

Prof S. K. R's Complete Works - 20

**THE ESSENCE
OF THE
BHAGAVAD GITA
(GITARTHA SUTRANI)**

by

Vidyalankara

Prof S. K. Ramachandra Rao



Suramā Prakashana
Bangalore - 11

**The Essence
Of the
Bhagavad Gita
(Gitartha Sutrani)**

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Surama Prakashana

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Preface

This unusual book which is original in its approach to the Bhagavad Gita consists of three parts.

In the first part, Prof S. K. Ramachandra Rao has composed aphorisms (Sutras) that relate the essential import of the Gita.

In the second part, the author has written about the efforts of scholars of various philosophical persuasions such as Abhinava Gupta of Kashmir, Yamuna Muni and Vishnutirtha who have each tried to distill the essential teachings of the Gita, and have brought out summaries like Gitartha Samgraha (both Abhinava Gupta and Yamuna Muni) and Gita Saroddhara (Vishnutirtha). He has translated the summary verses from each of the three texts, and has also given a brief account of the life and contribution of the three scholars who belong to the advaita, visishtadvaita and dvaita schools of thought.

The third section of the book contains an account of the 'Talks on the Gita' by Swami Vivekananda.

This book also has chapters like 'Gita in Bali', 'the different names of the chapters in the Gita, according to the various recensions of the text', 'Assurances in the Gita', etc.

This book was first published by Kalpatharu Research Academy in 2004. We are pleased to bring out the second edition of this uncommon volume. I would like to thank Cinnamon Teal Publishing House for the elegant printing.

Dr. S. R. Sudarshan

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PART ONE



गीतार्थसूत्राणि ॥

APHORISMS RELATING TO THE IMPORT OF BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

INTRODUCTION

An attempt has been made here to convey the essential and unique teachings of Bhagavad-gītā in the form of aphorisms. The sūtra (aphoristic) style is helpful in concentrating on the quintessence and separating it from what is explanatory, illustrative, supportive and didactic (arthavāda). The sūtra is fundamentally suggestive in nature (सूचनात् ।). In its form, it is known by its terse economy of words (using only words that are necessary and sufficient) and loading of the words with definite meaning. The familiar description of sūtra holds partially here:

अल्पाक्षरमसन्दिग्धं सारवत् सर्वतोमुखम् ।

अस्तोभमनवद्यं च सूत्रं सूत्रविदो विदुः ।

The Bhagavad-gītā has seven hundred (in the Kāshmiri recension 745) verses, arranged in eighteen chapters. The present aphoristic book Gitārtha-

sūtrāṇi, has 170 aphorisms arranged in seventeen sections (with ten aphorisms in each) and grouped in three books (kāṇḍa), each book summarizing the contents of six chapters of the Gīta:

I. प्रथमः काण्डः ॥ (आदिमषट्क प्रमेयपरः)

BOOK ONE

1. अवतरणिका । PREFATORY
2. आत्मावलोकनम् । LOOK INTO ONES SELF
3. बुद्धियोगः । UNDERSTANDING AND DELIBERATION
4. स्थितप्रज्ञता । ENLIGHTENMENT
5. कर्मयोगः । STRATEGY OF CORRECT ACTION
6. आत्मज्ञानम् । SELF-REALIZATION
7. श्रेयःप्राप्तिः । ABSOLUTE WELFARE
8. पुरुषार्थपरिपूर्णता । ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PURPOSES IN LIFE

II. द्वितीयः काण्डः ॥ (मध्यमषट्क प्रमेयपरः)

BOOK TWO

9. योगः । DETAILS OF STRATEGY
10. उपासा । CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP
11. विश्वरूपः । UNIVERSE AS HIS FORM
12. धर्म्यामृतम् । IMMUTABLE LAWS OF EXISTENCE

III. तृतीयः काण्डः ॥ (चरमषट्कप्रमेयपरः)

BOOK THREE

13. गुणातीतः । GONE BEYOND GUṆAS
14. पुरुषोत्तमः । THE SUPREME PERSON
15. श्रद्धा । FAITH
16. त्रैविध्यम् । THE TRIADS
17. उपसंहारः । WINDING UP THE TEACHINGS

The arrangement of the aphorisms into three books follows the ancient division of the whole text of eighteen chapters into three books (called kāṇḍas), each consisting of six chapters (hence called śaṭkas). The earliest adoption of this division is to be found in Yāmuna-muni's Gītārtha-saṁgraha (Ninth Century A.D.). There are various suggestions regarding the rationale of this division.

While preparing the aphorisms, I have consulted several classical commentories, annotations and glosses on the Gīta and have profitted by them:

1. The Bhāshya of Śamkara
2. The Gloss of Ānanda-giri
3. Gītārtha-saṁgraha of Yāmuna-muṇī with Vedānta-deśika's Rakshā
4. The Bhāshya of Rāmānuja

5. Tātparya-Chandrikā of Vedānta-deśika
6. The Bhāshya of Madhva (Ānanda-tīrtha)
7. Gīta-tātparya-nirṇaya of Madhva
8. Prameya-dīpikā of Jayatīrtha
9. Artha-Samgraha of Rāghavendra-tīrtha
10. Gītā-vivṛti of Rāghavendra-tīrtha
11. Paiśācha-bhāshya of Hanūmat
12. Tattvadīpikā of Vallabha
13. Bhārata-bhāva-dīpa of Nīlakaṇṭha
14. Tattva-prakāśikā of Keśava-Kāshmīri
15. Amṛta-taraṅgiṇī of Purushottama-tīrtha
16. Gītārtha-dīpikā of Madhusūdana-sarasvati
17. Brahmānanda-giri Veṅkaṭanātha
18. Subodhinī of Śrīdhara-svāmi
19. Tātparya-bodhinī of Śaṅkarānanda
20. Bhāva-prakāśa of Sadānanda
21. Sarvatobhadra of Rājānaka-Rāmakaṇṭha
22. Gītārtha-Samgraha of Abhinava-gupta
23. Bhāshyotkarsha-dīpikā of Dhanapati-sūri
24. Paramartha-Prabhā of Daivajña-pañḍita-sūrya
25. Mukta-mālā of Viṣṇu-tīrtha

However, the aphorisms have grown out of my own reflections and meditations on the import of the Gītā. This book has been my unfailing guide for about seventy years. I was initiated into the recitation of Gītā in my eighth year, so I am told. But I remember vividly my father explaining to me the verses of the Gītā in my 13th or 14th year. Whenever I was in distress, doubt or difficulty, my father would refer me to some relevant passages in the Gītā. And it somehow worked! The book has since then remained my constant companion. Each time, I recalled a verse of the Gītā, it provided a new insight, a new vision and a fresh outlook. I have now made bold to reduce the essential ideas in the Gītā in one hundred and odd aphorisms.

I have also appended Notes for these aphorisms in the form of explanations, references to the classical commentaries and cross-references to the verses. Although I have derived great benefit from later writers on the Gītā (like Lokamānya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Gurudev Ramachandra Dattatreya Ranade) my debt to the earlier commentators has always been deep and abiding, for I studied them in the traditional manner during my early and formative years. The aphorisms reflect the ideas crystallized by these early commentators and annotators.

S.K. Ramachandra Rao

गीतार्थसूत्राणि ॥

APHORISMS RELATING TO THE IMPORT OF THE GĪTA

प्रथमः काण्डः ॥ Book One

(आदिमषट्कस्थप्रमेयपरः ॥)

(About the contents of the First Six Chapters of the text)

अवतरणिका ॥२॥

1. Introductory Aphorisms

अथ गीतार्थसूत्राण्युच्यन्ते शास्त्रतात्पर्यनिश्चयोपयोगीनि ॥१॥ ॥१॥

- 1.1 Now begins the book of aphorisms intended to help ascertain the essential import of the scriptural text known as Bhagavad-Gītā.

तात्पर्यनिश्चयस्तु अनुष्ठानसमर्पणार्थम् ॥१॥ ॥२॥

- 1.2 The ascertainment of the essential import is for its practical application in life.

पुरुषार्थप्राप्तिरनुष्ठानादेव ॥२॥ ॥३॥

- 1.3 The fulfilment of life's purposes is possible only by practical application.

अतो गीतार्थसूत्राणि शोकमोहशान्त्यै ॥१॥ ॥४॥

- 1.4 Therefore, the aphorisms relating to the purport of Gītā's teachings have the purpose of the pacifying sorrow and confusion in life.

The inquiry is in the form of aphorisms, and into what the essential import of the text known as Gītā is. The inquiry is motivated by a desire to get rid of grief and confusion which are natural to all human beings.

मोहाच्छोकः । तत्त्वज्ञानान्मोहशान्तिः । अनुष्ठानाच्छोकहानिः ॥१॥ ॥५॥

- 1.5 Sorrow is caused by confusion; and confusion is pacified by the knowledge of reality; and sorrow is eliminated by practical application (of the teachings of the Gītā).

शोकमोहाभ्यां निर्विवेको स्थितिराहित्यं कार्यकर्माकरणप्रसङ्गश्च ॥१॥ ॥६॥

- 1.6 Owing to the impact of sorrow and confusion, there is absence of discrimination of what to do and what not to do; one fails to take a firm stand; and avoids doing what he ought to do.

शोकमोहाविष्टत्वात् कार्यविमुखमर्जुनं कर्मणि योक्तुं योगोपदेशः ॥१॥ ॥७॥

- 1.7 The yoga taught in the Gītā is to yoke Arjuna to the right action, for he had set himself against such action owing to his being oppressed by sorrow and confusion.

शोकमोहावनपनुद्य कर्मणि न प्रवृत्तिः । कार्पण्यदोषश्च ॥१॥ ॥८॥

- 1.8 Without the removal of sorrow and confusion, one does not have the inclination to do what is right, and his vision is constricted.

आदेयस्यानादानं, त्याज्यस्यापरित्यागः ॥१॥ ॥९॥

- 1.9 One does not accept what is right and is to be accepted; he does not give up what is wrong and is to be given up.

मनः प्रसादादेव शोकमोहौ विनिवर्तेते ॥१॥ ॥१०॥

- 1.10 It is only by the serenity of the mind that both sorrow and confusion are thrown out.

आत्मावलोकनम् ॥२॥

2. Aphorisms relating to looking into oneself

आत्मदर्शनादेव मनसः संप्रसादः ॥२॥ ॥१॥

- 2.1 It is only by sighting ones own self that the serenity of mind is accomplished.

चाञ्चल्यादात्मदर्शने न प्रभवति मनः ॥२॥ ॥२॥

- 2.2 Fickleness of mind is what incapacitates mind to look into ones own self.

तथाप्यभ्यासवैराग्याभ्यां आत्मदर्शनायोपयुज्यते ॥२॥ ॥३॥

- 2.3 Even so, by constant practice and cultivated dispassion, the mind will be able to envision ones own self.

प्रत्यक्प्रावण्यमभ्यासो योगनामकः ॥२॥ ॥४॥

- 2.4 Constant practice of looking inwards is what is known as the strategy or yoga.

पराक्प्रवृत्तिविमुखीकरणं सांख्यापरपर्यायो वैराग्यः ॥२॥ ॥५॥

- 2.5 Turning way from the natural tendency to look outward is dispassion; and the other name for its is the comprehension of reality or Sāmkhya.

योगसांख्यबुद्ध्योर्विवेकः शोकमोहकर्मबन्धप्रहाणाय ॥२॥ ॥६॥

- 2.6 Understanding aright the difference between Yoga and Sāmkhya will cut asunder the fetters of actions that are occasioned by sorrow and confusion.

सांख्यबुद्ध्यऽत्मयाथार्थ्यदर्शनम् ॥२॥ ॥७॥

- 2.7 It is by the outlook of Sāmkhya that one will perceive the reality of one's own self.

योगरूपकर्मकौशलादात्मदर्शनसिद्धिः ॥२॥ ॥८॥

- 2.8 It is by yoga which is of the nature of skillfulness in action that one accomplishes the vision of oneself.

मनसः संप्रसादमासाद्य सांख्ययोगौ पुरुषं स्वकार्ये कर्मणि संबध्येते ॥२॥ ॥९॥

- 2.9 The two disciplines, Sāmkhya and Yoga, provide for the mind utter serenity, and thereby enable one to engage himself in the actions that he ought to do.

ततः पुरुषार्थावाप्तिः ॥२॥ ॥१०॥

- 2.10 Then, the accomplishment of one's purposes in life is assured.

बुद्धियोगः ॥३॥

3. Aphorisms relating to the strategy of understanding and deliberation

आत्मानमीश्वरं हृत्स्थं सुहृदं पश्यन् शान्तिं परां लभते ॥३॥ ॥१॥

- 3.1 When one sees the self, who is the lord, and settled in ones own heart as a loving helpmate, he will obtain everlasting and supreme peace.

शान्तिलाभार्थं ध्यानयोगी भवेत् ध्यानादस्पन्दनं बुद्धेः ॥३॥ ॥२॥

- 3.2 In order to obtain peace, one must take recourse to the yoga of contemplation, for it is by contemplation that the mind settles down.

यतः समधिको ध्यानयोगी तपस्विष्यो ज्ञानिभ्योः कर्मिभ्यश्च ॥३॥ ॥३॥

- 3.3 That is because one who resorts to contemplation as the strategy is superior to those who are given to austerities and those who are wedded to the path of knowledge or to the path of actions.

ध्यानेनैव भावाभावयोरन्तो द्रष्टव्यः ॥३॥ ॥४॥

- 3.4 It is by contemplation alone that the difference between reality and unreality must be perceived.

भावरूपात्मपरिज्ञानादेव मोहापनोदनद्वारा शोकाभावः ॥३॥ ॥५॥

- 3.5 It is understanding fully that ones own self is the only reality that one eliminates confusion, and thereby sorrow is rendered void. There is no other way to undo sorrow and confusion.

बुद्धियोगादेव तत् ॥३॥ ॥६॥

- 3.6 That is accomplished only by resorting to the strategy of understanding and deliberation (buddhi-yoga)

बुद्धिसमाधानाद्योगावाप्तिः ॥३॥ ॥७॥

- 3.7 Yoga as a strategy gets fulfilled when ones understanding and deliberation are perfectly harmonized.

बुद्धौ युञ्जीत मनः, बुद्धिं न मनसि ॥३॥ ॥८॥

- 3.8 In understanding and deliberation, the mind must be yoked, and not the other way about (understanding and deliberation in mind).

अर्जुनो मनः, कृष्णस्तु बुद्धिरिति विवेकः ॥३॥ ॥९॥

- 3.9 Arjuna represents mind, while Kṛṣṇa symbolizes understanding and deliberation.

विषयोपरमे प्रसीदति मनः, प्रविशति च बुद्धौ ॥३॥ ॥१०॥

- 3.10 When the objects of the senses and their mental constructions cease, the mind settles down in peace and enters into understanding and deliberation.

स्थितप्रज्ञता ॥४॥

4. Aphorisms relating to enlightenment

आत्मा त्वतीन्द्रियः, केवलं बुद्धिग्राह्यः ॥४॥ ॥१॥

- 4.1 The self is beyond sensory apprehensions, but can be grasped by understanding and deliberation.

योगस्तदेव ॥४॥ ॥२॥

- 4.2 And that is the indicated strategy (Yoga)

तरमाद् बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छेत् ॥४॥ ॥३॥

- 4.3 Seek therefore refuge in understanding and deliberation.

बुद्धेर्व्यवसायात्मिकता युज्यते समाधौ ॥४॥ ॥४॥

- 4.4 It is the cultivation of understanding and deliberation that must be yoked to contemplative absorption (samādhi).

प्रज्ञाप्रतिष्ठानात्समत्वरूपयोगसिद्धिः ॥४॥ ॥५॥

- 4.5 By the establishment of perfect understanding, the strategy in the form of equanimity is accomplished.

स्थितप्रज्ञता नामात्मतुष्टिर्भयरागक्रोधविरतिः सर्वत्र समबुद्धिश्च ॥४॥ ॥६॥

- 4.6 What is meant by steadfastness in perfect understanding is self-satisfaction, abstention from fear, desire and anger, and having an understanding that is constant, unperturbed and impartial.

बुद्धियोगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥४॥ ॥७॥

- 4.7 The strategy of understanding and deliberation consists in being skillful in all actions.

शरीरयात्रासिद्धिः लोकसंग्रहसिद्धिश्च ॥४॥ ॥८॥

- 4.8 Rewards of this strategy are the accomplishment of a good, quiet, comfortable life on earth, and working for the welfare of people around.

स्वधर्माख्यकर्मयोग एव श्रेयस्करः ॥४॥ ॥९॥

- 4.9 It is only the strategy of a life of wise actions, known by its fulfilment of ones duties towards ones own self, that contributes to welfare.

स्वधर्मे शास्त्रपर्यालोचन-शिष्टाचार समीक्षणसुकरत्वम् ॥४॥ ॥१०॥

- 4.10 In the matter of fulfilling ones obligation to ones own self, comprehensive and correct understanding of scriptural texts and discerning observation of how the refined ones conduct themselves make it easy and efficient.

कर्मयोगः ॥५॥

5. Aphorisms relating to the strategy of correct action

असक्त एव कुर्यात् कर्म ॥५॥ ॥१॥

- 5.1 One must resort to activities, uninvolved (viz. devoid of attachment to the results of actions and without ego-involvement).

कर्मण्येवाधिकारः स्याद्योगिनः, न तु तत्फलसंयोगे ॥५॥ ॥२॥

- 5.2 The strategy (yoga) empowers one only to take the responsibility for performing actions, and does not allow him to bother himself about the results of such action.

यज्ञबुद्ध्या कर्म आचरेत् । यज्ञार्थात्कृतत्वात् न बध्नाति कर्म ॥५॥ ॥३॥

- 5.3 Perform action in the spirit of performing a sacrifice (viz. as a duty) and by so doing, the action done will not bind you.

सङ्गवर्जितः कार्यं कुर्वन् परमाप्नोति सः ॥५॥ ॥४॥

- 5.4 Engaged in actions, but without involvement (viz. attachment to results and appropriation of actions to oneself), one reaches the supreme (viz. the realization of self).

कर्माकर्मविकर्मविवेकात्कर्मबन्धनिवृत्तिः ॥५॥ ॥५॥

- 5.5 By discrete apprehension of distinction between what is to be done, what is not to be done, and what is done inappropriately and incorrectly, one frees himself from the bondage of actions.

श्रद्धया ज्ञानसिद्धिः ॥५॥ ॥६॥

- 5.6 Accomplishment of knowledge is facilitated by faith.

ततश्चित्तोपरमरूपा परा शान्तिः ॥५॥ ॥७॥

- 5.7 Subsequently, results the supreme peace of the nature of subsidence of all mental activities.

बुद्धिमान् कर्मण्यकर्म पश्यति ॥८॥

- 5.8 The wise person will perceive in all action only actionlessness (for he is not involved in the action as its author, or nor is he attached to the results thereof).

अकर्मणि च कर्म ॥८॥ ॥९॥

- 5.9 And in not doing anything, he will perceive action.

तदेव कृत्स्नं कर्म ॥५॥ ॥१०॥

- 5.10 That indeed is the action well and perfectly done.

आत्मज्ञानम् ॥६॥

6. Aphorisms relating to self-realization

उपासनाङ्गभूतकर्मणः फलं ज्ञानमेव ॥६॥ ॥१॥

- 6.1 The fruit of action done as a detail of worship is knowledge of the self.

ज्ञानं तु मनसा हृदा च ॥६॥ ॥२॥

- 6.2 Such knowledge is not only by the mind, but by the heart also.

आत्मयाथार्थ्यदर्शनरूपज्ञानात् पुनर्मोहः ॥६॥ ॥३॥

- 6.3 As a result of perceiving the true nature of the self, there is no more confusion for him.

आत्मशोधनार्थमेव कर्मकरणं योगिनाम् ॥६॥ ॥४॥

- 6.4 The strategists (Yogis) are engaged in action only to look into themselves and purify their interior.

कर्मणैव योगमारुरुक्षुस्ततः कर्मनिवृत्तिरूपशमेनान्तःप्रवणो

सन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगारूढः ॥६॥ ॥५॥

- 6.5 One who intends employing the strategy by engaging himself in action will accomplish the strategy by becoming inward-oriented and giving up all mental constructions as a result of the quiet of the nature of elimination of all action (viz. actions not binding the individual, owing to his non-involvement).

योगारूढ एकान्ते मनः समादध्यादन्तःकरणशुद्धये ॥६॥ ॥६॥

- 6.6 One who has accomplished the strategy should retire into solitude and settle his mind for the purification of his interior.

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीः युक्त आसीत् ॥६॥ ॥७॥

- 6.7 With a tranquil mind, and freed from all fear and anxiety, he must be wholly identified with the strategy.

संप्रत्याहृत्य ध्यानवान् भवति ॥६॥ ॥८॥

- 6.8 Turned well away from the objects in the world, he must engage himself in silent contemplation.

समाधौ स्वात्मनि स्थितिरूपां शान्तिं लभते ॥६॥ ॥९॥

- 6.9 He will then obtain peace that is of the nature of abiding firmly in himself in a state of quiet absorption.

परमात्मनि समाहितान्तःकरणः श्रद्धयोपासीत् ॥६॥ ॥१०॥

- 6.10 With his inner being settled in the supreme self, he must rest in worshipful absorption, with full confidence.

आत्मज्ञानम् ॥७॥

7. Aphorisms relating to absolute welfare

आत्मदर्शनमेव परमो लाभः ॥७॥ ॥१॥

- 7.1 Having a clear vision of ones own self is the final benefit.

आत्मनि सर्वमात्मानं सर्वत्र पश्यन् समदर्शनः ॥७॥ ॥२॥

- 7.2 Perceiving all things in his own self and recognizing his own self everywhere, he becomes endowed with equanimity.

मनसा शुद्धेन परमात्मानं पश्यन्नानन्दी भवति ॥७॥ ॥३॥

- 7.3 He becomes blissful when he perceives the supreme self by his mind that is pure (viz. devoid of mental constructs).

तदेव दुःखसंयोगवियोगरूपो योगः ॥७॥ ॥४॥

- 7.4 And that is the strategy (yoga), characterized by the elimination of all contact with the source of sorrow.

प्रशान्तो जितात्मा स्वस्यैव हृदि पश्यति परमात्मानं समाहितः ॥७॥ ॥५॥

- 7.5 Perfectly quiet, and master of his mind, he becomes composed, and perceives the supreme self in his own heart.

सर्वत्र समबुद्धिर्विशेषः ॥७॥ ॥६॥

- 7.6 His especial trait now is to be unperturbed (sama) and equitable in all his actions.

कर्म कुर्वन्निराशीर्निर्मम आसीत् विगतज्वरः ॥७॥ ॥७॥

- 7.7 Whatever one does, he must be devoid of hankerings and ego-involvement, and perfectly free from anxiety and agitations.

कर्मणि कामसंकल्पवर्जनमेव फलसङ्गत्यागः ॥७॥ ॥८॥

- 7.8 What is meant by giving up attachment to results of actions is only to eliminate mental constructs of the nature of desires.

सङ्कल्पसंन्यसन - कर्मयोगावुभौ श्रेयस्कुरौ ॥७॥ ॥९॥

- 7.9 Giving up mental constructs and engaging oneself in activities as strategy (for self-realization) are both conducive to one's supreme welfare.

नैष्ठिकी शान्तिरेव परमं श्रेयः ॥७॥ ॥१०॥

- 7.10 Absolute and unceasing peace alone is the supreme welfare.

पुरुषार्थपरिपूर्णता ॥८॥

8. Aphorisms relating to the perfect accomplishment of one's purposes in life

सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा ब्रह्मण्याधाय च कृतं कर्म न बन्धाय ॥८॥ ॥१॥

- 8.1 Abandoning attachments (to results and ego-involvements) and leaving actions and results to the pure consciousness that is the innermost reality in oneself, any activity done will not bind the doer.

काम एव सर्वानर्थमूलो बलवान् प्रवर्तकः ।
 स्वाधिष्ठानभूतैर्विषयप्रवणैरिन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिभिर्विमोहयति तत् । इन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिभिः
 परस्तादात्मा । तत्साक्षात्कारेणैव कामजयः ॥८॥ ॥१२॥

- 8.2 Desires are the powerful sources of all untoward happenings. It confounds the individual through the outward-oriented sense-organs, mind, understandings and deliberations, which are its bases. One's own self, however, is beyond the sense-organs, mind, understandings and deliberations. It is only by the vision and actualization of this self that the desire can be conquered.

भूतानां प्रकृतिवशवर्तित्वेऽपि रागद्वेषाधीनो न भवेत् ॥८॥ ॥१३॥

- 8.3 Although all beings are under the spell of their own nature, one must never give himself up to attachments and aversions.

चित्तनिरोध-सम्यक्ज्ञान-निदिध्यासन -
 मनःप्रसाद - सुखानां अनुक्रमेणोत्पत्तिः ॥८॥ ॥१५॥

- 8.4 Control of one's own mind, development of correct knowledge, contemplative absorption, serenity of mind and bliss successively arise.

कामक्रोधोद्वेगं वेगं योगी सहेतु सुखावाप्तये ॥८॥ ॥१५॥

- 8.5 One who is engaged in strategy (yoga) must contain the pressures arising from desire and anger, so that he obtains bliss.

आत्मरतिरात्मतृप्तिरात्मनि सन्तुष्टिः ॥८॥ ॥६॥

- 8.6 Bliss is of the nature of delight in oneself, being content in oneself, and being utterly happy with oneself.

तेनान्तःसुखं अन्तरारामः ॥८॥ ॥७॥

- 8.7 Thereby he is suffused with bliss in himself, and he feels easy and comfortable within.

कृतकृत्यतान्तर्ज्योतिश्च ॥८॥ ॥८॥

- 8.8 That is the satisfaction of having done what had to be done, and the lighting of a brilliant lamp within oneself.

तदेव ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् ॥८॥ ॥९॥

- 8.9 And that indeed is the extinction of the worlds outside and within, and the dissolution of the constitution in the pure consciousness of one's own self.

शोकमोहापनुत्तिः ॥८॥ ॥१०॥

- 8.10 That indeed is what cuts asunder all sorrow and confusion

द्वितीयः काण्डः ॥ Book Two

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मध्यमषट्कस्थप्रमेयपरः ॥

योगः ॥९॥

9. Aphorisms relating to the details of the strategy

परमात्मन्यासक्तिः तस्मिन्नेवाश्रयस्तद्योगः ॥९॥ ॥१॥

- 9.1 Deep interest in nothing but the supreme self, and grounding oneself in it alone, characterize the strategy (yoga) pertaining to self-realization.

विज्ञानसहकारेणैव पुरुषार्थसाधकं ज्ञानम् ॥९॥ ॥२॥

- 9.2 Knowledge will be effective only when it is conjoined with experiential intuition, to fulfil one's purposes in life.

भगवत्प्रकृतिरपराऽष्टधा । क्षेत्रज्ञलक्षणा प्रकृतिः परा ॥९॥ ॥३॥

- 9.3 The transactional disposition of the supreme spirit consists of eight details (viz., five sensitivities, understanding and deliberation, ego-sense, and mind), while the transcendental disposition assumes the form of the soul in the body.

सर्वं त्रिगुणात्मकं जगत् तस्मिन्ननुस्यूतम् ॥९॥ ॥४॥

- 9.4 The entire cosmos which is of the nature of three guṇas (viz. sattva, rajas and tamas) is woven into this disposition as warp and woof.

त्रिगुणैर्मोहितो जन्तुः त्रिभ्यः परमव्यमं न पश्यति ॥९॥ ॥५॥

- 9.5 The being, deluded by the welter of change occasioned by the three guṇas, cannot perceive the unchanging spirit that is beyond the scope of the three guṇas.

भगवत्प्रसादादेव मायां तरति गुणमयीम् ॥९॥ ॥६॥

- 9.6 It is only by the grace of the supreme spirit that one can hope to go beyond the sea of diverse appearance occasioned by the three guṇas.

योगमायामोहितत्वात् भगवन्तमन्तिके सन्तमपि न जानाति ॥९॥ ॥७॥

- 9.7 Because of being deluded by the diverse appearance, (māyā), which is a strategy of the supreme spirit (yoga), one does not know the supreme spirit although it abides in ones own heart.

रागद्वेषसमुत्थद्वन्द्वमोहविमुक्ता जानन्ति ब्रह्म निर्गुणम् ॥९॥ ॥८॥

- 9.8 Those who have freed themselves from the pair arising out of attachment and aversion will be able to comprehend the supreme self which is devoid of the guṇas.

ज्ञानिप्रमुखाश्चतुर्विधा भजन्ते परमात्मानम् ॥९॥ ॥९॥

- 9.9 Four groups of devotees headed by the wise (jñāni), others being the distressed (ārta), the inquirers (jijñāsu) and the aspirers after material welfare (arthārthi), approach the supreme self.

भगवदुपासनायां श्रद्धैव गरीयसी ॥९॥ ॥१०॥

- 9.10 In the matter of contemplative worship of the supreme spirit, faith is the highest means.

उपासा ॥१०॥

10. Aphorisms relating to contemplative worship

अक्षरं परं आत्मा व्यापकः सर्वत्र ॥१०॥ ॥१॥

- 10.1 The self which is unchanging and beyond (space, time and the guṇas) is all-pervasive.

अध्यात्मं प्रत्यगात्मा जीवभावापन्नः ॥१०॥ ॥२॥

- 10.2 The inner self of all beings assumes the form of a soul.

विशिष्टशरीरयोगः कर्म ॥१०॥ ॥३॥

- 10.3 Action means involvement with a specific body.

देहिनामधिभूतं शरीरः क्षरः ॥१०॥ ॥४॥

- 10.4 The body which is the material outfit for the soul is finite and liable to decay and destruction.

जीवस्त्वधिदैवतम् ॥१०॥ ॥५॥

- 10.5 The soul, however, is the luminous principle in the body.

शरीरस्थः सर्वकर्मप्रवर्तको ह्यधियज्ञः ॥१०॥ ॥६॥

- 10.6 It abides in the body, and provides impetus for all its actions; and it is regarded as the principle of sacrifice (yajña).

आत्मचिन्तनरूपं योगिनां, आत्मोपासनरूपं ज्ञानिनां, परमात्मोपासनरूपं भक्तानां इति
उपासात्रैविध्यम् ॥१०॥ ॥७॥

- 10.7 There are three types of contemplative worship: for the employers of the spiritual strategy (yoga) unremitting reflection on the self; for the aspirants of knowledge (jñāna) meditative absorption in the self; and for the devotees (bhakta) worship of the supreme self.

मनो हृदि निरुन्ध्यात् ॥१०॥ ॥८॥

- 10.8 The mind must be absorbed in the heart (which is its source).

योगधारणया देहविस्मृतिः परमात्मदर्शनं च ॥१०॥ ॥९॥

- 10.9 By persisting in the strategy, the presence of the body is forgotten, and the vision of the supreme self dawns.

तदेव मुक्तिरपुनरावृत्तिलक्षणः ॥१०॥ ॥१०॥

- 10.10 That indeed is liberation, characterized by non-return (to the transactional involvements).

विश्वरूपम् ॥११॥

11. Aphorisms relating to the universe as but his form.

आकाशे स्थितो वायुर्यथा सर्वाणि तथा भूतानि परमात्मनि ॥११॥ ॥१॥

- 11.1 Even as the wind abides in space, so do all the beings in the supreme self.

दैवीप्रकृतिस्थाः पश्यन्ति तं भजन्ति च ॥११॥ ॥२॥

- 11.2 People whose constitution is pure and elevated see this, and partake of it.

सर्वेषां भूतानां गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ॥११॥ ॥३॥

- 11.3 The supreme self is surely the destiny of all beings, the protector and the lord, the witness and abode, the refuge and friend for all.

स्वस्मिन्नित्याभियुक्तानां वहति स योगक्षेमम् ॥११॥ ॥४॥

- 11.4 He takes good care of those who are devoted to him earnestly and constantly.

प्रयतात्मा नित्यभक्तः तत्परायणः कर्मबन्धाद्विमुच्यते । कृतार्थश्च भवति ॥११॥ ॥५॥

- 11.5 One who is self-restrained, energetic and lovingly devoted to him, ever intent on him, will free himself from the fetters of action; and becomes fulfilled in life.

भक्तानां बुद्धियोगं ददाति ॥११॥ ॥६॥

- 11.6 For His devotees He communicates the strategy of understanding and deliberating.

तेनान्तरात्मनि स्थित्वा तमो हरति ॥११॥ ॥७॥

- 11.7 Thereby, the devotee will settle down in his own interior and wards off the darkness of the soul.

सर्वभूतानामन्तर्हृदि तिष्ठति ॥११॥ ॥८॥

- 11.8 He abides indeed within the heart of all beings.

विश्वस्मिन् सर्वा विभूतयस्तस्यैव ॥११॥ ॥९॥

- 11.9 And all the excellent things in the world are expressions of His own excellences.

विश्वमतीत्य तु तस्य महिमा ॥११॥ ॥१०॥

- 11.10 However, His greatness exceeds this universe.

धर्म्यामृतम् ॥१२॥

12. Aphorisms relating to the nectar of the Immutable laws of existence

दिव्येन चक्षुषा योगमैश्वरमीक्षते ॥१२॥ ॥१॥

- 12.1 It is with divine vision that one can perceive the wonderful and masterly strategy of the supreme spirit.

वासुदेवः सर्वमिति विगतभीः प्रीतमना भवति ॥१२॥ ॥२॥

- 12.2 By understanding that the supreme spirit is in reality all this, the devotee frees himself from fear and anxiety, and his mind gets suffused with joy.

भक्त्याव्यभिचारिण्या तत्त्वतः पश्यति तमनुभवति च ॥१२॥ ॥३॥

- 12.3 Through unswerving and loving devotion, he will be able to perceive the supreme spirit as He really is, and will also experience Him in his entire being.

मनस्तस्मिन् समाधाय श्रद्धया परया तं ध्यायन्नुपासीत ॥१२॥ ॥४॥

- 12.4 One must settle firmly his whole mind on Him, and contemplate intently on Him with absolute faith, and worship Him.

सर्वभूतहिते रताः समबुद्धयो नियतेन्द्रियाः उपासायामधिक्रियन्ते ॥१२॥ ॥५॥

- 12.5 Those who are engaged in doing good to all beings, those who have eqanimity as their trait, and those whose sense-functions are perfectly restrained are qualified to worship.

उत्तमोपासनया परमात्मनि चित्तसमाधानात् निर्दुःखानन्दानुभवः ॥१२॥ ॥६॥

- 12.6 By firmly grounding the mind on the supreme spirit by the most refined contemplative worship, one experiences bliss, altogether untouched by sorrow of any kind.

तदशक्तस्य अभ्यासलक्षणो योगः ॥१२॥ ॥७॥

- 12.7 For one who is incapable of it, the strategy of persistent practice is suggested.

तत्राप्यशक्तस्य परमात्मपरकर्मानुष्ठानम् ॥१२॥ ॥८॥

- 12.8 For one who is incapable even of this, performance of activities related to the supreme spirit is indicated.

अथवा न्यस्तभरस्त्यक्तफलाभिसन्धिः सर्वकर्मकरणम् ॥१२॥ ॥९॥

- 12.9 Alternately, one should engage himself in all his activities but with the burden of his life laid at the feet of the supreme spirit and without attachment to the results of whatever he does.

श्रद्धयोपेताः धर्म्यामृतं पर्युपासन् परां शान्तिमधिगच्छन्ति ॥१२॥ ॥१०॥

- 12.10 Those who are endowed with firm faith will follow completely the deathless path of virtuous existence, and obtain the highest peace.

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चरमषट्कस्थप्रमेयपरः

(About the contents of the last six chapters of the text)

गुणातीतः ॥२३॥

13. Aphorisms relating to the one gone beyond guṇas

शरीरमेव क्षेत्रम् । सर्वक्षेत्रेषु क्षेत्रज्ञः परमात्मा ।

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोगाज्जगदिदं प्रवर्तति ॥१३॥ ॥१॥

- 13.1 This body of ours is the field; and the knower of all the fields is the supreme spirit. It is because of the association of the field and the knower of the field that this world prevails.

ज्ञानेन चक्षुषा विजानीयात्तयोरन्तरम् ॥१३॥ ॥२॥

- 13.2 The distinction between the Field and the Knower of the Field must be understood by the eyes of wisdom.

आत्मापरोक्षज्ञानं तदर्थशास्त्रानुचिन्तमुभौ ज्ञानमेव ॥१३॥ ॥३॥

- 13.3 Wisdom here includes both the knowledge of the direct experience of the self and the continued reflection on the scriptural texts dealing with it

निर्गुणं परं ब्रह्म सर्वभूतानामन्तर्यामी ज्ञेयः ॥१३॥ ॥४॥

- 13.4 The supreme spirit (brahman), utterly devoid of guṇas is to be apprehended as the inner controller of all beings.

शरीरस्थोऽपि परमात्मा न करोति न लिप्यते । आकाशवत् ॥१३॥ ॥५॥

- 13.5 Although dwelling in the body, the supreme self does not act, nor get tainted; it is like unto sky.

देहिनं निबध्नन्ति गुणास्त्रयः ॥१३॥ ॥६॥

- 13.6 The three guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas) bind the soul that has the body.

गुणेभ्यः परस्तु परमात्मा ॥१३॥ ॥७॥

- 13.7 The supreme self is beyond the three guṇas.

तमधिगच्छति गुणातीतः ॥१३॥ ॥८॥

- 13.8 One who goes beyond the guṇas can reach the supreme self.

समदर्शनः सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः ॥१३॥ ॥९॥

- 13.9 One who has equanimity and who gives up mundane enterprises, is the one who is beyond the guṇas.

भक्त्याऽव्यभिचारिण्या गुणानतीत्य ब्रह्मवद्भवति ॥१३॥ ॥१०॥

- 13.10 By unswerving and unflinching devotion, one goes beyond the guṇas, and becomes like unto the Brahman.

पुरुषोत्तमः ॥१४॥

14. Aphorisms relating to the supreme person

अश्वत्थवद्रूपं संसारस्य ॥१४॥ ॥१॥

- 14.1 The transactional world is of the nature of the aśvattha-tree.

तद्विहाय पदं परममन्वेष्टव्यम् ॥१४॥ ॥२॥

- 14.2 Abandoning it, one must seek for the highest state of existence.

