

The *Gita* and the *Tao*

(spr01\05)

The few pages provide an “overview” of the *Gita* from the text of the *Tao*. Their intent is to facilitate the student’s reading of this involved and difficult poem. This ‘overview’ looks at the progression of the learning which Krishna seeks to provoke in Arjuna, moving Arjuna from concentration on the external world of his sense impressions to the internal world of his spiritual mind and soul. Indeed, Krishna moves Arjuna from the biological reality in which he is living because he views the battlefield of life as a war between himself and his foster parents and brothers, to his existential reality, that is, to the “war of living” between the mortality of his body in which his immortal soul and spiritual mind is encased.

As in the Buddhist *Damapadda*, so also in the Hindu *Gita*, Arjuna’s radical problem is his mental attitude toward life itself which is a reflection of his own self image. Were we to apply the Chinese *Tao* here, the *yin*, as breath of the soul allows the *yang* or body to manifest self, so the body as *being* depends upon the soul as *non-being* and the words we speak through the body can not adequately appreciate or express the emptiness which is the *yin* and *Tao*; thus, we need to know when to stop speaking with the mouth and start listening with the heart, thereby making room for us to hear (tone poems 1 and 32).

Arjuna’s problem stems from the way he thinks about himself and his life; he views his life as born and nurtured thanks to his natural and his foster parents; his very life manifested by his breathing, however, is actually a gift of God, in this case, *Siguna Brahman*, the source of the breath of life itself. So, Arjuna’s actual battle must be waged between the moral world of his body vis a vis the spiritual world of his soul. Krishna, therefore, must teach Arjuna the knowledge which will free him rather than the knowledge which he now practices and follows, a knowledge which renders him dependent upon the mortal world, as a slave of his human birth and nurture. Thus, the second chapter begins with the *yoga* of knowledge, that is, an attempt to bring Arjuna into a union with his mind and his body through breathing so his present self-knowledge as being dependent upon the moral world might be lifted to a self-knowledge as being free through a spiritual self-knowledge – an interesting fact is that the St. Augustine of the fourth century A.D. comments within his dialogue *Soliloquies* that the soul (*anima*) “...holds out life to the body (*corpus*)”. Of course, the Greeks from the Pre-socratics down through the Stoics called the principle which is the source of self-movement *psyche*, translated as soul, but when pronounced in Greek is the Greek word for breath because the Greeks observed that every being which moved itself breathed and so had to have a principle other than *hule*, or matter in its makeup.

The *Gita* is a difficult poem both because translations are less than clear and the multiple names assigned both to Krishna and Arjuna are distracting at best – however, these multiple names have their origin in the human tendency of lovers to assign many

names to the “beloved” for the “beloved’s” many manifestations and the lover’s many reactions. So, this editor has chosen again to apply relevant tone poems of the *Tao* for two reasons: first, to show the underlying similarity of religious ideas across cultures since it seems that the *Tao* is some two thousand years older than the *Gita*; secondly, to elucidate the *Gita* text.

Chapter I Arjuna’s Depression

The *Gita* begins by setting the scene and by posing the problem. The scene is set on a battlefield and Arjuna confront the problem, or the possibility of waging war. However, Arjuna thinks that the war is a physical one between himself and the household of his foster family. Of course, this thought confuses Arjuna and depression sets in so he refuses to fight his foster family. Arjuna misreads the kind of conflict which confronts him because he is thinking and knowing is triggered by his biological reaction, that is, his reaction is an emotional one when, in reality, the conflict confronting him is on the level of existence, that is, on the very basic level of being alive, that is, the natural war between his mortal living within his body and his immortal being within his soul. Krishna now begins to reeducate Arjuna to the real war which consists in choosing to live according this mortal world of changing reality or to live according to the immortal world of spiritual being.

#73

To know that you do not know is the best.
To pretend to know when you do not know is a disease.
Only when one recognizes this disease as a disease can one be free from the disease.
The wise person is free from the disease because he recognizes this disease to be a
disease, he is free from it.

#33

Hr who knows others is wise;
He who knows himself is enlightened.
He who conquers others has physical strength.
He who conquers himself is strong.
He who is contented is rich.
He who acts with vigor has will;
He who does not lose his place (with *Tao*) will endure.
He who dies but does not really perish enjoys long life.

#13

“Favor and disgrace cause one dismay;
What we value and what we fear are within the Self”.
What does this mean:
“Favor and disgrace cause one dismay”?
Those who receive a favor from above are dismayed when they receive it, and dismayed
when they lose it.
What does this mean:
“What we value and what we fear are within the Self”?
We have fears because we have a self (literally, a mortal body).
When we do not regard that self as self (literally, the immortal soul)

What have we to fear?

Therefore, he who values the world as self (as spiritual),
May then be entrusted with the government of the world;
And he who loves the world as self (the spiritual self),
The world may then be entrusted to his care.

Chapter II The Yoga of Knowledge

Krishna's first attempt to teach Arjuna to practice the *yoga* of knowledge. *Yoga* means literally, union, that is, the purpose of yoga is to bring the body and soul together through breathing, so that the body and soul act as one and so that the body no longer divides from the soul through such physical reactions as the emotions, such as pity and its counterpart sorrow – as has occurred in Arjuna within the first chapter, thereby causing his depression. The first lesson is a practical one wherein Krishna observes that a wise person neither feels sorrow for the dead or the living; the wise person is devoid of such emotion – reflect back upon the Apology of Plato wherein Socrates lacked both fear of living virtuously and of dying. Krishna calls Arjuna to practice his *dharmā*, that is, act righteously which radically means embracing the duty of really being alive, that is of being and acting as a spiritual human – here again, as in the Gilgamesh myth and in Eliade's book, The Sacred and the Profane, the human being is characterized essentially as a *homo religiosus*, that is, human most religious.

