observation on various types of devotees and the superiority of the man of wisdom among the devotees.

Sri Rāmānuja's commentary on the 6th Chapter (Highlights)

Lord Krishna starts off by observing that among the thousands of men, suited to observe the directions of the scriptures (*Shāastras*), only few perhaps strive for perfection. Even among this subset of men, one alone will comprehend Me and gain success in his strivings through My grace.

Our Lord instructs Arjuna that as the Supreme One, He is the origin and the dissolver of the universe (*Bhagavad Gītha* 7. 6). The Lord reveals further that " There is nothing higher than Myself and all this is (*Prakruthi, Jīvas*) are strung on Me, as rows of gems on a thread" (*Bhagavad Gīta* 7.7). The Lord tells Arjuna that the three *Guna* have originated from Him and that He is not however in them (i.e., He does not depend on them for His existence). The three *Guna* merely are instruments for His sport. "My divine Māya made up the three *Guna* and

created by Me has divine power and it is not easy to overcome that Māya of Mine". (*Bhagavad Gīta* 7.14)

Next the Lord points out there are four kinds of men, who worship Him (the distressed, the seekers after knowledge, the wealth seekers and the men of knowledge). Our Lord identifies the *Jñāni* as the one among the four, who is dearest to Him. He states that the *Jñāni* finds refuge in Him at the end of the many births. That fortunate devotee considers that "Vāsudeva is ALL" and that such a *Jñāni* is very hard to find in the world :

*Bahunām janmanamanthe Jnanavān maam prapadyate
Vāsudeva: sarvamidhi sa mahāthmā sudurlabha:*

At the conclusion of many births the man of wisdom resorts to Me, holding that Vāsudeva is everything. This high-souled man is very hard to find.

- *Bhagavad Gīta* 7.19

Lord Krishna acknowledges that most of the people driven by their inherent nature (*vāsanās*) and lack of knowledge of the scriptures (*Shāstra*) end up in resorting to other gods such as Indra and other gods. The Lord concedes out of compassion that "Whichever devotee seeks to worship with faith whatever form, I make that very faith steadfast":

*yo yo yām yām tanum bhaktha: sraddhayārchithum icchasi
tasya tasyāchalam sraddhām thāmeva vidhadhamyaham*

Whichever devotee desires to worship with faith whatever manifestation (of Mine) – in relation to every such devotee, I make that same faith of his unshakable and firm

- *Bhagavad Gīta* 7.21

That person worshipping other gods with faith gains the object of his desire, which is granted really by Me alone (*Bhagavad Gīta* 7.22). The worshippers of demi-gods will go the world of the demi-gods but those who worship Me will come to Me. Ignorant people do not comprehend that I am the One, who is worshipped by all the rites and I have incarnated as the son of King Vāsudeva without setting aside my divine nature. These ignoramus think that I am the son of a mere human being, who is born here as Krishna due to My Karmas. As a result, they do not offer worship to Me and nor seek My protection. All their worship to other demi-gods ends at My feet. These demi-gods derive their power from a small portion of My omnipotence.

9) Essence of the eighth chapter

Vedānta Desika's brilliant summary of the 28 poems (*Shlokas*) of the Eighth Chapter has taken this form in his *Gīthārtha Sangraham Pāsuram*:

*ārātha selvamum aar uyir kānum arum payanum
perāthu tann kazhal keezh amarum peru vāzhcchikalum
sorāthu uhanthavar thumathi kolvathum seyvanavum
terā visayanukkut-thirunāranan seppinane
- Gīthārtha Samgraham of Vedānta Desika 9.*

Meaning: Lord Krishna, the direct incarnation of Sriman Nārāyana, imparted teaching

(*upadesham*) to the confused Arjuna about the doctrines to be grasped and the practices to be observed by the different qualified devotees (*adhikāris*) who desire either undiminishing wealth or the enjoyment arising from the direct visualization of the Self (*parama Purushārtha* i.e., the Supreme Goal) living forever at the Sacred Feet of the Lord in His Supreme abode (*Sri Vaikuntham*).

Prelude to the 8th Chapter

At the end of the 7th chapter, the Lord used two poems (*shlokams*, the 29th and 30th) to instruct Arjuna about the need for a clear understanding of three principles (*tatthvas*) for those who wish to get a release from *Doshas* like old age, decrepitude and death and to enjoy the bliss (*ānandam*) of direct visualization of the soul (*Kaivalyānubhavam*). These three principles to be understood were mentioned without elaboration as "*Brahma, Adhyathma and Karma*". Here *Brahma* stands for the Supreme abode of auspicious attributes namely, the Form and Characteristics of Vishnu (*Vishnu Svarupa*). *Adhyathma Kruthsnam* refers to the entire form of knowledge of the soul during this Bliss. *Akhilam Karma* refers to the entire Karmas of the Lord. The qualified devotee (*adhikāri*) here is the one who desires the bliss of direct visualization of the Soul (*Kaivalyānubhavam*). This was covered in the 29th Poem of the 7th Chapter and was for the benefit of the one seeking *Kaivalya anubhavam*.

In the 30th and the final Poem of the 7th chapter, our Lord aimed His instruction at the other three qualified devotees (*Ārtha, Artārti and Jijñāsu*), who are collectively named as the seekers of wealth. Our Lord indicated that these three devotees should know about *adhibhutham, adhidhaivam, adhiyajnam* and *anthima smruthi* (remembrance of the Lord even during the last moments on earth).

Strictly speaking there are three types of qualified devotees (*adhkāris*) instead of four :

- (1) *Kaivalyārti*, who desires pure visualization and enjoyment of the Self (*Āthmanubhavam*).
- (2) *Isvaryārti*, who desires the best of worldly joys. The one who wants to regain lost wealth (*Arthi*) and one who wishes to gain wealth for the first time are both clubbed under *Isvaryārti*.
- (3) *Mokshārti*, who desires neither *Kaivalya* nor perishable pleasure of the worldly joys but longs for *Moksha* (residence in *Sri Vaikuntam* to enjoy the bliss of eternal service to *Sriman Nārāyanan*).

Each of these three kinds of devotees need to understand different principles or *tatthvas* (*Brahmam, Adhyathma and Karma* for *Kaivalyārtis* and *adhiyajnam*).

Arjuna was confused between these wordings and the requirements that each kind of devotee should possess. In the first Poem (*shloka*) of the 8th Chapter, Arjuna pleads with the Lord to explain these concepts clearly.

There are 8 questions from Arjuna : (1) Who is that *Brahman* ? (2) What is *Adhyathma* ? (3) What is *Karma* ? (4) What are the activities of *Brahman*? (5) What is *adhibhutha* ? (6) What is *adhidhaivam* ? (7) How can one find *adhiyajnam in the body of Jīvas*? (8) During the last moments, what is Your (the Lord's) purpose, what form are You appearing and how can one recognize You then ?

Throughout the entire 8th chapter, the Lord answers clearly the above 8 questions from Arjuna.

10) Essence of Ninth Chapter

Essence of the **ninth** chapter. This chapter has 34 Shlokas.

Sri Vedanta Desika's summary of the 9th chapter

*Tann mEnmayum Tann piRappil taLarAt-tani nilayum
pannmEni naNInan paal piriya anbar aasaikaLum
punnmEni ViNNavar paal puriyAtha Tann Bhatthimayum*

nannmEni NaaraNannaranukku navinRananE

(Meaning): Lord Krishna of divinely beautiful body instructed Arjuna about His Supreme status (with no one to equal Him or excel Him), His undiminished Superiority as the Lord even in His incarnations (*Avathāras* or *Parathvam*) and His indwellership inside the bodies of all *Chethanas* (gods, humans, birds, animals and others), the loving services rendered by His devotees (*Bhagavathas*) and the Bhakthi Yoga to be practiced towards Him.

Thirukkallam Swamy's special comments on this poem (*Pāsuram*) : The Lord is the indweller (*Antharyami*) for both the sentient and non-sentient beings (*chethans* and *achethanas*). He creates every one and every thing. He protects them and ultimately dissolves them. The world functions because of Him. Lord Krishna instructed Arjuna on these glories.

Wherever the Lord incarnates and whatever forms He takes during His incarnations, His knowledge (*jnana*) and power (*shakthi*) are undiminished. There is no diminution of His supremacy (*parathvam*).

The Lord explains the devotees practicing Bhakthi Yoga towards Him with *nama sankīrthanam*, *archana*, *ārāadhanam* with intense devotional attitude (*Bhakthi bhāvam*). He instructs Arjuna that His true devotees would not desire insignificant and non-lasting fruits (*phala*) and that they would not devote their time to gods, who have perishable bodies.

Note: Reciting the divine names, offering flowers invoking the different names of God, lighting lamps and incense accompanied by Vedic Mantra, offering food and prostrating to God, partaking the food offered to God, singing the glory of God (*Nama sankīrthanam*, *archana*, *ārāadhanam*) are some of the many limbs (*anga*) of worship.

Lord Krishna explained that His devotees worship Him (*ārādhana*) and perform *sāthvika tyāga* at the end and meditate on Him with intense love.

Swamy Ālavanthār's summary of the 9th Chapter

Svamahāthmyam manushyathve parathvam cha mahathmanām

Vishesho navame yogo Bhakthirupah prakīrthithaha.

- *Gītārtha Sangraha* 13.

(Meaning): Lord Krishna described in the ninth chapter, "His own eminence, His undiminished Supremacy as the divine even when He assumes embodiments as incarnations, the excellence of great souls (*mahathma*) or devotees who seek Him alone and the discipline of Bhakthi or devotion to Him ".

In the previous chapter, the differences that characterize the four different seekers, who approach the Lord were covered. In this chapter, the nature of *upāsana* taking the form of Bhakthi is explained. The glory of those devotees practicing Bhakthi Yoga is also extolled by the Lord to establish the lofty state of one who has attained the knowledge (*Jñāni*) practicing Bhakthi Yoga.

Some key verses (*shlokas*) of the 9th Chapter of *Bhagavath Gīta*

Mayā tatamidam sarvam jagadavyaktha murthinā

mathsthāni sarvabhuthāni na chāham teshvavastitha:

- Verse 4

(Meaning) : The whole universe is pervaded by Me in an unmanifest form. I am the Master (*Sheshi*), who sustains and rules over this universe. I am their indweller, who controls their

actions. They depend on My will for their existence and acts. I do not however depend on them for My existence.

*Avajānanti mām muda mānushīm tanumāshritham
Param bhāvamajānantho mama bhuthamaheswaram.*

- Verse 11

(Meaning): Driven by their bad Karmas, fools ignore Me when I take on human forms and fail to recognize that I am the Supreme Lord of all beings and the Omniscient as well as Omnipotent Lord, who has incarnated as a mere human being.

*Mahāthmānstu Mām Pārtha daivīm prakruthimāshrithāha
Bhajantyananyamanaso jñāthvā Bhuthadimavyayam.*

- Verse 13

(Meaning): On the other hand, the great souls (*Mahathmas*) who are affiliated with My divine nature, worship Me with steady minds and recognize Me as the immutable origin (source) of all beings.

*Sathatham kīrtayantho mām yathanthasccha dhruvavrathaha
Namasyanthsccha mām bhakthyā nithyamukthā upāsathe.*

- Verse 14

(meaning): " Aspiring for eternal communion with Me, they worship Me, always singing My praise, striving with steadfast resolution and bowing down to Me in devotion ".

Through the verses (*shlokas* 16-19), the Lord reveals to Arjuna that He is the Vedic sacrifices (*Krathu* and *Yajna*), He is the offering to the manes (*svadha*), He is the oblation proper, He is the Mantra with which such oblation is offered, He is the clarified butter poured as oblation in the sacred fire, which is none other than Himself. Our Lord continues to reveal about His pervasive presence in every thing and being : " I am the Father, Mother, creator and grandfather of the universe. I am the purifier. I am the syllable Om (*Pavithram Omkara:*) and also *Rk*, *Sāman* and *Yajus*. I am the goal (*gathi*), supporter, the Lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge and the friend. I am the seat of origin and dissolution, the base of preservation and the imperishable seed (*Bījamavyayam*). I am immortality (*amrutham*) as well as death (*mruthyu*) ".
Note: *Rk*, *Sāman* and *Yajus* are the three Vedas: The Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Sāma Veda.