तदव्ययं धाम अपुनरावृत्तिलक्षणम् ॥१४॥ ॥३॥

- 14.3 The state is indestructible and unchanging; and it is characterized by non-returning (to the transactions of the world)

सर्वस्य हृदि तद् व्यवस्थितम् ॥१४॥ ॥४॥

- 14.4 And it is established in the heart of all beings

सर्वाणि भूतानि क्षरसंज्ञकः पुरुषः ॥१४॥ ॥५॥

- 14.5 All beings are perishable and changing; this is Kshara-Purusha

आकाशवत्तेषु स्थितोऽक्षरः पुरुषः ॥१४॥ ॥६॥

- 14.6 In all the beings, like unto space (formless but pervasive) abides the supreme self in the nature of Akshara-Purusha (eternal and unchanging)

अन्यस्तु पुरुषोत्तमः क्षराक्षरातीतः ॥१४॥ ॥७॥

- 14.7 Different from, and transcending these two, is Purushottama, the highest and supreme spirit

विश्वाधारो विश्वाकारः ॥१४॥ ॥८॥

- 14.8 And He is the support for the entire universe, and assumes the form of all things in the universe

तमेव बुद्धिमान् भजेत ॥१४॥ ॥९॥

- 14.9 The wise one should approach Him with devotion

कृतकृत्यः स्यात् ॥१४॥ ॥१०॥

- 14.10 Thereby he would become fulfilled

श्रद्धा ॥१५॥

15. Aphorisms relating to Faith

दैवासुरसम्पदोर्विवेकः प्रतिप्रतव्यः ॥१५॥ ॥१॥

- 15.1 One must understand the distinction between the divine and demonic wealths

कामक्रोधलोभान्येव निरयद्वारभूतानि ॥१५॥ ॥२॥

- 15.2 Desires, anger and greed are the only three doorways to hell.

तान् विधूयैव श्रेयः साधयति ॥१५॥ ॥३॥

- 15.3 One accomplishes his welfare only by shaking them off

तत्र प्रमाणं शास्त्रमेव ॥१५॥ ॥४॥

- 15.4 Authority in this matter is the scriptural corpus

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषः ॥१५॥ ॥५॥

- 15.5 Man's very nature is suffused with faith

त्रिविधा श्रद्धा त्रिगुणानुरूपा ॥१५॥ ॥६॥

- 15.6 Faith is three-fold, in accordance with the three guṇas

तथाहारयज्ञदानतपांसि ॥१५॥ ॥७॥

- 15.7 Even so, three-fold are food, sacrificial acts, giving of gifts, and penance-like activities

सात्त्विकीमेव श्रद्धां श्रेयेत् ॥१५॥ ॥८॥

- 15.8 However, one must prefer only the faith that is sāttvik in nature

ॐ तत् सदिति ब्रह्मणो निर्देशः ॥१५॥ ॥९॥

- 15.9 Brahman, the supreme spirit, is indicated by Om, tat ('that') and sat (real)

तद्विहिता श्रद्धा सात्त्विकी ॥१५॥ ॥१०॥

- 15.10 Faith that is in accord with this (viz. Brahman) is sāttvik in nature

त्रैविध्यम् ॥१६॥

16. Aphorisms relating to the Triads

यज्ञदानतपांसि कार्यमेव ॥१६॥ ॥१॥

- 16.1 Performance of acts in the spirit of sacrifice generously giving gifts, and engaging oneself in penance-like activities must necessarily be resorted to

कर्मफलत्याग एव त्यागः ॥१६॥ ॥२॥

- 16.2 Abandonment of the thoughts concerning fruits of actions is indeed the act of giving up

देहजीवेन्द्रियप्राणदैवानि कर्मकारणानि ॥१६॥ ॥३॥

- 16.3 The physical body, the soul, the sense-functions, the vital force and fortune (destiny) are the causes for all actions

कर्मणो गुणतस्त्रैविध्यम् ॥१६॥ ॥४॥

- 16.4 Three-fold is all action, in accordance with the three guṇas

बुद्धेस्त्रैविध्यं धृतेश्च ॥१६॥ ॥५॥

- 16.5 Three-fold is understanding, and so is perseverance

नैष्कर्म्यफला ध्यानयोगसिद्धिः सर्वकर्मफलसंन्यसनादेव ॥१६॥ ॥६॥

- 16.6 The fruit of abandonment of action, which is the fulfilment of the strategy of contemplative absorption, is obtained only by giving up thoughts of the reward of all actions

समदर्शनः प्रसन्नात्मा भक्त्या परमात्मानं तत्त्वतो जानन्नवाप्नोति ॥१६॥ ॥७॥

- 16.7 One who has equanimity and serenity will, with loving devotion, know the supreme self in truth and reach Him

बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य तच्चित्तो भूत्वा तत्प्रसादान्मुक्तो भवति ॥१६॥ ॥८॥

- 16.8 Taking recourse to the strategy of understanding and deliberating, and his thoughts fully and exclusively settled in Him, the devotee will become emancipated, by His grace

हृत्स्थमीश्वरं शरणं ब्रजेत् ॥१६॥ ॥९॥

- 16.9 One must seek refuge in the Lord (viz. the supreme spirit) who abides in the heart

तेन पापास्पर्शः शोकमोहतरणं च ॥१६॥ ॥१०॥

- 16.10 Thereby, the sins (viz. the sources of misery) are driven far away, and the waters of sorrow and confusion are crossed

उपसंहारः ॥१७॥

17. The aphorisms winding up the teachings

नैष्कर्म्यसिद्ध्या विशुद्धबुद्धिः ॥१७॥ ॥१॥

- 17.1 By accomplishing the abandonment of (the fruits of) actions, the faculty of understanding and deliberation gets cleansed

रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्येते ॥१७॥ ॥२॥

- 17.2 Attachment and aversion are eliminated

विषयविरागात् ध्यानयोगपरता ॥१७॥ ॥३॥

- 17.3 By giving up attachment to the objects of the world, one becomes inclined to the strategy of contemplative absorption.

निरन्तरध्यानेन निर्ममता शान्तिश्च ॥१७॥ ॥४॥

- 17.4 Through uninterrupted contemplation, one becomes free from egoistic feelings, and obtains everlasting peace

प्रसन्नात्मना द्वन्द्वमुक्तिः भक्तिलाभश्च ॥१७॥ ॥५॥

- 17.5 It is only the one whose interior is serene that is freed from the pair of opposites (like joy and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat, love and hate) and secure loving devotion

भक्त्याभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्ति तत्त्वतः ॥१७॥ ॥६॥

- 17.6 And by loving devotion is the supreme spirit known in truth and in its infinity.

तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा तं तस्मिन् विशति ॥१७॥ ॥७॥

- 17.7 Knowing Him in reality, one enters into Him

कर्म कुर्वन्नपि तत्प्रसादात् परा शान्तिः ॥१७॥ ॥८॥

- 17.8 Albeit one is engaged in worldly activities, by His grace he obtains everlasting peace

शाश्वतं पदमव्ययं तदिति निरुक्तिः ॥१७॥ ॥१॥

17.9 And that surely is the state that is undying and unchanging

सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशे तिष्ठन्तमीश्वरमेव शरणं ब्रजेदिति समासार्थः ॥१७॥ ॥१०॥

17.10 The purpose of the text in brief is that one should seek refuge only in the Lord (viz, the supreme spirit), abiding in the heart of all beings.

Notes

(The numbers refer to the sūtras)

- 1,1** Śāstra is what lays down (śāsanāt) or eulogizes (śamsanāt) the supreme truth or ultimate reality (tattva), what is most beneficial to a human being (hita) and what the values are that must be pursued in life (purushārtha).

The earliest commentator, Śamkara, describes Gītā as a śāstra:
तदिदं गीताशास्त्रं समस्तवेदार्थसारसंग्रहभूतम् ॥

Yāmuna-muni who came after Śamkara and before Rāmānuja also speaks of Gītā as a śāstra:

पार्थ प्रपन्नमुद्दिश्य शास्त्रावतरणं कृतम् ॥

And Gītā as a śāstra begins with 2,11 -

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वम् ॥

and ends with 18,66 -

मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

Grief (śoka) and the elimination of grief are the subject-matter of Gītā by the traditional criterion of upakramopasamhāra-nyāya, which is relevant in the śāstra. The work starts with 'grieving for what

must not really be grieved', which all human beings normally and naturally do, and ends with the assurance that Lord will eradicate all sorrows provided one seeks refuge in Him.

This subject is also what is repeated often in the text (abhyāsa) and what constitutes the distinguishing detail in the text (apurvatā). The elimination of sorrow is the fruit of this śāstra (phala). And this is explained with a variety of imagery and analogy (arthavāda); and is augmented by reason and argument (upapatti). The import of any śāstra-text is ascertained by these six details

उपक्रमोपसंहारावभ्यासोऽपूर्वता फलम् ।
अर्थवादोऽपपत्ति च लिङ्गं तात्पर्यनिर्णये ॥

Further, in the Śāstra three kinds of languages are employed (bhāshā-traividhya):

- (i) darśana-bhāshā, relying on observation, reason, logic and transactional values, is what is normal in any narrative and is easily understood. The earlier chapters in the Gītā resorts to this language. Illustrations are जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युः ॥ 2,27; लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा etc. 3,3.
- (ii) guhya-bhāshā, employing metaphors, symbols and hidden meanings. The words used do not mean what they normally mean, but signify meanings that are perceived only after intent reflection (*Mantrārtha-mañjarī*)

आपातप्रतीत एव न श्रुत्यर्थः । अपि तु मीमांसित एव ॥

For instance, the very first verse itself illustrates this. The words dharma-kshetra and Kurukshetra do not refer to the places so named and relevant to the Mahābharata battle, but they refer to the human body. Later in the text, Kṛṣṇa himself tells Arjuna that this body verily is the field (इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ॥). And repeatedly we are informed about the Kshetra and the kshetrajña. Further, ‘māmakāh’ does not refer to the Kauravas, nor ‘Pāṇḍavāh’ to the five children of Pāṇḍu. The former word signifies the tendencies pertaining to the ego (aham, mama) which are manifested by selfish sentiments, mundane interests and practical transactions. On the other hand, Pāṇḍavas signify tendencies which are spiritual in nature (पण्डा आत्मज्ञानं येषां ते पाण्डवाः ॥), which are oriented to self-realization. This body of ours houses both these tendencies, which are opposed to each other, and which are in constant confrontation.

This meaning is justified because nowhere in the text do we find anything that tells us of what the actual Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas as warring parties did, or what happened to him (which in fact Dhṛtarāṣṭra wanted to know किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ।). The hidden meaning is elicited by the etymological force of the words and the contextual relevance.

- (iii) samādhi-bhāṣhā is the speech that is spontaneous in a moment of intense concentration or meditative absorption. The frequent reference to himself by Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Spirit (मत्तः परतरं नास्ति ।, मच्चित्तः ।, मद्याजी ।, मां नमस्कुरु । मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं ।, अहं त्वा सर्व पापेभ्यो । मोक्षयिष्यामि ।, योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहं । etc.) does not refer to the son of Devakī, the kinsman of Arjuna, and the mortal man who helped the Pāṇḍavas to win the battle. It signifies the yogi that Kṛṣṇa was, who rose to identify himself with the supreme spirit in a moment of yogic absorption.

We find such spontaneous and inspired utterances in Ṛgveda (like the hymn of Vāmadeva and the hymn of Vāgambhraṇī) which Yāska describes as 'ādhyātmikya'. Relevant in this context is the episode related in Aśvamedhika parvan of Mahābhārata. The great battle is over. The Kauravas are dead. Pāṇḍavas gain the kingdom and they are the rulers of the land now. The Aśvamedha ritual also is gone through. Their friend and saviour, Kṛṣṇa sets out for Dvārakā, his home-town, his job being over. He bids farewell to the Pāṇḍavas and is about to mount his chariot. But Arjuna, his dear friend, holds him back. He wants to hear once again the Gītā that Kṛṣṇa taught him on the battle-field on the first day of the war. He tells Kṛṣṇa that all that he had then heard had been forgotten owing to numerous distractions. Would he repeat it now?

विदितं ते महाबाहो संग्रामे समुपस्थिते ।
 माहात्म्यं देवकीमातस्तच्च ते रूपमैश्वरम् ॥
 यत्तद् भगवता प्रोक्तं पुरा केशव सौहृदात् ।
 तत्सर्वं पुरुषव्याघ्र नष्टं मे भ्रष्टचेतसः ॥
 मम कौतूहलं त्वस्ति तेष्वर्थेषु पुनः पुनः ।
 भवांस्तु द्वारकां गन्ता न चिरादेव माधव ॥

were Arjuna's words. Kṛṣṇa was rather annoyed at this disclosure, and calls Arjuna a senseless fool. How could he forget this great teaching? And how could Kṛṣṇa repeat it now? When Kṛṣṇa told it on the battle-field he was in a state of yoga. That is how he was able to reveal this great teaching. Now, he could not enter that high state, and it was thus impossible to repeat this teaching. Kṛṣṇa's words:

श्रावितस्त्वं मया गुह्यं ज्ञापितश्च सनातनम् ।
 धर्मस्वरूपिणं पार्थ सर्वलोकांश्च शाश्वतान् ॥
 अबुद्ध्या नाग्रहीर्यस्त्वं तन्मे सुमहदप्रियम् ।
 न च साथ पुनर्भूयः स्मृतिर्मे सम्भविष्यति ॥
 नूनमश्रद्धधानोसि दुर्मेधा ह्यसि पाण्डव ।
 न च शक्यं पुनर्वक्तुमशेषेण धनञ्जय ॥
 स हि धर्मः सुपर्याप्तो ब्रह्मणः पदवेदने ।
 न शक्यं तन्मया भूयस्तथा वक्तुमशेषतः ॥
 परं हि ब्रह्म कथितं योगयुक्तेन तन्मया ।
 इतिहासं तु वक्ष्यामि तस्मिन्नर्थे पुरातनम् ॥

Kṛṣṇa confessed that he could not command that state of yoga in which he gave the Gītā then (kathitam yoga-yuktena tan-mayā). He could only tell Arjuna ‘something to that effect’ (itihāsam). This episode brings out clearly the nature of the source of Bhagavad-gītā. And whenever Kṛṣṇa identifies himself with Brahman the supreme reality (param hi brahma kathitam), and the revelation of that supreme reality as viśva-rūpa (chapter 11), the language used is samādhi-bhāṣhā.

- 1.4 Cf. नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।
न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥ (2,66)

The Aphorisms pertaining to the essential import of Bhagavad-gītā

अज्ञानेन ज्ञानमावृत्वात् मोहः ततो शोकः ।

Confusion (moha) is caused by our natural knowledge-complex (jñāna) being clouded and covered over by ignorance.

Knowledge here refers to the knowledge of the self (ātma-jñāna), which is real and unchanging. It is quite distinct from the psychophysical constitution (viz. the body, sense-organs, mind, ego), in which it is present. Ignorance (ajñāna) is the non-recognition of this distinction; it is mistaking our psychophysical constitution itself as our self (dehātma-bhrama). It is a delusion, false belief. This is the fundamental error, which is responsible for our phenomenal existence and involvement, and for our sorrows.

- 1.5 Owing to grief and confusion, it becomes impossible for one to perform the actions which are necessary and obligatory.
- 1.6 Grief (śoka), which is the consequence of confusion, is an emotional block for doing ones duty and discharging ones obligations. It is an emotion which restricts ones perceptions and distorts his perspectives.

Confusion (moha) is occasioned by not discriminating between what is right and what is wrong, what must be done and what must not be done, what is a fact and what a fiction. In the wake of confusion, mind throws up diverse and disparate images and conflicting inclinations. Confusion and the resulting emotion thus succeed in preventing us from our performing the proper actions or actions properly.

- 1.6 As a result of this confusion (delusion) we become unable to find our way through the tangled web of false projections, and we grieve. Grief is oppressive and overtakes the entirety of the psychophysical constitution. It stuns and immobilizes.

The aphorism refers to the background of Bhagavad-gītā. Arjuna, the Pāṇḍava hero of the Mahābhārata war had come ready to fight against his kinsmen, the Kauravas. But when he saw his adversaries on the battle-field of Kurukshetra, he shrank from what now appeared to him a terrible and sinful ordeal. He was overcome by compassion for those who had assembled only to be killed. Should

he fight, as a kshatriya? Should he withdraw as a considerate human being? He was thus confused about what he should do? What now were his duties and obligations and for whom (dharma-sammūḍha-chetāh). He asked Kṛṣṇa, his friend and cousin who had come as a charioteer for him, to guide him in the matter. What Kṛṣṇa told him on the occasion is the Gītā.

Arjuna in fact symbolizes the common man (nara); when he is in distress and confusion, Kṛṣṇa as the inner spirit of every one (bhagavat) offers guidance. The import of the sacred text goes beyond the battle on the grounds called Kurukshetra. The very psychophysical constitution of everyone is a kurukshetra; the transactional soul of everyone is in reality Arjuna; and the spirit that enlivens the psychophysical constitution, and inspires the individual soul (antaryāmi), seated in the heart, is Kṛṣṇa. Bhagavad-gītā's import is charged with mystic symbolism.

The aphorism : As a result of grief and confusion overcoming Arjuna's normal nature, he was disinclined to do what was his duty. Kṛṣṇa taught him Yoga in order to enable him do his duty and discharge his obligations.

The teachings of Gītā is called a yoga (yoga-śāstra, 'the science of yoga'). There is a mention that the Yoga which was taught to mankind at the very dawn of civilization, got lost during the passage of time (4, 1-3). Getting 'lost' means the gradual obliteration of

the complete character of yoga, the fragmentation and isolation of details and the survival of such partial details (like jñāna, karma, bhakti, dhyāna and so on). Gītā is an attempt to recover yoga in its original, legitimate and wholesome nature. Kṛṣṇa's well-considered advice to Arjuna was that he must become a yogi ('tasmād yogī bhavārjuna', 6,46). The advice was to become not a karma-yogi, jñāna-yogi or a bhakti-yogi, but a yogi in the real, original and comprehensive sense. The fourth chapter of Gītā ends with the admonition 'yogam ātishṭha' ("practice yoga") in the same sense.

- 1.7 Unless grief and confusion are eliminated, the urge to engage oneself in right action will not be there; and the vision that is narrowly constricted and cribbed, continues.

Grief is gone, once confusion disappears. And confusion is eliminated by the knowledge of ground reality (tattva-jñāna). If one does not have it, then he does not know how to get rid of confusion, much less get rid of the grief that results from it. When one's perspective is severely restricted, he can have no access to the knowledge of the real; and there is no possibility of confusion being eliminated. As long as confusion is there, grief cannot be avoided.

The restriction of vision (kārpaṇya) is a defect; it precludes the discernment of the right means for eliminating grief and confusion.

(2)

- 1.10 Grief and confusion can be eliminated only by securing peace of mind (perfect tranquillity, calmness arising out of detachment).

Confusion is a state of mind where thoughts are in a jumble and tumult. There is no orderly succession of thoughts, nor does a single thought endure for long. Gītā likens the mind here to a boat on the waters in a hurricane ('vāyur nāva ivāmbhasi'), tossed about restlessly. It is technically known as 'chitta-vikshepa', marked by an excess of rajas. The purpose of yoga is to calm the mind, suppressing the turbulence and distractions in it.

In the metaphor (in Kāthopanishad, 3,11) of the chariot owned by the soul (ratha-rūpaka), sense-organs are the horses which are yoked to the body, the chariot; mind is like the reins that are fastened to the horses and that the charioteer (the Buddhi, or the individualized consciousness) holds in his hands. If the mind is well directed by the Buddhi, the sense-organs are properly controlled, and the chariot moves on the road aright. If, however, the mind is uncontrolled by the Buddhi, the reins being lax, the horses (sense-organs) run amuck and lead the chariot to damage and ruin. Thus involving the soul (owner of the chariot) in trouble. A properly guided ensemble of sense-organs, mind and Buddhi will attain to peace, to tranquillity of the soul (ātmavaśyair vidheyātmā prasādam adhigachchhati).

The word ‘prasāda’ signifies calmness, peace; also clarity and transparency. In *Chhândogya-upanishad* (8,6,3 and 7,11,1, also in *Bṛhadâraṇyaka-upanishad* 4,3,15) ‘sam-prasāda’ means ‘the light of clear void’. *Kaṭha-upanishad* (1,2,20) uses the word ‘dhātu-prasāda’ in the sense of the purity of the psychophysical constitution. Although Gītā employs the word ‘prasāda’ in association with manas, it is actually the state of Buddhi or personal consciousness. When the Buddhi is clear and transparent, the light of the ātman is reflected in it; and the mind also catches it.

Buddhi is awakening, awareness, internal illumination. Its background is the Vedic budhnā, “fundus”, “illumination of the depth”. Hence it is figuratively spoken of as the cave (guhā). Its location is between the heart (hṛt, where the Self is) and the mind (manas). When the buddhi is covered over by manas, the Self is hidden, obscure, unmanifest. When the mind is withdrawn into the buddhi or rather when the mind is withdrawn from the external world and settled completely in the buddhi, the buddhi is pure, clear and transparent. This is called ‘chitta-prasāda’.

2.1 Mind can have peace only when the ātman is perceived.

The ātman (or self), abiding in the heart-cave of every being, is not evident, for it is covered over (samāvṛta) by the mysterious power and projections (yoga-māyā) of the three guṇas (constituents of the psychophysical constitution of the individual and the structure

and function of the physical world (7,25): sattva, rajas and tamas. Human beings are clouded by delusions consequent upon appetites (rāga) and aversions (dvesha); their vision is constricted, cribbed and clouded. The Self eludes them. The mind needs to be trained, restrained, and reoriented to turn inward, so that peace may be had.

2.2 चञ्चलत्वादात्मदर्शने न प्रभवति मनः ॥८॥

The mind because of its fickleness becomes unable to encounter the self. The mind's nature is to be fickle, restless and fluid; it flits from object to object that is presented by the external world. Its constant and intimate association with the sense-organs makes it outward-oriented. It consists of processes (vṛtti) which are object-determined, continuous, rapid and restive. It can never perceive the Self which is the innermost reality, extremely subtle and utterly isolated from the transactional world. The real has no form, shape or quality, and hence out of reach for the normal mind.

2.3 However, the mind can be pressed for the pursuit and vision of the ātman, by training it in habitual introspection (abhyāsa) and uprooting the outward orientation (vairāgya).

Kathopanishad insists that it is only through the mind that the ātman must be reached (manasaivedam āptavyam); we can never bypass mind. While the normal mind moves away from the real nature of ātman and gets involved in the objective world, mind can be

disciplined, trained, disentangled and made inward-looking, and thus enabled to have a vision of the ātman. This is the sole purpose of yoga.

(cf. also Patañjali: *Yoga-sūtra*, ‘abhyāsa-vairāgyābhyām tan-nirodhah’; we find the same prescription in the Gītā, ‘abhyāsenā tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa cha grhyate’).

- 2.4 Turning the mind inward is practice (abhyāsa); it is what is described as yoga.

By abhyāsa is meant directing of attention or effort ‘ās’, “to throw”) repeatedly towards (abhi) a single object for a particular purpose. In other words, it is practice. Mind is trained to naturally incline towards (prāvaṇya) the Śelf, who is the subject and who is entirely internal (pratyak). This necessarily involves withdrawing mind from external objects (parāk); even ones body and sense-organs are external to the Śelf. Mind is enabled to get away from the external world in slow-measures by buddhi (6,25).

Gītā develops this idea contained in *Kāthopanishad* (3,3,9) of the yoked mind (yuktena manasā), yoga associated with manas.

Yoga is an important idea in Gītā; the word (derived from the root yuj along with its derivied forms like yogī, yukta, yogārūḍha, yoga-yajña, yoga-sevāyā and sāmkhya-yoga) has been used as many as 118 times in the text, and each of the eighteen chapters has been

described as some yoga. The word has many meanings. The kosha enumerates as many as fourteen:

योगोऽपूर्वार्थसम्प्राप्तौ सङ्गति ध्यान युक्तिषु ।
 वपुःस्थैर्यं प्रयोगे च विष्कम्भादिषु भेषजे ॥
 विश्रब्धघातिनि द्रव्योपाय संनहनेष्वपि ।
 कर्मणोऽकर्मणेऽपि च योगः स्यात्... ॥

Obtaining something one does not have already; uniting; contemplation; techniques; bodily strength; uses and applications; astrological conjunctions (vishkambhaka, tithi, vāra, nakshatra); remedial measures and therapeutic uses; deceiving a trusting one; substances; methods; armour; magical devices; and ritualistic action. Another well-known statement gives a shorter list of meanings:

योगः सन्नहनोपाय सङ्गति ध्यानयुक्तिषु ॥

centering; methods of obtainment; relating; meditation; and techniques (of liberation). Grammar uses the word in connection with etymological derivation. Manu gives also the meaning of trickery (kapaṭam).

However, Pāṇini suggests two derivations of the word: one in the sense of union or joining (yujir yoge, *Dhātupāṭha* 7,7), and the other in the sense of concentration or absorption (yuj samādhau, *ibid.* 4,68). While Pantañjali takes the word yoga in the latter sense (samādhi or Chittavṛthinirodha, suppression of all mental activity

leading to absorption), Gītā uses the word in both senses, and in its nominal, adjectival and verbal forms. There are also significant usages like ‘yogam yuñjan’ (7,1), ‘yoga-yukta’ (5,7), ‘brahma-yoga-yuktātmā’ (5,21), ‘yogam ātishṭha’ (4,42), and ‘yogī yuñjīta’ (6,10), which are peculiar to this text. The word ‘yoga’ is a powerful one in Gītā, effective, inclusive and suggestive.

The expression ‘abhyāsa-yoga’ is also found in the text (12,9) in the sense of achieving firm fixity of mind in the Self, which is synonymous with contemplative absorption (dhyāna). However, this expression suggests a series: practice (abhyāsa), leading to knowledge (jñāna), and that leading to contemplative absorption (dhyāna) (12,12).

The idea of yoga as dealt with in the Gītā is five-fold:

1. It is practice, in contradistinction with theory (Samkhya), but aligned closely to it.
2. Control of sense-functions and mind; integration - as in the injunction योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि ।
3. Spiritual experience of thoughtlessness (chitta-vṛtti-nirodha) as in 6,25 न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् । Śamkara remarks that this no-thought state is the ultimate limit of yoga (एषः योगस्य परमोऽवधिः ।): control of sense-functions and mind is one limit. Then their the control in the intellect and finally restraint in oneself. When

all the world is excluded from the interior, and when the internal organs are completely dissolved, it is the final limit. इन्द्रियाणां मनसां नियमनं अवधिः । तस्य च बुद्धौ इति क्रमेण आत्मन्येव । सर्वप्रपञ्चशून्ये अन्तःकरणस्य विलयनं परमः अवधिः ॥

4. Sameness and indifference, as in समत्वं योग उच्यते ।

5. Skillfulness in performing actions योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ।

2.5 Dispassion, also known as perfect understanding (sāmkhya), is withdrawal of the mind from outward orientation.

Rāga is attachment, involvement, approach tendency; and vi-rāga is a negation of rāga. The mode (bhāva) of this negation is vairāgya. It is described as detachment from the world, disentanglement from family and social obligations; renunciation of ones rights and duties, abandonment of interest in the objects around oneself. While it is primarily negative in its significance, it becomes effective only when one knows the real well (sam-khyā). The real is known, and the unreal is given up. It is in this sense that vairāgya is equated with jñāna. For knowing the real, one must turn inward. And one can turn inward only when he withdraws from the outside. Vairāgya and jñāna are synonyms in one sense, and complementary to each other in another sense.

2.6 The discrete understanding of the Yoga-approach and the Sāmkhya-approach serves the purpose of eliminating the bondage of actions, which is responsible for our grief and confusion.

It is well-known that both Sāmkhya and Yoga are systems (darśanas) included in the celebrated Six (Ṣaḍ-darśana). They constitute a pair (like Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, and Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta), Sāmkhya concentrating on theory and yoga on practice. Kapila is said to be the originator of the sāmkhya system, and Hiranyagarbha of the yoga-system (which was redacted by Patañjali at a later date in his yoga-sūtra). Although the Gītā mentions the name of Kapila among the Siddhas, it is uncertain if the references to Sāmkhya in this text (about five times, 2,39; 3,3; 5,4; 13,24; 18,13) are to the system as we know it today. It is probable that the word Sāmkhyā was used in the sense of enumeration of the guṇas and their combinations (guṇa-samkhyāna, 18,19). It is more likely, however, that the word was used in its strict etymological sense: sam (well, complete, perfect), khyā (knowledge), viz., the knowledge of the Self (ātma-jñāna), the highest principle (paramārtha-tattva).

Yoga, as explained earlier, refers to the way of life, to the discipline one subjects himself to, the actions one undertakes. Sāmkhya is thus jñāna, while yoga is karma. The former is associated with vairāgya, as the latter with abhyāsa. Both together constitute the spiritual path that the Gītā advocates ('abhyāsenā tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa cha grhyate', 6,35).

The expression yoga means many things in the Gītā itself: practice apropos theory (2,39), spiritual exercise (2,39), Self-control or

integration (2,48-,50), sameness and indifference (2,48) and skill in the performance on actions (2,50).

Actions become bondage, owing to the ego-involvement and the focus on the results or rewards. And bondage not only restricts the freedom of the individual, but generates stresses which manifest themselves as grief and confusion. One who takes to the path mentioned above will be able to extricate himself from the bondage, and thereafter avoid grief and confusion. Knowledge of reality (tattva-jñāna) is one aspect of this path (sāmkhya); and the other aspect is the method to reach and experience that reality (yoga). One cannot be effective without the other.

- 2.7 The Sāmkhya approach leads to the vision of the Self as it really is. Confusion consists of misapprehensions, illusions delusions and inability to see things as they are and take the right decisions. It is out of contact with reality, and sustains itself with conjectures, fears, hopes, projections and concerns. The knowledge of the real eliminates this confusion, and the clouds that surround it. Confusion is a matter of the mind. Although mind by itself is sattva (purity, light, oriented to Self), the sensations that stream into it and the confabulations that they occasion fill the mind with rajas and tamas; and the sattva is driven into the background and rendered inoperative. The purpose of all spiritual endeavour is to revive and invigorate the sattva: by studiously and systematically eliminating rajas and tamas (vairāgya) and enabling mind steadily regain its own

sattva-role (abhyāsa). Knowledge of the Self strengthens the former procedure, so that the mind is rid of the confusion that obscures the vision of the Self.

- 2.8 The yoga approach which consists in the skill in action will help attain to the realization of the Self (viz. experiencing the Self directly).

Yoga is defined as the skill (competence, effectiveness) in action ('yogah karmasu kauśalam', 2,50); and by action is meant physical activities, speech and thoughts. The skill consists in performing the action without ego-involvement and without attention being focussed on the results or rewards of such action. It is described as skillful action, because it will not be a bondage: it will not corrupt the individual or cloud his conscience. On the other hand, it will help the mind turn inward and perceive the Self.

It does not matter what the action that is performed is; what is important is how it is done. The attitudinal set is yoga; the right attitude being yoked to the action (yujyate iti yogah) transforms the action into virtually no-action, viz. leading to the knowledge of the Self. No-action (akarma) is not the non-performance of action; it is performance of action with the correct perspective, so that the action done actually helps one have the vision of the Self.

It is in this way that knowledge (sāmkhya) and action (yoga) have the same goal in view: experiencing the pure Self, detached from

phenomenal involvements. This is the accomplishment (siddhi) that is spoken of here.

- 2.9 Both sāmkhya and yoga bring about the peace of mind, and then make the individual do the work that is natural to him or that is obligatory on him.

The 'prasāda' of the mind signifies tranquillity, serenity and utter absence of grief and confusion. There is an account in the Gīta, of how by constant brooding over sensory objects, one develops an attachment to them, and this breeds a longing for them; and if there is here an obstacle, the longing will assume the form of indignation; and indignation leads to confusion, and as a result of confusion the mindfulness of the person will be shaken; and as a consequence the intellect gets corrupt, and the individual is lost completely. Peace of mind is an absence of the entire series. The other word for 'manasah prasāda' is 'śānti'.

The immediate objective of the Sāmkhya-yoga praxis (knowledge-practice complex) is to provide for the individual peace of mind. It is a great gain in itself, but it cannot be the goal of spiritual practice. The goal is the realization of the Self (ātma-darśana), and for this, the practice must continue. The further practice consists in discharging one's duties and obligations in a manner that the actions do not bind him. The individual will be in the world, but not of the world.

An enlightened one will not renounce the world and run away. He will continue to be involved in the transactional world, but not blindly, passively or under pressure. He will walk in the light within; he will work, fully awake and willingly. His work, however, will only be what comes to him naturally, and he will do only the work that he is ordained to do, that is in keeping with his role and status in life.

Sāmkhya involves wisdom that is beyond passion; samnyāsa is dispassion. And he renounces his ego-involvement in whatever he does; and he gives up his longing for the results and rewards that his action may lead to. But yoga will keep him on the right track; it will make him go on working, for the good of himself and of the world, and not run away from the world. Sāmkhya gives him the correct perspective, and yoga the correct prescription, in his life.

For man belongs to two worlds: the natural world (his body, sense-organs, mind, family, society and so on) and the spiritual world (his Self altogether isolated from the former).

- 3.1 One attains to supreme peace, when he sees his Self, Lord and friend, seated in his own heart.

The peace that is supreme is not only enduring but altogether satisfying. Its synonyms are 'sukha' (happiness), 'ānanda' (bliss) 'perfection' (siddhi) and so on. It cannot be had, unless one

cultivates it ('na cha abhāvayatah śāntih', 2,66). Cultivation here is in the sense of learning to dedicate all ones actions to the Self within as the Lord. It is a perspective, an attitude (bhāvanā). As long as one thinks that he is responsible for his actions, or that the actions that he undertakes are for his own good or benefit, he is under strain and stress. One who does not yoke himself to the path shown here will not be able to get away from this false sense of responsibility and the consequent stress ('na chāyuktasya bhāvanā' ibid.). The Gītā tells us that it is only after obtaining knowledge that one gets the supreme peace of mind (4,39).

The combined effect of Sāmkhya-Yoga is to perceive that the Śelf who is situate in his own heart, beyond his psychophysical complex, is also the Śelf likewise situate in the hearts of all beings; and that this Śelf is the best friend that one can ever have. He is always there, his own, never failing guide and master (5,29). All of ones actions must be dedicated for him, with the full understanding that he it is that is the source of strength, the sustenance, the eternal witness, and the final resort, the only real, all else being but emanations from him.

The text no doubt employs words like 'jñātvā' ("having known"), 'matvā' ("having understood") and 'paśyan' ("perceiving", seeing) almost synonymously. Knowing the Self, however, is the Sāmkhyan approach, but seeing is more direct. In between the two is the practice, which consists in 'vyavasāya' or full understanding, as a result of repeatedly resorting to the knowledge with firm resolve

and determination ('*niśchaya*' regarding '*ātma-yāthārthya*'). This is work in the realm of *Buddhi*. The yoga that the *Gītā* speaks of in reality is *Buddhi-yoga* (to be explained later).

The Self abiding in the heart (*hṛstha*) is an Upanishadic idea (especially *Chhāndogya*, 8th chapter, '*dahara-vidyā*'). In the centre of ones being is the heart-lotus (*puṇḍarīka*); and within the lotus is the empty space (*ākāśa*), extremely subtle, devoid of shape or form, untainted by anything, and pervasive. Although it is minute (*dahara*), it is as all-pervasive as the sky, and contains within it not only the sun, moon and the stars and the three worlds, but comprehends all that is and is not (now or yet). What (*tad*) indeed is inside this space, enlivening it and sustaining it, is to be sought after (*anveshṭavyam*) and known (*vijijñāsitavyam*). Seeking after it is yoga, and knowing it is *Śāmkhya*. Together, they help one have a vision of the Self (*ātma-darśana*). One will "see" him (*paśyati*). The whole of the first *Shaṭka* (the first six chapters) of the *Gītā* is indicated for getting to know and perceive the Self (*ātmāvalokana*).

- 3.2 In order to attain to this highest peace, one must resort to *dhyāna-yoga*.

Peace (*śānti*) is paraphrased as the pacification (from the root '*śam*') or elimination of *rajas* (*śānta-rajasam*, 6,28), and of course of *tamas*; it is the strengthening of *sattva*, making it active and enduring, unalloyed and free. When one is peaceful (at heart), confusion and

grief are at once removed; there is serenity, calmness and clarity of understanding. The Self within the heart reveals itself to the individual in a state such as this.

In a sense, it is a gain (lābha); the individual who had no encounter with the Self, being caught in the vortex of transactional involvements, has now a vision of the Self. It is a new experience, altogether different from any experience, however exhilarating, that he had earlier. And once he has this vision, he is totally transformed, he can no longer be the old individual. But the Self was always there, and was always as he reveals himself now. The individual was always in touch with him, albeit unconsciously. There is in this sense nothing new that has happened. It is not a fresh encounter. Thus there is no gain involved here.

The woman was wearing a necklace; but she had forgotten about it, and was looking everywhere for it. Suddenly she discovered that she was all the while wearing it. Or someone pointed it out for her. She is happy that the necklace was found; it is a gain. But she had never lost it, and there was no gain. She did not acquire anything new. Experiencing the peace of the Self is like this: a gain and not a gain. It was always there, and it was also found.

How to find it, gain it, and reach it becomes relevant for the Gītā, although the text repeatedly tells us that it is the very nature of the Self and never lost really. Dhyāna is the method of discovery

advocated in the Gītā. The word 'dhyāna' literally means "intent thinking" (from the root 'dhyai', chintāyām', "to think"); it usually signifies "contemplation", "meditation", "sustained thinking", "concentration". When this is employed as a yoga, it is dhyāna-yoga (dhyāna eva yogah). It is then defined as "unbroken mindfulness" (akhaṇḍa-smṛti), born out of deep thinking (manana). Dhyāna here is short for bhagavad-dhyāna, uninterrupted attention focussed on the Supreme Spirit as the inner controller of the self. It involves the visualization of the Supreme Spirit (mūrti), a direct encounter with it (avalokana-rūpa), an actual absorption in it.

We have a fairly elaborate account of the procedure that is best suited for dhyāna (6,10-15). The practitioner must be disinterested in everything other than the Self (nirāśih and aparigraha). He must yoke himself to the yoga, which is the pursuit of the Supreme Spirit as it really is (ātma-yāthātmya-anusandhāna). He must choose to dwell in solitude (rahasi), and in full control of his sense-organs and mind. The spot chosen must be clean, quiet and pleasant. The practitioner must be properly and comfortably seated, holding his body erect but easy.

However, the most important detail is that the mind must incline naturally, easily and totally towards the object of meditation (viz. the Supreme Spirit). To accomplish this difficult task, the preliminary phases of the practice should be directed at the removal of whatever stains, obstacles, inhibitions and wayward tendencies that the mind

has. The Gītā calls this the purification of mind (ātmā-viśuddhi, ātmā here meaning mind). And it is for this purpose that both abhyāsa and vairāgya are prescribed. A mind that is unrestrained and undisciplined can never settle down to yoga. The normal mind by its nature is fickle, and not suited for yoga. But it is possible to train it so that it becomes fit for yoga. This is done by withdrawing it from outward orientations and involvements, and leading it in slow measures towards the Self dwelling in the heart (6, 24-26 and 32-36).