#47

One may know the world without going out of doors.
One may see The Way of Heaven without looking through the windows.
The farther one goes, the less one knows.
Therefore, the wise know without going about;
Understand without seeing and accomplish without any action.

#7

The universe is everlasting.
The reason the universe is everlasting is that it gives life to others (through its transformations)
There it can long endure.

Therefore, the wise put self last and find self in the foremost place;
Regards his body as accidental and his body is thereby preserved.
Is it not because he does not live for self that his Self is realized?

#21

The marks of great Character (*te*) follow alone from the *Tao*.
The thing which is called *Tao* is elusive, evasive, elusive, evasive.
Yet, latent in it are forms, elusive, evasive.
Yet, latent in it are objects, dark and dim.
Yet, latent in it is the life-force, the life-force being very true.
Latent in it are evidences.

From the days of old till now, its Named (manifested forms, the **yang**) have never ceased,
 By which we may view the Father of All Things.
 How do I know the shape of the Father of All Things?
 Through These! (the manifested forms, the **yang**).

Chapter III The **Yoga** of Action

Krishna now urges Arjuna to act according to the knowledge of his **dharma** and thereby walk on the path by which he will attain goodness. The path is through the mind's control of the senses. Krishna tells Arjuna that his goodness, happiness and "salvation" lie in his ability to live detached or independent from the mortal world – remember, this English word, salvation comes from the Latin, **salvare**, literally, to be healthy, both physically and spiritually. The real enemy of living, states Krishna is desire, so Arjuna's **dharma** means that mind must kill desire and thereby eliminate sorrow. Linguistically, the **Dharma** (of the **Dhammapadda**) is the **Pali** form of this Hindu **Dharma**, a word with no fewer than six (6) meanings. The first is: the one ultimate reality. The other five meanings in order are: an ultimately real event. This ultimately read event, as reflected in life is: righteousness, virtue; as interpreted in Buddha's teaching, it is Doctrine, Scripture as well as Truth; and as an object of the sixth sense-organ, it is the mind. Again, an interesting point is that the Thirteenth Century A.D. Dominican monk and mystic Thomas Aquinas observes in his *Summa Theologiae, I-II, q. 80, article 1* that the natural virtue of religion is a function of the virtue of justice (the word is Greek **dike**, frequently translated as righteousness but which actually means balance) in that humans have an obligation or duty to give thanks and honor to God, that is, bring into balance the relationship between the "creature" and the "Creator", the source of life itself.

#56

He who knows, does not speak.
 He who speaks does not know.

Close the mouth.
 Shut the doors.
 Blunt the sharpness.
 Untie the tangles.

Soften the light and become one with the dusty world.
 This is called profound identification.

Therefore, it is impossible either to be intimate and close to **Tao** or to be distant and indifferent to **Tao**.

It is impossible either to benefit **Tao** or to harm **Tao**.
 It is impossible either to honor **Tao** or to disgrace **Tao** for this reason **Tao** is honored by the world.

#12

The five colors cause one's eyes to be blind.
 The five tones cause one's ears to be deaf.
 The five flavors cause one's palate to be spoiled.
 Racing and hunting cause one's mind to be mad.

Goods that are hard to get injure one's activities.
 For this reason, the wise are concerned with the belly and not the eyes.
 Therefore, the wise reject the one but accept the other.

Chapter IV The Yoga of Knowledge

Arjuna does not understand this *yoga* of action because he does not understand the *yoga* of knowledge, so Krishna returns to this *yoga* of knowledge observing that Arjuna's spiritual self is unborn just as divinity is unborn so whenever Arjuna turns toward his mortal self, he lives within the passion of mortal birth, losing his very spiritual self and consequent stability and peace. (Reflect that the very fact that the activity of human thinking has no beginning and no end – human thinking is a pure activity which does not stop, not even when humans sleep.) However, this mortal world of birth is one of dependence, one of attachment and thus, lacks the freedom of the spiritual world.

#2

When the people of the world all know beauty as beauty (that is, as the universal, or the absolute),
 There arises the recognition of ugliness.
 When they all know the good as good (again as a self-constructed universal by which we judge
 "goods"), there arises the recognition of evil.
 Therefore, Being and non-Being produce each other;
 Difficult and easy complete each other;
 Long and short contrast each other;
 High and low distinguish each other;
 Front and behind accompany each other.

Therefore, the wise manage affairs without action, and spread doctrines without words.
 All things arise and he does not turn away from them;
 He produces them but does not rely on his own ability.
 He accomplishes his task but does not claim credit for it.
 It is precisely because he does not claim credit that his accomplishment remains with him.

#4

Tao is empty (like a bowl).
 It may be used but its capacity is never exhausted.
 It is bottomless, perhaps the ancestor of all things.
 It blunts its sharpness.
 It unties its tangles.
 It softens its light.
 It becomes one with the dusty world.
 Deep and still, it appears to exist forever.
 I do not know whose son it is.
 It seems to have existed before the Lord.

Chapter V The Yoga of Renunciation

Arjuna then asks Krishna how he can achieve spiritual freedom and Krishna tells him only by renouncing his own works. So, whenever Arjuna acts, he must do so without attachment; he must act unselfishly. Another way to express Krishna's advice is that whenever a human being acts, if he or she is to act virtuously, the person must act with unconditioned love, that is, a love which has no conditions attached to the act of love being practiced. Such love is self-purifying and enables one to "connect" with God-as-love. A different way of understanding this "without attachment" is to reflect upon the *yin* and then the *Tao*. The *yin*, after all, is *emptiness*, *non-being*, pure capacity with no conditions, so the non-action of this non-being is the source of all *yang*, or *being*, just as the hub of the wheel is the source of the action of the wheel's progress!

