There are four very great events in history, the siege of Troy, the life and crucifixion of Christ, the exile of Krishna in Brindavan and the colloquy with Arjuna on the field of Kurukshetra. The siege of Troy created Hellas, the exile in Brindavan created devotional religion, (for before there was only meditation and worship), Christ from his cross humanised Europe, the colloquy at Kurukshetra will yet liberate humanity. Yet it is said that none of these four events ever happened.

They say that the gospels are forgeries and Krishna a creation of the poets. Thank God then for the forgeries and bow down before the inventors.

– Sri Aurobindo

Krishna... came upon earth to bring freedom and delight. He came to announce to men, enslaved to Nature, to their passions and errors, that if they took refuge in the Supreme Lord they would be free from all bondage and sin.

– The Mother

The Essential Gita Diary

With Selected Text, English Translation, and Commentary in the Words of Sri Aurobindo

Acknowledgement:
The translation of the text of The Gita appearing here has been done by Shri Parmeshwari Prasad Khetan. It is based on Sri Aurobindo's work "**Essays on the Gita**". This translation and the selected commentary in the words of Sri Aurobindo appearing in this book has been taken from The Bhagavad Gita edited by Sri Parameshwari Prasad Khetan and published by Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Trust.

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Personal Information

PERSONAL

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Personal Insurance	Renewal
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Credit Card No.	Expiry
Credit Card No.	Expiry
ATM Card No.	

Important Dates in the Ashram

The Mother's Birthday (Darshan Day)	*21 February*
Foundation of Auroville	*28 February*
The Mother's First Arrival in Pondicherry	*29 March*
Sri Aurobindo's Arrival in Pondicherry	*4 April*
The Mother's Final Arrival in Pondicherry (Darshan Day)	*24 April*
Sri Aurobindo's Birthday (Darshan Day)	*15 August*
The Mother's Mahasamadhi	*17 November*
The Mother's Body Laid To Rest	*20 November*
Siddhi Day (Darshan Day)	*24 November*
Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi	*5 December*
Sri Aurobindo's Body Laid To Rest	*9 December*

List of Holidays

Id-Ul-Zuha	*Jan. 11*	*Baisakhi*	*Apr. 13*
Lohri	*Jan. 13*	*Buddha Poornima*	*May 13*
Makar Sankranti	*Jan. 14*	*Raksha Bandhan*	*Aug. 9*
Pongal	*Jan. 14*	*Independence Day*	*Aug. 15*
Republic Day	*Jan. 26*	*Janamashtami*	*Aug. 16*
Basant Panchami	*Feb. 2*	*Ganesh Chaturthi*	*Aug. 27*
Moharram	*Feb. 10*	*Anant Chaudas*	*Sep. 6*
Ravidaas Jayanti	*Feb. 13*	*Gandhi Jayanti*	*Oct. 2*
Shiv Ratri	*Mar. 26*	*Dashahara*	*Oct. 2*
Holi	*Mar. 14*	*Guru Nanak Jayanti*	*Nov. 5*
Dhulendi	*Mar. 15*	*Deepawali*	*Nov. 21*
Ugadi	*Mar. 30*	*Goverdhan Pooja*	*Nov. 22*
Ram Navami	*Apr. 6*	*Bhaiya Dooj*	*Nov. 24*
Mahavir Jayanti	*Apr. 11*	*Id-Ul-Fitar*	*Nov. 25*
Milad -Ul-Nabi	*Apr. 11*	*Christmas Day*	*Dec. 25*
Good Friday	*Apr. 14*	*Guru Govind Singh Jayanti*	*Dec. 27*

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The Spiritual Action of the Gita

Sri Aurobindo considers the message of the Gita to be the basis of the great spiritual movement which has led and will lead humanity more and more to its liberation, that is to say, to its escape from falsehood and ignorance, towards the truth.

From the time of its first appearance, the Gita has had an immense spiritual action; but with the new interpretation that Sri Aurobindo has given to it, its influence has increased considerably and has become decisive.

– The Mother

1. *The Spirit of Approach*

"The world abounds with scriptures sacred and profane, with revelations and half-revelations, with religions and philosophies, sects and schools and systems. To these the many minds of a half-ripe knowledge or no knowledge at all attach themselves with exclusiveness and passion and will have it that this or the other book is alone the eternal Word of God and all others are either impostures or at best imperfectly inspired, that this or that philosophy is the last word of the reasoning intellect and other systems are either errors or saved only by such partial truth in them as links them to the one true philosophical cult. Even the discoveries of physical Science have been elevated into a creed and in its name religion and spirituality banned as ignorance and superstition, philosophy as frippery and moonshine. And to these bigoted exclusions and vain wranglings even the wise have often lent themselves, misled by some spirit of darkness that has mingled with their light and overshadowed it with some cloud of intellectual egoism or spiritual pride.... We are .. apt to declare that our truth gives us *the* supreme knowledge which other religions or philosophies have missed or only imperfectly grasped so that they deal either with subsidiary and inferior aspects of the truth of things or can merely prepare less evolved minds for the heights to which we have arrived. And we are still prone to force upon ourselves or others the whole sacred mass of the book or gospel we admire, insisting that all shall be accepted as eternally valid truth….

It may therefore be useful in approaching an ancient Scripture, such as the Veda, Upanishads or Gita, to indicate precisely the spirit in which we approach it and what exactly we think we may derive from it that is of value to humanity and its future. First of all, there is undoubtedly a Truth one and eternal which we are seeking, from which all other truth derives, by the light of which all other truth finds its right place, explanation and relation to the scheme of knowledge. But precisely for that reason it cannot be shut up in a single trenchant formula, it is not likely to be found in its entirety or in all its bearings in any single philosophy or scripture or uttered altogether and for ever by any one teacher, thinker, prophet or Avatar….

I hold it therefore of small importance to extract from the Gita its exact metaphysical connotation as it was understood by the men of the time, – even if that were accurately possible. That it is not possible, is shown by the divergence of the original commentaries which have been and are still being written upon it; for they all agree in each disagreeing with all the others, each finds in the Gita its own system of metaphysics and trend of religious thought. Nor will even the most painstaking and disinterested scholarship and the most luminous theories of the historical development of Indian philosophy save us from inevitable error. But what we can do with profit is to seek in the Gita for

the actual living truths it contains, apart from their metaphysical form, to extract from it what can help us or the world at large and to put it in the most natural and vital form and expression we can find that will be suitable to the mentality and helpful to the spiritual needs of our present-day humanity."

"In the Gita there is very little that is merely local or temporal and its spirit is so large, profound and universal that even this little can easily be universalised without the sense of the teaching suffering any diminution or violation; rather by giving an ampler scope to it than belonged to the country and epoch, the teaching gains in depth, truth and power. Often indeed the Gita itself suggests the wider scope that can in this way be given to an idea in itself local or limited. Thus it dwells on the ancient Indian system and idea of sacrifice as an interchange between gods and men, – a system and idea which have long been practically obsolete in India itself and are no longer real to the general human mind; but we find here a sense so entirely subtle, figurative and symbolic given to the word "sacrifice" and the conception of the gods is so little local or mythological, so entirely cosmic and philosophical that we can easily accept both as expressive of a practical fact of psychology and general law of Nature and so apply them to the modern conceptions of interchange between life and life and of ethical sacrifice and self-giving as to widen and deepen these and cast over them a more spiritual aspect and the light of a profounder and more far-reaching Truth. Equally the idea of action according to the Shastra, the fourfold order of society, the allusion to the relative position of the four orders or the comparative spiritual disabilities of Shudras and women seem at first sight local and temporal, and, if they are too much pressed in their literal sense, narrow so much at least of the teaching, deprive it of its universality and spiritual depth and limit its validity for mankind at large. But if we look behind to the spirit and sense and not at the local name and temporal institution, we see that here too the sense is deep and true and the spirit philosophical, spiritual and universal. By Shastra we perceive that the Gita means the law imposed on itself by humanity as a substitute for the purely egoistic action of the natural unregenerate man and a control on his tendency to seek in the satisfaction of his desire the standard and aim of his life. We see too that the fourfold order of society is merely the concrete form of a spiritual truth which is itself independent of the form; it rests on the conception of right works as a rightly ordered expression of the nature of the individual being through whom the work is done, that nature assigning him his line and scope in life according to his inborn quality and his self-expressive function. Since this is the spirit in which the Gita advances its most local and particular instances, we are justified in pursuing always the same principle and looking

always for the deeper general truth which is sure to underlie whatever seems at first sight merely local and of the time. For we shall find always that the deeper truth and principle is implied in the grain of the thought even when it is not expressly stated in its language."

"The philosophical system of the Gita, its arrangement of truth, is not that part of its teaching which is the most vital, profound, eternally durable; but most of the material of which the system is composed, the principal ideas suggestive and penetrating which are woven into its complex harmony, are eternally valuable and valid; for they are not merely the luminous ideas or striking speculations of a philosophic intellect, but rather enduring truths of spiritual experience, verifiable facts of our highest psychological possibilities which no attempt to read deeply the mystery of existence can afford to neglect. Whatever the system may be, it is not, as the commentators strive to make it, framed or intended to support any exclusive school of philosophical thought or to put forward predominantly the claims of any one form of Yoga. The language of the Gita, the structure of thought, the combination and balancing of ideas belong neither to the temper of a sectarian teacher nor to the spirit of a rigorous analytical dialectics cutting off one angle of the truth to exclude all the others; but rather there is a wide, undulating, encircling movement of ideas which is the manifestation of a vast synthetic mind and a rich synthetic experience. This is one of those great syntheses in which Indian spirituality has been as rich as in its creation of the more intensive, exclusive movements of knowledge and religious realisation that follow out with an absolute concentration one clue, one path to its extreme issues. It does not cleave asunder, but reconciles and unifies.

The thought of the Gita is not pure Monism although it sees in one unchanging, pure, eternal Self the foundation of all cosmic existence, nor Mayavada although it speaks of the Maya of the three modes of Prakriti omnipresent in the created world; nor is it qualified Monism although it places in the One his eternal supreme Prakriti manifested in the form of the Jiva and lays most stress on dwelling in God rather than dissolution as the supreme state of spiritual consciousness; nor is it Sankhya although it explains the created world by the double principle of Purusha and Prakriti; nor is it Vaishnava Theism although it presents to us Krishna, who is the Avatara of Vishnu according to the Puranas, as the supreme Deity and allows no essential difference nor any actual superiority of the status of the indefinable relationless Brahman over that of this Lord of beings who is the Master of the universe and the Friend of all creatures. Like the earlier spiritual synthesis of the Upanishads this later synthesis at once spiritual and intellectual avoids naturally

every such rigid determination as would injure its universal comprehensiveness. Its aim is precisely the opposite to that of the polemist commentators who found this Scripture established as one of the three highest Vedantic authorities and attempted to turn it into a weapon of offence and defence against other schools and systems. The Gita is not a weapon for dialectical warfare; it is a gate opening on the whole world of spiritual truth and experience and the view it gives us embraces all the provinces of that supreme region. It maps out, but it does not cut up or build walls or hedges to confine our vision."

"We of the coming day stand at the head of a new age of development which must lead to such a new and larger synthesis. We are not called upon to be orthodox Vedantins of any of the three schools or Tantrics or to adhere to one of the theistic religions of the past or to entrench ourselves within the four corners of the teaching of the Gita. That would be to limit ourselves and to attempt to create our spiritual life out of the being, knowledge and nature of others, of the men of the past, instead of building it out of our own being and potentialities. We do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of the future."

"What then is the message of the Gita and what its working value, its spiritual utility to the human mind of the present day after the long ages that have elapsed since it was written and the great subsequent transformations of thought and experience? The human mind moves always forward, alters its viewpoint and enlarges its thought substance, and the effect of these changes is to render past systems of thinking obsolete or, when they are preserved, to extend, to modify and subtly or visibly to alter their value. The vitality of an ancient doctrine consists in the extent to which it naturally lends itself to such a treatment; for that means that whatever may have been the limitations or the obsolescences of the form of its thought, the truth of substance, the truth of living vision and experience on which its system was built is still sound and retains a permanent validity and significance. The Gita is a book that has worn extraordinarily well and it is almost as fresh and still in its real substance quite as new, because always renewable in experience, as when it first appeared in or was written into the frame of the Mahabharata. It is still received in India as one of the great bodies of doctrine that most authoritatively govern religious thinking and its teaching acknowledged as of the highest value if not wholly accepted by almost all shades of religious belief and opinion. Its influence is not merely philosophic or academic but immediate and living, an influence both for thought and action, and its ideas are actually at work as a powerful shaping factor in the revival and renewal of a nation and a culture. It has even been said recently by a great voice that all we need of spiritual truth for the

spiritual life is to be found in the Gita. It would be to encourage the superstition of the book to take too literally that utterance. The truth of the spirit is infinite and cannot be circumscribed in that manner. Still it may be said that most of the main clues are there and that after all the later developments of spiritual experience and discovery we can still return to it for a large inspiration and guidance."

"Our object, then, in studying the Gita will not be a scholastic or academical scrutiny of its thought, nor to place its philosophy in the history of metaphysical speculation, nor shall we deal with it in the manner of the analytical dialectician. We approach it for help and light and our aim must be to distinguish its essential and living message, that in it on which humanity has to seize for its perfection and its highest spiritual welfare."

2. *The Core of the Teaching*

"A clear conception fastening upon the essential idea, the central heart of the teaching is especially necessary here because the Gita with its rich and many-sided thought, its synthetical grasp of different aspects of the spiritual life and the fluent winding motion of its argument lends itself, even more than other scriptures, to one-sided misrepresentations born of a partisan intellectuality….

Thus, there are those who make the Gita teach, not works at all, but a discipline of preparation for renouncing life and works: the indifferent performance of prescribed actions or of whatever task may lie ready to the hands, becomes the means, the discipline; the final renunciation of life and works is the sole real object. It is quite easy to justify this view by citations from the book and by a certain arrangement of stress in following out its argument, especially if we shut our eyes to the peculiar way in which it uses such a word as *sannyāsa*, renunciation; but it is quite impossible to persist in this view on an impartial reading in face of the continual assertion to the very end that action should be preferred to inaction and that superiority lies with the true, the inner renunciation of desire by equality and the giving up of works to the supreme Purusha.

Others again speak of the Gita as if the doctrine of devotion were its whole teaching and put in the background its monistic elements and the high place it gives to quietistic immergence in the one self of all. And undoubtedly its emphasis on devotion, its insistence on the aspect of the Divine as Lord and Purusha and its doctrine of the Purushottama, the Supreme Being who is superior both to the mutable Being and to the Immutable and who is what in His relation to the world we know as God, are the most striking and among the most vital elements of the Gita. Still, this Lord is the Self in whom all knowledge culminates and the Master of sacrifice to whom all works lead as well as the Lord of Love into whose being the heart of devotion enters, and the Gita preserves a perfectly equal balance, emphasising now knowledge, now works, now devotion, but for the purposes of the immediate trend of the thought, not with any absolute separate preference of one over the others. He in whom all three meet and become one, He is the Supreme Being, the Purushottama.

But at the present day, since in fact the modern mind began to recognise and deal at all with the Gita, the tendency is to subordinate its elements of knowledge and devotion, to take advantage of its continual insistence on action and to find in it a scripture of the Karmayoga, a Light leading us on the path of action, a Gospel of Works. Undoubtedly, the Gita is a Gospel of Works, but of works which culminate in knowledge, that is, in spiritual realisation and

quietude, and of works motived by devotion, that is, a conscious surrender of one's whole self first into the hands and then into the being of the Supreme, and not at all of works as they are understood by the modern mind, not at all an action dictated by egoistic and altruistic, by personal, social, humanitarian motives, principles, ideals. Yet this is what present-day interpretations seek to make of the Gita. We are told continually by many authoritative voices that the Gita, opposing in this the ordinary ascetic and quietistic tendency of Indian thought and spirituality, proclaims with no uncertain sound the gospel of human action, the ideal of disinterested performance of social duties, nay, even, it would seem, the quite modern ideal of social service. To all this I can only reply that very patently and even on the very surface of it the Gita does nothing of the kind and that this is a modern misreading, a reading of the modern mind into an ancient book, of the present-day European or Europeanised intellect into a thoroughly antique, a thoroughly Oriental and Indian teaching. That which the Gita teaches is not a human, but a divine action; not the performance of social duties, but the abandonment of all other standards of duty or conduct for a selfless performance of the divine will working through our nature; not social service, but the action of the Best, the God-possessed, the Master-men done impersonally for the sake of the world and as a sacrifice to Him who stands behind man and Nature. In other words, the Gita is not a book of practical ethics, but of the spiritual life."