- 3.3 For the dhyāna-yogi is superior to the ascetics, the knowers of truth and the performers of duties.

Yoga is of many types: rāja-yoga (6, 25-26), jñāna-yoga (3, 28; 5, 8-9), abhyāsa-yoga (12,9), japa-yoga (8,14), bhakti-yoga (9,27 and 34;12,8; 14,26; 18, 52-54), karma-yoga (2,28; 4,20-22 and 24), haṭha-yoga (8,10 and 12), aṣṭāṅga-yoga (8,12), sāmkhya-yoga (13,24), and so on. These forms of yoga represent differential emphasis on details. The original yoga, as pointed out earlier, was total, wholesome and one. This was the one that was said to have been lost in the great passage of time. It was Kṛṣṇa's idea to recover it, and teach it to Arjuna. What was this original yoga?

It was dhyāna-yoga (6,46). When Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that he must become a yogi ('tasmād yogī bhava'), he distinguishes the yoga from

all ascetic practices (including exercises of self mortification) (tapas), knowledge of the Self through the Sāmkhya approach (jñāna), and the performance of duties and discharging of obligations (karma). The admonition to become a yogi, eschewing all these, comes at the end of the teaching that describes dhyāna-yoga (chapter 6). Becoming a yogi in the context refers to becoming a dhyāna-yogi.

The important detail in dhyāna-yoga is also found a mention: ‘madgatenāntarātmanā’ (6,47) : “with the Supreme Spirit absorbing the yogi’s self into itself”; or in other words, the dhyāna-yogi focusses his attention wholly in the Supreme Spirit, who dwells within his own heart as the inner ruler, guide and friend (antaryāmi). Such absorption or contemplation is clearly superior to other methods that involve the body, the sense-organs and the mind. The mind in dhyāna-yoga is totally withdrawn from all externalities (including the body and the senses), and directed solely to the Self. In fact, the mind becomes no mind as it is merged in Buddhi.

The Supreme Reality has three aspects: ‘sat’ (existence), ‘chit’ (consciousness) and ‘ānanda’ (bliss). What we call the soul (jīva) is of the form of the mind, and is in the middle, sandwiched between existence (the world outside consisting of objects and events, including ones own body and sense-organs) one side, and the supreme bliss, on the other. Mind partakes of the nature of both. It has normally an outward orientation, concerned with the ‘sat’ aspect of the Supreme Reality. This is the transactional involvement

of mind. The light of the Self is reflected in the Buddhi and this in turn is reflected in the mind; but the mind's preoccupation with the outside turns it away from the Self. Hence, grief and confusion.

Yoga is meant to correct this position of the mind: to turn it inward, and allow the reflection of the Self in the Buddhi to shine by itself. The mind, in other words, is yoked to the Buddhi. Dhyāna is the method that helps this 'buddhi-yoga': mind must be rendered pure, freed from extravert tendencies and settled in the Buddhi which is its master. The yoga means:

- (i) to give up desire, anger, greed etc.;
- (ii) to become fearless;
- (iii) to have faith in the Supreme spirit; and
- (iv) to perform duties that are ordained (like yajña, dāna and tapas).

3.4 One must understand the distinction between what is and what is not.

The word 'bhāva' means "existence", "mode of being" (from the root 'bhū', sattāyām, "to be"). It is synonymous with 'sat', "the real" (from the root 'as' bhuvi). The negation of bhāva is abhāva (non-existence), the same as 'asat'. In the transactional world, the two are mixed up: normally, one does not distinguish between them. Grief and confusion are the consequence of this inability to distinguish.

The real (what is) is what exists in all three segments of time (past, present and future), what does not cease to exist anywhere or at anytime, and what does not undergo any change or modification due to anything. This is also called 'nitya'. On the other hand, what is not real does not exist at any time; it may appear to exist, but it either comes into being from nothing, or becomes nothing after some time. And it changes its form or content repeatedly.

What is can never cease to be; what is not cannot be or become. The expressions used in the Gītā (2,16) are significant: the *asat* (unreal) cannot have *bhāva* (being); the *sat* (real) cannot have *abhāva* (non-being). Hence the distinction (*anta*) between them: what is real is the Self; it exists always and is the ground of all existence. What is unreal is the psychophysical constitution, ever changing, originated and liable to destruction. Normally, the psychophysical constitution is mistaken for oneself; and the changes in it are ascribed to the Self; and when it ceases to exist, the Self itself is taken to have got lost. This, according to the Gītā, is the root-cause of our grief and confusion.

Therefore, the prescription is that one who wants to be a yogi must understand the distinction between the real and the unreal viz., the Self and the body. The self is within, hidden in the heart. That is the only reality. All else is unreal; they come and go, appear and disappear, take birth and die. But the Self remains forever, immutable and inscrutable. We are awake, we dream, and we sleep. We move from one condition to the other, but the Self endures

through all of them, and does not get influenced by any of them. It is like the body that grows into adulthood from boyhood, and into old age from middle age; the body persists through all the changes.

The two categories are in fact reality and appearance. Reality is described in the Gītā by suggestive synonyms: parā-prakṛti (transcendental nature, 7,5), kshetrajña (the soul or the principle of consciousness in the body, 13, 1-2), puruṣa (the person, 13,19) and akshara (the immutable, 15,16). And appearance is aparā-prakṛti (lower nature, transactional world), kshetra (psychophysical field, body), prakṛti (nature, consisting of the three guṇas), and kshara (mutable, finite). The real is there even before the appearances arise, and will be there after the appearances cease. It exists in the real sense of the term.

However, even the unreal can arise, appear and disappear, only on the ground of the real. So the real is the core of the unreal also. In the ultimate analysis, there is no such thing as unreal; it is but an appearance of the real. What appears to be has its origin in the real, its sustenance in the real, and its disappearance also is in the real. The Gītā speaks of the real as all-pervasive. The same words 'yena sarvam idam tatam' (the real pervades everything, including the unreal) occur in the Gītā at three different places: 2,17; 8,22 and 18,46. We also have the words 'mayā tatam idam sarvam' (9,4). The real is 'that' ('tat', which stands for 'sat'), which is all-pervasive and also imperishable ('avināśi tu tad - viddhi', 2,17).

- 3.5 It is only by the complete understanding of the Self, which alone is real, that grief can be eliminated.

Grief represents the stress of life in its three-fold sources (tāpa-traya): bodily and mental ills (ādhyātmika), troubles caused by the surrounding including fellow-beings (ādhibhautika), and unforeseen troubles, beyond ones control (ādhidaivika). It is distinguished by a natural and insistent urge to get rid of it. It is most repulsive (anishṭa). We take resort to numerous devices which are calculated to avoid grief, forestall it, or counteract it. However, most devices are but palliatives, they cannot drive away once and for all the grief that has occurred, much less avoid the possibility of grief. And grief can come to us in a thousand forms, and no one can tell how or when it comes.

Grief concerns the body and mind, possessions and relations, objects and events - all of which are but appearances, unreal, lacking substance, and fleeting. This truth can be understood only when what is real comes within our ken. What is real is the Self, which is distinct from body and mind, possessions and relations, objects and events. Our experience of deep sleep is evidence for this. In this state, there is no body-awareness, no ego-involvement, no object-experience, no duality of subject and object, and consequently no grief whatsoever. But the self continues to exist although not identified as "I". Only it is separated from the appearances of body and mind, possessions and relations, objects and events. The Self

as it really is becomes a source of happiness; for do we not say “I slept happily?” It is happiness, because in that condition grief has been eliminated.

The expression ‘attaining to different bodies’ (dehāntaraprāpti, 2,13) in the sense of being born again after death, abandoning the old and worn out body and acquiring a new one, and the simile of changes like childhood, adulthood and old age occurring in the same body are meant to point out the persistence of the Self, unchanging amidst all changes. The expression also refers to the three states that we all pass through: wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. The states represent the conditions of the psychophysical organization that we commonly call the body. These conditions are mere appearances and unreal; it is the Self which is real that endures, providing the ground for the changing conditions and births.

Knowing the Self well, viz., that it is the only real inhabiting the body which is unreal, presents a clear and true perspective in life. It is the enlightened outlook, distinguishing between reality and appearances, and thus avoiding excitement as well as dejection. Who would seek to quench his thirst by the waters in a mirage? The knowledge of the Self must be alround (pari-jñāna) by scriptural study, introspection, observation, reason and contemplation. It would then lead to direct encounter or experiencing the Self (darśana, ātmāvalokana). This is the way to really get rid of grief.

- 3.6 That (viz. complete understanding of the Self) is possible only through Buddhi-yoga (viz. yoking Buddhi to the mind).

Buddhi is an important concept in the Gītā. The very background of text emphasizes its role: if Arjuna is the mind (manas), Kṛṣṇa is the buddhi. The imagery of the body-chariot in Kaṭhopanishad provides the backdrop. Body is the chariot of the jīva (bhūtātma), the individual soul; senses are the horses yoked to it. The individual soul (or Arjuna) who owns the chariot represents each one of us, having a body which is one's own. Kṛṣṇa, the charioteer, stands for buddhi; in his hands are the reins, the mind, to control the horses. It is the charioteer who guides, leads and restrains the chariot along the right or wrong path. If the horses (senses) are wild and unruly and the rein (mind) is lax and indulgent, with the charioteer (buddhi) being indifferent, the chariot (psychophysical system) is driven to destruction (grief and confusion). If, on the other hand, the charioteer (buddhi) is awake, alert and in control of the situation, the rein (manas) is held firm, and the horses (senses) obey and submit to the charioteer. It is the way to reach the end safely and happily. The role of buddhi is thus all important.

It is difficult to translate 'buddhi' into English. It has been rendered as soul, intellect, contemplative intellect, will and so on. But none of these can be a fit equivalent. It is the highest faculty in man's physical nature. And it is the bridge between the psychophysical complex and the ātman (the Self or the spirit). It is of the nature of consciousness; it is awareness.

The word is of Vedic origin: Agni is described as 'buddhi-mat', viz. 'possessing buddhi', where buddhi signifies kindling and also

awakening: he is the ever-moving traveller, awakening with the dawn of spiritual consciousness. In words like ushar-budha, ushar-but, jarā-bodha, budhna and pratibodha, all of which are used in the Vedic literature in the sense of fundus or illumination of depth, awakening, flaming aspiration and the internal illumination consequent upon it, was the original significance of buddhi. In some of the brāhmaṇas (like Śāṅkhāyana, Taittirīya and Śatapatha) it is identified with vijñāna. The Nighaṇṭus give dhī, dhīti, manīshā, prajñā, śemushī, chit, prekshā, samvit, medhā, pratibhā and paṇḍā as synonyms of buddhi. In *Rāja-nirghaṇṭā*, hṛllekhā (“heart-streak”) and samkhyā (complete knowing) are synonymous with it. The etymological meaning is that it is the instrument of knowledge (from the root ‘budh’ with the suffix kṭin), the means of our knowing anything (buddhyate anayā).

It is the psychic principle in the individual. Its place is between hṛt (heart) and manas (mind). It is subtler than the mind, higher than the mental place. It is more in the nature of illumination, intuition; it is cognate with ‘sambodhi’ (enlightenment), which marks the Buddha. Its equivalent ‘manīsha’ (cf. RV. ‘hṛdā manīshā manasābhiklrpto’, also *Taittirīya-āraṇyaka* 10,1,13 and *Kaṭha-Upanishad*, 2,3,9) has the sense of plunging, penetrating, ecstatic attunement with the dweller in the heart-cave. Buddhi is thus close to dhyāna. In fact, the word ‘nididhyāsana’ (an equivalent of dhyāna) etymologically signifies striving for internal illumination (cf. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 2,4,4,5 and 6). It may be recalled that the Vedic

synonym 'budhna' also means illumination of the depth. And it may be noted that Śamkara takes the 'heart-cave' as buddhi (buddhi-guhā): it is lighting up the darkness within.

It is interesting that in the Sāmkhya system, buddhi which is the first evolute from nature in equilibrium (prakṛti) has a cosmic aspect (mahat, represented by prāṇa) and an individual aspect (prajñā). Buddhi is thus a cosmological principle as well as a psychological principle. Prāṇa is strictly a cosmological category, while manas is a psychological category. Buddhi however is both. It rests on the manas and reaches to prāṇa. This is suggested by the Gītā (3,52):

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिः बुद्धेरात्मा महान् परः ।

The mind is the lower principle: it is concerned with the outer world and associates with the sense-organs, which are physical in nature and function. In fact, the mind is regarded as an internal sense (antar-indriya) or a semi-sense (no-indriya). It has no organ of its own (sthāna), but has processes (vṛtti); all the sensory functions are at once appropriated by it. But it functions only in the light of the buddhi, which is a higher principle.

Its functions are construction (samkalpa) of images, and modifications of sensations into meaningful messages (vikalpa).

Buddhi is ever present, while manas goes backward and moves forward. The present awareness is the buddhi; the past and the future are processes of mind.

The buddhi, however, is the principle of consciousness (awareness, prajñā) in the individual, and has an aspect outside the individual framework, unlike the mind which is strictly intra-individual. If functions like a light (dīpa) for the mind, and it reflects the light of the Self, which is the only light in the individual. To reach the Self, buddhi is the only intermediary; it is therefore that it is described as ‘buddhi-grāhyam atīndriyam’. The light of buddhi is awareness; If the Self *is*, the buddhi is aware of it.

Normally the mind is yoked to buddhi; the buddhi or awareness is a mere backdrop and it is covered over by mind. The mind projects its images, phantasies, resolves, fears and hopes which completely fill the buddhi. The buddhi’s power to reflect the self and function as pure awareness is impeded. The mind will not allow the present awareness to wake up; it conjures up a transactional world in which the past and future loom large. Hence grief and confusion. The mind needs to be trained, disciplined, purified and withdrawn from the over-riding sense-organs and the outside world that they conjure up. This is done by yoking the mind to the buddhi; this is called buddhi-yoga. Here the practice takes the form of meditating on the Self, to be awake to the Self, to be aware of the Self. This is also called dhyāna-yoga.

We read in Bhāgavata (11,14,42):

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यो मनसाऽकृष्य तन्मनः ।

बुद्ध्या सारथिना धीरः प्रणयेन्मयि सर्वतः ॥

“The sense - functions must be withdrawn from the sense-organs by the mind, and the mind must then come under the control of the charioteer, buddhi and turned towards the Self.” When the buddhi is no longer aGītāted by the restive mind, it is called samādhi (Viśva-rūpāchārya):

ध्यानादस्पन्दनं बुद्धेः समाधिरभिधीयते ॥

There is no method other than yoking the buddhi to mind to reach the Self.

Yoga is attained by settling the buddhi in the Self.

Transactional life is ridden by grief and confusion; and that is because the mind (manas) has a complete sway over the details of life. The objects of the world attract and repulse, and the sense-functions are led involuntarily towards them, either inclining to them (rāga) or withdrawing from them (dvesha). Inclination is love and aversion is hate; and both are mental processes. Neither the sense-organs by themselves nor the buddhi by itself can love or hate; the sense-organs and the buddhi are made to love and hate by the mind when it dominates over them. The buddhi's light is dimmed, and the Self can no longer be reflected in it. This illustrates the normal individual who is involved in the transactional world and who is therefore subject to the vagaries of grief and confusion.

Yoga as the method of unyoking the individual from this grief and confusion ('duhkha-samyoga-viyogam yoga-sanjñitam', 6,23)

emphasizes the role of buddhi as principle of pure, uncorrupt and independent principle of awareness. It is of importance to recover the serenity of buddhi and also its freedom from the trammels of the mind. When the buddhi unburdens itself from the yoke of the mind, the buddhi settles down to its normal function, reflecting in itself the light of the Self, to become aware of the presence and primacy of the Self, to directly encounter the Self.

Withdrawn from the mind, it naturally turns towards the Self. This is the 'sam-ā-dhāna' that is spoken of here. Literally the word means "settling itself well, perfectly, easily in something (samyak ā dhīyate asmin) or by some instrument or means (anena)." It is a centering process (con-centration), a way of inclining towards something to the exclusion of everything else (at-tension). This is not dependence on anything. Dependence involves stress, grief; independence is happiness. There is a common saying in Sanskrit 'parāyattam hi duḥkhāya, svāyattam sukha-kāraṇam': dependence on others leads only to sorrow; dependence on oneself is cause for happiness. This is true in the case of buddhi: it suffers grief and confusion when it depends on the mind, but when it is in its natural state, it reflects the self within itself and is in a state of peace and freedom. All of us have a taste of this in deep sleep, where the buddhi withdraws into the Self (svam apito bhavati), which is only natural to it.

When the buddhi settles down comfortably in the Self or rather in itself, it drags the mind also where it goes, unlike in the

transactional processes where the mind drags the buddhi wherever it goes. This is the significance of the prescriptions like spirit, ‘manmanā bhava’ (“let your mind be full of the Supreme Spirit, 6,67), ‘mayyāveśya manah’ (“allowing the mind to be possessed by the Supreme Spirit”,), ‘yan manonuvidhīyate’ (“where the mind follows the buddhi”,) ‘yato... manah... tato niyamyā ātmanyeva vaśam nayet’ (“whenever the mind which is fickle goes out, it must be restrained then and there, and made to settle down in the Self” 6,26).

- 3.8 It is the mind that must be settled in buddhi, and not the other way about (viz. the buddhi in the mind).

This is the explication of the idea of buddhi-yoga, already explained. The mind is outward oriented; it associates itself with the sense-functions, and thereby with the objects of the outside world. It has processes like recollection and anticipation, which extends to the past and future; and it includes feelings and emotions like love and hate. If buddhi, the awareness, is sought to be settled down in mind which is like this, the buddhi becomes aware of (and involved in) the mental processes and emotions. It is involuntarily coloured by an outward tendency. This is the normal condition of the transactional man, who is heir to grief and confusion.

Contrarily, yoga is the method whereby the mind is deprived of its outward orientation and turned inward (viz. towards buddhi).

When mind becomes dissociated from sense-functions and from the objects of the outside world, it also gets uprooted from tendencies to wander into the past and into the future. It will settle down to the present, to the mere awareness, and becomes 'awake' to the presence of the Self. This is settling down in buddhi.

- 3.10 When the objects cease to enter into the mind, the mind composes itself and settles down; it then enters into the buddhi.

The expression 'manah-prasāda' has already been explained. It is synonymous with calm detachment of mind, and disinterest in the presence of objects of sense (anāsakti). It involves as a necessary detail contentment in oneself (3,17, ātma-trpti, ātma-santushṭi). When the mental processes which flow ceaselessly in transactional life are steadily and slowly reduced to their bare minimum, as a result of the practice of yoga, the mind does not get agitated by the past and the future. It focusses itself on the present, on mere awareness. This is what is called the peace of the mind, tranquillity, clarity and transparency (prasāda, samprasāda, chitta-prasāda). In this state, the mind is not led away passively or inadvertently, by the sense-functions, or involuntarily forced by recollections and anticipations. The individual is thus freed from thoughts with emotional overtones like regret, grief, fear, anger, hope, desire and greed; and experiences quiet contentment.

It is in such a condition that the mind turns to its own 'master', the buddhi (the charioteer in whose hands are held the reins), which

is also its most natural resting place. The mind can comfortably settle down there.

4.1 The Self is beyond the sense-faculties, but accessible to the buddhi.

The Self by definition is distinct from the psychophysical complex. The latter is devoid of spirit; it is inert, objective and part of the phenomenal projection. The Self in the transactional context is not even the subject; it cannot be claimed as “I” (aham). What becomes the subject on behalf of the Self is the buddhi, the subtlest detail in the psychophysical organization. It is the mirror in which the Self is reflected; and it is the principle of awareness. Thus it is the only detail in the constitution that can apprehend the Self. The Self is present in all the details, but no detail other than buddhi can make the Self the object of understanding (prameya). Even the buddhi does not function like the means of understanding (pramāṇa); the Self does not become an object to it. Nor is the Self the subject (pramātṛ): it is really beyond the cognitive transaction. It is the buddhi which catches the reflection of the Self that behaves like the subject.

The buddhi is the real knower or pramātṛ, but through its interaction with mind, it creates an ego (ahamkāra) as the surrogate pramātṛ (and subsequently karṭṛ and bhokṭṛ, the performer of actions and the recipient of the rewards thereof). But this is the result of an outward inclination, which precludes attention to the Self. When

the buddhi is preoccupied by ego and mind, it cannot catch the Self's reflection, for it is no longer pure or transparent.

The *Nighaṇṭu* takes buddhi as synonymous with awareness (samvit) or experience (upalabdhi):

बुद्धिर्मतिश्च मेधा संख्या सवित्तिरुपलब्धिः ॥

But it is also precise knowledge (samkhyā), which involves mind and the sense-organs, and mental vigour or brilliance of the mind (medhā). It is noteworthy that when the buddhi is capable of recognizing clearly the existence of the Self ('buddhyāvadhāraṇīyam ātma-tattvam sāmkyam', Rāmānuja), it also presses the mind to this purpose. Hence, the statement in *Kāthopanishad* that the Self is to be known by the mind ('manasaivedam āptavyam').

The Self is, of course, beyond the grasp of the sense-organs (atīndriya), which are by their very structure and function outward-oriented; but mind that is associated with them can also look inward. It can get involved with buddhi, and help it recognize the Self.

4.3 Therefore, one must take refuge in buddhi.

One's mind must be settled in buddhi, after withdrawing it (the mind) from the senses (organs and objects). This indicates a transformation in the psychophysical complex. The outward inclination of the entire

complex is abandoned, and the inward inclination is instituted and promoted. In this, the mind plays a significant role. It is true that it is buddhi (which is of the nature of resolve, will, determination, *niśchaya*) that determines the directional change of the psychophysical system. One must therefore seek resort to this principle of will (buddhi); and operate at this level. The buddhi needs to be strengthened, to be isolated from the transactional preoccupations of the mind, to be rendered pure (*viz.* to be merely 'aware', not mixed up with emergent mentations as in the case of normal transactional states).

The buddhi's natural and original state is to be 'awake'; mind puts it to sleep or introduces into it confusion. When the mind is active, the buddhi is inactive; when the mind is at rest, the buddhi is awake. There is a mystic utterance in the *Gītā*: what is day for everyone, it is night for the sage; and when the sage is awake, the world sleeps ('*yā niśā sarvabhūtānām tasyām jāgarti samyamī*' etc.) Mind is the world; the buddhi is wakefulness. When the buddhi becomes worldly (owing to the dominance of mind), the buddhi is destroyed. The *Gītā* calls it '*buddhi-nāśa*'. And as a consequence, the individual is ruined (*praṇaśyati*), *viz.* caught up hopelessly and helplessly in the quagmire of transactional turmoil (*samsāra*). The vision of the Self is for him altogether precluded.

- 4.8 'Loka-samgraha' is an 'apūrvatā' of the *Gītā-śāstra*. It is what is unique for this prasthāna, and is not found in the other two

(Upanishads and Vedānta-sūtra): ‘Loka’ is people, and ‘samgraha’ is setting them on the right and wholesome track, so that they do not go astray, or fall off into decay and degeneration.

(Loka-rakshā) Every one who is wise has the duty and responsibility of working for the welfare of the people around him. Even wise rulers like Janaka did so.

Rāma-kaṇṭha, the Kashmiri commentator, has this to say लोकशब्देन त्रिवर्गमात्रोपदेशविषयभूतो जनोऽत्र विवक्षितः । तस्य संग्रहः शास्त्रानुष्ठातृलक्षणस्वपक्षस्वीकारः । तं वक्ष्यमाणहेतुना अवश्यकरणीयतया संपश्यन् सम्यक् बुध्यमानः स्वं शिष्टधुरामातिष्ठन् । कर्तुं शास्त्रविहितानि कर्माणि आचरितुम् ॥

Loka refers to common people who pursue only the three values of life: wealth, pleasures and virtuous living. Sangraha is to make them pursue these values in accordance with scriptural sanctions.

The usual tendency for the people is to follow the superior ones and do as they do. The superior folk (viz. the wise ones) must serve as role-models. It is not enough to teach, but set examples. (cf. 3, 20-21)

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन् कर्तुमर्हसि ॥
यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठः तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

‘Karma’ here refers to Karma-yoga, a life of activity in the world amidst others.

It does not mean scripturally prescribed rites, as the Mīmāṃsakas regard karma. कुरु कर्मैव त्वं refers to an active life of responsibilities and duties. The word 'karma' is to be taken in the sense of 'kāryam karma', activities that must be resorted to.

This also ensures the fulfilment of the needs of the body-mind complex (śarīra-yātrā). cf. 3,8:

शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥

It is impossible to sit even for a moment without doing anything; even sitting is an activity. This is what is ordained by nature. The body, sense-organs and mind are themselves filled with activities, and they do not wait for our deliberation (3,5 कार्यते ह्यवशं कर्म), for they must be done at all costs. The body must continue in a fit state till natural death, and these activities are needed to keep the body in good shape and in a healthy condition. Enlightenment can occur only in a body that is in perfect equilibrium.

- 4.9 'Sva-dharma' is one of the key-concepts in Gītā. Interpretations differ as what it means. In the context, Kṛṣṇa is speaking about dedicating all our activities to the Supreme Self (3,30 मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि सन्यस्य ।) with full faith (3,31 श्रद्धावन्तः ।), and also that love and hate are the enemies that must be fought (3,34 रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ... अस्य परिपन्थिनौ ।) It is in this context that the verse (3,35) occurs:

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥

There is nothing in the context that can suggest 'ones duties ordained by the caste that one belongs to'; there is no mention of the four 'varṇas' here, in this situation. 'Sva-dharma' therefore can only refer to ones obligation to accomplish self-realization: 'dharma relating to the Self or ātman'. In contrast to it, 'para-dharma' is the dharma of the body, sense-organs and the mind, all of which are other than, external to, the Self (hence called 'para-dharma'). Achievement of ones own enlightenment is of prime importance. 'Nidhana' in it means here not death, but settling down in it, preserving it and persevering in it (from the root 'nidhā'). In other words, 'svadharme nidhanam' has the sense of 'yoga-yuktatā'; and this is what is conducive to one welfare (śreyas). Settling down to bodily sensual or mental preoccupations (para-dharma) is dangerous because love and hate (rāga-dvesha) which are ones real adversaries (paripanthinau) and which are mentioned in the previous verse, are generated therefrom.

'Sva-dharma' is synonymous with karma-yoga, as Rāmānuja points out; it does not, he says, refer to 'varṇāśrama-dharma', for the context is karma-yoga and jñāna-yoga:

प्रकृतकर्मयोगज्ञानयोगविषयौ ॥

Here sva-dharma is karma-yoga, and para-dharma is jñāna-yoga. To see 'varṇāśrama-dharma' here would be a fallacy of irrelevance (aprastuta-prasamsā).

- 5.2 This is because the results of an action are not entirely dependent on oneself. (cf. 18, 13-14):

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।
 अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।
 विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टाः दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥

There are five details together responsible for any action: the body which is the foundation, the doer (the soul distinguished by the body), the various sense-faculties (which are instrumental for any action), the different activities involved in an action, and the destiny or fortune (which decides the shape that the action takes).

- 5.3 The term ‘yajña’ is employed in Gītā, not in the sense of sacrifices and rituals, but in the sense of performing actions without a selfish motive, with a sense earnestly dedicating oneself to such action (मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्य ।, 3,30). Pertinent in this context is the insistence that one must never give up yajña, dāna (charitable disposition, generosity) and tapas (austere living) (18,5):

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।

Good life (सत् सद्भावे साधुभावे च ।) consists in engaging oneself in these three kinds of activities (18,27):

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।
 कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥

Further, Gitā enumerates several kinds of yajña (cf. 4,28;32) like dravya-yajña (yajña with material objects) and jñāna-yajña (the yajña of acquiring wisdom) (4,32-33):

द्रव्यज्ञास्तपोयज्ञाः योगयज्ञास्तथाऽपरे ।
स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः सांशितव्रताः ॥

Dravya-yajña, tapo-yajña, yoga-yajña, svādhyāya-yajña and jñāna-yajña are mentioned (4,28)

In the context, the word yajña is also defined (4,27):

सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।
आत्मसंयम योगाग्नौ जुह्वति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥

All sensory functions and vital processes are merged in the fire of self-restraint.

Rāghavendra-tīrtha takes yajña in the sense of undertaking an activity solely for the sake of the Supreme Spirit, who knows all and who is the object of human existence.

जानातीति ज्ञः विष्णुः । येनोद्देशेन यातो विषयीकृतो स उद्देशो यज्ञः ॥

The word 'yajñārtha' signifies "in the spirit of a sacrifice"

The idea of sacrifice is significant: (i) in the individual it makes for the purification of constitution, it is productive of joy of living

and it affords a taste of divine acceptance; (ii) it is a kind of recognition of the bountiful gifts of the gods to us, we enjoy only after offering our gratitude to them (3,12); and (iii) it is an involvement with the Supreme Spirit, Brahman.

- 5.5 Karma is action, akarma inaction and vikarma wrong action (or variety of action). Action is what must be resorted to by the spiritual seeker (anushṭheyam mumukshuṇā), involving knowledge too as contained within it (tadantargatam jñānam); it must be devoid of desire for fruits, and it must be in the nature of worship. So says Rāmānuja. Inaction or non-action is the correct knowledge of the self which is the source of action but not of the nature of action (कर्तुरात्मनो याथात्म्यज्ञानम् ।), according to Rāmānuja (cf. 3,8 नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वम् ।) also cf. 18,7 yajñā, dāna and tapas are the karma.

Vikarma is taken by Śamkara and Madhva to mean wrong action ('vi' in the sense of 'viruddha'); but Rāmānuja takes the word in the sense of various activities (vividha), like nitya (ordained), naimittika (occasional) and kāmya (motivated), as well as earning money for these purposes (dravyārjana) etc.

5,8-9 (cf. verses 3,18)

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥

While engaged in action (karmanī), one seeks for self-realization (ātma-jñāna), which is non-action (Rāmānuja). While engaged in

action, one recognizes that he is not the doer; he is only the reflection or counter-foil (pratibimba) of Viṣṇu who is the real doer (Madhva) विष्णोरेव कर्म । नाहं चित्प्रतिबिम्बः किञ्चित्करोमीति । And when not doing anything (as while asleep), one sees the action of Viṣṇu going on, सुप्त्यादौ अकरणावस्थायां परमेश्वरस्य कर्म यः पश्यति । (Madhva)

5,10 कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् । (3,18)

doer of complete, perfect action; one who does everything. This is because he obtains the wholesome fruit of action (Madhva); this is perfect in the sense that karma has now acquired the form of jñāna as well as that of karma (Rāmānuja).

6,5 cf. verse 6,3. For one who desires to climb (ārurukshu), the ladder of spiritual exercise (viz. in order to fulfil the technique of knowledge, cf. Rāghavendra-tīrtha, उपायसंपूर्तिमिच्छोः ज्ञानोपायं ।), which is of the nature of experiencing the true nature of the self, योगं आत्मावलोकनं प्राप्नुमिच्छोः । For Rāmānuja, karma-yoga (viz. dhyāna-yoga) is the background. Rāghavendra-tīrtha: परोक्षज्ञानिनः योगारोहरूप साक्षात्कारस्य कारणं अपरोक्षरूप फलोदयपर्यन्तं कार्यमिति भावः ॥ And for one has scaled the heights and fulfilled this technique (ārūḍha) of knowledge quiescence (śama) of the mind, or cessation from all activity would be the means. When contemplation matures, samādhi results (चित्तविक्षेप कर्मोपरम) सर्वोपशमेन समाधिरेव प्राधान्येन कारणम् । (Madhva).

6.6 cf.6,72 युञ्ज्याद् योगमात्मविशुद्ध्ये ॥ Keśava-kāśmīri, बन्धनिवृत्तये ।
 Nilakaṇṭha, चित्तशुद्ध्यर्थम् ।; Rāghavendra-tīrtha, मनसः विशुद्ध्ये ।
 सर्वमलदाहाय । स्वस्थ संसारमलनिवृत्तये ॥

6.7 cf. verse 6,14:

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।
 मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत् मत्परः ॥

The tranquil mind (praśāntātmā) indicates freedom from love and hate (Ānanda-giri); happiness of the mind that is well-disciplined in the strategy (Vedānta-deśika, योगोपयुक्तमनः सन्तोषपरः । with mind not inclined towards outer objects on ones own (Rāghavendra-tīrtha), स्वतो विषयेष्वप्रवृत्तमनस्कः ।; exceedingly pacified mind (Rāmānuja, अत्यन्तनिर्वृत मनाः ।)

The tranquillity of the mind is occasioned by steadfast pursuit of self-realization, giving up both the scriptures on one hand and the worldly concerns on the other.

वेदमिमं लोकममुं परित्यज्यात्मानमन्विच्छेत् ॥

6.8 cf. verses 6,10 to 6,15

Practical suggestions regarding dhyāna are given in these verses

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।
 एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।
 नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥
 तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।
 उपविश्याऽसने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥
 समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।
 संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥
 प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।
 मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ॥
 युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।
 शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥

The yogi (dhyāyī) must abide in a quiet 'secluded' soothing, natural spot, and engage himself in constant and long stretches of meditation. He must be in perfect solitude, devoid of desires, possessing nothing, and restrained in mind and intellect. He must select a clean pure place, and assume a comfortable but steady posture. His mind must be concentrated, thoughts and sense-functions under firm control. He must hold his torso, head and neck erect and balanced, and set out to cleanse his interior (viz. mind) of all defects, obstacles and distractions. He must be still, and focus his attention on the tip of his nose, without looking around. He must be serene, tranquil, fearless; and withdrawn from external things and thought; the mind must be settled on the supreme spirit with composure and concentration. He will come to peace that ends in unshaken calm, and abides in the Supreme Spirit itself.

- 6.9 The example is given of the light of the lamp that is placed in a spot free from breeze, burning steadily (6,19)

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ॥

- 7.4 cf. 6,23:

तं विद्याद्दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ॥

(दुःखैः संयोगः । तेन वियोगः । निखिलार्थ निवृत्तिरूपः ॥)

Yoga is defined here as redemption from (viyoga) coming into (samyoga) misery (duhkha). The word 'samyoga' does not refer only to the misery that is already arisen, but the very arousal of misery which is prevented by yoga. (Madhva, न केवलं उत्पतितं दुःखं विनाशयति । उत्पत्तिमेव निवारयति ॥)

The word 'duhkha' (misery) includes also the pleasures of sensory organs (Keśava-kāśhmīri, दुःखशब्देन दुःखोदकं विषयेन्द्रियजन्यसुखमपि गृह्यते ॥)

- 7.6 सर्वत्र समबुद्धिः ।

'sama' is "same". It has two shades of meaning. The wise man sees everything as same; he does not discriminate between one and another: he has no prejudices, likes and dislikes. The other meaning is that his mind will be the 'same'; it will not be agitated or excited; it retains composure at all times and everywhere

cf. 6,29 सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ।

Rāmānuja : सर्वभूत समानाकारं स्वात्मानं; स्वात्मसमानाकाराणि सर्वभूतानि ॥
 Veṅkaṭanātha (Brahmānanda-giri) takes the word 'samam' in the sense of the absolute, the Brahman. सर्वत्र प्रपद्ये । समं निर्विशेषं ब्रह्मैव पश्यति । The yogi recognizes the Supreme Spirit everywhere in the world.

cf. निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म ॥

9.9 cf. 7,16

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
 आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥

Four groups of devotees are enumerated here. This is according to the hierarchy of merits acquired in previous lives (Keśava-Kashmīri, सुकृततारतम्यात् 1): (i) ārta, the distressed one, like Gajendra or Draupadi, seeking succour and relief; (ii) jijñāsu, the one desirous of knowing the nature of Godhead, like Janaka and Śrutadeva (iii) arthārthi, the one looking for acquiring and possessing wealth, like Dhruva, Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa; and (iv) jñāni, the one who knows and has realized, like Sanaka, Nārada, Śuka and Bhīṣma.

These four correspond to dharma, kāma, artha and moksha, according to Nīlakaṇṭha.

Rāmānuja distinguishes between 'ārta' and 'arthārthi'. The former is one who has lost his support or wealth and wants to regain it (भ्रष्टैश्वर्यः पुनः तत्प्रप्तिकामः 1) while the latter seeks support or wealth

(अप्राप्तैश्वर्यतया ऐश्वर्यकामः ।). Jijñāsu is one who is desirous of knowing the nature of self, dissociated from prakṛti (प्रकृति वियुक्तात्मस्वरूपावाप्तीच्छुः ।), while jñāni is one who realizes his belongingness to Godhead, which is his essential and blissful nature (भगवच्छेषतैकरसात्मस्वरूपवित् ।)

9.10 cf. 7,22:

स तथा श्रद्धया युक्तः तस्याराधनमीहते ।
लभते च ततः कामान् मयैव विहितान् हि तान् ॥

Faith which is not shaken by any obstacle or by any distraction. This firm faith is provided by or strengthened by God's grace only (cf. 7,21: (अचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ।))

10.1-2 This is the first answer given to Arjuna's seven questions (8, 1-2), the first one being किं तद् ब्रह्म? followed by किं अध्यात्मम् ?

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ॥

This expression 'akshara' means imperishable, ever unchanging (sadaikarūpam) (Samkara) and also the one sacred letter Om (praṇava) (Nīlakaṇṭha) which is the symbol of Brahman. It is the own-nature of every individual (प्रतिदेहं प्रत्यगात्मभावः । Śamkara). 'Svabhāva' is inherent inalienable nature, which is not adventitious (svasya bhāvah; svo bhāvah), of the soul (jaivah, Madhva). Adhyātma is pertaining to the soul (जीवात्मानमधिकृत्य Keśava-Kāshmīri, taking the form of body, sense-faculties and mind).

‘Akshara’ refers to Viṣṇu the Brahman (Rāghavendra-tīrtha), the all-pervading and supreme spirit, which abides in the soul as its inner director (antaryāmi). The Akshara assumes the form of the soul (jīva-bhāva) in the individual.

10,3 This is the answer to the question किं कर्म?

भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥

Vedānta-deśika describes this as acquiring a particular body (physical adjunct) and getting inseparably associated with it (विशिष्टशरीरयोगः १). He explains Rāmānuja’s definition of karma as appearing as a human being and so on (मनुष्यादि भावः १). The word ‘bhūta-bhāva’ means the aspect of being a living being (bhūtānām bhāvah); individual existence. Its origination (udbhava) and so on (growth, nourishment, enlargement) are due to karma. The ‘bhāva’ includes changes like birth, growth, decay and death. This is the special action of Godhead (īśvara-karṭṛkā vyāpāra-viśeshah, Rāghavendra-tīrtha). The body is the effect (kārga), but the Godhead is the cause (kāraṇa)

10.4-5 cf. (8,4) अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः ।

The reference is to the embodied souls (सशरीरान् जीवान् अधिकृत्य) Madhva); the body is there to help the soul achieve its destiny (viz. bliss of liberation) (तदुपकारित्वेन वर्तमानं वस्तु । Rāghavendra-tīrtha). The body is thus sādhana-śarīra. It is, however, perishable, liable to mutation (ksharo bhāvah).

