



WESLEY LA VIOLETTE

The Bhagavad Gita
An Immortal Song

A VERSE INTERPRETATION • CRITICAL READING EDITION

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song

Wesley La Violette

1894–1978

CRITICAL READING EDITION

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

Extremes and Moderations

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS: EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

EDITORIAL AND RIGHTS NOTE

This critical reading edition resets the complete prologue and all eighteen chapters of the 1945 first edition of *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song*. It is not a facsimile. The source scan governs wording, sequence, lineation, stanza divisions, internal headings, capitalization, and indentation.

The 1945 volume is in the public domain in the United States; the complete HathiTrust/Google Books witness is marked Public Domain. La Violette described the work as an interpretation rather than a translation. This edition makes no claim for it as a Sanskrit-language authority.

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ARCHIVAL IMAGES

A short visual record



Wesley La Violette in later life. Los Angeles Jazz Institute, Wesley LaViolette Collection.

THE BHAGAVAD

Gita

AN IMMORTAL SONG

AN INTERPRETATION
OF A SACRED EPIC

By

WESLEY LA VIOLETTE



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*Title page of the first edition of The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song, DeVorss & Co., 1945.
The digitization furniture has been cropped away.*

INTRODUCTION

Music, scripture, and the independent line

Wesley La Violette moved through worlds that are usually kept apart: conservatory modernism, religious mysticism, independent Los Angeles publishing, and the contrapuntal experiments that helped shape West Coast jazz. Trained as a composer, he became a dean, theory teacher, music publisher, and advocate for contemporary American composition in Chicago before settling in Southern California. There his private pupils included Jimmy Giuffre, Shorty Rogers, John Graas, and Frank Patchen. They carried his lessons in counterpoint, linear motion, and musical form into the writing rooms and bandstands of the 1950s. At the same time, La Violette was publishing books on love, consciousness, comparative religion, and the Bhagavad Gita. The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song is the most unusual meeting point of those careers. La Violette called it an interpretation, not a translation. He removes most Sanskrit names, identifies Krishna with Christ, and turns the dialogue into nearly two hundred pages of English verse organized by recurring phrases, three levels of indentation, and more than a hundred short internal movements. The result is historically revealing, spiritually earnest, and unmistakably a mid-century American recasting of an Indian scripture; its Christian universalism also shows the limits of the period's approach to religious difference. This edition resets the prologue and all eighteen chapters from the complete 1945 first edition. It preserves the source's lineation, stanza openings, stepped margins, italics, internal headings, and exact distinction among self, Self, and SELF, while removing scanning debris and correcting only unmistakable typographical damage. No facsimile page substitutes for the poem.

BIOGRAPHY

Composer, teacher, spiritual author

Names, birth, and the Pacific Northwest

Wesley La Violette was born January 4, 1894, in St. James, Minnesota, and grew up in Spokane, Washington. Library catalogues variously style his surname La Violette, LaViolette, and LaViolette; the fuller civil form Wallace Wesley LaViolette also appears in records. His published books and most professional accounts use Wesley La Violette, the form adopted in this edition. The surviving biographical record says little about his parents or childhood, but it consistently places his formative years in Spokane and his adult education in Chicago.

La Violette entered Northwestern University's School of Music and completed the four-year Bachelor of Music program in two years, graduating in 1917. The speed of that course suggests both unusually concentrated training and an already developed musical background. Northwestern later became the principal repository for his manuscripts, preserving material from 1913 through the year of his death.

War service and advanced study

After graduation La Violette served in France with the United States Army during the First World War. No unit history or service file was recovered in this research pass, and later biographical sketches do not say whether he performed military music or served in another capacity. His European service nevertheless interrupted the straight path from university training to a professional musical career.

Back in Chicago, he studied at the Chicago Musical College and received a doctorate in music in 1925. He subsequently became dean of the college and head of its department of theory and composition. Those posts established the two parts of his professional identity that would remain inseparable: he was a

composer in his own right and a teacher concerned with the craft and architecture of other people's music.

Chicago institutions and contemporary music

From 1933 to 1940 La Violette taught at the DePaul University School of Music. He also directed the DePaul University Press for American music, an operation founded to publish work by American composers. At a time when conservatory repertories and publishing channels still favored Europe, the press placed him inside a practical campaign to make contemporary American concert music visible and performable.

La Violette served as president of the Chicago chapter of the International Society for Contemporary Music. His own output included operas, symphonies, concertos, chamber music, and works for violin and piano. A later reference work, quoted by Northwestern's archive, describes the music as often atonal and contrapuntal but also broad-lined, rhythmic, conservative in form, and direct in presentation. That mixture—modern harmony, linear independence, and formal clarity—helps explain why his teaching proved useful to musicians who did not themselves write concert music.

His first substantial prose book grew directly from this institutional work. *Music and Its Makers: The Story of Musical Expression* appeared from the University of Knowledge in 1938; a revised or retitled version, *Music and the Great Composers*, followed in 1940. These books offered a general readership a history of musical expression and its major creators. *A Sonata for Violin and Piano* was published in 1937, and the Northwestern archive preserves a much larger body of scores than his printed bibliography suggests.

Southern California

La Violette left his DePaul posts around 1940 and settled in Southern California. There he taught privately and at the Los Angeles Conservatory, where his work extended beyond harmony and composition to lectures on philosophy, religion, and the arts. Los Angeles gave him a different kind of career: less centered on an academic office, more dispersed among private pupils, small publishers, spiritual study, and the region's rapidly changing professional music scene.

The move also placed him within the city's long-standing culture of comparative religion and metaphysical publishing. DeVorss & Company, located on South Grand Avenue, issued *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song* in 1945. La Violette's prologue makes his procedure explicit. To make the work intelligible to Western readers, he omits or freely interprets Indian names and symbols, aligns Krishna with Christ, and presents the scripture in English verse. He insists that the book is an interpretation rather than a translation. That distinction is essential: the volume is evidence of La Violette's religious and poetic thought, not a philologically reliable English Gita.

The Gita as American verse

The 1945 book is built as a long spiritual dialogue in eighteen chapters. Its typography is unusually musical. Lines move among three stepped left margins; passages gather into stanza-like units; more than one hundred italic subheadings mark changes of argument, voice, and emotional pressure. The verbal counterpoint among *self*, *Self*, and *SELF*—mortal personality, immortal soul, and universal mind—is announced in an author's note and sustained across the book. La Violette also imports Christian terms such as Christ, the Comforter, and the Kingdom of Heaven into the Gita's philosophical field.

Read now, those substitutions require historical caution. La Violette's universalism treats Hindu and Christian teachings as manifestations of the same spiritual truth, but it also recasts Indian scripture through a Western Christian vocabulary and removes much of its linguistic and cultural specificity. The book therefore belongs both to the American reception of Asian religions and to the history of California metaphysical literature. Its greatest formal interest lies in the way a composer makes doctrine audible: recurring statements return in altered positions, long arguments unfold as linked movements, and visual indentation supplies a score for emphasis and breath.

Teacher of the West Coast arrangers

La Violette's most durable public influence may have come through students whose names are better known than his own. Northwestern identifies Shorty Rogers, Jimmy Giuffre, John Graas, and Frank Patchen among his jazz pupils; other students listed in the archive include Roger Chapman, Boris Kremenliev, Frank Denke, Dan Morehouse, and Frank Asper. A Library of Congress dossier on Florence Price also names La Violette among the teachers from whom she studied orchestration and instrumental technique, linking him to another major history of American composition.

The connection to West Coast jazz was specific rather than merely social. A University of Maryland study of modernism and the making of West Coast jazz reports that Giuffre, Patchen, and Rogers studied with La Violette while he was teaching at the Los Angeles Conservatory. Their central subject was counterpoint. Rogers remembered examining Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart before the musicians carried baroque-flavored lines into pieces that opened into improvisation. The new writing was tested almost immediately by the Lighthouse musicians in front of live audiences.

Giuffre described the longer course of study in a 1955 interview. After seven years with La Violette, he was still working on homophonic and large forms, minute details of composition, and analytic listening that ran from Bach to contemporary jazz arrangers. A later jazz reference account says that the private study continued for fourteen years. La Violette did not teach a jazz style, and he did not claim to invent the West Coast sound. He supplied formal tools—independent lines, counterpoint, balance, and structural listening—that Giuffre and his peers adapted to their own ensembles.

Mysticism and later books

After *The Bhagavad Gita*, La Violette published a sequence of books that moved more fully into mysticism, spiritual psychology, and ethical philosophy. *The Creative Light* appeared in the late 1940s, followed by *The Crown of Wisdom* in 1949. Northwestern's finding aid states that *The Crown of Wisdom* was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature. No independent Nobel nomination record was located, so the statement is best treated as an archival claim rather than a verified award history.

Later titles include *The Song of the Angels* (1953), *The Wayfarer: An Interpretation of the Dhammapada* (1956), *Love and Live: A Philosophy of Love* (1969), *Wings Unfolding* (1971), and *The New Gita* (1973). Together they show that *An Immortal Song* was not a brief departure from music into religion. Comparative scripture, consciousness, love, and spiritual growth occupied the final three decades of his writing. The later *New Gita* also demonstrates that he returned to the Indian text, but it has not been collated with the 1945 version in this edition.

Collections, associations, and readers

La Violette's papers survive in two especially important collections. Northwestern University Music Library holds twenty-one boxes of music manuscripts and papers dating from 1913 to 1978. The collection is predominantly scores, with nonmusical papers, programs, certificates, clippings, books, a typescript, an article, and photographs. La Violette himself donated the material in 1974 and 1975, giving the archive an unusually direct provenance.

The Los Angeles Jazz Institute at California State University, Long Beach holds a Wesley LaViolette collection of recordings, books, scores, photographs, and papers. Its placement in a jazz archive reflects the afterlife of his teaching. The Institute's online collection page preserves a small formal portrait of the older composer, reproduced in the archival section of this volume. The two repositories divide his legacy in a revealing way: Northwestern emphasizes the concert composer and university teacher; Los Angeles preserves the figure remembered by jazz arrangers and musicians.

A copy of *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song* also appears in the reconstructed library records associated with Frank Lloyd Wright and Olgivanna Lloyd Wright. The surviving database entry does not prove a personal exchange between Wright and La Violette, but it places the book within another American modernist and spiritual reading network. The volume's publisher, DeVorss, and its Los Angeles address connected it to readers well beyond poetry or academic music.

Death and legacy

La Violette died July 29, 1978, in Escondido, California, at the age of eighty-four. By then his life had encompassed two world wars, the growth of American conservatory composition, the institutional modernism of the 1930s, Southern California's metaphysical publishing culture, and the emergence of a jazz language partly built by his pupils. Yet those careers were filed in different histories and his books gradually became scarce.

His legacy is clearest when those histories are reunited. The composer's interest in independent lines illuminates the stepped, recurring structures of the Gita; the spiritual author's belief in an underlying unity helps explain the broad comparative method of his teaching and writing; the teacher's resistance to stylistic boundaries gave working jazz musicians techniques they could transform rather than imitate. La Violette remains an imperfect interpreter of Indian scripture and an underdocumented American composer, but he is also a significant connective figure in mid-century Los Angeles—between sacred text and verse, Bach and the Lighthouse, conservatory form and improvisation.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA: AN IMMORTAL SONG

An interpretation of a sacred epic • 1945

La Violette's complete eighteen-chapter verse interpretation follows. The source's three-step visual lineation has been proportionally reset for the Green text block.

Prologue

In the literature of India there is a great epic poem known as the Mahabharata, in which the Bhagavad Gita is one of the priceless sections.

The theme of this story is the great war which was carried on between two factions of a large tribe that had common ancestors. Sovereignty of one of the smaller states was the bone of contention between the opposing parties. It was the familiar struggle between offensive and defensive warfare.

After a period of banishment from their homeland, an army of young princes, friends, sympathizers, and professional soldiers marched to battle against the older branch of the family.

One of the Pandu princes, Arjuna, by name, is the leader of one army. Having displayed nobility of character, and fortitude under persecution, he is accompanied in his war chariot by Krishna as his charioteer. Krishna is the supreme spirit (the same as Christ of the western world), and in this story He is incarnated, or made manifest, as the friend, companion, and teacher of the young prince of an earthly kingdom. Arjuna is generally accepted as the symbol of every seeker after truth.

According to my thought and understanding, the teachings of the historical Jesus are essentially similar to those found in the Gita; and, for that reason, I have taken the liberty of identifying Krishna, the divine teacher of the young Prince in the Gita, with the Christ, symbol of a spirit rather than an individuality.

Here the philosophy of the battle is told to the old blind king of the defenders, by a retainer named Sanjaya. The old king's nephew, Arjuna, is the hero of the narrative.

At the beginning of the battle, Arjuna is horrified to discover that it is a battle between relatives and friends, between love and hate, and he declares that he would rather die than defend himself against his own people. Though born into the warrior caste of India, and thereby obligated to fight when so ordered, he protests that kind of a call to duty. His dilemma is comparable to that of millions of persons who, over the centuries, fighting friend and foe, fight only in answer to duty. "To slay, or be slain," is not only the lament of the young Prince of the Pandus, it has been echoed and re-echoed as the heart cry

of mankind. It is the ever recurrent question of the conflict between light and darkness, between ignorance and intelligence; desire and duty; choosing whether our life here shall be lived as only part of an eternal experience, or whether we view it as an end in itself. How can Arjuna kill those he knows and loves, or even those he does not know, yet cannot hate?

The dialogue can be thought of as between the real and the ideal; between the human and the divine; as man talking to the divinity within man.

Krishna, with all the gentleness, all the discerning subtlety of the western Christ, explains to the dismayed youth his inescapable part in the drama of battle, using the battlefield only as a symbol of the larger arena of life, where ignorance, darkness, and intolerance struggle against intelligence, understanding, and light. Through the awakening of his soul-consciousness, the young Prince Arjuna, typifying every seeker after understanding, comfort, and truth, no matter who, or where he may be, plunges into life, into the battle, leading himself and his army to victory.

In the largest sense, the recounted story of the opening of the battle, and the following discussions and dialogue between the Prince, Arjuna, and his charioteer, Krishna, merely serve as a vehicle for the spiritual and philosophical teachings in the ancient epic. The principles are universal, neither Oriental nor Occidental alone, belonging to mankind.

All names and symbols are omitted, or freely interpreted. In order not to confuse the reader in the western world with the many Indian proper names in the original, and to clarify the teachings, this rendition of the Bhagavad Gita is presented in English verse as an interpretation and not as a translation.

When the dialogue opens, Prince Arjuna, filled with despair, is speaking to the Krishna, or Christ, by his side.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The earthly mind, or mortal self, is spelled self; the eternal, or immortal self, is written as Self; while the universal mind is spelled SELF.

Publication. The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic. Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 7-9.

CHAPTER 1

Despair

Alas, O Master:
Since I have seen
the mighty armies of our enemies,
 comprising a vast array
 of experienced fighting men
 whose names are already synonyms
 for bravery, cunning, and strength;

While on our side are gathered under
my command the greatest warriors of our people,
 the best of twice-born men,
 valiant, experienced, fully armed,
 with fevered, wildly running blood,
all devoted to me and to my cause,
 willing, and even anxious to risk
and renounce their lives that we might win,
that we and our children should live:

Alas, this army of ours,
though brave and under fine command,
 anxious to kill, or ready to be killed,
seems far too small, far too weak,
while the opposing host,
 confronting us with far more men,
 has greater strength in every way.

The battle roar

The ancient chief of our enemy
blew on his great battle-shell
 a vast sound like the lion's roar,
 arousing fearless courage in his men.

And, answering this tremendous roar
other shells and horns sounded at once,
myriads of drums and instruments
for warlike music blared tumultuous din
and stirred the enemy to high resolve.

Then, in brave response
and sounding mighty, defiant threats,
our battle instruments replied.

Standing in their great chariots of war,
trimmed with gold and brilliant, precious gems,
and drawn by milk-white horses,
stood the Lord and Master,
as incarnation of Divinity,
as God made manifest in man,
with our earthly Prince, (his student,)
sounding their huge trumpets with such mighty blasts
the air quivered and rocked
with shock from the vibrations.

And all the army joined in defiance,
and again the mightiest fighters blew
and beat their instruments until the sound
rose like the sea,
until a violent thunder swept the earth,
answering sound for sound
until the ground trembled in responsive,
rolling rhythms, and the enemy was filled
with terror, with dismay.

Then the noble leader, Prince,
seeing that the mighty enemy stood ready
to begin the fight, that, even then,
the arrows were already winging flight
toward him and his charioteer,
(knowing God stood at his side,)
said: "you drive my chariot so that it shall stand
between the battle lines
so I can see the faces of my enemies
who now begin this bloody fight."

When the chariot finally stood
between the opposing powers,
the Master told the Prince to look closely
on the faces of both enemies and friends
to see the mystery of hate.

The dismay of the Prince

To his dismay
he found them facing loved ones on both sides,
 relatives, teachers, playmates,
many more whose happiness, welfare, and life
were dear to him,
 standing opposed,
 eager for the fight,
brother seeking brother, father, son.
 While, back of him, only waiting his command
to join him in the struggle for liberty or death,
stood an array of others
 in the same relationship
 of friendship or of blood.
 Seeing all these tragic things
the young Prince was overcome with gloom
and dark despair;
 pity, compassion, tore at him,
with confusion in his mind
while despondency and sadness stormed at his heart.
 Sighing deeply, bitterly,
his words vibrant with sorrow,
he spoke to his charioteer,
 his Master, who stood beside him yet:
 “Now that I behold the faces,
see the forms of my kindred,
and many that I love,
 arrayed for battle against each other,
 all chafing for the fight,
knowing neither fear nor sorrow
 at this sight,
 my heart fails;
 my arms refuse to fight;
 my face is drawn with agony;
 my flesh burns with fever;
my brain whirls like wind
 and I can scarcely stand
while my bow and arrow
 slip uselessly from my hand.

Adverse omens threaten, fill the air,
and all around strange voices seem to speak
to me so that I am overcome
 with indecision,
 bewildered,
 confused.

The problem

What good can come
from killing relatives, loved ones, and friends?
Nor do I want the glory of such victory,
nor long for kingdoms, for dominion,
 enjoyment, or pleasure,
 or even life itself!

These earthly things of vanity are vain,
most unworthy, undesirable;
 nor would I seek the kingship
of three kingdoms if they were won
as reward for killing kinsmen,
 beloved companions, comrades,
 and friends.

Even if they wish to take my life,
or, possibly, might actually kill me,
 still I do not want to fight,
 to kill, or harm them.

If I should kill my relatives and friends,
though I am trained to fight,
 belonging to the warrior caste,
what happiness or pleasure could I have?
 If I destroyed them
 remorse would always live with me
and sorrow be my constant friend.

Therefore, it seems to me the truth is
that we should not kill our kinsmen,
nor battle, save in self-defense;
for how can we be happy,
 now or hereafter,
if we know that we are guilty

of having killed our fellow-man,
our own kind,
and those of our own race?

Are we justified,
is there excuse for us
in doing all these horrors?
simply because of the ignorance
of others, those who are depraved,
bloodthirsty with greed,
and mad with might and power,
who see no evil in shedding the blood
of relatives and friends,
the helpless, those innocent of hate,
who see whole families destroyed.

With our supposed intelligence,
supposed enlightenment,
can we not learn
to turn away from error,
ignorance, renounce such evil,
such horrible sin?

We have been taught
that ancient virtue lies in the family;
that, destroying the virtues,
traditions of the family, we corrupt
the people, with adulteration and vice
the entire race is overwhelmed.

And with these people who are killed
destruction follows their destroyers
who themselves are then destroyed.

Despair

Pain and sorrow, degradation,
tragedy and woe are mine
if we commit this savage crime
of murdering relatives and kindred, friends,
for the vain bauble of dominion,
for the vain lust for power!

I would rather bare my own breast

to the weapons of our enemies
and let them drink deep
of royal blood
and drain the fountain of my heart;

I would rather wait their coming,
meet their onslaught without arms,
than commit this beastly crime,
this dastardly betrayal of ideals,
this murder of my flesh and blood.
Surely my own life is a small price
to pay for freedom from such sin.

Having spoken from his heart
the young Prince sat back
upon the seat of his chariot
and threw away his bow and arrows,
his mind overcome by grief,
his heart consumed by despondency,
and gloom.

Publication. The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic. Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 13–19.

CHAPTER 2

The Call of Duty

The student continued:

My heart is weighted
with the vice of faintness,
with heavy anguish,
with indecision from despair.

Confusion as to duty
wraps my mind
and darkness blankets every way
I would be turning.

Which is better?
to conquer, or be conquered;
to slay in battle, or be slain?

As suppliant,
disciple seeking guidance,
teach me with the light
of your understanding.

Let no cowardice
close the door of heaven that lies in me;
nor impotence withhold my arrow
on that day.

* Beginning with verse seven in the original.

My senses wither,
and my arid soul grows parched
while craving wisdom's sea.

Nor should this anguish be assuaged
by shedding blood,
by brutal force,
or even by unrivalled monarchies
attained while here on earth;
or, possibly, the sovereignty
of Shining Ones
whose golden light weaves shutters
round my heart
so neither hurt nor harm

can enter there.

Grief is needless

Then the Teacher answered:

You grieve for those
who have no need of grief;
for those whose immortal journeys
wing them to that realm
in which there are no vestments of sorrow,
nor chains of death,
where all are free,
unshackled,
where all are robed in light,
where destiny fulfils itself
in flaming light.

If you were swift
on wisdom's swiftly running feet;
if understanding spread her rays
in all the dark crevices of your being;
if you had ears
responding to the wondrous words of light,
you would not grieve:
not grieve for earth-born things,
nor for the things celestial still to come;
nor cling to grief
for those beloved
among the living or the dead.

Neither the proud nor humble,
nor mighty princes,
nor the lowliest
among the men of earth
shall ever cease to be

now
or hereafter.

As we who dwell within the flesh
experience childhood in that bound body
of the earth,
pass on to youth,

and wither with old age,
so shall we pass
to still another dwelling,
a spirit knowing neither shackles,
failure, nor decay.
If we are steadfast,
nor spurn the heaven-sent ray of light,
nor slumber in our souls,
we shall not grieve for those
who change their mortal garments
for the unfettered wings
of immortality.

The contacts of all material, earthly things,
that give us cold and heat, pleasure and pain,
unbidden come and go,
impermanent phantasms haunting time,
flowing through our feverish grasp,
must be released,
bravely endured,
until they drift into the dark
forgotten memory.

The man whom these dark things of earth
do not torment, whose mind is steadfast,
balanced in pain or joy,
unchanged in sorrow, ecstasy,
such a soul is fitted to dwell
in mansions of eternal light,
ready for immortality.

Reality endures

The unreal has no being,
no entity;
the real has always been,
nor does it ever cease to be.
The truth about the unreal and the real
long has been perceived
by seers of the essence of all things,
though often shining faintly

in the gloom of ignorance,
 confusion, and immediacy
 of mortal thought.