"Therefore it is a mistake to interpret the Gita from the standpoint of the mentality of today and force it to teach us the disinterested performance of duty as the highest and all-sufficient law. A little consideration of the situation with which the Gita deals will show us that this could not be its meaning. For the whole point of the teaching, that from which it arises, that which compels the disciple to seek the Teacher, is an inextricable clash of the various related conceptions of duty ending in the collapse of the whole useful intellectual and moral edifice erected by the human mind. In human life some sort of a clash arises fairly often, as for instance between domestic duties and the call of the country or the cause, or between the claim of the country and the good of humanity or some larger religious or moral principle. An inner situation may even arise, as with the Buddha, in which all duties have to be abandoned, trampled on, flung aside in order to follow the call of the Divine within. I cannot think that the Gita would solve such an inner situation by sending Buddha back to his wife and father and the government of the Sakya State, or would direct a Ramakrishna to become a Pundit in a vernacular school and disinterestedly teach little boys their lessons, or bind down a Vivekananda to support his family and for that to follow dispassionately the law or medicine or journalism. The Gita does not teach the disinterested performance of duties

but the following of the divine life, the abandonment of all dharmas, *sarvadharmān*, to take refuge in the Supreme alone, and the divine activity of a 18.66
Buddha, a Ramakrishna, a Vivekananda is perfectly in consonance with this teaching. Nay, although the Gita prefers action to inaction, it does not rule out the renunciation of works, but accepts it as one of the ways to the Divine. If that can only be attained by renouncing works and life and all duties and the call is strong within us, then into the bonfire they must go, and there is no help for it. The call of God is imperative and cannot be weighed against any other considerations."

"The Gita can only be understood, like any other great work of the kind, by studying it in its entirety and as a developing argument. But the modern interpreters, starting from the great writer Bankim Chandra Chatterji who first gave to the Gita this new sense of a Gospel of Duty, have laid an almost exclusive stress on the first three or four chapters and in those on the idea of equality, on the expression *kartavyam karma*, the work that is to be done, which they render by duty, and on the phrase "Thou hast a right to action, but none to the fruits of action" which is now popularly quoted as the great word, *mahāvākya*, of the Gita. The rest of the eighteen chapters with their high philosophy are given a secondary importance, except indeed the great vision in the eleventh. This is natural enough for the modern mind which is, or has been till yesterday, inclined to be impatient of metaphysical subtleties and far-off spiritual seekings, eager to get to work and, like Arjuna himself, mainly concerned for a workable law of works, a *dharma.* But it is the wrong way to handle this Scripture.

The equality which the Gita preaches is not disinterestedness, – the great command to Arjuna given *after* the foundation and main structure of the teaching have been laid and built, "Arise, slay thy enemies, enjoy a prosperous 11.33
kingdom," has not the ring of an uncompromising altruism or of a white, dispassionate abnegation; it is a state of inner poise and wideness which is the foundation of spiritual freedom. With that poise, in that freedom we have to do the "work that is to be done," a phrase which the Gita uses with the greatest wideness including in it all works, *sarvakarmāṇi*, and which far exceeds, though it may include, social duties or ethical obligations. What is the work to be done is not to be determined by the individual choice; nor is the right to the action and the rejection of claim to the fruit the great word of the Gita, but only a preliminary word governing the first state of the disciple when he begins ascending the hill of Yoga. It is practically superseded at a subsequent stage. For the Gita goes on to affirm emphatically that the man is not the doer of the action; it is Prakriti, it is Nature, it is the great Force with its three modes

of action that works through him, and he must learn to see that it is *not* he who does the work. Therefore the "right to action" is an idea which is only valid so long as we are still under the illusion of being the doer; it must necessarily disappear from the mind like the claim to the fruit, as soon as we cease to be to our own consciousness the doer of our works. All pragmatic egoism, whether of the claim to fruits or of the right to action, is then at an end.

But the determinism of Prakriti is not the last word of the Gita. The equality of the will and the rejection of fruits are only means for entering with the mind and the heart and the understanding into the divine consciousness and living in it; and the Gita expressly says that they are to be employed as a means as long as the disciple is unable so to live or even to seek by practice the gradual development of this higher state. And what is this Divine, whom Krishna declares himself to be? It is the Purushottama beyond the Self that acts not, beyond the Prakriti that acts, foundation of the one, master of the other, the Lord of whom all is the manifestation, who even in our present subjection to Maya sits in the heart of His creatures governing the works of
11.33 Prakriti, He by whom the armies on the field of Kurukshetra have already been slain while yet they live and who uses Arjuna only as an instrument or immediate occasion of this great slaughter. Prakriti is only His executive force. The disciple has to rise beyond this Force and its three modes or *gunas*; he has to become *triguṇātīta*. Not to her has he to surrender his actions, over which he has no longer any claim or "right", but into the being of the Supreme. Reposing his mind and understanding, heart and will in Him, with self-knowledge, with God-knowledge, with world-knowledge, with a perfect equality, a perfect devotion, an absolute self-giving, he has to do works as an offering to the Master of all self-energisings and all sacrifice. Identified in will, conscious with that consciousness, That shall decide and initiate the action. This is the solution which the Divine Teacher offers to the disciple.

What the great, the supreme word of the Gita is, its *mahāvākya*, we have not to seek; for the Gita itself declares it in its last utterance, the crowning
18.62 note of the great diapason. "With the Lord in thy heart take refuge with all thy
18.66 being; by His grace thou shalt attain to the supreme peace and the eternal status. So have I expounded to thee a knowledge more secret than that which is hidden. Further hear the most secret, the supreme word that I shall speak to thee. Become my-minded, devoted to Me, to Me do sacrifice and adoration; infallibly, thou shalt come to Me, for dear to me art thou. Abandoning all laws of conduct seek refuge in Me alone. I will release thee from all sin; do not grieve."

The argument of the Gita resolves itself into three great steps by which action rises out of the human into the divine plane leaving the bondage of the lower for the liberty of a higher law. First, by the renunciation of desire and a perfect equality works have to be done as a sacrifice by man as the doer, a sacrifice to a deity who is the supreme and only Self though by him not yet realised in his own being. This is the initial step. Secondly, not only the desire of the fruit, but the claim to be the doer of works has to be renounced in the realisation of the Self as the equal, the inactive, the immutable principle and of all works as simply the operation of universal Force, of the Nature-Soul, Prakriti, the unequal, active, mutable power. Lastly, the supreme Self has to be seen as the supreme Purusha governing this Prakriti, of whom the soul in Nature is a partial manifestation, by whom all works are directed, in a perfect transcendence, through Nature. To him love and adoration and the sacrifice of works have to be offered; the whole being has to be surrendered to Him and the whole consciousness raised up to dwell in this divine consciousness so that the human soul may share in His divine transcendence of Nature and of His works and act in a perfect spiritual liberty.

The first step is Karmayoga, the selfless sacrifice of works, and here the Gita's insistence is on action. The second is Jnanayoga, the self-realisation and knowledge of the true nature of the self and the world; and here the insistence is on knowledge; but the sacrifice of works continues and the path of Works becomes one with but does not disappear into the path of Knowledge. The last step is Bhaktiyoga, adoration and seeking of the supreme Self as the Divine Being, and here the insistence is on devotion; but the knowledge is not subordinated, only raised, vitalised and fulfilled, and still the sacrifice of works continues; the double path becomes the triune way of knowledge, works and devotion. And the fruit of the sacrifice, the one fruit still placed before the seeker, is attained, union with the divine Being and oneness with the supreme divine nature."

3. THE DEJECTION OF ARJUNA

"The peculiarity of the Gita among the great religious books of the world is that it does not stand apart as a work by itself, the fruit of the spiritual life of a creative personality like Christ, Mahomed or Buddha or of an epoch of pure spiritual searching like the Veda and Upanishads, but is given as an episode in an epic history of nations and their wars and men and their deeds and arises out of a critical moment in the soul of one of its leading personages face to face with the crowning action of his life, a work terrible, violent and sanguinary, at the point when he must either recoil from it altogether or carry it through to its inexorable completion. It matters little whether or no, as modern criticism supposes, the Gita is a later composition inserted into the mass of the Mahabharata by its author in order to invest its teaching with the authority and popularity of the great national epic. There seem to me to be strong grounds against this supposition for which, besides, the evidence, extrinsic or internal, is in the last degree scanty and insufficient. But even if it be sound, there remains the fact that the author has not only taken pains to interweave his work inextricably into the vast web of the larger poem, but is careful again and again to remind us of the situation from which the teaching has arisen; he returns to it prominently, not only at the end, but in the middle of his profoundest philosophical disquisitions. We must accept the insistence of the author and give its full importance to this recurrent preoccupation of the Teacher and the disciple. The teaching of the Gita must therefore be regarded not merely in the light of a general spiritual philosophy or ethical doctrine, but as bearing upon a practical crisis[1] in the application of ethics and spirituality to human life."

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच
धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत संजय ।।1.1।।*

1.1. Dhritarashtra said: Assembled on the plain of Kurukshetra, the field of evolving Dharma, and eager for battle, what did they do, O Sanjaya, my people and the Pandavas?

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[1] *There is a method of explaining the Gita in which not only this episode but the whole Mahabharata is turned into an allegory of the inner life and has nothing to do with our outward human life and action, but only with the battles of the soul and the powers that strive within us for possession. That is a view which the general character and the actual language of the epic do not justify and, if pressed, would turn the straightforward philosophical language of the Gita into a constant, laborious and somewhat puerile mystification. The language of the Veda and part at least of the Puranas is plainly symbolic, full of figures and concrete representations of things that lie behind the veil, but the Gita is written in plain terms and professes to solve the great ethical and spiritual difficulties which the life of man raises, and it will not do to go behind this plain language and thought and wrest them to the service of our fancy.*

**These and the numbers in the margin indicate the chapter and the verse number of the Gita.*

अर्जुन उवाच
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ।। 1.21।।
यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।
कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ।। 1.22।।

1. 21-22. Arjuna said: O Achyuta (the faultless, the immovable), station my chariot between the two armies so that I may view all these standing here, desirous of battle, with whom I have to fight in this holiday of fight.

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ।। 1.23 ।।

1. 23. I should have a look upon those who have come here and who would engage in fighting, to champion the cause of the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra.

"It is typical... of the pragmatic man that it is through his sensations that he awakens to the meaning of his action. He has asked his friend and charioteer to place him between the two armies, not with any profounder idea, but with the proud intention of viewing and looking in the face these myriads of the champions of unrighteousness whom he has to meet and conquer and slay "in this holiday of fight" so that the right may prevail."

तान्समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान् बन्धूनवस्थितान् ।। 1.27।।
कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।। 1.28।।

1. 27-28. On seeing all these kinsmen thus standing arrayed, the son of Kunti, overwhelmed with pity, spoke thus in sadness and dejection:

"It is as he gazes that the revelation of the meaning of a civil and domestic war comes home to him, a war in which not only men of the same race, the same nation, the same clan, but those of the same family and household stand upon opposite sides. All whom the social man holds most dear and sacred, he must meet as enemies and slay, – the worshipped teacher and preceptor, the old friend, comrade and companion in arms, grandsires, uncles, those who stood in the relation to him of father, of son, of grandson, connections by blood and connections by marriage, – all these social ties have to be cut asunder by the sword."

अर्जुन उवाच
दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ।। 1.28।।
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।
वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ।। 1.29।।

1. 28-29. Arjuna said: Seeing these my own people, O Krishna, thus eager for battle, my limbs fail and my mouth is parched, my body is quivering and my hair stands on end.

"It is not that he did not know these things before, but he has never realised it all; obsessed by his claims and wrongs and by the principles of his life, the struggle for the right, the duty of the Kshatriya to protect justice and the law and fight and beat down injustice and lawless violence, he has neither thought out deeply nor felt it in his heart and at the core of his life. And now it is shown to his vision by the divine charioteer, placed sensationally before his eyes, and comes home to him like a blow delivered at the very centre of his sensational, vital and emotional being."

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।
किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ।। 1.32।।

1. 32. O Krishna, I desire not victory, nor kingdom, nor pleasures. What is kingdom to us, O Govinda, and what enjoyment, or even life?

"The first result is a violent sensational and physical crisis which produces a disgust of the action and its material objects and of life itself. He rejects the vital aim pursued by egoistic humanity in its action, – happiness and enjoyment; he rejects the vital aim of the Kshatriya, victory and rule and power and the government of men. What after all is this fight for justice when reduced to its practical terms, but just this, a fight for the interests of himself, his brothers and his party, for possession and enjoyment and rule? But at such a cost these things are not worth having."

एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ।।1.35।।
निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ।
पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान्हत्वैतानाततायिनः ।।1.36।।

1. 35-36. These I would not like to slay, though myself slain, O Madhusudana (Sri Krishna), even for the kingdom of the three worlds, how then for this earth? What pleasure can be ours, O Janardana (Sri Krishna), on killing these sons of Dhritarashtra? Sin alone would take hold of us in our slaying these hostile aggressors.

"The whole thing is a dreadful sin, – for now the moral sense awakens to justify the revolt of the sensations and the emotions. It is a sin, there is no right nor justice in mutual slaughter; especially are those who are to be slain the natural objects of reverence and of love, those without whom one would not care to live, and to violate these sacred feelings can be no virtue, can be nothing but a heinous crime."

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ।। 1.38।।
कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ।। 1.39।।

1. 38-39. Even if these, with their consciousness clouded by greed, do not see any guilt in the destruction of the family and no crime in hostility to friends, why should not we have the wisdom to draw back from such a sin, we who see, O Janardana, the evil in the destruction of the family?

"We see in the teaching of the Gita how subtle a thing is the freedom from egoism which is demanded. Arjuna is driven to fight by the egoism of strength, the egoism of the Kshatriya; he is turned from the battle by the contrary egoism of weakness, the shrinking, the spirit of disgust, the false pity that overcomes the mind, the nervous being and the senses, – not that divine compassion which strengthens the arm and clarifies the knowledge. But this weakness comes garbed as renunciation, as virtue: "Better the life of the beggar 2.5
than to taste these blood-stained enjoyments; I desire not the rule of all the 1.32
earth, no, nor the kingdom of the gods." How foolish of the Teacher, we might say, not to confirm this mood, to lose this sublime chance of adding one more great soul to the army of Sannyasins, one more shining example before the world of a holy renunciation. But the Guide sees otherwise, the Guide who is not to be deceived by words; "This is weakness and delusion 2.2-3
and egoism that speak in thee. Behold the Self, open thy eyes to the knowledge, purify thy soul of egoism." And afterwards? "Fight, conquer, enjoy a wealthy 11.33
kingdom." Or to take another example from ancient Indian tradition. It was egoism, it would seem, that drove Rama, the Avatara, to raise an army and destroy a nation in order to recover his wife from the King of Lanka. But would it have been a lesser egoism to drape himself in indifference and misusing the formal terms of the knowledge to say, "I have no wife, no enemy, no desire; these are illusions of the senses; let me cultivate the Brahman-knowledge and let Ravana do what he will with the daughter of Janaka"?

The criterion is within, as the Gita insists. It is to have the soul free from craving and attachment, but free from the attachment to inaction as well as from the egoistic impulse to action, free from attachment to the forms of virtue as well as from the attraction to sin. It is to be rid of "I-ness" and "my-ness" so as to live in the one Self and act in the one Self; to reject the egoism of refusing to work through the individual centre of the universal Being as well as the egoism of serving the individual mind and life and body to the exclusion of others. To live in the Self is not to dwell for oneself alone in the Infinite immersed and oblivious of all things in that ocean of impersonal self-delight; but it is to live as the Self and in the Self equal in this embodiment and all embodiments and beyond all embodiments. This is the integral knowledge."

4. *KURUKSHETRA*

In this first chapter of the Gita, although Arjuna is himself concerned only with his own situation, "his inner struggle and the law of action he must follow, yet, as we have seen, the particular question he raises, in the manner in which he raises it does really bring up the whole question of human life and action, what the world is and why it is and how possibly, it being what it is, life here in the world can be reconciled with life in the Spirit. And all this deep and difficult matter the Teacher insists on resolving as the very foundation of his command to an action which must proceed from a new poise of being and by the light of a liberating knowledge.

But what, then, is it that makes the difficulty for the man who has to take the world as it is and act in it and yet would live, within, the spiritual life? What is this aspect of existence which appals his awakened mind and brings about what the title of the first chapter of the Gita calls significantly the Yoga of the dejection of Arjuna, the dejection and discouragement felt by the human being when he is forced to face the spectacle of the universe as it really is with the veil of the ethical illusion, the illusion of self-righteousness torn from his eyes, before a higher reconciliation with himself is effected?"