The soul, on the other hand, has association with the divine, with the devatā. The soul is here called 'purusha', because the body, sense-organs and the mind all become whole and functional, because of the presence of the soul (पूर्ण अनेन सर्वम् ।) It is so-called because he rests in the body पुरि शयनाद्वा । Śamkara). It is divine in the sense that its source and place of rest is the solar orb (ādityāntargata; सूर्यमण्डलमध्यवर्ती वैराजः स वै शरीरी; स वै पुरुषः । Śrīdhara). The soul is identified with Hiraṇyagarbha, virāt, Samkarshaṇa or Brahmā the creator (the cosmic soul). The reference is to the collective soul (samashṭi-jīvātmā), which helps all beings live, move and have their being (सर्वप्राणिकरणानामनुग्राहकः । Śamkara)

10,6 cf. 8,4

अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे ।

The supreme spirit is the object of all worship activities Vishṇu assuming the forms of Agni, Indra and so on receives all sacrificial offerings and provides rewards for the sacrificers (Śamkara and Madhva). He it is that inspires all actions. However, this divinity abides in the body as its soul, as the inner controller (antaryāmi) of all beings (सर्वप्राणिदेहस्थरूपेण ।)

10.7 cf. 8, 7-9

10.8 cf. 8,12:

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुद्ध्य च ।
मूर्धन्याधायाऽऽत्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥

By the practice of yoga, one should restrain the outgoing activities of all sense-organs and settle his mind exclusively in the heart. That is to say the mind must be prevented from its constructions (मनसो विषयाकारवृत्तिं निरुद्ध्य । Ānanda-giri). The heart here stands for the Supreme Spirit (Nārāyaṇa), for the entire world is absorbed in it (नारायणे हन्नामके । हियते जगत् त्वया । Madhva).

This is achieved by leading the vital current to the middle of the eyebrows (भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् । Vallabha), or to the brahmarandhra through the sushumṇā channel above the middle of the eyebrows (मूर्धन्यनाड्या सूषुम्णाख्यया मूर्ध्नि भ्रुवोर्मध्ये । Nilakaṇṭha; सर्वबाह्यक्रियाहेतुं प्राणं भ्रूमध्यादुपरि ब्रह्मरन्ध्रे सुषुम्णामार्गेणावेश्य । Keśava-kāshmīrī). This is called 'dhāraṇā' which is 'ātma-vishaya-samādhi-rūpa' (Madhusūdana-sarasvati). This is of the nature of uninterrupted mindfulness (अखण्डस्मृतिरूपयोगधारणा । Rāghavendra-tīrthā).

The restraint of the doors mentioned here is three-fold: of the external sense-functions (bāhyendriya-dvāra), of the mind (antarupalabdhi-dvāra), and of the vital current (kriyā-dvāra, sarva-bāhya-kriyā-hetu)

- 10.9 The expression त्यजन् देहं in 8,13 means only forgetting the body (देहाभिमानं त्यजन्)

10.10 cf. 8, 15-16

11.1 cf. 9,6:

यथाऽऽकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो । महान् ।
तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥

11.2 cf. 9,13:

महात्मनस्तु मे पार्थ देवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥

The great ones (viz. the devotees with great minds, (mahā-manaskāh) take their stand in a nature that is divine, viz., characterized by the preponderance of sattva-guṇa (Madhusūdana-sarasvatī). Such ones are eligible to liberation (Rāghavendra-tīrtha).

This verse speaks of the best form of worship (uttama-upāsti) where the worshipper is exclusively intent on worship (मद् भजनैकप्रयोजना Rāmāṇja), and where the Brahman alone is perceived.

Verse 14 deals with worship of intermediate merit (madhyama-bhakti), where worship is carried out by singing the praise of the Lord, bowing down and revelling in thinking about the Lord. The Mahātmās are of two types: jñānis and bhaktas (Purushottama-tīrtha). The former illustrate the uttama-upāsanā, while the latter the madhyama-upāsanā (characterized by loving devotion and ecstatic eulogy). However, verse 15 mentions another variety of

worship by jñāna-yajña. Śamkara takes this in the sense of jñāna itself being the yajña. Nīlakaṇṭha means by the expression nirvikalpa-samādhi of the yoga of Patañjali. Here the Supreme Spirit is viewed as one as well as many.

11.3 cf. 9,18:

गीतर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ।
प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥

Gatih, गम्यते मुमुक्षुभिः, the goal of those who aspire for liberation (Madhva). The destiny, प्राप्यस्थानं । (Rāmānuja). The root for words meaning movement (gamlṛ gatau) have also the sense of knowing (गत्यर्थधातूनां ज्ञानार्थत्वात् ।) and so 'gati' means "those who aspire for liberation know him" (मुमुक्षुभिरवगम्यत्वात् गतिः ।, Rāghavendra-tīrtha).

'bhartā', the nourisher, the supporter (प्रोषको धारयिता वा, Keśava-Kashmīrī)

'prabhu', lord (svāmī), master, controller (niyantā)

'sākshī', perceiver (साक्षाद् द्रष्टा, Rāmānuja); directly sees everything (साक्षादीक्षते सर्वं । Madhva);

'nivāsaḥ', the abode for all beings; of the nature of body for all beings (सर्वदेहस्वरूपात्मकः । Purushottama-tīrtha)

'śaraṇaḥ', refuge for the distressed (ārtānām) (Śamkara); where all sorrow is destroyed (शीर्यते अस्मिन् दुःखम् ।) (Śamkara); one who

secures what is good and removes what is not (इष्टस्य प्रापकः अनिष्टनिवारकः ।, Rāmānuja); the refuge for him who is frightened by transactional involvement (आश्रयः संसारभीतस्य । Madhva)

‘suhṛt’, one who helps without expecting return help or reward, प्रत्युपकारनपेक्ष्य सन्नुपकारी । Śamkara); well-wisher (hitaishī, Rāmānuja) one who helps without being asked (अप्रार्थितहितकर्ता ।, Purushottama-tīrtha), one who helps without a motive (अनिमित्तोपकारी । Madhva)

‘prabhavaḥ’, originator, creator, cause for rewards of action (Vallabha).

‘pralayaḥ’, in whom all dissolve; eliminator of sins (पापानां नाशकः । Vallabha)

‘sthānam’, place of rest; stable state between the two; (तिष्ठत्यस्मिन् । Śamkara)

(Kashmīr recension प्रभवप्रलयस्थानम् । Nīlakaṇṭha: उत्पत्तिस्थानं, लयस्थानं, स्थितिस्थानम् ।)

‘nidhānam’, where all is preserved (निधीयते अस्मिन् । Rāmānuja), where during dissolution the world subsists (संसारकाले जगदत्र निधीयते । Madhva) (प्रलयाधिष्ठानं । Venkaṭa-nātha Brahmānanda-giri); protector (रक्षकः, Purushottama-tīrtha); treasure-house ‘bijam’, seed, primary cause.

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

This is an assurance that those who are devoid of selfish desires and who have correct knowledge of the Lord (ये पुनर्निष्कामाः सम्यग्दर्शिनः ।, Śamkara) will be protected by the Lord.

Yoga-kshema is welfare; getting what one does not have but likes to have (yoga); preservation of what one has got (kshema, अप्राप्तस्य प्रापणं, तद्रक्षणं समाहारत्वादेकवद्भावः ।, Śamkara)

According to Rāmānuja, getting to Godhead (मत्प्राप्तिलक्षणं योगः) and not returning to transactional existence (अपुनरावृत्तिरूपं क्षेमः) Rāghavendra-tīrtha: अप्राप्तस्य प्राप्तिः मोक्षरूपः । तस्य अनन्तत्वं क्षेमः ॥ Keśava-kāshmīri : yoga is providing all values of life till liberation and kshema is securing it with no danger of its being lost (मत्प्राप्तिपर्यन्त-सर्वपुरुषार्थ प्रापणं योगः । तत्संरक्षणं पुनस्तदपायशंकावर्जनम् ।) According to Śrīdhara, yoga is benefits of normal transactional living (dhanādi-lābham), and kshema is liberation from transactional existence, even when such liberation is not sought after (मोक्षाख्यं च तैरप्रार्थितमपि ।)

(cf. Mahābhārata, Śānti-parva, 348, 72

मनीषिणो हि ऋषयो ये केचिद्यतयो मोक्षधर्मिणः ।
तेषां विच्छिन्नतृष्णानां योगक्षेमवहो हरिः ॥)

11.6 cf. 10,10:

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

The verse describes the reward for earnest worship with loving devotion (उपासनायाः फलमाह । Nīlakaṇṭha). Buddhi-yoga is the reward. By this, the devotee is assured that he will realize (उपयान्ति, प्रतिपद्यन्ते, coming near, साक्षात्कुर्वन्ति) the Supreme Spirit. Buddhi-yoga is complete, correct and comprehensive knowledge (सम्यग्दर्शनम् । Śaṃkara); it is the transformation of the inner constitution as a result of the attainment of the ultimate owing to meditational absorption (ध्यानजन्यप्रकर्षकाष्ठागतान्तःकरणपरिणामः । Ānanda-giri). It is the state of maturity or ripening, विपाक दशापन्नम् । Rāmānuja). According to Keśava Kāshmirī, it is jñāna-yoga.

11.7 cf. 10,11:

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थं अहमज्ञानजं तमः ।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥

Madhusūdana-sarasvatī introduces this verse as indicating the intermediary reward precedent to self-realization as a result of the promised buddhi-yoga:

दीयमानस्य बुद्धियोगस्यात्मप्राप्तौ फले
मध्यवर्तिनं व्यापारमाह ।

The *tamas* or darkness is of the nature of delusions born out of ignorance of reality (Śamkara); the opposite of correct knowledge and inclination towards objects in the world (Rāmānuja), and bondage of the nature of stresses like pleasure and pain (Rāghavendra-tīrtha). This darkness is removed by the lamp of wisdom, which abides in the very nature of the self (viz. the *buddhi*) (cf. Keśava-kāshmīri, बुद्धिवृत्तौ स्थितः ।; Madhusūdana-sarasvati, आत्माकारान्तः करणवृत्तौ स्थितः ।; Rāghavendra-tīrtha, तदीय चित्तवृत्तिस्थः ।)

11.8 cf. 10,20:

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ॥

The word ‘āśaya’ here, where the Supreme Self is said to abide, has been explained as “inside, in the heart” (*antah hṛdi*) by Śamkara; Rāmānuja also says मम शरीरभूतानां हृदये आत्मतया अवस्थितः ॥ Āśaya is taken in the sense of “support”, “ground” (*ādhāra*): आत्मा हि नाम शरीरस्य सर्वात्मना आधारो नियन्ता शेषी च ॥ Nīlakaṇṭha means by the word the one unitary resting place like tank for water, आशय एकीभावस्थानं जलानां कासार इव ॥

It has further been explained (Śamkarānanda):

आ समन्तात् सर्वतः शेते शयान इव नैश्वल्येन आत्मा तिष्ठति ॥ It is synonymous with heart-cave (*buddhi-guhā*), where the *ātman* abides in his own nature and as an uninvolved witness and light to all the activities going on in the body, sense-organs and mind (यत्र स आशयः बुद्धिगुहा तत्र स्वरूपत्वेन साक्षित्वेन सर्वप्रकाशकत्वेन तिष्ठति ॥)

- 11.9 verses 19 to 42 of Chapter X enumerate the principal vibhūtiḥ, with the pratijñā हन्त ने कथयिष्यामि दिव्या ह्यत्मविभूतयः ॥ vibhūti is a term used in Yoga and refers to unusual, unique and wonderful but natural powers of the Supreme Spirit, on which everything depends for both existence and activity. So Rāmānuja:

भक्तियोगानुपपत्तये तद्विद्वद्वये च सकलेतरविलक्षणेन स्वाभाविकेन भगवदसाधारणेन कल्याणगुणगणेन सह भगवतः सर्वात्मत्वम्; तत एव तद्व्यतिरिक्तस्य कृत्स्नस्य चिदचिदात्मकस्य वस्तुजातस्य तच्छरीरतया तदायत्तस्वरूपस्थितिप्रवृत्तित्वमुक्तम् ॥

These are the most auspicious attributes of the Lord; they are extraordinary and unique for him, and quite distinct from what is found in the world. They affirm that the Lord is all; everything in the world, alive or inert, is God only, the soul for the world that is his body. The vibhūtiḥ are mentioned here only to engender and promote the yoga of loving devotion.

Ānandagiri says that these verses point out the nature of Brahman, in his transactional world-form as well as in his own transcendental form (sopādhika and nirupādhika). The nature of consciousness that is the real form of the Supreme Spirit (chidrūpa) is to be meditated upon (dhyeya) and realized (jñeya).

- 11.10 All this endless vibhūti, (नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां ।) which encompasses the entire world, however, is but one small part of

the infinite Supreme Spirit (एकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ।). As Rāghavendra-tīrtha points out:

अनन्तांशमध्ये एकांशेनैव व्याप्य स्थितः ।
सर्वांशेन व्याप्तुं जगत्सहस्रमपि नालम् ॥

The whole universe is but one tiny fragment of the immeasurable and infinite Brahman, who supports the universe pervading it. To cover the inexhaustible powers of the Brahman, even thousands of universes would not be enough.

- 12.1 Chapter 11 reveals the visva-rūpa of Yogeśvara-Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna longs to see actually the myriad forms of the Supreme Spirit (3):

द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरम् ॥

Arjuna knows that Kṛṣṇa is Yogeśvara and it is therefore that he requests Kṛṣṇa to reveal the viśva-rūpa (11,4):

योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयाऽऽत्मानमव्ययम् ॥

By yogeśvara is meant the lord of the yoga of the yogins (Śamkara). Śamkarānanda says that the yogeśvara is capable of making even the non-yogis adepts in yoga (अयोगिनमपि योगीकर्तुं शक्नोषि ।). Kṛṣṇa is yogeśvara in the sense that he is the master of all techniques (Rāghavendra-tīrtha, सर्वोपायपते ।)

Then Kṛṣṇa reveals the all-form presentation. As Nilakaṇṭha points out, this viśva-rūpa is the revelation of the inscrutable and inexhaustible power of the Supreme Spirit, the real nature of whom, however, is beyond even this:

विश्वरूपं मायामयं, वास्तवं तु रूपं मायातीतम् ।

It is important in the context to note that Arjuna beheld viśva-rūpa while gazing at Kṛṣṇa, the two-armed human form in the chariot; but he did not see the two-armed human form of Kṛṣṇa in the viśva-rūpa:

पार्थो रथस्थं द्विभुजस्वरूपं ददर्श देहं खलु विश्वरूपम् ।
न विश्वरूपे ददृशे रथस्थं यद्विश्वरूपस्य निदानमेतत् ॥

In response to Arjuna's request, Kṛṣṇa revealed the visva-rūpa.

In Sañjaya's words -

दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥१९॥

This viśvarupa is described as 'māyā-vilāsa-vijṛmbhitam', the wondrous spectacle of the play of the inscrutable power of the Lord. Mahābhārata (Udyoga-parva, 5,131) refers to another occasion where Kṛṣṇa presented this viśva-rūpa in the assembly of Dhṛta-rāshṭra. This was witnessed by Droṇa, Bhīshma and Vidura as they

were provided with divine sight; others were frightened and closed their eyes:

तं दृष्ट्वा घोरमात्मानं केशवस्य महात्मनः ।
 न्यमीलयन्त नेत्राणि राजानस्तत्र अचेतसः ॥
 ऋते द्रोणं च भीष्मं च विदुरं च महामतिम् ।
 तत्रायं च महाभागां ऋषींश्चैव तपोधनान् ॥
 प्रादात्तेषां च भगवान् दिव्यं चक्षुर्जनार्दनः ॥

In such a wondrous sight can be beheld, there must be very powerful eyes indeed, and they can be there only by providential grace.

Vāmana-purāṇa says:

तेजोरूपं परं ब्रह्म निगमेषूपवर्णितम् ।
 अपरोक्षीकृतं ज्ञानचक्षुषाऽत्रार्जुनेन तत् ॥
 इति केचिद्वर्णयन्ति प्रकृते तन्न सङ्गतम् ।
 सत्त्वस्यैव प्रकाशोऽसौ यमलोकत फाल्गुणः ॥
 चक्षुषा चार्मणेनैव लोकेन यदलोकि तत् ।
 न हि यातीन्द्रियपथं निर्गुणं ब्रह्म कस्यचित् ॥
 चक्षुस्त्वेकपदे विश्वं द्रष्टुं सहजमक्षमम् ।
 इति दिव्यमदादन्यद्दयालुर्यदुपुङ्गवः ॥
 ददर्श स तदाश्चर्यं युगपद्विविधं च यत् ।
 त्रिगुणं विश्वमेवेदं तद्धि न ब्रह्म निर्गुणम् ॥
 चिन्त्यते मनसा तेजश्चक्षुषा दृश्यतेऽपि च ।
 ब्रह्माचिन्त्यमदृश्यं च तेजोरूपं कथं नु तत् ॥

Some people explain that Arjuna beheld the *viśva-rūpa* through the eye of wisdom. But in the context, Arjuna had the wondrous sight by the predominance of *sattva*. What can be seen by the physical eye is not the Brahman, who is devoid of all *guṇas*, forms and details. And it is impossible for one to perceive the entire and manifold universe at one glance. So Arjuna was provided with divine vision, by means of which all various details of the immense universe could be beheld at once. The universe is an expression of the three *guṇas*; but the Brahman is beyond the three *guṇas*. How can the Brahman be seen by the eyes, or reflected upon by the mind?

In *Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says it is impossible for Arjuna to behold the *viśva-rūpa* with his bare eyes; and therefore provides him with divine eyes (11,8):

न तु मां शक्यते द्रष्टुं अनेनैव चक्षुषा ।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥

The 'divinity' of the vision that was conferred upon Arjuna consists in its being supernormal (*aprākṛta*, *Rāmānuja*), unworldly (*alaukika*, *Vallabha*). It is capable of perceiving the forms that are supernatural (अप्राकृतरूपदर्शनक्षमम् । *Keśava-kāshmīri*). It is of the nature of knowledge (ज्ञानात्मकं चक्षुः. *Purushottama-tīrtha*); the power to perceive directly the Supreme Spirit (दर्शनशक्तिं, *Rāghavendra-tīrtha*).

The 'Yoga' which is concerned with 'īśvara' (Godhead, Lord) is what is to be prehended by the divine eye. The text describes Kṛṣṇa as the great *Yogeśvara* (11,9 एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन् महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ॥),

Lord of yoga. Śamkara takes 'yogam-aiśvaram' in the sense of unexcelled yogic power (योगशक्त्यतिशयम् १); Nīlakaṇṭha means by the word the power to support the entire universe (producing it, pervading it, governing it, sustaining it, and finally withdrawing it) (विश्वाश्रयत्वलक्षणं सामर्थ्यम् १). It is the yoga that illustrates the relation between the Lord and the soul (ईश्वरभूतात्मसंबन्धियोगं १, Rāghavendra-tīrtha). It is what lets us know how the Supreme Spirit becomes the Lord (ईश्वरत्वकारणं योगम् १ Śamkarānanda)

This yoga is later called ātma-yoga (11,47, मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् १). It is the Lord's own power as the ātman of all things and beings (Rāmānuja). It is not to be regarded as merely resulting from deep meditation of the devotee (Vedānta-deśika). It is the Lord's own power of projection, which is unique to the Lord (Madhusūdana-sarasvatī, असाधारणात् निजसामर्थ्यात् १). Śrīdhara and Śamkarānanda take this yoga in the sense of the power to produce yoga-māya, or māyā-yoga.

12,3 cf.11,54:

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परन्तप ॥

By loving devotion alone that is firm, uninterrupted, undistracted and single-minded (अव्यभिचारितया अखण्डया १, Nīlakaṇṭha), the seeing of viśva-rūpa can become possible. Viśvarūpa is 'sādhya' (what is to be achieved or accomplished), and loving devotion is the sādhanā

(means of accomplishment) (Keśava-Kashmīri, साधनसाध्यसंबन्धरूपतया मदेकनिष्ठया ।). Apart from the Supreme Spirit, nothing whatever becomes the object of such loving devotion (Rāghavendra-tīrtha, अनन्यसाधारणया ।)

- (i) 'jñātum': to know (by scriptural study, शास्त्रतः, Śamkara); correctly, the Supreme Spirit. This word goes with 'tattvena', as it is really याथार्थ्यस्वरूपेण ।)
- (ii) 'drashtum': to perceive, to directly experience the nature of the Supreme Spirit, unworldly and transcendental (अलौकिक भाव ।) This also goes with 'tattvena': by the standard order of śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana (Veṅkaṭa-Brahmānanda-giri). If 'jñātum' involves scriptural study (śāstrataḥ), 'drashtum' is by meditation (dhyānataḥ) (Nīlakaṇṭha).
- (iii) 'praveshtum': to enter into the Supreme Spirit, becoming one with it (तादात्म्येन, Śrīdhara), and this is liberation (मोक्षमेकीभावलक्षणं, जीवन्मुक्तिं); सायुज्यं प्राप्तुम्, Rāghavendra-tīrtha). Vallabha, however, takes this word in the sense of 'entering into ones own heart, where the Lord abides (हृदि प्रवेष्टुम् ।).

12,4 cf. 12,2:

मय्योवेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥

After *viśva-rūpa-darśana*, the word ‘*mayi*’ refers to the Lord who is *viśva-rūpa* (*Śamkara* मयि विश्वरूपे ।); in the blessed *Vāsudeva* who is all, and who is the Brahman with cognizable attributes (*भगवति वासुदेवे सगुणे ब्रह्मणि* । *Madhusūdana-sarasvati*).

Nilakaṇṭha takes the word ‘*āveśya*’ in the sense of “entering into” (*praveśya*), in accordance with 11,54 (ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं प्रवेष्टुम्). Having placed the mind entirely and comfortably in the Supreme Spirit (*समाधाय* ।, *Śamkara*); making it perfectly one-pointed (*एकाग्रं कृत्वा* । *Keśava-kāshmīri*); by engaging oneself uninterruptedly (*nitya-yukta*) in *Karma-yoga* and *dhyāna-yoga* (*Rāghavendra-tīrtha*).

- 12,5-9 verses 12,8 to 12,11 describe the methods to be adopted in order by the devotees. (i) The best is to establish the mind firmly in the Supreme Spirit and dwell in Him. (ii) If it is not possible to fix the mind firmly in the Supreme Spirit, unremitting effort must be made to seek and find the Supreme Spirit. (iii) If such effort too is not possible, one must engage himself in activities connected with worship of, and service to, the Godhead, without a selfish motive, dedicating the work to the Godhead. (iv) If, however, even this is not possible, one must at least give up attachment to the fruits of the actions he engages himself in, with full self-restraint.

- (i) मय्येव मन आधत्स्व । मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ॥
- (ii) अभ्यासयोगेन मामिच्छ आप्तुम् ॥
- (iii) मत्कर्मपरमो भव ॥
- (iv) सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥

- 12.10 Dharmyāmṛtam is dealt with in verses 13 to 20 of the 12th chapter. The expression occurs in the final verse, which is in the nature of phala-stuti (12,20):

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
श्रद्धधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥

Whoever do reverence, filled with faith, to these deathless words of virtuous living, spoken by the Supreme Spirit, holding the Supreme Spirit as their ultimate object of achievement will become dearly loved by the Supreme Spirit.

Dharmya is whatever that is in perfect and lasting association with dharma (धर्मादिनपेतं धर्म्यं ।, Śamkara); 'amṛta' is deathlessness, immortality, ambrosia, nectar, signifying what is unending, unchanging. Dharma is virtue, righteousness, the sustaining power of life; it also means factors of existence, details of living, nature of objects. (तदमृतं च तदमृतहेतुत्वात् । Śamkara). Śrīdhara explains 'dharmyāmṛta' as the immortal factors that generate the Lord's grace (प्रसादजनकान् धर्मानाह ।).

Vedānta-deśika describes it as referring to sādhana, the method by which the ultimate is realized. Rāmānuja identifies it with the path of loving devotion which is both the means and the end (प्राप्यसमं प्रापकं भक्तियोगम् ।). Madhva, however, takes the word 'dharma' to mean Viṣṇu, the Supreme Spirit; whatever is related with him is 'dharmya'. This is 'amṛta' in the sense that it eliminates transactional

involvement (like death) (धर्मो विष्णुः । तद्विषयं धर्म्यम् । मृत्यादि संसारनाशकं च ।). Rāghavendra-tīrtha explains that Viṣṇu is 'dharma' because he supports the entire existence; whatever is the means of reaching Him (by worship etc.) is 'dharmya'. It is amṛta in the sense that it leads to liberation which is deathless (moksha):

धारकत्वाद्धर्मः विष्णुः । तदुपासनाङ्गत्वादुपचारेण
धर्मसाधनं धर्म्यम् । अमृतशब्दितमुक्तिसाधनममृतम् ॥

The section known as Dharmyāmṛta enumerates the details of sādhanā which makes the devotee dear to the Lord:

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥13॥

He feels no hatred for any living being; he is friendly and compassionate. He is devoid of selfishness and arrogance. He is the same in sorrow as in happiness. He has fortitude to bear suffering for long

सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥14॥

He is ever content, composed, integrated and earnest; he is firm of purpose; he devotes unswervingly his mind and soul to the Supreme Spirit of whom he is a loving devotee. Him the Supreme Spirit loves.

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।

हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥15॥

From him people do not get anxious; nor does he become anxious from the world around him. He is free from exaltation, impatience, fear and excitement. He is the one whom the Supreme Spirit likes

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥16॥

He does not expect anything from anyone. He is pure of heart, and efficient. He is indifferent to what he gets, and he is free from worries. He gives up all selfish enterprises. Such a loving devotee becomes dear to the Supreme Spirit.

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न कांक्षति ।

शुभाशुभ परित्यागी भक्तिमान् यः स मे प्रियः ॥17॥

He does not feel elated (getting what is pleasant), nor depressed and annoyed (getting something unpleasant or disliked). He does not grieve, nor does he desire this or that. He puts away both pleasant and the unpleasant. Such a one having loving devotion becomes dear to the Supreme Spirit.

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥18॥

He is the same to the enemy as to the friend. He is the same in honour, disgrace, cold, heat, happiness and misery. He puts away attachment.

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिमौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमति भक्तिमान् मे प्रियो नरः ॥19॥

He is the same when praised or blamed. He is silent in speech and thought. He is content with whatever comes his way. He does not get rooted anywhere. He is steady of mind and has loving devotion. He becomes dear to the Supreme Spirit.

ये तु धर्म्यामृतामिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
श्रद्धधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥20॥

Those loving devotees who do reverence to these immortal words spoken by the Supreme Spirit, pertaining to virtuous living, and puts faith in the words, making the Supreme Spirit their ultimate goal, are indeed exceedingly dear to the Supreme Spirit.

13.1 cf.13.2:

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥

The body includes sense-organs, mind, ego and so on. It is prakṛti. The expression 'kshetra' means the field of experience; from क्षिनिवासगत्योः, it signifies the place where the Supreme Spirit resides (भगवदावासस्थानत्वात् क्षीयते स्थीयते अत्र भगवता ।, Rāghavendra-tīrtha). Nilakaṇṭha takes the word in the sense of both hurting the self by avidyā and saving it by vidyā (क्षिणोति आत्मानमविद्यया त्राति तं विद्यया च ।).

Veṅkaṭa-Brahmānanda-giri describes it as a field in which the crop of transmigrational existence takes root and grows (संसारस्य प्ररोहभूमिः ॥).

Keśava-kāshmīri gives the analogy of the farm and the farmer to drive home the distinction between the body and the soul (क्षेत्रात् कृषीवलवत् अत्यन्तविलक्षणः ॥). The soul is there, quite distinct from the body (अनेन देहातिरिक्तः क्षेत्रज्ञः कश्चिदस्तीति सूचितम् ॥)

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ॥ (13,3)

The Supreme-Spirit is the field knower (kshetrajña) in all the body-fields. Here the particle अपि is taken to refer to the field (क्षेत्रमपि) by Rāmānuja, and to all the fields (सर्वक्षेत्रेषु) by Madhva. Nīlakaṇṭha takes it as meaning “and” as the Supreme Spirit abides not only in each individual body, but in all the bodies collectively (परमेश्वरमेव उभयरूपेण सन्तम् ॥). Also क्षेत्रज्ञं च क्षेत्रं अपि मां विद्धीति द्वयोरपि ब्रह्मप्रतिपादनं युक्तम् । सर्वं ब्रह्मैव ॥ (Śamkarānanda).

- 13.2 This knowledge, which pertains to the distinction (viveka) between the field (kshetra) and the knower of the field (kshetrajña), is correct and comprehensive (samyak-jñāna). And this is the knowledge that must be had (upādeyam jñānam) (Rāmānuja). The knowledge of the distinction between prakṛti and puruṣa is indicated here; and this knowledge is the final means of salvation (मुक्तेः परमकारणम् ॥). Madhusūdana-sarasvatī also describes this knowledge as real knowledge because it brings about liberation (मोक्षसाधनत्वात् ॥)

Madhusūdana-sarasvatī points out (13,7) that the knower-of-the field (kshetrajña) is the uninvolved witness (sākshi) of the field.

cf. Chhāndogya-upanishad (8,3,2):

तद्यथापि हिरण्यनिधिं निहितमक्षेत्रज्ञा उपर्युपरि
सञ्चरन्तो न विन्देयुः एवमेवेमाः सर्वाः प्रजाः अहरहर्गच्छन्त्य
एतं ब्रह्मलोकं न विन्दन्ति । अनृतेन हि प्रत्यूढाः ॥

- 13.4-5 A distinction has been made in the Gītā between jñāna (knowledge), which is अध्यात्मज्ञान and तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शन (13,12) and jñeya (the object of such knowledge, what must be known for the sake of liberation), which is अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म, abiding inside and outside of all beings, subtle, far and near uninvolved and devoid of guṇas, all-pervasive, all-encompassing, total and undivided although dwelling in all divided entities, sustaining, generating and devouring all (13, 13-17). The jñeya has been identified with the Supreme Self (paramātmā) in the body itself:

परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन् पुरुषः परः ॥23॥

Even though he abides in the body, the Supreme Self is altogether untained by the body, its guṇas and its activities, like the subtle sky that is all-pervasive (33) :

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्मादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।
सर्वत्र स्थितो देहे तथाऽऽत्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥

The subtlety of the sky is in its nature of being undivided, unseen, untouched and uninjured (अप्रतिहतस्वभावात् ।, Ānanda-giri); असङ्गस्वभावात् । Madhusūdhana-sarasvati; अखण्डत्वात् । Vallabha; (अप्रतिघत्वात् । Rāghavendra-tīrtha).

Even as the one sun lights up this whole world, even so the knower of the field illumines the entire field that is the body (3 4):

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।
क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥

13.6 cf 14, 5 :

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥

The verse indicates the cause and nature of bondage, so that one who knows that he is bound may adopt the means of getting out of it (बन्धप्रकारं दर्शयति साधनानुष्ठानाय ।, Madhva). Sattva, rajas and tamas are the three guṇas and they constitute the prakṛti (here kshetra). (त्रिगुणात्मकप्रकृतिः ।, Rāghavendra-tīrtha). They emanate from the māyā-power of the Supreme Self. (Śamkara, also Veṅkaṭa-Brahmānanda-giri, प्रकृतिरीश्वरशक्तिर्माया ।).

The bondage is of the nature of experiencing happiness (sukha), misery (duhkha), delusion (moha) and so on. It is like the calf being tied to a peg, the guṇas being ropes (स्थूणायां वत्समिव, रशनाभूताः।,

Nīlakaṇṭha). They project ownership of the body, the sense-organs, mind and ego; the appropriation of them, and love for them is bondage (देहतदनुबन्धिषु अभिनिवेशापादनेन ।, Keśava-kāshmiri).

The three guṇas are dealt with in detail in this chapter (6-18).

13.7 Cf. 14, 19 and 20 :

गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोधिगच्छति ॥19॥
गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन् देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥20॥

13,8 verses 22-25 of the chapter tells us how one may transcend the hold of the three guṇas (गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥) :

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।
न द्वेष्टि सम्प्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि कांक्षति ॥22॥

The guṇa productions that arise on their own (स्वतः प्राप्तानि । Śrīdhara; संस्कारानुगुणं प्राप्तानि ।, Keśava-kāshmiri; प्राप्तेषु । Śamkarānanda; यथायथं प्राप्तानि ।; स्वसामग्रीवशादुद्भूतानि । Madhūsudana-sarasvatī) are not hated by him; nor the guṇa-productions that are withdrawn from him (विनिवृत्तानि ।; तदपायहेतुवशान्निवृत्तानि । Keśava-kāshmiri) are longed for.

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।
गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥23॥

One remains as if he is indifferent to what comes or goes (remains a non-participant observer or witness, neither loves nor hates, Madhusūdana-sarasvatī; स्तब्ध इव वर्तते । Nīlkaṇṭha); he is unshaken by the activities of the guṇas; he knows full well that the guṇas are there (for whatever happens); and therefore he is unperturbed.

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाश्चनः ।

तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्य निन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥23॥

He is the same in misery as in happiness; he abides in himself (स्वस्मिन्नात्मनि तिष्ठति ।; आत्मस्थः । न बहिर्मुखः ।; स्वेनैव स्वेच्छयैव तिष्ठति ।); a lump of mud, stone and gold are all the same to him (हेयोपादेयरहितत्वात् ।). What is pleasant and what is unpleasant are to him alike. He is self-composed, and treats blame and praise alike.

(cf. सुखदुःखयोः समत्वं नाम चित्तस्येष्टानिष्टभावनावैधुर्यमेव । तदेव समचित्तत्वम् । स्वस्थः सर्वावस्थासु सर्वदा स्वस्मिन्नेव ब्रह्मणि तिष्ठति । ब्रह्मनिष्ठस्य विषमबुद्धिर्न सम्भवति कारणाभावात् ॥)

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥25॥

He treats alike honour and dishonour; he is the same with enemies as with friends, He abandons all enterprises in wordly life as well as for spiritual welfare (ऐहिकामुष्मिकार्थान् आरम्भान् क्रियाकलापान् । Keśava-kashmīri; केनचित्प्रयोजनेनापि अवैष्णवसर्वकर्मारम्भमकुर्वन् । Rāghavendra-tīrtha; देहधारणमात्रनिमित्तव्यतिरेकेण । Ānanda-giri). Such a one is known to have transcended the hold of guṇas.

13.10 cf.14.26 :

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।
स गुणान् समतीत्यैतान् ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥

The word mām is explained by Madhusūdana-saraswati : सर्वभूतान्तर्यामिणं मायया क्षेत्रज्ञतामागतं परमानन्दघनम् ।; Kesava-kāśmiri takes the word in the sense of निरस्तसमस्तदोषगन्धम् ।; Vallabha पुरुषोत्तमम् । Nīlkaṇṭha प्रत्यगात्मानम् ।

The loving devotion (bhakti) which is held out here as the technique (yoga, upāya) must be unremitting, undistracted unwavering exclusive, firmly settled without a break (all of which meanings are contained in the expression अव्यभिचारेण) (एकान्त्यविशिष्टेन ।, Rāmānujā; अनन्यात्मकेन । Purushottama-tīrtha; वृत्त्यन्तरानन्तरितेन ।, Nīlkaṇṭha; नित्यभक्त्याख्योपायेन । Rāghavendra-tīrtha).

One who contemplates (sevate) on the Supreme Spirit (सदाऽनुसन्दधाति ।, Ānanda-gīri; चिन्तयति । Madhusūdana-sarasvati; ध्यायति । Nīlkaṇṭha) with such one-pointed and constant loving devotion will overcome the guṇas and prepare himself for the state of Brahman (viz. liberation ब्रह्मभावनाय मोक्षाय; Rāmānujā; भूयाय भवाय । ब्रह्मवत् प्रकृतिवद्भगवत्प्रियत्वं ब्रह्मभूयम् । Madhva; ब्रह्मवद्भावः ब्रह्मभूयः । Jayatīrtha; ब्रह्मशब्दोऽत्र चित्प्रकृतिपरः । चित्प्रकृतिवद्भूयं भवनं ब्रह्मभूयम् । सा यथा विष्णुप्रिया तथा गुणातीतोऽपि विष्णुप्रियो भवतीत्यर्थः ॥ Rāghavendra-tīrtha).

14.1 cf 15.1-4

There is a forceful imagery of the sacred Aśvatha tree for illustrating transmigrational existence. Its roots are above, and branches below. Its branches are spread below and above. Its leaves are the Vedic passages. Its branches are well-nourished by the guṇas; its twigs are the objects of the world. Below, its roots are inseparably connected, proliferating. The human world therefore is a network of activities. It is firmly established in human consciousness; and so deeply in fact that no form of it can be comprehended, for it changes constantly. It has no foundation, but it is endless and beginningless! The tree's roots are firmly fixed. But they must be cut (छित्त्वा) with the stout stick of detachment, and one must search for that state reaching which one does not return to this transactional existence.

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधः शाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्यम् ।

छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥1॥

अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखाः गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ।

अधश्च मूलान्यनुसन्ततानि कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥2॥

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते नान्तो न चादिर्न च सम्प्रतिष्ठा ।

अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूलम् असङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥3॥

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं यस्मिन् गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।

तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥4॥

The imagery (rūpaka) of the tree, especially aśvattha is ancient. We find it in the Kāthopaniṣad (6, 1). But it signifies here the bright and endless Brahman, in whom all the worlds are contained and which none can transcend :

ऊर्ध्वमूलोऽवाक्छाख एषोऽश्वत्थः मनातनः ।
 तदेव शुक्रं तद् ब्रह्म तदेवाऽमृतमुच्यते ।
 तस्मिँल्लोकाः श्रिताः सर्वे तदु नात्येति कश्चन ॥

The idea of roots above and branches below is to be found even in R̥gveda (1, 24, 7) :

अबुध्ने राजा वरुणो वनस्योर्ध्वं स्तूपं ददते पूतदक्षः ।
 निचीनाः स्युरूपरि बुध्न एषामस्मे अन्तर्निहिताः केतवः ॥

In this passage, the luminous Varuṇa (the encompasser, coverer) is described as pure of might (pūta-daksha). He settled himself in the bottomless abyss (abudhne, atmosphere or firmament which has no base, antariksha, mūla-rahite) and holds aloft (ūrdhvam dadate) the tree's high crown (vanasya stūpam). The word 'vana' means tree, and it also means most adorable (vananīya) light. So the words 'vanasya stūpam' signify heap of light. The rays of this light (or the branches of the tree) spread downward (nichīnāh syuh); but their roots (or base) are above (upari budhna). The branches (or the rays of light) are hidden in us (asme antarnihitāh) as the source of our existence (ketavah).