Know that THAT, Reality,
is indestructible;
 whomsoever it pervades,
 shot through with light,
shall find his death only release,
 nor can another work destruction
of such a One
 for already he has taken on a body
 beyond Time.

These bodies of the embodied One,
these mortal houses for immortal souls
that are eternal, indestructible,
 and immeasurable,
these bodies only are finite.
 Therefore fight,
 unearthly child of earth.

If you regard yourself as slayer,
or think yourself as slain,
 you are ignorant,
 ignorant of eternal laws
for neither is one slain
 nor does he slay.

He is not born,
nor does he ever die;
 never having been
he never ceases any more;
 unborn,
 perpetual,
 eternal,
yet ancient long before man knew time,
he is not slain
 when the body is laid low,
 nor slaughtered by the blow
 of friend
 or foe.

The soul is indestructible

He who knows the soul
is indestructible, undiminishing,
perpetual, unborn,
forever vast,
beyond imagined radiance
and light,
how can you say
that that man slays,
or how can he be caused
to be slain?

As a man
casting off worn-out garments
is not left naked
but takes on new ones,
richer, finer than before;
so does the dweller in the body,
living on this earthly plane,
cast off his worn-out body
and enter into others that are new
wherein the heart-beat of the world
shall throb
and lift eternal tides
of love
and destiny.

Weapons cannot harm his eternal Self
nor fire burn his soul,
nor waters wash their waves on him,
nor does the parching wind
dry and blow his soul away.

If beyond the hurt of weapons,
beyond the burning fire or flame,
and if, indeed, he can be
neither washed nor blown away
as leaves before the autumn wind;
if he endures perpetually,
is all-pervasive, everywhere,

immovable, ancient before a timeless Time:

Unmanifest, beyond imagined thought,
immutable beyond the furthest rim of change,
yet always calling at the gateway of your heart,
if, therefore, thus you know his ageless soul,
you should not weep, nor grieve in darkness,
nor grope for glimmering, vanished fears.

The ageless soul

Or, if you think of him
as being constantly reborn on earth
continuously released by death,
forever turning homeward,
even then, O mighty warrior,
no grief, no joy, no pain
should shut your door to life,
nor shadow shroud your sight.

For death comes surely for the born,
as certainly shall come rebirth for those who die;
therefore, because the turning wheel
turns endlessly,
inevitably,
predestined with impending destiny,
grieve not if death comes early
or birth shall seem too late.

Beings are unmanifest in their beginning,
made manifest a moment here on earth,
again unmanifest beneath the sorcery of death;—
strange ships upon a stranger sea,
briefly haunting vast horizon's rim.
What reason, then, is there for dirge?
for music's sorrow, pain, lament?

This dweller, sinewed with immortal Self,
asleep, awake, in every one,
forever in the body of mankind,
forever swirling in the earthborn song,
forever whispering disembodied hope,
invulnerable before the wrack of fate

serenely waits.
Therefore we should not grieve
for any soul or creature, any thing
for nothing is ever really lost
and no one is ever really alone.

Further, looking to your duty,
you should not fear,
you should not tremble with anxiety;
for, to a warrior,
and who is there on earth
who never needs to fight
a challenge made to liberty and right?
nothing is more welcome than a righteous war,
for preservation of life, intelligence, and light!

Death is but a key

Happy, then, that warrior
who obtains such a fight,
offered unsought, offered for the right,
who finds it but an open door to heaven
where all the seeming lost are found,
sweet youth restored perpetually,
where death is but the key
to life,
to victory.

But if you will not carry on
this righteous war where right
shall be found greater than all might,
and, disavowing duty
cast away your honor,
then evil is incurred.

Men will recount
your perpetual dishonor,
and, to you who have been
so highly esteemed,
such loss,
such infamy,
far exceeds such death.

The great generals of war,
the leaders who depend on you,
will think you fled from battle
because of fear,
 terror blinding you to duty,
 and you
who were so highly thought of then by them
will by them be lightly held.

Many unkind words,
many hateful lies will be spoken
 by your enemies,
slandering your strength,
 slandering without regret,
 without shame;
what could give you greater pain,
 what greater loss?

If in the line of duty you are slain,
suddenly you cross the threshold,
are released, and heaven is obtained;
 if not, and you should fight so passionately
that you would win the victory
 for truth and liberty,
then you could enjoy the earth;
therefore, stand up, be resolute,
armored by all of truth and light,
 stand up,
 be unafraid to fight!

Taking all things as equal,
pleasure or pain, gain or loss,
defeat or victory,
 inviolate within your self,
gird for battle,
 follow only duty's call,
whether slain or slaying
avoid the curse of cowardice and ignorance.

The ageless teaching

This teaching set forth here

is in accordance with those Masters
who have studied evolution on the earth
for centuries. All great teachers
of all ages have taught these same truths;
and so, imbued with all the power of knowledge,
with wisdom, you shall no longer be
a slave to action,
 a slave to self,
 nor slave to any other man.

 In this there is no loss of effort,
no renunciation,
 no transgression of the law.
Even if your knowledge of these truths
should seem so small, it will protect you
from the power of great fear
 and shield you from despair.

 The Oversoul of Reason, Mind,
is many-branched, yet single-pointed,
illimitable, endless are its thoughts.

 The flowery speech
spoken by the ignorant, unwise,
who cling to words
and say there is nothing else beyond desire,
longing after heavenly bliss,
who offer only birth upon rebirth
as the only, ultimate reward,
teachings filled with sacred liturgy
and rites for gaining joy,
dominion, empire, sovereignty;
 the thought and life of those
who are misled by such false faith in deeds,
who cling to pleasures, fight for power,
are not inspired with divinest strength
 nor led by wisdom's light.

The forms of energy

 Some teachings teach
three attributes as forms of energy:
 rhythm, harmony, and light,

with their three opposites;
but live within these attributes
if you are seeking truth;
beyond the pairs of opposites
always steadfast in purity,
indifferent to the things of earth;
full of the Self
as part of the great OVERSELF,
aware that your own mind
is part of that of God.

To those themselves who teach,
whose souls already see the light,
these teachings are as useful
as is a tank of water
placed within a place
already full.

Your concern
should be with action only,
never with its fruits;
counting neither gain nor loss
do not let the fruit of action
be your motive or desire;
nor even to inaction
should you become attached.

Perform your duty,
let your action always be
in rhythm and in harmony
with Universal Mind,—
renouncing all attachments
to material things, to conquest, and to fame,
and always balanced evenly
in failure and success.

Union with Self

Action done for its reward
is far lower than that rarer union
with discerning Self.
Then take refuge in Pure Reason,

Infinite Mind, the source of all;
for those who work for fruit alone
should be pitied, not condemned.

United to the Infinite
you abandon all the thought of deeds
as being either good or evil,
abandon all desires for their fruits;
therefore, cling to union,
seeking, finding skill in everything you do.

The Sages,
those wise ones who have found
their union with the Infinite Intelligence,
renounce all fruit which action brings,
and, liberated from the bonds
of birth and death,
they progress to ever widening knowledge,
happiness, to bliss, as well as spiritual power.

When your mind shall have won
its freedom from the tangle of delusion,
from the snares of creed,
then you shall rise to indifference
as to that which has been
and to that which shall be heard.

When your mind,
bewildered by confusion
from innumerable Sacred Words,
shall stand immovable, serene,
in harmony with destiny,
in rhythm with the Universal Mind,
then you shall rise,
attain to union with the Self,
with Knower and the knowledge known.

If the student asks:
What is the mark of him
who is stable of mind,
steadfast in his discernment?
how does the stable-minded talk,

how does he sit,
how walk?

Then does the Blessed Teacher reply:
When a man abandons all desires
of the heart, and is satisfied
within himself by the Self,
then is he called stable in mind.

Freedom of mind

He whose mind is free
from anxiety amid pains,
indifferent in the midst of pleasure,
loosed from passion, fear, and anger,
is called a Sage,
silent within the silence of the Self
and wise within the wisdom of the All.

If on every side
he is without attachments,
untouched by all that happens, fair or foul,
and neither likes nor dislikes,
his understanding is well poised.

As a tortoise
draws his limbs in on all sides,
the man whose understanding is well poised
withdraws his senses from the objects
of all sense, from the deception of desire.

If rejected,
objects of the senses turn away;
and yet, for him who lives within the body,
for whom desire still remains,
the relish still remains
until his vision sees the Mind Supreme.

When the senses grow excited,
even when a man is wise,
even though he is striving,
impetuously the senses strive
more strongly still and dominate,

carry his mind away.

Having restrained them all,
he should sit quietly in harmony,
with Self the final goal;

for him, whose senses have been mastered
the understanding grows and is well poised.

Man, musing on the objects of his senses,
conceives attachment for these things,
these things that smoulder in the dark
and perish with his days;

from his attachment comes desire;
from desire anger is brought forth;

From anger comes delusion;
from delusion comes confused memory;
by confused memory Reason is destroyed;
and from destruction of his Reason
each man perishes.

Knowledge and Peace

But the Self that has been disciplined,
moving among sense-objects with the senses free
from attraction and repulsion,
knows a peace that nothing else can give.

In that Peace
for him arises the extinction of all pain,
for him whose heart has found peace
the Reason also soon obtains its poise.

There is no Pure Reason without harmony,
nor for the non-harmonized is concentration possible,
for him who has no concentration there is no peace,
and without peace how can there be happiness?

Such roving senses
as the mind yields to
hurry away his understanding,
just as a gale hurries away
a ship upon the waters of the storm.

The night

When that which is the night for all,
the silent sleeping in dark solitude,
he who sees the vision lies awake
weaving threads of life and truth;
while when the blind awake
thinking they see light of day,
theirs is illusion
for the Sage who sees it
as the seamless garment of the night.

Through understanding he finds Peace,
into him do all desires flow
as rivers to the larger sea,
which, though filled with water,
its center still remains unmoved,—
without understanding one is disturbed
by every wave on which desires blow.

He who has forsaken all desire
and presses onward, free from yearnings,
selfless, without false pride,
that soul arrives at Peace.

This is the Eternal state,
O son of man, joint-heir with the divine:
Having reached this Oneness with the Source of All
no one is bewildered
nor walks the way alone.

If even at the hour of death
the mind awakens to its union with the Infinite,
Supreme Intelligence,
then shall it find unending Peace
eternally a part of the Eternal ONE.

Publication. The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic. Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 20–35.

CHAPTER 3

Harmony by Action

Then the pupil said:
If you think that knowledge
is superior to action,
that thought so far surpasses deed,
why do you then impose this war on me,
this action that I think seems terrible?

With these perplexing words
you only blur, confuse my understanding,
for now I neither know the road to take,
nor the thoughts that you would have me think;
therefore, tell me with the clearest certainty
the single way by which I may attain
knowledge, harmony, and bliss.

The twofold path

The blessed Lord replied:
On your mortal plane there is a twofold path,
as I have said before, O sinless one:
that of harmony by knowledge,
and that of harmony by deed.
Man does not win freedom from action
by abstaining from activity,
nor by the mere renunciation of life
does he rise to perfection, or perpetual bliss.

Nor can anyone attempt to stop
the shuttling loom, even for a moment
of time, and remain really actionless;
for helplessly, each one is driven
to an action which is born of qualities,
qualities within his nature and inherent.

For he who sits controlling every deed,
while in his mind he dwells
on the treasured objects of his senses,
and is confused, misled on every path,

that one is called a hypocrite.

Consecration of energy

But he who, on the Altar of Service,
consecrates all energy of action
in obedience to Law,
and follows Duty where it leads,
without attachment,
in kindly, simple service, giving self,
finds himself by action
linked harmoniously with Overself.
Such a man is worthy of his Source.

Then perform your duty, fill your time
with right action as you see it,
for action is superior to inaction,
and, inactive, your existence,
even your earthly life and home
would not be possible.

The world is bound by action,
unless performed for sacrifice,
for that sake then, without attachment,
illuminated by the light of Universal Mind,
let all your actions be performed with love,
as duty,
gifts you lay upon the altar of mankind.

Sacrifice is born

In long forgotten past of ancient times,
beyond beginning and without end,
mankind and sacrifice were brought together
from the matrix of the world.

And from this Cosmic Mind,
the womb of all creation,
Itself Creator and Created,
do we ourselves create,
this One, the giver of desires.

With sacrifice you nourish all the Shining Ones
whose light is on your path,

and may they nourish you;
thus nourishing each other,
transforming life and death,
you reap the highest good.

For, nourished by your sacrifice,
the Shining Ones bestow on you
the enjoyments you desire.

A thief is he
who takes the gifts they give, enjoying,
yet, without returning Them a thing.

The righteous, guileless ones,
who eat the remnants of that sacrifice,
are freed from bondage to all sin;
but the careless, selfish, ignorant,
preparing food for their own sakes,
must eat the fruits of ignorance
and live their lives in darkness
or in thralldom to their misery and woe.

The Life-Force

Creatures grow on food;
food is grown by rain and sun
upon the seed and soil;
Nature lives and is reborn through sacrifice,
and out of action from life-force
does all its sacrifice and bitter-sweet arise.

Then know that out of knowledge action grows,
and knowledge comes from the Imperishable.

Therefore, the Eternal, Universal Mind,
always present everywhere, pervading everything,
is ever present then in sacrifice.

He who while on earth
will not tread his revolving wheel
is ignorant of Life, of Destiny,
rejoicing only in the flesh and its inconstancy;
imperfect, incomplete while here,
and vexed, frustrated everywhere,

his life is barren, lived in vain.

Happiness in Self

But he whose life rejoices
in a union with the Overself,
and with the Life-of-All is satisfied,
within the SELF finds happiness, content,
for him there is no slavery to men
nor bondage to the transient things of Time.

For him there is no interest,
no winter of anxiety for things
he does while in the commonwealth of earth,
nor any in the things not done,
nor does a thing of his,
an object for the senses,
depend on any being here.

Therefore, detached,
above the possessive lure of things,
those gems set in the diadem of earth,
constantly performing action which is duty,
by deeds done so objectively
man truly reaches the measureless, Supreme.

Many others have indeed attained perfection
by action done within the bounds of Duty;
so should you perform all works
with your eye upon the welfare of mankind.

All that every great man does is done
through power greater than his own,
that, others can, and other men shall do;
the standards he sets up,
creates through faith and love toward the higher Self,
upon that faith the people build,
and in that light and love must mankind walk.

Christ incarnate

There is nothing in the universe
that need be done by Me,

your Master and your Guide,
nothing remains unreached in earth, or heaven,
that I might wish to be attained;
yet I mingle in man's every thought,
in work and deed,
and walk the weary roads with men.

For if I never mingled on the earth
nor knew the weariness of flesh,
nor felt the thorns of sorrowed heaviness
pricking every beat of breaking hearts,
men all around would follow Me with ignorant
inactivity,
their stars of night would then be shackled by the day,
My path would then be theirs.

These worlds would fall in ruin and desolation
without my labors in their behalf,
without the gift of grace
falling like dew from the Divine.
I should confound confusion among all men,
destroying those that now I seek to save.

As the ignorant man must act
because of his belief in clay,
in action as an aim within itself;
so should the wise man act,
happily, without attachment to the deed,
his shining goal the welfare of the world.

Let no wise man unsettle the dark mind
of those so ignorantly attached to faith in works;
but acting now in harmony with Universal Law,
let every deed be made alluring,
always knowing that within each man
exists the power of Deity that is his soul.

The gifts of Nature

All actions spring from attributes within,
the earthly gift of Nature to God's own.
The lower self, deluded by base pride,
a beggar at the door of Time,

boasts: "It is I, I the doer of the deed,
mine the action I alone have done."

But he, O mighty-armed,
who knows the essence of relations
between inherent qualities
and functions of sense-objects,
is not attached, is spiritually set free,
and so has inner peace,
exalted, deep serenity.

Those deluded by the qualities of things
become attached to the functions
of those qualities, instead of seeing them
as experiences for instruction of the soul,
as manifesting Form of the World-Mind, Idea.

The man of perfect knowledge
should not unsettle him, the foolish one,
whose knowledge still remains imperfect.

Surrendering all actions to ME,
the Lord and Law of Life,
with all your thoughts at rest
on the unchanging, supreme SELF,
from hope, and consuming egoism freed,
and of mental fever cured,
engage in battle,—
in the sacred struggle for the right
in which, I tell you, you must conquer
or be slain.

Those who always live
in this teaching of Mine,
filled with faith in Supreme Mind,
with flowers and fruit from Wisdom's tree,
and free from bickering, bigotry, and creed,
they too are liberated,
freed from actions that forge chains,

Those who grow arrogant,
querulous at my teaching,
and do not act upon it,

senseless, deluded in all knowledge,
fettered by their ignorance,
know that these mindless ones are fated
to return to earth,

The enlightened man

Even the enlightened man
behaves according to his inner heritage;
all beings follow nature from within,
then of what avail shall be restraint?

Within the darkened senses of illusion
there buds and flowers affection
or aversion for all objects of desire,
let no one come under dominion
of this deceiving pair of opposites;
they are obstructions on the thorny path
that leads to Knowledge and to Peace.

It is better to accept one's own duty
though destitute of apparent merit,
than the duty of another well discharged;
better, death in discharging one's own duty;
for the duty of another is a snare,
a chasm filled with danger.

The struggling aspirant inquired:
But what is the nerveless, inner force
that seems beyond resistance or control,
that drags a sodden man reluctantly,
against the protest of a voice within,—
blindly compelling him to sin?

The Blessed Lord replied:
It is desire,
it is wrath
begotten by a quality of vibration;
all consuming is its fever,
all polluting is its venom,
eclipsing everything with night,
know this desire as your foe on earth.

As a flame is enveloped by smoke,
and a mirror is by dust,
as an embryo is wrapped by the caul,
so is the universe enveloped by desire.

Wisdom is enveloped
by this constant foe of the wise
in the capricious form of false desire,
entrancing, and insatiable as a flame.

The finite senses, mind, and reason
are said to be the seat of all desire;
when these illusions envelope wisdom,
the spirit living in the house of flesh
becomes bewildered, stumbles on its way.

Therefore, master the senses first,
slay this thing of ignorant desire
that enslaves knowledge
and is destructive of wisdom.

It is said that the senses are great;
and greater than the senses is the mind:
and greater than the mind is the reason;
but that which is greater than the reason
is HE, the ONE Supreme Mind of ALL.

Thus understanding Him
as greater than the Reason,
restraining mortal self by the immortal Overself,
slay, O mighty-armed, the hidden foe within
in finite form, deceiving through desire,
deceptive, difficult to overcome.

Publication. The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic. Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 36–45.

CHAPTER 4

Spiritual Understanding

The Blessed Master said:
This imperishable truth of inner harmony
I have told to many men before your birth.
And many times again have they declared it
to each other, to their children.

From highest Spirit Power
to wise Kings, and men of less degree,
my teachings of the Truth were taught.
During the greatest ebb and flow of time
this law of vibrant harmony,
through alteration, falsity,
through lust for power,
this light grew dim, burned low,
often deteriorated in the race of man.

Today this secret teaching, these timeless truths
of Everlasting Principle, the science of the ETERNAL,
have been declared to you by Me,
for you are my disciple,
My understanding friend; these immensities,
these mysteries are the Supreme Secret of the World.

Then the disciple answered:
Since you were born upon this earth
after those you said you taught
from the beginning, before Time,
then how am I to understand
you taught these truths
before you yourself were born?

Remembrance

The Master gently said:
Many times have I been born,
a myriad lives have been left behind by me,
and also many of your own,
beloved seeker after Truth.

Our minds have been a circle of existence
continuous, unbroken,
perpetually revolving on the Wheel of Time,
our souls awakening with each dawn
whether we were here or there,
a blessed resurrection of the Self.

I remember all my endless births and lives
as cycles of awareness and forgetting;
while, for you the centuries of memory
are not recalled, have not awakened yet.

When even still unborn, being above the Law,
brooding on the unreal and transitory nature
of all material forms produced by Thought,
compared with the eternal Reality of Mind,
my imperishable SELF,
crucible of the Divine Overself,
decreed each birth a cycle of experience here
as a gift through my own Power of Thought
to produce the illusion of existence in the flesh.

Whenever there is loss of light,
decay of wisdom and of righteousness,
chaos, and vice, confusion
between the Spirit and the forms it takes,
between material and its Eternal Maker,
then I, Myself, am born, incarnated again
to teach the wisdom of the abiding Law,
to destroy error, evil, injustice,
to light the many paths of Truth
which finally lead to sublime unity in One.

For the protection of the wise,
for the destruction of ignorance and the ignorant,
to disclose Nature's law,
ceaselessly I interchange my bodies and my forms,
and I am endlessly reborn from age to age
as Master and beloved Sage.

Release from rebirth

For him who knows my Essence,

My divine birth and action
in its deepest meaning, clearest forms,
 having finally left his mortal house
he need not come to earth again,
 need not re-embody on this plane;
but comes to dwell with Me, immutable,
eternal Teacher, Guide, and Friend.

Freed from hate and passion, from desire,
from fear and anger then set free,
filled with eternal light from Me,
taking refuge in Me, in Deathless Mind,
purified in wisdom's sacred fire,
 many have entered into my Immortal Being,
 the Consciousness of Immensity.

But whatever way men seek for Me,
by that path I seek and welcome them,
 for the path men take from every side,
the road that leads from everywhere is Mine.

There is no road beyond that of the Self,
no highway hidden from Omniscient Mind.

They who long and seek after success
 in action while on earth
 worship the Shining Ones;
for in the brief space of man's span
 within the world of men
success is born of action,
 the reward of deeds.

The attributes

All the races, tribes, and castes
and the classes of men were created by Me.
In spite of the different distribution of their qualities,
of attributes, actions, and forms of energy;
know they emanate from Me, the changeless,
 even though the Overself, the Supreme Mind
is actionless, inexhaustible, and without qualities.

Nor do actions have effect on Me,
nor do I seek their rewards or fruit:

So he who knows the essence of the changeless Me
as the unlimited, eternal SELF,
grows neither limited nor bound
by actions of the earthly self.

Having known these truths of old
our forefathers, ever seeking deliverance
from the burden of mortality,
performed actions unattached to fruits;
therefore, with the same purpose,
with the same understanding,
you also should perform your duty,
and reap your own reward.

“What is action, what inaction?”
Even the wise are perplexed by this.

And so I will explain to you
the action which, if you but know and do
you shall also find release
from bondage to all evil and be set free.

Discrimination

It is needful to discriminate
between the action that is lawful
and that which is unlawful,
and between them and inaction;
discernment is so difficult
and so mysterious is the path.

He who has discerning eyes
to see action in inaction,
or inaction in activity,
he is wise among mankind,
within himself has found his harmony,
and even while he follows duty's call
his activities are purged by Wisdom's Flame.

He whose works are loosed
from the needs and influence of desire,
transcendent over earthly things,
whose actions are consumed
by wisdom's burning fire,

the wise have called that man a Sage.