"To man's righteousness this is his cosmic crime,
Almighty beyond good and evil to dwell
Leaving the good to their fate in a wicked world
And evil to reign in this enormous scene.
All opposition seems and strife and chance,
An aimless labour with but scanty sense,
To eyes that see a part and miss the whole..."

"...if we accept at all, as the Gita accepts, the existence of God, that is to say, of the omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, yet always transcendent Being who manifests the world and Himself in the world, who is not the slave but the lord of His creative Consciousness, Nature or Force (Maya, Prakriti or Shakti), who is not baffled or thwarted in His world-conception or design by His creatures, man or devil, who does not need to justify Himself by shifting the responsibility for any part of His creation or manifestation on that which is created or manifested, then the human being has to start from a great, a difficult act of faith. Finding himself in a world which is apparently a chaos of battling powers, a clash of vast and obscure forces, a life which subsists only by constant change and death, menaced from every side by pain, suffering, evil and destruction, he has to see the omnipresent Deity in it all and conscious that of this enigma there must be a solution and beyond this Ignorance in which he dwells a Knowledge that reconciles, he has to take his stand upon this faith, "Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee." All human thought

or faith that is active and affirmative, whether it be theistic, pantheistic or atheistic, does in fact involve more or less explicitly and completely such an attitude. It admits and it believes: admits the discords of the world, believes in some highest principle of God, universal Being or Nature which shall enable us to transcend, overcome or these discords, perhaps even to do all three at once, to harmonise by overcoming and transcending."

"God is not only the Destroyer, but the Friend of creatures; not only the cosmic Trinity, but the Transcendent; the terrible Kali is also the loving and beneficent Mother; the lord of Kurukshetra is the divine comrade and charioteer, the attracter of beings, incarnate Krishna. And whithersoever he is driving through all the strife and clash and confusion, to whatever goal or godhead he may be attracting us, it is – no doubt of that – to some transcendence of all these aspects... But where, how, with what kind of transcendence, under what conditions, this we have to discover; and to discover it, the first necessity is to see the world as it is, to observe and value rightly his action as it reveals itself at the start and now; afterwards the way and the goal will better reveal themselves. We must acknowledge Kurukshetra; we must submit to the law of Life by Death before we can find our way to the life immortal; we must open our eyes, with a less appalled gaze than Arjuna's, to the vision of our Lord of Time and Death and cease to deny, hate or recoil from the universal Destroyer.... It is only a few religions which have had the courage to say without any reserve, like the Indian, that this enigmatic World-Power is one Deity, one Trinity, to lift up the image of the Force that acts in the world in the figure not only of the beneficent Durga, but of the terrible Kali in her blood-stained dance of destruction and to say, "This too is the Mother; this also know to be God; this too, if thou hast the strength, adore." And it is significant that the religion which has had this unflinching honesty and tremendous courage, has succeeded in creating a profound and widespread spirituality such as no other can parallel. For truth is the foundation of real spirituality and courage is its soul."

5. *The Creed of the Aryan Fighter*

The answer of the divine Teacher Sri Krishna to the first flood of Arjuna's self-questioning and dejection and refusal to fight is a strongly worded rebuke.
2.2 He says, **Whence has come to thee this dejection in this hour of difficulty and peril, O Arjuna. It is not cherished by Aryan men; it leads neither to**
2.3 **heaven nor to glory. Yield not to impotence, it is not worthy of thee. Shake off this paltry faint-heartedness and arise, O Parantapa.**

"The answer of a hero to a hero, shall we say, but not that which we should expect from a divine Teacher from whom we demand rather that he shall encourage always gentleness and saintliness and self-abnegation and the recoil from worldly aims and cessation from the ways of the world?" Are we in face of a mere gospel of war and heroic action? The divine Teacher himself in a later chapter (16.2) puts compassion to creatures, gentleness, freedom from wrath and harmlessness as endowments of one who is born with Daivic nature. It is not from any such standpoint that Arjuna merits rebuke. It is not
2.1 compassion but pity by which Arjuna is invaded, *kṛpayāviṣṭam*, that merits this rebuke. "It is .. compassion in the Aryan fighter, the soul of his chivalry, which will not break the bruised reed, but helps and protects the weak and the oppressed and the wounded and the fallen. But it is also the divine compassion that smites down the strong tyrant and the confident oppressor, not in wrath and with hatred, – for these are not the high divine qualities, the wrath of God against the sinner, God's hatred of the wicked are the fables of half-enlightened creeds, as much a fable as the eternal torture of the Hells they have invented, – but, as the old Indian spirituality clearly saw, with as much love and compassion for the strong Titan erring by his strength and slain for his sins as for the sufferer and the oppressed who have to be saved from his violence and injustice."

But it is not this compassion but an impotence full of weak self-pity, a recoil from the mental suffering which his act must entail. This pity, when for others, is also a form of self-indulgence; it is the physical shrinking of the nerves from the act of slaughter. "This pity is a weakness of the mind and senses, – a weakness which may well be beneficial to men of a lower grade of development, who have to be weak because otherwise they will be hard and cruel.... But this way is not for the developed Aryan man who has to grow not by weakness, but by an ascension from strength to strength. Arjuna is the divine man, the master-man in the making and as such he has been chosen by the gods. He has a work given to him, he has God beside him in his chariot, he has the heavenly bow Gandiva in his hand, he has the champions of unrighteousness, the opponents of the divine leading of the world in his front. Not his is the right to determine what he shall do or not do according to his emotions and his passions, or to shrink from a necessary destruction by the

claim of his egoistic heart and reason, or to decline his work because it will bring sorrow and emptiness to his life or because its earthly result has no value to him in the absence of the thousands who must perish. All that is a weak falling from his higher nature. He has to see only the work that must be done, *kartavyam karma,* to hear only the divine command breathed through his warrior nature, to feel only for the world and the destiny of mankind calling to him as its God-sent man to assist its march and clear its path of the dark armies that beset it."

Arjuna in his reply to Sri Krishna admits the rebuke even while he strives against and refuses his command. He says, **Better in this world to live even on alms than to slay these (Bhisma and Drona) high-souled Gurus. For even by slaying these Gurus, I would be tasting only blood-stained enjoyments of wealth and desire in this world.** He admits, **It is poorness of spirit that has smitten away from me my (true heroic) nature, my whole consciousness is bewildered in its view of right and wrong, I ask thee what may be right and good – that tell me decisively. I am thy disciple and seek refuge in thee; enlighten me.** He is resolved that on the old basis of thought and motive he will not fight saying, "I will not fight", and awaits in silence the answer to his objections that seem to him unanswerable. **I see not what shall thrust from me the sorrow that dries up my senses, even if I should obtain a rich and unrivalled kingdom on earth or even the sovereignty of the gods.**

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Sri Krishna's answer to the claims of Arjuna's egoistic being proceeds upon two different lines, first, a brief reply founded upon the highest ideas of the general Aryan culture in which Arjuna has been educated, secondly, another and larger founded on a more intimate knowledge, opening into deeper truths of our being, which is the real starting-point of the teaching of the Gita. In this section we shall be concerned only with the first answer which has been Termed, "The creed of the Aryan fighter," by Sri Aurobindo. The first part of this answer which may be termed stoical spirituality – relies on the philosophic and moral conceptions of the vedantic philosophy. This is popularly mistaken by many as the profoundest part of the Gita's teaching. The second part relies on the social idea of duty and honour which formed the ethical basis of Aryan society.

The Stoical Spirituality

The ethical and rational grounds that Arjuna has used to justify his refusal to fight are nothing but apparently rational words used merely to cloak the revolt of his ignorant and unchastened emotions. Sri Krishna smilingly points this out vividly in the following words:

श्रीभगवान् उवाच
अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ।। 2.11 ।।

2. 11. The Blessed Lord said: Thou grievest for those who should not be grieved for and yet speakest wise-seeming words, but the enlightened man does not mourn either for the living or for the dead.

2.12 **It is not true that at any time I was not, nor thou, nor these kings**
2.13 **of men; nor is it true that any of us shall ever cease to be hereafter. As the embodied soul passes through childhood, youth and old age in the body, so too is its change over to another body. The calm and wise man**
2.15 **is not deluded by this.... The man whom these things do not trouble or**

pain, O best of men, the firm and the wise who is equal in pleasure and sorrow, makes himself fit for immortality. That which really is, cannot 2.16
go out of existence, just as that which is non-existent cannot come into being. The end of this opposition of 'is' and 'is not' has been perceived by the seers of essential truths. Know that to be imperishable by whom 2.17
all this is pervaded. No one can bring about the destruction of this imperishable One. These bodies of the embodied One, who is eternal, 2.18
indestructible and illimitable, are known to have an end. Therefore, fight, O Bharata. He who regards this as a slayer, and he who thinks 2.19
that it is slain, both of them fail to perceive the truth. It does not slay, 2.20
nor is it slain. This is not born, nor does it die, nor is it a thing that

comes into being once and passing away will never come into being again. It is unborn, ancient, sempiternal; it is not slain with the slaying
2.21 **of the body. One who knows it as unborn, immutable, eternal and imperishable, how can, O Partha, such a man slay or cause to be slain?**
2.22 **The embodied soul casts away old and takes up new bodies as a man**
2.23 **changes worn-out raiment for new. Weapons cannot cleave it, nor the**
2.24 **fire burn, nor do the waters drench it, nor the wind dry. It is uncleavable, it is incombustible, it can neither be drenched nor dried. Eternally stable,**
2.28 **immobile, all-pervading, it is for ever and for ever.... Beings are unmanifest in the beginning, manifest in the middle, unmanifest again in disintegration, O Bharata. What is there to be grieved at?**

"This high and great knowledge, this strenuous self-discipline of the mind and soul by which it is to rise beyond the clamour of the emotions and the cheat of the senses to true self-knowledge, may well free us from grief and delusion;... it may well teach us to look undisturbed upon the most terrible assaults of life and upon the death of the body as a trifle;... But how does it justify the action demanded of Arjuna and the slaughter of Kurukshetra?"

Or in other words, all this means that one should rise above one's ignorant reactions to life and death but where, in all this, is the justification for fighting and killing of others? "The answer is that this is the action required of Arjuna in the path he has to travel; it has come inevitably in the performance of the function demanded of him by his *svadharma*, his social duty, the law of his life and the law of his being."

The Heroic Appeal – The Svadharma of the Kshatriya

After succinctly stating and reminding Arjuna of the precepts of stoical spirituality with which he must have been familiar, the Teacher turns to give another answer to Arjuna's cry. "What is the true object of the Kshatriya's life and his true happiness? Not self-pleasing and domestic happiness and a life of comfort and peaceful joy with friends and relatives, but to battle for the right is his true object of life and to find a cause for which he can lay down his life or by victory win the crown and glory of the hero's existence is his greatest happiness." **Happy are the Kshatriyas, O Partha, when such a battle comes to them of itself like the open gate of heaven. But if thou dost not fight this battle for the right, then hast thou abandoned thy Swadharma and thy glory, and sin shall be thy portion. Besides, men will recount thy perpetual dishonour, and to one in noble station, dishonour is worse than death. The mighty warriors will think thee fled from the battle through fear, and thou shall be belittled in the eyes of**

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those who once highly esteemed thee. Many unseemly words will be spoken by thy enemies, slandering thy strength; what is worse grief than that? Slain thou shalt attain heaven, victorious thou shalt enjoy the earth; therefore, arise, O son of Kunti, resolved upon battle. 2.36 2.37

"This heroic appeal may seem to be on a lower level than the stoical spirituality which precedes and the deeper spirituality which follows; for in the next verse the Teacher bids him to make grief and happiness, loss and gain, victory and defeat equal to his soul and then turn to the battle, – the real teaching of the Gita."

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ।। 2.38 ।।

2.38. Make grief and happiness, loss and gain, victory and defeat equal to thy soul and then turn to battle; so thou shalt not incur sin.

The Creed of the Aryan Fighter

"It is the creed of the Aryan fighter. "Know God," it says, "know thyself, help man; protect the Right, do without fear or weakness or faltering thy work of battle in the world. Thou art the eternal and imperishable Spirit, thy soul is here on its upward path to immortality; life and death are nothing, sorrow and wounds and suffering are nothing, for these things have to be conquered and overcome. Look not at thy own pleasure and gain and profit, but above and around, above at the shining summits to which thou climbest, around at this world of battle and trial in which good and evil, progress and retrogression are locked in stern conflict. Men call to thee, their strong man, their hero for help; help then, fight. Destroy when by destruction the world must advance but hate not that which thou destroyest, neither grieve for all those who perish. Know everywhere the one self, know all to be immortal souls and the body to

be but dust. Do thy work with a calm, strong and equal spirit; fight and fall nobly or conquer mightily. For this is the work that God and thy nature have given to thee to accomplish."

Thus Arjuna has been answered according to the highest knowledge and ethical ideals to which his race and age had attained. The higher knowledge of self and the world and the ethical standard of Kshatriya order point in the same direction. That Arjuna is still not satisfied – is not intended to be satisfied – with all this is plain to the divine Teacher who now turns away from this summary answer to present before him – to make vividly living to him – a spiritual solution to the problem which will be independent of all mental ideals, ethics and philosophy which appear like a translucent screen between the human mind and the spirit.

6. *Sankhya and Yoga in the Gita*

"In the moment of his turning from this first and summary answer to Arjuna's difficulties and in the very first words which strike the keynote of a spiritual solution, the Teacher makes at once a distinction which is of the utmost importance for the understanding of the Gita, – the distinction of Sankhya and Yoga."

एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु ।
बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ।। 2.39।।

2.39. Such is the intelligence (the intelligent knowledge of things and will) declared to thee in the Sankhya, hear now this in the Yoga, for if thou art in the Yoga by this intelligence, O son of Pritha, thou shalt cast away the bondage of works.

"The whole object of the first six chapters of the Gita is to synthetise in a large frame of Vedantic truth the two methods, ordinarily supposed to be diverse and even opposite, of the Sankhyas and the Yogins. The Sankhya is taken as the starting-point and the basis; but it is from the beginning and with a progressively increasing emphasis permeated with the ideas and methods of Yoga and remoulded in its spirit. The practical difference, as it seems to have presented itself to the religious minds of that day, lay first in this that Sankhya proceeded by knowledge and through the Yoga of the intelligence, while Yoga proceeded by works and the transformation of the active consciousness and, secondly, – a corollary of this first distinction, – that Sankhya led to entire passivity and the renunciation of works, *sannyāsa*, while Yoga held to be quite sufficient the inner renunciation of desire, the purification of the subjective principle which leads to action and the turning of works Godwards, towards the divine existence and towards liberation. Yet both had the same aim, the transcendence of birth and of this terrestrial existence and the union of the human soul with the Highest. This at least is the difference as it is presented to us by the Gita.

The Gita is in its foundation a Vedantic work; it is one of the three recognised authorities for the Vedantic teaching... But still its Vedantic ideas are throughout and thoroughly coloured by the ideas of the Sankhya and the Yoga way of thinking and it derives from this colouring the peculiar synthetic character of its philosophy....

What, then, are the Sankhya and Yoga of which the Gita speaks? They are certainly not the systems which have come down to us under these names as enunciated respectively in the Sankhya Karika of Ishwara Krishna and the Yoga aphorisms of Patanjali. This Sankhya is not the system of the Karikas, –

at least as that is generally understood; for the Gita nowhere for a moment admits the multiplicity of Purushas as a primal truth of being and it affirms emphatically what the traditional Sankhya strenuously denies, the One as Self and Purusha, that One again as the Lord, Ishwara or Purushottama, and Ishwara as the cause of the universe. The traditional Sankhya is, to use our modern distinctions, atheistic; the Sankhya of the Gita admits and subtly reconciles the theistic, pantheistic and monistic views of the universe.

Nor is this Yoga the Yoga system of Patanjali; for that is a purely subjective method of Rajayoga, an internal discipline, limited, rigidly cut out, severely and scientifically graded, by which the mind is progressively stilled and taken up into Samadhi so that we may gain the temporal and eternal results of this self-exceeding, the temporal in a great expansion of the soul's knowledge and powers, the eternal in the divine union. But the Yoga of the Gita is a large, flexible and many-sided system with various elements, which are all successfully harmonised by a sort of natural and living assimilation, and of these elements Rajayoga is only one and not the most important and vital.... Accordingly, its idea of Samadhi is quite different from the ordinary notion of the Yogic trance; and while Patanjali gives to works only an initial importance for moral purification and religious concentration, the Gita goes so far as to make works the distinctive characteristic of Yoga....