*Ye tvanyadevathā bhakthā yajanthe shraddhayānvithāha
Tepi māmēva kountheya yajanthyavidhipurvakam.*

- Verse 23

(Meaning) : " Even those who are devoted to other divinities with faith in their hearts, worship Me alone, Oh Arjuna, though not as sanctioned by the scriptures (*shāstra*)".

*Aham hi sarva yajñānam bhokkkthā cha prabhureva cha
na thu māmabhijānanthi tatthvenāthashchyanvanthi te.*

- Verse 24

(Meaning): " For, I am the only enjoyer and the only Lord of all sacrifices. They do not recognize Me in My true nature; hence they fail ".

Pathram pushpam phalam thoyam yo me bhakthyā prayacchathi

Tadaham bhakthyupahruthamashnāmi prayathāthmanaha.

- Verse 26

(Meaning): " Whoever offers Me with true devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or some water, I accept this offering made with devotion by him, who is pure of heart " .

Yatkaroshi yadashnāsi yajjuhoshi dadāsi yath

Yatthapasyasi kountheya tathkurushva madharpanam.

- Verse 27

(Meaning): " Whatsoever you do, whatsoever you eat, whatsoever you offer, whatsoever you give away, whatsoever austerity you practice, Oh Arjuna, do that as an offering to Me".

Samoham sarvabhutheshu na me dhveshyosti na priyaha

Ye bhajanti thu mām bhakthyā mayi te teshu chāpyaham.

- Verse 29

(Meaning) " I am the same to all creation. There is none hateful or dear to Me. But those, who worship Me with devotion abide in Me and I do abide in them " .

Manmanā bhava madhbhaktho madhyāji mām namaskuru

Maamevaishyasi yukthvaivam āthmānam mathparāyanaha.

- Verse 34

(Meaning) : " Focus your mind on Me, be My devotee, be My worshipper. Bow down to Me. Engaging your mind in this manner and regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, You will come to Me.

In this last verse (*shloka*) of the Ninth chapter of Srimad Bhagavath Gīta, Our Lord describes the true nature of Bhakthi.

11) Essence of Tenth Chapter

Today, we will study the **TENTH Chapter** of Srimath Bhagvath Gīta. This chapter has 42 Verses (*Shlokas*). This chapter is about the manifestation of the Divine glories of the Lord.

Āchārya Rāmānuja summarizes the purport of the Tenth Chapter this way : Having taught Bhakthi Yoga in the ninth chapter, Our Lord wanted to induce such Bhakthi and sustain it in Arjuna. Hence, He taught Arjuna further about His multitudes of auspicious attributes (*anantha kalayāna guna*) and that His rulership over the universe (sovereignty) is uncontested and without any match. The Lord revealed further that the Universe is ruled by His will and it serves as His body (*sharīra*) and Himself residing inside it as its indweller (*antaryami*).

For creating Bhakthi for Him in those who did not have it before and for growing the Bhakthi of those who already have it, the Lord revealed that He has limitless auspicious attributes and that the form, sustenance and transformation (*svarupa*, *sthithi* and *pravrutthi*) of all created beings are under His sole control. This is the message of the Tenth Chapter.

Sri Vedanta Desika's summary of the 10th chapter

yellaillAtha tann seelamAm innamuthakkadalum

yellaillAtha vibhUthi yelAm tanathu Aanamyum

yellayil bhatthi tanai yezhuvikkat-thiruvaruLAI

yellayil Isan iyambinan Indhiran MainthanukkE.

- 13 the Pāsuram of Gītārtha Sangraham

Meaning of the First line of the *Pāsuram* :

yellaillAtha tann seelamAm innamuthakkadalum

Our Lord is the indweller of all beings; He is totally devoid of any defects (*Dosha*). He is the abode of all auspicious attributes. He rules all from His position as the indweller. He is thus different in every way from the sentient and the insentient. Those who understand His intrinsic form and nature (*svarupa* and *svabhava*) would be freed of all obstacles to Bhakthi unto Him and will be devoted to Him with unassailable devotion (Bhakthi).

Meaning of the second line of the *Pāsuram*

yellaillAtha vibhUthi yelAm tanathu Aanamyum

Our Lord uses one trillionth of His power as the ruler of the universe to be present in a pervasive manner in all of His created objects and beings. The disposition to begin some thing or to cease from any activity arises from the determination (*sankalpa*) of Lord, the indweller. The sentient and insentient of the universe can not overcome the will of the Lord during the state of cause and effect (creation and dissolution; *kārya, kārana*), manifestation in the gross (*sthula*) or subtle (*sukshma*) or in the states of creation, protection or dissolution i.e., They can not transgress His will (*sankalpa*) in any one of the above states.

Meaning of the Third line of the *Pāsuram*

yellayil bhatthi tanai yezhuvikkat-thiruvavuLAI

Those who comprehend that the Lord is the abode of multitudes of auspicious attributes (*anantha kalayāna guna*) and that He rules the universe as its cause (*kārana*) will always have their minds united with the Lord. They can not sustain themselves even for one second without Him. They will exchange their knowledge about the auspicious attributes of the Lord with other devotees. They will stay happy in reciting or hearing about the sweet, superhuman deeds (*athimanusha līla*) of the Lord. Their devotion (Bhakthi) will grow on and on forever.

The Meaning of the fourth line of the *Pāsuram*

yellayil Isan iyambinan Indhiran MainthanukkE

The Lord of infinite auspicious attributes instructed Arjuna, the son of Indra, the secrets about Bhakthi Yoga with great compassion.

Sri Ālavanthār's summary of the 10th Chapter:

*Svakalyāna gunānanthya kruthsna svādhīnatāmathihi
Bhakthyuthpatthi vivrudhyārtha vistīrnā dasamodhithā.*

- *Gītārtha Sangraha* 14

(Meaning): This tenth chapter reveals that Lord's auspicious qualities are infinite. All of these qualities (*guna*) are under His total control. Lord's sovereignty over the entire universe created

by Him is unmatched and is ruled by Him alone through His will (*sankalpa*). The universe is His body and He is the indweller of all the sentient and insentient beings (*chethana* and *achethana*) of this universe. Those who comprehend clearly the principles (*tatthva*) revealed in this chapter will become full of Bhakthi, if they did not have Bhakthi for the Lord before; those who had Bhakthi before would experience a growth in that Bhakthi.

Some Key verses (*Shlokas*) of the 10th Chapter of Srimad Bhagavath Gīta:

The meanings are those given by Swamy Aadhidevananda.

*Yo mām ajam anādim cha vethi lokamaheswaram
Asammudaha sa marthyeshu sarva pāpaih pramuchyathe.*

- Verse 3.

"He who knows Me as unborn and without a beginning and the great Lord of the worlds -- he among the mortals is undeluded and is released from every sin".

*Aham sarvasya prabhavo matthah sarvam pravarthathe
Ithi mathvā bhajanthe mām bhudhā bhāva samanvithāha.*

- Verse 8.

"I am the origin of all; from Me proceed everything. Thinking thus, the wise worship Me with all devotion (*Bhāva*)".

*Macchithhā madhgathaprāā bhodhayanthah parasparam
Kathayanthasccha maam nithyam thushyanthi cha ramanthi cha.*

- Verse 9.

"With their minds focused on Me, with their consciousness (*prajna*) centered in me, inspiring one another and always speaking of Me, they live in contentment and bliss at all times".

*Teshām sathatha yukthānām bhajathām prīthi purvakam
dhadhāmi budhi yogam tamm yena mām upāyanthi te.*

- Verse 10

"To those, who are ceaselessly united with Me and who worship Me with immense love, I lovingly grant that mental disposition (*Buddhi Yoga*) by which they come to Me".

*Yacchāpi sarva bhuthānam bījam tadahamarjuna
Na tadasthi vinā yastyānmayā bhutham charācharam.*

- Verse 39

"I am also that which is the seed of all beings. Oh Arjuna ! Nothing that moves or does not move, exists without Me".

In the 40th Verse (*shloka*), Lord says that "There is no limit to My divine manifestations:
Nānthosti mama divyānām vibhūhīnām parantapa.

*Yadyadvibhuthimatsathvam srīmadhurjithameva vā
Tatta devāvagaccha thvam mama tejomsha sambhavam.*

- Verse 41

" Whatever being is possessed of power, or of splendor or of energy, know that as coming from a fragment of My power " .

In the 42nd and concluding Verse (*shloka*) of the Tenth chapter, Lord instructs Arjuna that "He stands sustaining the whole universe with a fragment of His power" (*Vishtabhyāham idam krutnam yekāmsena stitho jagath*).

12) Essence of Eleventh Chapter

Today , we will study the ELEVENTH Chapter of Srimath Bhagvath Gīta. This chapter has 55 *Shlokas*. This chapter is about the vision of the Cosmic Form (*Vishva Rupa*) of the Lord.

Introduction

Āchārya Rāmānuja says : Having heard from the Lord of His divine nature unique to Him, and of the entire universe as having its proper form, existence and activities (*svarupa*, *sthithi* and *pravrutthi*) dependent on Him, and being convinced of the truth of this doctrine, Arjuna (was) still desirous of perceiving the Lord in this way and conveyed his longing to the Lord. By the grace of the Lord, Arjuna was able to see Him in His cosmic form.

The Lord gave Arjuna the divine vision (*Dhivya Chakshus*) to see Him in His *Vishva Rupam*. Arjuna saw the Lord in His infinite form with countless limbs with no end, middle or beginning . Arjuna became panic stricken at the sight of the Lord devouring all the worlds on every side and saw all the sons of Dhritarāshra entering the fearful mouth of the Lord and being ground up into powder. Arjuna observed that these heroes rush in to the Lord's mouth like moths rushing quickly into a raging fire to meet their death. The terrified Arjuna asks the Lord about the purpose of taking such a fierce form.

The Lord replied: " O Arjuna, the great Bowman! I am the world-destroying time. Manifesting fully, I have begun to destroy the worlds here. Even without you, none of these warriors arrayed in the hostile ranks shall survive...Therefore arise, win glory . Conquering your foes, enjoy a prosperous kingdom. By Me, they (Your foes) have been slain already . You be merely an instrument " .

The overwhelmed Arjuna fell at the feet of the Lord and begged to be forgiven for all the trespasses from treating the Lord as his friend and equal. He eulogized the Lord and recognized Him as the Lord of all Gods, the Ancient One (*ādidevan*) and Primal *Pursusha*.

Beholding the Lord's cosmic form, the overwhelmed Arjuna saluted the Lord a thousands of times : Salutations, salutations to You a thousand times, and yet again and again salutations (*Namo namaste asthu sahsarakruthvahaha, punasccha bhuyo api namo namaste- Bhagavad Gītha XI.39*). Being ignorant of Your majesty and valour and out of friendship and ignorance I have called You "Oh Krishna, Oh Yādāva, Oh Friend ". Oh *Aprameya*! Please forgive all disrespect shown to You by me out of my blinding ignorance about Your majesty, valour and *Vaibhava* as the Lord of all Gods. Oh Lord of unmatched greatness ! Thou art the Father of the world. You are the Universal Teacher (*Jagadguru*) worthy of adoration. There is no one equal or superior to You in all the three worlds.

Note: *Aprameya*, immeasurable, unfathomable is a way of calling the Supreme, here Lord Krishna.

Vaibhava, Greatness, glory, grandeur etc.

After seeking the Lord's pardon for earlier trespasses, Arjuna begged the Lord now to resume His non-fierce form (*soumya rupam*) with which he was more familiar and comfortable. This is the form with four hands and with a dazzling crown, mace and discus. Lord obliged and took on His human form as the charioteer of Arjuna.