#11

Thirty spokes are united around the hub to make a wheel,
But, it is on its *non-being* that the utility of the carriage depends.
Clay is molded to form a utensil,
But, it is on its *non-being* that the utility of the utensil depends.
Doors and windows are cut out to make a room,
But, it is on its *non-being* that the utility of the room depends.
Therefore, turn *being* into advantage, and turn *non-being* into utility.

#10

Can you keep the spirit and embrace the One without departing from them?
Can you concentrate your vital force and achieve the highest degree of weakness like an infant?
Can you clean and purify your profound insight so it will be spotless?
Can you love the people and govern the state without knowledge?
Can you play the role of the female in the opening and closing of the gates of Heaven?
Can you understand all and penetrate all without taking any action?
To produce things and to rear them, to produce, but not take possession of them.
To act, but not to rely on one's ability, to lead them, but not to master them –
This is called profound and secret virtue.

#65

In ancient times, those who practiced *Tao* well, did not seek to enlighten the people, but to make them ignorant.
People are difficult to govern because they have too much knowledge.
Therefore, he who rules the state through knowledge is a robber of the state.
He who rules a state not through knowledge is a blessing to the state.
One who knows these two things also (knows) the standard.
Always to know the standard is called profound and secret virtue.
Virtue becomes deep and far-reaching and with it all things return to their original state.
Then complete harmony will be reached.

Chapter VI The Yoga of Meditation

Arjuna learns that to practice *yoga* and attain freedom from division of body from soul and freedom from the attachment to the mortal though human passions is possible to one who has become a *yogin*. All the actions of such a *yogin* concentrate by meditating

on breathing"...having made equal the incoming and outgoing breaths moving within the nostrils". Such a person has achieved *yoga*, that is, union of spiritual soul with mortal body through breathing, the human's life proximate source. Such a person is freed forever because such a person through this proximate union becomes united with *Seguna Brahman*, the ultimate source of the breath of life in which each human and all living beings participate.

#56

He who knows, does not speak.
He who speaks does not know.

Close the mouth.
Shut the doors.
Blunt the sharpness.
Unite the tangles.
Soften the light.

Become one with the dusty world.

This is called profound identification.

Therefore, it is impossible either to be intimate and close to *Tao* or to be distant and indifferent to *Tao*.

It is impossible either to benefit *Tao* or to harm *Tao*.
It is impossible either to honor *Tao* or to disgrace *Tao*.
For this reason, *Tao* is honored by the world.

#15

The wise of old had subtle wisdom and depth of understanding so profound that they could not be understood.

Because they could not be understood, perforce must they be so described:

Cautious, like crossing a wintry stream;
Irresolute, like one fearing danger all around;
Grave, like one acting as a guest;
Self-effacing, like ice beginning to melt;
Genuine, like a piece of undressed wood;
Open-minded, like a valley and mixing freely like murky water.
Who can find repose in a muddy world?
By lying still, it becomes clear.
Who can maintain his calm for long?
By activity, it comes back to life.

He who embraces this *Tao* guards against being over-full.

Because he guards against being over-full, he is beyond wearing out and renewal.

#19

Abandon being wise and discard wisdom, then the people will benefit a hundredfold.
Abandon humanity and discard righteousness, then people will return to filial piety and deep love.
Abandon skill and discard profit, then there will be no thieves or robbers.
However, these three things are ornaments (*wen*) and are not adequate.

Therefore, let people hold on to these:

Manifest plainness,
Embrace simplicity,
Reduce selfishness,
Have few desires.

#20

Banish learning and vexations end.

Banish 'Ah!' (approval) and 'UGH!' (disapproval), how much difference is there?

Between 'good' and 'evil', how much difference is there?

That which men fear is indeed to be feared; but, alas, distant yet is the dawn (of awakening)!

The people of the world are merry-making, as if partaking of the sacrificial feasts, as it mounting
the terrace in spring;I alone am mild, like one unemployed, like a new-born babe who cannot yet smile, unattached, as
without a home.

The people of the world have enough and to spare, but I am like one left out.

My heart must be that of a fool, being muddled, nebulous!

The vulgar are knowing, luminous; I alone am dull, confused.

The vulgar are cleaver, self-assured; I alone am depressed, patient as the sea, drifting, seemingly
aimless.

The people of the world all have a purpose;

I lone appear stubborn and uncouth.

I alone differ from the other people and value drawing milk from Mother (nature).

Chapter VIIThe *Yoga* of Wisdom and Understanding

The result of such meditation is that Arjuna achieves the wisdom of understanding that "all this universe is strung on Me (the blessed one) like jewels on a string". Arjuna, therefore, arises above the "blessed" as divided eight-fold nature, as "earth, water, fire, wind ether, mind, intellect and self-consciousness" or, as manifested within and through *maya* and unites with the 'Blessed' as the "higher nature...the life-soul by which this world is supported". This is to know **Brahman**.

#1

The **Tao** which can be told of is not the eternal **Tao** (See # 14, reproduced under Chapter XVII).

The name which can be named is not the eternal name.

The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth; the Named is the mother of all things.

Therefore, let there always be non-being (*yin*), so we may see their subtlety and let there always
be being (*yang*), so we may see their outcome.

The two are the same.

But, after they are produced, they have different names.

They both may be called deep and profound, deeper and more profound, the door of all subtleties!

#7

The universe is everlasting.

The reason the universe is everlasting is that it gives life to others (through its transformations).

There it can long endure.

Therefore the wise person puts (physical) self last and finds (spiritual) self in the
foremost place;

Regards his body as accidental and his body is thereby preserved.

Is it not because he does not live for (physical) Self
That his (spiritual) Self is realized?

#21

The marks of great Character (*te*) follow alone from the *Tao*.
The thing which is called *Tao* is elusive, evasive, elusive, evasive.
Yet, latent in it are all forms, elusive, evasive.
Yet, latent in it are objects, dark and dim.
Yet, latent in it is the life-force, the life-force being very true.
Latent in it are evidences.