This much has to be said in order to avoid any confusion of thought that might be created by the use of familiar words in a connotation wider than the technical sense now familiar to us. Still, all that is essential in the Sankhya and Yoga systems, all in them that is large, catholic and universally true, is admitted by the Gita, even though it does not limit itself by them like the opposing schools. Its Sankhya is the catholic and Vedantic Sankhya such as we find it in its first principles and elements in the great Vedantic synthesis of the Upanishads and in the later developments of the Puranas. Its idea of Yoga is that large idea of a principally subjective practice and inner change, necessary for the finding of the Self or the union with God, of which the Rajayoga is only one special application...."

7. *The First Words of the Gita's Yoga*

The Gita's first words on the great initial fruits and the nature of the path of yoga are greatly reassuring to all the perspective seekers of yoga.

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ।। 2.40 ।।

2. 40. On this path no effort is lost, nor is there any retrogression, even a little of this Dharma delivers from the great fear.

What is the great fear that besieges humanity? The fear of sin and suffering here in this world or in other worlds and its fear of the world and its Creator whose true nature is beyond its understanding. As is clear from his utterances, Arjuna himself – the chief hero – is afraid of many things, afraid of suffering, afraid of sin and its result hell and punishment, afraid of the hereafter, afraid of himself and God. What is there that he is not afraid of? To all such the Lord says, "My Yoga will deliver you from the great fear and even a little of it will bring deliverance. When you have once set out on this path, you will find that no step is lost; every least movement will be a gain; you will find there no obstacle that can baulk you of your advance. A bold and absolute promise and one to which the fearful and hesitating mind beset and stumbling in all its paths cannot easily lend an assured trust; nor is the large and full truth of it apparent unless with these first words of the message of the Gita we
18.66 read also the last, 'Abandon all laws of conduct and take refuge in Me alone; I will deliver you from all sin and evil; do not grieve.'

But it is not with this deep and moving word of God to man, but rather with the first necessary rays of light on the path, directed not like that to the soul, but to the intellect, that the exposition begins. Not the Friend and Lover of man speaks first, but the Guide and Teacher who has to remove from him his ignorance of his true self and of the nature of the world and of the springs of his own action."

If one could have faith in this bold and absolute promise of the Master
6.23 of Yoga, one would be relieved of all fear and worry. But for this, as the Gita says, This yoga must be continually applied with a heart free from despondent sinking.

"It is difficult to acquire or to practise this faith and steadfastness on the rough and narrow path of Yoga because of the impatience of both heart and mind and the eager but faltering will of our rajasic nature. The vital nature of man hungers always for the fruit of its labour and, if the fruit appears to be denied or long delayed, he loses faith in the ideal and in the guidance. For his mind judges always by the appearance of things, since that is the first ingrained

habit of the intellectual reason in which he so inordinately trusts. Nothing is easier for us than to accuse God in our hearts when we suffer long or stumble in the darkness or to abjure the ideal that we have set before us. For we say, 'I have trusted to the Highest and I am betrayed into suffering and sin and error.' Or else, 'I have staked my whole life on an idea which the stern facts of experience contradict and discourage. It would have been better to be as other men are who accept their limitations and walk on the firm ground of normal experience.' In such moments – and they are sometimes frequent and long – all the higher experience is forgotten and the heart concentrates itself in its own bitterness. It is in these dark passages that it is possible to fall for good or to turn back from the divine labour.

If one has walked long and steadily in the path, the faith of the heart will remain under the fiercest adverse pressure; even if it is concealed or apparently overborne, it will take the first opportunity to re-emerge. For something higher than either heart or intellect upholds it in spite of the worst stumblings and through the most prolonged failure. But even to the experienced Sadhaka such falterings or overcloudings bring a retardation of his progress and they are exceedingly dangerous to the novice. It is therefore necessary from the beginning to understand and accept the arduous difficulty of the path and to feel the need of a faith which to the intellect may seem blind, but yet is wiser than our reasoning intelligence. For this faith is a support from above; it is the brilliant shadow thrown by a secret light that exceeds the intellect and its data; it is the heart of a hidden knowledge that is not at the mercy of immediate appearances. Our faith, persevering, will be justified in its works and will be lifted and transfigured at last into the self-revelation of a divine knowledge. Always we must adhere to the injunction of the Gita, 'Yoga must be continually applied with a heart free from despondent sinking.' Always we must repeat to the doubting intellect the promise of the Master, 'I will surely deliver thee from all sin and evil; do not grieve.' At the end, the flickerings of faith will cease;" but only at the end, because the questionings of the surface nature continue for a long time even after one has earnestly taken to the path. 6.23 18.66

Arjuna, voicing one of the most prominent forms of such questionings, asks Sri Krishna: **He who takes up Yoga with faith, but cannot control himself with the mind wandering away from Yoga, failing to attain perfection in Yoga, what is his end, O Krishna? Does he not, O mighty-armed, lose both this life and the Brahmic consciousness to which he aspires and falling from both perish like a dissolving cloud? Please dispel this doubt of mine completely, O Krishna; for there is none other than Thyself who can destroy this doubt.** 6.37 6.38 6.39

6.40 To this the divine Teacher replied: **O Partha, neither in this life nor hereafter is there destruction for him; never does anyone who practises**
6.41 **good, O beloved, come to woe. Having attained to the worlds of the righteous and having dwelt there for immemorial years, he who has**
6.42 **fallen from Yoga is again born in the house of the pure and glorious. Or he may be born in the family of wise Yogins; such a birth as this is rare**
6.43 **indeed to obtain in this world. There, O joy of the Kurus, he recovers the Buddhic-disposition which he had formed in his previous life and with**
6.44 **that he again endeavours for perfection. By virtue of the practice of the past, he is carried on irresistibly; even the seeker after the knowledge of Yoga goes beyond the range of the Vedas and Upanishads.**

8. The Yoga of the Intelligent Will

The Gita begins by distinguishing between two types of intelligence in the human being. "The first is concentrated, poised, one, homogenous, directed singly towards the Truth; unity is its characteristic, concentrated fixity is its very being. In the other there is no single will, no unified intelligence, but only an endless number of ideas many-branching, coursing about, that is to say, in this or that direction in pursuit of the desires which are offered to it by life and by the environment."

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।
बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ।। 2.41 ।।

2. 41. The resolute intelligence is one-pointed, O joy of the Kurus, many branching and endless is the intelligence of the irresolute.

"Buddhi, the word used, means, properly speaking, the mental power of understanding but it is evidently used by the Gita in a large philosophic sense for the whole action of the discriminating and deciding mind which determines both the direction and use of our thoughts and the direction and use of our acts; thought, intelligence, judgement, perceptive choice and aim are all included in its functioning: for the characteristic of the unified intelligence is not only concentration of the mind that knows, but especially concentration of the mind that decides and persists in the decision, *vyavasāya,* while the sign of the dissipated intelligence is not so much even discursiveness of the ideas and perceptions as discursiveness of the aims and desires, therefore of the will. Will, then, and knowledge are the two functions of the Buddhi."

The rest of the Second Chapter, traditionally termed "Sankhya-Yoga", is concerned with the application of the Intelligent Will to properly value the Scriptures, to institute desireless works, to arrive at stable intelligence and to attain a firm standing in the Brahman – *brahmi-sthiti* – by utterly controlling the mind and the senses.

The Vedavada and the Letter of the Scriptures

The first words of the Gita leading to a synthesis of Sankhya and Yoga or knowledge and works by the power of the intelligent will are a strong censure and repudiation of the Vedavada. "The Gita even seems to go on to attack the Veda itself which, though it has been practically cast aside, is still to Indian sentiment intangible, inviolable, the sacred origin and authority for all its philosophy and religion.... The Vedas in the widest terms, 'all the Vedas', – which might well include the Upanishads also and seems to include them, for the general term Shruti is used later on, – are declared to be unnecessary for the man who knows." 2.46

2.42 -43 2.44 2.45 2.46 **This flowery word which they declare who have not clear discernment, devoted to the creed of the Veda, whose creed is that there is nothing else, souls of desire, seekers of Paradise, – it gives the fruits of the works of birth, it is multifarious with specialities of rites, it is directed to enjoyment and lordship as its goal. The intelligence of those who are misled by that (flowery word), and cling to enjoyment and lordship, is not established in the self with concentrated fixity. The action of the three Gunas is the subject matter of the Veda; but do thou, O Arjuna, become free from the triple Guna, without the dualities, ever based in the true being, without getting or having, possessed of the Self. As much use as there is in a well with water in flood on every side, so much is there in all the Vedas for the Brahmin who has the knowledge.**

"Nay, the Scriptures are even a stumbling-block; for the letter of the Word – perhaps because of its conflict of texts and its various and mutually dissentient interpretations – bewilders the understanding, which can only find certainty and concentration by the light within.... So offensive is all this to conventional religious sentiment that attempts are naturally made by the convenient and indispensable human faculty of text-twisting to put a different sense on some of these verses, but the meaning is plain and hangs together from beginning to end."

"Let us see, however, what all this means; for we may be sure that a synthetic and catholic system like the Gita's will not treat such important parts of the Aryan culture in a spirit of mere negation and repudiation[2].... It is not surprising at all, one may observe in passing, that with the conflict of so many philosophical schools all founding themselves on the texts of the Veda and Upanishads, the Gita should describe the understanding as being perplexed 2.53 and confused, led in different directions by the Shruti, *śrutivipratipannā*. What battles are even now delivered by Indian pundits and metaphysicians over the meaning of the ancient texts and to what different conclusions they lead! The 2.52 understanding may well get disgusted and indifferent, *gantāsi nirvedam,* refuse to hear anymore texts new or old, *śrotavyasya śrutasya ca*, and go into itself to discover the truth in the light of a deeper and inner and direct experience."

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[2] *The Gita in later chapters speaks highly of the Veda and the Upanishads. They are* 9.17 *divine Scriptures, they are the Word. The Lord himself is the knower of Veda and the author of Vedanta,* Vedavid Vedāntkṛt; *the Lord is the one object of knowledge in all the Vedas,* 15.15 sarvair vedair aham eva vedyaḥ, *a language which implies that the word Veda means the book of knowledge and that these Scriptures deserve their appellation.*

2.39

The Institution of Desireless Works

"I have declared to you the poise of a self-liberating intelligence in Sankhya, says the divine Teacher to Arjuna. I will now declare to you another poise in Yoga. You are shrinking from the results of your works, you desire other results and turn from your right path in life because it does not lead you to them. But this idea of works and their result, desire of result as the motive, the work as a means for the satisfaction of desire, is the bondage of the ignorant who know not what works are, nor their true source, nor their real operation, nor their high utility. My Yoga will free you from all bondage of the soul to its works..."

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ।। 2.47।।

2. 47. Thou hast a right to action, but only to action, never to its fruits; let not the fruits of thy works be thy motive, neither let there be in thee any attachment to inactivity.

"The fruit belongs solely to the Lord of all works; our only business with it is to prepare the success by a true and careful action and to offer it, if it comes, to the divine Master. Afterwards even as we have renounced attachment to the fruit, we must renounce attachment to the work; at any moment we must be prepared to change one work, one course or one field of action for another or abandon all works if that is the clear command of the Master. Otherwise we do the act not for his sake but for our satisfaction and pleasure in the work, from the kinetic nature's need of action or for the fulfilment of our propensities; but these are all stations and refuges of the ego...." "Ego is the obstacle, the linch-pin of the wheel of delusion, the loss of the ego in the soul's self the first condition of freedom. To become spirit, no longer merely a mind and ego, is the opening word of this message of liberation.

Arjuna has been therefore called upon first to give up all desire of the fruits of his works and become simply the desireless impartial doer of whatever has to be done, – leaving the fruit to whatever power may be the master of the cosmic workings. For he very evidently is not the master; it is not for the satisfaction of his personal ego that Nature was set upon her ways, not for the fulfilment of his desires and preferences that the universal Life is living, not for the justification of his intellectual opinions, judgments and standards that the universal Mind is working, nor is it to that petty tribunal that it has to refer

its cosmic aims or its terrestrial method and purposes. These claims can only be made by the ignorant souls who live in their personality and see everything from that poor and narrow standpoint. He must stand back first from his egoistic demand on the world and work only as one among the millions who contributes his share of effort and labour to result determined not by himself, but by the universal action and purpose. But he has to do yet more, he has to give up the idea of being the doer and to see, freed from all personality, that it is the universal intelligence, will, mind, life that is at work in him and in all

others. Nature is the universal worker; his works are hers, even as the fruits of her works in him are part of the grand sum of result guided by a greater Power than his own. If he can do these two things spiritually, then the tangle and bondage of his works will fall far away from him; for the whole knot of that bondage lay in his egoistic demand and participation..." "In the end, as the attachment to the fruit of the work and to the work itself has been excised from the heart, so also the last clinging attachment to the idea and sense of ourselves as the doer has to be relinquished; the Divine Shakti must be known and felt above and within us as the true and sole worker."

In the next three verses (2.48 to 2.50) the Gita describes how desireless actions are done by those who have attained Yoga or union with the divine.

Fixed in Yoga do thy actions, having abandoned attachment, having become equal in failure and success, O Dhananjaya, for it is equality that is meant by Yoga. Works are far inferior to Yoga of the intelligence, O Dhananjaya; desire rather refuge in the intelligence; poor and wretched souls are they who are motivated by the fruit of their works. One whose intelligence has attained to Union, casts away from him even here (in this world of dualities) both good doing and evil doing; therefore strive to be in Yoga; Yoga is skill in works. 2.48 2.49 2.50

"Yoga, says the Gita, is skill in works, and by this phrase the ancient Scripture meant that the transformation of mind and being to which it gave the name of Yoga brought with it a perfect inner state and faculty out of which the right principle of action and the right spiritual and divine result of works emerged naturally like a tree out of its seed. Certainly, it did not mean that the clever general or politician or lawyer or shoemaker deserves the name of Yogin; it did not mean that any kind of skill in works was Yoga, but by Yoga it signified a spiritual condition of universal equality and God-union and by the skill of the Yogic worker it intended a perfect adaptation of the soul and its instruments to the rhythm of the divine and universal Prakriti liberated from the shackles of egoism and the limitations of the sense-mind."

"...action done in Yoga is not only the highest but the wisest, the most potent and efficient even for the affairs of the world..."

Sthitiprajna or the Man of Stable Intelligence

Since Yoga is skill in works, the question that must naturally arise in the mind of the disciple is, how one may attain to it. The divine teacher says, **When thy intelligence which is bewildered by the Sruti, shall stand unmoving and stable in Samadhi, then shalt thou attain to Yoga.** Arjuna, voicing the average human mind asks for some outward signs of this state of Samadhi. He said, **What is the sign of the man in Samadhi, the man of stable intelligence? How does, O Keshava, the sage of settled understanding speak, how sit, how walk?** 2.53 2.54

"No such signs can be given, nor does the Teacher attempt to supply them; for the only possible test of its possession is inward and that there are plenty of hostile psychological forces to apply. Equality is the great stamp of the liberated soul and of that equality even the most discernible signs are still
2.55 subjective." The divine Teacher said, **When a man expels, O Partha, all desires from the mind, and is satisfied in the Self by the Self, then is he**
2.56 **called stable in intelligence. He whose mind is undisturbed in the midst of sorrows, and amid pleasures is free from desire, from whom liking and wrath and fear have passed away, is the sage of settled**
2.57 **understanding. Who in all things is without affection though visited by this good or that evil and neither hates nor rejoices, his intelligence is firm in its seat.**

"The sign of the man in Samadhi is not that he loses consciousness of objects and surroundings and of his mental and physical self and cannot be recalled to it even by burning or torture of the body, – the ordinary idea of the matter; trance is a particular intensity, not the essential sign. The test is the expulsion of all desires, their inability to get at the mind, and it is the inner state from which this freedom arises, the delight of the soul gathered within itself with the mind equal and still and high-poised above the attractions and repulsions, the alternations of sunshine and storm and stress of the external life. It is drawn inward even when acting outwardly; it is concentrated in self even when gazing out upon things; it is directed wholly to the Divine even when to the outward vision of others busy and preoccupied with the affairs of the world."

The Control of Mind and Senses and the Attainment of Brahmi-Sthiti

When the intelligent will takes an upward and inward orientation – rather than a downward and outward towards a discursive action of the perceptions and the will, – towards a settled peace and equality in the calm and purity of the soul, the subjective being is no longer at the mercy of the objects of sense and the intelligence is fixed in the calm self-knowledge of the Purusha. The first necessity for this orientation of the intelligent will is to get rid of desire which is whole root of the evil and suffering. And to get rid of desire we must put an end to its cause – the rushing out of the senses to seize and enjoy their objects.