For having given up attachment
to the fruit of action, always content,
he walks in solitude, yet never walks alone,
nowhere seeking refuge,
nowhere seeking fame,
his Real Self never doing anything
unless it's done in duty's name.

Hoping for nothing save instruction
from his work and actions here;
in full control of body, mind, and self,
having abandoned greed and wars of conquest,
lust for power,
free alike from like and from dislike, from hate,
performing action with the physical alone;
he does not sin in thought or deed,
for duty is his daily guide,
while Love and Light supply his every need.

Content with everything obtained,
unfettered from each pair of opposites,
with neither hate, envy, nor jealousy,
balanced in failure or success,
quiet within, though active in the outer self,
he is not bound by earth's activity,
for him the fight is won,
that man is free.

Of one for whom attachments
have dissolved or died,
his Self in harmony with SELF,
his thoughts ineffably at rest
within the wisdom of the MIND,
his works are sacrifices to mankind
and action for itself then melts away.

Timeless offerings

Only the timeless can be brought
as offering to the ETERNAL ONE;

and he who transcendently perceives
the ETERNAL LIGHT vibrating in everything,
and in his action only acts for the endless MIND,
 he alone becomes united with that LIGHT,
all others remaining bound within the world of forms.

Some who live illuminated lives
proffer divine sacrifice to the Shining Ones;
while others sacrifice only by pouring
sweet, sacrificial gifts of self
into the fire of the infinite ETERNAL.

Some pour hearing, and the other senses,
into the sacrificial fires of restraint;
some pour sound, and other objects of sense,
into the fires of the sense as sacrifice.

Into that fire kindled by wisdom's light
in oneness with the higher Self
attained by discipline and self-control,
some pour the oil of sacrifice
from all the functions of the senses
and all activities of earthly life.

Yet some give the sacrifice of wealth,
offering an ascetic way of life,
 the sacrifice of meditation
offering silent study and knowledge patiently
 acquired,
with fasting, concentration, and effectual vows;

While others sacrifice
the outgoing breath in the incoming,
and the incoming in the outgoing,
restraining the flow in both
the outgoing and incoming breaths,
solely absorbed in the practice of control.

The sacrificial spirit

Some sacrifice their whole existence here
to others, or to find the breath of life.
All these seeking union with the Overself

and knowing the need of sacrificial spirit
have, by whatever sacrifice, been given light
destroying ignorance and night.

Partaking of those things that partake of
immortality
they go to the ETERNAL, beyond earth's transient
forms.

This unending, changeless world of Spirit, world
of Mind,
is not for him who in his ignorance
will never walk the road of sacrifice.

Many and various are the forms of sacrifice
that mankind spreads before ETERNAL MIND.

If you know that all these forms
are born of action, born of need to see,
born of desire to win peace,
then indeed you shall be free.

However, better than the sacrifice
of any objects, any rites,
is the offering of wisdom, golden Light.

For all actions, in their total sum,
give Wisdom, Knowing Spiritually.

The essence

Learn this lesson from your teacher,
learn by study, by service to mankind.

The Wise Ones, seers of all the ages
who see the essence of all things,
will aid and lead you in the paths of light.

Wait patiently for every need to be supplied
for when the pupil is prepared
the Master will appear.

And when you have acquired
these divine secrets that you seek
you shall strike the chains from error,
from confusion, from misunderstanding;
for by this way of understanding

you will see all beings as a part of SELF,
One Life, Eternal Source,
and so divinely rest in Me.

Even if your blindness has been great,
and you have been the greatest of transgressors,
yet you shall be carried without harm
out of darkness, above the sea of sin
upon the wings of Light and Truth.

As the flame reduces wood to ashes
which are carried far upon the wind,
so does the fire of Knowledge and Truth
convert to ashes all the harvest
of every ignorant action, every sin.

The flame of Wisdom

Truly, within this world
there is no purifying flame
like that of wisdom's fire.

It burns away the dross of baser self
and its transforming light
shall lead to union with Reality.

The man who has abundant faith
and who has won the mastery over self,
won disenchantment from the senses,
has won wisdom and unfoldment,
and swiftly goes along the path
to Me, to Supreme Peace.

But the blind egoist, and those with meagre faith
do not find even the beginning of the path,
and with their doubting selves go to their fate;
with faith obscured and filled with doubts
there never can be happiness or peace,
neither in this world
nor in the one to come.

He who has won freedom
from slavery to activity
by gaining harmony with SELF,

and with wisdom has pierced illusions
and all the mists of doubt;
 actions never bind or hinder him
for he is unattached, unfettered, free.

 Therefore, with the brightly gleaming sword
of wisdom from the ALL,
with one mighty, cleaving blow
 cut the bonds of unbelief and doubt,
 slay desire, and ignorance born of self.
Arise, in union with the ETERNAL ONE:
 perform your own predestined task;
 stand up,
 be unafraid.

Publication. *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic.* Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 46–55.

CHAPTER 5

Renunciation

Then, again, the earth-born Prince
said to the Blessed Lord:

You always speak in paradoxes,
of all actions and their fruits;
and then, also, you praise
the service one can offer
through actions for mankind.

Of these two ways of harmony with Self,
which is the better?

Which gives greater mastery?
Like clear water in a pool,
without obscurity of words,
tell me clearly,
ending my confusion, gloom,
for the need burdening my heart,
end my doubt.

The Master of the Kingdom of the Spirit
answered:
and Service through Action
shed light upon the secret path,
deliver the inner man from captivity,
both lead to highest radiance and joy.

But, let me make it clear to you:
of the two, harmony
won through service to the human family
gives greater vision, clearer light,
is preferable to Renunciation of Action;

Right Action weaves a shining web
preferable to Inaction weaving ruin.

Though even here,
in using these terms of seeming right and wrong,
of Action and Inaction,
these words that cloud your day
and vaguely haunt your night,
you must choose wisely,
patiently to find the path to take.

Spiritual freedom

He who has reached the higher stage,
renouncing all rewards of deeds,
who does not seek labor
nor does he run away from it;
 free from the pairs of opposites
he neither hates the one
nor yearns with desire for the other,
for him wisdom has been born;
 he it is who lives in crystal harmony;
 his spirit vibrant with all life.

Children in the labyrinth to Truth,
blindly confusing dark with light,
sometimes confuse renunciation
and performance of right action
as being different, as though
there could be fruit without a tree.

Sages know action and reward
as identical, the fruit is not greater
than the tree, nor the tree
greater than the fruit it bears.

So he sees beneath the surface
of all things, receives the fruits of wisdom
both from the performance of right action
and the renunciation of activity:

 Seed and tree,
 harvest of flowers and fruit
all are one, all moulded for eternity.

Service

But, O student, eager for the core of Truth,
it is not simple to attain to harmony
 through renunciation of action,
unless you also find your Self through service,
learn to study, reach, and know your soul.

 Aware of Self,
 your walls of ignorance fall,
the temporal flows through every deed

into the ETERNAL, Universal Life of ALL.
Purified of selfish aims,
and though he lives and moves
within the realm of sense;
he sees and hears,
feels, smells, and eats,
moves, sleeps, and breathes;
the wise man always knows that left alone
he can do nothing of himself.

The mirror

In the earth-bound world of senses
the self and senses play their necessary part,
mother to desires,
and father to our needs,
but knowing both their time and place,
with the senses always fresh and free,
the wise man is not deceived
when his reflecting actions mirror self.

Having renounced attachment
to all actions for their rewards,
like the sea is free, yet a part
of all the rivers that flow into it;
seeing the Real Self as actionless, unbound,
such knowledge is without a blemish,
such freedom is untainted by the world,
even as the floating lotus-leaf remains serene,
unharmd by the water that surrounds it.

Those who have opened the door
to light and guidance on their path
do everything with the body,
with the mind and intellect,
and even with the senses
only for the release of the inner Self,
the purification of ideals,
to find the Overself.

Unrest, dissatisfaction
disturb and fill the mind

of those whose crippled wings
seek shelter in desire,
whose soul is bound to earth
and cannot wing its way
toward the starry space and peaks of Light.

The body

The body is a city with many gates,
in which the sovereign mind can rest serenely.

Within that city is the sacred Temple
of the Spirit, Mind, where there is no desire
to act, nor any motivating cause,
yet always the glad willingness
to follow Duty when it calls.

For, although the body,
senses, and the mind
engage in earth's activities,
yet the ETERNAL SELF
does not weigh and measure deeds
belonging to the worldly, lower self,
for IT remains forever undisturbed,
only weaving love into its harmony
of understanding, stillness, and light.

The sweet and bitter,
the always known, forever strange
miracle of Life that includes All
in its timeless, spaceless sea,
knows and accepts neither good nor evil
that mankind brings in ignorance.

The brightly burning Oil of Wisdom
is frequently obscured behind the pall and smoke
of ignorance, unknowing, and unknown.

Though shielded from the eyes of other men,
those whose inner eye perceives the Truth
within the Spirit's ever-burning Flame
can see Divinity forever shining
through an infinity of suns.

Those wise ones who meditate on the universal SELF,

and blend with the Supreme Mind,
eternally filled with the changeless Idea
yet holding, possessing nothing forever,
boundlessly loving, with deepest insight
and devotion to the soul of All;
 yet released from judgment
and all judging of those who do judge;
 always with divinest melody, their heart
a song that never shall be songless;
 they rise from limitation of the earth
and pass into that far sphere
from which no mortal can return
to the veiled existence we know here.

Equality of all

He who has awakened
from the mortal dream of error
from the nightmare of illusion,
has eyes that look with equal kindness
and respect on the leader and those led;
 upon those who sorrow in the wilderness of night,
 and those who find their joy in learning and in
 light;
on a judge held prisoner within his walls,
 imprisoned by his self,
or the outcast wandering among the crowd:—
 both man and beast,
 those bound in slavery or free,
are always seen in love and oneness
 by him who finds his sight
 through ME.

Even when he walks the lands of earth
everything is overcome, all things made possible
for him, the dauntless one, who daily lives
within awareness of his heritage,
 knowing temporal, earthly self
as winged with Cosmic Consciousness,
the higher Self made manifest and Real.
 Since Eternity is now, has always been,

forever here, yet also everywhere,
and the Eternal is eternally
in balance, incorruptible;
 established in the changeless, timeless
Universal One, that dauntless soul
puts on the garments spun of Light
and walks unfaltering through darkness
his mind a gleaming crystal
 filled with heavenly Flame.

Living in measureless harmony
with the secret springs of Life
that well forever in his heart,
 the knower of the Eternal
is neither overjoyed by day
when the rivers of circumstance
bring happiness in their stream;
nor is he overburdened by night
when he drinks the cup of sadness
or the waters grow bitter with sorrow.

Always in touch with the Eternal
his eyes seeing with full vision
the things of spirit and of earth,
 his ears hearing Beauty
softly beat her wings against his heart,
his joy is inexpressible in its secret silence,
 his song unshadowed in the sun.

The earth-born

All things born of earth
are wombs of pain or loss,
filled with both desire and dread,
 never fully embraced,
 never quite released,
always a thing pursued
and that from which we seek escape,
their end is their beginning
and their beginning is their end.

If, strong with inner strength

which only wisdom gives,
one is able to endure on earth,
the fetters born of passion and desire,
until both the body
 and its confining needs
are liberated by the hand of Life,
he shall know a nameless happiness,
a peace of distant dreams become Reality.

The Priceless Pearl

Knowing happiness within
having found the joy of heaven
lying close within the Self,
 the invisible made known;
 illuminated by the Eternal Sun
that waits to shine within all hearts,
that waits to shine in every sky.
 for everyone;

One with the Eternal,
without separation or duality,
working for the welfare of mankind,
to such a knowing soul there finally comes
the Peace that is the Priceless Pearl.

This knowledge opens doors
to inner silence in the quiet flesh,
opens windows to the far, faint flush of dawn.

No stranger to Itself,
 untouched, unseen by mortal mind,
beyond all price, the Pearl of Peace
lies at the heart of all
 who know themselves as ONE.

The body then becomes
a Temple for the Soul,
with all the senses,
mind and Reason always mastered,
 in control.

Seeking freedom from the fabric
woven from the things acquired

by the mind while still away from home,
the Sage then lays aside
the wornout garments
loomed by passion, fear, desire.

Knowing Mind as measureless,
detached, calm, imperturbable;
knowing that the Eternal One
forever seeks its union with the Self
while the Self forever yearns
for understanding, union,
fulfilment in the Overself,
the Wise One knows
who is the true, enduring lover,
loving all the Kingdoms of the Heart,
and in the everlasting now
he finds and knows Eternal Peace.

Publication. *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic.* Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 56–64.

CHAPTER 6

Self-Control

Then the Prince of Peace
said to the young prince
of the earthly kingdom:

He that performs his duty
in actions beyond thought
of reward or fruits is more truly
an Ascetic, has found the inner
spirit of the teaching,
than he who builds an altar
only for the empty shell of ritual,
of sacrificial rite and form.

Action without Intelligence
without the loving gift of self,
is not right action at all.

Having no plans for the future,
living all the time in timelessness,
letting each new day
disclose its miracle of life,
he who has renounced the self
can scatter his abundant gifts
since he receives abundantly
from union with the Source of All.

When one awakes to dawning harmony
he learns Right Action in kindness
as the simplest path to Truth.

While to the same man,
as wisdom is disclosed
and he has crossed the threshold
to Light,
to Understanding,
comes freedom from all necessity of action
and serenity within the mind.

When he has lost desire
for the fruits of action,

nor seeks action for itself,
nor, haunted by desire,
 is he wandering in the objects
 of the sense-world,
then he shall walk with Me,
 on the highest road of Right Action
 filled and quickened
 with the boundless Truth.

Self-Knowledge

Let each man find self-knowledge
through knowledge of the Over-soul,
without the self being depressed
in the darkened corridors of life;
for, always upon his path
there walks his other Self,
his truest friend,
 always undefiled,
eternal lover of his soul.
Or, if he walks in ignorant blindness,
he sometimes may see
this God-Self as an old enemy
since He has never let him go.

The higher Self is always
the friend of him in whom
the earthly self has yielded mastery,
self vanquished by the love of SELF;
but to him who will not yield,
in whom the self remains defiant,
hardened by the drip of time,
the SELF seems hostile,
an enemy, bitterest foe.

The spiritual Self of him
who has found self-knowledge,
 is self-controlled
is filled with peace and calm
in heat or cold, pleasure or pain,
as well as in honor or dishonor,

unfaltering on its path of Destiny.

The wise man is content
knowing wisdom is inseparable
from knowledge of his deepest Self.
To him, a lump of clay,
a stone, or nugget of gold,
are the same as one;
for, having found wisdom
as the rarest gift on earth
his new Treasure has replaced Desire.

He also looks impartially
on lovers, friends and enemies,
on countrymen, or aliens,
saints and sinners,
the righteous and unrighteous,
with equal understanding,
equal love,
with equal brotherhood.

In the invisible

In the secret place of silence
and inward truth
the man who is complete
in spirit and knowing,
listens to the revelations
of the inner voice.
Freed from hope and greed,
with self and thought subdued,
he knows the joys and sorrows
of mankind
and hears the far off music
of a long forgotten memory.

The master of his mind and self
sits quietly,
the past and present fused as one
in concentrated thought,
his mortality absorbed
in immortality,

the thirsting roots of his soul
nourished by the waters
 of pure consciousness
flowing from his truest Self,
from the ocean of the Absolute
 and the All in All.

Serene in self,
 knowing dawn shall come,
fearless in heart and mind,
firmly resolved in purpose
 and in deed,
in the wonder of awareness
 his thought quietly
 reaches out toward Reality
and is united then
 in harmony with ME.

With Destiny and Will
freely moulded, united with the SELF,
not wholly bound by Fate,
nor fully fettered by Freedom learned and taught,
never entirely enslaved,
 never entirely free,
the mortal self partakes
 of the Divine
and finds its peace and joy
 in Me.

Virtue lies in moderation

Knowledge shall hardly come
to him who eats too much,
 or else abstains and seeks
to make a virtue out of fasting;
 nor to him who sleeps too much,
or makes a virtue of his abstinence,
 enslaved to transient things.

The internal harmony,
 spiritual communion
which destroys pain, comes rather

to him who does not look for permanent
happiness in earthly things,
 who consciously observes moderation
in eating,
 in sleeping, waking
 in activity and rest;
and does not run from excess in anything
only to yield to its antagonistic twin
of excess in repression or denial.

When his thoughts grow quiet
with longing for the unknown,
subdued, and fixed upon the SELF,
then, finding freedom from desire,
 from passion's fevered fire,
he wins harmony and Knowing
 by uniting Reason and the Heart,
 the Timely and the Timeless
becoming One with the Eternal Mind.

The Light of Knowledge

As a lamp set in a windless place
does not flicker
 so does his mind become
a clear and steady flame
 before the altar of work
 and love made visible.

Through recognition of the mind
as part of Principle, the Universal Mind,
dissolving the illusion
 of the duality of mind,
the soul finds poise and rest
 and is content to live in peace
 within the presence of that greater Self;
and, with the sparks kindled
 by its own knowledge,
the Self becomes illuminated,
 grows aware that it has All,
and in that All of Self

is satisfied.

Spiritual Union

Far above
anything that the mind can obtain
through the colored images of senses,
the spiritual Self finds clarity,
supreme delight
in acceptance of Reality.

Content in this blessed joy,
the newly found Kingdom of the Spirit,
his God-Self knows no greater satisfaction
can come to him on earth;
and, once securely established in it,
the weight of great grief or sorrow
does not outweigh his content and peace
for he has risen above
the burdens of the world.

This freedom from pain
and sorrow
from the drouth of summer,
or the winter's night;
this breaking of the prison walls
into the world of understanding,
brings the dew of morning,
the radiance of noon
as Spiritual Union, Harmony.
Hold it close within
the deepest soundings
of your heart.

Abandoning all the vain longings
of the imagination;
and with the enlightened mind
rising beyond all the petty inclinations
and illusions of the sense,
Step by step,
with My light upon your path
you will attain tranquillity

and know the deepest calm
as the wonder of the Mind
is wakened by the Spiritual dawn.

As often as the wavering
and unsteady mind shall wander
from the guidance of the Real Self,
 shall lose sight of its' goal,
draw in its reins, and, by skilful direction
lead it back to the control
 of Self.

Supreme Joy

The man whose mind is peaceful,
whose carnal nature is controlled,
who has let go of what the world calls sin,
 which is the goad of ignorance,
has escaped the toils of error
 and partakes of the nature
 and the Mind of the ETERNAL,—
 knows supreme joy.

Life's doorways always opening
to harmony with Self, to unity
 of body, mind, and soul,
he readily enjoys the rapture
of that Divine touch
 that touches all
 beyond the darkening print
 of earth's mortality.

He sees through endless change
there is always only One, unchanged;
 One Self everywhere,
 circling in the Infinite,
 in knower and the known,
 all beings in the Self,
the Universal a part of every one,
each individual immersed in One,
 the Universal All.

The Golden Fetters

He who sees Me everywhere,
beyond horizon's farthest rim,
and in everything sees Me,
in every breath of wind,
and throb of earth,
he hears My melody;
we are forever bound, then,
to each other by the golden bonds
of love,
that neither bind nor irritate
the soul.

Realizing Me in Unity,
with love of self always
reflecting love of Me,
he lives forever in my Being,
inseparable, no matter what
his earthly way of life may be.

Aware of that which he has found
within himself as a fragment of one Essence
flowing through the heart of all,
the giver and the gift in everything,
he recognizes pleasure and pain as one,
as comfort or regret, the same,
equality in everything.

The mind is restless

The student answered:
Alas, I am unable to accept this teaching
of union, this harmony of self
which you say comes by poise,
by steadfastness of mind.

I see the mind most restless,
wandering everywhere,
turbulent, tough, and stubborn,
resistant, obstinate,
as hard to curb as the wind

which blows and passes,—
 now gently as a breeze
 now turbulently in storm,
so difficult is it to master
and control this mysterious principle
 we call the Mind.

The Blessed Master continued:
Without doubt you have spoken rightly
for the mind is restless, hard to curb
 as the unbridled winds.
Yet, with unwearying, constant practice,
with unflagging discipline and care
the long-sought mastery finally comes.

It is hard, indeed,
to attain such mastery,
by a self that is uncontrolled,
that lacks the directing hand
and touch of the Master Self.
But, nevertheless, the soul,
when it becomes aware
and accepts the guidance,
the divine pressure of the Oversoul,
coupled with patience, care,
and well directed energy,
finally attains true harmony.

Where does faith alone lead?

The troubled seeker after truth
 replied:
But what of him that is possessed
 with earnest faith,
even though without the mastery of self,
his wayward mind
 a reed before the wind,
and so he fails to reach perfection;
what path, then, shall he tread,
 O Christ-in-man?

Must he then choose

between faith and works,
standing between right action
and spiritual attainment,
lacking the support of both
and so gaining neither one?

Is he like a cloud torn
without allegiance anywhere,
and so dissolving
into oblivion
and nothingness,
to depths
no one can reach?
Confused, deluded on the pathway
to the Absolute, seeking light,
is he forsaken, lost,
destroyed?

Deign to answer me,
beloved teacher,
dispel my doubt completely,
for there is no one to be found,
except Yourself, who can rightly
answer me, destroy this doubt.

There is no destruction

The Blessed Master said:
Know then that neither in this world
nor in the lives of worlds to come
is there destruction for him,
or anyone.
He does not walk the path of woe
whose days are lived in righteousness,
and whose arms of faith
reach out toward the Self
and Me.

The man whose rituals,
devotions and faith,
were attended by good works,
yet whose mind was not attended

by acquirement of discipline,
such a soul, after the transition
 known as death,
goes to a plane of thought, of pure-doing,
devoted to those righteous souls
who have not as yet found union,
 harmony with Self,
deliverance from the Wheel of Birth.

Living there in happiness:
 for immemorial time, an immensity
 of years,
that soul is finally reborn on earth
in conditions and surroundings
best adapted to the unfoldment
and development that are its heritage.

Nothing is lost in death

Perhaps, upon the turning wheel,
the righteous soul may be reborn
into the family and company
of those learned in Spiritual Harmony;
although such a reward of grace
is difficult to attain, rarely bestowed,
and only when called for by the Law
 and when fully deserved.

Nothing once gained in life
is ever lost through the gate of death.
One step taken, all knowledge learned,
need never be repeated, nor relearned;
for the essence of those things won
is preserved forever,
 spanning aeons of time,
is bestowed again upon the soul
 just newly born.

 The unquenchable desire
 for inner harmony
carries him further on his path
than could misdirected study

of the Sacred Books of Truth.

The quiet urge within,
the soul's remembrances
will reveal his own source of power,
a new goal,
always opening doors and windows
on to Light and Life.

And working with patience,
freed from errors,
and purified from sin,
fully developed, perfected
through many births on earth,
he reaches the supreme goal
and obtains harmony, serenity,
and mastery.