The idea of roots above (urdhva-mūla) is synonymous with 'abudhna', the atmosphere, which is above the earth. And branches below (avāk-chchhākha) signify the earth. In another Ṛgvedic passage (10, 31, 7) there is a problem posed : which indeed is that tree, that tree-trunk out of which heaven and earth were fashioned :

किं स्विद्वनं कः ३ स वृक्ष आस यतो द्यावापृथिवी निष्ठतक्षुः ॥

It is out of this atmosphere (abudna), which is the "bottomless abyss."

- 14.2 The Aśvattha illustrates transmigrational existence (samsāra), which is of the nature of māya (Śamkara, संसारं मायामयं वृक्षमाहुः ।). The devotee would have to cut the roots of this tree so that it will not grow again. And having cut, he must transcend the limitations of the tree and rise to the state of being one with the Brahman (15, 8) :

ततः पदं परिमार्गितव्यं यस्मिन् गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ॥

This state (cf. Vedic तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ।) is described as पदनीयं ब्रह्म श्रुतिप्रसिद्धम् । (Nīlakaṇṭha), मूलभूतं पदं वस्तु वैष्णवम् । (Śrīdhara) and तत् ऊर्ध्वपदेन प्रकृतं ब्रह्म । (Rāghavendra-tīrtha). The state of oneness with the absolute and ultimate reality, which is the source indeed of the universe which arises and disappears causing manifold mundane stresses, is to be sought after (परिमार्गितव्यं, अन्वेषणीयं, known ज्ञातव्य)

by the standard techniques of scriptural study (śravaṇa) earnest reflection (manana) and yogic absorption (nididhyāsana). (Samkarananda: पदं परतत्त्वं । श्रुतियुक्तिभिः सम्यग् विचारणीयम् ।) (Rāghavendra-tīrtha: तत् परं परतत्त्वविषयविमर्शादनन्तरं । तत् ऊर्द्धादिपदेन प्रकृतं ब्रह्म । श्रवणादिना विषयीकर्तव्यम् । जगद्वैलक्षण्यज्ञाने सति एव तत् स्वरूपं अन्वेष्टुं शक्यते ॥). Once the devotee enters into this state, he is utterly emancipated ; there is no more return to transactional existence.

- 14.3 The transactional world is born and it dies; it undergoes constant change. But its source, the Brahman (tad vishṇoh paramam padam) is without beginning or end; there is no change in it. There is no coming and going in it. It is free from all transactional characters.

14.4-7 cf 15, 15:

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि संनिविष्टः ।

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ॥

Hṛt or the heart is the centre of the being, where all the constituent factors of existence are gathered up. It is not to be mistaken for the physical heart. The heart where the Supreme Spirit dwells is identified with the atmosphere or midregion (antarīksha or ākāśa). Its lower half (aparārdha) is inside the body, while its upper half (parārdha) is situated above the crown of the head (atyatishṭhad daśāṅgulam; identified with ushṇīsha-kamala), and thus above the body (śarīrād-utthāya). The former is saṁguṇa-brahman, and the latter nirguṇa-brahman or para-brahma.

The former is purusha (puri śete, dwells in the body), and that the latter is 'uttamah purushah' (the purusha higher up) or Purushottama (15, 17). It is situated higher up, hence called 'Kūṭastha'.

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ॥

The injunction in 14.4 (ततः पदं तत् परिमार्जितव्यम्) refers to this purusha, who is described as primal, primaeval purusha ('ādyam purusham', 15, 4); it is indeed that state having reached which, there is no return to the transactional world (यास्मिन् गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।) This is what the Veda speaks of as तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ॥

The Gīta mentions that there are two purushas, the lower (apara) and the higher (para). The one mutable and bodily (kshara) and the other beyond it (akshara) (15, 16), both being involved in the transactional existence (loke):

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षराक्षर एव च ॥

The lower purusha is the soul (jīva), which is distinct and unique for each physical body: it is multiple (sarvāṇi bhūtāni). The higher purusha (kūṭastha) is but unitary; it is the same for all beings. The Gītā speaks of a purusha other than (anyah, 15, 17) these two. He is 'Purusha' in the sense that it fills all, completes all (pūrṇam anena jagat; पृ पालनपूर्णयोः ।) He is not involved in the transactional world at all. He is the lord (īśvara) unchanging (avyaya) and encompasses and supports the three realms (earth, atmosphere and sky).

15.9-10 This knowledge of the Supreme Spirit (purushottama) is described as the most secret of the scriptural teachings (गुह्यतमं शास्त्रम् ।) And Keśava-kāśhmīri explains that this is the brief form of all the essential teachings of the Gīta (सर्वगीतार्थसंक्षेपरूपम् ।). Here is the culmination of Gītā-śāstra in this chapter (Śamkara, गीताख्यं समस्तं शास्त्रमुच्यते । तथाप्ययमध्यायः इह शास्त्रम् ।).

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमदमुक्तं मयाऽनघ ।

एतद् बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान् स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥15, 20॥

The knowledge of the lower purusha (jīva-bhūta) who is kshara is guhya (the hidden secret teaching); and knowledge of the higher purusha (kūṭastha), who is akshara, is guhya-tara (comparative degree, more hidden or secret teaching), while knowledge of purushottama (uttama-purusha, īśvara, paramātmā) is guhya-tama (superlative degree, most hidden or secret teaching). It teaches about the Supreme Spirit without any limitations whatever (निर्विशेषं परं तत्त्वं शास्ति । Śamkarānanda). Another explanation is this. What has been taught about karma (karma-tattva) is guhya; the teachings regarding worship involving mind and loving devotion (upāsana-tattva) is guhya-tara; and the teaching of the Supreme Spirit (paramātmā-tattva) involving knowledge is guhya-tama. The three books of the Gītā accordingly deal with Karma, Bhakti and Jñāna respectively.

Becoming awake to this Supreme Reality (buddhvā), one becomes endowed with buddhi (cf. बुद्धियोगं ददामि ते । बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ ।).

Getting access to buddhi is the task meant to be accomplished in life; this life with a body, sense-organs and mind is instrumental for this accomplishment (sādhana-śarīra). so when one becomes equipped with the faculty of awareness of reality (viz., pure consciousness), he has done his job, he feels fulfilled. Nothing more needs to be done by him.

- 16.1 The chapter XVI in Gītā deals in detail with the nature of all beings, divine (daivī), demonic (āsurī) diabolical (rākshasī), mentioned already in chapter IX (Śamkara). The daivī-nature is meant for liberation from transmigrational existence (samsāra-mokshāya), while the other natures makes for bondage (nibandhāya). The former is to be accepted and cultivated (ādānāya), and the latter shunned and eliminated (parivarjanāya) (Śamkara दैवी आसुरी राक्षसी चेति प्राणिनां प्रकृतयो नवमेऽध्याये सूचिताः । तासां विस्तरेण प्रदर्शनाय... ।)

Madhva, who opens his commentary on this chapter with a significant salutation साधनविघ्नहर्त्रे नमः ।, prostrations offered to the Supreme Spirit who destroys the obstacles for the spiritual unfoldment. The chapter deals, according to him, with the values in life to be perfected, the methods of accomplishing them, and the obstacles that one encounters (पुमर्थसाधनविरोधीत्यनेनाध्यायेन दर्शयति ॥): Jayatīrtha explains that this is a continuation of the previous chapter, which briefly mentions how the objectives of human life, knowledge and liberation are accomplished, and also what the human life, knowledge and liberation, are accomplished,

and also what the obstacles on the way are. Both the facilities and obstacles for knowledge and liberation are expatiated in this chapter obstacles on the way are Both the facilities and obstacles for knowledge and liberation are accomplished are expatiated in this chapter (पुमर्थयोर्ज्ञानमोक्षयोः साधनं तद्विरोधि च पूर्वाध्याये संक्षेपेणोक्तम् । तदुभयमिदानीं प्रपञ्चनीयम् ॥)

Rāmānuja takes the entire chapter to signify the importance of living according to the dictates of scriptural lore (शास्त्रवश्यतां वक्तुं ।) Those who are indifferent or averse to the scriptural injunctions represent demonic wealth, others are divine in their wealth (शास्त्रवश्यतद्विपरीतयोर्दैवासुरसर्गयोर्विभागमुवाच ।)

Madhusūdana-sarasvati points out that the āsuri-nature is swayed by delusions (मोहात् ।), clutching at false conceptions, but it is averse to the scriptural injunctions (न तु शास्त्रात् ।) (मोहाद्गृहीत्वाऽ-सद्ग्राहान् प्रवर्ततेऽशुचिब्रताः ॥ 16.10)

cf. 16, 21 :

- 15.2 त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत् त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥

People with demonic nature (āsuri) enter into hell unwittingly and inevitably. Hell is where misery abounds, and life's fulfilment is denied; the self itself appears destroyed (नाशनमात्मनः ।). The gateway to this hell is three-fold: excessive desires (kāma cf. काममाश्रित्य दुष्पूरं । 16, 10; कामोपभोगपरमा ॥ 16,11; ईहन्ते कामभोगार्थं

अन्यायेनार्थसञ्चयान् ॥ op. cit.); anger (krodha, दम्भोऽतिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च । 16,4; प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः । 16,18; द्विषतः क्रूरान् । 16,19; असौ मया हतः शत्रुः हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।, 16,14); and greed (lobha, आशापाशशतैः बद्धाः 16,12; इदमद्य मया लब्धं इदं प्राप्स्ये मनोरथं । 16,13; इदमस्तीदमपि मे भविष्यति पुनर्धनम् । op.cit.)

- 15.3 The three causes of darkness and self-destruction must at all costs be avoided. Freed from them, one will work for his own welfare (ātmanah śreyah), and ultimately reach the highest goal (16, 22):

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।
आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥

- 15.4 The man of demonic nature is guided by his own capricious desires ambitions and aspirations (kāmakāratah), while the person of the divine nature is restrained by the counsel of the scriptural lore (śāstra-vidhi). The man gone astray by manifold yearnings will not attain the state of spiritual maturity (siddhi) and will enjoy neither the pleasures here nor bliss hereafter.

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः ।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम् ॥

Siddhi means fitness to accomplish the life's values (पुरुषार्थयोग्यतां ।, Śamkara; पुमर्थोपायं ।, Rāghavendra-tīrtha), that is to stay, purification of internal constitution (अन्तःकरणशुद्धिं ।, Madhusūdana-sarasvati; चित्तशुद्धिं । Nīlakaṇṭha). It is fulfilment of the nature of

obtainment of the knowledge of the ultimate reality (Vallabha, तत्त्वज्ञानाप्तिरूपां आमुष्मिकीम् ।)

कामचारतः प्रवृत्तानां पुरुषार्थहानिः अनर्थावाप्तिः ॥

- 15.5-6 According to Madhusūdana-sarasvatī, there are two types of performers of activities: (1) Even though aware of the scriptural injunctions, they ignore them owing to lack of faith in scripture and follow their own selfish inclinations (शास्त्रविधिं ज्ञात्वापि अश्रद्धया उत्सृज्य कामकारेण..; they are described as demonic (āśura); and (2) those who aware of the scriptural injunctions, and have faith in them, and perform actions accordingly (शास्त्रविधिं ज्ञात्वा... तदनुसारेण... श्रद्धधानतया...). These are divine (devāḥ) and become fit to obtain all values of life (सर्वपुरुषार्थयोग्यता). Ānandagiri makes an explicit statement. Even the apparent believers (āstikas), who believe in the injunctions of śāstra, yet engage themselves in activities like worship, according to their own whims and fancies, are to be included in the āśura group:

शास्त्रोक्तं विधिं अधिगच्छतामपि तमवधीर्य स्वेच्छया देवपूजादौ प्रवृत्तानां आसुरेष्वेवान्तर्भावः ॥

This kind of belief (śraddhā) is not of the sāttvika type. Keśava-Kāśmiri makes it even more explicit. Being believers for all external appearance, they do not really do as the scripture asks

them to do, either because of their indolence or of their fear that is difficult to do so; they are merely traditional (unthinkingly unpainstakingly), and follow the custom. They do not care to understand and reflect on all the implications of the scriptural injunctions, and follow the letter rather than the spirit; they do only what they like to do.

ये दुःखबुद्ध्या वा आलस्याद्वा शास्त्रज्ञाने श्रममकृत्वा केवलं शिष्टाचारपरम्परावशेन श्रद्धयान्विताः.. । न तु शास्त्रं सम्यग्ज्ञात्वा बुद्धिपूर्वकं, तमनादृत्य यथेष्टाचारेण वर्तमानाः गृह्यन्ते ॥

Śrīdhara-svāmi likewise says :

नात्र शास्त्रातिलंघिनो गृह्यन्ते । क्लेशबुद्ध्या आलस्याद्वा शास्त्रार्थज्ञाने प्रयत्नमकृत्वा.. अनादृत्य, केवलमाचार प्रामाण्येन श्रद्धयान्विताः ॥

- 15.6 Śraddhā (faith) is an important aspect of śāstra. In fact, śāstra (scriptural lore) is said to have two details : (i) jñāna, knowledge of reality and the injunctions pertaining to it, vidihi, and (ii) śraddhā or faith in its being an authentic guide. Faith is not only the conviction but a feeling of urgency that this will surely lead one to what he has as his goal of reality or welfare (श्रद्धा हि स्वाभिमतं साधयतीति विश्वासपूर्विका साधने त्वरा ।). Derived from previous and deeply ingrained predispositions (vāsanā, saṃskāra), one develops a taste (ruchi-viśeṣa) for it. Where this relish is there, faith can be there (Rāmānuja, स्वासाधारणः भावः प्राचीनवासनादिनिमित्तः तत्तद्गुचिविशेषः । यत्र रुचिस्तत्र श्रद्धा जायते ।) Keśava-kāshmiri, in the same strain says

स्वकीय प्राचीन कर्मानुगुणः रुचिविशेषः । तस्माज्जाता । जीवस्य यत्र रुचिः तत्र श्रद्धा जायते । श्रद्धा अयं ममेष्टं साधयेदिति विश्वासः । विश्वासपूर्विका एव साधने प्रवृत्तिर्भवति । रुचिश्रद्धाप्रयत्नानां निमित्तभूता अन्तःकरणरञ्जका सत्त्वादयो गुणाः कार्यैकगम्या । अतः त्रिविधा भवति ॥ (17,2)

Prior predispositions ॐ taste or relish ॐ faith ॐ decision to act ॐ actions.

15.9 cf. 17,23:

ओं तत्सधिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ॥

Three-fold pointers to Brahman (viz. paramātma, the Supreme Spirit) are (i) ओं (praṇava), illustrating absolute supremacy of the Brahman, (ii) तत् ('that', indicating universality and indescribability) and सत् । (It is reality.) The three are limbs of Brahman as it were (avayavas). But they are in fact one only (त्रयवयवं एकं नाम ।) Madhva quotes *Rgveda-Khila* : ओं तत्सदित्येनमतो वदन्ति ।

(i) ओं is the one sound (ekākshara) directly signifying Brahman: ओमित्येकाक्षरमुपासीत । ओमितीदं सर्वम् । ओमिति ब्रह्म । ओतं जगद्यत्र स्वयं च पूर्णो वेदोक्तरूपोऽनुपचारतश्च । तं प्रविष्टं आश्रितं जगद्यत्र । ईश्वरः जगति प्रोतः प्रविष्टः ।

(ii) तत् is "that", as in तत्त्वमसि । तदेव शुक्रं तद् ब्रह्म । Rāghavendra-tīrtha अस्य परोक्षवाचित्वाद् ब्रह्मणश्च वेदैकवेद्यता परोक्षत्वात् तदिति । "That" is an indirect designation, not 'this' (viz. in front of us, available to our sense function, and a mental apprehension,

with name and form, and identifiable attributes). ‘That’ is without individual entity; it is not delimited by time and space. ‘That’ is also what can be known only by scriptures.

- (iii) सत् is ‘real’, “it is,” as in सदेव सोम्य । It is what is not circumscribed by time (real in past, present, future) and not delimited by space (as near, far, here, there etc.). Raghavendra tīrtha : निर्दोष सर्वशुभगुणपूर्णत्वात् सदिति नामेति ज्ञेयम् ॥

The word सत् indicates what is real and what is good :

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत् प्रयुज्यते ॥ (17, 16)

It also has the sense of steadfastness and has its involvement in the activities: yajña (actions performed in the spirit of a sacrifice), tapas (austerities, penances, earnest spiritual effort) and dāna (generosity, giving of gifts, sharing what one has with others, दानं संविभागः ।).

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ॥ (17)

The expression ‘sthiti’ signifies continuous, uninterrupted activity or involvement (नैरन्तर्येण प्रवृत्तिः ।). Whatever activity (yajña, tapas and dāna) is done with complete faith is described as ‘sat’ (good, real, fruitful); and when faith is not there, then it is ‘asat’ (bad, false, fruitless) (17, 18)

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥

16,2 The word 'samnyāsa' used in the Gīta does not refer to the āsrama of that name (as the fourth or the last, safter brahmacharya, gārhaṣṭhya and vānaprastha), nor does it signify renunciation and wearing of ochre robes. It merely means giving up (etymological sense, nyāsa) of the selfish activities oriented towards satisfaction of desires (kāmya-karma) (18, 2) :

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं सन्न्यासं कवयो विदुः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणः ॥

Karma for the mīmāṃsakas is action sanctioned or enjoined by scriptures. It is of three types : nitya (ordained as necessary), naimittika (occasional, for purification) and kāmya (desire-filled, but approved by scripture). Of these three, the two are obligatory and unavoidable. The third one is optional, and it consists of activities relevant to transactional existence.

Giving up of the third variety of actions is commended here. 'Giving up' (nyāsa) is abandonment (parityāga). But it is not abandonment of action itself, but giving up only of the desire for the fruits of action (phala-tyāga). It signifies that when the action is done without expectation of rewards, it is as good as not acting at all. And kāmya-karma, like Aśvamedha for eradicating all sins, jyotiṣṭoma for reaching heaven, and putrakāmeshṭi for securing progeny may also be given up. Hence Madhva : फलानिच्छया अकरणेन वा काम्यकर्मणः न्यासः ॥ It is giving up actions dictated by desires.

The second line of the verse insists that all karmas including obligatory (nitya) and occasional (naimittika) must be given up; but adds that giving up the rewards of such karmas is what is meant. फलमात्रत्यागः । Rāmānuja; त्यागस्तु फलत्याग एव । Madhva. And Madusūdana-sarasvati explains that by giving up the rewards of karma is meant actions performed for the sake of purifying ones own inner constitution :

अन्तःकरण शुद्ध्यर्थकर्मनुष्ठाने फलाभिसन्धित्यागः ।

- 16.3 When it is insisted that activities connected with yajña, tapas and dāna must be performed and not given up (18, 3 यज्ञो दानं तपः कर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।), as they purify the individual (pāvanāni). It must be recognized that the performance of any action depends on five factors (18, 13). These five are enumerated, lest one should egotistically claim responsibility for himself alone (Keśava-kāshmiri कर्मण्यहंकारनिवृत्तये विवेकार्थं मुमुक्षुणाऽवश्यं ज्ञातव्यानि । Also Śridhara : आत्मनः कर्तृत्वाभिमाननिवृत्त्यर्थं ।).

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।

विविधाश्च पृथग् चेष्टाः दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥ (18, 14)

- (1) Adhishṭhāna, support, foundation, viz., the body for the soul (शरीरं अधिष्ठीयते जीवात्मना ।, Rāmānuja), the physical body, includes also the subtle body, लिङ्गशरीरं । Purushottama-tirtha; not only the body, but other supports like ground, wealth, air

etc.; all the physical details which enable an individual to live, move and work (hence Madhva, देहादिः । Rāghavendra-tīrtha, देहभूम्यादिः) are included here (कर्तृकरणक्रियाश्रयम् । the support for the soul, sense-organs, mind, and actions.

- (2) Kartā, the doer, agent of action, the soul (jīvātmā, Rāmānuja) which knows the world around (jñātr), experiences the world (bhoktr), and performs actions (kartr). Purushottama-tīrtha takes the word in the sense of the feeling of “I” “mine” and so on, ego appropriating the body and the actions done by it (कर्तृत्वाभिमानरूपोऽहङ्कारः । Also Vallabha जीवात्मा साहङ्कारः ।; Nilkaṇṭha, बुद्धिविशिष्टश्चिदाभासः प्रमाता अहंप्रत्ययविशयोऽहङ्कारः ।) Madhva, however, takes kartā to signify Vishṇu (viz. the Supreme Spirit), who is the all-doer (विष्णुः सर्वकर्ता); Jayatīrtha explains that ‘kartā’ does not mean the soul, because of its dependence on the Supreme Spirit who alone is independent (अपराधीनत्वात् न जीवः ।). However, Rāghavendra-tīrtha suggests an alternative explanation: kartā may refer to the soul, which is a dependent doer (doing only as prompted by Vishṇu) and the fifth factor ‘daiva’ refers to Vishṇu (कर्तृपदेन पराधीनकर्ता जीवः दैवपदेन विष्णुः ।)
- (3) *Karaṇam*, the sense-faculties (इन्द्रियाणि ।) instruments of many kinds (prthagvidham); five organs of knowledge, five organs of action, mind and intellect are included in the category of instruments. Rāghavendra-tīrtha includes also the implements that are used for the execution of any action (इन्द्रियं सूक्ष्मवादि ।).

- (4) *Cheshṭah, vivedhāh prthak*, the activities that are individual, discrete and manifold. These are the vital process that go on in the body (Rāmānuja, पञ्चात्मा वायुः शरीरेन्द्रियधारकस्य प्राणापानादि भिन्नवायोः विविधा वृत्तयः ।) They include the functions of the ten-fold prāṇa. They keep the body alive, active and fit for any action, whether physical (like prehension, locomotion, observation, elimination of waste from the body) or mental (like meditation, reflection), also activities like ritualistic offerings etc. (Rāghavendra-tīrtha हस्तादिक्रिया... ध्यानरूप मानसक्रिया, प्रधानहोमादि क्रियारूपा कारकाश्रिता वान्तरक्रिया ।)
- (5) Daivam, God, fate, destiny, fortune, the Supreme Spirit as the inner controller, is the primary factor causing all actions (परमात्मा अन्तर्यामिः कर्मनिष्पत्तौ प्रधानहेतुः । Rāmānuja, and also Vallabha पञ्चसंख्यापूरणमुत्तमं अन्तर्यामिरूपम् ।, and Keśava-kāsmīri अन्तर्यामी परमात्मा ॥); the deities responsible for sensory and bodily functions (आदित्यादि चक्षुराद्यनुग्राहकम् । Śamkara; तत्तत्करणानुग्राहक सूर्यादिदेवतारूपम् । Nilkaṇṭha; अनुग्राहकदेवताजातम् । Madusūdhana-sarasvati). It may also mean the unseen hand of destiny (अदृष्टम् । Madhva). Or, it may signify the influence of punya (virtue) and pāpa (vice) (Nilakaṇṭha).

17.1 cf. 18, 49 : (cf. also 3, 4)

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥

One whose consciousness is free from attachment everywhere, who has his inner constitution under restraint, and who is devoid of desires will attain to the accomplishment of non-action that is supreme, through the abandonment of attachment to the fruits of action.

Naishkarmya means : the state of one from whom all actions are gone, owing to the realization of his self as the Brahman who is devoid of action (निर्गतानि कर्माणि यस्मात् निष्क्रिये ब्रह्मात्मसम्बोधात् सः निष्कर्मा । तस्य भावः नैष्कर्म्यं । निष्क्रियात्मस्वरूपावस्थानलक्षणस्य सिद्धिः निष्पत्तिः । Śamkara). The word nishkarma is taken as synonymous with Brahman, and naishkarmya is what is related to Brahman (Madhusūdana-sarasvati: निष्कर्म ब्रह्म तद्विषयम् ज्ञानं नैष्कर्म्यम् ॥) It is settling down entirely in the knowledge of Self (jñāna-nishṭhā) according to Śamkara; and undivided devotion to contemplation (dhyāna-nishṭhā) according to Rāmānuja. Madhva takes 'naishkarmya' in the sense of a yoga-siddhi, an accomplishment of yoga for the sake of naishkarmya (नैष्कर्म्यफलां योगसिद्धिम् । Jayatīrtha नैष्कर्म्यार्था सिद्धिः योगस्य ॥)

Literally naishkarmya means withdrawal in effect of all actions, (nitya, naimitika and kāmya कर्मनिवृत्तिलक्षणां ।, Keśava-kāshmīri, also कात्स्न्येन स्वरूपतः कर्मत्यागलक्षणां पारिव्राज्यसिद्धिः । Nilakanṭha). Madhusūdana-sarasvati points out that it is of the nature of knowledge, accomplished by investigation, inquiry and reflection (विचारपरिनिष्पन्नं ज्ञानम् । तद्रूपां सिद्धिम् ॥). It is of the form of abandonment

of all actions (viz. ritualistic acts) (सर्वकर्मसंन्यासरूपां नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं ब्रह्मसाक्षात्कार योग्यतां नैर्गुण्यलक्षणां सिद्धिम् ॥). It involves the giving up of the three guṇas (responsible for normal action), becoming a 'guṇātīta', thus becoming eligible to Brahman-realization. Further, it is freedom from all sense-functions (सर्वेन्द्रियकर्मोपरतिरूपम् ।)

This is achieved by the practice of giving up (samnyāsa), either the kāmya-karmas themselves or the attachment to the fruits thereof. Sam-nyāsa may also mean dedicating all actions to the Godhead (भगवति सर्वकर्मणां समर्पणेन ।).

However, notwithstanding all these and many more shades of interpretations for the second half of this verse, some of which are rather far-fetched, the intended import appears simple. The Gītā begins by distinguishing between the paths of sāmkhya (jñāna-yoga) and yoga (karma-yoga) (3, 3) :

लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयाऽऽनद्य ।
ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥

but points out that the two paths are in reality one and the same (5, 4 and 5):

सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ॥
एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥

Of the two paths, one is the end and the other the means. This is how they are both one and two. Jñāna is of course the end,

for without it there is no liberation. And at first glance, jñāna is antithetical to karma; so the means must be abandonment of karma (samnyasana). But what does abandonment of karma really mean, for karma in the sense of activities cannot really be given up. Further, the explicit teaching of Gītā is कुरु कर्मैव त्वम् । It can then only mean giving up the scripturally prescribed rituals (as the Mīmāṃsakas look upon karma). The Gītā extends the concept of karma to kāmya-karma, activities performed with a motive with a desire for the fulfilment of a physical need, pleasure or profit. And further, Gītā distinguishes between the nature of activity and the purpose served by such activity (phala), and counsels that the expectation of a reward or preoccupation with the purpose of an activity is to be avoided. This is karma-phala-tyāga, and according to Gītā, this is what 'samnyasana' (abandonment of action) really means.

This verse (18, 49) has to be read along with another verse (3, 4) where also the words naishkarmya, siddhi and samnyāsa occur significantly :

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
न च सन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥

(Śamkara takes the word 'naishkarmya' here in the sense of Jñāna-yoga, and he explains that this is not reached merely by giving up actions, but by developing knowledge that really liberates (केवलकर्मपरित्यागात् ज्ञानरहितात् ।). Keśava-kāshmīri adds that without

jñāna which arises when the inner constitution is perfectly cleansed, the accomplishment (siddhi) is impossible (चित्तशुद्ध्यभावेन ज्ञानं विना ।). Madhva points out that this stage is reached only when karma-yoga is gone through (निष्क्रान्तकर्मयोगः । पर्यवसितकर्मयोगः ।); and the yoga in karma consists of giving up attachment to results of and ego-involvement in, the actions that one performs.)

The words 'karma' and 'samnyasana' in the verse are used in their restrictive sense : activities and abandonment, respectively. Not undertaking activities and abandonment of activities themselves are not the methods of perfection. But when the same words are used in the verse (18, 49); karma is included in 'naishkarmya' and 'samnyasana' changed to 'samnyāsa', activities bereft of attachment to results and ego-involvement, and abandonment of attachments and ego-involvement are meant. Thus, 'naishkarmya' and 'samnyāsa' constitute a continuum, the latter being the first part (means) and the former the second (end).

In the context, samnyāsa (abandonment of attachment and ego-involvement) becomes synonymous with karma-yoga, and naishkarmya is jñāna-yoga. This is what was indicated by Madhva when he explained that naishkarmya comes only after karma-yoga is complete (निष्क्रान्तकर्मयोगः). And this is also why Śamkara takes naishkarmya in the sense of jñāna-nishṭhā, and why Rāmānuja explains that this is the resultant stage even of jñāna-yoga (ज्ञानयोगस्यापि फलभूताम् ।).

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PART TWO



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Abhinava-gupta's

Gītārtha-Samgraha

(Sangraha-Ślokāḥ)

Summary Verses of 18 Chapters

Introduction

What follows is a collection of eighteen ślokas, each of which summarizes the teachings of an entire chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā (which contains eighteen chapters and seven hundred and fifteen slokas in this version, viz. the Kashmeri recension).

The summary-verses were prepared by Abhinava-gupta of Kashmir, who lived in the early tenth century A.D. The verses form part of his commentary on Bhagavad-gītā known as *Gītārtha-samgraha*. This work is important, because it brings to light the secret meanings of the Bhagavad-gītā ślokas, preserved in oral tradition. And the summary-verses (samgraha-ślokas) are master-pieces of lucidity and brevity.

The author, Abhinava-gupta, was a celebrated genius and polymath. He was the son of Narasimha-gupta and Vimalā and grandson of Varāha-gupta who was hailed as an ornament of Kashmir. Abhinava's teachers included Utpala-rāja (the great master of Kashmir śaivism, who lived around 930 A.D. and wrote the famous *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-sūtra*), Bhaṭṭendu-rāja

(who was a great poet and scholar and whom Abhinava described as vidvat-kavi-siddhi-chela) and Bhaṭṭa-Tauta (the author of *Kāvya kautuka* on which Abhinava wrote a gloss).

He wrote numerous works in Sanskrit, and they are all significant contributions to Indian art, literature, philosophy, esoteric disciplines and religious poetry. His celebrity rests on his gloss called *Abhinava-bhāratī* on Bharata's Nāṭya-śāstra, the source book of Indian dramaturgy, dance, music and aesthetics, and a commentary 'Lochana' on Ānanda-vardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*, (about 855-884 A.D.) a definitive work on literary criticism. He wrote a *Vimarśinī* on his parama-guru's work, *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-sūtra*, and crystallized the basic tenets of Kashmir Saivism.

Other works from his facile pen include philosophical treatises (like *Paramārtha-charchā*, *Parā-trimśikā-vivaraṇa*, *Mālinī-vijaya-vārtika*, *Anuttārāśṭhikā*, *Tantra-sāra*, *Tantrāloka* and *Tantra-vaṭadhānikā*), literary works (besides Lochanā, *Ghaṭakarpura-vivṛti*, *Bodha-pañchāśikā*, and *Mahopadesa-vimśati* and devotional hymnology (like *Bhairava-stotra*, composed around 989 A.D., *Krama-stotra* and *Prakaraṇa stotra*). He has composed another gloss on *Bharata-Nāṭyā-śāstra* called *Nāṭya-śāstra-ṭikā*.

In many of his works, he provides summary-verses, meant to determine and understand the precise import of the text. Called Sangraha-sloka, they help the reader constantly keep in mind the main thrust of the chapter or the text. In his own words,

सम्पक् गृह्यते निश्चीयते अनेनेति संग्रहः ।
 उपायः । तेनोपायेन तत्पदमभिधास्ये । उपायमत्र
 सतताभ्यासाय वक्ष्यते ॥

(*Gitārtha-samgraha*, 8,11)

This work was composed by Abhinava at the behest of a friend, Loṭaka by name; and he based the work on the oral tradition received through his master, Bhaṭṭa Indurāja. The work was expressly intended to bring to light the secret teachings not contained in any of the earlier commentaries. In one of the introductory verses (5), he says

तास्वन्यैः प्राक्तनैर्व्याख्याः कृता यद्यपि भूयसा ।
 न्याय्यस्तथाप्युद्यमो मे तद् गूढार्थप्रकाशकः ॥

The viewpoint defended here is markedly distinct from the Sāṃkhya position and also from the Vedānta standpoint. It is known as 'Paramādvaita' (18,67) and is described as deeper even than Vedānta:

गुह्याद्वेदान्तादपि गह्यम् ॥

It espouses the Kāsh̥mīra-Śaiva ideology: Reality of the world; the highest reality of pure consciousness (Śiva) as the light (prakāśa) and its expressions (vimarśā) in one; combined approach of knowledge and action (jñāna-karma-samuchchaya); the obtainment of spiritual perfection in normal life, without giving up worldly enjoyment; and the ultimacy of yoga as an upāya (methodological device, technique).

Abhinava takes *Bhagavad-gītā* as highly symbolic and esoteric text. The fight between Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, which forms the setting for the dialogue between Kṛiṣṇa and Arjuna known as the Gītā, is taken by Abhinava to represent the ongoing encounter between knowledge of the self (pure consciousness, Śiva, as the highest reality, vidyā) and ignorance of this truth (avidyā), each trying to overpower the other. The fighting details are opposites (dvandvas) like passion and dispassion, anger and forgiveness, benevolence and wickedness, clarity and confusion.

The purpose of the Gītā is to help man attain liberation (moksha) through yoga. However, yoga here does not mean a withdrawal from the world, but enjoying the world while at the same time practising deep meditation (4,34). It is through meditation that one attains to the identity with God (viz. Śiva or pure consciousness, absolute, free and unitary, the world being an expression of his power or śakti). And unless this is accomplished, surrender to God is impossible and meaningless.

Abhinava-gupta is an honoured name in Indian thought and art. He was recognized as a saint even while he lived. He was always referred to respectfully as 'Śrī Mahā-māheśvara-āchārya-varya-rājānaka Abhinava-gupta-pāda'. But he himself was convinced that his celebrity was due to his constant contemplation on the feet of his teachers and on Śiva who is the sole reality. The colophon to his *Gītārtha-samgraha*, for instance;

परिपूर्णोऽयं श्रीभगवद्गीतार्थसंग्रहः । कृतिस्त्रिलोचन
चरणसरोरुहचिन्तनलब्धप्रसिद्धेरभिनवगुप्तस्येति शिवम् ॥

He had the greatest regard for his teachers and he frequently mentions that devotion to the teachers is the gateway to the proper understanding of the secret teachings in the tradition.

अत्र च बहुतरो रहस्यरसोऽन्तः संवलिनीकृतोऽपि
निबिडतरभक्तिसेवासंप्रसादितगुरुचरणप्राप्तसंप्रदाय
महौषधसमीकृतधातूना (4,31)

It is through the teacher that one gets access to highest truths; without the benefit of this oral tradition, trying to understand the texts like Gītā would be like drawing pictures in the sky:

मुखसंप्रदायक्रममन्तरेण नैतत् नभिश्वित्रमिव
चित्तमुपारोहतीति... (4,24)

While commenting on a verse in chapter 8 (8.7), he gives a long explanation, which he winds up with a significant remark “It is enough to say that this is the view acceptable to the teachers of Abhinava”

इति श्रीमदभिनवगुप्तगुरुणां संमतमित्यलम् ॥

His humility is revealed when he says that the deep secrets hidden in texts like the Gītā are sought to be revealed by him, in accordance with his own mind-capacity, albeit his intellect is poor; it is the instruction of his teacher that has emboldened him in this attempt:

इत्यनेन श्लोकेन वक्ष्यमाणौश्च श्लोकेः
 परमरहस्यमुपनिबद्धम् । तच्चास्माभिर्मितबुद्धिभिरपि
 यथाबुद्धि यथा गुर्वाम्नायं च विवृतम् ॥... (ibid)

His Gītārtha-samgraha is unfortunately little known despite its great significance. It preserves a yoga tradition that has all but disappeared. For those who seek to practise the teachings of the Gītā, this work would be of invaluable help. It opens a new world of spiritual enterprise, where spiritual perfection goes hand in hand with worldly activities. And there is guidance provided stage by stage.

श्रीमदभिनवगुप्तपादविरचिते गीतार्थसंग्रहे संग्रहश्लोकाः ॥
 (Summary verses of Abhinavagupta-Gītārtha-samgraha)

CHAPTER I

विद्याविद्योभयाघातसंघट्ट विवशीकृतः ।
 युक्त्या द्वयमपि त्यक्त्वा निर्विवेको भवेन्मुनिः ॥1 ॥

The sage (wise man), when oppressed by the united pressures of both knowledge and ignorance, should give up both, having carefully deliberated, and become free of all thoughts.

CHAPTER II

अहो नु चेतसाश्वित्रा गतिस्त्यागेन यत्किल ।
 आरोहत्येव विषयाञ्छेयंस्तांस्तु परित्यजेत् ॥2 ॥

How wonderful is mind's variegated moment! The movement it gives up one thought, it mounts on another. The objects of the mind are ever recurrent, each one only to be abandoned in turn.

CHAPTER III

धनानि दारान् देहं च योऽन्यत्वेनाधिगच्छति ।
किं नाम तस्य कुर्वन्ति क्रोधाद्याश्वित्तविभ्रिमाः ॥३॥

For one who approaches his wealth, consort or even his own body, fully realizing that they are all different from his real self, what can vagaries of the mind like agner do?

CHAPTER IV

विधत्ते कर्म यत्किञ्चिदक्षेच्छामात्रपूर्वकम् ।
तेनैव शुभभाजः स्युस्तृप्ताः करणदेवताः ॥४॥

Whatever action is done prompted by the desire of the sense-organ alone, will indeed satisfy the divinities that are known as sense-organs; and this would bestow benefits on the one who acts.

CHAPTER V

सर्वाण्येवात्र भूतानि समत्वेनानुपश्यतः ।
जडवद् व्यवहारोऽपि मोक्षायैवावकल्पते ॥५॥

One who looks upon all creatures alike here (in transaction), becomes fit for liberation, even if he is dull-witted in worldly matters.

CHAPTER VI

भगवन्नामसंप्राप्तिमात्रात्सर्वमवाप्यते ।
फलिताः शालयः सम्यग्वृष्टिमात्रेऽवलोकिते ॥६॥

One procures all things by merely securing the name of God for himself. The paddy-grains will shoot forth into plants at the mere sight of the rains.

CHAPTER VII

स्फुटं भगवतो भक्तिराहिता कल्पमञ्जरी ।
साधकेच्छासमुचितां येनाशां परिपूरयेतु ॥७॥

Vivid and firm devotion to God will bring about the veritable wish-fulfilling creeper, by which the devotee may procure all things that are appropriate to his endeavour.