From the days of old till now, its Named (manifested forms) have never ceased, by which
we may view the Father of all Things.
How do I know the shape of the Father of All Things?
Through these (the manifested forms, beings or *yang*)!

#51

Tao produces them.
Virtue fosters them.
Matter gives them physical form.
The circumstances and tendencies complete them.
Therefore, the ten thousand things esteem *Tao* and honor virtue.
Tao is esteemed and virtue is honored without anyone's order.
They always come spontaneously.

Therefore, *Tao* produces them and virtue fosters them.
They rear them and virtue fosters them.
They rear them and develop them.
They give them security and give them peace.
They nurture them and protect them.
Tao produces them but does not take possession of them.
Tao leads them but does not master them.
This is called profound and secret virtue.

Chapter VIII The *Yoga* of the Imperishable Brahman

Arjuna asks Krishna what this Brahman is? Krishna responds: "Brahman is the indestructible, the supreme; the Self is called the essential nature and *karma* is the name of the creative power which causes beings to exist". Remember this Hindu *karma* has the same meanings as the Buddhist *Dhrama*: The first is: the one ultimate reality, an ultimately real event; and this ultimately read event, as reflected in life is: righteousness, virtue; as interpreted in Buddha's teaching, it is Doctrine, Scripture as well as Truth; and as an object of the sixth sense-organ, it is the mind. Here obviously, the first meaning pertains, namely, the one ultimate reality, but all the others relate to this first.

#1

The *Tao* which can be told of is not the eternal *Tao*.
 The name which can be named is not the eternal name:
 The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;
 The Named is the mother of all things.

Therefore, let there always be non-being, so we may see their subtlety.
 And let there always be being, so we may see their out-come.
 The two are the same.
 But after they are produced, they have different names.
 They both may be called deep and profound.
 Deeper and more profound.
 The door of all subtleties!

#32

Tao is eternal and has no name.
 Though its simplicity seems insignificant, no one in the world can master it.
 If kings and barons would hold on to it, all things would submit to them spontaneously.
 Heaven and earth unite to drip sweet dew.
 Without the command of man, it drips evenly over all.
 As soon as there were regulations and institutions, there were names.
 As soon as there are names, know that it is time to stop:
 It is by knowing when to stop that one can be free from danger.
 Analogously, *Tao* in the world may be compared to rivers and streams running into the sea.

#4

Tao is a hollow vessel,
 And its use is inexhaustible!
 Fathomless!
 Like the fountainhead of all things.
 Its sharp edges rounded off,
 Its tangles untied,
 Its light tempered,
 Its turmoil submerged,
 Yet dark like deep water it seem to remain.
 I do not know whose Son it is,
 An image of what existed before God.

#23

Nature says few words.
 For the same reason a whirlwind does not last a whole morning, nor does a rainstorm last a whole day.
 What causes them?
 It is Heaven and Earth (Mother Nature).
 If even Heaven and Earth cannot make them last long, how much less can man?

Therefore, he who follows *Tao* is identified with *Tao*.
 He who follows virtue is identified with virtue.
 He who abandons *Tao* is identified with the abandonment of *Tao*.
 He who is identified with *Tao* – *Tao* is happy to have him.
 And he who is identified with the abandonment – the abandonment is also happy to abandon him.

It is only when one does not have enough faith in others that others will have no faith in him.

#7

The universe is everlasting.
The reason the universe is everlasting
Is that it gives life to others (through its transformations).
There it can long endure.

Therefore the wise person puts self last,
And finds self in the foremost place;
Regards his body as accidental,
And his body is thereby preserved.
Is it not because he does not live for Self
That his Self is realized?

Chapter IX The Yoga of Sovereign Knowledge and Mystery

Krishna explains to Arjuna that Brahman's un-manifested form pervades all this world and reveals the mystery, namely, that "All beings rest in Me but I do not rest in them". The profane *maya* (confer Mircea Eliade's *The Sacred and the Profane*), therefore, itself witnesses to the sacred presence of Brahman. Note that the distinction between the maya and Brahman precludes any identity between this Brahman and "me" and this "me" and the world, including any and every individual soul contrary to what some interpreters claim (namely, that this Hindi tenant constitutes "pantheism" – which in Greek merely means "God is everywhere", something which even *Genesis* states to be unequivocal!) If we apply this to ourselves, say our writing, or our artistic works, such as sculpting or painting, this only means that each writer or artist is present in the written work or artistic work which each produces!

#52

There was a beginning of the universe which may be called the Mother of the universe.
He who has found the Mother (the pictograph indicates *Tao*) and thereby understands her sons
(beings),
Having understood her sons (beings) still keeps to the Mother will be free from danger
throughout his lifetime.

Close the mouth.
Shut the doors (of cunning and desire) and to the end of life there will be peace without toil.
Open the mouth, meddle with affairs and to the end of life there will be no salvation.
Seeing what is small is called enlightenment.
Keeping to weakness is called strength.
Use the light, revert to enlightenment and thereby avoid danger to one's life.
This is called practicing the eternal.

#28

He who knows male and keeps to the female becomes the ravine of the world.

Being the ravine of the world, he will never depart from eternal virtue, but returns to the state of infancy.

He who knows white (*yang*, being light and, thus, white), yet keeps to the black (*yin*, being shadow and, thus darkness) becomes the model for the world.
Being the model for the world, he will never deviate from eternal virtue, but returns to the state of the non-ultimate.

He who knows glory but keeps to humility becomes the valley of the world.
He will be proficient in eternal virtue and will return to the state of un-carved wood (non-being).

When the un-carved wood is broken up, it is turned into concrete things (beings).

But, when the wise use it, he becomes the learning official.

Therefore, the great ruler does not cut up.

#49

The wise has no decided opinions and feelings (*hsin*, literally “heart” which denotes both thinking and feeling in Chinese; indeed, “knowing” for the Chinese is feeling, as in the belly).
But regards the people’s opinions and feelings as his own.