Therefore, the Gita says, **One who draws away the senses from the objects of sense, as the tortoise draws in his limbs into the shell, his intelligence is firm in its seat.** But it is not this external renunciation which will suffice or is recommended by the Gita. By abstention one gets rid of the physical contact with the object of sense, but does not get rid of the inner relation (affection *rasa*) which makes that contact hurtful. **The objects of sense cease to affect an abstemious dweller in the body, but the affection itself of the sense, the *rasa,* remains; the *rasa* also ceases when the Supreme is seen.** 2.58 2.59

The subjective cessation of the *rasa* is the only real sign of mastery because otherwise there is *nivṛtti*, cessation of the object, but no subjective cessation, no *nivṛtti* of the mind which can be attained only by union or oneness of the whole subjective being with the Soul, the Purusha satisfied in its own delight. This delight is free from dualities and can take the place of the sensuous pleasures and repulsions of the mind once we fix our mind and will on this Purusha. But to keep to this poise is not easy.

Even the mind of the wise man who labours for perfection is carried away by the vehement insistence of the senses, O son of Kunti. Having brought all the senses under control, he must sit firm in Yoga, wholly given up to Me; for in him whose senses are mastered the intelligence is firmly established in its seat. 2.60 2.61 The senses cannot be mastered by a mere mental self-discipline or the act of the intelligence on its own. "...it can only be done by Yoga with something which is higher than itself and in which calm and self-mastery are inherent. And this Yoga can only arrive at its success by devoting, by consecrating, by giving up the whole self to the Divine, "to Me", says Krishna; for the Liberator is within us, but it is not our mind, nor our intelligence, nor our personal will, – they are only instruments. It is the Lord in whom, as we are told in the end, we have utterly to take refuge. And for that we must at first make him the object of our whole being and keep in soul-

contact with him. This is the sense of the phrase "he must sit firm in Yoga, wholly given up to Me"; but as yet it is the merest passing hint after the manner of the Gita, three words only which contain in seed the whole gist of the
2.61 highest secret yet to be developed, *yukta āsīta matparaḥ*."

2.62 **In him whose mind dwells on the objects of senses with absorbing interest, attachment to them is formed; from attachment arises desire;**
2.63 **from desire anger comes forth. Anger leads to bewilderment, from bewilderment comes loss of memory; by loss of memory the intelligence**
2.64 **is destroyed; and by the destruction of intelligence he perishes. But the self-disciplined being, moving among the objects of sense with the senses free from attraction and repulsion and under the control of the**
2.65 **Self, attains to supreme felicity. In that felicity comes the cessation of all his miseries, and in the soul that has felicity the intelligence is rapidly**

established. For one who is not in Yoga, there is no intelligence, no concentration of thought; for him without concentration there is no peace, and for the unpeaceful how can there be happiness? Of the roving senses whichever the mind takes after, that sense carries away the understanding, just as the winds carry away a ship upon the sea. Therefore, O mighty-armed, one who has utterly restrained the excitement of the senses by their objects, his intelligence sits firmly in its seat. What to all creatures is night, in that the self-mastering sage is awake; that in which all creatures wake, is night to the sage who sees.

2.66
2.67
2.68
2.69

"He regards the same facts, but from the higher outlook of the whole-knower, *kṛtsnavit*, while we view it altogether from the more limited mentality
3.29 of our partial knowledge, *akṛtsnavidaḥ*, which is an ignorance. What we vaunt of as our freedom is to him bondage.... What we now call in our ordinary mentality our free will and have a certain limited justification for so calling it, yet appears to the Yogin who has climbed beyond and to whom our night is day and our day night, not free will at all, but a subjection to the modes of Nature."

He attains peace, into whom all desires enter as waters into the sea which is ever being filled, yet ever motionless, not he who longs for desires. He who abandons all desires and lives and acts free from longing, free from the sense of "I" or "mine", attains to peace. This is the *brahmi-sthithi* (firm standing in the Brahman), O Partha. Having attained thereto one is bewildered no more and, fixed in that status even at the end, one attains to extinction (Nirvana) in the Brahman.

2.70
2.71
2.72

9. *The Synthesis of Knowledge and Works*

"The Yoga of the intelligent will and its culmination in the Brahmic status, which occupies all the close of the second chapter, contains the seed of much of the teaching of the Gita, – its doctrine of desireless works, of equality, of the rejection of outward renunciation, of devotion to the Divine; but as yet all this is slight and obscure. What is most strongly emphasised as yet is the withdrawal of the will from the ordinary motive of human activities, desire, from man's normal temperament of the sense-seeking thought and will with its passions and ignorance, and from its customary habit of troubled many-branching ideas and wishes to the desireless calm unity and passionless serenity of the Brahmic poise. So much Arjuna has understood. He is not unfamiliar with all this; it is the substance of the current teaching which points man to the path of knowledge and to the renunciation of life and works as his way of perfection. The intelligence withdrawing from sense and desire and human action and turning to the Highest, to the One, to the actionless Purusha, to the immobile, to the featureless Brahman, that surely is the eternal seed of knowledge. There is no room here for works, since works belong to the Ignorance; action is the very opposite of knowledge; its seed is desire and its fruit is bondage. That is the orthodox philosophical doctrine, and Krishna
2.49 seems quite to admit it when he says that works are far inferior to the Yoga of the intelligence. And yet works are insisted upon as part of the Yoga; so that there seems to be in this teaching a radical inconsistency. Not only so; for some kind of work no doubt may persist for a while, the minimum, the most inoffensive; but here is a work wholly inconsistent with knowledge, with serenity and with the motionless peace of the self-delighted soul, – a work terrible, even monstrous, a bloody strife, a ruthless battle, a giant massacre. Yet it is this that is enjoined, this that it is sought to justify by the teaching of inner peace and desireless equality and status in the Brahman! Here then is an unreconciled contradiction."

3.1 Arjuna complains that, **If thou holdest the intelligence to be greater than works, O Janardana, why then dost thou, O Keshava, appoint me**
3.2 **to this terrible work? Thou bewilderest my intelligence with a mixed and tangled speech; tell me decisively the one thing by which I may attain to the supreme good.** It is in answer to this objection of Arjuna that the Gita begins at once to develop its positive and imperative doctrine of works and its reconciliation with the path of knowledge of the Sankhyas.

3.3 **The Blessed Lord said: Twofold is the abiding faith and discipline in this world, as declared by Me before, O sinless one: that of the Sankhyas by the Yoga of knowledge and that of the Yogins by the Yoga**
3.4 **of works. Not by abstention from works does a man enjoy *naiṣkarmya***

(actionlessness), nor by mere renunciation (of works) does he attain to his perfection.

Traditonal Sankhya Yoga, the Yoga of knowledge, insisted on the renunciation of works which it considered an obstacle to salvation while Yoga, the Yoga of works accepted them as a means of salvation. After making a distinction between the two paths, the Teacher says that a man cannot enjoy *naiṣkarmya* by abstention from works. It is not the cessation of the work of prakriti that is meant by *naiṣkarmya*. Rather it is the purusha's poise of a calm voidness from works which are done only by the Prakriti and which it watches from above but is not affected by them. By mere renunciation of works one cannot attain perfection. Thus renunciation (of works) is neither a necessary nor a sufficient means of perfection. In the next verse the Teacher goes even further and says that a complete renunciation of works, far from being

3.5 indispensable, is not even possible. **For none stands even for a moment not doing work; everyone is made to do action helplessly by the modes born of Prakriti.**

"Man embodied in the natural world cannot cease from action, not for a moment, not for a second; his very existence here is an action; the whole universe is an act of God, mere living even is His movement.... For it is not our physical movements and activities alone which are meant by works, by *karma*; our mental existence also is a great complex action, it is even the greater and more important part of the works of the unresting energy, – subjective cause and determinant of the physical. We have gained nothing if we repress the effect but retain the activity of the subjective cause. The objects of sense are only an occasion for our bondage, the mind's insistence on them is the means, the instrumental cause."

He who controls the organs of action, but continues in his mind to remember and dwell upon the objects of sense, is a deluded[3] soul, and his method of self-discipline is said to be false and vain. He who controls the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, and without attachment engages with the organs of action in Yoga of action, he excels. 3.6 3.7

[3] *"I cannot think that* mithyācāra *means a hypocrite. How is a man a hypocrite who inflicts on himself so severe and complete a privation? He is mistaken and deluded,* vimūḍhātmā, *and his* ācāra, *his formally regulated method of self-discipline, is a false and vain method, – this surely is all that the Gita means." This problem arises because of a failure to distinguish between* nigraha *and* saṁyama. *"The difference between suppression (nigraha) and self-control (*saṁyama*) is that one says 'I cannot help desiring but I will not satisfy my desire', while the other says 'I refuse the desire as well as the satisfaction of the desire'."* 3.6

It is not inaction but the control of senses and elimination of all attachment that is necessary. Action may continue, even the most stupendous action may be undertaken and still the soul may enjoy the Gita's *naiṣkarmya*. On the other hand a man who controls his organs of action and refuses to allow them their natural play would have gained nothing if his mind continues to remember and dwell upon the objects of sense in his mind. Such a man has only deluded himself with false notions of self-discipline. Therefore, it is not complete inaction – which anyway is an impossibility – but action full and free and done without subjection to sense and desire is the first secret of perfection. In the following verses in chapters 3, 4 and 5, the Gita continues to dwell upon this point in order to reconcile Sankhya and Yoga or knowledge and works.

He who in action can see inaction and can see action still continuing in cessation from works, is the man of true reason and discernment among men; he is in Yoga and a many-sided universal worker. Giving up all thy works to Me, with thy consciousness founded in the Self, free from hope and egoism, fight delivered from the fever of thy soul. 4.18 3.30

It is clear that giving up all works in the sense of the Gita does not mean cessation from action, rather the contrary. Even in the full flood of action, as the expression many sided universal worker, *kṛtsnakarmakṛt*, implies, the soul is free from its works, is not the doer, not bound by what is done. The Divine is the Lord of his works and he (the divine worker) is only their channel through the instrumentality of his nature. In this light the following verses of the Gita are perfectly in tune with what the Gita has been insisting all along. 4.18

4.19 **Whose inceptions and undertakings are all free from the will of desire, whose works are burned up by the fire of knowledge; him the**
4.20 **wise have called a sage. Having abandoned all attachment to the fruits of his works, ever satisfied without any kind of dependence, he does nothing even though engaged in works.**

4.37 And still further, it goes on to add: **As a fire kindled turns to ashes its**
4.38 **fuel, O Arjuna, so the fire of knowledge turns all works to ashes. There is nothing in the world equal in purity to knowledge, the man who is perfected by Yoga, finds it of himself in the self by the course of Time.**

Arjuna is again perplexed by above statements of Sri Krishna at the end of the fourth Chapter which seem to give an absolute prominence to knowledge – there is nothing in the world equal in purity to knowledge – whose fire turns all works to ashes. For, it appears to him that, "here are desireless works, the principle of Yoga, and renunciation of works, the principle of Sankhya, put together side by side as if part of one method, yet there is no evident reconciliation between them. For the kind of reconciliation which the Teacher has already given, – in outward inaction to see action still persisting and in apparent action to see a real inaction since the soul has renounced its illusion of the worker and given up works into the hands of the Master of sacrifice, – is for the practical mind of Arjuna too slight, too subtle and expressed almost in riddling words; he has not caught their sense or at least not penetrated into their spirit and reality. Therefore he asks again..."

5.1 **Arjuna said: Thou declarest to me the renunciation of works, O Krishna; and again thou declarest to me Yoga; which one of these is the better way, that tell me with a clear decisiveness.**

"The answer is important, for it puts the whole distinction very clearly and indicates though it does not develop entirely the line of reconciliation."

The Blessed Lord said: Renunciation and Yoga of works both bring about the soul's salvation, but of the two the Yoga of works is distinguished above the renunciation of works. He should be known as always a Sannyasin who neither loathes nor desires; free from the dualities he is released easily and happily from the bondage, O mighty-armed. Children speak of Sankhya and Yoga as different (apart from each other), not the wise; if a man applies himself integrally to one, he gets the fruit of both. The status which is attained by the Sankhyas, to that the men of Yoga also arrive; who sees Sankhya and Yoga as one, he sees.

5.2
5.3
5.4
5.5

This must be so because in the Gita the integrality of both Sankhya and Yoga is such that each contains the other.

5.7 **He who is in Yoga, the pure soul, the master of his self, who has conquered the senses, whose self becomes the self of all existences, even though he does works, he is not involved in them.**

"He knows that the actions are not his, but Nature's and by that very knowledge he is free; he has renounced works, does no actions, though actions
5.7 are done through him; he becomes the Self, the Brahman, *brahmabhūta,* he sees all existences as becomings (*bhūtāni*) of that self-existent Being, his own

only one of them, all their actions as only the development of cosmic Nature[4] working through their individual nature and his own actions also as a part of the same cosmic activity."

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[4] *This is not the whole teaching of the Gita; for as yet there is only the idea of the immutable self or Purusha, the Akshara Brahman, and of Nature, Prakriti, as that which is responsible for the cosmos and not yet the idea, clearly expressed, of the Ishwara, the Purushottama; as yet only the synthesis of works and knowledge and not yet, in spite of certain hints, the introduction of the supreme element of devotion which becomes so important afterwards; as yet only the one inactive Purusha and the lower Prakriti and not yet the distinction of the triple Purusha and the double Prakriti. It is true the Ishwara is spoken of, but his relation to the self and nature is not yet made definite. The first six chapters only carry the synthesis so far as it can be carried without the clear expression and decisive entrance of these all-important truths which, when they come in, must necessarily enlarge and modify, though without abolishing, these first reconciliations.*

Thus the upshot of all this is that action must be self-controlled.

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ।। 3.7।।
नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ।। 3.8।।

3. 8 Do thou action thus self-controlled, for action is greater than inaction; even the maintenance of thy physical life cannot be effected without action.

"Do action thus self-controlled, says Krishna, *niyataṁ kuru karma tvam*:[5] I have said that knowledge, the intelligence, is greater than works... but I did not mean that inaction is greater than action; the contrary is the truth, *karma jyāyo akarmaṇaḥ*. For knowledge does not mean renunciation of works, it means equality and non-attachment to desire and the objects of sense; and it means the poise of the intelligent will in the Soul free and high-uplifted above the lower instrumentation of Prakriti and controlling the works of the mind and 3.8

[5] *... I cannot accept the current interpretation of* niyatam karma *as if it meant fixed and formal works and were equivalent to the Vedic* nityakarma, *the regular works of sacrifice, ceremonial and the daily rule of Vedic living. Surely,* niyata *simply takes up the* niyamya *of the last verse.... Not formal works fixed by an external rule, but desireless works controlled by the liberated* buddhi, *is the Gita's teaching.*

the senses and body in the power of self-knowledge and the pure objectless
3.7 self-delight of spiritual realisation... *Buddhiyoga* is fulfilled by *karmayoga*; the Yoga of the self-liberating intelligent will finds its full meaning by the Yoga of desireless works. Thus the Gita founds its teaching of the necessity of desireless works, *niṣkāma karma,* and unites the subjective practice of the Sankhyas – rejecting their merely physical rule – with the practice of Yoga.

But still there is an essential difficulty unsolved.... The difficulty is this, how, our nature being what it is and desire the common principle of its action, is it possible to institute a really desireless action?... By doing all works with sacrifice as the only object, is the reply of the divine Teacher."

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ।। 3.9।।

3. 9. By doing works otherwise than for sacrifice, this world of men is in bondage to works; for sacrifice practise works, O son of Kunti, becoming free from all attachment.

"It is evident that all works and not merely sacrifice[6] and social duties

[6] *Let us... interpret the* niyata karma *of the Gita as the* nityakarma *of the Vedic rule, its* kartavya karma *or work that has to be done as the Aryan rule of social duty and let us take too its work done as a sacrifice to mean simply these Vedic sacrifices and this fixed social duty performed disinterestedly and without any personal object. This is how the Gita's doctrine of desireless work is often interpreted. But it seems to me that the Gita's teaching is not so crude and simple, not so local and temporal and narrow as all that. It is large, free, subtle and profound; it is for all time and for all men, not for a particular age and country. Especially, it is always breaking free from external forms, details, dogmatic notions and going back to principles and the great facts of our nature and our being. It is a work of large philosophic truth and spiritual practicality, not of constrained religious and philosophical formulas and stereotyped dogmas.*

can be done in this spirit; any action may be done either from the ego-sense narrow or enlarged or for the sake of the Divine. All being and all action of Prakriti exist only for the sake of the Divine; from that it proceeds, by that it endures, to that it is directed. But so long as we are dominated by the ego-sense we cannot perceive or act in the spirit of this truth, but act for the satisfaction of the ego and in the spirit of the ego, otherwise than for sacrifice. Egoism is the knot of the bondage. By acting Godwards, without any thought of ego, we loosen this knot and finally arrive at freedom."