Thus you see that the faithful,
earnest seeker after Truth,
always working in the light he has,
always trusting in the Divine Law,—
such a soul is far greater
than those who seek reward
through penitence and torture,
or, better even than many
who put their faith in learning,
or their trust in good works, in deeds.

Therefore, O Prince among men,
become one who, filled with faith,
with works, with love,
lets all My love, all My life
be a stream of living water
flowing through his life.
And among all those
who have found and claimed
their rightful heritage
I consider him

the most completely harmonized
whose heart is filled
and flowing freely with love,

with love toward ME,
and toward mankind,
and so lives in full
and perfect Faith.

Publication. The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic. Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 65–78.

CHAPTER 7

Discernment

The Blessed Lord said
to his beloved student:
With your mind fixed firmly in Me,
observing all my teachings,
with your heart filled with Me,
a refuge from the world,
I shall instruct how you
can know me fully,
to the uttermost.

Without reserve,
in its ultimate completeness,
I shall teach you this knowledge,
shall show you all the ways of wisdom,
which, when you have acquired them,
will leave you nothing more needed
to be known here.

Among thousands of men,
each filled with restless seeking,
only a few strive for perfection,
only a few are sufficiently discerning
to know what they strive for,
what they seek,
what their goal.

And of those discerning few,
the successful strivers,
the discerning seekers are so rare
that scarcely one of them
knows Me in My essential nature,
as the Universal Mind,
the Soul of Nature.

The womb of creation

In My eightfold nature are found
all thoughts manifest as forms:

the earth, the water, fire, air, and ether,
together with the mind, reason,
and the consciousness of self.

But beyond this lesser
I possess a higher, nobler nature.
It is the vibratory principle of life,
the life element which creates,
which sustains the universe.

It is Light.
Know this as the womb of all beings,
all creation,
ALL.

I am the Source,
I, the Creator of the Universe,
and, likewise,
I am its dissolution:
I, the Void from which it comes
and into which it all resolves.

There is nothing higher than I:
All the forms and objects of the universe
perpetually vibrate with Me,
scintillate from Me incessantly,
depend, and are sustained by Me,
even as a row of precious pearls
is threaded on a string
which passes through each gem
holding all together,
sustaining them in one.

I am the moisture in waters,
O Prince of this nation,
I, the light of the sun,
the radiance from the moon;
the sacred Word of Power
in all holy writ,—
O companion in the chariot,—
I am the sound waves in the air,
etheric vibrations,
the virility in men;

the pure fragrance of earth,
the perfume in flowers.

I am the glowing brilliance
and flame in fire;
the ever-burning Sun behind the sun,
the parentage of life in every being,
and the fountain of harmony
in all those who know tranquillity.

Know me, beloved son,
as the eternal source, the seed
of all nature.
I am Reason, the wisdom of the wise.
I am the splendor of all splendid things,
the glory of all glorious.

I am the strength of the strong,
without passion, beyond desire.
I give boldness to the faint hearted,
and will to the weak.
I am the motive of right action
to those who serve through deed
in duty to mankind.

The illusions of nature

The qualities of natures that are harmonious,
with creative activity, or inactivity,
are in Me, proceed from Me,
although I am not in them.

The world of men,
fallen under the delusion
of the natures made by these qualities,
does not understand
that though I permeate all personality,
I am above all these,
standing untouched by time,
rising unchanged by change,
immutable, imperishable.

This divine appearance,

caused by the nature of the qualities,
which seems a veil, an illusion
 to the eyes of men,
is most difficult to pierce.
But those who come to Me
can see through the illusion
 to the eternal light of My flame
which burns with radiant light
beyond the garment of their night.

Many cannot see beyond
the screen of illusions,
 past the borderland appearances,
so neither return to Me on earth
 nor know Me as I am;
for they worship the false gods
 of materialism and sensations,
embrace the image of Reality
and not the Mind which gives it form.

Among the righteous ones
 who worship Me
there are four groups:
the suffering, the Distressed;
the Seekers after Knowledge;
 the self-centered,
 Seekers of Success;
and the Wise Ones, Seekers of Truth,
 seeking a star.

Of these who worship Me,
the Wise Men are the rarest and best.
They have found the Kingdom of Heaven
 in themselves.
They recognize the Universal One,
and live in a world of fulfilment
 in union with the One.
To the Wise I am supremely dear,
 and they to Me.

The Path to all

All these righteous ones
who worship Me are noble souls,
and are on the path to Me;
but I hold the Wise
as I hold Myself;
for they have blended their self
with the Overself,
united with themselves and Me,
and live their lives in Me alone,
with Me their Path,
with Me their highest goal.

At the close of many births,
having lived uncounted lives,
with the accumulated Wisdom
gathered through immeasurable Time,
the Wise Ones finally come to Me,
knowing Me to be their ALL.

And others, whose ignorance
has led them astray,
go to lesser deities,
to other Shining Ones;
and, according to their own nature,
to their own light shining within,
worship in various rituals
always finding what they seek.

Among the bigoted, fanatical,
narrow in mind, in sympathy,
the Truth is not far away:
for, though they worship many gods,
prostrate themselves before
many shrines, many images,
and though in teaching and in deeds
they seem utterly opposed, in strife,
opposed to one another and to Me,
still, even that faith,
like a grain of sand, or tiny mustard seed,
emanates from a slumbering, still latent,
not yet unfolded faith in Me.

Those endowed with any faith
in gods, in images, or rites,
shall worship in that faith,
 at those altars, and those shrines,
even though it be with only
slowly dawning faith in Me.

In worshipping these forms,
these myriad ideas of One,
they wish to worship Me,
 wish to sacrifice to Me,
even though they do not know Me yet.
And I reward their faith,
I decree the benefits received
that their blind urge
 may later grow to Light.

The fruit of knowledge

Yet the rewards of finite desires
are finite in their very nature;
for what they thirst and hunger,
 what they seek and pray for
 are but transient things;
only a breath upon the flame,
the fleeting things of time
are given as answer to their prayers.

To the Shining Ones go those
who worship the Shining Ones,
who are but shadow-gods
made in My image, a shadow-form of Me.
But those who have the fruit of Wisdom,
and in their self see Me as Myself,—
 the Universal All, the Divine One,—
such understanding souls,
remembering their divine inheritance,
come to Me in My Spirit,
 the only world of Reality.
Where all is Real
 there are no illusions,
 no shadow-forms,

even as the Eternal Flame,
the Light which casts the shadows
Itself is Real.

There are those who,
lacking insight and understanding,
think of Me as being Manifest, incarnate,
made visible to their eyes,
do not know My supreme nature.
But in My Essence
I am neither manifest
nor visible to ignorant men.

The radiance of Reality

Back of all appearances, illusions,
back of all the forms
I have created by My thoughts,
the reflector and its reflection,
stands the World-Mind, stands ME,
beyond time,
transcending space.
Birthless, without beginning,
deathless, without end,
I am the never-ending circle of the Mind
always revolving back upon itself.
Blinded, confused, deluded by their thought,
mistaking shadow for Reality,
the ignorant can neither see
nor know me as imperishable,
unborn.

I have seen, have known
all beings that are past,
the vast throngs, the myriad creatures
who have passed before My gaze
on the misty path to Me.
Even now I see and know all those
at present on the way.
Still more mysterious,
I also know all those seeking souls

that hereafter shall tread My road.

But, of all those in the past,
the present, or in times to come,
not one fully comprehends Me.

I am their observer though unobserved
and hold them all in heart and mind;
but in their finite minds
they cannot hold Me in My Essence.

I am the reed on which they hear
only the memories of My Eternal Melody.

The delusion of opposites

Men walk the planes of earth
deluded by the pairs of opposites,
blinded by the opposing forms
of like and dislike, similar and dissimilar,
by attraction and repulsion.

Instead of seeing Unity,
seeking the Oneness underlying everything
they are betrayed by the many facets
of appearances Reality can take.

But those few who have freed
themselves from the delusive pair
of opposites, have freed themselves
from attachment to desires,
understand that I am ONE, the ALL,
and hold steadfast, constant
in their devotion, in their love for Me.

The eternal goal

They who have awakened
in My light of understanding
find refuge, find peace in Me.
Forever they move forward,
onward to greater freedom,
toward a greater light;
seeking liberation from the Wheel,
the pangs of birth and death.

They know Me as ETERNAL,
as the whole of Self-knowledge,
as the consciousness of earth and sky,
of sun and moon,
of stars;
they know My works, My Wisdom,
they know MYSELF!

They know ME as ALL in ALL,
as knowledge of the elements,
know that all the Universe, all Life, are Mine;
and that all paths of work and sacrifice,
all roads of worship lead to Me.

They know Me in the heart of life,
and when the hour of silence comes
and they must lay aside the tired body,
must leave behind the wornout garment of earth,
and their eternal spirit stands naked, unafraid,
enfolded only in a veil of Light,
there I shall also be
to welcome them at dawn,
to hold them in MY heart,
to guide them through eternity.

Publication. *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic.* Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 79–88.

CHAPTER 8

The Imperishable

When the young Prince
spoke again to the Blessed One
he asked him:

Tell me, my Beloved Teacher,
what is that which is ETERNAL?
What is the Universal?

What is SELF-knowledge?
And what is the true nature
of the elements,
of Action, and of Principle?
What knowledge do the glorious hosts
of Shining Ones, of Archangels,
that is so far greater,
so far higher, than that possessed
by ignorant man?

What is the knowledge
of Sacrifice?
What is the secret of your manifestation
in the body of clay,
your appearance here in human form?
And how, at the time of going forth,
the dissolution of the body,
do the Wise Ones know you?
How shall the SELF-controlled,
those with you from the beginning,
the untroubled in heart,
know you at the hour of death?

The indestructible

The Christ replied:
The indestructible,
ancient in time,
that which can never rust,
can never know decay,
bodiless things that are of Spirit,

the supreme ALL from which
all life flows to visibility,
the Soul from which all souls come,
the source of Universal Life,
that Mind, that Overself,
is the imperishable ETERNAL ONE
that walks with man
toward his ever distant star,
toward his Destiny.

The essential nature of this SELF,
the World-Mind from which
all ideas and knowledge flows,
of which each mortal mind
is but a mirror,
that Mind is SELF-knowledge
of which your own self-consciousness
is but a fragmentary part,
the stuff from which each human
builds his world.

That Principle, that Cause,
the innermost from which all things
move outwardly and act,
the living stream
from which all life forever flows,
is the essence, source of Action,
the primal mover of all life,
yet remains immovable itself.

My Will is demonstrated
in the elements of the universe.

They are perishable,
born in time.

The knowledge of the Shining Ones,
that archangelic host filled
with creative energy, is knowledge
of the ways and things of Spirit
beyond the tarnish and the fray of earth,
imperishable.

The understanding of all sacrifice,

with the mystery of my appearance here,
the Christ made manifest in man,
belongs to those whose inner wisdom
is in union with the Universal Law.

And when the hour of parting comes,
the separation of the timely body
from the timeless soul,
the eternal Self shall find
its dearest dreams fulfilled.
With a nature that desires
temporal, material things,
with the ruling passion one of sense,
the mind that worships
at these shrines of earth
shall go to his own plane of things.

But he who at the hour of death
is voiceless, yet has his mind and heart,
his Reason set on Me,
that soul shall come direct to Me,
without doubt, beyond mischance.

Therefore, at all times,
and in every place,
think only then of Me,
fight the fight,
and run the course of years
that lie before you now.

Those of the Spirit

With all your heart and mind,
with all your understanding
centered on Me,
not wandering after other desires,
in constant thought and deed
always reflecting Spirit,
always living in My Light,
as mirror of eternity,
then to the plane of Spirit
you shall finally come.

He who is intelligent,
the seer and the seen,
and thinks of the Eternal Spirit
as the All Wise, the One All Powerful,
smaller than the smallest,
yet larger than the largest,
the sustaining and the moving force
of all life's pageantry;
beyond imaginable form,
beyond imagined beauty
and enchantment,
as brilliant as the sun
beyond the darkness;
With his thought fixed indivisibly
on his appointed tasks,
with all his strength devoted
to one end,
the spirit with such wisdom
passes to the world of Light,
to the supreme Spirit
that never perishes,
without beginning,
without end.

The path

There is a path
that leads to Spirit
which the Sacred Word
has called the Indestructible.
It is the path on which
they strive to walk
who have controlled their minds,
are freed from passion's fire
and are strong with wisdom's strength.
I will briefly tell you
how to find
and how to walk upon this path
with intelligence,
with light.

Close tightly all the gates
to the body, those avenues
bewitched by sense and corporeal flesh.

Center the mind upon your heart,
upon your inner Self,
 celestial Idea,
with the very breath of life
enclosed within the magic
 of the Mind.

Stand firm with inner strength,
and in the secret silence
know that I AM the Eternal,
I am the sacred word made flesh,
I am both the symbol of the Creator,
and Preserver of All

I have created,
all those that know My name
and those that follow
 in My Light!

Then, faithful to the end,
when you quit this mortal mind
and frame of flesh and bones
you shall pass on to dawn,
to the highest path
that leads eternally to Me.

He who thinks so constantly of Me,
O Prince among the race of men,
and never lets his searching mind
wander away to lesser objects,
 to lesser minds,
 to lesser light,
will easily find Me,
will easily be led along the Path,
remembering My song
and hearing My new melody.

Once having been united,
 become one with Me,
living on the infinite plane of Spirit,
those Wise Ones never need return

to the pains of earthly birth,
to the finite limitations of the flesh,
for they pass with Me on wings of light
to the higher planes of Self fulfilled
in thought and work,
to an infinity of Life.

The processional of worlds

The vast worlds,
the universes come and go,
an unending processional in time;
the days are like four billion years,
and nights whirl ceaselessly the same;
yet these worlds on worlds in flux,
this panoply shall pass again,
and when they wheel and coalesce,
ever-changing,
ever-fleeting,
yet continuous,
the souls who find their life in Me
shall not return to birth,
shall not be born,
nor come again to earth.

When those days are aeons long
all visible things emerge
from the invisible,
all manifested life streams forth
at coming of the dawn;
while, when aeons of night plunge
all the universe in dark,
and visible things dissolve
back into invisibility,
potential life is held,
still lives in Universal Mind.

The Source of Life

Therefore, on this highest Path
there exists unmanifested still,

eternal Mind, eternal SELF,
the indestructible, unmanifest,
which, though enfolding all at night,
remains, itself, forever, Source of Light,
ethereal music before dawn.

Those who reach this plane of Mind,
this celestial stillness of universal soul,
this heart and center of the cosmic World,
shall know their part of a sublime All,
shall live forever in the Sun,
shall be united,
live with Me,
forever live as ONE.

This highest Spirit may be reached
only by those who persist
and who live in Spirit alone;
by those who worship at no other shrines,
no other gods, no other altars of desire.

All Nature is pervaded by this Spirit,
all hills and valleys echo Its memory;
all Life potential in Its womb,
the sea rising and falling with Its tides;
from It there flow eternal souls,
according to My Will,
pervaded by My Mind,
fulfilling Divine Destiny.

The path of Light

Fire and light,
the daytime and the night;
the sun upon its northern path
or six months to the south;
light and darkness in the world
these are the everlasting paths.

He who leaves this earth in Light,
filled with Wisdom, union with Me,
shall not return to this plane,
a tenant in the house of pain.

While he who walks in Darkness
shall know rebirth again
and yet again,
endlessly, until he sees
and finds
and walks
within this Light.

Therefore, O Blessed Son,
be not confused, nor be perplexed.
Perfect yourself in harmony,
your earthly house patterned
on your divine.
The fruit of such perfection
far surpasses all rewards of virtue,
of sacrifice, of meritorious deeds,
of charity, and penance,
even as great as these may be.

Those learned in knowledge
of this Truth,
pass beyond all forms and rites,
beyond all liturgy, dogma, and creed,
beyond all limitations set by man,
beyond all souls who worship Thought
made manifest on earth,
and not the Thinker,
unmanifested Overself.

The Wise Ones reach the ancient seat,
the Source, the inextinguishable Light,
the Supreme
Eternal Goal.

Publication. *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic.* Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 89–97.

CHAPTER 9

Kingly Knowledge

The Blessed Lord said:
To you, my faithful and trusting one,
I now give this profoundest Secret,
the final and supreme knowledge,—
 the royal wisdom,—
wisdom and knowledge combined,
which, when once you know It,
shall set you free from evil,
from misfortune, and mischance.

This is the Kingly Science,
this the Royal Secret of the World,
this the supreme Purifier of mankind;
it is intuitional, an infinite
 and inner knowing,
and very easy to comprehend
for such as you who live
 in righteousness,
nor is it difficult to perform.
It is unfailing, the transcendental key,
 imperishable.

Men without faith in this knowledge,
without this inner Secret,
who love darkness more than light,
 fail to find Me,
 fail to see My Light,
and so must plod the weary road,
 must come to earth
again, and yet again return
to study in the world of birth
that alternates with death.

The Absolute

But all this world,
this universe in all its parts

and its entirety
is an emanation of My Mind,
is filled by My invisible form,
all pervaded, everywhere, by Me,
unmanifested, infinite,
unlimited.

All beings have their roots in Me,
all thoughts are but reflections
of My thoughts,
yet I am not rooted in them
for Mind is All, Eternal, Free,
the Absolute,
final Reality.

Nor think that All Things
are Myself:
I am their sustainer,
they are inseparable from Me,
My Mind their primal Cause.
I am the ultimate support of all beings,
but All Things,
All Beings are not I.
My Immanence

Know that even
as the vast and mighty ocean of air
is present everywhere
and vibrates with constant motion,
is rooted and sustained
within the larger sea of Universal Ether,—
so do all earthly beings manifest,
all those born of flesh,
rest rooted in My Mind,
rooted in the timeless Me.

This is the heavenly Secret,
O child of earth and sky,
think deeply, know it well.

In the rhythm of the universe,
at the end of a creative period
of manifestation of My Activity,

all things, all beings
are withdrawn into My Nature,
into the Source and Soul of All;
both stone and flower, fruit, and tree,
both beast and man
are re-absorbed in Me.
And, in the dawning of new day,
a cosmic cycle, of ever-becoming,
as a new projection of Thought,
of Mind,
perpetually the World-Mind
emanates all things,
from It all beings are reborn
and flow from out Infinity.

Diversity in Nature

Hidden in this
ceaseless cycle of creation,
all these things of Nature,
Supreme Consciousness,
is My secret Nature,
from which I emanate again,
shall emanate forevermore
this vast multitude that constitutes
and fills the universe with power
yet, of itself, Nature is powerless.

Nor am I bound,
circumscribed by time or space,
nor do I grow entangled
in these universal works;
for, enthroned on high,
vibrant with Light as Energy,
I manifest in the World's appearances
yet I remain unattached in actions,
detached and free,
remain unbound.

Upon the Nature of the world
I superpose My power, My creative Will,

and so she rhythmically creates,
destroys form,
constructs, dissolves,
builds up, tears down,
both the animate and inanimate,
and thus the universe revolves,
and in its plastic ebb and flow
progressively evolves.

The foolish minds,
the unenlightened ones,
seeing Me when clad in human form,
My earthly house of flesh
the same as theirs,
being ignorant, unaware of My
true nature
as Supreme Lord of All beings,
they do not see that Light has come.

Empty of sustaining hope,
empty of deeds,
empty of wisdom's light,
they are senseless,
wander on the path of darkness,
living on their lower planes,
hardly amenable to higher thought,
and so their highest growth does not reach
beyond the level of an ignorant nature
that is evil, brutal,
deceitful.

But the Wise Ones
who have listened to My voice
and followed in My light
even from afar,
they have unfolded
their higher natures
and so partake of Mine.

They know My Mind
to be the Infinite Source of all life,
the Eternal Origin of all thought

and forms,
and worship Me completely,
with unwavering mind and heart.

Always magnifying Me,
realizing My Power as the source
of theirs,
they are constant in devotion,
strong in their faith
and inward harmony.

The One in Many

Others also discover Me
in various forms and aspects,
offering wisdom as their sacrifice,
and worship Me in many ways
as the One in Many
or the Manifold in One
yet present everywhere.

Truly, in all worship am I,
of whatever form and creed am I,
for I, Myself, am the worship itself.
I am the sacrifice;
I am the libation
offered to ancestral souls;
I am the incense, and I
the sacrificial spices in the flame;
I am the burnt offering
and the sacrificial gifts to gods;
I am the fire
and its secret source,
and I the offering consumed by fire.

I am the Father of this cosmos
and likewise Mother of this universe.
I am its Preserver
and its Supporter;
I am its ancient Sires;
I am the Holy One of old,
the one to be sought,

to be known.
I am the Magic Word,
mysterious in its power,
and I the Sacred Writings
of the past
and ever present now.
And so all paths lead to Me
for I am the Path;
the Comforter;
the Creator of the universe;
the Witness.
I am the Resting Place for the weary,
and the Place of Refuge for mankind
for I am the Lover
and the Friend
of all.
I am the Origin,
the Dissolution,
and the End.
I am the Foundation
and the Storehouse
for the Eternal
Seed.
I am the Heat, and I the Cold,
the Sunshine, and Rain.
I now press out, and now draw in,
in-breathing, and out-breathing
breath of life, of worlds.
I am Death,
yet of all immortals
I am Immortality.
I am Being, ever Becoming;
I am Non-Being, unmanifested;
I am the One beyond both.
Behind the final pair of opposites
is One,
I AM,—ETERNAL MIND.

Each to its own

Those learned in the scriptures,
in the ancient books of wisdom,
offer many sacrifices, many forms,
drink the holy wine at the end
of the ritual of sacrifice,
and so seek purification from sin.

They actually pray to Me
beseeching Me to show the Path to Heaven.

Those with little faith ascend
to the plane of the Ruler of the Shining Ones,
that Kingdom of the Heavenly Realm
for which they seek.

There they partake of celestial foods
and enter into the pleasures
of that lower realm.

But, when they have enjoyed
the pleasures of that spacious heaven-world,
partaken of those feasts
and those divine enjoyments,
and finally exhausted the rewards
of holiness, of their good deeds on earth,
enjoyed the fruits of their virtues
and their worship of forms and sacrifices;
then, according to the Law
they come back to live again
upon this plane of birth and death.

Having followed the path
and precepts of the ancient scriptures,
yet desiring desires,
each spirit on the finite and transitory road
is rewarded according to its kind,
they then receive the reward
for all the transitory and finite.

The road to Me

To him who worships Me alone,
with neither thought nor service
for another, to him in radiant unity
with Me, I bring full security, serenity,

for I perform the ceremonies,
I offer up the sacrifice, the oblations.
 He is Mine.
 I am his!

And yet, remember seeking soul,
that even those who follow other gods
really worship Me,
 even though it is unrecognized
and contrary to their ancient rule.

For, if worship is full of love,
and sacrifice is given with faith and joy,
I accept them as if in spirit
 they were intended then for Me,
and reward them accordingly.

Though they seem to worship Me,
and so receive according to their merits,
yet because they limit Me,
have no knowledge of My Essence,
they must eventually relinquish Heaven
and then return again to earth
 and know the sorrows of re-birth.