The good ones I declare good and the bad ones I also declare good.

That is the goodness of Virtue.

The honest ones I believe; the liars I also believe.

That is the goodness of Virtue.

The wise dwell in the world peacefully, harmoniously.

The people of the world are brought into a community of heart and the wise regard them all as their own children.

Chapter X The Yoga of Manifestations

This chapter describes the fruit of meditation, that is, the understanding of how Brahman (the Sacred) is present in and through the *maya* (the profane) so this chapter enables Arjuna to unite with Brahman through Brahman’s manifestations within this world: “How may I know You, O *Yogin*, by meditating always? What states of being are you, O Blessed Lord, to be thought by me?” Remember that in Chapter VIII, I listed the six meanings of *dharmā*, the first of which was the Ultimate Reality and the sixth of which was: “...as an object of the sixth sense-organ, it is the mind”. Thus, the perfect circle exists, that is, the beginning (the Ultimate Reality) is the end as contemplated by the human mind. So what began as achieving union of soul with body through breathing now becomes achieving union with *Brahman* through the human mind! “I am the Self seated in the hearts of all beings...I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings” – this, of course is why the *Gita* ends with “*om*”, the breathing forth of this union of the human being with *Brahman*! Note that this passage echoes that of the Old Testament, *Deuteronomy*:

...Yhwh, our God, is the one Yhwh. You shall love Yhwh with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. Let these words I urge on you today be written in your heart...(Dt. 6:4-7)

#4

Tao is empty (like a bowl).
 It may be used but its capacity is never exhausted.
 It is bottomless, perhaps the ancestor of all things.
 It blunts its sharpness.
 It unties its tangles.
 It softens its light.
 It becomes one with the dusty world.
 Deep and still, it appears to exist forever.
 I do not know whose son it is.
 It seems to have existed before the Lord.

#16

Attain complete emptiness.
 Maintain steadfast quiet.

All things come into being (**yang**) and I see thereby their return.
 All things flourish, but each one returns to its root (**yin**).
 This return to its root means tranquility.
 It is called returning to one's destiny.
 To return to destiny is called the eternal (**Tao**).
 To know the eternal (**Tao**) is called enlightenment.
 Not to know the eternal is to act blindly and results in disaster.
 He who knows the eternal is all-embracing.
 Being all-embracing, he is impartial.
 Being impartial, he is kingly (universal).
 Being kingly, he is one with Mother Nature.
 Being one with Mother Nature, he is in accord with **Tao**.
 Being in accord with **Tao**, he is everlasting and is free from danger throughout his lifetime.

#67

All the world says that my **Tao** is great and does not seem to resemble the ordinary.
 It is precisely because **Tao** is great that **Tao** does not resemble the ordinary.
 If **Tao** did resemble it, **Tao** would have been small for a long time.

I have three treasures: guard and keep them:
 The first is deep love.
 The second is frugality and the third is not to dare to be ahead of the world.
 Because of deep love, one is courageous.
 Because of frugality, one is generous.
 Because of daring not to be ahead of the world, one becomes the leader of the world.
 Now, to be courageous by forsaking deep love, to be generous by forsaking frugality and to be ahead of the world by forsaking following behind – that is fatal.

For deep love helps one to win in the case of attack and to be firm in the case of defense.
 When Heaven is to save a person, Heaven will protect him through deep love.

#73

He who is brave in daring will be killed.
 He who is brave in not-daring will love.
 Of these two, one is advantageous and one is harmful.
 Who knows why Heaven dislikes what it dislikes?
 Even the wise consider it a difficult question.
 The Way of Heaven does not compete and yet, it skillfully achieves victory.
 The Way does not speak and yet, it skillfully responds to things.
 The Way comes to you without your invitation.
 The Way is not anxious about things and yet, it plans well.
 Heaven's net is indeed vast; though its meshes are wide, it misses nothing.

Chapter XI

The Yoga of the Vision of the Universal Form

Arjuna now asks to see that of which Krishna has spoken, however, the answer is: “You can not see Me with your own eye. I give you a divine eye. Behold My Divine *yoga*” – this is an interesting chapter, but this statement is most interesting because the Catholic Christian Dominican teacher and mystic, Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century A.D. observes within his *Summa Contra Gentiles, chapter LI (51)* that after death the righteous, or virtuous will see God, but not by their own effort or ability because human beings, as creatures can not “see” the Creator – since now humans “see” in a mirror; however, God will give the virtuous creatures the capacity to see God, as promised by Moses “face to face”.

#1

The *Tao* which can be told of is not the eternal *Tao*.
 The name which can be named is not the eternal name:
 The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Mother Earth;
 The Named is the Mother of all things.

Therefore, let there always be *non-being* (the *yin*), so we may see their subtlety and let there always be *being* (the *yang*), so we may see their outcome.
 The two are the same.

#7

The universe is everlasting.
 The reason the universe is everlasting is that it gives life to others (through its transformations).
 There it can long endure.

Therefore, the wise puts self last and finds self in the foremost place.
 The wise regards his body as accidental and his body is thereby preserved.
 It is not because he does not live for Self that his self is realized?

#21

The Marks of great Character (*te*) follow alone from the *Tao*.
 The thing which is called *Tao*, is elusive, evasive, elusive, evasive.
 Yet latent in it are forms, elusive, evasive.
 Yet latent in it are objects, dark and dim.

Yet, latent in it is the life-force, the life-force being very true.
Latent in it are evidences.

From the days of old till now its Named (Manifest forms, *yang*, *beings*) have never ceased by
which we may view the Father of All things (*beings*).
How do I know the shape of the Father of all things (*yang*, *beings*)?
Through these (the manifest forms, *yang*, *beings*).