10. The Gita's Doctrine of Sacrifice

The Law of Sacrifice

"The law of sacrifice[7] is the common divine action that was thrown out into the world in its beginning as a symbol of the solidarity of the universe. It is by the attraction of this law that a divinising principle, a saving power descends to limit and correct and gradually to eliminate the errors of an egoistic and self-divided creation. This descent, this sacrifice of the Purusha, the Divine Soul submitting itself to Force and Matter so that it may inform and illuminate them, is the seed of redemption of this world of Inconscience and Ignorance. For 'with sacrifice as their companion', says the Gita, 'the All-Father created these peoples.' The acceptance of the law of sacrifice is a practical recognition 3.10
by the ego that it is neither alone in the world nor chief in the world. It is its admission that, even in this much fragmented existence, there is beyond itself and behind that which is not its own egoistic person, something greater and completer, a diviner All which demands from it subordination and service. Indeed, sacrifice is imposed and, where need be, compelled by the universal World-Force; it takes it even from those who do not consciously recognise the law, – inevitably, because this is the intrinsic nature of things. Our ignorance or our false egoistic view of life can make no difference to this eternal bedrock truth of Nature. For this is the truth in Nature, that this ego which thinks itself a separate independent being and claims to live for itself, is not and cannot be independent nor separate, nor can it live to itself even if it would, but rather all are linked together by a secret Oneness. Each existence is continually giving out perforce from its stock; out of its mental receipts from Nature or its vital and physical assets and acquisitions and belongings a stream goes to all that is around it. And always again it receives something from its environment gratis or in return for its voluntary or involuntary tribute. For it is only by this giving and receiving that it can effect its own growth while at the same time it helps the sum of things. At length, though at first slowly and

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[7] *In the spiritual sense... sacrifice has a different meaning – it does not so much indicate giving up what is held dear as an offering of oneself, one's being, one's mind, heart, will, body, life, actions to the Divine. It has the original sense of "making sacred" and is used as an equivalent of the word* yajña. *When the Gita speaks of the "sacrifice of knowledge", it does not mean a giving up of anything, but a turning of the mind towards the Divine in the search for knowledge and an offering of oneself through it. It is in this sense, too, that one speaks of the offering or sacrifice of works.... the European sense of the word is not the sense of the word "Yajna" or the sense of "sacrifice" in such phrases as "the sacrifice of works". It doesn't mean that you give up all works for the sake of the Divine – for there would be no sacrifice of works at all. Similarly the sacrifice of knowledge doesn't mean that you painfully and resolutely make yourself a fool for the sake of the Lord. Sacrifice means an inner offering to the Divine and the real spiritual sacrifice is a very joyful thing. Otherwise one is only trying to make oneself fit and has not yet begun the real Yajna.*

partially, we learn to make the conscious sacrifice; even, in the end, we take joy to give ourselves and what we envisage as belonging to us in a spirit of love and devotion to That which appears for the moment other than ourselves and is certainly other than our limited personalities. The sacrifice and the divine return for our sacrifice then become a gladly accepted means towards our last perfection; for it is recognised now as the road to the fulfilment in us of the eternal purpose.

But, most often, the sacrifice is done unconsciously, egoistically and without knowledge or acceptance of the true meaning of the great world-rite. It is so that the vast majority of earth-creatures do it; and, when it is so done, the individual derives only a mechanical minimum of natural inevitable profit, achieves by it only a slow painful progress limited and tortured by the smallness and suffering of the ego. Only when the heart, the will and the mind of knowledge associate themselves with the law and gladly follow it, can there come the deep joy and the happy fruitfulness of divine sacrifice. The mind's knowledge of the law and the heart's gladness in it culminate in the perception that it is to our own Self and Spirit and the one Self and Spirit of all that we give."

"Nearness, sympathy, solidarity create a mental, moral and emotional unity; theirs is a sacrifice of mutual support and mutual gratifications. But the true unity is spiritual; its sacrifice is a mutual self-giving, an interfusion of our inner substance. The law of sacrifice travels in Nature towards its culmination in this complete and unreserved self-giving; it awakens the consciousness of one common self in the giver and the object of the sacrifice. This culmination of sacrifice is the height even of human love and devotion when it tries to become divine; for there too the highest peak of love points into a heaven of complete mutual self-giving, its summit is the rapturous fusing of two souls into one.

This profounder idea of the world-wide law is at the heart of the teaching about works given in the Gita; a spiritual union with the Highest by sacrifice, an unreserved self-giving to the Eternal is the core of its doctrine. The vulgar conception of sacrifice is an act of painful self-immolation, austere self-mortification, difficult self-effacement; this kind of sacrifice may go even as far as self-mutilation and self-torture. These things may be temporarily necessary in man's hard endeavour to exceed his natural self; if the egoism in his nature is violent and obstinate, it has to be met sometimes by an answering strong internal repression and counter-balancing violence. But the Gita discourages any excess of violence done to oneself; for the self within is really the Godhead
17.6 evolving, it is Krishna, it is the Divine; it has not to be troubled and tortured as

the Titans of the world trouble and torture it, but to be increased, fostered, cherished, luminously opened to a divine light and strength and joy and wideness. It is not one's self, but the band of the spirit's inner enemies that we have to discourage, expel, slay upon the altar of the growth of the spirit; these can be ruthlessly excised, whose names are desire, wrath, inequality, greed, attachment to outward pleasures and pains, the cohort of usurping demons that are the cause of the soul's errors and sufferings. These should be regarded not as part of oneself but as intruders and perverters of our self's real and diviner nature; these have to be sacrificed in the harsher sense of the word, whatever pain in going they may throw by reflection on the consciousness of the seeker.

But the true essence of sacrifice is not self-immolation, it is self-giving; its object not self-effacement, but self-fulfilment; its method not self-mortification, but a greater life, not self-mutilation, but a transformation of our natural human parts into divine members, not self-torture, but a passage from a lesser satisfaction to a greater Ananda. There is only one thing painful in the beginning to a raw or turbid part of the surface nature; it is the indispensable discipline demanded, the denial necessary for the merging of the incomplete ego. But for that there can be a speedy and enormous compensation in the discovery of a real greater or ultimate completeness in others, in all things, in the cosmic oneness, in the freedom of the transcendent Self and Spirit, in the rapture of the touch of the Divine. Our sacrifice is not a giving without any return or any fruitful acceptance from the other side; it is an interchange between the embodied soul and conscious Nature in us and the eternal Spirit. For even though no return is demanded, yet there is the knowledge deep within us that a marvellous return is inevitable. The soul knows that it does not give itself to God in vain; claiming nothing, it yet receives the infinite riches of the divine Power and Presence."

The Reconciliation of Vedism and Vedantism

"The Gita's theory of sacrifice is stated in two separate passages; one we find in the third chapter, another in the fourth; the first gives it in language which might, taken by itself, seem to be speaking only of the ceremonial sacrifice; the second interpreting that into the sense of a large philosophical symbolism, transforms at once its whole significance and raises it to a plane of high psychological and spiritual truth."

"At first, however, the Gita takes up the Vedic statement of the idea of sacrifice and phrases the law of sacrifice in its current terms. This it does with a definite object. We have seen that the quarrel between renunciation and works has two forms, the opposition of Sankhya and Yoga which is already in

principle reconciled and the opposition of Vedism and Vedantism which the Teacher has yet to reconcile.... Vedism worshipped the Devas, the gods, with sacrifice and held them to be the powers who assist our salvation. Vedantism was inclined to regard them as powers of the mental and material world opposed to our salvation (men, says the Upanishad, are the cattle of the gods, who do not desire man to know and be free); it saw the Divine as the immutable Brahman who has to be attained not by works of sacrifice and worship but by knowledge. Works only lead to material results and to an inferior Paradise; therefore they have to be renounced.

The Gita resolves this opposition by insisting that the Devas are only forms of the one Deva, the Ishwara, the Lord of all Yoga and worship and sacrifice and austerity, and if it is true that sacrifice offered to the Devas leads only to material results and to Paradise, it is also true that sacrifice offered to the Ishwara leads beyond them to the great liberation. For the Lord and the immutable Brahman are not two different beings, but one and the same Being, and whoever strives towards either, is striving towards that one divine Existence. All works in their totality find their culmination and completeness in the
4.33 knowledge of the Divine, *sarvaṁ karmākhilaṁ pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate.* They are not an obstacle, but the way to the supreme knowledge. Thus this opposition too is reconciled with the help of a large elucidation of the meaning of sacrifice. In fact its conflict is only a restricted form of the larger opposition between Yoga and Sankhya. Vedism is a specialised and narrow form of Yoga; the principle of the Vedantists is identical with that of the Sankhyas, for to both the movement of salvation is the recoil of the intelligence, the *buddhi*, from the differentiating powers of Nature, from ego, mind, senses, from the subjective and the objective, and its return to the undifferentiated and the immutable. It is with this object of reconciliation in his mind that the Teacher first approaches his statement of the doctrine of sacrifice; but throughout, even from the very beginning, he keeps his eye not on the restricted Vedic sense of sacrifice and works, but on their larger and universal application, – that widening of narrow and formal notions to admit the great general truths they unduly restrict which is always the method of the Gita."

3.10 **With sacrifice the Lord of creatures of old created creatures and said, By this shall you bring forth (fruits or offspring), let this be your**
3.11 **milker of desires. Foster by this the gods and let the gods foster you;**
3.12 **fostering each other, you shall attain to the supreme good. Fostered by sacrifice the gods shall give you desired enjoyments; who enjoys their**
3.13 **given enjoyments and has not given to them, he is a thief. The righteous who eat what is left from the sacrifice are released from all sin; but evil**

are they who cook (the food) for their own sake, they verily eat sin.
From food creatures come into being, from rain is the birth of food, 3.14
from sacrifice comes into being the rain, sacrifice is born of work; work -15
know to be born of Brahman, Brahman is born of the Immutable;
therefore is the all pervading Brahman established in the sacrifice. He 3.16
who follows not here the wheel thus set in movement, evil is his being,
sensual is his delight, in vain, O Partha, that man lives. But the man 3.17
whose delight is in the Self and who is satisfied with the enjoyment of
the Self and in the Self he is content, for him there exists no work that
needs to be done. He has no object here to be gained by action done 3.18
and none to be gained by action undone; he has no dependence on all
these existences for any object to be gained.

"The whole sense and drift of this teaching turns upon the interpretation we are to give to the important words, *yajña*, *karma, brahma,* sacrifice, work, Brahman. If the sacrifice is simply the Vedic sacrifice, if the work from which it is born is the Vedic rule of works and if the *brahman* from which the work itself is born is the *śabda-brahman* in the sense only of the letter of the Veda, then all the positions of the Vedist dogma are conceded and there is nothing more. Ceremonial sacrifice is the right means of gaining children, wealth, enjoyment... Even salvation, even the highest good is to be gained by ceremonial sacrifice. It must never be abandoned. Even the seeker of liberation has to continue to do ceremonial sacrifice, although without attachment; it is by
3.20 ceremonial sacrifice and ritualistic works done without attachment that men of the type of Janaka attained to spiritual perfection and liberation."

"Obviously, this cannot be the meaning of the Gita, for it would be in contradiction with all the rest of the book. Even in the passage itself, without the illumining interpretation afterwards given to it in the fourth chapter, we have already an indication of a wider sense where it is said that sacrifice is born from work, work from *brahman, brahman* from the Akshara, and therefore the all-pervading Brahman, *sarvagataṁ brahma,* is established in the sacrifice. The connecting logic of the "therefore" and the repetition of the word *brahma* are significant; for it shows clearly that the *brahman* from which all work is born has to be understood with an eye not so much

to the current Vedic teaching in which it means the Veda as to a symbolical sense in which the creative Word is identical with the all-pervading Brahman, the Eternal, the one Self present in all existences, *sarvabhūteṣu,* and present in all the workings of existence.... all the working of Prakriti is in its true nature a sacrifice, *yajña*, with the Divine Being as the enjoyer of all energisms
5.29 and works and sacrifice and the great Lord of all existences, *bhoktāram yajñatapasāṁ sarvabhūtamaheśvaram,* and to know this Divine all-pervading
3.15 and established in sacrifice, *sarvagataṁ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam,* is the true, the Vedic knowledge."

"But he may be known in an inferior action through the Devas, the gods, the powers of the divine Soul in Nature and in the eternal interaction of these powers and the soul of man, mutually giving and receiving, mutually helping, increasing, raising each other's workings and satisfaction, a commerce in which man rises towards a growing fitness for the supreme good. He recognises that his life is a part of this divine action in Nature and not a thing separate and to be held and pursued for its own sake. He regards his enjoyments and the satisfaction of his desires as the fruit of sacrifice and the gift of the gods in their divine universal workings and he ceases to pursue them in the false and evil spirit of sinful egoistic selfishness as if they were a good to be seized from life by his own unaided strength without return and without

thankfulness. As this spirit increases in him, he subordinates his desires, becomes satisfied with sacrifice as the law of life and works and is content with whatever remains over from the sacrifice, giving up all the rest freely as an offering in the great and beneficent interchange between his life and the world-life. Whoever goes contrary to this law of action and pursues works and enjoyments for his own isolated personal self-interest, lives in vain; he misses the true meaning and aim and utility of living and the upward growth of the soul; he is not on the path which leads to the highest good. But the highest only comes when the sacrifice is no longer to the gods, but to the one all-pervading Divine established in the sacrifice, of whom the gods are inferior forms and powers, and when he puts away the lower self that desires and

enjoys and gives up his personal sense of being the worker to the true executrix of all works, Prakriti, and his personal sense of being the enjoyer to the Divine Purusha, the higher and universal Self who is the real enjoyer of the works of Prakriti. In that Self and not in any personal enjoyment he finds now his sole satisfaction, complete content, pure delight; he has nothing to gain by action or inaction, depends neither on gods nor men for anything, seeks no profit from any, for the self-delight is all-sufficient to him, but does works for the sake of the Divine only, as a pure sacrifice, without attachment or desire. Thus he gains equality and becomes free from the modes of Nature, *nistraiguṇya*; his soul takes its poise not in the insecurity of Prakriti, but in the peace of the immutable Brahman, even while his actions continue in the movement of Prakriti. Thus is sacrifice his way of attaining to the Highest."

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ 3.19 ॥

3. 19. Therefore without attachment perform ever the work that is to be done; for by doing work without attachment man attains to the highest.

"The phrase used in the Gita to express this work that has to be done has indeed been interpreted in the sense that we must do our duty without regard to the fruit. But this is a conception born of European culture which is ethical rather than spiritual and external rather than inwardly profound in its concepts. No such general thing as duty exists; we have only duties, often in

conflict with each other, and these are determined by our environment, our social relations, our external status in life. They are of great value in training the immature moral nature and setting up a standard which discourages the action of selfish desire. It has already been said that so long as the seeker has no inner light, he must govern himself by the best light he has, and duty, a principle, a cause are among the standards he may temporarily erect and observe. But for all that, duties are external things, not stuff of the soul and cannot be the ultimate standard of action in this path. It is the duty of the soldier to fight when called upon, even to fire upon his own kith and kin; but such a

standard or any akin to it cannot be imposed on the liberated man. On the other hand, to love or have compassion, to obey the highest truth of our being, to follow the command of the Divine are not duties; these things are a law of the nature as it rises towards the Divine, an outflowing of action from a soul-state, a high reality of the spirit. The action of the liberated doer of works must be even such an outflowing from the soul; it must come to him or out of him as a natural result of his spiritual union with the Divine and not be formed by an edifying construction of the mental thought and will, the practical reason or the social sense."