Sri Ālavanthār's summary of the 11th chapter

*Yekādashe svayātāthmya sākshāthkāra avalokanam
Dhattham uktham vidhiprāpthyoha bhakthyekpaayathā tatā.*

- *Gītārtha Sangraha* 15

(Meaning): In the eleventh chapter, Lord blessed Arjuna with the divine vision to see His cosmic form and stated that Bhakthi is the only means (*upāyam*) to see, know and attain Him.

Sri Vedanta Desika's summary of the 11th Chapter

*yellAm Tanakku uruvAi ilangum vahai Taan- - uraitthu
sollAI aRinthathu sOrAmal kaNDida vENDum yenRa
villALanukku anRu meyk-kaNN kodutthu ithu vERumuNDO
nallArkaL kANpar yenRu navinRAn nangaL NaayakanE*

- *Pāsuram* of Sri Desika's *Gītārtha Sangraham* 12

Meaning of the First line of the *Pāsuram* :

" *YellAm Tanakku uruvAi ilangum vahai Taan- - uraitthu* "

Arjuna who had received the teaching (*upadesham*) until now through the ten chapters made this request to the Lord : I am now free of doubt about Your status as Paramāthma, Your Lordship over the sentient and the insentient (*chethana* and *achethana*), Your indwellership in them all, You are the creator, protector and dissolver of all creation originating from You, You are the abode of infinite auspicious attributes and your will (*sankalpa*) is the prime mover of all activities in this world and your being is the foundation of this universe. I am convinced of these eternal truths through Your teachings (*upadesha*).

Meaning of the second line of the *Pāsuram*

" *sollAI aRinthathu sOrAmaRk-kaNDida vENDum yenRa VillAlanukku* "

Oh Lord ! Having heard about Your glories through Your own mouth, I long to see the divine body of Yours, which is the object of such divine attributes. That cosmic form of Yours with all its qualities and glories (*guna*, *vibhuthi*) and forms is an object of my deep desire for being seen.

Meaning of the Third line of the *Pāsuram*

" *anRu meyk-kaNN kodutthu vERumuNDO* "

Our Lord said that Arjuna could not see His cosmic form with his physical eyes and blessed him

with the divine vision to see that unique form with thousands and thousands of limbs hosting many worlds and engaged in destroying Arjuna's enemies in the battle field.

That cosmic form was fierce and blindingly lustrous. It was adorned with many jewels and weapons (*ābharanas*) and looked like the thousands of Suns that have arisen at the same time. Arjuna was frightened by that fierce form of the Lord and asked for pardon for the trespasses made earlier in his relationship with the Lord as His friend. Arjuna begged the Lord to take His benevolent form as Krishna of enchanting form. The Lord pointed out that the vision (*darshanam*) of His cosmic form is much desired by the *Deva* and yet is not attainable by them. He praised Arjuna for having had the good fortune to witness His cosmic form.

The Lord pointed out further that one without Bhakthi will not be able to see Him even if he recites Vedas, performs *tapas*, *danam*, *homam* and *yajnam*. Only through single minded Bhakthi in Him and without seeking any other fruits (*phala*), a true Bhakthan alone can see and enjoy Him said the Lord to Arjuna.

The Meaning of the fourth line of the Pāsuram

"nallOrkaL kaaNbar yenRu navinRAn nagaL NaayakanE "

The Lord of ours instructed Arjuna about those devotees (*Bhāgavatha*) who could succeed in seeing Him and enjoying Him :

1. They perform all the activities prescribed to them such as recitation of Veda, worship (*Vedādhyaiana* as *Āradhana*) for the Lord,
2. They recognize the Lord as the ultimate fruits of all actions,
- (3) They can not sustain themselves except through performing service (*daiva kaimkarya*) to Him
4. They have no attachment to any thing because of their overabundant love (Bhakthi) for the Lord,
5. They ignore the non-lasting and trivial pleasures of life (*samsāra*) and turn their attention to the ultimate pleasure of the Lord (*parama sukha*),
6. They attribute their sufferings to the sins accumulated by them
7. They recognize that all the created beings are under Lord's control and they have no enmity towards any one of Lord's creation, and
8. They totally cut asunder ignorance as well as false or untrue knowledge (*viparitha jñāna*) to enjoy the Lord fully.

In the Eleventh Chapter, Lord Krishna explains these principles to Arjuna.

Some key Verses (*Shlokas*) of the 10th Chapter of Bhagavath Gīta

*Thvamaksharam paramam vedithavyam
Thvamasya visvasya param nidhānam
Thvamavyayah shāsvatha dharma gopthā
Sanāthanasthvam purusho matho me.*

Oh Lord ! Thou art the imperishable, Supreme One to be realized. Thou art the supreme foundation of this universe. Thou art the unchangeable, protector of the eternal law. Thou art understood by me as the everlasting Supreme Being !

*Sudarsamidam rupam dhrushtvānasi yanmama
Deva apyasya rupasya nithyam darsana kānkshinaha.*

*Nāham vedairna tapasā na dānena na chejyayā
Shakya yevamvidho dhrashtum dhrushtavānasi mām yathā.*

*Bhakthyā thvananyayā shakya ahamevam vidho Arjuna
Jñātum dhashtum cha tatthvena praveshtum cha Paramtapa*

- 52, 53, 54.

(Meaning): It is very difficult to witness this form of Mine, which You have just seen. Even the gods (*Deva*) long forever to behold this cosmic form of Mine. This form beheld by you cannot be seen by mastery over Vedas, victory over austerities or by giving gifts galore or by the performance of *Yagam*. It can only be seen, known and entered into by single-minded devotion towards Me.

13) Essence of Twelfth Chapter

Today , we will study the **TWELFTH** Chapter of Srimath Bhagavath Gîta. This chapter has 20 Shlokams. This chapter is about Communion through loving devotion.

Introduction to the 12th chapter

The Lord (*Bhagavān*) explains here the following aspects of the Bhakthi Yoga or *Bhagavath Upāsana*; the latter is superior to the meditation on the Self (*Jīvāthma upāsana*). The superiority of the *Bhagavath Upāsana* over *Āthma Upāsana* is due to the superiority of the object of meditation in the former which is God over the later which will be Self.

Āchārya Rāmānuja quotes the 47th Verse (*Shloka*) of the sixth chapter of Bhagavath Gîta in this context : "He who, with faith, worships Me, whose inmost self is fixed in Me, I consider him as the most integrated among all Yogis ". The path of meditation on the Self is recommended for one, who does not have the wherewithal to follow *Bhagavath Upāsana*.

The Lord explains the following four points related to Bhakthi Yoga in the twelfth chapter:

1. Meditation on the Lord through Bhakthi Yoga,
2. Speediness of Bhakthi Yoga in bearing fruits over *Jīvāthma Upāsana* and hence the superiority of Bhakthi Yoga or *Bhagavath Upāsana*,
3. The "felicity " of the performance of *Bhagavath Upāsana*
4. The means for meditation (*Upāsana*) on the Lord.

Sri Ālavanthār's summary of the 12th chapter:

*Bhaktheh shraishityam upāyokthihi ashakthāyāthmanishtathā
Tathprakārāsthvathiprīthihi bhakthe dhvādasa uchyaathe.*

- *Gītārtha Sangraham* of Sri Ālavathār 16

(Expanded meaning): The superiority of Bhakthi Yoga is taught to Arjuna in the Twelfth chapter. Arjuna is advised that Meditation on God (*Bhagavath Upāsana*) is superior (*shraishyam*) to Meditation on the Self (*jīvāthama upāsanam*). Meditation on God is identified as the one which will yield Liberation (*moksha*) quicker than the meditation on the Self. Those who are not qualified for the former should elect for the later which will pave the way for the Meditation on God (*Bhagavath Upāsana*). There are many steps in Meditation on God (Bhakthi Yoga): Control of mind, total focus on experiencing the attributes of the Lord, construction of temples, and other divine services (*kiamkarya*) to the Lord with love of God alone in mind and the scrupulous observance of the daily obligatory duties (*nithya karma*). The accessory to Bhakthi Yoga is Karma Yoga. From Verses (*Shloka*) 13 to 19 of this Twelfth chapter, Lord Krishna describes the characteristics of a devotee conducive to the observance of Karma Yoga.

Swamy Desikan's summary of the 12th Chapter

*Tann kazhalil patthi thAzhathathum athan kAraNamAm
 innguNa chinthayum Eethu aRiyAthArkku avvadimaikaLum
 tann karumankaL aRiyAthavarkku ilahu nilayum
 tann kazhal anbarckku nallavan sARRinan Paartthanukke*

- Sri Vedanta Desika's *Gītārtha Sangraha* 13

Meaning of the First and part of the second lines of the *Pāsuram* :

"*Tann kazhalil patthi thAzhathathum athan kAraNamAm*"

One who observes occupational duties (*nithya Karmas*), performs *Yaga, Homa, Tapas* and *Dānam* and offers the fruits of those Karmas to the Lord in the spirit of *Sāthvika Thyāga* will be assisted by the Lord to overcome all obstacles to cross the ocean of life (*Samsāra*) and the Lord will grant him Liberation (*Moksha*). In contrast to the above Meditation on God (*Bhagavath upāsana*) with the different parts (*anga*) of Karma Yoga, the route of Meditation on Self (*āthma upāsana*) will delay one's journey to Liberation since it is not easy to stop the activities of the senses to perform meditation on the Self.

The one meditates (*upāsaka*) has been used to consider his body as the soul and that leads to additional confusion. Although it is difficult at the beginning to have whole hearted focus on the Lord for one who has been ruled by his senses, the repeated meditation on Lord's multitudes of auspicious qualities will pave the way for success in the Meditation on God.

Meaning of the rest of the second line of the *Pāsuram*

"*inguNa chinthayum Eethu aRiyAthArkku avvadimaikaLum*"

It is not easy to deflect the mind to engage in the Meditation on God (Bhagavd dhyāna) since the mind for a very long time has been lured by external pleasures of a non-lasting kind. The power of the old impressions (*vāsana*) can however be controlled in favour of Meditation on God by engaging in matters that please the Lord: Building of His temples, creating flower gardens for Him, lighting lamps in His temples or shrines, conducting worship, circumbulating, singing His glories and prostrating to Him. Since these Karmas are sacred, constant engagement in them will lead to single pointed devotion to the Lord and access to Him.

Meaning of the Third line of the *Pāsuram*

"tann karumankaL aRiyAthavarkku ilahu nilayum"

Pure renunciation (*Sāthvika Thyāga*) including the offering of results of actions to the Lord will destroy sins arising from the sense of I and mine (*ahankāra – mamakāra*). The meditation of the Self will follow; ignorance (*avidya*) will get banished and the knowledge of *Seshathva* will get established. The comprehension of the blissful nature of the Soul on par with the Lord's Bliss (*ānanda*) will be realized and Bhakthi Yoga will be realized without much effort .

Note: *Seshathva* means the acme of servitude. According to Sri Rāmānuja, *seshathva* isa servant who always wants to add glory to his Master.

The Meaning of the fourth line of the *Pāsuram*

"tann kazhal anbarcku nallavan sARRinan PaartthanukkE"

Our Lord indicates that those who practise Bhakthi Yoga are very dear to Him. This truth was taught by the Lord to Arjuna in the 12th chapter.

Some key Verses (*Shlokas*) of the Twelfth Chapter of Bhagavath Gīta:

*Mayyāvesgya mano ye mām nithyayukth upāsathe
Shraddhayā parayopetāste me yukthatamā mathāha.*

- 2

(Meaning): " Those who, ever integrated with Me and possessed of supreme faith , worship Me, focusing their minds on Me -- these are considered by Me the highest among the Yogins " .

*Ye tu sarvāni karmāni mayi sanyasya mathparāha
Ananyenaiva yogena mām dhyāyantha upāsathe.*

- 6.

*Teshām aham samuddharthā mruthyusamsaāra sāgarāth
Bhavāmi na chirāth pārtha mayyāvesitha chetasām.*

- 7

(Meaning of both the Verses): "For, those who dedicate all actions to Me, hold Me as their supreme goal, intent on Me, and worship Me meditating on Me with exclusive devotion. Of those whose minds are thus focused on Me, I become soon their Saviour from the ocean of mortal life" .