Each spirit goes to the level
of the plane on which he worships,
to the level of his love and spiritual light.

Those who worship a personal,
 a finite god,
or the angels in the heavenly host,
go to live upon their heavenly, finite plane;
 those who worship ancestors
go to live with them;
 those who worship elemental spirits
are attracted to and live with them.

While My worshippers,
who know Me in Essence,
 with unbecloved mind,
come to live with Me in Essence,
in clarity of Eternal Mind and Light.

The striving self

The simple folk,
the self striving for union with its God,
the humble, and the meek in heart,
who in devotion offer Me a leaf,
a fruit, a fragrant flower,
or bring only a cup of water,
that worship is acceptable in the spirit
which the giver brings his gift.

Its value lies only in the loving thought
with which the gift is proffered.

Therefore, O striving soul,
seeking to find your God-Self,
whatever you do,
 in necessity or delight,
within the temple of your daily deeds,
whether it be eating, giving,
sacrificing, doing penance,
performance of ritual or rite,
do all these things in faith,
rejoice in them as offerings to Me
while opening windows to the dawn.

Freedom from fetters

In offering everything to Me,
all thought, all action, every deed,
you shall be liberated from all bonds,
unfettered from the phantoms of all fear.

Then, dancing free in heart and mind,
your fragment of divinity
inextricably entwined with the larger Mind,
 with the Divine Overself,
you shall come to Me,
 come to the heart of All,
 at the appointed time,
though at what hour
 the gates shall swing open
 no mortal ever knows.

All My children of this world,
all living creatures, large or small,
all are equal in My sight.

None are more dear than another,
none more hateful, none less dear.

Love is fulfilment,
and in the heart of All there is
neither more nor less of love
for any one;
love brings only completion,
only equality,
only entirety.

And those who worship Me in Truth,
with understanding, with devotion,
find for themselves the road
that leads them to My heart.

Guided by love they wake to memory,
hear the songs their heart is singing
of Myself in them
and they in Me.

Hope for all

Even if one lives in ignorance,
stumbles on his darkened path,
yet finally turns to Me
with undivided heart,—
he, too, shall be accounted righteous,
he, too, shall find new light upon his way.

And if persistent in his new resolve
holds firmly to the given light,
he shall find rest, eternal peace,
for he who is my servant
shall never know the night
nor perish on the way.

All who seek a sanctuary
find their refuge in My heart,
though born in the womb of ignorance;

and those who some think
are beyond hope, outside the gate,
even they shall walk within My Light,
shall walk upon My Path
if they but place their hand in Mine,
but place their faith and hope in Me.

If this be true, O man of earthly kingdom,
then how much more certain
is salvation for the holy men,
for those rare, learned souls
who see this earth as but a transient home,
who see the finite mind as but a pattern
 made of dark and light,
who have the Kingly Knowledge
for their Key to Paradise,
 the only gateway leading directly to Me.

Then know Me with all your heart,
 know Me with all your self,
fix all your mind on Me,
 on Universal Mind;
with constancy in work and thought
devote your labors and your dreams
to build that city, timeless and free,
where your mind shall always blend with Mine
and wing the skyways of Eternity.

Publication. *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic.* Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 98–110.

CHAPTER 10

The Perfection in the Divine Nature

Then the Blessed God-in-man
said to the Prince among men:

Hear My supreme Word,
O strong-armed warrior of faith,
whom I love,
for to you I will declare the Truth.

Know that neither angels nor gods,
nor the shining multitude of heaven,
nor great spirits, nor others high
in knowledge, know a thing about My birth,
nothing of My Beginning:

for, even before they were, I am,
for I am even their Beginning.

He who with his insight
knows Me unborn,
beginningless before Time,
eternal before the stars,
Supreme Mind of the Universe
of all that came from Me,—
he,—a mortal free from error,
disentangled from delusion,
is liberated from the price and pains,
from the penalties of ignorance.

Reason, Knowledge, Wisdom;
Patience, Truth, Forgiveness;
Self-control and Calmness;
Pleasure and Pain;
Birth and Death;
Courage, and Fear;

Mercy, Joy;
Charity, and Sacrifice;
Earnestness, Intentness,
are the various qualities
and nature of the Personalities

flowing from My eternal
Realm of Perfect Mind.

From My nature,
from My mind,
all things, all races
are generated and born.
Knowing this essential Truth
the Wise Ones honor Me
and worship with enraptured souls.

Unfaltering in mind,
forever holding Me within
the inner chamber of their hearts,
their lives are filled
with secret joy and calm content.

And within their glowing minds
and eager, questing hearts,
I constantly illuminate,
I constantly inspire them.

So that to each other,
mindful of Me,
with their lives hidden in Me,
they constantly illuminate,
constantly inspire one another,
their blood resurgent
with the flood and flame
of the cosmic music
of My Name.

The gift of insight

To these, whose inner light
shines always in a world
of darkness, ignorance,
with constant mind and faith,
offering instant love in sacrifice,
I give Discrimination,
give Spiritual Insight
through which they know, they see,

by which they come to Me,
and touch a magic harmony.

Out of pure compassion,
from My great love for them,
dwelling deep within their SELF,
My Light irradiating all
the darkened places of their minds,
I destroy darkness with
the shining Truth from Wisdom's Lamp.

The eager youth replied:
I acknowledge you to be the ETERNAL,
Supreme Lord, God made in an earthly form;
Supreme Purity; eternal divinity in man;
Primeval Deity; the Soul of Nature, and

Her Mind;
unborn, impermanence from Permanence,
One Cosmic Mind,

One Lord!
All the gods and sages,
all the angels, and wise souls
have acclaimed Your Name,
acknowledging your Omnipotence,
your Omniscience, Omnipresence:
and now You, Yourself,
proclaim these sayings to me,
and present this vision of eternal Truth.

Full acceptance of truth

All this I believe,
fully accept without reserve,
O Blessed Lord of All.
Your mysterious presence here,
in earthly form,
Christ incarnate,
Spirit manifest in flesh,
this recurrent mystery
is never understood by men,
nor even by all the gods and demigods,
by angels, nor the mighty souls

of all the worlds
innumerable in space.

You, Yourself, can be understood
only by Yourself, for you are
the ceaseless Fountain of all life;
You, the Supreme Lord of the Cosmos;
very God among all gods;
Ruler of all rulers;
the urgent Sun behind all shining suns:
far more than finite mind can comprehend,
Infinite Heart!
Infinite Mind!

How can we know?

By what radiance of power
can you, as Creator of the All,
pervade the far horizons of the World
without loss of unheard glories,
while remaining immutably the Source,
never anywhere, yet always everywhere?

How may I come to know you
when you remain the Source of Wisdom,
Harmony, of Light dissolving Dark?

By constant prayer and meditation,
when I do not know the form?

What are the powers invested
and the resplendent forms
by which, and through which disguise
you manifest yourself to man?

Upon what aspects of these glories
shall I think?

Master and Lord!

For I am thirsty for such crystal waters
even as the winter thirsts for spring;
and silently I wait for your wisdom
even as mute silence waits to sing.

Mind is Infinite

The Christ incarnated replied:
My blessings, and My Peace
upon you, beloved student!

I will acquaint you with
the chief characteristics of My
divine glory and its manifestations here.

These few must suffice
the throbbing pulse of Time
for My essential Nature is beyond Time,
outside of space, unlimited,
and My Being, Mind, is Infinite.

I am the divine Overself
living in the heart of every man;
Self indivisible from SELF;
the beginning, middle, and also end
of every being everywhere:
I am the image that you see
reflected in every water, every pool,
mirrored in every mind.

I create the Sun-gods
and am their shining Sun;
in the jeweled light
of planets and stars
I am the Moon that lights their night.

I am the Secret Mover
of the air and winds,
the magnificence and fury
of the storms.

Among the sacred books
I am the Book of Books,
the Song above all Songs.

Of the senses I am the Mind;
of all living beings I am Intelligence,
and of intelligence I am World-Mind;
and in all life I am the procreating Life.

Among all attributes of fate
I stalk their lair as Fate;
and share all fortunes,

good or bad, of triumph or despair,
for it is I who turn the spinning wheel,
for I am Fortune, I, its Prize.
I am the Original Being,
immortal Teacher of Divine Teachers,
and the Chief among all household priests.

I lead the Celestial Armies
for I am the General of all armies
on the earth and in the heavens.
I made the rivers, lakes, and oceans,
yet the sea cannot contain Me
for I, their source, am more boundless
than the boundless sea;
I am the ocean, and of all oceans
my depths are deepest.

Manifest in Nature

Of all the great and wise
I am the most wise,
for I am Wisdom,
unutterable,
unsearchable;
and in a world of words
I am the Sacred Word
across the door of Time.
Though earth should call Me Nature,
and man calls Me Humanity,
unceasingly, by day and night,
I answer all who worship,
all who name Me,—GOD.

In the great forests
I am the trees that touch and
brush the sky.
Of all the sweet Celestial Singers
My Music sings most sweetly
for I am the Chord of Life
that wakens music in the soul.
I am the source of earth's perfection,

of all perfected souls,
for I am Perfect.

Rising from the breaking waters of the sea
I am the Mighty Horse that rose
with the nectar of immortality.
Of elephants I am the Lordly Elephant;
and of men and monarchs
am I Emperor of all Emperors.

When the thunders rend the sky
know that among all weapons it is I,
the Thunderer, who hurls the thunderbolts
for I am the Divine Thunderbolt.
I am the progenitor of love,
the priest at all the nuptial rites,
for I am Love.

When you see the symbol of the serpent,
the joined ends implicit in the circle
of eternity,
then you see Me,
the Eternal Serpent
endlessly encircling all.

The creatures of the deep
know Me as God of the Ocean,
Master of the Tideless Seas.

I am the Governor of governors
and all who govern follow Me.

The calculators of the beat of Time
cannot know Me for I am the Measurer of Time.

Of wild beasts I am the Imperial Lion:
and I the fabulously colored bird
whose wing tips touch the ends of earth.

Among purifiers I am Pure Air.
To warriors I am the Lord of Arms.

Among rivers I am the Sacred Waters
bringing life to every land.

In calm or storm
I am the calm at the whirling center
of the whirlwind's heart.

Change is changeless

Though all things change restlessly,
I am forever changeless,
for I am their Beginning,
I am their Middle,
and I, their destined End.

No orator can speak
unless I speak through him.
Science begins and ends with Self.

My eyes turn ceaselessly
in all directions for I am the Preserver
and none shall ever perish from My sight.

I am the guardian
of the great portal, Death,
the door through which all mortals
finally must pass.

And, likewise, I am the womb
of all Re-birth, and the final birth
which dissolves Death.

All qualities of love and beauty,
fame and fortune, speech, and memory,
strength, constancy, intelligence,
forgiveness and patience,
flow from My bounty.

Of all hymns I am
the Hymn of Hymns, the Universal Song
resounding endlessly, eternally
across the wide abyss of Time.

And in the poet's rhythms
flows My heartbeat of the world.

The seasons wake and dream
while I am the Season of Flowers.

There is nothing more splendid
than I, for I am Splendor;
I am Determination,
the Truth in all the truthful;
and I am Victor

in all Victory.

Eternal supply

I am the Head of all great clans
and families; the Sage of all the sages;
the Poet from whom all poets come;
the Bard of bards; the Seer of seers;
I am the uncreated Light which the darkness
cannot understand;
and the Prophet to all prophets for I know
all things that were, that are, and all things
that shall ever be.

To those who rule mankind
I am the golden Scepter of Power;
and in those who seek to conquer
I am Statecraft, and Statesmanship.
Of secrets I am secretive Silence;
I am the Stillness vaulting the skys of night.
There is no knowledge beyond Mine.
I am the doorway opening to Wisdom,
I am MIND.

I am creative thought, activity,
and essence:
the dormant seed in every fruit,
immortal germ in all mortality.
Nor does the universe hold anything
in motion or at rest,
that is not surcharged with Me
for without My potency,
divine and elemental energy,
all life would perish instantly
in a bleak and sterile void.

There is no end to My myriad manifestations,
O perplexed mortal seeking truth.
What I have said already will disclose
My refulgence,
immortal glory,
infinite power.

Whatever is good, beautiful,
glorious, and mighty,
understand it is but a tiny, glittering facet
of My splendor.

But the knowledge of all these fragments
need not concern the seeking soul:
for I have manifested this whole universe
with an infinitesimal fragment of World-Mind,
all luminous with perfection's dream,
and yet I remain its Sovereign Lord:
the Observer, and the object seen,
Creator, and Creation:
Indivisible,
ONE,
and ALL!

Publication. *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic.* Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 111–121.

CHAPTER II

Vision of the Universal Form

Then the young Prince
spoke to his Master:

Out of your great compassion,
out of the abundance of your love,
you have spoken precious words of Wisdom
unveiling your supreme secret of the Spirit,
its pageantry, and manifestation in each Self,
and so my bafflement
and illusion are removed.

I have learned the truth
about unborn creation,
undying dissolution of the cosmos,
the eternal greatness of your Mind,
and the crystal chalice
of its all-embracing presence
everywhere.

O Creator, supreme Ruler of the Universe,
though you have described yourself
as consummate, rarest Being,
I yearn for a final token of your love,
one more vista of supremacy,
for I desire to see your SELF:
the ethereal beauty of your face,
desire to be enraptured
by your glory and divinity of Form.

The Blessed Christ-in-Man
answered him:

Since you would see immortal beauty
with your mortal eyes
I now endow your soul
with mystic vision and insight
to see the Form of Me:—
immeasurable, divinely fired
colors and forms,
uncountable in multiplicity of kinds.

Behold the heavenly hosts,
innumerable celestial beings,—
angels, archangels; planetary gods;
sovereigns of vast universes;
and many other radiant wonders
scarcely dreamed of in your wildest fancies,
an apocalypse of marvels
 never seen before.

The gift of inner sight

Here now, today,
behold the sumptuous universe
standing united as One in Me;
and each treasure you desire to see.

Yet with your mortal eye,
imprisoned, illusory, finite,
you cannot see these rapturous sights,
so I invest your inner Eye of Spirit
with the godlike power to see
 My sovereignty.

Thus having spoken, the Christ,
the Blessed Lord of Lords,
revealed Himself in His Supreme Form.

The Many-in-One had myriad mouths
and countless eyes, a vision of rich marvels,
with heavenly ornaments, divine weapons;
wearing radiant vestments of the sky,
 and forms of clothing, jewelry,
 divine array.

He revealed the God all-marvelous,
resplendent, majestic, boundless,
his unshadowed face of faces
 ceaselessly turning everywhere.

No glory nor golden conflagration
of uncounted suns and constellations
 blazing in the vaulted sky
could match, could outshine
the illuminating vision of that Mighty Face.

There the student saw the universe spread out,
separated in its terrestrial parts,
divided in its celestial aspects,
yet standing united
in the body of the Christ,
the Lord of All.

Overcome with awe and wonderment,
enchantment and astonishment,
he bowed in reverent devotion
to his Master, and said:

Within your sacred body, Mighty God,
I see all lesser gods,
all grades of creatures with distinctive marks;
I even see the Brahma, one Lord,
seated on his lotus-throne,
around him are the Sages,
and symbolic circling Serpents,
all Divine.

With myriad mouths and eyes,
with countless arms, and bodies, too,
I see you everywhere
incarnate with unbounded Form.
But, still imbued with mystery
for I never see your beginning,
your middle, nor your end,
nor find your source,
All Infinite!

The crown of glory

I see you crowned with Universal Glory,
with emblems of power and might,
irradiant with dazzling blaze and fire,
and immeasurable light.

Lofty beyond all thought, imperishable,
beautiful beyond all words,
a treasure-house beyond all price,
the sacred flame dazzles

and almost blinds my inner eye.

Eternal guardian of the World,
I think of you as immemorial Man.

Your refulgent eyes
are like the sun and moon,
your face is blazing as with sacrificial fire;
your radiance floods the universe,
and worlds careen and burn before your flame.

Your presence arteries the land and azure space,
and depthless regions interlaced.
The triple worlds of earth, and sea, and sky,
bow silently before your manifested Form.

I see a great multitude
of enlightened souls who join in worship
and accord.

All the celestial beings
in the gardens of the sky are offering
triumphant songs to praise the Infinite.
Gods, and lesser gods, Titans, heroes,
martyrs, saints, and all creation
bow in amazement at your Light
while circling in their sunswept flight.

Having seen the magnitude, reality,
of your immeasurable and ultimate Form,
the vast and surging bosom of the World,
the ignorant blindly grope with terror,
confused, and struck with fear.

Radiant, and rainbow-hued,
you touch all heaven with a magic wand.
Your many mouths are open wide
and from your eyes flashes of lightning
sweep across the universe.

Having seen your greatness
my spirit quakes,
my spirit fails,
and my peace is destroyed.

Light knows no darkness

Where shall I fly to darkness,
where escape, subdue the terrifying light
of your universal presence?

for there is no place outside
of your World-Mind, for you alone
have lent me wings,
and only in your All can I find
a haven and a refuge for my Self.

I see the marching sons of earth,
and all the kings and rulers of mankind,
the noble warriors, slayers and slain,
rush into the mighty flames;
or mangled, ground to powder,
beneath the rhythmic tread of Time's
destroying march.

As rivers in their sweeping floods
impetuously pour into the ocean's tides,
so do the obstinate, hard-hearted lords of earth,
and ignorant men, rush tumultuously
to hurl their speck of Time into Eternity
as if they sought their own destruction,
not knowing that no soul is ever lost,
none ever destroyed.

Like evening moths fly headlong
into a flaming light, to burn and vanish,
so do these ignorant, embattled multitudes
struggling for fame and momentary might,
disappear into the cauldron of your Light.

On every side, all consuming,
and fiery-tongued,
your scorching Light destroys ignorance,
dissolves the forces of the dark.
No other power can long exist
within your blazing rays of Mind.

Your untrammelled glory fills all space;
the universe is in a flaming conflagration, Christ,

from your engulfing Light.

Reveal your SELF!

Show me your spiritual, true Form!

I offer love and gratitude for flawless flame,
for harmony of body, mind, and soul,
for your Name,—

O Christ, incarnate in an earthly frame;
yet I would know your inner Being,
for this plethora of light and life
streaming from your Self bewilders me.

Christ fights our fight

The Christ replied:

I am Time, before whom all creations
rise, and pass, disintegrate,
unravelling all the tangled skeins of life.

Time lays its devastating hand upon the world,
while brother slays his brother,—fellow man.

Time ravishes the heart of all mankind
while it corrodes the breath he breathes
and irresistibly congeals his blood of life.

None of these warriors, here arrayed for strife,
ready to kill or to be killed,
shall escape from death
upon this battlefield of earth's mortality
for ignorance and hate eventually destroy self.

Only you alone shall live,

O student seeking God within!

Therefore, stand up!
Fight the fight against all darkness,
against beclouded mind, and murky light.

Conquer every foe of Self, self-chosen,
cast your fetters to the laughing sea
and claim your heritage of mind and reason
as royal sons of life,—eternally.

By Me, the Christ made man,
eternal spirit clothed with garments of mortality,
the fight was long since won,—

the darkness only darkness in the mind of man.
Only be My instrument
performing the decrees of so-called Fate
that actually are patterns in your Destiny.

The blind and battling warriors,
begotten on the field of Time,
have been killed already by the working of the Law,
shattered by greed, by hate, desire,
destroying their body on the wheel
of birth and death
while working through their scheme of Destiny.

Then fight, destroy fearlessly
the enemies of Truth,
for neither life nor death are gifts
that you can give or take.

Oppose the iniquitous hosts
from sabled centuries,
by buckling on the shield of Light,
and, armored with the cause of Love,
wield the gleaming blade of Truth.

The chorus of earth

Then the young Prince
fell prostrate before the God-man,
and trembling, stammering with fear,
with saddened face,
in broken accents, said:

O Christ, the world rejoices,
the firmament and earth are shouting
your magnificence and glory!
The hordes of darkness flee in terror
before the onset of your light,
while the Enlightened Ones,
who know and walk upon your path,
sing your praises, offer adoration
with humility, and wonder at your sight.

For how could they do otherwise?

O loftiest SELF! First Cause of All!
Without conceivable beginning,
from an incalculable past,
with no conceivable end.

Eternal God of all the gods,—
the matrix of all worlds!

Most Ancient of Time:
Your illimitable Mind
generates all universes;
you are the knower of all things
and all things in turn know you.

From out the vastness of your Form
the day and night are born,
and all the terror, beauty,
majesty, and loveliness of Creation
merge, unroll endlessly.

You are the God of winds;
the deity of fire flames through you.

The God of oceans, of the moons and stars,
of nations, and of men, of all things seen,
and those unseen, the ever new, and never old,—
you are Progenitor, ancestor of the race,
Grandsire of them all:

Hail, all hail a thousand times!
O dreaming world within a dream:
Reverence and love be magnified
a thousand times a thousand, without end,

O Infinite,

Incarnate One
from out Infinity!

Around you on every side
nature proffers sacrifice, oblation, praise:

The sighing of the winds across blue space;
the tempests of the sea,
the laughter of the skies,

the music sounding from the passing spheres,
the wake of comet's tail,
the jagged rocks, the tabernacled hills,
meadows, fields of earth,

fragrance of many-petalled flowers,
the seasons trailing seasons,
and the souls of seeking men

All praise your boundless power,
your immeasurable strength,
for you include them all within your glory,
and all their glory only speaks of You!

Awakening comes

If in thinking of you
I have assumed you as only
my dear friend on earth,
the driver of my chariot,
or if I have grown importunate,
careless, or thoughtless in my love
and its expression;

if jesting, I have shown irreverence,
unaware of your true nature,
your Divinity,
in every day affairs of life,
alone, O sinless One,
or in the company of friends,
forgive my error, O boundless One.

Father of the pageantry of worlds,
of all that moves or is unmoved,
you are the Wise Instructor
of those who come to Wisdom's fountain;
the Teacher of all teachers,
Mind guiding all intelligence,
for there is no thought beyond your Mind.

And so I offer self to Self,—
my mind and soul a part of yours,
and crave your blessing and your love.

As father with his son,
as friend to friend in the mystery of friendship;
as the beloved bears with the lover,
bear with me, O loving Christ.

As the soundless fall of the footsteps of the night
I hear you call;
or in the sightless seeing of the day
I see your Form,
I now embrace you with my heart.

Return, Celestial Form

Such blissful visions as I have seen
no mortal eye has seen before.
The pillars of my heart are trembling
with entranced delight;
my breath comes swiftly, restlessly,
my mind is dazzled, glowing
with the transfiguring beauty of your sight.
Yet, even in its sun-bright ecstasy
my flooded heart enfolds desire,—
my mind is thirsty with a still deeper thirst
for I would see the vision
of yourself in your Celestial Form.

Then, O God, My Lord, O Universal Mind,
the Former of all Form,
assume the form eternally remembered and beloved,
on which I looked uncounted times,
and again on which I could feast my soul
without a tremble, without fear.
Awaken now the imperishable remembrance
of my far forgotten years.