"...there are three kinds of works, that done without sacrifice for personal enjoyment which is entirely selfish and egoistic and misses the true law and aim and utility of life, *mogham pārtha sa jīvati,* that done with desire, but 3.16
with sacrifice and the enjoyment only as a result of sacrifice and therefore to that extent consecrated and sanctified, and that done without desire or attachment of any kind. It is the last which brings the soul of man to the highest, *param āpnoti pūruṣaḥ*." 3.19

The Significance of Sacrifice

"The whole of the Gita's gospel of works rests upon its idea of sacrifice and contains in fact the eternal connecting truth of God and the world and works. The human mind seizes ordinarily only fragmentary notions and standpoints of a many-sided eternal truth of existence and builds upon them its various theories of life and ethics and religion, stressing this or that sign or appearance, but to some entirety of it it must always tend to reawaken whenever it returns in an age of large enlightenment to any entire and synthetic relation of its world-knowledge with its God-knowledge and self-knowledge. The gospel of the Gita reposes upon this fundamental Vedantic truth that all being is the one Brahman and all existence the wheel of Brahman, a divine movement

opening out from God and returning to God. All is the expressive activity of Nature and Nature a power of the Divine which works out the consciousness and will of the divine Soul master of her works and inhabitant of her forms. It is for his satisfaction that she descends into the absorption of the forms of things and the works of life and mind and returns again through mind and self-knowledge to the conscious possession of the Soul that dwells within her. There is first an involving of self and all it is or means in an evolution of phenomena; there is afterwards an evolution of self, a revelation of all it is and means, all that is hidden and yet suggested by the phenomenal creation. This cycle of Nature could not be what it is but for the Purusha assuming and maintaining simultaneously three eternal poises each of which is necessary to

the totality of this action. It must manifest itself in the mutable, and there we see it as the finite, the many, all existences, *sarvabhūtāni.* It appears to us as the finite personality of these million creatures with their infinite diversities and various relations and it appears to us behind these as the soul and force of the action of the gods, – that is to say, the cosmic powers and qualities of the Divine which preside over the workings of the life of the universe and constitute to our perception different universal forms of the one Existence, or, it may be, various self-statements of personality of the one supreme Person. Then, secret behind and within all forms and existences, we perceive too an immutable, an infinite, a timeless, an impersonal, a one unchanging spirit of existence, an indivisible Self of all that is, in which all these many find themselves to be

really one. And therefore by returning to that the active, finite personality of the individual being discovers that it can release itself into a silent largeness of universality and the peace and poise of an immutable and unattached unity with all that proceeds from and is supported by this indivisible Infinite. Or even he may escape into it from individual existence. But the highest secret of all, *uttamaṁ rahasyam,* is the Purushottama. This is the supreme Divine, God, who possesses both the infinite and the finite and in whom the personal and the impersonal, the one Self and the many existences, being and becoming, the world-action and the supracosmic peace, *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti,* meet, are united, are possessed together and in each other. In God all things find their secret truth and their absolute reconciliation."

"..the individual being begins with ignorance and persists long in ignorance. Acutely conscious of himself he sees the ego as the cause and whole meaning of life and not the Divine. He sees himself as the doer of works and does not see that all the workings of existence including his own internal and external activities are the workings of one universal Nature and nothing else. He sees himself as the enjoyer of works and imagines that for him all exists and him Nature ought to satisfy and obey his personal will; he does not see that she is not at all concerned with satisfying him or at all careful

of his will, but obeys a higher universal will and seeks to satisfy a Godhead who transcends her and her works and creations; his finite being, his will and his satisfactions are hers and not his, and she offers them at every moment as a sacrifice to the Divine of whose purpose in her she makes all this the covert instrumentation. Because of this ignorance whose seal is egoism, the creature ignores the law of sacrifice and seeks to take all he can for himself and gives only what Nature by her internal and external compulsion forces him to give." 5.29

"Only when the individual being begins to perceive and acknowledge in his acts the value of the self in others as well as the power and needs of his own ego, begins to perceive universal Nature behind his own workings and through the cosmic godheads gets some glimpse of the One and the Infinite, is he on his way to the transcendence of his limitation by the ego and the discovery of his soul. He begins to discover a law other than that of his desires, to which his desires must be more and more subordinated and subjected; he develops the purely egoistic into the understanding and ethical being. He begins to give more value to the claims of the self in others and less to the claims of his ego; he admits the strife between egoism and altruism and by the increase of his altruistic tendencies he prepares the enlargement of his own consciousness and being."

But this is only a long intermediate stage. "The real self-knowledge and consequently the right way of works lies beyond; for the sacrifice done with knowledge is the highest sacrifice and that alone brings a perfect working. That can only come when he perceives that the self in him and the self in others are one being and this self is something higher than the ego, an infinite, an impersonal, a universal existence in whom all move and have their being.... This is the Purushottama to whom the sacrifice has to be offered, not for any transient personal fruit of works, but for the soul's possession of God and in order to live in harmony and union with the Divine."

The following passages on Yajña in the fourth chapter provide "...a perfectly explicit and detailed interpretation of the meaning of *yajña* in the language of the Gita which leaves no doubt at all about the symbolic use of the words and the psychological character of the sacrifice enjoined by this teaching.... This elaborate explanation of the Yajna sets out with a vast and comprehensive definition in which it is declared that the act and energy and materials of the sacrifice, the giver and receiver of the sacrifice, the goal and object of the sacrifice are all the one Brahman."

Brahman is the giving, Brahman is the food-offering, by Brahman it is offered into the Brahman-fire, Brahman is that which is to be attained by Samadhi in Brahman-action. 4.24

"This then is the knowledge in which the liberated man has to do works of sacrifice. It is the knowledge declared of old in the great Vedantic utterances, "I am He", "All this verily is the Brahman, Brahman is this Self ". It is the knowledge of the entire unity; it is the One manifest as the doer and the deed and the object of works, knower and knowledge and the object of knowledge... But all even of the Yogins have not attained to this knowledge."

4.25 **Some Yogins follow after the sacrifice which is of the gods; others**
4.26 **offer the sacrifice by the sacrifice itself into the Brahman-fire. Some offer hearing and other senses into the fires of control, others offer sound**
4.27 **and the other objects of sense into the fires of sense. And others offer all the actions of the sense and all the actions of the vital force into the**
4.28 **fire of the Yoga of self-control kindled by knowledge. There are some who offer in sacrifice their material possessions, others who offer the austerities of their self-discipline, others who offer their practice of some form of Yoga, and others who, firm in their vows, offer their study and**
4.29 **knowledge. Others again who are devoted to controlling the breath,**

having restrained the Prana (the outgoing breath) and Apana (the incoming breath) pour as sacrifice Prana into Apana and Apana into Prana. Still others, having regulated and controlled their diet, pour as 4.30
sacrifice their life-breaths into life-breaths. All these are knowers of sacrifice, and by sacrifice have destroyed their sins. They who enjoy the 4.31
nectar of immortality left over from the sacrifice attain to the eternal Brahman; this world is not for him who doeth not sacrifice, how then any other world, O Best of the Kurus? Therefore all these and many 4.32
other forms of sacrifice have been extended in the mouth of the Brahman. Know thou that all these are born of work and so knowing

4.33 **thou shalt become free. The sacrifice of knowledge, O Parantapa, is greater than any material sacrifice. Knowledge is that in which all actions culminate (not any lower knowledge, but the highest self-knowledge**
4.34 **and God-knowledge), O Partha! Learn that knowledge by prostrating (worshipping) at the feet of the teacher, by questioning and by service. The men of knowledge who have seen the true principles of things will**
4.35 **instruct thee in that knowledge. When thou has known it, thou shalt not again fall into this confusion, O Pandava; for by this thou shalt see all existences without exception in the Self, then in Me.**

Here the "Self" means the... "one, immutable, all-pervading, all-containing, self-existent reality or Brahman hidden behind our mental being into which our consciousness widens out when it is liberated from the ego..."

The "Me" refers to God, the Divine, the Purushottama. "To Him we offer everything as a sacrifice; into His hands we give up our actions; in His existence we live and move; unified with Him in our nature and with all existence in Him, we become one soul and one power of being with Him and with all beings; with His supreme reality we identify and unite our self-being. By works done for sacrifice, eliminating desire, we arrive at knowledge and at the soul's possession of itself; by works done in self-knowledge and God-knowledge we are liberated into the unity, peace and joy of the divine existence."

11. The Principle of Divine Works

The full significance of the Gita's doctrine of sacrifice depends on the idea of the Purushottama which is not yet developed and which is set forth in the Gita explicitly only in the fifteenth chapter. At present the divine Teacher does not at all speak in set terms of the Purushottama, but of himself, – 'I', Krishna, Narayana, the Avatar. He merely gives a hint of his relation to the immobile self when he says '...thou shall see all existences without exception in the Self, then in Me.' The antinomy between the tranquil and immutable Self and the action of Nature was at the root of the problem of the reconciliation of knowledge and works. The idea of the Purushottama, seen here as incarnate Krishna, is the key to the resolution of this problem for good. "Without it the withdrawal from the lower nature to the Brahmic condition leads necessarily to inaction of the liberated man, his indifference to the works of the world; with it the same withdrawal becomes a step by which the works of the world are taken up in the spirit, with the nature and in the freedom of the Divine. See the silent Brahman as the goal and the world with all its activities has to be forsaken; see God, the Divine, the Purushottama as the goal, superior to action yet its inner spiritual cause and object and original will, and the world with all its activities is conquered and possessed in a divine transcendence of the world. It can become instead of a prison-house an opulent kingdom, *rājyaṁ samṛddham*, which we have conquered for the spiritual life by slaying the limitation of the tyrant ego and overcoming the bondage of our gaoler desires and breaking the prison of our individualistic possession and enjoyment. The liberated universalised soul becomes *svarāṭ*, *samrāṭ*, self-ruler and emperor."

3.20 **It was even by works that Janaka and the rest attained to perfection. Thou shouldst do works regarding also the holding together of the**
3.21 **peoples. Whatsoever the Best doeth, that the other men also do; the**
3.22 **standard he creates, the people follow. I have no work whatsoever, O Partha, that I need to do in all the three worlds (physical, vital, mental), nor is there anything that I have not gained and have yet to gain, and I**
3.23 **abide verily in the paths of action. For if I did not abide sleeplessly in**
-24 **the paths of action, men follow in every way My path, O son of Pritha, – these peoples would sink to destruction if I did not work and I should**
3.25 **be the creator of confusion and slayer of these creatures. As those who know not act with attachment to the action, he who knows, O Bharata, should act without attachment, having for his motive to hold together the**
3.26 **peoples. He should not create a division of their understanding in the ignorant who are attached to their works; he should set them to all actions, doing them himself with knowledge and in Yoga.**

"There are few more important passages in the Gita than these seven

striking couplets. But let us clearly understand that they must not be interpreted, as the modern pragmatic tendency concerned much more with the present affairs of the world than with any high and far-off spiritual possibility seeks to interpret them, as no more than a philosophical and religious justification of social service, patriotic, cosmopolitan and humanitarian effort and attachment to the hundred eager social schemes and dreams which attract the modern intellect. It is not the rule of a large moral and intellectual altruism which is here announced, but that of a spiritual unity with God and with this world of beings who dwell in him and in whom he dwells. It is not an injunction to subordinate the individual to society and humanity or immolate egoism on the altar of the human collectivity, but to fulfil the individual in God and to sacrifice the ego on the one true altar of the all-embracing Divinity. The Gita moves on a plane of ideas and experiences higher than those of the modern mind which is at the stage indeed of a struggle to shake off the coils of egoism, but is still mundane in its outlook and intellectual and moral rather than spiritual in its temperament. Patriotism, cosmopolitanism, service of society, collectivism, humanitarianism, the ideal or religion of humanity are admirable aids towards our escape from our primary condition of individual, family, social, national egoism into a secondary stage in which the individual realises, as far as it can be done on the intellectual, moral and emotional level, – on that level he cannot do it entirely in the right and perfect way, the way of the integral truth of his being, – the oneness of his existence with the existence of other beings. But the thought of the Gita reaches beyond to a tertiary condition of our developing self-consciousness towards which the secondary is only a partial stage of advance... The rule given here by the Gita is the rule for the masterman, the superman, the divinised human being, the Best, not in the sense of any Nietzschean, any one-sided and lopsided, any Olympian, Apollonian or Dionysian, any angelic or demoniac supermanhood, but in that of the man whose whole personality has been offered up into the being, nature and consciousness of the one transcendent and universal Divinity and by loss of the smaller self has found its greater self, has been divinised."

"The Gita declares that the action of the liberated man must be directed not by desire, but towards the keeping together of the world, its government, guidance, impulsion, maintenance in the path appointed to it. This injunction has been interpreted in the sense that the world being an illusion in which most men must be kept, since they are unfit for liberation, he must so act outwardly as to cherish in them an attachment to their customary works laid down for them by the social law. If so, it would be a poor and petty rule and every noble heart would reject it to follow rather the divine vow of Amitabha

Buddha[8], the sublime prayer of the Bhagavata[9], the passionate aspiration of Vivekananda[10]. But if we accept rather the view that the world is a divinely guided movement of Nature emerging in man towards God and that this is the work in which the Lord of the Gita declares that he is ever occupied although he himself has nothing ungained that he has yet to win, then a deep and true sense will appear for this great injunction. To participate in that divine work, to live for God in the world will be the rule of the Karmayogin; to live for God in the world and therefore so to act that the Divine may more and more manifest himself and the world go forward by whatever way of its obscure pilgrimage and move nearer to the divine ideal."

"The whole range of human works must be that in which the God-knower shall move. All individual, all social action, all the works of the intellect, the heart and the body are still his, not any longer for his own separate sake, but for the sake of God in the world, of God in all beings and that all those beings may move forward, as he has moved, by the path of works towards the discovery of the Divine in themselves. Outwardly his actions may not seem to differ essentially from theirs; battle and rule as well as teaching and thought, all the various commerce of man with man may fall in his range; but the spirit in which he does them must be very different, and it is that spirit which by its influence shall be the great attraction drawing men upwards to his own level, the great lever lifting the mass of men higher in their ascent."

4.35

"The giving of the example of God himself to the liberated man is profoundly significant; for it reveals the whole basis of the Gita's philosophy of divine works... The divinised man entering into his divine nature will act even as he acts; he will not give himself up to inaction. The Divine is at work in man in the ignorance and at work in man in the knowledge... for it is he who works in the steps and measures of his power; every movement of it, every particle of the world of beings it forms is instinct with his presence, full of his consciousness, impelled by his will, shaped by his knowledge."

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[8] *...Amitabha Buddha... turned away when his spirit was on the threshold of Nirvana and took the vow never to cross it while a single being remained in the sorrow and the Ignorance.*

[9] *"I desire not the supreme state with all its eight siddhis nor the cessation of rebirth; may I assume the sorrow of all creatures who suffer and enter into them so that they may be made free from grief."*

[10] *"I have lost all wish for my salvation," wrote the great Vedantin, "may I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls, – and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species is the special object of my worship. He who is the high and low, the saint and the sinner, the god and the worm, Him worship, the visible, the knowable, the real, the omnipresent; break all other idols. In whom there is neither past life nor future birth, nor death nor going nor coming, in whom we always have been and always will be one, Him worship; break all other idols." The last two sentences contain indeed the whole gist of the matter.*

12. *The Action of Desire*

Arjuna said: Then what is this in us that drives a man to sin, as if by force, even against his own struggling will, O Varshneya? The Blessed Lord said: It is desire[11], it is wrath, born of Rajas, all-devouring, all-polluting, know thou this as the soul's enemy here. 3.36 3.37

"...the grand deformation which the psychic Prana contributes to our being, is desire. The root of desire is the vital craving to seize upon that which we feel we have not, it is the limited life's instinct for possession and satisfaction. It creates the sense of want, – first the simpler vital craving of hunger, thirst, lust, then these psychical hungers, thirsts, lusts of the mind which are a much greater and more instant and pervading affliction of our being, the hunger which is infinite because it is the hunger of an infinite being, the thirst which is only temporarily lulled by satisfaction, but is in its nature insatiable... Desire is the root of all sorrow, disappointment, affliction, for though it has a feverish joy of pursuit and satisfaction, yet because it is always a straining of the being, it carries into its pursuit and its getting a labour, hunger, struggle, a rapid subjection to fatigue, a sense of limitation, dissatisfaction and early disappointment with all its gains, a ceaseless morbid stimulation, trouble, disquiet, *aśānti*."