In the Verses 13 to 19, the Lord lists the attributes of those who are dear to Him as practionners of Karma Yoga as an limb for Bhakthi Yoga. The sixteenth Verse provides an example of such a devotee dear to the Lord:

*Anapekshah shuchirdaksha udāsīno gathvyathaha
Sarvārambha parithyāgi yo madhbhakthassa me priyaha.*

- 16

(Meaning): "He who is free from desires, who is pure, expert, indifferent and free from agony, who has renounced every undertaking - he is dear to Me."

*Tulyanindâsthuthirmounī samtushto yena kenachith
Anikethah sthiramathihi bhathimān me priyo naraha.*
-- -- 19th Shloka

(Meaning): " He who regards alike both blame and praise, who is silent and content with any lot, who has no home, who is firm of mind, and who is devoted to Me - dear to Me is such a man."

14) Essence of the thirteenth chapter

We shall now move on to the study of the 13th Chapter of Srimath Bhagvath Gîta. This chapter has 34 poems (*shloka*). This chapter is about differentiation of the knower (*kshetrajñan*) from the known (*kshetra*).

Introduction to the Thirteenth Chapter:

Âchârya Râmânûja's commentary as translated by Swamy Adhidevanandha is as follows :

In the first group of six chapters, the comprehension of the real nature of the individual Self as forming the ancillary to the worship of Bhagavân Vâsudeva, the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme object of attainment, has been taught. It is also taught therein that it can be accomplished by two worthy paths, namely Jñâna and Karma Yoga. Next, in the middle group of six chapters, intense and one pointed devotion to Bhakthi Yoga, preceded by the true knowledge of the Lord (*Ishwara*), the supreme goal, and His glory, has been propounded. It was also taught in a secondary sense that Bhakthi Yoga constitutes the means for those who wish for great sovereignty (*aisvarya*) and also for those who aspire after the state of isolation of the Self (*Kaivalya*).

In the next or third (final) group of six chapters, the topics propounded in the first two groups of six each are examined. These are: The attributes of the material body and of the Self, the universe as the combination of these, the Ruler, His true nature, the real nature of Karma, Jñâna and Bhakthi and the ways of practising these.

Now in the 13th Chapter, the following topics are discussed:

- (1) The nature of the body and the Self ;
- (2) Examination of the real nature of the body ;
- (3) The means for the attainment of the disembodied self ;
- (4) The examination of the real nature of the Self in the disembodied state;
- (5) The cause of association of such a Self with matter and
- (6) The mode of discriminating between the body (*Sharîra*) and the Self (*Jîvâthma*).

Swamy Âlavanthâr's summary of the 13th Chapter

*Deha-svarupam âthmapthi hethu: âthmavisodanam
Bhandhu hethur-vivekasccha thryodhasa udheeryathe*
- *Gîtârtha Sangraham* of Swamy Alavanthâr

"In the 13th chapter, the nature of the body, means for the realization of the Self, investigation of the nature of the Self, the cause of bondage, and the discrimination between the Self and the body are dealt with".

There are five key words chosen by Swamy Âlavanthâr to summarize the themes covered by Gîtâchâryan (Sri Krishna) in the above *Shloka* : 1) *Deha svarupam* (2) *Âthmapthi hethu* (3) *Âthma, visodanam* (4) *Bhandha hethu* and (5) *Vivekam*.

Let us look at each of them with the help of Vaikunta Vâsi, Gîta Pravachana Jyothi Thirukkallam Swamy (a spiritual and religious master).

1. *Deha Sambhandham*: The body that the sentient beings (*chethanas*) have is an amalgam (admixture) of many matters (*vasthu*) like *Pancha bhuta*, *ahamkâra*, *mahath* and *prakruthi* as the object (*dravya*); the eleven *indriya* (five sense perceptions, 5 organs of action and the mind); the matters (*vasthu*) like form (*rupam*), taste (*rasam*), smell (*gandham*), touch (*sparsham*) and sound (*sabdham*); the changes experienced by the embodied soul (*jîva*) as a result of its relation (*sambhandham*) with the Self of desire, hatred, pleasure (*sukha*) and pain (*dukkha*). The feelings (*aubhavam*) of pleasure (*sukha*), pain (*dukkha*), dispassion (*vairâgya*), hate are changes (*vikâras*) experienced by the Self (*jîvâthma*) based on its previous virtuous and non virtuous actions (*pâpa* and *punya karma*). The Supreme Soul (*paramâthma*) has given the body (*sharîra*) to experience the fruits of the above two kinds of karmas.

These concepts are covered by Swamy Alavanthâr through the use of the word *deha svarupam*.

2. *Âthmapthi hethu* : The *Gunas* essential for the comprehension of the soul (*âthma*) are lack of pride and ostentation, devotion to teacher (*âchârya Bhakthi*) and cultivation of other spiritual qualities (*âthma guna*). This concept is referred to by the choice of the word *Âthmapthi hethu*.

3. *Âthma visodanam* : This refers to the fact that the soul (*âthma*) is different from the body. *Âthma* is eternal. It (*âthma*) is the bonded servant (*seshan*) of the Lord. It (*âthma*) can experience everything without the mediation of the sensory and organs of action (*karma indriya*). This is *âthma visodanam* covered in this chapter.

4. *Bhandha hethu* : The attachment of material and non-lasting pleasures arise from the bondage arising from the operation of the three *gunas* (*Sathva*, *Rajas* and *Thamas*) causing *sukha* and *dukkha* in the world of birth and death cycle (*samsâra*). The operation of the three *gunas* is the causative factor for bondage (*bhandha*) in bound souls (*Bhaddha Jîvas*).

5. *Vivekam* : The sentient and the insentient are products of the non-sentient (*achethana*) *prakruthi*. *Jîva*'s incorporation (*samsarga*) into various bodies (*sharîra* or manifestations of *prakruthi*) causes their being. The Self (*jîva*) inside all the bodies (*sharîras*) is of the same kind. The differences are in the body assumed. Even though the different bodies perish, the Self does not ever perish. The Self is eternal. One who understands these principles (*tathva*) is known as a *Viveki*.

The emphasis in the thirteenth chapter is therefore on the principles of body, soul and the Supreme (*tathva thrayam*). This chapter dwells on the body (*sharîra* or *kshetra*) arising from relation with the Self (*jîva*), the resident Lord of the *Sharîra*. *Jîva* is therefore the knower of the *kshetra* and is aptly named as *Kshetrajña*, the knower of the *Kshetra*. The *sharîra* and the *jîva* are distinctly different. One is non-lasting whereas the other (*jîva* or *kshetraña*) is eternal. Those who do not understand this important distinction are afflicted with the thought that the body (*deha*) is the soul (*âthma*), technically called *dehâthma Bramam*, suffer in *samsâra* as bonded soul (*jîva*).

The Supreme Soul (*Paramâthma*) is inside all *âthmas* as the indweller and therefore both the souls (*âthma*) and the body (*sharîra*) are His bodies. The Supreme Soul (*paramâthma*) sitting inside the embodied soul (*jîvâthma*) is not affected by the karmas enjoyed by the soul (*jîva*) in their embodied state.

Instead of enjoying itself (*âthmâvalokanam*) as pointed out by Swamy Nammâlvâr (*atthai thinru ange kidakkum*), the soul (*jîva*) stays inside the insentient (*achethana*) *prakruthi* and is engaged in the enjoyment of the activities (*kârya*) of the three *gunas* (*sukha* and *dukha*) and struggles in the fierce samsaric ocean as the bonded *jîva*.

One who sees the equality (*samathva*) in all the souls (*jîva*) inside the different bodies (*sharîras*) is not lost in cycles of births and deaths (*samsâra*). He is a discerned (*viveki*). He knows that the differences as man, woman, gods (*deva*), short one, tall one, dog, bird etc., are only differences in their bodies alone. Karmas performed by the infinity of soul (*jîva*) occupying that many bodies are a result of the relation with the *prakruthi* (*prakruthi sambhandham*). As the three *gunas* change, the *gunas* of the soul (*athma*) change also. As the *sathva guna* is ascendant, *amânithva* increases. The notion that the body is the soul (*dehâthma bhramam*) is chased away. Humility (*amânithvam*) helps in realizing the Self (*âthmâvalokana*). The soul's unalloyed nature (*shuddha svarupam*) is visualized as totally blissful.

Swamy Desikan's summary of the 13th Chapter

Unin padiyum uyirin pirivum uyir peruvar
Jnanam peruvahayum jnanameenra uyirppayanum
Uninratharku adiyum yuir veridum ull virahum
Teninra paathan telivitthanan silaip-partthanukke

- 14th *Pâsuram* of Swamy Desikan's *Gîtârtha Sangraham*

"The Lord with lotus feet abundant with divine honey taught Arjuna about (1) the *Svarupa* of *sharîra*, (2) the differences between the *sharîra* and the *âthma* (Self), (3) the *gunas* such as *amânithva* required to comprehend the Self, (4) the *âthma's svarupa* comprehended through those *gunas*, (5) the reasons for the bonds of *samsâra*, (6) the means to be adopted by the mind to see the Self shining clearly from the body, its house."

Bhagavân Vâsudeva (*Paramâthma*) constitutes the Self of all entities (*Kshetra* and *Kshetrajña*). *Brahma Sutras* (*Shâriraka Sutras*) authoritatively establish the nature of *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajña* and their relationship to the Supreme Being.

Some key poems (*Shloka*) of the thirteenth chapter:

Samam sarveshu bhutheshu thishtantham pameswaram
Vinasyassvavinasyantham ya: pasyathi sa pasyathi
 - 27th *Shloka*

"Who sees the supreme ruler dwelling alike in all bodies and never perishing when they (bodies) perish, he sees indeed".

Prakruthyaiva cha akrmani kriyamanani sarvasa:
Ya: pasyathi tatamanamakartharam sa pasyathi
 - 29th *Shloka*

“He who sees that acts are done universally by *Prakruthi* alone and likewise that the Self (*jîvan*) is not the doer, he sees indeed”.

*Yadha bhuthaprutakbhavamekastamanupasyathi
Tatha yeva cha vistharam Brahmam sampadhyathe tadha*
- 30th *Shloka*

“When he perceives the independent modes of existence of all beings centred in one, and as also their expansion from It alone, then he attains Brahman”.

*Anathithvath nirgunathvath Paramâthma ayam avyaya:
Sarirastpapi kountheya na karothe na lipyathe*
- 31st *Shloka*

“This Supreme Self, though dwelling in the body, is immutable. Oh Arjuna ! Being without beginning, It neither acts nor is tainted, as It is without *Guna*”.

*Kshetra-kshetrajñayorevamanthram jñâna chakshusha
Bhutha-prakruthi moksha cha ye vidhuryanthi te Param*
- 34th *Shloka*

“Those who thus discern with the eye of knowledge the difference between the body or the field (*Kshetra*) and the knower of the body or field knower (*Kshetrajña*) and the means of deliverance from the manifested *prakruthi* - they attain the Supreme”.

15) Essence of the fourteenth chapter

We shall now move on to the study of the 14th Chapter of *Srimath Bhagvath Gîta*. This chapter has 27 poems (*Shlokas*). This chapter is about division according to the three *Gunas*.

Introduction to the Fourteenth Chapter:

Âchârya Râmânûja’s commentary as translated by Swamy Adhidevanandha is as follows : It was shown in the 13th Chapter that by knowing the truth concerning the nature of *Prakruthi* and the Self, which are conjoined with one another, one is freed from a bondage by means of *Jñâna* consisting of modesty etc., when favoured by devotion to the Lord. And it was also stated that the cause of bondage consists in attachment to pleasure etc., which arises from prior linkage with *guna* such as *Satthva* etc., on the authority of passage like “its attachment to the *Guna* is the cause of birth in good and evil wombs (Gîta: 13.21). Now, it is proposed to describe how the *Gunas* become the cause of bondage and how their hold can be removed.