#62

Tao is the storehouse of all things.
It is the good man's treasure and the bad man's refuge.
Fine words can buy honor and fine deeds can gain respect from others, even if a man is bad, when
has *Tao* rejected him?
Therefore, on the occasion of crowning an emperor or installing the three ministers, rather than
present large pieces of jade proceeded by teams of four horses, it is better to kneel and offer this
to *Tao*.

Why did the ancients highly value this *Tao*?
Did they not say, "those who seek shall have *Tao* and those who sin shall be freed"?
For this reason, *Tao* is valued by the world, but after they are produces, they have different
names.
They both may be called deep and profound, deeper and more profound, the door of all subtleties.

#25

There was something undifferentiated and yet complete which existed before Heaven and Earth
soundless and formless, it depends on nothing and does not change.
It operates everywhere and is free from danger.
It may be considered the Mother of the universe.
I do not know its name, but I call it *Tao*.
If forced to give it a name, I shall call it Great.
Now, being Great means functioning everywhere.
Functioning everywhere means returning to the original point.

Therefore, *Tao* is Great; Heaven is Great; Earth is great and the king is also Great.
There are four things in the universe and the king is one of them.
Man models himself after Earth
Earth models itself after Heaven.
Heaven models itself after *Tao* and *Tao* models itself after Mother Nature.

#34

The Great *Tao* flows everywhere.
It may go left or right.
All things depend on it for life and it does not turn away from them.
It accomplishes its task, but does not claim credit for it.
It clothes and feeds all things, but does not claim to be master over them.
Always without desires, it may be called The Small.
All things come to it and it does not master them.
It may be called The Great.
Therefore, the wise never strive themselves for the Great and thereby the Great is achieved.

Chapter XII The *Yoga* of Devotion

Arjuna now asks who is more learned in *yoga*, those who are always disciplined and honor, “You or those who worship the Imperishable and the Un-Manifest?” Arjuna answers that the most learned in *yoga* are those who “...fixing their mind on Me, worship Me with complete discipline and with supreme faith”. However, to worship the Imperishable and the Un-Manifest while in the body is very difficult and much harder. Then Krishna enumerates the characteristics of those devoted to Brahman who are so disciplined.

#23

Nature says few words.
For the same reason a whirlwind does not last a whole morning:
Nor does a rainstorm last a whole day:
What causes them?
It is Heaven and Earth (Mother nature).
If even Heaven and Mother nature cannot make them last long, how much less can men?

Therefore, he who follows *Tao* is identified with *Tao*.
He who follows virtue is identified with virtue.
He who abandons *Tao* is identified with the abandonment of *Tao*.
He who is identified with *Tao* – *Tao* is also happy to have him and he who is identified with the
abandonment – the abandonment is also happy to abandon him.
It is only when one does not have enough faith in others that others will have no faith in him.

Chapter XIII The *Yoga* of the Distinction between the Field and the Knower of the Field

The prior chapter raises the distinction between the “field” and the “knower of the field”, an essential distinction for anyone seeking union with Brahman through the discipline of being a *yogin*. The “field” is everything mortal, the *maya* of this world, the mortal, whereas the “knower of the field” is “constancy in knowledge of the Self, insight into the end of essential knowledge”, that is the spiritual world, the eternal. He who knows this distinction and lives by it “attains to the Supreme”, “the light of lights beyond darkness”.

#1

The *Tao* which can be told of is not the eternal *Tao*.
The name which can be named is not the eternal name:
The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;
The Names is the mother of all things.

Therefore, let there always be *non-being* (the *yin*) so we may see their subtlety and let there
always be *being* (the *yang*), so we may see their outcome.
The two are the same, but after they are produced, they have different names.
They both may be called deep and profound, deeper and more profound, the door of all subtleties!

#4

Tao is a hollow vessel and its use is inexhaustible!
 Fathomless! Like the fountain-head of all things (all *beings*):
 Its sharp edges rounded off, its tangles untied, its light tempered, its turmoil submerged.
 Yet, dark like deep water it seems to remain.
 I do not know whose Son it is, an image of what existed before God.

#32

Tao is eternal and has no name.
 Though its simplicity seems insignificant, no one in the world can master it.
 If kings and barons would hold on to it, all things would submit to them spontaneously.
 Heaven and earth unite to drip sweet dew.
 Without the command of men, it drips evenly over all.
 As soon as there were regulations and institutions, there were names.
 As soon as there are names, know that it is time to stop.
 It is be knowing when to stop that one can be free from danger.
 Analogically, *Tao* in the world may be compared to rivers and streams running into the sea.

Chapter XIV The *Yoga* of the distinction of the Three *Gunas*

Interesting is the fact that this chapter reverts to a biological analogy to explain how the wise become united to Brahman and, therefore, become spiritual and immortal by participation: “My womb is the great Brahman; in that I place the seed and the birth of all beings comes from that, Oh Arjuna”. Then Krishna lists the characteristics in which any jogin or wise person will share when united to Brahman. An interesting point is that Brahman observes: “Even those who are devotees of other gods and who worship them full of faith, even they worship Me only” – St. Paul parallels this observation within the Acts of the Apostles while viewing an altar To An Unknown God erected by the Council of the Areopagus within Athens (Acts: 17:22-34)

#28

He who knows male (*yang*) and keeps to the female (*yin*) becomes the ravine of the world.
 Being the ravine of the world, he will never depart from eternal virtue, but returns to the state of infancy.

He who knows white (*yang*, or light), yet keeps to the black (*yin*, or shadow and thus darkness)
 becomes the model for the world.
 Being the model for the world, he will never deviate from eternal virtue, but returns to the state of the non-ultimate.

He who knows glory but keeps to humility becomes the valley of the world.
 He will be proficient in eternal virtue and returns to the state of the un-carved wood (*yin*).
 When the un-carved wood (*yin*) is broken up, it is turned into concrete things (*yang*, or beings)
 But, when the wise use it, the wise become the learning officials.
 Therefore, the great ruler does not cut-up.