CHAPTER VIII

सर्वतत्त्वगतत्वेन विज्ञाते परमेश्वरे ।
अन्तर्बहिर्न सावस्था न यस्यां भासते विभुः ॥८॥

When the Lord is known to be present in all categories of existence (tattva), there is no spot or condition, within or outside the devotee, where the Lord will not make his appearance.

CHAPTER IX

अद्वैते ब्रह्मणि परा सर्वानुग्रहशालिनी ।
शक्तिर्विजृम्भते तेन यतनीयं तदाप्यते ॥९॥

In that Brahman, one and without a second, shines forth in all glory the transcendental power (sakti), bestowing grace on all beings. One should therefore endeavour to attain to that supreme reality.

CHAPTER X

इच्छायामिन्द्रिये वापि यदेवायाति गोचरम् ।
हठाद्विलापयंस्तत् तत्प्रशान्तं ब्रह्म भावयेत् ॥10॥

Whatever becomes manifest to our mind (desire) or to our sense-experience, must by effort and force be dissolved in ones own self (Brahman); it is that tranquil reality that must be made manifest by contemplation.

CHAPTER XI

शुद्धाशुद्धविमिश्रोत्थसंविदैक्यविमर्शनात् ।
भूर्भुवःस्वस्त्रयं पश्यन् समत्वेन समो मुनिः ॥11॥

By deliberating upon the unity of consciousness, that becomes manifest in all objects that arise in pure, impure or mixed conditions of existence (adhvā), the sage looks upon the earth, the midregion and the heavenly realm (viz, the states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep) as but the same, and becomes indeed ever unchanging.

CHAPTER XII

परमानन्दवैवश्यसञ्जातावेशसम्पदः ।
स्वयं सर्वास्ववस्थासु ब्रह्मसत्ता ह्ययत्नतः ॥12॥

Absorbed in the highest bliss (inherent in his own self) and feeling bountiful, the sage experiences the stuff of the supreme reality (Brahman) in all the conditions of his existence. And this he does without the least effort; it is spontaneous and persistent experience.

CHAPTER XIII

पुमान्प्रकृतिरित्येष भेदः संमूढचेतसाम् ।
परिपूर्णास्तु मन्यन्ते निर्मलात्ममयं जगत् ॥13॥

That the cognizing self (purusha) is different from the world around that is cognized (prakṛti) is what occurs to the ordinary minds which are deluded. But the perfect sage is convinced that the world in its essential nature is but the one pure self.

CHAPTER XIV

लसद्भक्तिरसावेशहीनाहङ्कारविभ्रमः
स्थितेऽपि गुणसम्मर्दे गुणातीतः समो यतिः ॥14॥

When the sage gets rid of the variegated play of his ego as a result of being overpowered by the joy of devotion that shines alround, he becomes unchanging and balanced even in the confusing confluence of the three strands of existence (guṇa: sattva, rajas and tamas). He is beyond the influence of these strands of existence.

CHAPTER XV

हत्वा द्वैतमहामोहं कृत्वा ब्रह्ममयीं चितिम् ।
लौकिके व्यवहारेऽपि मुनिर्नित्यं समाविशेत् ॥15॥

Eliminating the great delusion arising out of looking upon the world as different from the self (duality, dvaita), and making his own consciousness identical with the supreme reality (Brahman), the sage should abide perfectly and restfully in that consciousness, even while engaged in worldly affairs.

CHAPTER XVI

अबोधे स्वात्मबुद्ध्यैव कार्यं नैव विचारयेत् ।
किंतु शास्त्रोक्तविधिना शास्त्रं बोधविवर्धनम् ॥16॥

When one is undecided what to do, he should not rely on his own limited mind and deliberate on the other hand he should take recourse to what is scripturally prescribed in that situation, for the scriptures are meant to enhance our understanding and help our decisions.

CHAPTER XVII

स एव कारकावेशः क्रिया सैवाविशेषिणी ।
तथापि विज्ञानवतां मोक्षार्थं पर्यवस्यति ॥17॥

He (Brahman, Śiva) it is that inspires all instruments of experience; and his power (śakti) which cannot be qualified as this or that, it is that which constitutes all activities. But for those who know, all activity (religious, ritualistic or spiritual) reaches upto, and ends in, liberation.

CHAPTER XVIII

भङ्क्त्वा ज्ञानविमोहमन्थरमयीं सत्त्वादिभिन्नां धियम्
प्राप्य स्वात्मविभूतसुन्दरतया विष्णुं विकल्पातिगम् ।
यत्किञ्चित् स्वरसोद्यदिन्द्रियनिजव्यापारमात्रस्थिते
हेलातः कुरुते तदस्य सकलं सम्पद्यते शङ्करम् ॥18॥

The sage who has broken down the differentiating thoughts that arise from the functioning of the three guṇas (knowledge, delusion and ignorance)

and who has reached as a result of his splendid recognition of his own self as Viṣṇu, all-pervading and beyond thought-constructs, will engage himself in actions effortlessly; whatever he does is only in response to the movements in his own sense-organs which arise on their own. For him, everything happens for his good alone!

YĀMUNA-MUNI'S GĪTĀRTHA-SAMGRAHA

Introduction

Yāmuna-muni (around 918 A.D.), the authoer of Gītārtha-samgraha, was a great saint, philosopher, scholar and author, after Śamkara (632-664 A.D.) and before Rāmānuja (1017-1137). He was the son of Īśvara-bhaṭṭa and grandson of Nātha-muni who is regarded as a prominent āchārya, anterior to Rāmānuja in the Śrī-vaishṇava-guru paramparā, Nāthamuni was a yogi, who lived for about ninety years and wrote on Yoga, Nyāya and Vedānta. He had eleven disciples one of whom was Puṇḍarīkāksha (also called Uyyakoṇḍar), whose student was Rāma-miśra.

It was under Rāma-miśra that Yāmuna studied Veda. At the suggestion of Rāma-miśra, Yāmuna went to Karukā-nātha and learnt yoga from him. Yāmuna also became acquainted with the Tamiḷ compositions of Ālvārs through Rāma-miśra.

Yāmuna had a large number of disciples of whom Mahāpūrṇa (Periyā-nambi), Śrīśailapūrṇa (Tātāchārya) Goshthī pūrṇa, Kāñchīpūrṇa (a śūdra from Pūnamalli, who became the teacher of Rāmānuja) and Māranera-nambi were prominent.

Also known as Ālavandār, Yāmuna is counted as a guru in the Paramparā after Maṇakkāl-nambi (who succeeded Uyyakoṇḍār or Puṇḍarikāksha, who was the successor to Nathāmuni) and before Periyā-nambi (Mahāpūrṇa, who was the predecessor to Rāmānuja in the line). Yāmuna wrote six works in Sanskrit: Stotra-ratna, Chatuh-ślokī, Āgama-prāmāṇya, Siddhi-traya, Mahāpurusha-nirṇaya and Gītārtha-samgraha.

Gītārtha-samgraha, a short text of thirty-two ślokas, summarizes the teachings of Bhagavad-gītā, which has 700 verses in eighteen chapters. It is the trend that was set by this work that we see elaborated in the bhāṣhya of Rāmānuja on Gītā. This brief treatise of Yāmuna has an excellent gloss by Vedānta-deśika called Gītārtha-samgraha-rakshā.

The text is reproduced here with a running translation in English. After the twenty second śloka (which summarizes the eighteenth chapter), the succeeding ślokas have been omitted here, but for the last one (32), which sums up the entire outlook of the Gītā.

The Gītā has here been described as a 'śāstra', which means instruction, precept, science or discipline. It is distinguished from 'Śruti', which tells us about the doctrinal matters (astitā); śāstra, on the other hand, deals with the practical methods to be adopted by the aspirant (upāya). It not only teaches what the 'tattva' (supreme reality) is, but instructs us about what is good for the human being (hita), and what constitutes the goals of life (purushārtha).

(1) THE IMPORT OF THE ENTIRE TEXT

स्वधर्मज्ञानवैराग्यसाध्यभक्त्येकगोचरः ।

नारायणः परं ब्रह्म गीताशास्त्रे समीरितः ॥१॥

The Gītā teaches that Nārāyaṇa (God that dwells in the heart of each being) is indeed the supreme reality, called Brahman in Vedānta. It can be realized only by loving devotion (bhakti), which in turn is made possible by performing ones duty sincerely and selflessly (sva-dharma or karma), by acquiring spiritual knowledge (jñāna) and by developing an attitude of detachment and dispassion in life (vairāgya).

(2) THE IMPORT OF THE FIRST SECTION

(the first six chapters)

ज्ञानकर्मात्मिके निष्ठे योगलक्ष्ये सुसंस्कृते ।

आत्मानुभूतिसिद्ध्यर्थे पूर्वषट्केन चोदिते ॥२॥

For realizing this supreme reality, the two techniques (yoga) that are helpful consist in the performance of ones ordained duty as instrumental in God-realization (karma-yoga), and the acquirement of spiritual knowledge, also as instrumental in God realization (jñāna-yoga). The two techniques must be firmly resorted to until the goal is reached (nishṭhā); and they must be chastened by total dedication to Godhead as the highest and only goal. The purpose accomplished by this persistent application is the understanding of the nature of ones own self (ātmānubhūti), as preliminary to realizing Godhead. This is taught in the first six chapters.

(3) THE IMPORT OF THE MIDDLE SECTION

(the second six chapters)

मध्यमे भगवत्तत्त्वयाथात्म्यावाप्तिसिद्धये ।

ज्ञानकर्माभिनिर्वृत्यो भक्तियोगः प्रकीर्तितः ॥३॥

This teaching is followed by the formulation of loving devotion as instrumental in realizing Godhead (bhakti-yoga). This is to be accomplished by acquiring spiritual knowledge and by engaging oneself in activities that are proper to him and with no expectation of worldly benefits. This technique of loving devotion is meant to attain to the correct understanding of the principle of Godhead. The middle section, consisting of chapters seven to twelve, elaborates on this aspect.

(4) THE IMPORT OF THE FINAL SECTION

(the last six chapters)

प्रधानपुरुषव्यक्तसर्वेश्वरविवेचनम् ।

कर्मधीभक्तिरित्यादिः पूर्वशेषोऽन्तिमोदितः ॥४॥

In the final section of Gītā, comprising of chapters thirteen to eighteen, the topics dealt with are the distinction between the causal nature (pradhāna), the experiencing soul (purusha), the manifest universe (vyakta) and the God who rules over all (Īśvara); The explanations pertaining to activities, loving devotion and so on; and whatever has been left unsaid in the previous sections.

(5) THE FIRST CHAPTER

अस्थानस्नेहकारुण्यधर्मधियाऽऽकुलम् ।

पार्थ प्रपन्नमुद्दिश्य शास्त्रावतरणं कृतम् ॥५॥

The Instruction descends in the first chapter. It was addressed to Arjuna, whose mind was agitated by considerations of what must be done and what not, for he was overcome by affection and pity which were totally misplaced.

(6) THE SECOND CHAPTER

नित्यात्मासङ्गकर्मेहागोचरा सांख्ययोगधीः ।

द्वितीये स्थितधीलक्षा प्रोक्ता तन्मोहशान्तये ॥६॥

The attitude determined by the Sāmkhya precept holds that the soul is immortal and immutable; and the practice of yoga involves the performance of all activities without attachments. Thereby ensues the condition of the mind which is firm, lucid, settled and detached. The second chapter teaches how to develop this condition of the mind, in order to overcome the agitated state of the mind born of ignorance.

(7) THE THIRD CHAPTER

असक्त्या लोकरक्षायै गुणेष्वारोप्य कर्तृताम् ।

सर्वेश्वरे वा न्यस्योक्ता तृतीये कर्मकार्यता ॥७॥

The third chapter teaches how one must perform the activities that are proper for him. He must be totally disinterested in the worldly benefits that arise

from such activities and must be free from ego-involvement in them. Whatever is done must be seen as the work of three guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas), or all (viz. God). And the activities are to be planned for the well-being of the world.

(8) THE FOURTH CHAPTER

प्रसङ्गात्स्वभावोक्तिः कर्मणोऽकर्मतास्य च ।

भेदा ज्ञानस्य माहात्म्यं चतुर्थाध्याय उच्यते ॥८॥

The main teaching of the fourth chapter is about the aspect in action that is altogether distinct from activities (viz. the thoughts, the will, the attitude with which the activities are performed), and the varieties of activities that will lead to spiritual advancement. Dealt with here is also the importance of acquiring spiritual knowledge. And incidentally, the God's own nature is indicated.

(9) THE FIFTH CHAPTER

कर्मयोगस्य सौकर्यं शैघ्र्यं काश्चन तद्विधाः ।

ब्रह्मज्ञानप्रकाराश्च पञ्चमाध्याय उच्यते ॥९॥

The fifth chapter explains how the technique of action (activities done as instrumental to obtaining knowledge of the soul and of God), is easy to undertake, and quick to yield results. In the chapter is also to be found the methods of attaining to the knowledge of the supreme reality (viz. God).

(10) THE SIXTH CHAPTER

योगाभ्यासविधिर्योगी चतुर्धा योगसाधनम् ।

योगसिद्धिः स्वयोगस्य पारम्यं षष्ठ उच्यते ॥१०॥

This chapter deals primarily with the details concerning the practice of yoga (the method of realizing the supreme reality), which takes the form of meditation. The four kinds of practice are also described. When yoga is accomplished, one perceives (i) that the souls are all alike in their nature; (ii) that the soul in its pure state is like God; (iii) that when the soul becomes freed from the bonds of Karma, its knowledge expands to become the all-pervading Ātman; and (iv) that the soul in its natural state is unconnected with the objects and persons around him. Yoga is facilitated by practice and dispassion. And meditation on Godhead (Ātman) is the best of all kinds of yoga.

(11) THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

स्वयाथात्म्यं प्रकृत्याऽस्य निरोधः शरणागतिः ।

भक्तिभेदः प्रबुद्धस्य श्रेष्ठ्यं सप्तम उच्यते ॥११॥

The true nature of Godhead (who is the object of meditation), viz. the Ātman, is described in the seventh chapter, as well as how causal and manifest nature conceal this true nature of the Godhead. The value of surrender is brought out in this chapter, as also the different kinds of devoted persons and the superiority of those who are devoted only because of love for the Godhead.

(12) THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

ऐश्वर्याक्षरयाथात्म्यभगवच्छरणार्थिनाम् ।
वेद्योपादेयभावानामष्टमे भेद उच्यते ॥१२॥

Among the devotees, there are those who seek to obtain material wealth and physical enjoyment; there are also those who seek self-realization; and then there are those who long to be devoted exclusively to Godhead. The eighth chapter tells us what these devotees should know and what they must do. Differences between the devotees are also indicated.

(13) THE NINTH CHAPTER

स्वमाहात्म्यं मनुष्यत्वे परत्वं च महात्मनाम् ।
विशेषो नवमे योगो भक्तिरूपः प्रकीर्तितः ॥१३॥

The ninth chapter describes the glory of Godhead and how the divine transcendental nature is retained even when God appears as a human being on earth. The chapter also narrates the especial merit of the great souls who have realized the Godhead. The treatment of loving devotion as a technique of God-realization is also to be found in this chapter.

(14) THE TENTH CHAPTER

स्वकल्याणगुणानन्त्यकृत्स्नस्वाधीनता मतिः ।
भक्त्युत्पत्तिविवद्ध्यर्था विस्तीर्णा दशमोदिता ॥१४॥

The tenth chapter describes in detail how the innumerable and auspicious attributes of Godhead and the understanding that the entire universe is under his control are meant to produce the attitude of loving devotion to that Godhead, and make the attitude grow.

(15) THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

एकादशे स्वयाथात्म्यसाक्षात्कारावलोकनम् ।
दत्तमुक्तं विदिप्राप्त्योर्भक्त्येकोपायता तथा ॥१५॥

In the eleventh chapter, we are told that divine vision was provided to Arjuna for realizing the true nature of Godhead; and we are also told that loving devotion is the sole means for knowing Godhead as well as attaining to Godhead.

(16) THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

भक्तेः श्रेष्ठ्यमुपायोक्तिरशक्तस्यात्मनिष्ठता ।
तत्प्रकारास्त्विति प्रीतिर्भक्ते द्वादश उच्यते ॥१६॥

The superiority of loving devotion to Godhead (over meditation on the self) and the techniques that facilitate it are dealt with in this chapter. The meditation on the self is suggested for one who is unable to lovingly devote himself to Godhead. The qualities that must be developed in order to attain to loving devotion are enumerated. The involvement of intense love in the devotee is eulogized.

(17) THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

देहस्वरूपमात्माप्तिहेतुरात्मविशोधनम् ।
बन्धहेतुर्विवेकश्च त्रयोदश उदीर्यते ॥१७॥

In the thirteenth chapter, the nature of the body, the method of attaining to self-realization, the understanding of the self dissociated from the body, the causes and conditions of the bondage and the method of separating the self from the body are dealt with.

(18) THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

गुणबन्धविधा तेषां कर्तृत्वं तन्निवर्तनम् ।
गतित्रयस्वमूलत्वं चतुर्दश उदीर्यते ॥१८॥

The way in which the three guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas) function and involve the self in bondage and their active role in everything that is done are explained in this chapter. We are also told how one can get away from their hold and how this is the source of the three approaches (desiring material wealth, longing for self-realization, and attaining to Godhead).

(19) THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

अचिन्मिश्राद्विशुद्धाच्च चेतनात्पुरुषोत्तमः ।
व्यापनाद् भ्रणात् स्वाम्यादन्यः पञ्चदशोदितः ॥१९॥

The fifteenth chapter teaches that the supreme Godhead is distinct from the soul that is mixed up with matter (the common human being), as well as from the soul that has freed itself from this condition and that it is this supreme Godhead that pervades over all, supports everything and governs all existence.

(20) THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

देवासुरविभागोक्तिपूर्विका शास्त्रवश्यता ।
तत्त्वानुष्ठानविज्ञानस्थेम्ने षोडश उच्यते ॥२०॥

The sixteenth chapter, which confirms all that the previous chapters have deliberated upon, emphasizes that one must allow himself to be guided by

the good instructions (embodied in the canonical scriptures), for stabilizing ones understanding of the supreme reality and for facilitating ones attaining to it. This emphasis is prefaced by the distinction between the devas (who follow the precepts in the canon) and the asuras (who go against the precepts).

(21) THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

अशास्त्रमासुरं कृत्स्नं शास्त्रीयं गुणतः पृथक् ।
लक्षणं शास्त्रसिद्धस्य त्रिधा समदशोदिता ॥२१॥

The asuras (human beings with demoniacal nature) are known by their rejection of instructions embodied in scriptures. And those who abide by the instructions differ in accordance with their natures (determined by the three guṇas; sattva, rajas and tamas). Whatever is established by the scriptural instructions is distinguished by three symbols: om, tat and sat (the 'supreme being' who can be described only as 'that' and who is the only 'real'). This is what we find in the seventeenth chapter.

(22) THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

ईश्वरे कर्तृताबुद्धिः सत्त्वोपादेयताऽन्तिमे ।
स्वकर्मपरिणामश्च शास्त्रसाराथ उच्यते ॥२२॥

The last chapter of the Gītā summarizes the whole teaching of the text as Instruction. One must develop the attitude of ascribing everything to Godhead. He must understand that everything in the ultimate analysis rests in sattva and that he must cultivate sattva in his life. He must also realize

that he reaches the highest goal (God-realization) by performing his legitimate duties in ascending stages of purity, detachment and loving devotion. The gist of the Gītā's teaching is that one must whole-heartedly surrender his entire being to Godhead, with the conviction that this would free him from all sin and sorrow.

ऐकान्तात्यन्तदास्यैकरतिस्तत्पदमाप्नुयात् ।

तत्प्रधानमिदं शास्त्रमिति गीतार्थसंग्रहः ॥२३॥३२॥

One who finds delight in serving God exclusively and zealously will surely attain to the foothold of Godhead ('vishṇoh paramam padam'). This constitutes the very theme of this book of Instructions. And thus ends this work known as the 'Epitome of Gita's Import.'

गीताध्यानश्लोकाः

VERSES FOR CONTEMPLATION ON GĪTĀ

ध्यै चिन्तायां स्मृतो धातुर्विष्णुचिन्ता मुहुर्मुहुः ।
अनाक्षिप्तेन मनसा ध्यानमित्यभिधीयते ॥

The Sanskrit word for contemplation is dhyāna, from the root ‘dhyai’ “to think of”; it means constant and concentrated thinking of Viṣṇu. (Agni-purāṇa)

पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयमू
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्येमहाभारतमू ।
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीमष्टादशाध्यायिनीमू
अम्ब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीमू ॥१॥

I adore with fervour, the Bhagavad-gita in eighteen chapters, verily like unto a mother, which will destroy the woes of the transmigrational world, and which will rain down the nectar of absolute unity of Brahman. This great book was taught by Viṣṇu himself (Nārāyaṇa residing in the hearts of all creatures) to Arjuna, and it was compiled by the ancient sage Vyāsa in the course of his narrative of the Mahābhārata war.

नमोऽस्तु ते व्यास विशालबुद्धे
 फुल्लारविन्दायतपत्रनेत्र ।
 येन त्वया भारततैलपूर्णः
 प्रज्वालितो ज्ञानमयः प्रदीपः ॥२॥

I bow down to Vyāsa of immense wisdom, whose eyes are like fully open lotus flowers. It was he who lit up the lamp of wisdom, the lamp full of the oil of the great epic.

प्रपन्नपारिजाताय तोत्रवेत्रैकपाणये ।
 ज्ञानमुद्राय कृष्णाय गीतामृतदुहे नमः ॥३॥

Prostrations to Kṛṣṇa, who milked the nectarine Gītā and who is the saviour of those who seek refuge in him. He holds in one of his hands the whip, and in the other the gesture of liberating wisdom.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।
 पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महतू ॥४॥

All the Upanishad texts are like the cows, and Kṛṣṇa is the one who milks them. Arjuna is the calf for whom the milk is brought forth, and the wise one partakes of it. The milk is the great nectarine Gītā.

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनमू ।
 देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुमू ॥५॥

I bow down to Kṛṣṇa who is the teacher of the world, who caused unsurpassed delight to his mother Devakī, who is the shining one, son of Vasudeva and vanquisher of Kamsa and Chanūra.

भीष्मद्रोणतटा जयद्रथजला गान्धारनीलोपला
 शल्यग्राहवती कृपेणवहनी कर्णेन वेलाकुला ।
 अश्वत्थामविकर्णघोरमकरा दुर्योधनावार्तिनी
 सोत्तीर्णा खलु पाण्डवै रणनदी कैवर्तकः केरावः ॥६॥

The Paṇḍavas were safely taken by the helmsman Kṛshṇa across the difficult river of battle, which had Bhīṣma and Droṇa as the banks, Jayadratha as the waters, the Gāndhāras as the rocks, Salya as the large fish, moved fast by Kṛpa, the stormy waves as Karṇa, Aśvatthāma and Vikarṇa as terrible crocodiles, and Duryodhana as the whirlpool.

पाराशर्यवचः सरोजममलं गीतार्थगन्धोत्कटमू
 नानाख्यानककेसरं हरिकथासम्बोधनाबोधितमू ।
 लोके सज्जनषट्पदैरहरहः पेपीयमानं मुदा
 भूयाद् भारतपङ्कजं कलिमलप्रध्वंसि नः श्रेयसे ॥७॥

May this lotus of the epic, the sure destroyer of evil, secure our spiritual welfare. It has arisen out of the pure pond of the words of Vyāsa; it is fragrant with the sweetness of the Gita's import; the flower has numerous filaments in the form of episodes and narratives, and it is opened up by the clarion-call of Viṣṇu's tales. The good folk in the world are the bees that partake of the nectar joyously and uninterruptedly.

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुलं घयते गिरिमू ।
 यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्द माधवमू ॥८॥

I bow down to the blissful Kṛshṇa, whose compassion will transform the dumb into an orator and will enable the lame one to jump across a hill.

यं ब्रह्मा वरुणेन्द्र रुद्र मरुतः स्तुन्वन्ति दिव्यैः स्तवैः
 वेदैः साङ्ग पदक्रमोपनिषदैर्गायन्ति यं सामगाः ।
 ध्यानावस्थिततद्गतेन मनसा पश्यन्ति यं योगिनो
 यस्यान्तं न विदुः सुरासुरगणा देवाय तस्मै नमः ॥९॥

Prostrations to the great god (the luminous one), whom the gods like Brahmā, Varuṇa, Indra, Rudra and the maruts eulogize with their excellent stanzas, about whom the sāmān priests sing with Vedic hymns complete with anga, pada, krama and Upanishads; whom the ascetics absorbed in meditation behold in their minds, and whose farther limits are unknown even to the hosts of gods and demons.

Note :

(Besides Arjuna, the discourse given by Kṛṣṇa known as the Gītā was first heard by Hanumān, who was stationed in banner atop the chariot of Arjuna. Sañjaya who was gifted with divine vision, was the second one to listen to the Gītā, and he communicated it to the blind Dhṛtarāshṭra. Vyāsa was the sage who provided the poetic form to the discourse, when he documented the details of the epic story. Vaiśampāyana related the discourse to Janamejaya, the grandson of Arjuna. And finally the paurāṇika Sūta revealed the discourse of Śaunaka and other sages who had gathered in the Naimisha forest.)

गीता माहात्म्यम्

GĪTĀ - MĀHĀTMYĀ

(THE GREATNESS OF THE GĪTĀ)

धरो वाच

भगवान् परमेशान भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।

प्रापब्धं भुज्यमानस्य कथं भवति हे प्रभो ॥१॥

1. The Earth goddess asks:

By what means, O great lord, can one, consuming helplessly what is in store for him, cultivate the spirit of unswerving loving devotion (which alone leads to liberation)?

श्रीविष्णुरुवाच-

प्रारब्धं भुज्यमानोऽपि गीताभ्यासरतः सदा ।

स मुक्तः स सुखी लोके कर्मणा नोपलिप्यते ॥२॥

2. Śri-Vishṇu responds

Consuming indeed what has been in store for him, if he should engage himself constantly in the study of Bhagavad-gītā, he gets free from the pressures of what has been in store for him, he becomes happy here and now, and no act done by him will ever taint him.

महापापादिपापानि गीताध्यानं करोति चेत् ।
 क्वचित् स्पर्शं न कुर्वन्ति नलिनीदलमम्बुवत् ॥३॥

3. If one engages himself in contemplating on the teachings of the Gītā, no sin however great will touch him, even as the lotus-leaf remains untouched by the water.

गीतायाः पुस्तकं यत्र यत्र पाठः प्रवर्तते ।
 तत्र सर्वाणि तीर्थानि प्रयागादीनि तत्र वै ॥४॥

4. Where there is a copy of the book of Bhagavadgita, and where a recitation of the text is taking place, all the sacred places like Prayagā are there.

सर्वे देवाश्च ऋषयो योगिनः पन्नगाश्च ये ।
 गोपाला गोपिका वापि नारदोद्धव पार्षदैः ।
 सहायो जायते शीघ्रं यत्र गीता प्रवर्तते ॥५॥

5. Where Gītā is being studied, all the gods, sages, ascetics, the celestial dragons, along with the playmates of Kṛṣṇa and the attendants like Narada and Uddhava come and help.

यत्र गीताविचारश्च पठनं पाठनं श्रुतम् ।
 तत्राहं निश्चितं पृथ्वि निवसामि सदैव हि ॥६॥

6. Where Gītā is being discussed, read, taught, or heard, O Earth-goddess, I am surely there; I abide there forever.

गीताश्रयाऽहं तिष्ठामि गीता मे चोत्तमं गृहम् ।
गीताज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य त्रीँल्लोकान् पालयाम्यहम् ॥७॥

7. I abide basing myself on Gītā; Gītā indeed is my best home. It is depending on the wisdom contained in the Gītā that I protect the three worlds.

चिदानन्देन कृष्णेन प्रोक्तं स्वमुखतोऽर्जुनम् ।
वेदत्रयी परानन्दा तत्त्वार्थज्ञानसंयुता ॥८॥

8. This Gītā communicated by Kṛṣṇa himself, who is of the nature of pure consciousness and bliss, to Arjuna is the essence of the three Vedas (Rik, Yajus and Sāma), is transcendently blissful, and equipped with the wisdom of the Real.

योऽष्टादशं जपेन्नित्यं नरो निश्चलमानसः ।
ज्ञानसिद्धिं च लभते ततो याति परं पदम् ॥९॥

9. Whichever mortal studies the eighteen chapter of the Gītā everyday, with focussed attention, obtains the fulfilment of his knowledge, and thereafter reaches the supreme state of existence.

गीताभ्यासं पुनः कृत्वा लभते मुक्तिमुत्तमाम् ।
गीतेत्युच्चारसंयुक्तो प्रियमाणो गतिं लभेत् ॥१०॥

10. By studying Gītā repeatedly one attains the superior state of freedom: even the utterance of the word ‘Gītā’ will ensure better destiny for one who casts off his mortal coils.

गीतार्थश्रवणासक्तो महापापयुतोऽपि वा ।

वैकुण्ठं समवाप्नोति विष्णुना सह मोदते ॥११॥

11. Even a great sinner, if interested in listening to the reading of the Gītā, will reach heaven, and enjoy the God's presence.

गीतार्थं ध्यायतो नित्यं कृत्वा कर्माणि भूरिशः ।

जीवन्मुक्तः स विज्ञेयो देहान्ते परमं पदम् ॥१२॥

12. Even the person given to immense activity, who will be contemplating constantly on the import of the Gītā, becomes liberated while still alive in this body; and attains the highest state when he dies.

गीतामाश्रित्य बहवो भूभुजो जनकादयः ।

निर्धूतकल्मषाः लोके गीता याताः परं पदम् ॥१३॥

13. It is by basing themselves on the Gītā, numerous rulers like Janaka freed themselves from obstructions and sins and reached the highest state.

गीताशास्त्रमिदं पुण्यं यः पठेत्प्रयतः पुमाम् ।

विष्णोः पदमवाप्नोति भयशोकादिवर्जितः ॥१४॥

14. Whoever reads this meritorious scriptural text, Gītā with restraint, will obtain the domain of Vishṇu becoming free from ills like fear and sorrow.

गीताध्ययनशीलस्य प्राणायामपरस्य च ।

नैव सन्ति हि पापानि पूर्वजन्मकृतानि च ॥१५॥

15. For one that is engaged in the study of Bhagavad-gītā and for him who practices prāṇāyāma, there can be no sins whatsoever; even the sins acquired in past lives will fall away.

मलनिर्मोचनं पुंसां जलस्नानं दिने दिने ।

सकृद् गीताम्भसि स्नानं संसारमलनाशनम् ॥१६॥

16. Taking a bath in water everyday will eliminate for man dirt of the body. But bathing in the waters of Gītā even once will wash away the dirt of this transactional existence.

गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या किमन्यैः शास्त्रविस्तरैः ।

या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्य मुखपद्माद्विनिःसृता ॥१७॥

17. One must recite Gītā, which verily emanated from the lotus like mouth of Kṛṣṇa (whose navel is adorned with the lotus) himself, of what use is the other scriptural lore?

भारतामृतसर्वस्वं विष्णोर्वक्त्राद्विनिःसृतम् ।

गीतागङ्गोदकं पीत्वा पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥१८॥

18. One who drinks this Gāṅgā-water of the Gītā (which is celestial and sanctifying), which has come out of the mouth of Vishnu (like the Gaṅgā-river coming out of the feet of Viṣṇu) and which is of the nature of the quintessence of the nectar of Bhārata, will not be born again.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥१९॥

19. All the Upanishads are like the cows; and Kṛṣṇa the cowherd-boy is the one who milks them, Arjuna is the calf and the wise man drinks it. Such is the greatness of the nectar like Gītā.

एकं शास्त्रं देवकीपुत्रगीत -
मेको देवो देवकीपुत्र एव ।
एको मन्त्रस्तस्य नामनि यानि
कर्माप्येकं तस्य देवस्य सेवा ॥२०॥

20. There is but one scripture and that is the Gita sung by the son of Devakī (viz. Kṛṣṇa). There is but one God, and that is the son of Devaki. There is but one mantra and that is the string of names of Kṛṣṇa. And there is only one activity that needs to be performed, and that is the service done to the same God (Kṛṣṇa).

भगवदाश्वासनम् ॥

ASSURANCES IN THE GĪTĀ

One of the probable reasons for the unparalleled popularity of the Gita is that it holds out assurances for the good folk, the virtuous and the generous, the seekers after spiritual welfare and the loving devotees of God. The assurances held out here are not blanket promises for all and sundry, but are conditional. They are in the nature of rewards for human effort in the right direction; and the purpose is to induce confidence in the hearts of the earnest. The reward assured consists peace, tranquillity, happiness, freedom and wisdom in this life, here and now. It is not in terms of material benefits and worldly gains; nor the pleasures of a heaven after death are promised.

Bhagavad-gītā is a book of knowledge for those who desire to live wisely and meaningfully. It is also a book of practical guidance in living well and efficiently. It tells all human beings how to live without hurting the world around them and how not to get hurt by the world around (यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोकः लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ॥). The reward of such a life is complete freedom from internal and external pressures, equated with the supreme joy of living, called in India moksha (liberation, emancipation). Gītā emphasizes that it is a positive concept, an ideal within the reach of every human being.

A selection is made here of statements of Kṛṣṇa, the most perfect teacher of all mankind, containing assurances that a life lived well will not be in vain, but will, on the other hand, be filled with happiness.

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।

प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यावतिष्ठते ॥१॥ ३,६५॥

1. When one is tranquil (viz. devoid of attachments and aversions), all misery is at once eliminated. For him, whose mind has become calm and peaceful, understanding and deliberation are soon occasioned (2,65)

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुनिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।

श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥२॥ ३,३१॥

2. Those human beings who unremittingly attend to My call here, with faith and without envy, will surely get freedom from (viz, will not betrayed and bound by) the actions they engage themselves in (3,31)

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥३॥ ४,७॥

3. Whenever there is a damage done to virtuous living (dharma), I shall make an appearance on earth to root out vice and wickedness (adharma) that have arisen (4,7)

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥४॥४,८॥

4. In every phase of time, do I manifest my own form to protect the good folk, to destroy the wicked, and to establish the rule of virtue and goodness (4,8)

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥५॥४,९॥

5. Whoever understands the truth why I make my appearance and what divine acts are done by me, will not be reborn when he casts off his body here; he will surely reach me (4,9)

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥६॥४,११॥

6. Whoever approaches me in whatever form or manner, in the very same form and manner do I receive him (viz. I shall reveal myself to him in the form that he cherishes). Human beings in all ways follow only the path laid out by me (viz. nothing can be wrong religion or wrong religious practice) (4,11)

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥७॥४,१४॥

7. No act (viz. religious act) done will ever taint me, nor do I have a yearning for the benefits of such acts. Whoever understands this truth of my being, will not be bound by the acts done by him (4,14)

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।

सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं सन्तरिष्यासि ॥८॥४,३६॥

8. Even if you happen to be the most sinful one among all human beings, having committed sins of all types, you will surely go beyond the waters of all sins by the boat of wisdom (viz. understanding the true nature of God.) (4,36)

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।

लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥९॥४,१०॥

9. Whichever person does all his duties, dedicating them to God (the pure and supreme spirit beyond the phenomenal transactions), and without attachment to the fruits of such work, he will not be tainted by the evil that may be in that work, even like the lotus-leaf that will not be touched by the water in which it grows (5,10)

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।

सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥१०॥४,२१॥

10. Understanding that all our worship and all our austerities are being received by Me, the one lord of the entire universe, who is also a dear friend to all living beings, the devotee will partake of everlasting peace (5,29)

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।

शान्तिं निर्वणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥११॥६,१५॥

11. One who thus employs the spiritual strategy will restrain his mind and yoke his attention completely to his own self, without ever straying from that object, and thereby reach that perfect state of peace characterized by absolute extinction of all mental processes, and which in reality is the state of God head. (6,15)

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।

सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमन्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥१२॥६,२८॥

12. The spiritual strategist (yogi) thus yoking his mind uninterruptedly to his self, will eliminate from himself all obstacles to enlightenment and easily get into intimate contact with the Brahman (the supreme spirit abiding in himself) thus becoming blissful (6,28)

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणशमति ॥१३॥६,३०॥

13. For him who sees me (God) everywhere, and sees everything in me (God), I (God) will never be lost; nor will he ever get lost for me (6,30)

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।

श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥१४॥६,४७॥

14. Almost all the spiritual strategists, one, who filled with faith, approaches Me (God) with his entire interior settled in Me (God), he will be the one most integrated with Me (God) (6,47)

दैवीह्योषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥१५॥७,१४॥

15. This indeed is My power to obscure (the real from the transactional minds), constituted by the three guṇas, and inexorable. However, those who approach Me alone (to the exclusion of the transactional world) will be able to cross over this divine obscuration (7,14)

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।

मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥१६॥८,२८॥

16. This entire universe from the grossest to the most subtle are ever of the nature of recurring. However, when one reaches Me there is no more rebirth for him (8,16)

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव

दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।

अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा ।

योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥१७॥८,२८॥

17. Whatever are the rewards of merit extolled as owing to scriptural study, sacrificial acts, austerities or generous acts of charity, the understanding

of a spiritual strategist (yogi) will exceed all these, for he will reach the primordial and supreme state, and abide there (8,28)

अनन्यश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥१८॥९,२२॥

18. For those who worship Me thinking exclusively and uninterruptedly of Me, with unfailing understanding, I shall safeguard their entire interest (9,22)

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।

ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥१९॥९,२९॥

19. I am the same for all living beings : there is no one whom I hate, nor is there any one who is dear to me. However, they who approach Me with loving devotion abide in Me, and I abide in them (9,29)

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्यैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥२०॥९,३४॥

20. Settle your mind completely in Me; be lovingly devoted to Me; worship me, and make your prostrations to Me. So doing, you will yoke yourself to your own self, where I reside. You will thus reach only Me. (9,34)

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।

निर्वैरः सर्वेभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥२१॥११,५५॥

21. One who does everything dedicating all his work to Me, who holds Me as the highest objective, who is devoid of attachment and ego-involvement, and who hates no living creature whatever, will surely reach Me.