Swamy Âlavanthâr’s summary of the 14th chapter

*Gunabhandha-vidha: tesham karthruthvam tannivathanam
Gathithraya-svamoolathvam chathurdasa udheeryathe*

18th *Shloka* of *Gîtârtha Sangraham*

“In the fourteenth chapter are explained the various ways in which the *Gunas* bind the self (*jîvâthma*), how they (*gunas*) are the agents in respect of all works and how the Supreme Person (*Paramâthma*) is the basis of all the three ends attainable, namely, heavenly sovereignty, the abidance in the pristine state of the Self, and dwelling in the Lord”.

There are four key group of words that have been chosen by Swamy Âlavanthâr to summarize the core of the 14th Chapter of Gîta : 1) *guna-bhandha-vidha*, (2) *tesham karthruthvam*, (3) *tannivartthanam*, (4) *Gathithraya -svamoolathvam*.

Let us comment on them one by one following the way chosen by Thirukkallam Swamy :

1) *Guna-bhandha-vidha* : This is the way in which the three *Guna* — *sathva*, *rajas* and *thamas* — bind the Self (*jîva*) to the cycles of birth and death (*samsâra*). Among the three, *sathva* promotes bondage to pleasure (*sukha*), knowledge (*jñâna*) and facilitates the performance of virtuous actions (*punya karmas*) that binds the Self (*jîva*) to *samsâra*. *Rajas* creates desire for every (worldly) thing other than the Lord (Bhagavân) and leads the Self (*jîva*) to perform karmas that ends up in the Self (*jîva*) swirling in the ocean of *samsara*. *Thamas* shackles the Self (*jîva*) very tightly to prison of *samsâra* and creates sleepiness, disinterest, procrastination in doing things. These are the ways (*prakâram*) of the *guna* which ties up the Self (*jîva*) to birth and death cycle or *samsâra* (*Guna-bahndha-vidha*).

2) *Tesham karthruthvam* : The Self's (*jîva*) actions is based on desire, anger, sorrow. Attachment is caused by the operation of the three *gunas*. It is not the Self's (*jîva*) nature to have desire, anger etc. Water does not scald one in its intrinsic form. It however scalds due to its relation (*sambhandham*) with fire. Similarly, the Self's intrinsic nature (*jîva's svarupa*) is endowed with auspicious attributes (*sathva guna*). *Jîva* however through the relation (*sambhndham*) with *Prakruthi* made up of three *gunas* ends up in engaging in activities, which are inconsistent with its intrinsic nature. This is referred to by the two words : *tesham karthruthvam*.

3) *Tannivartthanam* : Those who elect the Lord as their ultimate goal (*phalan*, fruit of their efforts) and exhibit unwavering devotion (Bhakthi) to Him will not be influenced any longer by the three *gunas*. They cross the *Mâyâ* of *Bhagavân* (*Prakruthi*) and attain a status, which equals the Lord's attributes in many areas (*parabrahma sâmyam*). Such a person is a extremely *sâthivic* (*parama sâthvika*). He looks upon a lump of earth with the same feeling of detachment as he looks at a ball of gold. These people, who have overcome the Lord's *Mâyâ* are known as *gunâtîtha*. "Unwavering Bhakthi to Me is the only route to cross My *Mâyâ*", says the Lord. All the three goals – worldly wealth (*aishwarya*), direction vision of the Self (*Kaivalya*) and freedom from the cycles of birth and death (*moksha*) are granted by the Lord and Lord alone.

4) *Gathi-thraya-moolathvam*: Our Lord (Vâsudevan) alone grants the three *Purushârthas* : *Kaivalyam*, *aishwaryam* and *moksham*. *Gathi Thrayam* refers to these three fruits.

Swamy Desikan's summary of the 14th Chapter

Mukkuname uyir murravum kattida moondamayum
Mukkuname anaitthum vinai kolla muyanramayum
Mukkuna mayai kadatthalum mukkathi tanthalippum
Mukkunam arra piran mozhinthan mudiyon tanakke

- 15th *Pâsuram* of *Gethartha Sangraham* of Swamy Desikan

The soul by its own is not capable of doing virtuous or non-virtuous actions (*pâpa* or *punya* karmas). It is pristine pure and is of the form of pure knowledge (*jñâna svarupam*). *Sathva*, *Rajas* and *Thamas* (the triad making up *Prakruthi*) do these karmas and makes the soul (*jîva*) believe that it did these karmas. *Sathva* creates the attachment for the soul (*jîva*) in pleasure (*sukha*) and knowledge and makes the soul (*jîva*) perform karmas that are appropriate towards that goal. *Rajas* creates the desire for carnal pleasures between men and women and pushes the soul (*jîva*) to engage in karmas that bind them to the life cycle (*samsâra*). The *Thamas* creates laziness and lack of focus in activities and leads the soul accumulate many non-virtuous actions that shackle the soul into the prison of birth and death life cycles.

The soul (*jîva*) becomes a liberation soul (*muktha jîva*) by performing its karmas without expecting any fruits (*phala*), without getting attracted by the secondary fruits of worship (*anya devatha âradhanam*) even by mind and pursuing Bhakthi Yoga firmly. That type of *jîva* crosses over the relation (*sambhandham*) of with *Prakruthi* made up of the three *gunas* and thus becomes the liberated soul (*muktha jîva*).

The Lord (*Bhagavân*) is the only omnipotent One, who can grant the three *purushârthas* (*kaivalya*, *aiswarya* and *moksha*). The Lord devoid of the three *gunas* described these tattvas to Arjuna in the 15th chapter.

Some key poems (*Shlokas*) of the fourteenth Chapter:

*sarva-yonishu kountheya Moorthaya: sambhavanthi yaa:
thasam Brahma mahathyonir—aham Bheejapradha: pitha*
- *Shloka* : 4

"Whatever forms are produced in any womb , Oh Arjuna, the *Prakruthi* is their great womb and I am the sowing Father". The Lord says that He is "the imbedder of muliplex of conscient selves according to each one's Karmas".

*Satthvam Rajas-tama ithi guna prakruthi-sambhava:
nibhadhnathi mahabhaho dehe dehinamavyayam*
- *Shloka* 5

"*Sathva*, *Rajas* and *Thamas* are the Guna that arise from the *Prakruthi*. They bind the immutable self in the body , Oh Arjuna".

Jîva is not in its pristine state, when it is conjoined with the three *gunas* (of *Prakruthi*). *Gunas* bind the *jîva*, when it resides in the body. *Sathva guna* for instance conjoined with the *jîva* binds latter through attachment to pleasure (*sukha*) and knowledge (*jñâna*). *Rajas* binds the embodied self with attachment to work (*karma sangha dhvarena, rajo dehinam nibhadhnathi*). *Thamas* arising from erroneous knowledge deludes (causes *Moha*) all embodied souls. *Thamas* binds the *Jîva* with "negligence, indolence and sleep" (*âlasya, anârambha svabhâva* and *sthabhdhatha*).

*Karmana: sukruthasyahu: Sâthvikam nirmalam Phalam
rajasasthu phalam dukkham ajananam tamas: phalam*
- *Shloka* 16

"The fruits of a good deed, they say, is pure and is of the nature of *Sathva*. But the fruit of *rajas* is pain; and the fruit of *thamas* is ignorance.

*Nânyam gunebhya: Kartharam yadha dhrashtanupasyathi
gunebhasccha param vetthi madhbhavam soadhigacchathi*
- *Shloka 19*

“When the seer beholds no agent of action other than the *guna*, and knows what transcends the *guna*, he attains to My state.”

One who stays in pure *sâthvic* state gets thereby partaking *sâthvic* food and the practise of unwavering (*asanchala*) Bhakthi Yoga and through *nishkâma karmanushtânâ* (i-e)., He does every thing to please the Lord and does not seek any fruits (*phala*) for his karmas. This noble seer comprehends that the *gunas* are the agents of action and not the Self. The pure-natured Self (pristine by inherent *svarupam*) “gains agency through various actions by contact (*sambhandham*) with the *gunas* springing from past karmas. When one perceives the self in this way, namely, that the self by itself is no agent of actions and is of the nature of infinite knowledge (*jñâna*), then, that self attains to the likeness of the Lord (*Brahma sâmâmyama*). That self attains immortality (*vimuktho amrutham asnutha*). That noble seer has the vision of the Self being totally different from the three *gunas*. He rises above the *gunas*. He becomes qualified for the state of Brahman (*sah brahmabhuyaya kalpathe*) through his unswerving, unshakable practise of Bhakthi Yoga. That noble seer with the conviction that realizing “Vâsudeva is all” is a rare one and is a great soul (*mahathma*) dear to the Lord, who is immortal (*shâshvathan*), the embodiment of eternal *dharma* and the perfect bliss (*parama sukha*). By taking refuge in the Lord, the *knower* (*jñâni*) with one pointed mind transcends the three *gunas* to attain *Brahm sâmâmyama* state. The concept of *prapatthi* is introduced here as an *angam* (limb) of Bhakthi Yoga. There is another point of view that holds that *Prapatthi* by itself is an independent path (means) to attain *Moksha* and *Brahma Sâmâmya*. Bhakthi Yoga is not with in the reach of all. It is extremely difficult to practise. Hence the act of *prapatthi* that is open to all and is doable in a trice (short time) and does not take long to yield fruit is considered by Âchâryas to be superior as the means for *Moksha*.

16) Essence of the fifteenth chapter

This chapter has 20 *Shlokas*. This chapter is about "The Mystery and grandeur of the Supreme Lord (*Purushothama*)".

Introduction to the Fifteenth Chapter:

Âchârya Râmânûja's commentary as translated by Swamy Âdi Deva Ananda is as follows :

"The Thirteenth Chapter dealt with the *Kshetra* (field) and the *Kshethrajna* (the knower of the field); it was shown after an examination of the nature of *Prakruthi* and the Self, that the beginningless conjunction of the pure Self consisting only of infinite knowledge, with the *prakruthi*, transformed into the forms of gods, humans, animals, birds etc., causing the flow of attachment of the Self to the *guna* of the *Prakruthi*.

In the Fourteenth Chapter, the following points were treated :

1. The conjunction of the Self with the *prakruthi* in its two states of effect and cause has attachment to the *guna* for its source and it is determined by the Lord Himself;
2. The manner of (their) attachment has been stated in detail;
3. The (re)attainment of the true nature of the Self preceded by the annihilation of attachment to the *guna* has devotion to the Lord as its means. All these have been discussed.

Now in the Fifteenth Chapter, Sri Krishna begins to speak of the adorable Lord as having the absolute control of the Universe consisting of the perishable or bound selves (*kshara*) and the imperishable or freed selves (*akshara*). He also states that the Lord is the Supreme Person because of His unmatched greatness in being antagonistic to all that is evil and in being endowed with auspicious attributes, which are different in kind from both the perishable and imperishable selves and which constitute His glory. Then to elucidate the manifestation called *akshara* (freed souls) whose bondage has been cut off by the sword of non-attachment, the Lord describes the modification of *kshara* or non-intelligent *prakruthi* into the form of bondage that has to be cut off. This modification of bondage-creating *prakruthi* is compared to the *aswattha* tree (Pipal tree) with its roots above and branches below ".

Swamy Âlavanthâr's summary of the 15th chapter:

*achinmisradhvisuddhaccha chetanath Purushothama:
Vyâpanâth bharanath swamyadhanya: panchadasodhitha:*

(Meaning): In the fifteenth chapter, the Supreme Person is declared to be other than the self both in its state of conjunction with non-conscient matter (*prakruthi*, the *achethana*) and in its state of pristine purity, because the Lord as *Purushothama* pervades, sustains and rules over them (*prakruthi*, *chethana* and *achethana*) and the universe.

Bhagavân, the *sarweshvaran* (Lord of all) is distinctly different from both the *chethana* with *prakruthi sambhnam* (*Baddha jîva*), and the pristinely pure *chethana* (*muktha Jîva*) without any admixture of *prakruthi* and its three *guna* (*purushothama: achinmisrath chethanath cha anya* :) This is so because He is pervading both inside and outside (*vyâpanâth*) is supporting all (*bharanâth*) and is the Lord of all.