#29

There are those who will conquer the world and make of it (what they conceive or desire).

I see that they will not succeed for the world is God's own Vessel.
 It can not be made (by human interference).
 He who makes it spoils it.
 He who holds it, looses it.
 For, some things go forward, some things follow behind;
 Some things blow hot and some blow cold;
 Some are strong and some are weak.
 Some may break and some may fall.
 Hence the wise eschew (avoid) excess, eschew extravagance, eschew pride.

Chapter XV The Yoga of the Highest Spirit

This chapter presents another analogy to understand this relationship of unity of all beings (**yang**) to Brahman and Brahman to all beings (**yang**). The analogy is simple: that of a tree whose branches are above and whose roots are below the ground – again, note that in the New Testament, the Christ is quoted as comparing Himself as the vine and His followers as the branches (St. John: 15: 1-17). Again, the point is that Brahman is "...seated in the hearts of all; from Me (come) memory, wisdom and argument. I am that which is to be known by the **Vedas**; I am the author of the **Vedanta** (the **Upanishads**) and I am also the knower of the **Vedas**" – Here even the Gita claims divine inspiration in its authorship, just as do both the Old and New Testaments within the Jewish and Catholic Christian traditions. Also, this identification of Brahman with beings (**yang**) as existing as **maya** finds the same analogy within both **Genesis** and **Deuteronomy**, two of the five books of the **Pentateuch** or the **Torah**:

God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. (Image, in Hebrew is **zelem**, literally, image and likeness.) (Genesis:1:27)

...Yhwh, our God is the one Yhwh. You shall love Yhwh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. Let these words I urge on you today be written on your heart...(Dt. 6:4-7)

Of course, as noted, above, this also mirrors Christ's own analogies about Himself and his followers found in John, namely, Christ being the vine and his followers being the branches and Christ being the Head and his followers being the other bodily members: (John: 15:1-17 and St. Paul: 1 Corinthians:12:12-30)

#65

In Ancient times, those who practiced **Tao** well did not seek to enlighten the people, but to make them ignorant.

People are difficult to govern because they have too much knowledge.
 Therefore, he who rules the state through knowledge is a robber of the state.
 He who rules a state not through knowledge is a blessing to the state.
 One who knows these things also knows the standard.
 Always to know the standard is called profound and secret virtue.

Virtue becomes deep and far reaching and with it all things return to their original state.
Then complete harmony will be reached.

#67

All the world says that my **Tao** is great and does not seem to resemble the ordinary.

It is precisely because **Tao** is great that Tao does not resemble the ordinary.

If **Tao** did resemble it, **Tao** would have been small for a long time.

I have three treasures; guard and keep them:

The first is deep love.

The second is frugality and the third is not to dare to be ahead of the world.

Because of deep love, one is courageous; because of frugality, one is generous; because of not daring to be ahead of the world, one becomes the leader of the world.

Now, to be courageous by forsaking deep love, to be generous by forsaking frugality and to be ahead of the world by forsaking following behind –

This is fatal.

For deep love helps one to win in the case of attack; and to be firm in the case of defense.

When Heaven is to save a person, Heaven will protect him through deep love.

Chapter XVI

The Yoga of the Distinction Between the Divine and Demoniatic Endowments

This chapter draws a sharp distinction between the yogin and “...(one) who is born with the demoniac nature...”, that is, between one who lives a spiritual life and one who lives a material life. The virtues of the former include “...non-violence, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, peace, absence of guile, compassion towards beings, absence of covetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness...” and the vices of the latter include “...hypocrisy, arrogance, excessive pride...anger, harshness and also ignorance...” Noteworthy here is the Krishna observes that the vicious people do not believe in God, however, the virtuous people believe in God. Mercia Eliade also makes this observation when he discusses the world as sacred and contrasts it with the world as purely profane, conceived of by the “secular humanists” who deny all Transcendence – which constitutes a contradiction since to state that no absolute exists is to ipso facto to declare that an absolute exists! (Read *The Sacred and the Profane*, pp. 200-206.)

#42

Tao produced the One (Mother Nature).

The One produced the two (**yin** and **yang**).

The two produced the three (Mother Nature and **yin**, **yang**).

The three produced the ten thousand things (beings).

The ten thousand things carry the yin and embrace the yang and even through the blending of the material force they achieve harmony.

People hate to be children without parents, lonely people without spouses, or men without food to eat and yet kings and lords call themselves by names.

Therefore, it is often the case that things gain by losing and lose by gaining.

What others have taught, I teach also: ‘violent and fierce people do not die a natural death’.

I shall make this the father of my teaching.

Chapter XVII
The *Yoga* of the Threefold Division of Faith

Krishna now describes the various kinds of faith because Arjuna wants to know the characteristic of faith which unites a believer to **Brahman**, since various kinds of faith are practiced by human beings – indeed, some humans have faith to have no faith, that is, believe not to believe! Krishna defines human beings as “faith people – the **homo religious**, or **most religious human beings** which Eliade, Cicero and Aquinas find humans to be so both Cicero and Aquinas define the verb religion to be composed of three Latin verbs or actions: to re-read, to re-choose and to re-bind. Then, Krishna states: “whatever faith a man has, that he is”. **Sattvic** men worship the gods; **rajasic** men worship demi-gods and demons and the **tamastic** men worship elemental spirits and ghosts”. **Sattvic** humans are united with Brahman through breathing of **OM** whereas the other two groups of men are not so they lack the breath of spiritual life!

#10

Can you keep the spirit and embrace the One without departing from them?
Can you concentrate your vital force and achieve the highest degree of weakness like an infant?
Can you clean and purify your profound insight so it will be spotless?
Can you love the people and govern the state without knowledge?
Can you play the role of the female in the opening and closing of the gates of Heaven?
Can you understand all and penetrate all without taking any action?
To produce things and to rear them, to produce, but not to take possession of them?
To act, but not to rely on one’s own ability?
To lead them, but not to master them?
This is called profound and secret virtue.