The Blessed Lord replied:
Beloved son, out of my love for you
your eyes have been unsealed.
I have first revealed to you my incarnate,
supreme forms,
as the radiant universe in its primeval essence
manifested in its eternal and infinite glory,
shown you the milleniums that circle God.
None, except yourself, has ever seen this sight.

Not by sacrifice, by charities,
nor by the study of Sacred Books;

not by great learning, by good works,
nor penance and denial of self;
the reward of a vision of this Form
is won by none of these observances
and rites.

Nor can the eyes of man be opened
so he can see Me as I am,
can comprehend the vision of the spheres.
You alone have had this gift.

Having seen so suddenly these marvelous things,
neither be bewildered, confused, nor dismayed.
Be free from fear,
and let your heart rejoice;
for when your mind and heart subside,
when peace and quietude throb slowly
in your breast,
then again you may behold Me,
again may see Me in familiar Form.

Christ always returns

Then the Blessed Christ,
having reassured the distraught one,
resumed the well-known Form
in which He first appeared
beside the Prince upon the battlefield.

The young Prince said:
Seeing your loved Form once more,
as I have seen and known you in the past,
my mind and heart rejoice in peace,
and dawn now swiftly rolls
across my boundless skies.

The Christ replied:
Yes, O student seeking understanding,
seeking Light:
you have seen this Form of Mine,
have known My Mind Invisible,
while seen in all things visible,
the very Soul of Nature,

which even the gods, the Shining Ones,
the angels, archangels,
and the higher hosts of heaven
crave as a boon, forever yearn to see,
though even they have never seen
the vision as you envisioned Me.

There is no name beyond My Name,
no mind outside My Mind,
there is no other road
than by supreme devotion offered Me alone.
Only by the wisdom,
by the love given by the Overself to the Self,
can Eternal Light be manifest,
Divine Form be sensed in everything.

He who does all actions only for Me,
who thinks all thoughts through Me,
whose supreme treasure, whose All in All,
is found in Me, in My Kingdom of Universal Mind;
the true follower of My golden Light,
who holds dominion, freed from attachment,
forsaking everything for Me, his goal,
who places inner Wisdom
beyond the price of earthly things;
who finds his peace, salvation,
only in loving all, and in all loving;
he shall finally come to Me,
O son of royal blood,
for he and I are One,
secure eternally.

Publication. The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic. Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 122–135.

CHAPTER 12

The Path of Devotion

The seeker asked:

Tell me, Enchanting One, which
of those children of the earth
who worship, those who serve you,
those who know an inner, soundless
harmony, realize you most completely?—
those who worship at the shrine of Form,
disclosed and tangible in near and far;
or those who worship silently,
who worship you as Mind,—
The Absolute,—Unmanifest, the Infinite?

Which is most deeply filled
with understanding, richest harmony?

The Blessed One replied:

Those whose little world centers in Me,
whose zeal and faith revolve round Me,
and never wavers, is impregnable,
are My most devoted ones.

And yet, those who worship Me
as Mind, the Indestructible, Unmanifest;
Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent;
Immutable, though all else dissolves in change;
Unthinkable, though Thinker of every thought;
Ineffable, yet expressed in the wonder
 of all waking, and all dreams;
Invisible, yet interwoven with all visibility;
Eternal, silver thread in all Infinity;

 those seeking ones who restrain
and conquer domination of the senses;
without entanglement, and look on all things
quietly, with equal stillness of the mind;
rejoicing in the welfare of mankind;
have cut the cords of darkness, one by one;
whose radiant face of love is turned to all;
 these also walk upon the path

and come at last to Me.

Those who without division live in Mind
Unmanifested, Absolute, will find
the path is thornier, is hard
for souls imprisoned in the flesh
to reach and know the never old
in the ever new.

If they strive, if they offer Me
their own fulfilment in all they think and do;
and all their daily paths of work and love,
though they seem devious, dark, and steep,
wind upward on their way to Me;
then they too shall come up over,
be raised above the changing sea of Time,
above the shifting tides of earth's mortality.

O you who seek Me in your mortal mind,
content with immortality,
place your mind in Universal Mind,
suffuse your reason with My thought,
let self grow in My greater Self,
and penetrate My heart with understanding,
your pulsing song in time with Mine;—
then shall you move, and breathe, and live in Me
today
and hereafter.

But if distractions on the earth
distract your mind from Mine,
the tawdry strings of things entangle
and confuse your course of days,
then with patient practice,
with daily discipline, seek out the path
that surely leads to Me.

Or, if with constant practice,
with observance of discipline and rite
you still cannot attain to harmony,
then seek Me by the path of service,
performing everything for My own sake,

then you shall reach perfection
in the starry constellation of your lives.

If even to accomplish these
there does not seem sufficient strength,
then take refuge in union with My Mind,
renouncing all the fruits of external things
and let the inner self be controlled by Me.

For far better is the Kingly Knowledge
the wisdom of the universe of Law,
than either practice or blind habit;
and better far than earthly knowledge is Meditation,
the minding of the things of Mind;
and better than deep meditation
is renunciation of desire for reward;
for following renunciation
follows peace,—
that peace that only they can know
whose heart is in My Hand.

Love finds a way

He who bears no hurt toward anyone,
is friendly, and compassionate, is wise
in seeing God, divinity in all the diverse
destinies of men;
who loves all Nature, though unnamed,
and whom all Nature loves as one
whose harmony reflects the spheres;
is undisturbed by pleasure, or by earthly pain;
and who, already long forgiven
is himself forgiving;
who is content, happy in unbroken fulness;
whose thoughts are heritage of Mind
and so control all passions, tasks, desires;
whose mind is absorbed and covenanted with Mind,
with understanding burning with My Flame,
communion of such soul to soul is precious,
very dear,—
his heart shall hear

the shimmer of soft harmonies of night
and music forever weaving strands of Light.

He who always measures self
only by the SELF immeasurable,
eternal Mind of Universal All,
and so neither shrinks away
nor tires on his path across the earth,
nor does the world turn away from him;
he is delivered from the turbulence
of strife, the winnowing winds of life;
he, also, is held within the shelter of
My heart.

He whose Kingdom of the Mind
is pure, beyond desire, need;
untouched by passion's searing touch,
untroubled on his daily path,
and has renounced reward and prize
is also heir to eternal love, and dies
in union with the Mind of Me.

Likewise he
who neither loves nor hates the things of earth,
who neither grieves for things that pass,
nor rejoices overmuch for those that stay;
who neither covets nor desires
that which never was his own,
and, filled with devotion to the Spirit
is not enticed by material things, nor flesh;
he too shall find his all,
dominion, and divinity in Me.

Equanimity

Alike to friend or foe,
for neither one knows all;
nor is repute nor disrepute,
infamy nor fame, more than a word
to him who lives in Mind.

Unmindful of reproach or praise,

content with all that falls,
whose troubles softly slip
into the silent waters of the night;
homeless, yet finds a haven everywhere,
sheltered always in My Light,—
steady in mind, unswerving in devotion,
in love we are united: I in him
and he in Me.

They who drink the divine waters
of Wisdom, of Immortality,—
this ambrosial nectar of the gods;
accept these principles,
these prime precepts
I have given here for you,
receiving all with unutterable devotion
and unquestioned faith;
with Me the object, Me, their supreme God;
their love for Me grows ever dearer,
and Mine for them surpasses all.

Publication. *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic.* Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 136–141.

CHAPTER 13

The Knower and the Known

Then the student
said to the Blessed One:
I desire to learn of Nature
and of Spirit: that is, the self,
and the Overself; my soul,
and the Oversoul; my body,
as the Field in which I experience
my existence here,—and my
eternal Self, or Spirit, which
looks upon that Field.

Tell me,—who is the Knower,
and what the object known?

The Christ replied:
Your body is the field
in which darkness and light
sow seeds, and where the fruits
are ripened, then are harvested.

It is the Known.
Dreaming in autumnal quiet
your soul is the Harvester
of all these thoughts and deeds,
the fruits of ignorance, and intelligence.

It is the Knower of the Field.

Understand that I, Eternal Mind,
the Oversoul of all the World,
am the Knower of the Field
in every field of life.

True Wisdom lies
in comprehending this twofold
nature of existence everywhere,
for I am both Knower
and the object Known.

Now listen carefully,
while I, the Alchemist,
tell you the nature of the Field,

what it is, its properties,
how changed, or modified,
and from where they came.

Also, what He, the Knower, is,
and what His powers are.

This truth has long been sung
by many Wise Ones,
by many Sages in the ages past,
in various chants, in hymns of praise,
and decisive writings full of reasonings,
arguments, and convincing proofs.

Our body is the Field known

The Field, or body, the temporal self,
that which is Known by the Knower:
it consists of the elements, or principles,
in all the physical, material things,—
the seen and the unseen,
the consciousness of Self
that pervades all beings everywhere;
the senses, and all the centers
that respond to the five organs of sense,
all aspects of intelligence, and mind;
then come love, and hate, emotions,
pleasure, and pain,
and all the forms of sensibility
through which the body functions
while the spirit lives on earth.

All these ingredients are a part
of this teeming Field of Self,
the changing Personality in its interaction
with this life.

Those who are truly wise
in spiritual wisdom,
lighted with a spark of sacred flame,
are free from over self-esteem,
hypocrisy, or injury to others.

Understanding brings patience,

rectitude, respect, and service for
those who teach, for the Masters;
 it brings purity in heart and mind,
with firmness, and self-control;
gentle simplicity;
 without lust for far-flung fields;
 indifference towards the objects
 of sense
and their clamoring sway;
with continual insight
into the nature of birth and death,
the pain and woe from sickness,
from old age,—
 all things hallowed
 by the hand of Time.

Vision of the Overself

For him who has the Wisdom
of seeing self through the understanding
vision of the Overself, the bonds of love
that identify the self with other selves,
are loosened, no matter who the other self
 may be,
no matter how deeply he may be beloved.

He looks with calm, with cool serenity,
with the constant equanimity of stars,
upon the passing change of things,
no matter whether his experience brings
him pleasure or brings pain,
whether undesirable or desirable.

Such light upon the path
engenders need for devotion,
worship in seclusion, or templed
 by the sky,
garlanded with prayer and meditation
to draw the knowing soul to Me.

The song he sings is not the lonely
 heart's lament,

for there grows a love for solitude,
a search for some hidden place
where he can learn to hear My voice;
and in that secret chamber of the heart
there is less need of men, companionship,
of losing self in a multitude of other selves,—
in crowds.

For the soul that understands
and knows the intrinsic wisdom
of the Self there is a constant yearning,
continual pursuit of spiritual truth,
desire to perceive and know
the purpose of all knowing.

The start upon this path is Knowledge,
Light:
all else against it is but folly, ignorance,
for darkness cannot know the light.

The object of Wisdom

If you know the true object,
the goal for which all understanding,
all wisdom seeks,
then you shall find immortal SELF,—
the knowing Self of Immortality.

This object of Wisdom, the Overself,
is Universal Mind, Imperial, Eternal,
the Seer, and the seen,
it is without beginning, and can be
neither Being, nor Non-Being, for It is Life.

Free from every organ of a body,
free from the womb of sense,
yet with supreme sensibility,
this World-Mind pervades and frames
a lustrous universe,
envelopes all beyond the farthest thoughts
of limited and finite minds.

Unattached and free,
without the limitations that we know,

this Infinite Mind contains all Nature
within its sumptuous, Illimitable SELF.

Without the attributes and qualities
of our earthly self, the Absolute partakes
of all knowledge given by those
qualities, those treasured attributes;
creating and sustaining all the tapestry,
the transitory life upon our little world.

Fluctuating between the Here and There,
between the Now and Then,
Without, within all mortal minds It moves,
yet also is immovable,—
in and through all Nature and all beings.

This Universal Mind is Infinite
in its subtlety, is imperceptible, invisible;
and though it stands far away in spaceless distance,
it is forever close, forever near,
eternally the Self enclosing Self.

Infinite diversity

In the essence of Its nature
it is undivided, remaining One in unity;
yet in its manifest diversity
it is Infinite, as stars
sparkling like dew upon the skies
seem numberless upon the meadows
of the night.

Mind is the procreating vortex of all life
for it continuously creates, is inexhaustible,
and re-absorbs all life into Itself.

Mind endlessly evolves,
and endlessly revolves
then endlessly dissolves.

The source of Light is Cosmic Mind.
It is Light Itself, uncreated glory,
yet when the word was spoken:
“Let there be light,”—
the sun, the moon, and stars were born,
all interstellar spaces flashed

with regal day.
Beyond all darkness,
Itself the Source,
Mind only knows Itself as Light of Light,
as resplendent Wisdom,—
as the source and object of Wisdom,
and lives within the minds and hearts of all.
It is the light of God we see
in every face we meet upon the street.
So, briefly, I have explained the Self,
as part of the Overself,
and its Knowing Mind, and the Field,
or Object of all Wisdom.
This is the secret
and essence of Life;
how it is enmeshed,
and how it moulds, orders,
and bends creation
to Its universal plan.

The Source of Life

The Wise One knows the Source of Life,
experiences the Light of Life,
knows the harvest of experience in his life,
and how to use the knowledge
from that harvest,
and so he is enabled,
with the Knower,
to share all Wisdom known.
The sundial of his life
is only shadowed by His wings.

Spirit and Matter of this world
are both without beginning,
and, therefore, without end.
All qualities and principles
are inherent in matter, born of Nature,
and from her all changes,
forms, and attributes perpetually flow.

Nature, Mind, is the Father of Cause,
and the Mother of Effect,
the Infinite Parent of action, ever-becoming,
the law, and substance underlying all.

The Eternal Knower

The Mind, or Soul,
that vibrates through our instrument
ensheathed in flesh receives
impressions from the kingdom of matter,
from the world of sense.

It is the Mind, or Spirit,
that is aware of blessings, or of pain,
that interacts with our activity,
that makes us conscious
of our spark of Deity.

An Eternal Spirit, Mind,
united with an instrument in Time,
uses the natural qualities of that
instrument for its own spiritual
growth,—Mind and Matter
interacting while on earth as One,
either in conflict, or in harmony.

Until the higher Wisdom is found
the soul evolves through many births,
many rebirths. At last it is no longer
shackled by the clamor of the flesh,
fevered senses,
or the good and evil of the earth,
or paced and footed by the anguish
of rebirth.

It is the Soul, supreme SELF,
the higher nature of Mind, Spirit,
which, templed in the body
while on earth, observes, directs,
protects while it shares
in activities called Life.

Untouched by desecrations of mankind,
the Soul forever wings its way

to absolution in the sacred fountain
of Eternal Mind.

He who finds the golden key
to unlock Eternal Consciousness, the Soul,
or Mind, and knows the qualities,
or Principles, that stand under Nature
and Matter, whatever his temporal condition
may be here, the Truth has liberated him
and he shall not need again to wander
through the tortuous mazes of rebirth
on earth.

Many means of knowing

There are some minds that,
by means of meditation,
grow to sense the Universal Mind
within all Nature;—their own self,
intelligence, awakening as a part
of the great Overself,—
their Soul,—a light illuminating
Will, and Body, all activity;—
their deeds a lovely image
on the mirror of the mind.

While others find their path
by renouncing action; still others,
by seeking Service in right action,
activity and right for their own sake.

There are those who have not found
these truths, are ignorant in themselves:
but having heard the teachings from others,
yet believe and follow them.

These also leave the ageless Wheel of Death
and rejoice immortally beyond, in victory,
untouched by earth's mortality.

Then know that all creation,
inanimate or animate, flows from
the union of Soul and Nature,
things and thoughts projecting

as an image of World-Mind,
or lesser, earthly minds;—
combining the observer
and the things observed,
the Knower, and the Field of Knowledge
Known.

True insight

He only sees with eyes
that truly see when insight sees
the Universal Soul, or Mind, as immanent,
mirrored in everything in earth or sky.

Though all things perish, changing,
irrevocably returning to eternal source,
the Mind remains imperishably
immutable in all perishable things.

Since seeing everywhere, in everything,
the same Eternal Mind,
the Cosmic Soul vibrant in universality,
he does not identify the Self
with the lower vibrations of Materiality;
and, seeing beyond mortality's mirage,
he walks upon the highest Path
to Immortality.

He who sees that everything he does
is but a misty or a clear reflection
of Universal Mind, illumined Will,
his soul, without entanglement in actions,
principles of Nature, or material things
that change
he never is engulfed by dark despair
and finds the Light upon his path.

The Tree of Life

Perceiving that all diversities
in Nature's form,
its tree of countless branches,
are really rooted in one trunk, one Life,

and through that trunk there flows the sap
to all its branches, limbs, twigs, and leaves,
in all their colorful and infinite variety,
then that mind has arrived
at consciousness of his own oneness
with Universal Mind,
and has reached illimitable, Eternal Mind,
his higher Self, and divine Overself,
eternally united,
sing a deathless, glowing melody
with unutterable beauty
iridescent with immortal harmony.

The Spirit of the Universal Mind, or Soul,
the imperishable, supreme Self,
even when it lives within the body,
or a form of Nature, is actionless,
unstained, untouched by all activity.

Without beginning,
without qualities or attributes of Time,
it is above the breaking tides
of change, of storm,
and the ignorance of men.

The ether, present everywhere,
is not affected by the objects it contains,
or that contain it; so, the Universal Mind,
the matrix of material things and forms,
and which is the eternal essence of all things,
remains untouched, unaffected,
immutably the SELF,
the Knower of all Known.

Even as one sun illuminates
the entire world, so does the Lord of Light,
One Mind, illuminate all Nature:—
Eternally Known by the Eternal Knower.

And he, who in the flood of insight,
Spiritual Power, and Wisdom,
perceives the difference between
the Field of Knowledge, finite life,

and the Knower of the Field, Infinite Mind,
the difference between the Knower,
and the objects known,
he literally perceives the Freedom of the Soul,
freed from the illusions of the earth,
of matter, Personality,
and passes to the Universal Consciousness,
Spiritual Oneness with the Infinite,
Supreme Reality,
the vast Consciousness of Immensity.

Publication. The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic. Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 142–153.

CHAPTER 14

The Understanding of Qualities

The Universal Teacher said:
Draw near, and I shall now disclose
that Supreme Wisdom, of all knowledge
the best,—that star of wisdom by which
the Wise Ones in all ages are guided
to the highest reaches of attainment
and ultimate Perfection.

Having been united with the SELF,
refuged in Wisdom of the Overself,
they never shall return to earth
in the cycle of rebirth,
even in the creation of a Cosmic Day
nor are they lost in dissolution
of a universe in a Cosmic Night.

O son of earthly Kings:
Great Nature is the womb of the Eternal;
in her I cast the hidden germ of life;
from her are born all beings,
objects, natural forms.

The great Eternal womb of Nature
is the womb of all mortals
conceived and born in Time.

I, World-Mind, am their generating
Father, whose germinating Seed sleeps deep
within the seed of all things born on earth,
bestowing form on all existence here
through thought, divine decree.

The three great qualities,
or principles of Nature, are
inherent in and spring from
Universal Mind.

These qualities are Truth;
Motion, or Passion; Indifference.
And, born of Nature, they are her thongs
to bind the Soul within embodied form,—

silence wrapped in sound,
the imperishable bound to perishable clay.

Though all are bonds,
each is different in its Nature,
by its very quality.
Truth, though her face is pure,
and luminous,
strangely binds the soul to the far
attainment
of Harmony, and Wisdom;
and, sometimes, brings it
to re-birth because of bondage
to happiness and knowledge.

Motion, or the Passion-Nature,
brings burning with want,
insatiable desire,
and is the source of attachment
and thirst for life,
for things of earth,
and binds the soul to action,
objects, and lust for power,
thus also binding to return on earth.

While Inertia, or Indifference,
is ignorance, a darkened mind,
and the delusion of mankind.

It binds the soul relentlessly
by heedlessness, indolence,
tethering it with folly, sloth,
and sleep.

Only by rebirth can such vibrations
rise eventually to those of Spirit,
Light.

Intelligence can woo the soul
to bliss, well-being, Harmony.
The flood of Passion seeks activity
engulfing power and possessions.
While Inertia, stupidity, or ignorance,
shrouds the mind in darkness,

misconception,
hedging Life with dogma, empty forms,
outworn tradition, and decay.

The dominant quality

When the mind is winged with Harmony,
Indolence and Ignorance are overcome;
or Passion, thirst for power,
can dominate both Truth, and Indifference;
and sometimes ignorance, Inertia,
dominates both Truth and Passion,
then urge of earth engulfs the mind
with confusion in its dark abyss.

When from every threshold
of the body Wisdom-light
shines out, then you may know
that Truth, and Harmony hold sway,
intelligence is manifest:
Happiness illuminates the day,
irradiates the night with song.

If the mind is fluctuant with yearning,
with avarice, restlessness,
and parched with deep desire,
mired in activity, spendthrift with its energy,
then you may know that Passion, unrest, and Power
sit upon the throne both day and night.

If Ignorance clutters any mind,
then darkness, inertia, hopelessness,
confusion, with delusion of the self,
all dominate that life
and fetter it with bondage
to its wretchedness.

When at last the soul forsakes the body
where Truth, and Harmony, and Light prevail,
then its transparent Self is winged
to that translucent plane of Spirit
where the Wise, Intelligent, all radiant

with Light, live in the eternal
Kingdom of the Mind.

If Passion, greed for Power, things,
have ruled in his domain of life,
then his soul passes to a plane of rest
until the time comes when the soul decides
to be reborn into a body adapted
to activity, expression of desire,
to be born among those people
and the environment in harmony
with that quality.

If when it leaves the plane of earth
ignorance, inertia, have enmeshed the mind,
that soul, likewise passes to rebirth
in a body harmonious
with that quality of mind.

The fruit of Intelligence is pure,
harmonious, and stainless;
while Passion, grasping Power,
ultimately meets its end in bitterness,
in bruise, and pain,—
with seams of loneliness.

The fruit of Ignorance, Indifference,
is poisoned with disillusionment,
enveloped in a mist of sorrow,
tears, and solitude.

Wisdom blossoms from the Tree of Truth;
from surging Passion and its fire
comes a greed that covetously haunts desire.

While from the qualities of Indifference
the mind then sinks to pathless lower planes.

Those immersed within the glowing
light of Wisdom
soar to highest planes, and hear the music
of their radiant universe.

Those bound by activity
and greed reach only middle planes of thought;
while those unlighted minds all warped

by ignorance, are weighted with that heaviness
of quality, and must inevitably sink to lower planes.

When the Seer perceives
there is no active agent other than
these three Qualities and Principles
within the realm of Nature's laws,
and knows that Universal Mind
is far beyond his mortal mind,
above, directing, yet in all of Nature's qualities,—
then he has found the inner nature,
the essence of the Soul,
and enters into My Divinity,
into the world of the Overself
where Mind illumines all.