Vedas declare, "Sa: Utthama: *Purusha*: (He is the Supreme *Purusha*)". *Vishnu Purâna* and *Srimad Râmâyana* salute Him as *Purushothama*.

The word *Purushothama* can be defined in one of the three ways: "*Purushebhya: utthama:* , *Pruushânâm utthama:* and *Purusheshu utthama:* ". *Srutha Prakâsika*, the commentary of *Sudarsana Soori* on Sri Bhashyam and Swamy Desikan's commentary on *Sthothra Rathnam* of Swamy Âlavanthâr support all of these three definitions.

Thus, the three chapters (13th, 14th and 15th) of the Lord's Gîta elaborated on the three *thathva* (*chith*, *achith* and *Ishvaran*) in that order.

Swamy Desikan's summary of the 15th Chapter:

*Moovettinum athin moham adaintha uyirhalinum
naa yettezhutthodu nalveedu nannina nambarinum
mevu yettu vann guna vinnorhalinum visayanukku
thavittu ulahalantha talai verenru sarrinane !*

(Meaning): The Lord who jumped to measure the worlds as *Thrivikraman* (the dwarf incarnation of Vishnu in which He measured the entire universe in three steps) instructed Arjuna that He is different from *prakruthi* with its 24 sub-*thathva* (*muveettinum veru*). He revealed to Arjuna further that He is distinctly different again from both the *bhadha Jîva* (*jîva* admixed with the three gunas of *prakruthi*), which become *muktha jîvas* through unceasing repetition of *ashtâkshara manthra*

(practice of unwavering Bhakti Yoga). Finally, the Lord explained that He is also different from the eternally liberated souls (*nithya suris*) as well, who are characterized by the 8 spiritual qualities (*âthma guna*) of compassion (*daya* to all *jives*), forbearance against offenses, lack of jealousy, purity, lack of sorrow, thinking of doing good to others, lack of greed and dispassion or *vairâgyam*).

Some key poems (*Shlokas*) of the fifteenth chapter :

Shloka 2 :

The branches of *Samsâra* (called Asvattha tree) spread out both above and below and are nurtured by the three Gunas. Their tender shoots are sense objects. Above, this tree's branches and shoots manifest as *Gandharva*, *Yaksha*, demi-gods, deva etc and are nourished by the *Sathva Guna*; down below the branches of this Aswattha tree spread as *Baddha Jîvas* (products of their Karmas) in the form of men, beast, bird, insect etc.

This Aswattha tree can be uprooted with the sharp axe of detachment from the sense objects constituted by the three Gunas. Then the erroneous knowledge (*viparîtha Jnâna*) that the *Jîva* is the same as *Sharîra* is destroyed and the agency (*karthruthvam*) of the three Guna that held the pristine *Jîva* in bondage is understood, which in turn leads the way to Moksha.

Shloka 6 :

*mamaivamso jeevaloke jeevabhuta: sanathana:
mana: shashtaneeindhriyani prakruthistani karshathi*

"An everlasting part of Myself (*Sanâthano mama amsa:*) having become the bound Self in the world of life, attracts the senses, of which the mind is the sixth, and which abide in *Prakruthi*." The ear, (*sabdha*, hearing sense), the eye, the sense of touch (*sparsa*), the nose (*gandha*), and the mind constitute the six senses.

The Karmas attract the Selves (*Jîvas*) here and there and transform them into bound *Jîvas*. The individual *Jîva* is the master of all senses and the mind (the 6th sense) in its embodied state and leads to the existence as *Baddha Jîva* toiling in *samsâra*. Whatever body the *Baddha Jîva* takes as a result of its Karmas, it takes with it the senses with their subtle elements, just as the wind carries the fragrances (that it had encountered), wherever it moves.

Shloka 15

*Sarvasya chaham hrudhi sannivishito
Mattha: smruthir-jnânâmapohanam cha
vedaisccha sarvairahmeva vedhyo
Vedânthakruth-vedavidheva chaham*

(Meaning): "And I am seated in the hearts of all. From Me arise memory, knowledge and their removal as well. Indeed I alone am to be known (as the indweller of all *Chethana* and *Achethana*) from all the Vedas. I bring about the fruition of the rituals of the Vedas (*Gîta Shloka* 7. 21-22 and 9. 24). I alone am the knower of the Vedas (I know the Veda that speaks about Me). "

Shloka 16

There are two kinds of persons (*Purusha*) that the sacred texts (*shâstra*) refer to: (1) the Perishable (*Kshara*) and, (2) the imperishable (*akshara Purushan*, the unchanging *Kutastha*). From the lowly blade of grass to the mighty Brahma are *Kasharas*. They are conjoined with *Achethana prakruthi* and its three Gunas in different proportions. The *akshara Purushans* are the liberated Jîvas and are free from the interaction of *prakrithi* (*prakruthi-sambhandham*).

Shloka 17

*Utthama: Purushathvanya: paramathmethyudhahrudha:
yo lokathrayamavisya bhibharthyavyaya Iswara:*

"There is the Supreme *Purusha* other than these two Purushas (*Kshara* and *akshara*). That Supreme One is named the Supreme Self (*Paramâthma*) in all the Vedas. He, who, as the immutable One and the Lord, entering the threefold world, supports it."

The Supreme *Purusha* (*Iswara*) is "a category distinct from the bound (*kshara*) and liberated (*akshara*) Purushas". He is their ruler and indweller and is celebrated by the smritis and the Vedas as the *Purushothama* (*athosmi loke vede cha pratitha: Purushothama:*).

Shloka 19

*yo maamevamasammudo janathi Purushothamam
Sa sarvavidh-bhajathi Maam sarvabhavena Bharatha*

"He who, without delusion thus knows Me as the Supreme Self, knows all, Oh Arjuna, and worships Me in every way."

Sri Gîtâchâryan (Sri Krishna) instructed Arjuna on His *Purushothama* -- *prathipadana* (*Purushothama Vidya*) and described it as the mysterious and esoteric doctrine that can be revealed only to the right (qualified) person (*adhikâri*). Knowledge of the *Purushothama Vidya* will make the knower a truly wise person and make him as the one, who has fulfilled all his duties (*yethath bhuddhva buddhiman syath, kruthakruthya: cha*).

17) Essence of the sixteenth chapter

This chapter has 24 *Shloka*. This chapter is about " The Divine and the Demonic Types".

Introduction to the SIXTEENTH Chapter :

Âchârya Râmânûja's commentary as translated by Swamy Âdi Deva Ananda is as follows :

"In the preceding three chapters were elucidated the following,

- (1) What constitutes the nature of the physical reality (*Prakruthi*), i. e., of the individual self (*Purusha*) taken separately and in conjunction with each other ;
- (2) that their conjunction is the result of attachment to the Guna, and their separation, the result of nonattachment;
- (3) that *Prakruthi* and the individual self in whatever modes of existence they be, both constitute the glory (*Vibhuthi*) of the Lord; and

(4) that the real nature of the Lord as the Supreme Person is distinct from insentient matter and sentient entity in both the states of bondage and freedom, as He is immutable, pervading, supporting and ruling.

Immediately afterwards, the Lord speaks (in this chapter) about the division into the divine and demonical creations. This division is based upon whether the person denoted follows the *Shâstra* (the sacred texts) or not. Those who follow the *Shâstra* are classed as divine, and the others who violate them as demonical. The purpose of this teaching is to impress that submission to the *Shâstra* (Vedas) is necessary for getting established in all the teachings given earlier, including those on conduct (*anushtânâ*)."

Swamy Âlavanthâr's summary of the 16th chapter

*Devaura vibhagokthi poorvika sashtravasyatha
tathvanushâna -- vijñastemne shodasa uchyaathe*

(Meaning): " The sixteenth chapter deals first with the distinction between the divine and the demoniac natures in order to establish what is truth and what is right conduct, which can be attained by submission to the *Shâstra*".

In the creation of beings (*janthu*), there are the divisions of divine parts (*daiva amsha*) and demoniac parts (*asura amsha*). Those with the divine characters will be guided by the sacred texts (*Bhagavaths Shâstra*). Those with demoniac characters will transgress those ordained sacred texts. The Lord (*Bhagavân*) instructs us through Arjuna that we must follow His injunctions and belongs to the divine type (*daiva amsha*) so that *Tatthva Jnânâ* and *Upâya Jnânâ* for *Moksha siddhi* can be firmly established in us.

Swamy Desikan's summary of the 16th Chapter

*aanai maravathar Devar alvazhakkor asurar
konai maratha Gunacchelva nee kurikkol marayaip-
peniya tatthuvamum piniyarra kirisaihalum
kann ithanal visaya yenru Kannan iyampinane*

(Meaning): The *Daiva amsha* is possessed by those with divine qualities (*daiva sampath*, *aanai maraathavar*). They follow the Vedic injunctions. That is their dominant behavioral feature. The key aspect of demoniac character (*asura sampath*) is the transgression of Vedic commands. Oh Arjuna having *Daiva sampath* ! Please follow Veda for guidance about what Karmas are to be done and what are to be discarded. Through Vedas, gain the knowledge (*jnâna*) about the the Supreme principle or Supreme Being (*Para Tatthva*) and cultivate the habit of doing your ordained Karmas without attachment to their fruits. Divine qualities (*daiva sampath*) leads to the path of liberation (*moksha sâdhana*). Therefore follow the Vedas and *Shâstra* to obtain the bliss of liberation (*moksha sukha*) !

Some key Shlokas of the fourteenth chapter:

The first three poems (Shlokas) offer clear definitions of the Divine type. The fourth *Shloka* sets the tone for the detailed description of the behavior of the demoniac type. The Lord dwells elaborately on the culture and mind set of the demoniac types (Poems 7-17) so we can recognize these features and avoid them. We will follow now the commentary of Swamy Desikan in *Taathparya Chandrika* here.

Shloka 1-3 (Features of the Divine Type)

The distinguishing features of those with divine shades (*daiva amsha*) are:

- 1) Fearlessness and freedom from sorrow over losing what is dear (*abhayam*).
- (2) Purity of mind characterized by the freedom from desire, anger, jealousy and deceit (*sathva samshuddhi*).
- (3) Devotion to meditation on the knowledge of the Self; focused existence to comprehend the true nature of the Self (*Jnâna Yoga vyavastha*).
- (4) Alms giving of rightfully earned things to the qualified devotees (*sâthvika adhikâri*) (*Sâthvika Dâna*)
- (5) Self-control and preventing the mind from straying into improper areas (*dhama*).
- (6) The performance of daily and season rituals (*nithya naimithtika* karmas like worship of the Lord, (*bhagavath ârâdhana*), offering of oblations to ancestors (*pithru yajna*), giving food to the animals and birds (*bhuta yajna*), service of the guest (*manushya yajna*) and study and teaching of Vedas (*brahma yajna*) (*yajna*).
- (7) The study of the Vedas with the clear understanding that the subject of the Vedas is all about Lord's glories and the ways to worship Him (*svâdhyâya*).
- (8) Penance or austerities to reduce the attachment to worldly pleasures. Some the important days for such austerities are: the eleventh and the twelfth day of the waxing and the waning moon, the new moon day, the four solstices of January, April, July and Octobre (*tapas*).
- (9) Uprightness; the compatibility of mind, body and speech with respect to interaction with others. Consistency in their interaction (*ârjava*).
- (10) Non-violence. The guiding line should be: Non-violence should be the supreme right path. "*Ahimsa Paramo Dharma*". (*ahimsa*)
- (11) Truthful behavior at all levels. To do good and to be good towards all beings should be the vow: "*Sathyam Bhuta hitham proktham*". (*sathya*)
- (12) Abandonment of anger towards oneself and others (*krodha thyâga*).
- (13) Peaceful attitude developed by control over external or sensory organs (*shanti*).
- (14) Non-slandering of others (*apaisunam*).
- (15) Compassion to all beings (*deva bhuteshu*).
- (16) Distaste for things unfit for pursuit. Control of desire leading to action to acquire or taste them (*alolupathva*).
- (17) Gentleness to others to enhance approachability (*mârdava*).
- (18) The development of a sense of shame over doing unfit things inconsistent with the sacred

texts (*hrī*).