#14

We look at it (**Tao**) and do not see it.
Its name is The Invisible.
We listen to it and do not hear it.
Its name is The Inaudible.
We touch it and do not find it.
Its name is The Subtle (Formless). (See # 1 under Chapter VII.)

These three cannot be further inquired into and hence merge into one.
Going up high, it is not bright and coming down low, it is not dark.
Infinite and boundless, it cannot be given any name.
It reverts to nothingness.
This is called shape without shape.
From without objects, it is The Vague and Elusive.
Meet it and you will not see its head.
Follow it and you will not see its back.
Hold on to the **Tao** (the) Old in order to master the things of the present.
From this one may know the primeval beginning (of the universe).
This is called the bond (or, thread) of **Tao**.

#16

Attain complete emptiness; maintain steadfast quiet.

All things come into being and I see thereby their return.

All things flourish, but each one returns to its root.

This return to its root means tranquility.

It is called returning to one's destiny.

To return to destiny is called the eternal (*Tao*).

To know the eternal is called enlightenment.

Not to know the eternal is to act blindly and results in disaster.

He who knows the eternal is all-embracing.

Being all-embracing, he is impartial.

Being impartial, he is kingly (universal).

Being kingly, he is one with Nature.

Being one with Nature, he is in accord with *Tao*.

Being in accord with *Tao*, he is everlasting and is free from danger throughout his lifetime.

Chapter XVII The Yoga of Freedom of Renunciation

The consequences of the instruction of the prior seventeen chapters is that Arjuna says: "I desire to know...the true essence of renunciation and abandonment...and the distinction between them..." Krishna then defines renunciation and abandonment simply as "...the giving up of acts of desire" and "...the surrendering of the fruits of all actions". But, such a life can only be lived as a result of unconditional love which basically is identical with the *Tao's Way*, that is, the way of non-action characteristic of the female, the yin, the valley and the earth whose abandonment of self permits conception, pregnancy and birth!

Krishna offers this conclusion to this *Gita* dialogue between Arjuna and himself: "And he who shall study this sacred dialogue of ours, by him I would be worshiped with the sacrifice of wisdom. Such is My thought".

#23

Nature says few words.

For the same reason a whirlwind does not last a whole morning:

Nor does a rainstorm last a whole day:

What causes them?

It is Heaven and Earth (Nature).

If even Heaven and Earth cannot make them last long,

How much less can man?

Therefore, he who follows *Tao* is identified with *Tao*

He who follows virtue is identified with virtue.

He who abandons *Tao* is identified with the abandonment of *Tao*.

He who is identified with *Tao* - *Tao* is also happy to have him.

And he who is identified with the abandonment - the abandonment is also happy to
abandon him.

It is only when one does not have enough faith in others that others will have no faith in him.

#25

There was something undifferentiated and yet complete which existed before heaven and earth.
 Soundless and formless, it depends on nothing and does not change.
 It operates everywhere and is free from danger.
 It may be considered the Mother of the universe.
 I do not know its name; I call it *Tao*.
 If forced to give it a name, I shall call it Great.
 Now being great means functioning everywhere.
 Functioning everywhere means to be far-reaching.
 Being far-reaching means returning to the original point.
 Therefore, *Tao* is great.
 Heaven is great.
 Earth is great and the king is also great.
 There are four great things in the universe and the king is one of them.
 Man models himself after Earth.
 Earth models itself after Heaven.
 Heaven models itself after *Tao* and *Tao* models itself after nature.

#34

The Great *Tao* flows everywhere.
 It may go left or right.
 All things depend on it for life and it does not turn away from them.
 It accomplishes its task, but does not claim credit for it.
 It clothes and feeds all things, but does not claim to be master over them.
 Always without desires, it may be called The Small.
 All things come to it and it does not master them.
 It may be called The Great.
 Therefore, the wise never strive for the great and thereby the great is achieved.

#40

Reversion is the action of *Tao*.
 Weakness is the function of *Tao*.
 All things in the world come from *being* (*yang*) and being comes from *non-being* (*yin*).

#41

When the highest type of men hear *Tao*, they diligently practice it.
 When the average type of men hear *Tao*, they half believe in it.
 When the lowest type of men hear *Tao*, they laugh heartily at it.
 If they did not laugh at it, it would not be *Tao*.
 Therefore, there is the established saying:
 The *Tao* which is bright (*yang*) appears to be dark (*yin*).
 The *Tao* which goes forward appears to fall backward.

Great virtue appears like a valley.
 Great purity appears like disgrace.
 Far-reaching virtue appears as if insufficient.
 True substance appears to be changeable.
 The great square has no corners.
 The great implement (or talent) is slow to mature.
 Great music sounds faint.
 Great form has no shape.
 Tao is hidden and nameless.

Yet, it is *Tao* alone that skillfully provides for all and brings them to perfection.

#45

What is most perfect seems to be incomplete, but it, utility is unimpaired.

What is most full seems to be empty;

But its usefulness is inexhaustible.

What is most full seems to be empty;

But, its usefulness is inexhaustible.

What is most straight seems to be crooked.

The greatest skill seems to be clumsy.

The greatest eloquence seems to stutter.

Hasty movement overcomes cold,

(But), tranquility overcomes heat.

By being greatly tranquil,

One is qualified to be the ruler of the world.

#46

When *Tao* prevails in the world, galloping horses are turned back to fertilize the fields.

When *Tao* does not prevail in the world, war horses thrive in the suburbs.

There is no calamity greater than lavish desires.

There is not greater guilt than discontentment.

And there is no greater disaster than greed.

He who is contented with contentment is always contented.