Evolution

The Nature of embodiment
evolves through these three Qualities,
and when the soul has grown
beyond their limitations,
their conditions,
and learns his role within
the drama of World-Mind,
then that soul is liberated
from rebirth and death;
pain, senility, and sorrow;
then sets his feet upon the path
that leads to God.

The troubled student asked:
What are the signs that mark
the man unfettered from these qualities?
How does he behave?
and by what means has he passed
beyond their pregnant claims
and overcome the limitations
of the flesh?

The Christ replied:
The Wise One does not hate the urge

of energy, nor ignorance, delusion,
nor even light, intelligence,
is not blinded by their presence,
nor enlightened by their absence;
 but, released from either
like or dislike for these qualities,
he is neutral, unshaken by their
continual flux and change,
and stands apart, but still aware,
watching them come and go,
their play, succession, movement, flow,
as one who stands and sees a panoramic show.

Equanimity

Such a soul stands strong, and self-reliant.
He hears My voice in calm or storm,
is balanced between all forces, all desires,
 is always undisturbed
by drifting life around him;
with all his moods, emotions, thoughts,
and actions held eternally
within the timeless hands of Mind.

Beyond the touch of fame or shame,
the same to friend or enemy,
without ambition for the laurels
of success the world can give:
 that mind has left
 the tormenting rhythms, the clamoring,
 countless claims of Qualities,
and escaped encirclement.
 His dross and dark of earth
 are changed to gold, and sun.

He whose seeking mind and heart
serve Me exclusively, devotedly,
whose only vision is of Me,
has left the earth-bound qualities behind,
 is worthy of consummate union
 with Eternal Mind.

For I, World-Mind, Eternal in the Universe,
the changeless God of changing Time,
am both the Symbol and Reality,
the immemorial righteousness,
the endless path where Self unfolds.

Forgotten by some mortal children on the earth,
I am still the Heaven,
still the home of the Immortals
whose starry spirits live in ceaseless
radiant bliss.

Publication. *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic.* Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 154–161.

CHAPTER 15

Awareness of Supreme Spirit

Then Christ, the Promised One,
spoke these words:

The Sacred Tree is said
to be indestructible.

It is the symbol of the universe.
Its roots are in the air above,
and its branches in the earth below.

The leaves of this tree
are the sacred hymns,
the sacred writings of mankind.
He who knows this truth
knows the tree of knowledge.

Downward, and upward,
its branches spread to earth and sky:
nourished by Nature's three Qualities
of Ignorance, Intelligence, and Power.
The organs, and the objects of the senses
are its shoots and twigs, its budding leaves
all reaching from the heart.

Its roots grow downward,
the bonds of action, good and evil deeds,
within the world of men.

The eyes of men cannot perceive
its changing forms, nor see
its far beginnings, further end,
nor the things on which it lives,
nor where it has its ancient roots.

When this vast spreading tree,
strongly rooted in illusion,
nourished by qualities, by deeds,
is finally cut down by the strong axe
of awareness; of disinterest,
or indifference to things,—

then he who cuts that
firmly rooted tree shall seek the place

from which there is no more rebirth;
treading the path beyond return,
to seek the Primal Man,
the One Supreme Soul
that does not live within
the always active, growing tree,
but lives within that sourceless stream
of eternal waters flowing
from the timeless sea.

Eternal Home

In that Eternal Home far off,
reached only by a beam of silent light,
live those Illuminated Souls,
freed from pride, from ignorance,
from delusion, from bondage to actions
and their results, evil or good;
from the pairs of opposites
that live within the self
and always give pleasure or pain.

For them, desire's lamp
has been burned out.

Transformed, relieved of illusion,
or confusion, they rise to My Eternal Plane

With no need of sun by day,
nor light of moon at night,
nor need of fire nor flame,
that vast plane is radiant,
all bright with light
beyond the eye of mortal mind.

It is the Eternal Mansion
of Supreme Mind,
and from that highest plane
no spirit shall return
to live on earth.

A tiny portion of My own Universal Self,
a fragment of World-Mind,
wrapped in finite mind,

seemingly a separate soul,
draws around itself, within the world of life,
the five senses,
with the mind the sixth,
that it may be embodied in this apparition
of mortality, and finally, withdraws from
the flesh, to live in its immortal home of Light.

Embodied fragment

And when a fragment of Eternal Mind, a soul, acquires a body here on earth, and, also, when that body is abandoned, the Spirit, Eternal Self, goes to the plane of its spiritual desires, carrying from life to life the essence of itself.

The faint fragrances from lives lived here on
earth
linger as the breeze itself carries
and takes fragrances from flowers.

Intermeshed within the ear,
the eye, the touch, the taste, and smell,
presiding over mind as well as sense,
the Mind experiences sentient life,
comes to know,
enjoying, or not, the objects of all sense.

The foolish ones, deluded,
ignorant of Eternal Mind,
cannot see the soul in its body here,
or when it leaves its mortal frame,
or returns from time to time;
or when the soul is swayed
by earth's Qualities, or enjoys
the color, and the sense
of life's drama played on Nature's stage.

Such presence of the soul is only seen
by those whose eyes are lighted here with love,
intelligence, with understanding,
kindled with Wisdom's inner light.

But those seeking souls
 with lighted minds, insight,
though they, themselves, are also struggling,
perceive the Oversoul established
 as a beam of light
within the Self of mortal mind,
Eternal Christ, living eternally
 enclosed within themselves;—
while those unlighted minds,
deluded, ignorant, and unintelligent,
 wandering everywhere,
though laboring hard to find a way,
cannot perceive the light they seek
is always burning in themselves.

Splendor of Light

All the light
 and all the radiance from the sun,
enlightening, irradiating worlds in worlds,
the luminous, and silvered moon-light
shining in the flower gardens of the night,
and bedded with the bloom of stars;
 the fiercely flaming gold in ruby-fire,
and all effulgent splendor flames from Me,—
Eternal Light of Lights in earth,
 and sky, and sea.

It is My Energy,
My vibrant life and Mind
that permeates the soil, and earth,
and nourishes all growing things,
sustaining with My life, My vital energy.

I am the vital sap flowing through everything,
the life-giving liquid in all plants.

I am the Fire of Life,
the vital flame and force
that breathes breath into the bodies
of all breathing things,—
directing, and uniting all

the processes of life.

Heart of Life

My heart of life,
My incorruptible, Universal Mind,
lives for a tiny breath of time,—
a reflex in the hearts and minds of men.

I am their heart, their mind,
their perception, and their memory,
and I am unconsumed
if earth and time destroy these.
I am the goal of understanding;
I am all that is to be known
in all the Sacred Writings of all ages,
for, indeed, I am the unguessed author
of their wisdom,
and the secret knower
behind all things known.

Upon the plane of earth
there are two aspects of Mind,
or Energy;—the One, and the Many;
the soul, or Self, and the Oversoul,
or Overself; the destructible,
and the indestructible; the transitory,
or the temporal things of earth,
and the eternal, or timeless, changeless,
beyond the realm of Time.

The Oversoul is manifested
in Nature's body, and her forms.
All are aspects of the Supreme Self,
pervading all, sustaining all
three kingdoms of the earth.

Christ Incarnate

It is I, the Christ incarnate
on the earth; I, who am the Soul
of every soul, Supreme Spirit,
Supreme Consciousness, Immutable,

the One and Only,—Absolute.

Transcending all things Perishable,
and beyond even the Imperishable,
all Sacred books and teachings
celebrate My Mind, Me, the Oversoul,
as Supreme.

And so to you, beloved student,
and to all those seekers coming after
you: he whose eyes have cleared beyond
the confusion and illusion, and knows
Me as the Christ, the mysterious Spirit
always living in the heart of every soul,
and so, loving Me in every form,
in every walk and way of Life, he worships
Me in truth and deed, for him the lights
of Wisdom burn eternally.

This most secret teaching,
the hidden secret of all secrets,
the Mystery of Mysteries,
has been told that you might become
illuminated, attaining highest wisdom,
accomplishing all duties in the Divine
Adventure of Life; gaining, understanding
all that can be known.

Publication. *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic.* Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 162–168.

CHAPTER 16

Attributes of Good and Evil

The Blessed Master continued:
These are some of the characteristics
and nature of those minds
on the path that leads upward toward the Light;
toward their Harmony of soul and body.

They are unafraid,
and have clean hearts,
and work continually toward Intelligence.

Charity, restraint of self,
sacrifice, the study of the Sacred Word,
with temperance in all things:

right action, harmlessness,
freedom from anger, renunciation,
peacefulness, absence of crookedness,
compassion, forbearance,
mildness, modesty, uncovetousness, loyalty;

vigor, humility, endurance,
courage, serenity, fearlessness,
with love toward mankind,
these are marks of him
whose sentient mind has grown aware
of its heritage to Oversoul,
and is palpitant with golden light.

Unlighted minds

These are some of the attributes
of those unlighted minds that see
no difference in evil or in good,
nor sense their hidden spark of Deity,
Eternal Mind.

With hypocrisy, with pride,
and arrogance, petty conceits, quick anger,
and unkind speech,
they walk the timeless circle of rebirth,

and in their darkened ignorance
are enemies that brush against the Light.

Divine properties
illuminate the Self, exalt the mind,
and struggle toward liberation
from the turning wheel of fate,
while discord mires Self
in evil ways, the mire of Mortality.

One leads to freedom, and to Light,
the other coils about the Self with bondage
to all ills of flesh and mind.

Two kinds of nature
manifest among all selves
born on the battle plane of life:
the good, the evil nature
constructive, or destructive;
the wise, the unwise;
the ignorant, and intelligent;
with eyes blinded by desire
or open toward the light.

Those whose shadowed natures
lead to rivalry between their evil
and their good,
whose image, mirrored murkily in Time,
reflects the mortal self estranged
from Divine Overself,
can scarcely know right action,
seem always a prisoner to wrong.

Without purity, propriety,
only stumbling truth is found
reflected there by day or night.

The deluded ones

In their tortured folly
these deluded ones repeat: "The universe
is without truth, without foundation,
without God; there is no law but change;
no truth, no universal Mind."

Believing only in materialism,
godlessness, they think that lust alone
brings life to union, perpetuation
of the race.

Under misapprehension,
misconception of these views,
their imperfect understanding
of themselves, of their purpose here
on earth, of the god-mind in their
inner self: these misguided souls
without a compass, sail seas
of ignorant thoughts and deeds,
living life in recurrent cycles
of error, in fetters of the flesh
and are destructive foes against
mankind, and enemy of their
divided selves.

Surrendering mind and body,
fevered with insatiable desire,
arteried with passion's fire,
forever seeking new sensations
in the always old,
only snuffing out old fires
by kindling those unknown and new;
intoxicated by their little self,
enshrouded by a faithless gloom
they can neither dream nor see
their lives lived in that of Oversoul.

Giving their body to be burned
upon the altar of desire,
to unmeasured thought
that only ends in death instead
of life;
regarding gratification of sense
as higher than understanding with
the mind;
feeling sure this life on earth is all:
they fill their meagre time while here

with inner worship of false gods
and outer service to false dreams.

Materialism

They are linked by countless ties
to objects, things; chained with links
of false hopes, enticing senses,
and avarice for hoards of wealth
and all the perishable fruits
of labor, pleasure, desire,—
 sleeping, waking, they twist and snarl
the spinning skein of ignorance
 from the reel of Time.

And always to themselves
these shadowed minds repeat:
“I have won this wealth today,
tomorrow I shall see my purpose gained;
this treasure is already grasped,
tomorrow the other shall be mine.”

Or, “having killed this enemy
tomorrow I shall kill the rest.
I am God in my dominion, perfect,
happy, all powerful.

“I am rich, high-born,
who else can equal me?
 who else can squander wealth like me?
I will offer sacrifice,
 give bounty to the poor;
I will offer gifts,
 for they are cheaper than the gift
 of self;
I will rejoice in material wealth
forgetting my poverty of spiritual Self.”

Deluded by ignorance and vanity,
bewildered by conflicting thoughts;
enmeshed in webs of fantasy,
illusion, foolishness; in nets

entangled with attachments and desires,
such disordered souls repeat rebirths
on lower planes until the dross
and sensuality are shed; and, sick in body,
mind, and soul, they feebly turn toward
the Light to see if sometime, happily,
they might find peace in mind, and spirit,—
in their forever waiting God.

The earth-bound self

In their desire
for glorification of self,
intoxicated with their wealth,
such men ape piety,
with ostentation of lip sacrifice,
performing the letter of the law;
not seeing Mind as the Spirit
pervading all,—more powerful
than wealth or treasures of the earth.

Filled with pride, with lust,
with sense of power, egoism,
insolence, they cannot hear
the inner voice of knowledge
forever seeking to instruct, direct,
to lead them by the power of thought,
to unfold their Self from within itself.

Not knowing Me as source,
the hidden spring within their souls,
they poison their own stream of life
with hate for Me in their own body,
hating themselves and fellow man.

These haters of themselves and man,
cannot see their hatred as their
deeper need for love, their Self
as tortured by such darkness,
such hunger and thirst for the bread
and waters of Eternal Life,
the food and drink of Light and Love;

and so they return again to earth,
always struggling toward the Light
beyond the door of Death,
beyond the womb of rebirth.

Caught in the snare
of birth and death, blindly
stumbling in the dark created
by their failure to hear
the melody their heart
is singing,—
that seems so distant,
but yet is always near,
failure to see the light and harmony
that is faintly gleaming from the Christ
forever deep within the deepest chambers
of Immortal Self, Eternal Mind,—
they pitifully plod their way
upon the treadmill of the gods
until they find their own release
by understanding, light, intelligence,
and love.

The Three Gates

There are three gates
that continually return the soul
to cycles of rebirth in bitter actuality.

They are the Gate of Lust,
the Gate of Wrath,
and the Gate of Greed.

Therefore, the mind must
renounce the re-embodiments of ignorance
that always enter earth
by these three doors leading to rebirth,
always

remembering that the Christ still lives inside
the heart, the mind, and life of every soul
that comes to move and live awhile upon the tide
of Time; that Christ would lead toward the far

goal
of Light and Knowledge, toward Intelligence;
always keeps him in the light that lights the whole
of Life, no matter what the dull ignorance
that still blinds the struggling, darkly shadowed
sight,
for Christ forever is within, his defence
forever is his Light.

And he who is liberated
from these three gates of darkened mind,
achieves his own welfare,
accomplishes his own dreams,
and so, inevitably, shall reach
the highest goal,—
where duty shall be consecrated
only to Christ, only to Him.

If in ignorance
he casts aside the teachings
of all sacred books,
and follows only promptings
of desire, he shall not soon
attain to happiness,
perfection, nor shall he soon reach
the highest goal he seeks
which ultimately is union
of the earthly self
with Divine Overself.

Therefore, search the sacred word
for light upon your path,
for knowledge of your actions,
duty, right, and wrong;
search for those unearthly secrets
always known within your heart:
your inner lamp of highest wisdom,
always working out your path of Destiny
while guided by the teachings of your own Christ,—
Eternal Overself
forever lighting Self within.

Publication. The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic. Los Angeles: DeVorss & Co., 1945, pp. 169–177.

CHAPTER 17

The Threefold Division of Faith

Then the still perplexed student
asked the Teacher:

What is the spiritual condition
of the man within himself,
of those men who neglect the teachings
of the Scriptures, yet who continue
their own faith through ritual and rite?

Are they dominated by Purity,
by Passion, or by Darkness?

The Christ replied:
The inborn faith of mortals
living in the House of Life
is of three kinds, reflected according to
the nature, the character, and disposition
of the man, whether it be pure, be passionate,
or dark.

Through windows facing dawn or night,
the Self looks out upon a passing world
all colored by the eyes that see
and the glass through which they gaze.

The faith of each man
reveals his character and is the index
of his nature.
It points the way that he will take
while wayfaring on the earth.
The quality of faith is weighted with
the essence of himself, for they are one.

His conception of Deity,
or even of an evil spirit, is but himself,
at his own worst or best, and amplified
to infinity, reflecting his accountability.

Faith is inseparable

The man, his faith, his gods,

are indivisibly one, the root and fruit
of all he does on earth, for good or bad,
entwined around the growing tree of Life.

 If Purity is predisposed, within the Self,
 the motivator, and the scales
 to measure all his deeds,
then he worships the gods, and only the most
advanced worship the Absolute Spirit
 found in Me!

 Those whose lives are woven
on the loom of passion's embodiment,
pay tribute to the lesser gods,
those governing lesser planes and regions.

 And those whose lives
are governed by the dark,
whose eyes peer always into night,
worship spectres, goblins,
and the unseen spirits on the lower
planes, mistaking them for Universal Mind,
 for God.

 No gifts of spirit
can be bought with flesh,
nor with the wealth of worlds.

 Misguided by vanity,
hypocrisy, self-righteousness, and pride;
only desire for praise, and passion
for reward, can fashion the lives
of such who close their eyes
to the encircling beam of light.

 Confusing their body with their mind,
these ignorant men torture self,
not knowing that they likewise torment Me,
 the Self within their soul,
forever waiting for their eyes to see.

Divisions of food.

 As mental things appeal to three types of mind,
and spiritual knowledge to three types of soul,

so there are three kinds of earthly food
pleasing to the bodies of all men.

Likewise, divided into three distinctions each
are Worship,

Zeal,

and gifts to Charity,

each with many facets,

each a mirror to the trinity of body, mind, and soul;

each,—

relating Nature, Nature's laws,

and Oversoul.

The food that is desired by those
in whom love of purity predominates
is such as lengthens life, increases strength
and power, and helps to keep them free from
sickness; happy, and contented.

It is pleasing to the palate, nourishing,
substantial, satisfying hunger and need.

It is not too bitter, nor too sour,
too salty, nor too pungent, burning with spice.

Those whose nature, whose disposition
is passionate, moody, emotional, and unstable
search for food that is excessive in its flavor.

It stimulates the jaded tastes,
excites the appetites, and finally produces pain,
sickness, discontent,
and darkens the vision of the mind.

Food that is stale and flat,
unwholesome, unclean, or only leavings,
is acceptable to the tastes of those
whose souls are brooding in a darkened house.

Divisions of worship

In worship, too, the natural disposition
offers three forms as instruments of enlightenment.

The pure in heart worship in the temple
of their daily lives, according to their Sacred Word,
with no desire for reward on earth;

with faith that sustains, directs, and fuses every
thought and deed, their only guidance being inner
promptings of the Self vibrating in union with the
Overself;

their reward,—

communion with the Infinite.

Worship and sacrifice yoked with desire for
their fruits, with hypocrisy, only to be seen of men,
overmindful of capricious self;
such worship is inseparable from natures under
the dominion of passion, and dulled by yielding
to the taunt of appetites.

The barren worship without precepts
of Eternal Mind, bound to ritual and form,
without the gift of Self, and without faith,
without knowledge of the Overself;
in separation from the daily walk in life,
not seeing God in each necessity, every delight,
such worship comes from darkened minds
whose windows are not yet opened to new day.

The marks of zeal

The worship given God
with respect for the heavenly host of the twice-born,
for holy, learned men, and Masters;
together with a love of chastity, and rectitude,
compassion; with harmlessness toward mankind,—
constitute the mark of bodily zeal.

While gentleness, with kindness, truthfulness,
soft speech, study of the Sacred Word,
reflect the zeal of speech.

Content of mind, mildness in temper,
devotion to the mental life, with control
of passions, and desires of the flesh,
with purity: are the marks of pilgrims
with a zeal of mind
while climbing upward on the hills of Time.

This threefold zeal of body, speech, and mind,
when warmed by utmost faith, without desire or
yearning for its fruits, harmonizing earthly self
with heavenly mind, is the ideal of those
whose natural quality is pure.

That zeal which is shown by those who seek for
respect, for honor, worship for ostentation before men,
is fleeting, unstable, and is part of those
in passion's power.

While zeal from minds wrapped in delusion's
shroud,
understanding neither man nor God,
with torture, or destruction of self,
or the self of other men,
destroying freedom for each self
to seek the path in its own light,
the mortal self united with the Overself;
forgetting some knowledge acquired in the past,—
such zeal is spawned in darkness
and born in the deepest caverns
of man's blackest night.

Charity

As in worship, and in zeal,
so, three aspects of Charity
thread through the patterns of all lives.
Gifts given in love,
gifts from the self,
in understanding,
each gift unasked;
unmindful of reward tomorrow;
believing in the eternal abundance of life;
each gift in the right place,
at the appointed time,
for all are worthy to receive all:
such giving is accepted
as a symbol of the pure, the meek,
and humble souls,—

uniting the giver and gift
with the unveiled heart
of him who receives.

Gifts bestowed in expectation of virtue,
or reward; not cheerfully, but grudgingly;
are signs of passion, with poverty of heart,
and meagreness in mind.

While charity, alms, or gifts
given scornfully, in ignorance by those
who have not asked if they themselves deserve
the gifts life proffers them;
respecting neither time nor place,
and understanding neither heart nor mind
of those accepting gifts:—

such giving disregards the giver's debt
and shows ingratitude to life.

It comes from those who sit and brood
in darkness,

wan with weariness
while stumbling on their way.

Three Universals

Creative Power,
Universal Faith,
and Universal Love
are the threefold Reality;
unfettered rhythmic forms of Eternal Mind,
or God,
the cosmic voice of all creation, Source of All,—
the Great Affirmer,
One Absolute!

From that creative source of universal power,
Mind of all minds,—
and all that is manifest, and the beyond,
come teachers, sacred writings,
and worship, all religion: come faith, and hope
in things in earth and life,
in immortality;

comes unshadowed love of self for Self,
of parents, children, friends, mankind,—
 comes Universal Love
 all Oneness—feeling—
 the universe as God.

Therefore, before all ceremonies,
sacrificial rites, and teaching of religion,
comes pronunciation of the sacred and
 indefinable name of God,
by those with understanding of the laws
and workings of Eternal Mind.

As a manifestation of Christ consciousness,
of divine, or universal love,
those who seek liberation from the self
offer all acts of worship, sacrifice,
of zeal, and charity, or gifts
without consideration of their fruits,
as duty on their path of Life,
 and Immortality.

Faith is united with Reality
in seeing all goodness, all good works
as dedicating all of life, and all its deeds,
as symbols of supremacy, of holy qualities,
 of rest in Cosmic Consciousness
 as union with the Absolute!

Steadfastness in worship,
or sacrifice, in zeal, and charity,
bring all work and actions into Light
as boundless homage to I AM that I AM:
 —the Universal God:
 creator and preserver of the All.

Whatever is performed without creative power,
faith, or love, and wisdom, whether it be worship,
 zeal or charity,
or any other act of work or worship
that lacks goodness, love, and faith, or truth,
is godless, without Reality.

It has neither worth nor virtue
here on earth
or in the worlds above
beyond the Gates of Dawn.
neither now, nor in those worlds

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CHAPTER 18

Freedom Through Renunciation

Then the eager student
spoke again to the Blessed Lord, saying:
I desire to know the true nature
of renunciation, that is, the abstaining
from action, on the one hand; and, on the other,
the relinquishment of the fruits of action.