(19) Removal of desire from tempting things even if they are near (*Vishaya sânidhya achâpalam*).

(20) Grandeur or ability to stay over insults of ill meaning ones (*tejas*).

(21) Forbearance and tolerance towards those who offend (*kshama*).

(22) Firmness of resolve even during times of danger and observance of actions stipulated in the sacred texts at all times without slipping. (To think of the Lord with resolve at those times instead of panicking). (*dhruti*)

(23) Cleanliness and Purity of body, mind and speech (*shoucha*).

(24) Freedom from hatred and control of conduct by the strong towards the weak in an unfair fashion (*adhroha*).

(25) Controlling over-pride (*nâthimânitha*)

The Lord asks Arjuna to follow the above rules to develop divine wealth. Pomposity, arrogance, self-conceit, wrath, rudeness and ignorance are identified as the traits of the demoniac type. The one with divine qualities is set to reach liberation (*moksha*), whereas the one with demoniac qualities ends up in bondage. Sri Krishna (*Gîtâchârya*) identifies the triad of desire, wrath and greed as the "triple gateway to hell (*naraka*)" and asks Arjuna to avoid them at all costs.

Poems (shlokas) 23 and 24

The importance of *Shashtra* (Vedas) in guiding one towards divine richness (*dhaiva sampath*) is stressed by the Lord at the end of the 16th Chapter of *Bhagavath Gîta*. Our Lord says that anyone following his desires and abandoning the injunctions of His *Shâstra* will never attain perfection or happiness in this world nor psychic powers (*siddhi*) in the other world. That defiant and willful one is doomed forever.

*Tasmath Shastram pramanam te karyakarya vyavastithou
jn~athva Shâstra vidhanoktham Karma karthumiharhasi*
- 24th and final poem (*shloka*) of the 16th Chapter

Therefore let the sacred texts (*shâstra*) be your authority for determining what should be done and what should not be done. Knowing what is enjoyed in the injunctions of the *Shâstra*, you should perform work here".

The Vedic injunctions complimented by the *Dharma Shâstra* are identified by the Lord as the sure means to please Him and to attain Him.

18) Essence of the seventeenth chapter

This chapter has 28 Shlokas. This chapter is about "The Three aspects of the Faith".

Introduction to the 17th Chapter:

Āchārya Rāmānuja's introduction to the 17th chapter takes on this form:

In the 16th chapter, it was said that there are two kinds of persons : one with the divine influence (*Daiva amsha*) and the other with the demoniac influence (*Asura amsha*). It was also pointed out that the true knowledge (*Jnāna*) and means to Liberation (*Mokshopāya*) have their roots only in the Vedas.

In this 17th chapter, the focus is on three items:

1. Whatever is outside the Vedas (*Shāstra*) is fruitless to pursue,
2. The Karmas prescribed in the Vedas (*Shāstra*) are of three kinds according to their links with each of the three Gunas and,
3. The definitions of what is prescribed in the Vedas (*Shāstra*).

What is not prescribed by the sacred texts (*Shāstra*) is demoniac (*āsura*) and will yield only undesirable fruits. Shastras classify the Karmas into *Sāthvika*, *Rājasa* and *Thāmasa* kind. The characteristics (*Lakshana*) for the actions prescribed in the Vedas (*Shāstrīya Karma*) are that it would start with three words: (*Pranava*) *Om Tath Sath*. One has therefore to start these actions with these three words.

Arjuna develops a doubt about the various kinds of fruits in terms of the three Gunas arising from the performance of sacrifices: "that are not enjoined in the *Shāstra*, but done with faith". The Lord instructs Arjuna on the three kinds of gifts, ritualistic action and austerities (*Dāna*, *Yajna*, *Tapas*) based on the divisions along the lines of the three Gunas. For instance, those with dominance of *Sathva Guna* will worship divinities, Devathas; People with ascendancy of *Rajo Guna* will worship spirits and demons (Yakshas and Asuras); those who have dominant trait of *Thamo Guna* will worship the dead and demi-gods (*Bhuta Gana*).

Swamy Ālavanthār's summary of the 17th chapter

*asasthramasuram kruthsnam sasthreeyam Gunatha: prutak
Lakshana Shāstraiddhasya thridha saphthadasodhitham*

(Meaning) : " In the 17th chapter, the following are dealt with: What are not ordained by the sacred texts (*Shāstra*) and for that reason wholly demoniac; what are ordained in the sacred texts (*Shāstra*) as varied in accordance with the Guna ; and the characteristics of what are established in the Vedas (*Shāstra*) as three fold in terms of " *Om* ", " *Tath* " and " *Sath* " .

Āchārya Rāmānuja comments this way on the above summary of Swamy Ālavanthār:

*"idhaneem asasthra -- vihithasya aasurathvena aphilathvam,asasthra -- vihithasya cha
Gunatha: thraividhyam, Shāstra-siddhasya Lakshana cha uchyathe"*

(meaning): In this 17th chapter, It is said that the Karmas not enjoined by the Vedas (*Shāstras*) are demoniac actions (*āsura* Karmas) and hence are fruitless to perform. They would not yield any fruits. The three kinds of Karmas (*Yajna*, *Tapas*, *Dana*) are classifiable into categories belonging to one or other of the three Gunas. These *Shāstra*-enjoined Karmas will be linked to *Om Tath Sath*. That is their particularity (*Lakshana*).

Swamy Desikan's summary of the 17th Chapter.

*marai porunthathavai vallasurarkku vahutthamayum
marai porunthum nilayin vann-Gunappadi muvahayum
marai nilai tannai vahukkum kuri munrin menmayum amm-marai umizhnthan uraitthan*

Vaasavan tann siruvanukke

(Meaning): The Lord, who released the Vedas instructed Arjuna, the son of Indra that the Karmas antithetical to the Vedas are practiced by those with the demoniac nature (*Asura Svabhāva*). They are eccentric actions (*Viparītha Karma*) not sanctioned by the Vedas and will not yield the desired fruits. The Karmas approved by the Vedas divide into three categories and these Karmas are commenced with the utterance of *OM Tath Sath*.

There are antagonistic to Veda (*Veda-viruddha* or *avaidika karma*) and compatible to Veda (*Veda-anukoola* or *Vaidhika karma*). The antagonistic actions and action done by unqualified ones according to their own rules belong to those with strong demoniac nature (*asura Svabhāva*).

The actions prohibited by the Vedas (*Veda-vihitha*) also divide into three classes based on the three Guna. The dominance of one of the three Gunas over the other makes that Karma *Sāthvika* or *Rājasika* or *Thāmasika*. These differences arise from the variations in different kinds of food consumed by the devotee. There is *Sāthvika* food, *Rājasika* and *Thāmasika* food. Hence one has to be careful to consume *Sāthvika* food alone.

In this chapter, the Lord points out that the actions in conformity with the Veda Karmas should be connected with "*Om Tath Sath*". Those belonging to the first three varnas (thrai-Varnika) are eligible to recite Vedas. They should commence the Yajnas sanctioned by the Vedas with the utterance of *Pranava* (Om). The first three Varnasa are Bramhana, Kshatriya and Vaishya.

The devotees who conform to Vedas should say "*Tath*", when they desire Liberation (*Moksha*) alone through the performance of Vedic rituals, austerities and gifts (*Yajna, Tapas and Dana*). Those who desire Moksha alone should NOT say "*Sath*" during the performance of the Karmas. They should utter "*Sath*" ONLY when they seek fruits (*Phalan*) for their Karmas except Liberation, Moksha.

Some key Shloka of the Seventeenth chapter:

Shloka 2 :

*thrividha Bhāvathi sraddha dehinam Saa svabhāvajaa
sathvikee rajasee chaiva thamasee chethi thamm srunu*

(Meaning): " Threefold is the faith of embodied beings, born of their own nature, constituted by *Sattva, Rajas* and *Thamas*. Listen now about it".

The predilection for one of the threefold behaviors (*Sāthvika, Rājasika* or *Thāmasika*) is caused by previous subtle impressions (*Vāsana*) associated with the souls (*jīvas*), which propel them towards a particular taste (*ruchi*) and faith (*Shraddha*). Note: Here, *ruchi* is taken in the sense of liking for the results of actions and not the taste of food.

Shloka 4 :

*yajanthe Sāthvika Devanyaksha--rakshamsi rajasa:
Prīthin-bhutaganamsccaanye yajanthe taamasa jana:*

(meaning): The *Sāthvika* types worship the gods. The *Rājasika* types worship spirits and demons

(Yakshas and Rākshasas). And the *Thāmasika* group worships the deceased ancestors and the assembly of demi-gods (Bhutas).

Shloka 23 :

*Om tathsadhithi nirdeso brahmansthividha: smrutha:
brahmanastena Vedasccha Yajnascccha vihitha: pura*

(meaning): " *Om, Tath, Sath* -- thus Brahman is denoted by this threefold expression. Associated with these, the Vedas, the Brāhmanas and sacrifices were ordained in the past.

Shloka 24 :

*tasmath omithyudhahruthya Yajna dhana tapa: kriya:
pravarthanthe vidhanoktha: sathatham brahmavadhinam*

(Meaning) : " Therefore, the Vedas-enjoined sacrificial acts, gifts and austerity by these expounders of Vedas, or those belonging to the first three stations (*Varnas*) are always and at all times begun after pronouncing Om at the beginning.

Shloka 25 :

*tadhithyanabhisamshaya phalam Yajnatapa: kriya:
dhanakriyasccha vividha: kriyanthe Moksha-kaankshibhi:*

(Meaning): " Acts of sacrifice, of austerity and of various gifts (giving) are performed without aiming at reward by those, who seek release (*Moksha*), after pronouncing "Tath".

Shloka 26

*sadhbhava sadhubhave cha sadhithyetatath prayujyathe
prasasthe Karmāni tata Sacchabdha: paartha yujyathe*

(Meaning): "The term "*Sath*" is used in the sense of existence and goodness. And so also, Oh Arjuna, the word "*Sath*" is applied to an auspicious action.

Shloka 28 :

*asraddhaya hutham dhattham tapastaptham krutham cha yath
asadhithyujyathe paartha na cha tathprethya no iha*

(meaning): " Whatever offering or gift is made, whatever austerity is practiced and whatever action is performed WITHOUT FAITH, that is called "*ASATH*" , Oh Arjuna ! It is naught here or hereafter ".

19) Essence of the eighteenth chapter

Introduction to the EIGHTEENTH Chapter:

Āchārya Rāmānuja's introduction to the 18th chapter as translated by Swamy Ādi Deva Ananda takes on this form :

" In the preceding two chapters, the following topics were treated: (1) Vedic actions such as sacrifices, austerities, gifts etc., alone constitute the means for prosperity and final release (2) The general characteristics of all Vedic acts are their connection with *Omkāra or Pranava*, (3) Of these, there is a distinction made between the means for the final release and the means for prosperity, since they are designated respectively by the terms of *Tath* and *Sath* (4) The means of liberation are acts that are free from the desire for fruits (5) Their performance is possible by the preponderance of *Sathva*, (6) the increase of *Sathva* is effected by the use of *Sāthvika* food.

Then in the 18th chapter, these are further elucidated :

(1) The identity between abnegation (*Thyāga*) and renunciation (*Sanyāsa*), which are described as the means for liberation, (2) The nature of abnegation (*Thyāga*), (3) Attributing the agency of all actions to the Lord, the ruler of all, (4) The necessity of *Sathva Guna* by an elaborate description of the effects of *Sathva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, (5) The way by which the Supreme person is attained through acts appropriate to one's own station in life and constituting the worship of the Supreme person, (6) Bhakti Yoga, which is the essential teaching of the *Gīta Shāstra*". Note: *Gīta Shāstra* is another name for *Bhagavad Gīta*.