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।

श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥२२॥१२,२॥

22. Those who keep their minds possessed of Me, and without a break worship Me merging themselves in Me, with extraordinary faith, they are surely integrated with Me (12,2)

संनियम्येन्द्रियगतां सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।

ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥२३॥१२,४॥

23. Those who well restrain all their sense-functions, and have an equitable feeling towards all beings and in all situations, will obtain only Me, being engaged in the good of all living beings. (12,4)

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।

अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।

भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥२४॥१२,६-७॥

24. I shall quickly become the saviour for My loving devotees who allow their hearts to be completely possessed by Me, who dedicate to Me

all that they do, who live keeping Me as their sole objective, who worship Me contemplating on Me with an exclusive strategy of understanding and characterized by death (12,6 and 7)

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।

हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥२५॥१२,१५॥

25. He indeed is most dear to Me, the one who does not irritate the world around him nor allow the world to irritate himself, and who is free from excitement, annoyance, fear and impulsive actions (12,15)

समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।

न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥२६॥१३,२८॥

26. Unswerving in the spirit of equanimity, the devotee sees the same Lord in all beings, present everywhere all the time, and he does not kill his own self (for the Lord is abiding within it). Such a one will surely reach the highest goal (viz. liberation) (13,28)

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।

भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ने परम् ॥२७॥१३,३४॥

27. Whoever perceive with their eye of wisdom the distinction between the body and the soul, and the liberation of the soul from the physical and mental constitution, will reach the highest goal (13,34)

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।

स गुणान् समतीत्यैतान् ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥२८॥ १४,२६ ॥

28. Whoever approaches Me with an exclusive strategy of loving devotion, will overcome the hold of the three gunas (viz. sattva, rajas, and tamas) and gets ready to experience Brahman (viz. the sole, supreme reality) (14,26)

एतैर्विमुक्तः कौन्तेय तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिर्नरः ।

आचरत्यात्मनः श्रेयस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥२९॥ १६,२२ ॥

29. That human being who has steered clear of the three gateways to ruin (viz. desire, anger and greed), will secure his own welfare, and then reaches the supreme goal (16,22)

अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।

विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्म भूयाय कल्पते ॥३०॥ १८,४३ ॥

30. The person who eschews ego, force, arrogance, lust, anger and spirit of possession, will give up clinging to his lower self, become tranquil and makes himself eligible to become one with Brahman (the supreme reality) (18,53)

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः

ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥३१॥ १८,५५ ॥

31. Understanding Me fully and in reality who I am and how I am, with loving devotion, the devotee will not only know Me for truth but then enter into Me truly (18,55)

मच्चितः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ॥३२॥१८,५९॥

32. Keeping your mind entirely and exclusively in Me, you will surely wade across with my grace all the difficulties and calamities (18,58)

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।

तत्प्रसादात् परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥३३॥

33. Seek refuge in Him alone in all ways and by all means, and by His grace you will secure everlasting and supreme state of tranquillity (18,62)

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥३४॥१८,६५॥

34. Settle your mind in Me, become My loving devotee, worship Me and offer yourself to Me. You will reach Me only, I assure you, for you are dear to Me (18,65)

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यमि मा शुचः ॥३५॥ २८, ६६॥

35. Abandon all interests in transactional life and seek refuge in Me alone. I shall surely free you from all sins (viz. obstructions to spiritual progress). Do not grieve (18,66)

गीतासूक्तयः ॥

Well-known wise sayings in the Gītā

अन्तवन्त इमे देहाः ॥२,१७॥

- 2.18. These physical bodies of ours are liable to decay and destruction

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युः ॥२,२७॥

- 2.28. Any one who is born will surely die.

तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥२,३७॥

- 2.37. Arise then, get ready for the (fight, viz. solving problems in life), with full resolve

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा ॥२,३८॥

- 2.38. While fighting, be the same in pleasure or in affliction

व्यवसायात्मा बुद्धिरेका ॥२,४१॥

- 2.41. A refined mind is one-pointed and firm

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ॥२,४७॥

- 2.47. Your responsibility is only to do; the results thereof are not your concern

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि ॥२,४८॥

- 2.48. Perform your action in the spirit of a strategy for self-realization

बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ ॥२,४९॥

- 2.49. Seek resort to wise understanding and deliberation

योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥२,५०॥

- 2.50. Skillfulness in action consists in doing your work as a strategy for self-realization

नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि ॥२,५७॥

- 2.57. The person of wisdom will neither get exhilarated nor irritated

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि ॥२,६०॥

- 2.60. The very nature of sense-functions is to disturb

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य ॥२,६६॥

- 2.66. There is no understanding and deliberation for one who is devoid of integrity

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वम् ॥३,८॥

- 3.8. Do engage yourself in activities that are proper and are ordained for you

भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥३,१३॥

- 3.13. They who cook only for their own sake (selfishly), eat only the sins

मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥३,१६॥

- 3.16. One who is selfish lives in vain

आत्मन्येव सन्तुष्टः ॥३,१७॥

- 3.17. The wise person will find delight in himself; he is well pleased with himself

लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन् ॥३,२०॥

- 3.20. The wise person will engage himself in action, seeing the need for helping people

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानाम् ॥३,२६॥

- 3.26. One should not cause confusion in the minds of ordinary people (by talking about philosophical theories and 7 religious prescriptions)

अहंकारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥३,२७॥

- 3.27. It is only the person who is deluded by his egoity that thinks that he is the one that does (anything)

गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्ते ॥३,२८॥

- 3.28. After all, the primary functional details (the gunas, sattva, rajas and tamas) operate on a other

युद्धचस्व विगतज्वरः ॥३,३०॥

- 3.30. While fighting (viz. doing your duties), be free from fever (viz. agitation and anxiety)

निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥३,३३॥

3.33. Of what use is trying to control nature?

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः ॥३,३५॥

3.35. Even to die while discharging your own obligations and duties is better (viz. more meritorious) than taking on the obligations and duties of others

संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥४,६॥

4.6. The Lord will appear on earth in various ways owing to His mysterious powers

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥४,७॥

4.7. Whenever the basic virtue fades away, the Lord will manifest himself (to restore the value thereof)

परित्रणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥४,८॥

4.8. The Lord promises to appear again and again here on earth, to establish the rule of what is right and virtuous, to protect the good folk and to destroy the evil-doers

वीतरागभयक्रोधाः ॥४,१०॥

4.10. The wise ones will eschew desires, fear and anger

ज्ञानाग्निदग्ध कर्माणम् ॥४,१९॥

- 4.19. The fire of wisdom will burn away (the taints of) action done

यदूच्छालाभसन्तुष्टः ॥४,२२॥

- 4.22. The wise person will be content and delighted with whatever comes on its own (viz, without his effort and desire)

तद्विध्दि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ॥४,३४॥

- 4.34. Approach the wise ones with humulity, clear your doubts by inquiring from them, and attend on them in the spirit of service

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रम् ॥४,३८॥

- 4.38. Nothing is as sacred (viz. sanctifying) as wisdom

श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानम् ॥४,३९॥

- 4.39. One who has faith will obtain right knowledge

संशयात्मा विनश्यति ॥४,४०॥

- 4.40. He who is burdened with doubts will be ruined

योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ ॥४,४२॥

- 4.42. Arise, get ready and engage yourself in what will make you spiritually developed

कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥५,७॥

- 5.7. The wise person will not get tainted even when he is busy doing his work

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्ते ॥५,९॥

- 5.9. The purpose of the sense-organs is toprehend the objects of the senses

लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥५,१०॥

- 5.10. The man of enlightenment while he is doing his duties, will not get tainted by the actions – even like the leaves of the lotus plant in water do not get wet

स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥५,१४॥

- 5.14. It is the innate nature of an individual that will prevail

ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः ॥५,२७॥

- 5.17. The wise people wash away their sins by knowledge

सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥५,२५॥

- 5.25. The enlightened persons are engaged in contributing to the welfare of all beings

विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधः ॥५,२८॥

- 5.28. The wise ones are known by their being devoid of desire, fear and anger

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानम् ॥६,५॥

- 6.5. Each one must work out his own salvation, relying entirely on himself

समलोष्टाश्मकाश्चनः ॥६,८॥

- 6.8. For the emancipated person a clod of earth, a piece of rock and gold are all the same

समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥६,९॥

- 6.9. The persons with their understanding and deliberation characterized by their equanimity, stand out apart from the crowd

युंज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥६.१२॥

- 6.12. One must resort to the strategy of self-realization in order to purify his interior

योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥६,१७॥

- 6.17. The strategy for self-realization will eliminate all distress.

सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥६,२९॥

- 6.29. The wise person will look upon all things and everywhere with perfect equanimity

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति ॥६,३२॥

- 6.32. The wise person will look upon all beings everywhere in the same way, even as he sees himself

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण ॥६,३४॥

6.34. The mind indeed extremely unstable

न हि कल्याणकृत् कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥६,४०॥

6.40. No one who does good will ever get into states of grief

सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥७,७॥

7.7. Like the pearls strewn in a thread (all things are held by the Lord)

मामनुस्मर युद्ध्य च ॥८,७॥

8.7. Think of the Lord and fight (viz. face challenges)

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ॥९,४॥

9.4. This entire universe is pervaded by the Lord whose form is altogether unmanifest

उदासीनवदासीनम् ॥९,९॥

9.9. The wise one remains as if indifferent (viz, without desires, attachments or aversions)

योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥९,२२॥

9.22. The Lord will take over and manage the devotee's life

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयम् ॥२६॥

- 9.26. The Lord will be pleased with any offering-even leaves, flowers, fruits or water

कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥९,२७॥

- 9.27. Dedicate everything that you do to the Lord

समो इहं सर्वभूतेषु ॥९,२९॥

- 9.29. He is alike in all beings (viz. He looks upon all beings in the same way)

न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥९,३१॥

- 9.31. His devotee will never perish

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तः ॥९,३४॥

- 9.34. Let the mind be settled in him exclusively; become his loving devotee

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं ॥१०,२०॥

- 10.10. He will bestow on you the strategy of understanding and deliberation

यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि ॥१०,२५॥

- 10.24. Among all the sacrificial acts, best is the act of repeating the divine name with understanding

अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानाम् ॥१०,३२॥

- 10.32. Among all the branches of learning, best is the branch of knowledge pertaining to the self

निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥११,३३॥

- 11.33. Each of us is but an instrument in the hands of God

समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥१२,१८॥

- 12.18. Be the same for all beings and in all situations and be free from attachment to the results of the actions that you engage in, and also from ego-involvement

देहेऽस्मिन् पुरुषः परः ॥१३,२२॥

- 13.22. In this physical body of ours, the self (ātman) is the supreme

न करोति न लिप्यते ॥१३,३१॥

- 13.31. Whatever is the action seen as performed by the wise man, he does not arrogate the authorship of that action to himself, nor does he get tainted by the results of that action

अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥१४,१८॥

- 14.18. The persons with tāmasa character (ignorant, indolent, passionate, cruel and sensual) will move downward

कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥१५,२॥

- 15.2. In human transactions, actions are pervasive and compelling

पश्यन्ति ज्ञानचक्षुषः ॥१५,१०॥

15.10. They only see who have eyes of wisdom

नैनं पश्यन्त्यचेतसः ॥१५,११॥

15.11. Those who are devoid of understanding will never see God

वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यः ॥१५,१५॥

15.15. God is the only object of knowledge in all scriptures

दैवी सम्पद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता ॥१६,५॥

16.5. The treasures that are spiritual and divine in nature make for liberation, while the treasures that are material and bestial in nature lead to bondage

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते ॥१६,२४॥

16.24. The scriptures must be authentic guides for us in what we must pursue and what we must avoid

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति ॥१७,३॥

17.3. The faith of all the people is according to the nature of their minds

यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥१७,३॥

17.3. The person is what his faith determines him

अनुद्भेगकरं वाक्यम् सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ॥१७,१५॥

- 17.15. One's speech must always refrain from disturbing or hurting others

ॐ तत् सदिति ब्रह्मणो निर्देशः ॥१७,२३॥

- 17.23. The three words that represent the supreme spirit are 'Om' (praṇava), 'That' and 'Real'.

यज्ञदानतपः कर्म न त्याज्यम् ॥१८,५॥

- 18.5. Activities that must never be given up are acts of sacrifice, acts of charity and acts of austerity

यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥१८,११॥

- 18.11. He alone is described as a true renouncer, who renounces the thoughts of rewards for his actions

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः ॥१८,४५॥

- 18.45. People should be engaged in activities that are natural and proper to them

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य ॥१८,४६॥

- 18.46. Worship of God can only be through the activities that are proper and natural to the worshipper

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मः ॥१८,४७॥

18.47. The duty pertaining to the realization of ones own self is the most meritorious.

समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु ॥१८,५४॥

18.54. The enlightened person has the spirit of sameness for all beings

प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥१८,५९॥

18.59. Ones nature will prompt all his actions.

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ॥१८,६१॥

18.61. God abides in the heart of all beings.

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ॥१८,६६॥

18.66. One must give up all interests in material welfare, and seek refuge in God only.

VISHṆU-TĪRTHA'S GĪTĀ-SĀRODDHĀRA (MUKTA - MĀLĀ)

INTRODUCTION

Vishṇu-tīrtha (1756-1806) was a great scholar and a spiritual seeker of eminence. Even as a householder he was known as a 'forest-dwelling saint' (āraṇyākāchārya, aḍavi-āchārya in Kannada). He was born on the Krishna-Janmashtami day in Siddāpur near Savaṇūr (North Kārnataka), and passed away on the Mahāsivarātri day in Mādanur near Kinhal. He studied under Venkaṭarāmachāraya who became a well-known renunciant (Vyāsa-tattvajña, or Aiji-svāmi) in later life (1704-1800). He became famous as an intellectual giant and as a writer of great repute. He lived a life of luxury, till he heard a song of Purandaradāsa calling for a spirit of renunciation and loving devotion to God. He then lived like an avadhūta and later took to sanyās.

A Sanskrit poem in 243 verses called Pāncha-ratna tells us of his life and works. It highlights his renunciation even as a householder (2,24):

प्रविधूय देहवनिताजनताममतां
सतामभिमतं सततम् ।
अवधूतभावमवलम्ब्य मुदा
स जयार्यवर्यचरणः शुशुभे ॥

He wrote numerous monographs and treatises in Sanskrit on Vedānta. But his emphasis was on mystical techniques. He was himself a sādḥaka, and naturally his major concern was with sādhanā. Among his works well known were Bhāgavata sāroddhara, Shodasī, Nyāyasudhā-ṭippaṇi, and Adhyātma-rasa-rañjanī. He was also a sensitive poet, and his many poems and songs (in Kannada) are full of beauty and powerful imagery.

His Gīta Sāroddhāra (also called Mukta-mālā) is a poem in twenty verses. But for the first and last verses (which were his own compositions), the other verses are selected from Bhagavad-gīta itself. He has selected a representative verse from each of the chapters of the Gīta. The first chapter of the text, however, has been omitted, and two verses represent the 18th Chapter. The selection of the verses is significant, and is meant for contemplation. As he says in another selection of his (Bhāgavata), “any one, even of little intelligence, may benefit by constantly thinking about what these few verses alone indicate, even in times of distress.”

कानिचिदेव पद्यानि आपद्यपि सन्ततमनुसन्धनाय अल्पमतीना-
मप्युरपकाराय संगृहीतुकामः

The selection of verses has been made so that even those who do not have the inclination, leisure, opportunity or ability to wade through the entire text of 700 verses, may get an idea of what the text is driving at.

गीतासारोद्धारः (मुक्तमाला)

बुधानामबुधानां वा मोक्षमार्गप्रवेशिनाम् ।
अलङ्कारप्रदीपोऽयं तन्यते रुचिकारकः ॥१॥

1. For those who seek to enter into the path of emancipation, whether they are learned folk or not, here is an ornamental lamp, which will not only shed light but create a taste in spiritual matters

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Two

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥२॥५०॥

2. One who is equipped with understanding will eschew both good and bad in transactional life. What is called yoga is the strategy of understanding and deliberation. It is skillfulness in all action. Therefore yoke yourself to such a strategy (2,50)

तृतीयोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Three

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युद्धचस्व विगतज्वरः ॥३॥३०॥

3. The aspirant, with his mind settled on his own self, will dedicate all his activities to the supreme spirit within his self. One must fight (viz. face the challenges of life), without fever (viz. agitation), devoid of longings and free from egotism (3,30)

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Four

कर्मण्यकर्म य पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥४॥१८॥

4. Engaged in all his activities, he looks upon himself as not doing anything at all; and not doing anything he regards it as useful work (for contemplative life). Such a one indeed is a person of understanding among all men. He has yoked himself to spiritual life; and so doing, he is a doer of all work (4,18)

पञ्चमोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Five

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।

लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥५॥१०॥

5. Dedicating all his activities to the supreme spirit abiding in himself, and devoid of attachment (to the results of activities and to his ego), whoever does anything will not be tainted by the demerits that may be in his actions, even as the lotus-leaf will not get wet by the water it dwells in (5,10)

षष्ठोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Six

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।

श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥६॥४७॥

6. Among all the spiritual practitioners employing the strategy of understanding and deliberation, one who is devoted to the supreme

spirit with perfect faith, and with his inner mind entirely settled in the supreme spirit, is indeed the most perfectly integrated. (6,47)

सप्तमोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Seven

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।

ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ॥७॥२८॥

7. Those fortunate persons who have eliminated completely all their blemishes, engaging themselves in meritorious deeds, and who have also overcome the pair of opposites (love-hate, happiness-misery, gain-loss, victory-defeat etc) will be able to approach God with a firm resolve (7,28)

अष्टमोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Eight

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।

तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥८॥१४॥

8. Easy it is for those who think of God without a break everyday to reach Godhead, for they are constantly engaged in the strategy of understanding and deliberation (8,14)

नवमोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Nine

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥९॥२२॥

9. Here is an assurance that God will undertake to protect and promote the welfare of his devotees who are constantly thinking of him, and who approach him without thinking of anything else (9,22)

दशमोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Ten

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥१०॥१०॥

10. Those who lovingly approach God, constantly thinking about him, are reassured that they will be granted the strategy of understanding perfectly and determining wisely so that they would thereby reach Godhead (10,10)

एकादशोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Eleven

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवं विधोऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परन्तप ॥११॥५४॥

11. It would be possible to know, perceive and enter into God in truth by devotion that is exclusive and absolute (11,54)

द्वादशोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Twelve

मरयेव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।

निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥१२॥८॥

12. Mind must be settled completely in God, the faculty of understanding must be directly wholly towards God; and then, without a doubt, the devotee will thereafter dwell only in God. (12,8)

त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Thirteen

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।

स गुणान् समतीत्यैतान् ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥१४॥२६॥

13. One who approaches God, employing the strategy of devotion that is understanding, exclusive and single-minded, will soon transcend the

guṇas (that characterize transactional existence) and become worthy of becoming one with Brahman (14,26)

चतुर्दशोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Fourteen

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।

अधिष्ठाय मनश्यायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥१५॥१॥

14. The Mind will experience objects of sense, grounding itself on the sense-organs: ears, eyes, organ of touch, tongue and nose (15,9)

पञ्चमदशोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Fifteen

दैवी सम्पद्विमोक्षाय निबन्धायासुरी मता ।

मा शुचः सम्पदः दैवीमभिजातोऽसि पाण्डव ॥१६॥५॥

15. Treasure that is divine and good makes for liberation and freedom, while the treasure that is demoniac and wicked leads to bondage. Arjuna is assured that he is born to the former; and that he need not grieve (16,5)

षोडशोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Sixteen

सत्त्वानुरूपं सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥१७॥३॥

16. For every one, his faith will be in accordance with his mental make-up. For a person is after all filled with faith, and he is as his faith is (17,3)

सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Seventeen

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दन्ति मानवाः ॥१८॥४६॥

17. Human beings secure their fulfilment by worshipping Him, by whom all beings are sustained and by whom all things are pervaded, by engaging themselves in activities that are proper and natural to themselves (18,46)

अष्टादशोऽध्यायः ॥ / Chapter Eighteen

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तु मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥१९॥६४॥

18. The devotee is asked to settle his entire mind on God, to be wholly and lovingly devoted to God, to make offerings to God, and to submit oneself to God with prostration. By doing so, he is assured that he will surely reach God; for he will be dear to God (18,65)

अवधूतशिरोरत्न जयतीर्थर्यनिर्मिता ।

मुक्तमालाऽनुसन्धेया परतत्त्वपरीक्षकैः ॥२०॥

19. This work, the gārland of pearls (mukta-mālā) by name, was prepared by Jayatirtha (The author's name before he become a sanyāsin) who is the crown-jewel among unconventional ascetics; the work must be intently studied by those who are interested in the Supreme Reality.

GĪTĀ IN BĀLI ISLAND

Indonesian republic is a significant detail of greater India. Indian culture had spread in all parts of this area. The two island states, Bāli and Jāvā, preserved Indian literary traditions in a remarkable manner. Besides the great epic Rāmāyaṇa, the two regions have preserved Bhagavad-gītā in their own recensions. The Javanese version has 81 Sanskrit ślokas from Gītā together with 56 Javanese verses (J. Gonda, 1935). The Bāli recension has 87 ślokas of our Gītā of 700 ślokas retained in their original Sanskrit form. But it is significant that chapters 12, 15, 16 and 17 have completely been ignored in this version. It is suggested that this in fact must have been the 'Original Gītā' (N.G. Sardesai). Following is the Gītā text prevalent in Bali. The numbers in brackets at the end of the Sanskrit passages refer to the chapter and verse current among us.

अर्जुन उवाच -

१. दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥ (१, २, ८ first half)
२. न च श्रेयोनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥ (१, ३१)
३. न कांक्ष्ये विजयं कृष्ण न राज्यं सुखानि च ॥ (१, ३२)
४. यदि मामप्रतीकारं अशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रा रणो हन्युः तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥ (१, ४६)

भगवानुवाच -

५. कलैव्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत् त्वरयुपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ (२,३)
६. अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ (२,११)
७. देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।
तथा देहान्तर प्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥ (२,१३)
८. नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ (२,१६)
९. अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥ (२,१८)
१०. य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ (२,१९)
११. स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ (२,३१)
१२. हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥ (२,३७)
१३. कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ (२,४७)
१४. सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ (२,४८ latter half)

१५. श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।
समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥ (२,५३)
१६. प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् ।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्ततदोच्यते ॥ (२,५५)
१७. दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निगहारस्य देहिनः ।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥ (२,५७)
१९. या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥ (३,११)
२०. देवान् भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ (३,११)
२१. यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥ (३,१३)
२२. श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ (३,३५)
२३. बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परन्तप ॥ (४,५)
२४. यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानामधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ (४,५)

२५. जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥ (४,९)
२६. कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।
स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥ (४,१८)
२७. यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।
समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वाऽपि न निबध्यते ॥ (४,२२)
२८. द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।
स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥ (४,२८)
२९. सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ यज्ञे परिसमाप्यते ॥ (४, ३३ latter half)
३०. तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ॥ (४, ३३ former half)
३१. संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात् कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥ (४,५)
३२. योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म न चिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ (५,३ latter half)
३३. सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ (५,७ latter half)
३४. उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
अत्मैव ह्यात्मानो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ (६,५)
३५. एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥ (६,१० latter half)
३६. समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।
संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥ (६,१३)

३७. यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ॥ (६,१८ former half)
३८. यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥ (६,३०)
३९. आत्मोपख्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ (६,३२)
४०. भूमिरोपोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।
अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥ (७,४)
४१. अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥ (७,६ latter half)
४२. मत्तः परतरं नान्यत् किञ्चाचिदस्ति धनञ्जय ।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ (७,७)
४३. रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभाऽस्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।
प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥ (७,८)
४४. पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसो ।
जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥ (७,९)
४५. बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥ (७,१० latter half)
४६. बलं बलवतास्मि कामरागविवर्जितम् ॥ (७,११)
४७. आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥ (७,१६ latter half)
४८. वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥ (७,१९ latter half)

४९. जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥ (७, २९)
५०. अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन् मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥ (८, ५)
५१. तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युद्धय च ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामिवैष्यस्यसंशयः ॥ (८, ७)
५२. सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।
मूर्धन्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणम् ॥ (८, १२)
५३. इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसेऽशुभात् ॥ (९, १)
५४. अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।
मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥ (९, १६)
५५. वेद्यं पवित्रमोँकार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च ॥ (९, १७ latter half)
५६. यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ (९, २७)
५७. आदित्यानामहं विष्णुः ज्योतिषामहमंशुमान् ।
मरीचिर्मरूतामस्मि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी ॥ (१०, २१)
५८. रूद्राणां शाङ्करश्यास्मि वित्तेशो पक्षरक्षसाम् ।
वसूनं पावकश्यास्मि मेरुः शिखरिणामहम् ॥ (१०, २३)

५९. महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम् ॥ (१०, २५ former half)
६०. अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।
गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥ (१०, २६)
६१. उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम् ।
ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ॥ (१०, २७)
६२. आयुधानामहं वज्रः धेनूनामस्मि कामधुक् ।
प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पः सर्पाणामस्मि वासुकिः ॥ (१०, २८)
६३. अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम् ।
पितृणामर्यमा चास्मि यमः संयमतामहम् ॥ (१०, २९)
६४. प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।
मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्या पक्षिणाम् ॥ (१०, ३०)
६५. पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ॥ (१०, ३१ former half)
६६. अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वः सामासिकस्य च ॥ (१०, ३३ former half)
६७. मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहं ऋतूनां कुसुमाकरः ॥ (१०, ३५ latter half)
६८. वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः ।
मुनीनामाप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ॥ (१०, ३७)
६९. नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परन्तप ॥ (१०, ४० former half)
७०. दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥ (११, ८ latter half)

सञ्जय उवाच -

७१. अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाभ्युदतदर्शनम् ।
अनेक दिव्याभरणं दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम् ॥ (११, १०)

अर्जुन उवाच -

७२. यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः
समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति ।
तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा
विशान्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति ॥ (११, २८)

७३. यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पदङ्गा
विशान्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः ।
तथैव नाशाय विशान्ति लोका
स्तावापि वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः ॥ (११, २९)

७४. आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपो ॥ (११, ३२ former half, first part)
भगवानुवाच -

७५. लोकान् समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ॥ (११, ३२ former half, second part)
अर्जुन उवाच -

७६. नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः ॥ (११, ४० former half first part)

भगवानुवाच -

७८. नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेऽज्यया ।
शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥ (११, ५३)

७९. मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।
निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥ (११,५५)
८०. यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते ।
सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथात्मा नोपलिप्यते ॥ (१३,३२)
८१. यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः ।
क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत ॥ (१३,३३)
८२. सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।
ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत ॥ (१४,९)
८३. ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥ (१४,१८)
८४. समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाश्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ (१४,२४)
८५. मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ (१४,२५)
८६. मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।
स गुणान् समातीत्यैतान् ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥ (१४,२६)
८७. सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ (१८,६६)

NAMES OF CHAPTERS IN GĪTĀ

The text of Bhagavad-gītā has 18 chapters. It is included in the epic Mahābhārata (Bhīṣma-parvan, chapters 25-42.) Here the chapters are not named; the colophons at the end of each chapter has only the number.

इति श्रीमहाभारते भीष्मपर्वणि पञ्चविंशाऽ

ध्यायः कृष्णार्जुनसंवादे प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥

But Gītā is most often regarded as an independent scriptural text, and we have in most of the manuscripts colophons giving a name for each chapter, like -

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे

श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादेऽर्जुनविषादयोगो नाम प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥

for the first chapter. But the names for the chapters are not uniform in all manuscripts. There are regional variations (Kashmir, Nepal, Bengal and South India), and the commentators give their names. The names given to the chapters are significant inasmuch as they indicate differences in the perceptions of the contents of the chapters.

Given below are some of the major differences in the names of the chapters. They are abbreviated as follows:

B - Bengal Versions

D - Devanagari MSS

G - Grantha MSS (South India)

K - Kashmir Recensions

M - Malayālam Recensions

N - Nepal Versions (Newari MSS)

S - Śāradā MSS

T - Tañjāvūr Versions

Chapter I : अर्जुनविषादयोगः । (D)
 सैन्यदर्शनयोगः । (D)
 अर्जुनपरिखेदयोगः ॥
 अर्जुनशोकवर्णन उपोद्धातः । (K)

Chapter II : सांख्ययोगः । (D)
 कर्मयोगः । (K)
 इन्द्रियसंयमयोगः ।
 योगशास्त्रनिर्णयः । (G)

गीतासंग्रहार्थप्रकाशः । (K)

Chapter III

: कर्मयोगः ।

कर्मप्रतिष्ठायोगः ।

कर्मप्रशंसायोगः ।

कर्मनिरूपणयोगः । (K)

कर्मब्रह्मज्ञानयोगः । (K)

कर्मनिरूपणयोगः । (K)

कर्मब्रह्मयोगः । (G)

ज्ञाननिष्ठावर्णनम् । (M)

Chapter IV

: ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः ।

कर्मसंन्यासयोगः । (D)

ब्रह्मार्पणयोगः । (K)

ब्रह्मज्ञानप्रशंसायोगः । (K)

ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासविविधयज्ञविभागः । (K)

विवस्वतयोगः । (N)

संन्यासयोगः । (B)

विवस्वदू ज्ञानयोगः । (T)

यज्ञविभागयोगः । (N)

ज्ञानयोगः । (K)

ब्रह्मार्पणयोगः । (M)

- Chapter V : कर्मसंन्यासयोगः ।
योगगर्भः । (S)
योगसमुच्चयः । (B)
संन्यासयोगः । (N)
सांख्ययोगः । (G)
प्रकृतियोगः । (G)
प्रकृतियोगः । (D)
स्वरूपविज्ञानम् । (M)
- Chapter VI : आत्मसंयमयोगः । (K)
ध्यानयोगः । (D)
योगगर्भः । (N)
स्वरूपयोगः । (K)
आत्मयोगः । (G)
अध्यात्मयोगः । (M)
- Chapter VII : ज्ञानविज्ञानयोगः ।
विज्ञानयोगः । (K)
गुणविज्ञानयोगः । (B)
समग्रदर्शनः । (B)
परापरयोगः । (B)
परमसहयोगः । (N)
ज्ञानविज्ञानवर्णनयोगः । (D)
परमहंसविज्ञानब्रह्मयोगः । (T)
परावरप्रकृतियोगः । (G)
ज्ञेयध्येयप्रतिपाद्यत्वब्रह्मनिरूपणम् । (M)

- Chapter VIII : अक्षरब्रह्मयोगः ।
 प्रयाणकालयोगः । (S)
 महापुरुषयोगः । (K)
 अक्षरब्रह्मज्ञानेन परमगतिप्राप्तिनिरूपणम् । (K)
 पुरुषोत्तमयोगः । (D)
 धारणायोगः । (B)
 आत्मयोगः । (N)
 अक्षरब्रह्मयोगः । (TG)
 तारकब्रह्मयोगः । (D)
 अधिकारिभेदेन अक्षरपरब्रह्मविवरणम् । (M)
- Chapter IX : राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगः ।
 राजगुह्यराजयोगः । (K)
 प्रकृतियोगः । (B)
 प्रकृतिपुरुषयोगः । (B)
 आत्मनिर्णययोगः । (D)
 आधिकारिभेदेन राजविद्याराजगुह्ययोगः । (M)
- Chapter X : विभूतियोगः ।
 भगवद्विभूतियोगः । (T)
 स्वैश्वर्ययोगः । (K)
 भगवत्तत्त्वयोगः । (N)
 आधिकारिभेदेन विभूतियोगः । (M)

- Chapter XI : विश्वरूपदर्शनयोगः । (K,N)
 विश्वरूपदर्शननिरूपणम् । (M)
 विश्वरूपाख्यमध्यमप्रमाणनिरूपणम् । (M)
- Chapter XII : भक्तियोगः ।
 भगवद्ध्यानयोगः । (K)
 तत्पदार्थविवेकः । (Nīlakaṇṭha)
 अधिकारिभेदेन भक्तियोगविवरणम् । (M)
- Chapter XIII : क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविभागयोगः ।
 क्षेत्रनिर्देशनः (K)
 क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञदर्शनयोगः । (T)
 पुरुषप्रकृतिविभागयोगः (NK)
 प्रकृतिपुरुषविवेकः । (T)
 क्षेत्रप्रकृतियोगः । (B)
 क्षेत्राभिदर्शनयोगः । (D)
 क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञविवेकः । (M)
- Chapter XIV : गुणत्रयविभागयोगः ।
 भगवत्प्राप्त्युपाययोगः । (T)
 महद्ब्रह्मयोगः । (N)
 प्रकृतिगुणत्रयविभागः । (M)
 गुणातीतत्वनिष्ठा । (M)
- Chapter XV : पुरुषोत्तमयोगः ।

- Chapter XVI : दैवासुरसम्पद्विभागयोगः ।
दैवासुरसम्पत्तिविवेकः । (D)
- Chapter XVII : श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगः ।
श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगविवरणम् । (M)
तत्त्वज्ञानाधिकारः । (K)
श्रद्धादित्रैविध्यनिरूपणम् (Dhanapati)
श्रद्धाविवेकः । (Daivajña-Sūrya-panḍita)
- Chapter XVIII : मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः ।
निर्णयसंन्यासयोगः । (K)
परमार्थनिर्णयः । (K)
ब्रह्मप्राप्तियोगः । (N)
परमार्थनिर्गुणब्रह्मयोगः । (N)
भिन्नसंशययोगः । (B)
सकलवेदशास्त्रपुराणसंग्रहमोक्षयोगः । (T)
सर्वोपनिषदर्थप्रतिपादनमोक्षयोगः । (D)
संन्यासयोगः । (TG)
मोक्षयोगः । (D)
गीतार्थनिष्ठात्रयोपसंहारवर्णनम् । (Sadānanda)
ब्रह्मार्पणसंन्यासयोगः । (Daivajña-Sūrya-Paṇḍita)

PART THREE



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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE GĪTĀ

INTRODUCTION

During my tenure as the Visiting Professor in the Vivekananda Chair of the University of Mysore in 2000-2001. I gave a series of talks on Swami Vivekananda's *Talks on the Gītā* (TG). There was also a discussion group on the subject. I have prepared this monograph, based on the lectures I delivered on the occasion.

Abbreviations:

TG : Talks on the Gītā

CW : Collected Works of Swami Vivekananda

LSV : Lectures of Swami Vivekananda

HOW DOES GĪTĀ BEGIN? AND END?

In the words of Swami Vivekananda (in a talk delivered in San Francisco on May 28, 1900) :

“The opening scene is the battle-field, and both sides see their relatives and friends — one brother on one side and another on the other side, a grandfather on one side, and a grandson on the other side..... When Arjuna sees his own friends and relatives on the other side and knows that he may have to kill them, his heart gives way and he says that he will not fight. Thus begins the Gītā.”

(TG. 46)

The account given above summarizes the entirety of the first chapter; and it accords with how the text begins as included in the epic *Mahābhārata*, (Bhīṣma-Parvan). The traditional approach, however, regards Gītā as a Śāstra (scriptural text, well-planned and deliberately designed to help the seekers achieve the highest values in life). Śamkara, for instance, speaks of ‘tad idam gīta-śāstram’; and Yāmuna-muni ‘gītā-śāstre samīrītam’ and śāstrāvatarāṇam kṛtam’. Its inclusion in the epic is incidental. One must therefore distinguish the text as found in the epic from the śāstra-portion of that text. The beginning (upakrama) and conclusion (upasaṃhāra) of this portion need to be ascertained. An early and authoritative opinion is that the śāstra-portion of Gītā begins with the eleventh verse of the second chapter (‘āśochyān anvaśochams tvam’) and ends with the sixty-sixth verse of the eighteenth chapter (‘sarva-dharmān parityajya’). We find that Swami

Vivekananda also subscribes to this distinction between the epic-text and the scriptural text. According to him, the scriptural text begins with the third verse in the second chapter:

“The Gītā opens with this very significant verse: Arise, O prince ! Give up this faintheartedness, this weakness ! stand up and fight !”

This is a paraphrase of the verse beginning with ‘Klaibyam mā sma gamah’, which is an admonition to give up fear and faintheartedness, the real message of the whole book.

“If one reads this one shloka”, says the Swami, “one gets all the merits of reading the entire Gītā, for in this one shloka lies embedded the whole message of the Gītā.”

(CW IV, 102)

There are many lessons in the Gītā. But “the last and the greatest lesson” (TG, 72) is contained in the fifth verse of the sixth chapter (beginning with ‘uddhared ātmanā’). This, however, does not mark the conclusion of the scriptural text, for the Swami is found to cite also passages from the subsequent chapters. But the Gītā, which is “that wonderful poem, without one note in it of weakness or unmanliness” (LSV, II 361), naturally begins with a lesson in fearlessness and ends with the lesson that “it is a tremendous error to feel helpless” and that “there is only one sin, and that is weakness” (TG. 72 and 73). In between these two ends, spans what the Swami called the two-fold merit of the text: reconciliation of the different paths of dharma (samanvaya) and work without desire or attachment (nishkāma-karma) (TG. 8-9).

“What is needed to attain truth is personal exertion. How can God have mercy on one who is devoid of such exertion ? He who is wanting in manliness is full of tamas (inertia). It was because Arjuna, the bravest of warriors, was going to lose this manliness that Sri-Krishna commanded him to follow the course of life and duty proper to him, so that by fulfilling his duties without attachment to results he might acquire the sattvic qualities-purity of heart, renunciation of work and self-surrender. Be strong. Be manly.”

(LSV, I, 271)

“As the Gītā typifies the struggle for higher things, it is highly poetical to lay the scene in the battle-field. Krishna in the guise of a charioteer to Arjuna, leader of one of the opposing armies, urges him not to be sorrowful, not to fear death, since he knows he is immortal, that nothing which changes can be the real nature of man. Through chapter after chapter, Krishna teaches the higher truths of philosophy and religion to Arjuna. It is these teachings which make this poem so wonderful; practically the whole of the Vedānta philosophy is included in them.”

(CW, 8, 8-9)

“The Gītā opens with this very significant verse : “Arise, O prince! Give up this faintheartedness, this weakness ! Stand up and fight !” Then Arjuna, trying to argue the matter (with Krishna), brings higher moral ideas,

how non-resistance is better than resistance, and so on. He is trying to justify himself, but he cannot fool Krishna. Krishna is the higher Self, or God. He sees through the argument at once. In this case (the motive) is weakness. Arjuna sees his own relatives and he cannot strike them ...

There is a conflict in Arjuna's heart between his emotionalism and his duty. The nearer we are to beasts and birds, the more we are in the hells of emotion. We call it love. It is self-hypnotisation. We are under the control of (our emotions) like animals ... It is not the blind, birdlike emotion that leads to perfection..... (To reach) the eternal consciousness, that is the goal of man ! There emotion has no place, nor sentimentalism, nor anything that belongs to the senses - only the light of pure reason. (There) man stands as spirit.

Now, Arjuna is under the control of his emotionalism. He is not what he should be - a great self-controlled, enlightened sage working through the eternal light of reason. He has become like an animal, like a baby, just letting his heart carry away his brain, making a fool of himself and trying to cover his weakness with the flowery names of "love" and so on. Krishna sees through that. Arjuna talks like a man of little learning and brings out many reasons, but at the same time he talks the language of a fool."