What are the differences,
the distinctions between these two philosophies?

The Christ answered:
For ages the bards and sages
have told us that the true abandonment
lies in the giving up of all works
that have a desired end, or object;
while the wise call relinquishment of the fruits
of every deed the desired wisdom.

There are some philosophers who declare
that because all action is an evil in itself,
a barrier between the Self and God,
all action should be renounced;
while others say that acts
of worship, zeal, and charity are virtuous,
to be desired, a lamp upon the path,
and therefore not to be snuffed out.

With all these teachings in confusion,
hear my final thought, my own conclusion
as to the subject of renunciation
of the rewards of labor, of its fruits,
since such relinquishment has been explained
before to be of three kinds,

Your offering

Renunciation of activity
does not consist in forsaking
all acts of worship, virtue, and charity,

for these are purifiers to the intelligent,
the teachers and philosophers.
They are the offering on your altar
enshrined in universal love.

But even these acts
of devotion should be done by the god-self,
for their own sake, for the virtue inherent
within them, and not for the praise of men,
for the hope of recompense today
or later on more distant harvest fields.

Dark confusion

The teaching that it is proper
to abstain from all the virtuous works
prescribed by highest teachings,
is erroneous, imprisoning,
and not to be desired. Such fruitless
folly comes from Ignorance, delusion,
from dark confusion in the mind,
and is a stumbling stone upon life's path.

No work or action should be left undone
because it may be painful,
or fraught with weariness to the flesh,
or unattractive to the mind.

Such renunciation
cannot obtain reward, for it is a shadow
rising from the Quality of Passion,
clinging to Desire for its external aims.

He who works and enters
into activity because it seems right,
seems necessary to be done,
forsaking all its consequences,
all its fruits,
without hope of recognition, or reward,
his relinquishment arises from
the Quality of Truth,
fused in the flame of Intelligence.
It is undefiled, and pure.

Impartiality

And he whose activities
are pervaded by purity, sound judgment,
intelligence, and cut away from
withering doubts, has neither
pleasure nor displeasure
 in success or in adversity,
for he is impartial,
is interweaving work and love,
 and so is free.

Yet it were stupidity
to think embodied souls
could abstain completely
from all labor, or necessity of deeds:—
 the very nature of the mortal body
precludes such vain attempts.

Therefore, such a seeker after light
is called a relinquisher,
 a renouncer of the fruits of deeds.

The fruits of action

All action has a threefold fruit
in good, in evil, and in mixed:
the first is coveted, desired, agreeable;
the evil is detested, dark, and undesired, disagreeable;
while the mixed is neither one,
being undetermined in its Quality.

And these fruits of action,
according to their nature,
are rewarded after death, or in rebirth,
for him who has not yet relinquished fruits.

For when there is no seed
planted for fruit from action,
there can be neither buds, nor blossoms,
nor any fruit. And so, when the fruits
have been renounced, then there can be
no fruits either in the gardens of this earth
 or those in aeons still to come.

Agents of activity

Learn from Me,
O mighty warrior in the arena of life,
that for every act upon the earth
five agents are required
as has long been known:

These actors are the body;
the mind participating;
the various organs or energies;
the muscles and the nerves;
and soul as supervisor,—
under the Wisdom of the Oversoul.

All work or actions
that engage a man on earth,
whether by body, speech, or mind,
whether for good, or its reverse,
unlawful, or within the law,
all these agents share, and are the cause;
activities must flow from them.

That being true,
he whose reason is untrained,
whose judgment is imperfect,
who only sees his self as instigator,
as isolated actor on the stage,
is blind and cannot see
relationship between his mind
and the body that obeys commands,
between his Self, and divine Overself.

He whose consciousness is freed
from tethering bonds of Personality,
and has gained right understanding
of the body, Self, and Overself,
a knowledge of his deathless destiny;
he knows that, although he fights,
destroys those against him in the battle,
yet neither does he kill,
nor is he fettered by fruit of action

on the wheel of re-embodiment
for his Divinity has come to birth.

The threefold cause

Knowledge, the knower, and the known,
form the threefold cause of every action;
they are the impulse for the organ,
or the instrument,
for the action, and the actor;
constituents that move and motivate
all embodied beings and their work.

Knowledge, the deed, and its doer
are each distinguished by the difference
and the influence of the Qualities
that color all existence everywhere.

Knowledge is untainted, pure in Quality,
when it perceives the One Eternal Prescience,
Indestructible Substance
 pervading all beings, and all of Nature,
 life;
inseparable from the separated.

Such knowledge is like the tremulous
 strings of night
vibrant with a music from the light
 of stars.

And that knowledge
which is permeated with the Quality
of Passion, haunted by Desire,
is that by which a man believes
and understands that in Nature
and all her wonder-working ways
there are many principles prevailing,
or souls separated, living apart,
divided, instead of the Eternal One,
transmuting source of all.

While that blurring Ignorance, Stupidity,
that Quality which confines to one effect,

or part, as if it were the whole,
or sees no Principle in anything,
not looking beyond its outer form,
nor seeing under the surface of all things,
that blindness sees neither relationship
of Cause, Effect; or part to whole;
and so is mired in the slough of Ignorance,
behind the opaque windows of his mind.

Serenity

An action which is ordained
upon the Path of Destiny,
and done by him who is
undesirous of reward, or fruit,
done dispassionately, careless of care;
with neither love nor hate,
such action flows from out
the Spirit of Serenity,
 the Quality of Light,
 of Purity.

But the labor that is done
desiring desires, with self-conceit,
with burden and much effort,
is tinged with the Quality of Passion
that can never satisfy
 and is unquenchable.

And those acts, undertaken in delusion,
without thought of consequences,
heedless of loss and injury to other souls,
performed in ignorance and folly,
are self-destructive, and inexorably
linked with wandering in the dark,
with chastening, and wrought in pain;
 the heart throbbing with sorrow's beat,
 the face furrowed
 by the plow of grief, and care.

Free from self

The agent, or doer,
who is free from selfishness,
detached, imbued with strength
and eagerness, and remains untouched
by failure or success,
does not heed the siren call
rewarding action with its fruits;
that doer works in the light
of silent harmony and purity,
fulfilling his own part
in the deepest secrets yielded
by labor, love, and life.

Impassionate, and greedy,
burning in the furnace of desire
for reward, avaricious, untouched
by sympathy for the woes of men,
impure, and bondsman to the transitory
moods of joy and sorrow;
such an agent, doer of deeds,
is hypnotized by Power,
and burns himself to ashes
in the sputtering and flames
of self and passion's fire.

If the actor does his part
moved by the Quality of Darkness,
then the murky mirror of his life
dimly mirrors all discord,
arrogance, despair, and injury,
the indolence, and slothfulness,
the treachery, the malice, and unremitting
pain that binds the soul inexorably
to misery on the turning wheel.

Intelligence, and Will

Likewise Intelligence and Will
are threefold in their nature,
tinctured by their Qualities.

That mind which knows

the paths of work and renunciation,
of action, right or wrong,
the cause of fear, or fearlessness,
the cause of bondage, or liberty,
has found a flawless harmony,
a peace suffused in golden light:
is pure, and walks serenely
on the path of mastery,
until his spirit shall be winged with youth
to dance in endless space
in the eternal rhythms beyond Time.

And that Intelligence,
wreathed round with things of earth,
that does not fully know
the Jaw from lawlessness,
the right from wrong,—
the things that should be done,
and those that should be left undone:
that imperfect understanding
is distorted by the sway of passion,
surging from the personal desire,
which warps the reason
and darkens all that could be light.

The self that is enveloped
in an unclear mind,
Intelligence confused between
desire and duty's call,
 work or slothfulness,
or justice and injustice,
sees all of life subverted,
contrary to true nature
and true meaning:
that Intelligence lives beneath
a cloud, and cannot comprehend
the blessed band of helpers
 always waiting,
 invisible in the Light.

Steadfast Mind

The unwavering Will
by which a man restrains
and masters himself,
his body, mind, and all
deceptions from the senses,
only comes to him whose
self is guided by the Overself:
whose heart is open to the sky,
whose eyes are turned toward
the eternal landscape
of the invisible.

And that unyielding Will
expressive of a stubborn mind,
holding fast to superstition,
blinded by bigotry, by vanity,
with laziness, and fears,
clinging to material wealth,
greed, desire, power,—
is a futile courage
born of passion's urge and flame.

At first the union of the senses
with the objects they desire
seems a nectar, apparently brings
bliss, but in the end becomes
an acrid potion, poison,
a self-inflicted pain:
that dream of happiness
is born of passion, thirst for power,
without the glowing Wisdom
from the Unseen Mind.

There is also deceptive pleasure
that at first and afterwards
is delusive of the self.

It is acquired from idleness
and indolence, misunderstanding,
from slavery to body, things, and self:

and belongs to that subterranean realm
of mind not yet illuminated
by the soul in seeking Universal Mind.

That dull-witted Will
by which a man is drugged with sleep,
haunted by a pall of fear, despondency,
despair, whose grief is never softly muted
by the chords of love, sustains itself only
by fortitude from ignorance, and nature's
will to live.

Pleasure

And now, O heir-apparent
to the throne of Mind: hear the threefold kinds
of pleasure, enduring happiness, that bring
release from starless winter's night, and pain.

That happiness, and pleasure, joy,
tranquillity, which comes through work
and energies spent rightfully, seems poison
to the taste at first, yet under guidance
of Divine Mind, pain is distilled,
the cup slowly, but surely filled
with sweet ambrosia:

such crystal joy, serenity,
and happiness is born of lucid mind
and heart, translucent intellect, and love;
from fullest realization of the Self.

There is no being on the plane of earth,
nor that above, among the Shining Ones,
unfettered from the Qualities
that spring from Nature's womb,
and always motivate the Self.

Inherent Qualities

Desires, duties, or the classes
and divisions of kind begotten by all men,
are determined by these inherent Qualities

of Darkness, Passion, and of Light.

They are the Qualities with which
are fashioned every soul;—
moulded by his past desires, thoughts,
and fired in his clay.

Serenity, and self-restraint,
zeal, and purity, forgiveness,
rectitude, and wisdom, knowledge,
with belief in God, and Immortality:
these are born within the Spiritual Nature
and awareness of him who tries to show
the light to other souls upon the path.

Those who fight valiantly in battles
for their country, or their faith,
are born with courage, bravery,
obedience, and with discipline of self,
with generosity and sovereignty
as their inheritance from Nature's gifts.

Inheritance

Whether to plow and till the land,
to know the secrets of the earth,
or dealing on the market place;
in industry, or labor; always in tune
with the unending paean of the earth;
whether to faithfulness in service
to another, with attentive thought, and
honesty: all these dispositions
are inextricably woven in the pattern
of our lives; these individual duties,
tasks, are part of natural qualities
that each one harvests from his endless,
unseen past reliving in his present
character, his struggle with Free-will
and Destiny.

Intent upon his obligations,
devoted to each task, acting faithfully,
without partiality, according to his

innate self, and walk in life,
his inheritance on earth transmuted
by intelligence, his soul is blessed,—
attaining to perfection at the last,
vibrant with celestial harmony,
immortal Song of Immortality.

He who senses God pervading all his tasks,
permeating each performance of his duty,
and offers labor from his hands, and mind,
as a loving homage to Divine Mind,
shall reach perfection's plane,
for he has harmonized his self with Overself,
his life and work returning
to the Supreme Source of Life.

Self-fulfilment

If the task is lowly, humble, with its faults,
appearing destitute of all the merits
that the work might have if done by someone else;
yet offered in joy, with love,
as the fulfilment of the Self,
within its ceaseless, self-encircling dreams,
that soul incurs no debts to pay,
shall carve his own reward
according to his natural inheritance.

Though veiled in darkness,
bondage to the will and flesh,
enveloped in its ignorance and evil
as a fire surrounded by its smoke,
the mind shall not forsake
the path and duties born with him
in his first lament and cries on earth,
until that mind shall break the chains,
cast off its ignorance, futility,
by seeking wisdom, freedom,
in a shadowless, and lucent Mind.

He whose nature and reason are controlled,
his mind a firmament of light,

his self subdued by Spirit from within;
from whom all passion, all desire have fled,—
that soul has won its freedom from external
aims through Renunciation, supremacy,
perfection reached through infinite rebirths;
unbound by law, because within the universal law,
that soul communes in silence with the Overself.

How obtained

And now, beloved earthly son,
hear how such illuminated souls,
the rising stars to guide all men,
have won perfection, how they have obtained
their temporal union with My Deathless Self,
and walk upon celestial paths
of highest Wisdom, consummate knowledge,
irradiant, and luminous with golden light.

Having cleansed the mind
of doubt, mirage of misconception,
swept away impurities and dross,
and mastered self with Overself,
forsaken objects of impermanence,
desire, passion, and dislike,

living in the transforming Silence of the Self,
worshipping in single-pointed thought;
body, mind, and speech restrained,
dispassionate toward the heard and seen,
toward the magic of the things unheard,
toward those still unseen,

forsaking egoism, arrogance,
the destructive retribution from all
violence, and power, anger,
selfishness, and covetousness,
yet filled with quietude and calm
when all about him is unrest,
his mind the melody, his heart
the harmony of song:
such a soul and mind emerge

and evolve to enter into consciousness
of SELF, his soul forever intertwined
with Oversoul.

Serenity

Becoming One with the Eternal,
self serenely resting in the sleepless SELF,
he neither wonders at the troubled days,
the muttering, the thunder, and conflicting storms
of men on earth; nor grieves, laments,
nor yearns for life's futilities:
seeing every mind a finite center of Divinity,
and loving all through universal love,
the self is intermingled with My SELF,
with ME.

Entering the inner calm, serenity of Self,
he hears My voice, and sees My Light,
discovers who and what I AM.

Knowing Me in Essence in his heart,
the Oversoul possessing and illuminating him,
he then possesses ME,
rapturously becomes identified with LIFE,
his light-enamored heart
eternally irradiant with My LIGHT.

Then, filled with quenchless faith, with unity,
devotion guiding through the labyrinth of Time,
each thought, each wish, each deed, an image
and reflection of Creative Mind.

By wonderful rebirth in Spirit, and in Me,
and through the gift of My illuminating grace,
he comes to live eternally
within the Kingdom of My Heart.

Full consecration

Consecrate all mind, and consecrate each task
as consecrated to illimitable Me;
and in the broadening, glorious light
of Wisdom and unfoldment of divinity,

give every thought to Overself,
your mind, your tasks, your life a shoreless sea,
a mirror to My own Immensity.

And thinking so intently on Me,
all obstacles, problems, and difficulties
shall be overcome by soul,
be conquered by My grace
by Universal Mind,
and Universal Love.

But if, in pride of Personality
you will not listen to My voice,
nor heed My teachings, nor see My Light,
then you shall seek escape from Me
yet only win rebirth
to struggle on in misery
until at last you come to Me.

And if, entrenched in self-sufficiency,
and dull in understanding you should say:
“I will not fight,” then shall even such
determination fail you, for all the principles,
the qualities, and character that Nature
has endowed you with, constrain you,
compel you
to grapple with your enemy.

Bondage

O, beloved son of earth, receptacle of God,
born a mortal, yet always an immortal,
if from illusion's bonds,
from delusion of conceit,
you think you will not follow your desire,
nor follow duty's path, you are helpless
in the net of your inheritance, environment,
your character,
your mind,
and you shall not escape your past,
your Bondage, Freedom of Will,
nor deathless Destiny.

God lives forever in your heart,
eternally in every being, every soul,
yet by His power all life revolves
as though mounted on the potter's wheel.

He the potter, we the clay,
evolving form and shape upon His wheel,
moulded by His breath, His touch,
always a dream within a dream,
 unfolding in His artistry.

And sheltered in His Mind,
our mind and body, heart and soul,
a pattern in His Divine, Eternal Plan;
our peace, our happiness, our home,
shall endlessly endure
 beyond the touch of Time,
 beyond the dream of man.

And in this simple teaching,
this Wisdom for all who Will
and seek to grow wise in this Truth,—
this mysterious mystery of Mind,
more secret than all secrecy itself,
has been revealed by Me to you,
that, filled with the light of Truth you can now
act wisely, choosing your choice
in fullest knowledge, and in
the self-illumination of your understanding,
always winging upward to the stars,
and guided by your inner, sacred light,
 the light of your Intelligence.

Because I love you devotedly,
your mind and heart in Mine,
listen to My word once more,
supreme word, the most mysterious mystery
of all, revealed for your enlightenment.

Fused as one

Merge your mind, your soul, with Divine Mind,
in devotion, worship, and union with Me,

our distance and our nearness fused as one eternally.

Thus shall you ultimately reach Myself.

I pledge My word to you,
for you are fashioned from My thoughts,
and born of My desires,
and you are grown most dear to Me
upon the pathway of all souls.

Release all thought of actions for their fruit,
whether righteous or unrighteous,
since in Me there is an absolute
and final freedom from all bondage to activities;
no deeds except for Me, the Overself of all,
always present everywhere, in everyone
upon the peaks and plains.

So, with Right Knowledge of the Self
you shall be free from limitations, evil, alienation,
all worldly cares, conditions that distress.

Grieve no more, for in your heart and mind
burns your divine inheritance,
are all the secrets,
all the wonders in the fountain of a free
and unencumbered life.

Now these truths must never be
the cause of argument with those
unmindful of self-discipline;
who do not know devotion to Universal Mind,
nor to those of little faith
who neither wish to enter, nor to hear,
who stand outside the portico of Life.

Teachers

But he who in deep devotion to Me,
and girded with the fullest understanding,
with mastery intrinsically in himself,
shall teach these profoundest truths
to My loyal students, or to humanity,
he, being freed from doubts,
undoubtedly shall come to Me.

Among all men there are none
who can render richer service to My Light,
nor none so dear on earth as he
who points the way upon the path to Me:
 Supreme Teacher, Supreme Lord,
 Reality.

And he who shall come after you,
and reads this sacred dialogue of ours,
and studies all its possibilities, its precepts,
truths, and follows its simplicity of teaching
 until the night of doubt shall be no more;
that soul shall come to know the highest knowledge,—
higher still than ritual, or forms,
or spoken prayer, or than the inner, silent prayer
 offered with the mind and heart.

And still, much more so, he who understands
and fashions his own days and nights upon
these truths shall be set free. He shall have
his feet directed on the Shining Path
that leads to happiness, to love,
to light, and peace,
 going to the happy worlds of those
 rewarded for good deeds and righteousness.

Has this been heard
with an attentive mind, an open heart?
 O earthling, with immortal soul.
Has the dark delusion
 from your ignorance and doubt
been now destroyed?
 so that you will not seek death,
 but rather you shall live for Me!

The dawn

The devout student then replied:
By your divine power,
your Wisdom and your grace,
my mind has cleared of its confusion,
has gained an understanding of my Self

and sees the Light of Spirit everywhere.

Now I stand firm upon your principles,
and the mist of doubts has vanished in the dawn;
now I shall act according to your Teachings,
and live within the radiance of Your Light:

Immutable, and only One,
O Prince of Light,
My blessed Christ,
My Master,
and My Lord.

Then, in conclusion, the gifted servant
who could see and hear at great distance and had
related this sublime story to his blind old king, said:

And now you have heard this dazzling dialogue
between the high-souled warrior Prince and
the Blessed Christ, manifested in the personal form,
divine vision of the Absolute Spirit,
the Holy One.

By the grace of some exalted spirit
I was enabled to hear and recall this profound
and beautiful wisdom of Self-realization as
in words of immortal beauty and resplendent Light
it fell from the lips of Christ Himself.

Remembering again and again
this holy conversation I am filled
with unearthly joy, ecstatic happiness,
with great rejoicing.

And when I recall again
the mysterious, evanescent, sunlit
form of Christ, My Lord, the Perfect One,
then I am still more amazed,
and still more filled with incomparable joy.

Wherever these deathless words of Wisdom
and Realization spoken by Christ,
the Lord, and the young Prince of earth,
whose confusion and whose mortal doubts
are those of other souls exiled on earth,

may be heard, or read, and known,
wherever they may come into understanding,
then, even there, must also come
Prosperity, Fulfilment, and Happiness,
 Beauty, Strength, Eternal Right, and Glory,—
 Yes, Blessing and Peace,
 Peace to all!

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TEXTUAL NOTE

Witness, lineation, and editorial method

The sole copy-text is the complete 1945 first edition digitized from the University of California copy and distributed through HathiTrust/Google Books. Its title page reads *The Bhagavad Gita: An Immortal Song: An Interpretation of a Sacred Epic*; the copyright page confirms 1945 and “First Edition.” The inherited project filename dated the scan 1946, but the book itself controls.

The prologue and all eighteen chapters are reset as live text. No poem page is reproduced as a facsimile. Page-coordinate OCR recovered the source’s three recurring left margins; those are represented by proportional 24-point steps. Each source line remains a distinct line. If a source line cannot fit the six-by-nine text block, its continuation returns to the base verse margin rather than acquiring a false hanging indent.

Stanza openings follow the visible vertical spaces in the source. The italic internal headings are retained and independently styled. The author’s distinction among self, Self, and SELF is preserved exactly. Capitalization of religious and philosophical terms, including Mind, Reality, Nature, Light, and Christ, follows the witness rather than a modern house style.

Physical page-wrap hyphens in the prose prologue have been silently rejoined. Clear scan and recognition debris—watermarks, folios, stray bars, dots, and fragments—has been removed. Two unmistakable printing errors have been corrected: “intelligence. understanding” becomes “intelligence, understanding” in the prologue, and “anmanifested” becomes “unmanifested” in chapter nine. The scan’s “Tha twofold path” was an OCR error; the printed heading reads “The twofold path.”

A damaged horizontal band crosses the source page numbered 117, immediately above the heading “Manifest in Nature.” The surviving words read continuously and no conjectural line has been supplied. Odd but legible constructions—including “to the Krishna” in the prologue and La Violette’s Christian substitutions—remain because they belong to the interpretation.

La Violette’s *The New Gita* (1973) is documented in the bibliography but was not available as an unrestricted copy-text and has not been collated. The present volume therefore restores the complete 1945 work; it does not conflate two versions separated by nearly three decades.

Publication notes after the prologue and each chapter follow the Green volume's apparatus form and identify the original book and printed page span. Editorial titles and running heads italicize the book title throughout.

COLOPHON

Production record

Designed and edited in Los Angeles in 2026 for Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry. Six by nine inches; mirrored 66/48-point margins; EB Garamond; cream page field; live-text Green cover system.

The cover uses newly generated, text-free artwork that places an ancient chariot and two figures in dialogue within a postwar Los Angeles glass house, joining the poem's source world to La Violette's midcentury musical setting. The image is centered in the standard 432-by-437-point Green panel. The archival section is deliberately limited to a portrait and the cropped 1945 title page.

Source scan, page renders, OCR geometry, proofed reset text, downloaded research pages, metadata records, archival images, clean cover art, final lettered cover, fonts, build code, source manifest, research change log, and QA renders are preserved in the poet's production folder.