Swamy Ālavanthār's summary of the 18th chapter

*Ishvare karthrutha Bhuddhis -- sathvopadeyatha -- anthime
svakarma parināmasccha sathra saaratha uchyathe*

- 22nd Shloka of *Gītārtha Sangraham*

(Meaning): "The last chapter presents the mental state required for ascribing the agency to the Lord, the necessity of cultivating the *Sāthvika* quality, the spiritual culmination of discharging one's duties, and Bhakti Yoga, which forms the essence of *Gīta Shāstra*".

"Ishvare Kartrutā Bhuddhi: "refers to the comprehension that the Supreme Lord, *Sarveshvara*, Sriman Nārāyanan is the chief doer (*Pradhāna Kartha*) for all Karmas.

"*Sathvopādheyatā*" refers to the *Sathva Guna* is the most important to cultivate.

"*Svākarma Parināmāsccha*" refers to the *tatthvam* that the *anushtāna* appropriate to their *Varnāshrama* facilitates the observant to attain the *Parama Purusha*.

Swamy Ālavanthār uses the next 10 Shlokas (23-32)

of His classical commentary on *Bhagavath Gītha* to describe and extol the importance of Bhakti Yoga.

Swamy Desikan's summary of the 18th Chapter:

*Satthuva veedudai narkarumam thann uhanthamayum
Satthuvam ullathu thann kurikkolvahai seythathuvum
Satthuva narkkirisaip -- payanum saranagathium
satthuvame taruvan uraitthan tanip-parthaukke*

(Meaning) : The Lord who blesses one with *Sathva Guna* instructed Arjuna of matchless valor

about His fondness for actions prescribed in the Vedas (*Vaidhika Karmas*) offered to Him with the accompaniment of pure renunciation *Sāthvika Thyāga*. He further instructed Arjuna about the three subdivisions of *Sāthvika Karmas* for His acceptance. He concluded the *Gītha Upadesha (Bhagavad Gīta)* with the revelation that the fruits of lofty *Sāthvika Karmas* are *Moksha* and *Prapatthi*.

Meaning of the First Line (*Satthuva veedudai naRkarumam Tann uhanthamayum*): When a bound soul (*chethana*) performs his Karmas, he should abandon their links to *Karthruthvam*, *Mamatha* and *Phala*. Note: We are by nature the bound souls.

- 1) *Karthruthvam* (abandonment): The performance of the Karma should be undertaken with the thought that it is the Lord, who through His servant, the soul, *Jīva*, performs for His sport the Karmas through the *indriya*, *Sharīra* and *Prāna* of the *Chethana*, which are ruled by Him.
- 2) Abandoning of myness (*Mamathā*): The bound soul (*Chethana*) should think that the Karma that is about to be performed is not his, but done by the Supreme Lord (*Sarweshvara*) for His pleasure. This is the way to abandon *Mamatha*.
- 3) Abandonment of link to fruits (*phala*): Enjoyment of Svargam results from the performance of virtuous actions (*Punya Karmas*). The *Chethana* should disassociate himself from the fruits of such Karma to gain renunciation of fruits of actions (*phala Thyāga*).

These are the three *Thyāgas* (abandonments) that should go with all *Vaidika Karmas* prescribed for the appropriate station in life (*Varna*). These Karmas should never be abandoned as long as one lives and should be considered as Worship of Lord (*Bhagavath Ārādhana*).

Meaning of Second line: (*Satthuvam uLLathu tAnn kuRikkoLvahai seythatuvum*): All the Karmas divide into three classes based on the dominance of one or other of the three Guna.

- 1) *Sāthvika Karma* is the one, which is performed according to prescribed *Varnāshrama Dharma* with *karthruthva*, *Mamatha* and *Phala Thyāga*.
- 2) *Rājasa Karma* is the one done with *Ahamkāra* (with the thought that it is done by me) and seeks and strives for that fruits aggressively.
- 3) *Thāmasa Karma*: This is the kind, where all thought about the Lord being the agent of the Karmas is abandoned. No respect is given to shāsthric directions; ostentatious performance along with violence (*himsa*) to others are the hallmarks of *Thāmasa Karma*.

Those who seek *Moksha* should chase away *Rajo Guna* and *Thamo Guna* and strive for *Sathva Guna* to be blessed by the Lord with the bliss of Liberation (*Moksha sukham*).

Meaning of the Third line : (*Satthuva naRkirisaij-payanum*) :

The fruits arising from the correct practice of Karma Yoga with *Sāthvika Thyāga* is referred to here. Such an observance leads to *Kaivalya* (direct visualization of the Blissful Soul, *Ānandamaya Jīva*), which is the bonded, eternal servant of the Lord); That will lead on to the uninterrupted and single minded devotion to Lord (*Sarweshvara*) and the bound soul (*chethana*) will now be blessed with the experience of devotional state (*Anubhava* of *Para Bhakti*). The Lord will now bless the soul (*jīva*).

His direct visualization (*Sākshāthkāra*): This stage of Bhakti Yoga is known as *Para Jnāna*. Arrival at this stage of *Para Jnāna* will make the soul (*jīva*) long intensely for the enjoyment of the Lord and the soul will not be able to keep his life without the real experience of the Lord at all times. He will cry out for that blessing. This stage of Bhakti Yoga is known as *Parama Bhakti*. At this stage, Lord will hasten to bless the soul with the Bliss of Liberation

and the eternal abode of the Lord (*Mokshanandham* and *Paripurna nithya Kaimkaryam*). This is the fruit of properly observed Karma Yoga with *Sāthvika Thyāga*.

Meaning of the Fourth line (*Sharanāgathium Satthuvame taruvan uraitthan tanip-parthaukke*): The Lord who blesses one with *Sathva Guna* instructed Arjuna about Liberation (*Moksha*) resulting from performing total surrender at His sacred feet (*Sharanāgathi*). The profound meanings of *Sharanāgathi* have been summarized earlier in this series, when the Prabhandham of Swamy Desikan on "Charama shloka Churukku". The total surrender (*Sharanāgathi*) is the essence of all sacred books.

Some key Shloka of the 18th chapter :

Shloka : 47

*sreyan svadhārmo viguna: paradharmāth svanushtithath
svabhāva-niyatham Karma kurvannapnothi kilbhisham*

(Meaning): " Better is one's own duty, though ill done (imperfectly performed), than the duty of another, though well performed; when one does the duty ordained by his own nature, he incurs no stain."

Shloka 55: "Through devotion, he comes to know Me fully; who and what I am in reality, who I am and how I am. Knowing Me thus in truth, he forthwith enters into Me."

Shloka 56: "Taking refuge in Me and performing all works constantly, one, by My grace, attains the eternal and immutable realm."

Shloka 61 :

*Iswara: Sarva Bhuthānam hrudhdheso Arjuna tishtathi
bhramayana-sarvabhuthāni yantharoodani Māyayaa*

(Meaning): The Lord, Oh Arjuna, abides in the heart of every being, spinning them round and round, mounted on a wheel as it were, by His power. "

Shloka 62:

*tameva saranam gaccha sarvabhavena Bharatha
Tath prasadhath pasam Shāntim stanam prapyasi sasvatham*

(meaning): Seek refuge in Him alone, Oh Arjuna, with the whole of your being. By His grace, you shall find supreme peace and eternal abode. "

Shloka 65:

*manmana Bhāva madhbhaktho maddhyajee Maam namaskuru
maamevaishyasi Sathyam te prathijane priyosi me*

(meaning): Focus your mind on Me. Be My devotee. Be My worshipper. Prostrate before Me. You shall come to Me alone. I promise you, truly; for you are dear to Me."

Shloka 66:

*sarvadharmān parithyājya maamekaṁ saranam vraja
Aham thva Sarva-papebhyo mokshishyami maa sucha:*

(meaning): " Completely relinquishing all Dharmas, seek Me alone for refuge. I will release you from all sins. Grieve not."

Shloka 78:

*yathra yogeeswara:krushno yathra paarto dhanurdhara:
tathra srirvijayo bhuthirdhruva neethirmathirmama*

(Meaning): Wherever there is Sri Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and Arjuna the archer, there are ever fortune, victory, wealth and sound morality. This is my (Sanjaya's) firm conviction. "

20) Phala shruthi

Today, we will study the remaining two fruit yields (Phala sruthi Pasasurams) of Swamy Desikan's Prabhandham of Gītārtha Sangraham.

Twentieth Pāsuram : Fruits of Reciting *Gītārtha Sangraham*

*vann parru arukkum marunthu yenru Māyavan thann uraittha
inbak-kadal amutham yena ninraviggītai thanai
anbarkku uraippavar ketbavar aadharitthu Othumavar
tunbak-kadalul tulanuhai neekkit--tulungavare*

(meaning): Gītha has the glory of being the medicine for releasing the bound souls (*Chethana*) from the disease of life and death (*Samsāra*). This has been stated by our Lord Himself.

Gītha is like a vast ocean containing an entire array of subtle disciplines and codes of conduct (*sakala sookshama Dharma*).

Gītha is a veritable ocean of nectar for its students. It generates supreme bliss (*Parama ānanda*) in them. Those who are able to teach the Songs of Gītha (Gīta Shloka) to disciples as well as the students who benefit from such studies with serious resolve and faith will be freed from the bonds of *Samsāra* and shine with divine effulgence.

The vast *Maha Bharatha* is compared here to the limitless ocean and *Gītha* as the nectar that arose out of that deep ocean (*inbak-kadal amuthAm ninRa Gīta*).

Teachers (*Āchāryas*) are instructed to teach this secret *Gīta Shastra* to the most deserving disciples (*anbarkkuUraippavar*). The disciples who learn it through the traditional methods are referred to as "*ketpavar*". They are dear to the masters, who master it through respectful and traditional learning (*adhyayana*) and reflect on their deep meanings are saluted as "*aadharitthu Odhumavar*". The end result of such a study and contemplation assures them freedom from the cycles of births and deaths (*Moksha*) through the means of self-surrender (Upāyam of Sharanāgathi) at the sacred feet of the Lord. They shine as splendid stars in the firmament of Lord's abode (Sri Vaikuntam) amidst other liberated souls.

Twenty First & Final Pāsuram: Poet's Mudhrai on Prabhandham

*theetharra narggunap--parrkkadal thamaraic-chemmalar mel
mathurra marvan maruva inngītayin vann porulaik--
kotharra nannmarai mouliyin Aasiriyān kuritthan
kadal thunivu udayar karkkum vannam karutthudane*

(Meaning): Adiyen, Vedānthāchāryan housed in this holy work (*Prabhandham*), the essential meaning (*Tathparyam*) of the Lord's *Gītha* in a manner that would both please the Lord's divine mind (*Thiruvullam*) and enable the devotee (*Bhaktha*) and One who seeks refuge with God (*Prapanna*) to learn these meanings with faith (*Shraddha*).

Swamy Desikan salutes the Lord, who blessed us with the teaching of *Gīta* (*Gītha Upadesha*) as the very Lord who is resting on Primordial Serpent (*Ādishesha*) at the Milky ocean with the lotus lady of auspicious attributes (*Sri Lakshmi*). That Great Lord (*Ksheerābdhi Nāthan*) incarnated as Lord Krishna, the dear friend and charioteer of Arjuna and blessed us with the profound *Gīthopanishad*.

Swamy Desikan informs us that the purpose of the creation of the *Prabhandham*, dealing with the quintessence of *Bhagavath Gītha* following the footsteps of Swamy Ālavanthār was to help one who seeks refuge with God (*Prapanna*) learn the code of Self-surrender (*Sharanāgathi Shastra*) with its major part, the great love of the Lord towards the devotees (*Maha vishvāsam*).

Swamy Desikan "signs off" as the composer of this sacred *Prabahndham* by identifying himself as the Master of the four Vedas, Vedānta and the Upanishad ("Nālmarai mouli āsiriyan).

Let everything be offered to Lord Krishna.
Sarvam Krishnarpanam asthu.