(TG. 47-48)

This, according to the Swami, is the real starting point of the text. All the various lessons of the Gītā are meant to enable us to shake off the faintheartedness and to be awake and manifest the Divinity within.

“This was the great work of Krishna : to clear our eyes and make us look with broader vision upon humanity in its march upward and onward. His was the first heart that was large enough to see Truth in all, his the first lips that uttered beautiful words for each and all.”

(CW I, 437-45)

“The sign of life is strength and growth. The sign of death is weakness. Whatever is weak, avoid. It is death. If it is strength, go down into hell and get hold of it ! There is salvation only for the brave. “None but the brave deserves the fair.” None but the bravest deserves salvation.”

(CW, I, 480)

This is the whole burden of the Gītā, according to the Swami : Cowardice (klaya) leads to destruction, while courage (dhairya) and strength (bala) help achieve perfection (siddhi). It is, therefore, that he summed up his appraisal of the Gītā with these words, with a remarkable condour :

“Stand up and and be strong ! No fear. No superstition. Face the truth as it is ! If death comes – that is the worst of our miseries – Let it come ! We are determined to die in the game. That is all the religion know. I have not attained to it, but I am struggling to do it. I may not, but you may. Go on!”

(CW, I, 480)

II

THE MAN OF SATTVA

The Swami begins his exposition of the Gītā by drawing our attention to Arjuna's grief and despondency (TG. 9 ff):

“Let us now read a little from the second chapter :

संजय उवाच-

तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णकुलेक्षणम् ।

विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥1॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच-

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।

अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥2॥

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परंतप ॥3॥

“Sanjaya said :

“To him who was thus overwhelmed with pity and sorrowing, and whose eyes were dimmed with tears, Madhusudana spoke these words:

The blessed Lord said:

‘In such a strait, whence comes upon thee, O Arjuna, this dejection, un-Arya-like, disgraceful, and contrary to the attainment of heaven?

‘Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha ! I’ll doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faintheartedness and arise, O scorcher of thine enemies!’

After this bare but beautiful translation of the Sanskrit verses, the Swami proceeds to explain its import :

‘In the shlokas beginning with ‘तं तथा कृपयाविष्टं’ – how poetically, how beautifully has Arjuna’s real position been painted ! Then Shri Krishna advises Arjuna. And in the words ‘क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ’ etc. why is he goading Arjuna to fight ? Because it was not that the disinclination of Arjuna to fight arose out of the overwhelming predominance of pure Sattva Guna (quality); it was all Tamas that brought on this unwillingness.

The nature of a man of Sattva Guna is, that he is equally calm in all situations in life – whether it be prosperity or adversity. But Arjuna was afraid, he was overwhelmed with pity. That he had the instinct and inclination to fight is proved by the simple fact that he came to the battlefield with no other purpose than that.

Frequently in our lives also such things are seen to happen. Many people think they are Sāttvika by nature, but they are really nothing but Tamasika. Many, living in an uncleanly way, regard themselves as Paramahamsas. Why? Because the shastras (scriptures) say that Paramahamsas live like one inert, or mad, or like an unclean spirit. Paramahamsas are compared to children, but here it should be understood that the comparison is one-

sided. The Paramahamsa and the child are not one and non-different. They only appear similar, being the two extreme poles, as it were. One has reached to a state beyond Jnana, and the other has not get even an inkling of Jnana.

The quickest and the lowest vibrations of light are both beyond the range of our ordinary vision; but in the one it is intense heat, and in the other it may be said to be almost without any heat. So it is with the opposite qualities of Sattva and Tamas. They seem in some respects no doubt to be the same, but there is a world of difference between them. The Tamoguna loves very much to array itself in the garb of Sattva. Here in Arjuna, the mighty warrior, it has come under the guise of Daya (Pity)!

In order to remove this delusion which had overtaken Arjuna, what did the Bhagavan (Lord) say ? As I always preach that you should not decry a man by calling him a sinner but that you should draw his attention to the omnipotent power that is in him, in the same way does the Bhagavan speak to Arjuna.

नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते – It doth not befit thee. Thou art that Atman imperishable, beyond all evil. Having forgotten the real nature, thou hast, by thinking thyself a sinner, as one afflicted with bodily evils and mental grief – thou hast made thyself so – this doth not befit thee.

So says the Bhagavan : क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ- yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha. There is in the world neither sin

nor misery, neither disease nor grief; if there is anything in the world which can be called sin, it is this - "fear". Know that any work which brings out the latent power in thee, is Punya (virtue); and that which makes thy body and mind weak is verily sin. Shake off this faintheartedness !"

This indeed is a powerful plea to gird up ones loins and march towards the goal of spiritual perfection, to which every one is eligible: There are several important issues that the Swami raises here. The description in the original verse of Arjuna as overwhelmed with compassion (kṛpayāviṣṭa) is taken by the Swami to represent the expression of Tamas although in the guise of Sattva. The three guṇas permeate the entire universe and also the individual beings. Sattva is knowledge, reason, light, goodness and peace. Rajas is activity, energy, passion, excitement and unrest. Tamas is ignorance, darkness, evil, sloth, torpor, inability to see correctly or employ reason. The Swami regards Sattva and Tamas as opposite qualities, although they appear alike. Sattva is calmness, while Tamas is indolence; they are the same in external appearances. But the sources of similar manifestation are very different. One may easily be mistaken for the other. The sorrow of Arjuna born out of compassion may indeed be seen as virtuous, or as an aspect of dharma ('dayā sarva-bhuteshu', compassion for all creatures.) But the ground of this compassion is only ignorance of reality, inability to use reason and refusal to fulfil ones obligations. It is therefore only Tamas, and by no means Sattva. To permit Tamas to masquerade as Sattva is what Krishna opposes.

The example that the Swami gives is a familiar description of the avadhūta who for all appearances lives and moves about as a mere child (bāla), as a lunatic (unmatta) or as a foul spirit (piśācha). The plane of reality in which an avadhūta operates is altogether different from the plane in which we ordinarily function. In usual transactions, a normal adult behaves very differently from children, lunatics and foul spirits, which are either subnormal and abnormal. They are either ignorant of, or defy, the norms of conduct relevant to all of us; and we judge them accordingly as outside normalcy. An avadhūta, who is evolved spiritually and has transcended the rules that govern normal transaction, may at first sight be perceived as abnormal or mad. But he has only risen above the guṇas of rajas and tamas that characterize normal behaviour, and has filled his whole being with sattva. That is why the Gīta describes him as awake where others are asleep, and as asleep where others are awake. The motives, attitudes, the mental sets and the powers of vision of an avadhūta are altogether different from those of the common human beings.

Arjuna was not meant by destiny to behave like an ordinary mortal, guided solely by rajas and tamas. His natural quality was sattva coupled with rajas: reason, wisdom, goodness, clear vision, energy for right action. But on this particular occasion, tamas overwhelmed his whole being, blocking out sattva and rajas. Hence his sorrow (vishāda), compassion that was misplaced, and refusal to do his duty. This was not in keeping with his constitution, past history, nature of social role. Hence, Krishna says “This does not befit you” (‘na tvayi etad upapadyate’). He refers to Arjuna being

under the control of emotionalism, as pointed out by the Swami. Arjuna was the sage Nara, and he should have been “the great self-controlled, enlightened sage working through the eternal light of reason”(TG 48). To this extent, Krishna was disappointed, and his words of beratement are to be ascribed to this cause: “This is unbecoming of thee”. The Swami takes a clue from this admonition and gives his own fervent and eloquent message.

“If you, my sons, can proclaim this message to the world (‘क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ’) -then all this disease, grief, sin and sorrow will vanish from off the face of the earth in three days. All these ideas of weakness will be nowhere. Now it is everywhere. This current of the vibration of fear. Reverse the current; bring in the opposite vibration, and behold the magic transformation! thou art omnipotent- go, go to the mouth of the cannon, fear not. Hate not the most abject sinner, look not to his exterior. Turn thy gaze inward, where resides the Paramatman (Supreme Self). Proclaim to the whole world with trumpet voice, “There is no sin in thee, there is no misery in thee; thou art the reservoir of omnipotent power. Arise, awake, and manifest the Divinity within !” (TG 12)

III THE WHOLE SECRET

न मे पार्थस्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
 नानवाप्तव्यमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥
 यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
 मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

(3,22-23)

The Swami's translation of the above verses, which he cites during his lecture in California on April 1, 1900, is more in the nature of a brief paraphrase:

“Behold, I am the Lord of the universe. I have no duty. Every duty is a bondage. But I work for work's sake. If I ceased to work for a minute (there would be chaos)”.

(CW. I 437-45)

The context in which the above paraphrase occurs is the understanding that “it is our own mental attitude which makes the world what it is for us” (TG. 21), and “learning to see things in the proper light” (ibid). The Swami, who wants us to believe in this world, for there is meaning behind everything, declares that “everything in the world is good, is holy and beautiful”. He further says that “if you see something evil, think that you

are not understanding it in the right light” (ibid). The perspective inspires us to work. “Work day and night”, says the Swami before the verses in question are taken up.

In another context, however, a more literal translation of the first of the above verses occurs (in a lecture delivered in San Francisco on May 29, 1900):

“Behold, Arjuna, there is nothing that I do not possess and nothing that I want to acquire. And yet I continue to work? If I stopped work for a moment, the whole universe would (be destroyed)”.

The last sentence is the rendering of the verse 24 of the same chapter, beginning with the words ‘utsīdeyur ime lokāḥ’. The import of the verse 23 has not been indicated either here or in the paraphrase quoted above.

The above verse is taken by the Swami alongside two verses in the third chapter (21- 21), which emphasize the necessity for role models in society.

लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥
यद्यदाचरतिश्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

“Even if you have known the secret that you have no duty, that you are, free, still you have work for the good of others.

Because whatever a great man does, ordinary people will do also. If a great man who has attained peace of mind and freedom ceases to work, then all the rest without the knowledge and peace will try to imitate him, and thus confusion would arise.”

(TG. 57-58)

An important idea in this connection is that of ‘loka-samgraha’, which signifies working for the welfare of others, accomplishing the good of the society, engaging oneself in social service. The expression occurs twice in the Gīta (3, 20 and the import of 25). The Swami has translated the latter reference thus :

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥

“That which the ignorant do with desire for results and gain, let the wise do without any attachment and without any desire for results and gain.”

In this translation, the idea of ‘loka-sangraha’ has been omitted, probably because it has already occurred in the translation of the earlier verse. The expression ‘loka’ in loka-sangraha refers to the common people, whose values in life are but three-fold: fulfilment of desires (kāma), acquisition of wealth (artha), and virtuous living (dharma), together called tri-varga. The goal of salvation or emancipation (moksha) is excluded from them. The normal tendency is to lay emphasis on the first two values, kāma and artha, often to the detriment of dharma, thus resulting in chaos and

tension. To save people from such catastrophe is indicated by the expression 'loka-sangraha'. It effectively signifies leading and guiding the common folk in the path of dharma. In order to accomplish this task, which devolves on the wise as their bounden duty, the wise should themselves perform all the actions (in accordance with dharma) that are expected from the common folk (in order to preserve social peace and well-being). But the wise would engage themselves in such actions, altogether without any desire for results of attachment with actions. The guidance from the wise comes not so much by preaching as by providing a role-model. It is also important that the wise should refrain from unsettling the minds and lives of the ignorant folk by suggesting changes which they are not capable of adopting. Krishna says (3,26):

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसंगिनाम् ।
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान् युक्तः समाचरन् ॥

The Swami translates :

“Even if you have knowledge, do not disturb the childlike faith of the ignorant. On the other hand, go to their level and gradually bring them up.”

and adds :

“That is a very powerful idea, and it has become the ideal in India. That is why you can see a great philosopher going into the temple and worshipping images. It is not hypocrisy.”

The Swami invites our attention to another passage in the Gītā (9,23):

येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयाऽन्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥

and translates it as follows, adding an explanation :

“Even those who worship deities are really worshipping me.”
It is God-incarnate whom man is worshipping, would God be angry if you called Him by the wrong name? He would be no God at all! Can’t you understand that whatever a man has in his own heart is God-even if he worships a stone? What of that?”

“We will understand more clearly if we once get rid of the idea that religion consists in doctrines... In India religion means realisation, nothing else. It does not matter whether one approaches the destination in a carriage with four horses, in an electric car, or rolling on the ground. The goal is the same... For the Indians (the goal) is how to become what they really are, to regain their lost Selfhood.” For, after all, the Gītā says that the individual’s natural aptitudes and altitudes are what matter (3, 33)”:

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥

The Swami translates the verse tersely as follows :

“Nature will have her way. What can suppression do?” and comments :

“That is a terrible (statement) in the Gītā. It seems it may be a vain struggle after all. You may have a hundred thousand (urges competing) at the same time. You may repress (them), but the moment the spring rebounds, the whole thing is there again. (But there is hope). If you are powerful enough, you can divide your consciousness into twenty parts all at the same time... Mind grows. That is what the Yogis say... We must be masters of the situation at its very root, as it were.”

(TG. 36)

The Swami suggests that the view that nature will have her way is the idea of the Mīmāṃsakas, and that it is not correct :

“There is another idea in this philosophy which is according to your modern ideas. Man is a slave of nature, and slave eternally he has got to remain. We call it Karma. Karma means law, and it applies everywhere. Everything is bound by Karma. “Is there no way out?” No ! Remain slave all through the years - fine slaves. We will manipulate the words so that you will only have the good and not the bad side of it.” That was the ideal of (the Mimamsakas). These are the ideals which are popular throughout the ages.”

(TG. 34)

He then projects the view of the Upanishads which are “diametrically opposite in all their conclusions.”

“The idea that you are all bound by the law of Karma, the Upanishads admit, but they declare the way out. The goal of man is to go beyond law. And enjoyment can never be the goal, because enjoyment can only be in nature.”

(ibid. 35)

“The Upanishads point out that the goal of man is neither misery nor happiness, but we have to be masters of that out of which these are manufactured.”

(ibid. 36)

He further holds that no work, done by the common folk, need be dismissed as secular and lacking in spiritual merit. “All work is sacred, all work is worship” (LSV, II, 420). The saints, however, know the secret of not being bound by what they do, and it is such people that must show the way for others. “Only the unimpassioned and unattached do most for the world” (ibid)

IV NATURE AND SPIRIT

As Arjuna's friend, philosopher and guide, Krishna points out that Arjuna is under the control of emotionalism, and that it is therefore that his reasoning faculty has become blurred. To analyse the nature and source of this emotionalism, the Swami takes up the verses in the seemed chapter (11-13), which really mark the beginning of the Gītā.

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
 गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥
 न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
 न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥
 देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।
 तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥

The Swami translates the verses as follows :

“The sage is not sorry for those that are living nor for those that die. Krishna says : You cannot die, nor can I. There was never a time when we did not exist. There will never be a time when we shall not exist. As in this life, a man begins with childhood and (passes through youth and old age, so at death he merely passes into another kind of body). Why should a wise man be sorry?”

(TG. 48)

He then proceeds to analyse the source of this emotionalism, which clouds one's reason and makes him miserable. He points to the next verse in the same chapter as containing the needed explanation.

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्ण सुखदुःखदाः ।
 आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥
 (2,14)

His translation and comments are :

“It is the touch of the senses that brings all the quality of existence: heat and cold, pleasure and pain. They come and go.”

“And where is the beginning of this emotionalism that has got hold of you? It is in the senses Man is miserable this moment, happy the next. As such he cannot experience the nature of the soul.”

(TG. 48-49)

The Swami links this up with another passage in the text which comes later on and which speaks of the nature of the soul beyond the senses. The beings are what they are because of the Self that is within them. The beings transact with the world through the sense-faculties; ‘the touch of the senses’ is essential for what the Swami calls ‘this quality of existence’. But the Self is the continuous ground of the beings before birth and after death. The beings are seen only in the present, owing to the ‘touch of senses.’

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥

(2,28)

The Swami's rendering in English of this verses :

“Beings are unknown to our human senses before birth and after death. It is only in the interim that they are manifest. What is there to grieve about?”

(TG. 50)

आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेनमाश्चर्यवद्ब्रूदति तथैव चान्यः ।
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति शृत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥

(2,29)

“Some look at It (the self) with wonder. Some talk of It as wonderful. Others hear of It as wonderful. Others, hearing of It, do not understand.”

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥
अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥
अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य ब्रह्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥

(2,16-18)

The Swami translates the three verses together in a passage :

“Existence can never be non-existence, neither can non-existence ever become existence... Know, therefore, that which provides all this universe

is without beginning or end, It is unchangeable. There is nothing in the universe that can change (the changeless). Though this body has its beginning and end, the dweller in the body is infinite and without end. Knowing this, stand up and fight.”

(TG. 49)

and gives a call to fight almost in Krishna’s own words :

“This bending the knee to superstitions, this selling yourself to your own mind does not befit you, my soul. You are infinite, deathless, birthless. Because you are infinite spirit, it does not befit you to be a slave... Arise, stand up and fight! Die if you must. There is none to help you. You are all the world. Who can help you?”

(TG. 49-50)

The Swami explains the significance of the knowledge of the Self to Arjuna’s own problem of emotionalism. The sure cure for emotionalism is the performance of ones duties devoid of ego-involvement and expectation of rewards. He quotes another verse, a well-known one, from the Gītā (2,38), before commenting on its import.

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥

“Making pleasure and misery the same, making success and defeat the same, do thou stand up and fight!”

“This is the beginning of another peculiar doctrine of the Gītā - the doctrine of non-attachment. That is to say, we have to bear the result of our own actions because we attached ourselves to them...

बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ।

“Only what is done as duty for duty’s sake... can scatter the bondage of Karma.” (2,39)

“There is no danger that you can overdo it...”

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥

“If you do even a little of it, this Yoga will save you from the terrible round of birth and death.” (2,40)

Intimately connected with the doctrine of non-attachment is the value of the mind that is perfectly concentrated and that is withdrawn from mundane interests:

“That is another great lesson. Spirituality can never be attained unless all material ideas are given up... what is in the senses? The senses are all delusion. People wish to retain them (in heaven) even after they are dead - a pair of eyes, a nose. Some imagine they will have more organs than they have now. They want to see God sitting on a throne through all eternity - the material body of God... Such men’s desires are for the body, for food and drink and enjoyment. It is the materialistic

life prolonged. Men cannot think of anything beyond this life. The life is all for the body.”

(TG. 51)

The Swami quotes verses 41 to 44 from the same chapter :

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।
 बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्ध्योऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥
 यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।
 वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ॥
 कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।
 क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥
 भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयाऽपहतचेतसाम् ।
 व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥

“Know, Arjuna, the mind that succeeds is the mind that is concentrated. The minds that are taken up with two thousand subjects (have) their energies dispersed. Some can talk flowery language and think there is nothing beyond the Vedas. They want to go to heaven. They want good things through the power of the Vedas, and so they make sacrifices... such a man never comes to that concentration which leads to freedom.”

(TG. 50-51)

and comments : “Such will never attain any success (in spiritual life) unless they give up all these materialistic ideas” (TG. 51). In this connection, the Swami notes that the Gītā wants us to go beyond the Vedas (2,45):

त्रैगुण्यविषया वैदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
 निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥

“The Vedas only teach things belonging to the three Gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.” The Vedas only teach about things in nature. People cannot think anything they do not see on earth. If they talk about heaven, they think of a king sitting on a throne, of people burning incense. It is all nature, nothing beyond nature. The Vedas, therefore, teach nothing beyond nature. “go beyond nature, beyond the dualities of existence, beyond your own consciousness, caring for nothing, neither for good nor for evil.”

(TG. 51-52)

The Swami explains that our commitment to nature (to the dualities) is due to the fact that “we have identified ourselves with our bodies.”

We are only body, or rather possessed of a body... All this chain of misery, imaginations, animals, gods, and demons, everything, the whole world - all this comes from the identification of ourselves with the body... we cannot give up the idea (of body). We are earth-bound... our ideas are burial grounds”

(TG, 52)

“According to our Indian system, there are two existences : nature on the one side and the Self, the Atman, on the other. By the word nature is meant not only all this external world, but also our bodies, the mind, the will, even down to what says

“I”. Beyond all this is the infinite life and light of the soul - the Self, the Atman... According to this philosophy, the Self is entirely separate from nature, always was, and always will be... there never was a time when the spirit could be identified even with the mind.

The reality in nature is spirit. Reality itself - the light of the spirit - moves and speaks and does everything (through our bodies, minds, etc.) It is the energy and soul and life of the spirit that is being worked upon in different ways by matter... The Spirit is the cause of all our thoughts and body-action and everything; but it is untouched by good or evil, pleasure or pain, heat or cold, and all the dualism of nature, although it lends its lights to everything.”

(TG. 61-62)

The above explanation is with reference to the twenty-seventh verse in the third chapter, which traces our misery to our ego-involvement and illusory appropriation of authorship of all that really happens in nature :

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥

“Therefore, Arjuna, all these actions are in nature. Nature... is working out her own laws in our bodies and minds. We identify ourselves with nature and say ‘I am doing this’ This way delusion seizes us.”

V

NON-ATTACHMENT

Not allowing the spirit to attach itself to the things and actions of nature is the real import of the doctrine of non-attachment, which is the burden of the Gītā. One must act, but act in such a way that the action does not constitute a bondage. This is the mystery of seeing inaction in action and action in inaction. It must be remembered that Krishna preached this in the midst of the battle-field; as the Swami comments :

“Each one of the prophets is the best commentary on his own teaching.”

(TG. 44)

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।
स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥

(4,18)

“He who finds in the midst of intense activity the greatest rest, and in the midst of the greatest rest intense activity, he has become a Yogi. He alone is a real worker, none else.”

(TG, 24)

The Swami links this spirit of non-attachment to the mystery of nature:

“When we come to that non-attachment, then we can understand the marvellous mystery of the universe : how it is intensest activity and vibration, and at the same time the intensest peace and calm; how it is work every moment and rest every moment. That is the mystery of the universe - the impersonal and personal in one, the infinite and finite in one. Then we shall find the secret.”

(ibid. 23-24)

The spirit of non-attachment is doing nothing with the idea of “mine”. It is duty for duty’s sake, work for work’s sake. Kṛṣṇa admonishes:

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूः मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

(2,47)

“To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof.”

The Swami adds to this translation :

“The soldier works for no results. He does his duty” and interestingly comments.

(TG. 24)

“Kṛṣṇa shows us the lower ways and methods. The easiest way for everyone is to do (his or her) work, and not take the

results. It is our desire that binds us. If we take the results of actions, whether good or evil, we will have to bear them. But if we work, not for ourselves, but all for the glory of the Lord, the results will take care of themselves.”

The Swami prescribes a praxis of graded eligibility. (TG. 24-25)

“If you are strong, take up Vedanta philosophy and be independent; if you cannot do that, worship God; if not, worship some image; if you lack strength even to do that, do some good work without the idea of gain; offer everything you have unto the services of the Lord.”

It is in this sense that non-attachment is a lower way, an easier method. One must, says the Swami, fight on. It does not matter how little one can offer to the Lord as his service. Indeed, Krishna himself says (9, 26):

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥

“Leaves and water and one flower - whosoever lays anything on my altar, I receive it with equal delight.”

(TG. 25)

Further, the Swami provides a reassurance (ibid) :

“If you cannot do anything, not a single good work, then take refuge (in the Lord).”

None can plead his inability to do at least this much. And this has a philosophical and doctrinal basis as its rationale. For it is said (18, 61-62) :

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
 भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥
 तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
 तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥

“The Lord resides within the heart of beings, making them turn upon his wheel. Do thou with all thy soul and heart, and take refuge in Him!”

A little later on, he explains how the Lord appears as a Guru to teach this lesson :

“If He comes to me, I can only recognize Him if he takes a human form. He is everywhere, but do we see Him? We can only see Him if He takes the limitation of man. If men and animals are manifestations of God, these teachers of mankind are leaders, are Gurus.”

(TG. 27; CW I 445)

This is another face of non-attachment : “Attach yourselves to the Lord and to nothing else, because everything else is unreal. Attachment to the unreal will bring misery” (TG. 23). Non-attachment is also directly related to the vision or perfect understanding that the God is one universal presence in all beings and in everything.

“If there is anything in the Gītā that I like, it is these two verses, coming out strong as the very gist, the very essence of Krishna’s teaching-

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।
 विनश्यत्स्त्वविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥
 समं पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितम् ।
 न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥

(13, 27-28)

“He who sees the supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, the Imperishable in things that perish, he sees indeed. For seeing the Lord as the same everywhere present, he does not destroy the self by the Self, and thus, he goes to the highest goal.”

(CW III 28; TG. 13)

The Swami discusses at length the nature of non-attachment, which renders the will of an individual ‘established’ (sthita-prajña) :

“Who can work without attachment? That is the real question. Such a man is the same whether his work succeeds or fails. His heart does not give me one false beat even if his whole life-work is burnt to ashes in a moment?

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।
 जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥ (2,51)

“This is the sage who always works for work’s sake without caring for the results. Thus he goes beyond the pain of birth and death. Thus he becomes free.”

(T4.53)

“This he sees that this attachment is all delusion. The self can never be attached... Then he goes beyond all the scriptures, and philosophies (2.52)-

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य च श्रुतस्य च ॥

If the mind is deluded and pulled into a whirlpool by books and scriptures, what is the good of all these scriptures? One says this, another says that. What book shall you take? Stand alone! See the glory of your own soul, and see that you will have to work. Then you will become a man of firm will” (2,53)-

श्रुतिविप्रपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।
समाधावचला बद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥

VI MAN OF ESTABLISHED WILL

Immediately thereafter, the crux of matter, the nature and characteristics of the person who has perfected his spiritual development are taken up by the Swami (2,54 ff):

Arjuna asks: “who is a person of established will?”

अजुन उवाच -

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्तस्य केशव ।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत ब्रजेत किम् ॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच-

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् ।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥

The answers given by Kṛṣṇa are paraphrased by the Swami, and presented along with own comments:

“(Krishna answers:) ‘The man who has given up all his desires, who desires nothing, not even this life, nor freedom, nor goods, nor work, nor anything’. When he has become perfectly satisfied, he has no more cravings. He has seen the glory of the self and has found that the world, and the gods, and heaven are... within his own Self. Then the gods became no gods, death becomes no death; life becomes no life. Everything has changed. ‘A man is said to be (illumined) if his will has become firm, if his mind is not disturbed by misery, if he does not desire any happiness, if he is free of all (attachment), of all fear, of all anger...’

‘As the tortoise can draw in his legs, and if you strike him, not one foot comes out, even so the sage can draw all his sense-organs inside’, and nothing can force them out. Nothing can shake him, no temptation or anything. Let the universe tumble about him, it does not make one single ripple in his mind.”

“Then comes a very important question. Sometimes people fast for days... When the worst man has fasted for twenty days,

he becomes quite gentle. Fasting and torturing themselves have been practised by people all over the world. Krishna's idea is that this is all nonsense. He says that the senses will for the moment recede from the man who tortures himself, but will emerge again with twenty times more (power)... What should you do? The idea is to be natural - no asceticism. Go on, work, only mind that you are not attached. The will can never be fixed strongly in the man who has not learnt and practised the secret of non-attachment."

(TG 53-54)

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥

(2,69)

"Where it is dark night for the (sense-bound) world, the self-controlled (man) is awake. It is daylight for him ...And where the world is awake, the sage sleeps". Where is the world awake? In the senses. People want to eat and drink and have children, and then they die a dog's death... They are always awake for the senses. Even their religion is just for that. They invent a God to help them, to give them more women, more money, more children - never a god to help them become more godlike!

"Where the whole world is awake, the sage sleeps. But where the ignorant are asleep, there the sage keeps awake" -

in the world of light where man looks upon himself not as a bird, not as an animal, not as a body, but as infinite spirit, deathless, immortal. There, where the ignorant are asleep, and do not have time, nor intellect, nor power to understand, there the sage is awake. That is daylight for him.”

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।

तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥ (2,70)

“As all the rivers of the world constantly pour their waters into the ocean, but the ocean’s grand, majestic nature remains undisturbed and unchanged, so even though all the senses bring in sensations from nature, the ocean-like heart of the sage knows no disturbance, knows no fear.” Let miseries come in millions of rivers and happiness in hundreds. I am no slave to misery ! I am no slave to happiness!”

(CW. I, 465-466: TG 55-56)

VII

KARMA-YOGA

The contents of the third chapter of the Gītā, which treats principally of Karma-yoga, is taken up by the Swami for a fairly elaborate treatment in a lecture that he delivered in San Francisco on May 29, 1900. According to him,

“Gītā teaches Karma-yoga. We should work through yoga (concentration). In such concentration in action (Karma-yoga), there is no consciousness of the lower ego present. The consciousness that I am doing this and that is never present when one works through Yoga.”

(TG. 77-78)

The Swami begins by translating Arjuna's question (3,1), and explains the implications of Karma-Yoga. The six verses in the words of Krishna are freely translated by him together in a long passage:

अर्जुन उवाच-

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।

तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच-

लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयाऽनघ ।
ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।
इन्द्रियार्थान् विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्याऽरभतेऽर्जुन ।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायोऽह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्राऽपि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥

(Sri Krishna): “From ancient times these two systems have come down to us. The Sankhya philosophers advance the theory of knowledge. The Yogis advance the theory of work. But none can attain peace by renouncing actions. None in this life can stop activity even for a moment. Nature’s qualities (Gunas) will make him act. He who stops his activities and at the same time is still thinking about them attains to nothing: he only becomes a hypocrite... But he who by the power of his mind gradually brings

his sense-organs under control, employing them in work, that man is better, Therefore do thou work...”

(TG 57)

लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ।
यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठः तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

(3,20-21)

‘Even if you have known the secret that you have no duty, that you are free, still you have to work for the good of others. Because whatever a great man does, ordinary people will do also. If a great man who has attained peace of mind and freedom ceases to work, then all the rest without that knowledge and peace will try to imitate him, and thus confusion would arise.’

(TG. 57-58)

Closely connected with the injunction to work is the insistence that each one has his own work to do. Gītā calls it ‘sva-dharma’. Here is Swami Vivekānanda’s explanation of this concept:

“According to Krishna, we are not new beings just come into existence. Our minds are not new minds... In modern times we all know that every child brings (with him) all the past, not only of humanity, but of the plant life. There are all the past chapters, and this present chapter, and there are a whole lot of

future chapters before him. Everyone has his path mapped and sketched and planned out for him.

And in spite of all this darkness, there cannot be anything uncaused, no event... no circumstance... It is simply our ignorance. The whole infinite chain of causation... is bound one link to another back to nature. The whole universe is bound by that sort of chain. It is the universal (chain of) cause and effect, you receiving one link, one part, I another... And that (part) is our own nature.

Now Sri Krishna says: ‘Better die in your own path than attempt the path of another’ (3,35):

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः॥

This is my path, and I am down here. And you are way up there, and I am always tempted to give up my path, thinking I will go there and be with you. And if I go up, I am neither there nor here.

We must not lose sight of this doctrine. It is all (a matter of) growth. Wait and grow, and you attain everything, otherwise there will be (great spiritual danger). Here is the fundamental secret of teaching religion.”

(CW I, 467-80, TG. 64-65)

From this, the Swami takes off to talk about organized religion which is against religion itself. He warns the one who wants to be religious to avoid entering into the gate of any organized religion (TG. 66). He counsels that the implication of 'sva-dharma' is to stick to ones own natural religion:

“They (the organized religions) do a hundred times more evil than good, because they stop the growth of each individual's development. Study everything, but keep your own seat firm. If you take my advice, do not put your neck into this trap (As) the bee culling honey from many flowers remains free, not bound by any flower, be not bound.

Enter not the door of any organized religions. (Religion) is only between you and your God, and no third person must come between you. Think what these organized religions have done! What Napoleon was more terrible than these religious persecutions?

If you and I organize, we begin to hate every person. It is better not to love, if loving only means hating others. That is no love. That is hell! If loving your own people means hating everybody else, it is the quintessence of selfishness and brutality, and the effect is that it will make you all brutes. Therefore, better die working out your own natural religion than following another's natural religion, however great it may appear to you.”

(TG. 66-67)

The Swami agrees with the Gītā that Karma-yoga has a hoary past and a great tradition (4, 1-3) :

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।
विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुर्िक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥
एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परन्तप ॥

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः परातनः ।
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥

“This Yoga I taught in ancient times (to Vivaswān; Vivaswān taught it to Manu)Thus it was that the knowledge descended from one king to another. But in time this great Yoga was destroyed. That is why I am telling it to you again today.”

(TG, 67)

अर्जुन उवाच-

अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।
कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच-

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परन्तप ॥
अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥ (4,4-6)

“Then Arjuna asks, “Why do you speak this ? You are

a man born only the other day, and (Vivaswan was born long before you). What do you mean that you taught him?"

Then Krishna says : 'O Arjuna, you and I have run the cycle of births and deaths many times, but you are not conscious of them all. I am without beginning, birthless, the absolute Lord of all creation. I through my own nature take form.'

(TG. 68)

The significance of the teaching of Karma-Yoga in the Gītā is the divine assurance that dharma will prevail, that the good folk will be protected (4, 7-8) :

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदाऽत्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

"Whenever virtue subsides and wickedness prevails, I come to help mankind. For the salvation of the good, for the destruction of wickedness, for the establishment of spirituality I come from time to time."

(TG. 68)

This divine descent is illustrated in any great soul that arises and in any great act that is accomplished anywhere in the world. In every instance of extraordinary power and magnificence (10, 41) one must perceive the appearance of God.

यद्यद् विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशसंभवम् ॥

The Swami's translation of this verse links it up with the two verses cited above.

“Whenever the virtue subsides and irreligion prevails, I come down. Again and again I come. Therefore, whenever thou seest a great soul struggling to uplift mankind, know that I am come”

(TG. 26, CW, I, 444)

The coming may be in any form : Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Zarathushtra, Śamkara or Śrī-Ramakrihna. And there is no room for dissensions, prejudices or schism. What they preached needs to be followed:

“A Hindu devotee would say : It is God himself who become Christ and Krishna and Buddha and all these (great teachers). A Hindu philosopher would say : These are the great souls; they are already free. And though free, they refuse to accept their liberation while the whole world is suffering: They come again and again and help mankind. They know from their childhood what they are and what they come for... they do not come through bondage like we do... They come out of their own free will.”

(CW, I, 45, TG. 26)

Here is an excellent statement of the Bodhisattva ideal. The perfectly enlightened individual can easily pass into the final Nirvāṇa. But he is distinguished by his great concern and compassion for the suffering mankind, and defers his own Nirvāṇa until others are helped in their spiritual perfection so as to enable them to pass into Nirvāṇa. Bodhi (perfect enlightenment, the liberating knowledge) is the very essence (sattva) of these individuals. Bodhi makes them eligible to Nirvāṇa, but they prefer to remain in the cycle of births and deaths, and guide other seekers to the ultimate welfare.

VII

MANY PATHS

The secret of Karma-Yoga is work without attachment. The Gītā cites the example of the celebrated ruler of Mithila, Janaka, as the ideal Karma-Yogi. The Swami explains that this involves not indifference but great love.

“The true Nishkāma-Karmi (performer of work without desire) is neither to be like a brute, nor to be inert, nor heartless. He is not Tamasika but of pure Sattva. His heart is so full of love and sympathy, that he can embrace the whole world with his love. The world at large cannot generally comprehend his all-embracing love and sympathy.”

(TG. 8) (CW 8, 22)

He is truly religious in the sense that “religion is the realization of the spirit as spirit, and not as we do now realising spirit as matter” (TG. 59-60). But this realisation may take many forms, and no one form can alone be credited with correctness. Swami Vivekananda frankly dismisses the claims of any organized religion as the sole custodian of truth and salvation.

“If you (can realize Brahman) by standing on your head, or on one foot, or by worshipping five thousand gods with three

heads each - welcome to it ! Do it any way you can! Nobody has any right to say anything. Therefore, Krishna says, if your method is better and higher, you have no business to say that another man's method is bad, however wicked you may think it.

Again, we must consider, religion is a (matter of) growth... Two thousand years ago a man saw God. Moses saw God in a burning bush. Does what Moses did when he saw God save you? No man's seeing God can help you that least bit except that it may excite you and urge you to do the same thing. That is the whole value of the ancient's examples. Nothing more. (Just) signposts on the way. No man's eating can satisfy another man. No man's seeing God can save another man. You have to see God yourself...

(In India) it has come down as a tradition that if there is God, He must be your God and my God.

To whom does the sun belong ! You say uncle Sam is everybody's uncle. If there is a God, you ought to be able to see Him."

(TG. 60-60)

As it has already been said, the Gītā admonishes that no wise man may disturb the childlike faith of the ignorant. There are many paths to reach the Godhead. "Blame no religion so far as it is sincere. Hold on

to one of these links, and it will pull you to the centre. Your heart will teach all the rest” (TG. 19). Krishna has “no condemnation for anything. It is better to do something than to stand still. The man who begins to worship God will grow by degrees and begin to love God for love’s sake” (ibid, 20-21). The Swami draws our attention to the assurance of Krishna (4, 11) :

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः

and also (7, 21) :

ये ये यां यां तनूँ भक्तः श्रद्धयाऽर्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥

He translates the two verses together in the constructive manner :

“None can go a day out of my path. All have to come to me. Whosoever wants to worship in whatsoever form, give him faith in that form, and through that I meet him”

(ibid, 20)

“Worship leads to the same goal. Krishna lays great stress upon worship. Worship God ! Various sorts of worship we see in this world.”

(ibid)

Religion in India is essentially an individual affair. Even the vision of God is only within ones own heart. God is no doubt the creator of the

universe, all-pervasive and transcendental, beyond our ken and reach. But the God relevant to the individual seeker is immanent, and directly accessible to realization. In Indian philosophy, it is called 'bimba' or Self (the image dwelling in the individual), whose 'prati-bimba' (or reflection) is the self or soul. Alternately, it conforms to the ideology of 'ishta-devatā' or chosen deity; in the words of Swami Vivekananda, "Your God and my God."

"Each one thinks his method is best. Very good. But remember, it may be good for you. One food which is very indigestible to one is very digestible to another. Because it is good for you, do not jump to the conclusion that your method is everybody's method, that Jack's coat fits John and Mary. All the uneducated, uncultured, unthinking men and women have been put into that sort of strait jacket..... What right have you to say that this man's method is wrong? It may be wrong for you. That is to say, if you undertake the method, you will be degraded; but that does not mean that he will be degraded. Therefore, says Krishna, if you have knowledge and see a man weak, do not condemn him. Go to his level and help him if you can. He must grow".

(TG. 61)

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