"...desire is the most obscure and the most obscuring movement of the lower nature. Desires are motions of weakness and ignorance and they keep you chained to your weakness and to your ignorance. Men have the impression that their desires are born within; they feel as if they come out of themselves or arise within themselves; but it is a false impression. Desires are waves of the vast sea of the obscure lower nature and they pass from one person to another. Men do not generate a desire in themselves, but are invaded by these waves; whoever is open and without defence is caught in them and tossed about. Desire by engrossing and possessing him makes him incapable of any discrimination and gives him the impression that it is part of his nature to manifest it. In reality, it has nothing to do with his true nature. It is the same with all the lower impulses, jealousy or envy, hatred or violence. These too are movements that seize you, waves that overwhelm and invade; they deform, they do not belong to the true character or the true nature; they are no intrinsic or inseparable part of yourself, but come out of the sea of surrounding obscurity in which move the forces of the lower nature. These desires, these passions have no personality, there is nothing in them or their action that is

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[11] *Desire is one of the four master-knots of our lower soul-nature ...pointed out for us and insisted on with great force and a constant emphatic repetition in the Gita; they are... desire, ego, the dualities and the three gunas of Nature; for to be desireless, ego-less, equal of mind and soul and spirit and* nistraiguṇya *is in the idea of the Gita to be free,* mukta.

peculiar to you; they manifest in the same way in everyone. The obscure movements of the mind too, the doubts and errors and difficulties that cloud the personality and diminish its expansion and fulfilment, come from the same source. They are passing waves and they catch anyone who is ready to be caught and utilised as their blind instrument. And yet each goes on believing that these movements are part of himself and a precious product of his own free personality. Even we find people clinging to them and their disabilities as the very sign or essence of what they call their freedom."

3.38 **As a fire is covered over by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo is wrapped by the amnion, so is this (knowledge) enveloped by it.**
3.39 **Enveloped is knowledge, O Kaunteya, by this eternal enemy of the wise**
3.40 **in the form of desire which is an insatiable fire. The senses, mind and intellect are said to be its seat; enveloping knowledge by these it bewilders the embodied soul.**

"The psychic Prana invades the sensational mind and brings into it the unquiet thirst of sensations, invades the dynamic mind with the lust of control, having domination, success, fulfilment of every impulse, fills the emotional mind with the desire for the satisfaction of liking and disliking, for the wreaking of love and hate, brings the shrinkings and panics of fear and the strainings and disappointments of hope, imposes the tortures of grief and the brief fevers and excitements of joy, makes the intelligence and intelligent will the accomplices of all these things and turns them in their own kind into deformed and lame instruments, the will into a will of craving and the intelligence into a partial, a stumbling and an eager pursuer of limited, impatient, militant prejudgement and opinion."

3.41 **Therefore, O Best of the Bharatas, controlling first the senses, do thou slay this thing of sin, destroyer of knowledge and discernment.**

To get rid of desire we must control our senses and put an end to their rushing out to seize and enjoy their myriad objects.

"All forces upon earth tend towards expressing themselves. These forces come with the object of manifesting themselves and if you place a barrier and refuse expression, they may try to beat against the barrier for a time, but in the end, they will tire themselves out and not being manifested, they will withdraw and leave you quiet.

So you must never say: 'I shall first purify my thought, purify my body, purify my vital and then later I shall purify my action.' That is the normal order, but it never succeeds. The effective order is to begin from the outside: 'The very first thing is that I do not do it, and afterwards, I desire it no longer and next I close my doors completely to all impulses: they no longer exist for

me, I am now outside all that.' This is the true order, the order that is effective. First, not to do it. And then you will no longer desire and after that it will go out of your consciousness completely."

Desire and Will

"Desire, it is thought, is the real motive power of human living and to cast it out would be to stop the springs of life; satisfaction of desire is man's only enjoyment and to eliminate it would be to extinguish the impulse of life by a quietistic asceticism. But the real motive power of the life of the soul is Will; desire is only a deformation of will in the dominant bodily life and physical mind. The essential turn of the soul to possession and enjoyment of the world consists in a will to delight, and the enjoyment of the satisfaction of craving is only a vital and physical degradation of the will to delight. It is essential that we should distinguish between pure will and desire, between the inner will to delight and the outer lust and craving of the mind and body. If we are unable to make this distinction practically in the experience of our being, we can only make a choice between a life-killing asceticism and the gross will to live or else try to effect an awkward, uncertain and precarious compromise between them. This is in fact what the mass of men do; a small minority trample down the life instinct and strain after an ascetic perfection; most obey the gross will to live with such modifications and restraints as society imposes or the normal social man has been trained to impose on his own mind and actions; others set up a balance between ethical austerity and temperate indulgence of the desiring mental and vital self and see in this balance the golden mean of a sane mind and healthy human living. But none of these ways gives the perfection which we are seeking, the divine government of the will in life. To tread down altogether the Prana, the vital being, is to kill the force of life by which the large action of the embodied soul in the human being must be supported; to indulge the gross will to live is to remain satisfied with imperfection; to compromise between them is to stop half way and possess neither earth nor heaven. But if we can get at the pure will undeformed by desire, – which we shall find to be a much more free, tranquil, steady and effective force than the leaping, smoke-stifled, soon fatigued and baffled flame of desire, – and at the calm inner will of delight not afflicted or limited by any trouble of craving, we can then transform the Prana from a tyrant, enemy, assailant of the mind into an obedient instrument. We may call these greater things, too, by the name of desire, if we choose, but then we must suppose that there is a divine desire other than the vital craving, a God-desire of which this other and lower phenomenon is an obscure shadow and into which it has to be transfigured. It is better to keep distinct names for things which are entirely different in their character and inner action."

13. The Gita's Doctrine of Avatarhood and Its Process, Purpose and Method

"In speaking of this Yoga in which action and knowledge become one, the Yoga of the sacrifice of works with knowledge, in which works are fulfilled in knowledge, knowledge supports, changes and enlightens works, and both are offered to the Purushottama, the supreme Divinity who becomes manifest within us as Narayana, Lord of all our being and action seated secret in our hearts for ever, who becomes manifest even in the human form as the Avatar, the divine birth taking possession of our humanity..." Sri Krishna declares
4.1 that: **This imperishable Yoga I gave to Vivasvan (the Sun-God), Vivasvan gave it to Manu (the father of men), Manu gave it to Ikshvaku (head of**
4.2 **the Solar line). Thus handed down from one to another, the Royal Sages knew it till it was lost to the world through the great lapse of Time, O**
4.3 **Parantapa. This same ancient Yoga has been today declared to thee by Me, for thou art My devotee and My friend; this is the highest secret.**

The Gita, when it declares it to be the highest secret, claims for it superiority to all other forms of Yoga because instead of leading to the impersonal Brahman or to a personal Deity, this leads us to the Purushottama, the highest being of the Divine which reconciles all powers and principles – even those contrary or opposed to each other – of its manifested being.

Arjuna takes Sri Krishna's declaration about the transmission of this
4.4 Yoga in its most physical sense and asks: **Recent is thy birth, far ancient was the birth of the Vivasvan, how then am I to comprehend that Thou declaredst it to him in the beginning?**

4.5 Sri Krishna replies that many are the lives of Arjuna and his own that are past and all of them he knows but Arjuna doesn't. He now takes the opportunity given by Arjuna's question to openly declare his concealed Godhead.

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ।।4.6।।

4.6. Though I am the unborn, though I am imperishable in my self-existence, though I am the Lord of all existences, yet I stand upon my own Nature and I come into birth by my self-Maya.

"Now it is notable that with a slight but important variation of language the Gita describes in the same way both the action of the Divine in bringing about the ordinary birth of creatures and his action in his birth as the Avatar.

'Leaning upon my own Nature, *prakṛtiṁ svām avaṣṭabhya,*'[12] it will say later, 'I loose forth variously, *visṛjāmi,* this multitude of creatures helplessly subject 9.8
owing to the control of Prakriti, *avaśaṁ prakṛter vaśāt.*' 'Standing upon my own Nature,' it says here, 'I am born by my self-Maya, *prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya... ātmamāyayā,* I loose forth myself, *ātmānaṁ sṛjāmi.*' The action implied in the word *avaṣṭabhya* is a forceful downward pressure by which the object controlled is overcome, oppressed, blocked or limited in its movement or working and becomes helplessly subject to the controlling power, *avaśaṁ vaśāt*; Nature in this action becomes mechanical and its multitude of creatures are held helpless in the mechanism, not lords of their own action. On the contrary the action implied in the word *adhiṣṭhāya* is a dwelling in, but also a standing upon and over the Nature, a conscious control and government by the indwelling Godhead, *adhiṣṭhātrī devatā,* in which the Purusha is not helplessly driven by the Prakriti through ignorance, but rather the Prakriti is full of the light and the will of the Purusha....

The language of the Gita shows therefore that the divine birth is that of the conscious Godhead in our humanity and essentially the opposite of the ordinary birth even though the same means are used, because it is not the birth into the Ignorance, but the birth of the knowledge, not a physical phenomenon, but a soul-birth...." "In the ordinary human birth the Nature-aspect of the universal Divine assuming humanity prevails; in the incarnation the God-aspect of the same phenomenon takes its place. In the one he allows the human nature to take possession of his partial being and to dominate it; in the other he takes possession of his partial type of being and its nature and divinely dominates it. Not by evolution or ascent like the ordinary man, the Gita seems to tell us, not by a growing into the divine birth, but by a direct descent into the stuff of humanity and a taking up of its moulds...." "The Avatar therefore is a direct manifestation in humanity by Krishna the divine Soul of that divine condition of being to which Arjuna, the human soul, the type of a highest human being, a Vibhuti, is called upon by the Teacher to arise, and to which he can only arise by climbing out of the ignorance and limitation of his ordinary humanity."

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[12]प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ।। 9.8।।

9.8. Leaning (pressing) upon My own Nature, I loose forth again and again this multitude of existences, all helplessly subject to the control of Nature.

The Purpose of Avatarhood

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ।।4.7।।

4.7. Whensoever there is a fading of the Dharma and the uprising of unrighteousness, O Bharata, then I loose myself forth into birth.

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ।।4.8।।

4.8. For the deliverance of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the enthroning of the Right, the Dharma, I am born from age to age.

"...we have to remark carefully that the upholding of Dharma in the world is not the only object of the descent of the Avatar, that great mystery of the Divine manifest in humanity; for the upholding of the Dharma is not an all-sufficient object in itself, not the supreme possible aim for the manifestation of a Christ, a Krishna, a Buddha, but is only the general condition of a higher aim and a more supreme and divine utility. For there are two aspects of the divine birth; one is a descent, the birth of God in humanity, the Godhead manifesting itself in the human form and nature, the eternal Avatar; the other is an ascent, the birth of man into the Godhead, man rising into the divine nature and consciousness, *madbhāvam āgataḥ*; it is 4.10

the being born anew in a second birth of the soul. It is that new birth which Avatarhood and the upholding of the Dharma are intended to serve. This double aspect in the Gita's doctrine of Avatarhood is apt to be missed by the cursory reader satisfied, as most are, with catching a superficial view of its profound teachings, and it is missed too by the formal commentator petrified in the rigidity of the schools. Yet it is necessary, surely, to the whole meaning of the doctrine. Otherwise the Avatar idea would be only a dogma, a popular superstition, or an imaginative or mystic deification of historical or legendary supermen, not what the Gita makes all its teaching, a deep philosophical and religious truth and an essential part of or step to the supreme mystery of all, *rahasyam uttamam.*

If there were not this rising of man into the Godhead to be helped by the descent of God into humanity, Avatarhood for the sake of the Dharma would be an otiose phenomenon, since mere Right, mere justice or standards of virtue can always be upheld by the divine omnipotence through its ordinary means, by great men or great movements, by the life and work of sages and kings and religious teachers, without any actual incarnation...." "That the Gita contains as its kernel this second and real object of the Avatarhood, is evident even from this passage by itself rightly considered; but it becomes much clearer if we take it, not by itself, – always the wrong way to deal with

the texts of the Gita, – but in its right close connection with other passages and with the whole teaching. We have to remember and take together its doctrine of the one Self in all, of the Godhead seated in the heart of every creature, its teaching about the relations between the creator and his creation, its strongly emphasised idea of the *vibhūti,* – noting too the language in which the Teacher gives his own divine example of selfless works which applies equally to the human Krishna and the divine Lord of the worlds... and we have to read in the light of these ideas this passage we find before us and its declaration that by the knowledge of his divine birth and divine

works men come to the Divine and by becoming full of him and even as he 4.9
and taking refuge in him they arrive at his nature and status of being,
madbhāvam. For then we shall understand the divine birth and its object, not 4.10
as an isolated and miraculous phenomenon, but in its proper place in the whole scheme of the world-manifestation; without that we cannot arrive at its divine mystery, but shall either scout it altogether or accept it ignorantly and, it may be, superstitiously or fall into the petty and superficial ideas of the modern mind about it by which it loses all its inner and helpful significance."

"The Avatar comes as the manifestation of the divine nature in the human nature, the apocalypse of its Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, in order that the human nature may by moulding its principle, thought, feeling, action, being on the lines of that Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood transfigure itself into the Divine...." "It is, we might say, to exemplify the possibility of the Divine manifest in the human being, so that man may see what that is and take courage to grow into it. It is also to leave the influence of that manifestation vibrating in the earth-nature and the soul of that manifestation presiding over its upward endeavour. It is to give a spiritual mould of divine manhood into which the seeking soul of the human being can cast itself. It is to give a Dharma,

a religion, – not a mere creed, but a method of inner and outer living, – a way, a rule and law of self-moulding by which he can grow towards divinity. It is too, since this growth, this ascent is no mere isolated and individual phenomenon, but like all in the divine world-activities, a collective business, a work and the work for the race, to assist the human march, to hold it together in its great crises, to break the forces of the downward gravitation when they grow too insistent, to uphold or restore the great Dharma of the Godward law in man's nature, to prepare even, however far off, the kingdom of God, the victory of the seekers of light and perfection, *sādhūnām,* and the overthrow of those who fight for the continuance of 4.8
the evil and the darkness. All these are recognised objects of the descent

of the Avatar, and it is usually by his work that the mass of men seek to distinguish him and for that that they are ready to worship him. It is only the spiritual who see that this external Avatarhood is a sign, in the symbol of a human life, of the eternal inner Godhead making himself manifest in the field of their own human mentality and corporeality so that they can grow into unity with that and be possessed by it. The divine manifestation of a Christ, Krishna, Buddha in external humanity has for its inner truth the same manifestation of the eternal Avatar within in our own inner humanity. That which has been done in the outer human life of earth, may be repeated in the inner life of all human beings."

The Method or the Process of Avatarhood

"This is the object of the incarnation, but what is the method[13]? First, we have the rational or minimising view of Avatarhood which sees

[13] *.... each being in a new birth prepares a new mind, life and body – otherwise John Smith would always be John Smith and would have no chance of being Piyusha Kanti Ghose. Of course inside there are old personalities contributing to the new life – but I am speaking of the new visible personality, the outer man, mental, vital, physical. It is the psychic being that keeps the link from birth to birth and makes all the manifestations of the same person. It is therefore to be expected that the Avatar should take on a new personality each time, a personality suited for the new times, work, surroundings. In my own view of things, however, the new personality has a series of Avatar births behind him, births in which the intermediate evolution has been followed and assisted from age to age.*

in it only an extraordinary manifestation of the diviner qualities moral, intellectual and dynamic by which average humanity is exceeded. In this idea there is a certain truth. The Avatar is at the same time the Vibhuti....

10.37 'I am Vasudeva (Krishna) among the Vrishnis,' says the Lord in the Gita, 'Dhananjaya (Arjuna) among the Pandavas, Vyasa among the sages, the seer-poet Ushanas among the seer-poets,' the first in each category, the greatest of each group, the most powerfully representative of the qualities and works in which its characteristic soul-power manifests itself. This heightening of the powers of the being is a very necessary step in the progress of the divine manifestation. Every great man who rises above our average level, raises by that very fact our common humanity; he is a living assurance of our divine possibilities, a promise of the Godhead, a glow of the divine Light and a breath of the divine Power.

It is this truth which lies behind the natural human tendency to the deification of great minds and heroic characters; it comes out clearly enough in the Indian habit of mind which easily sees a partial (*aṁśa*) Avatar in great saints, teachers, founders, or most significantly in the belief of southern Vaishnavas that some of their saints were incarnations of the symbolic living weapons of Vishnu, – for that is what all great spirits are, living powers and weapons of the Divine in the upward march and battle. This idea is innate and inevitable in any mystic or spiritual view of life which does not draw an inexorable line between the being and nature of the Divine and our human being and nature; it is the sense of the divine in humanity. But still the Vibhuti

is not the Avatar; otherwise Arjuna, Vyasa, Ushanas would be Avatars as well as Krishna, even if in a less degree of the power of Avatarhood. The divine quality is not enough; there must be the inner consciousness of the Lord and Self governing the human nature by his divine presence. The heightening of
9.8 the power of the qualities is part of the becoming, *bhūtagrāma,* an ascent in the ordinary manifestation; in the Avatar there is the special manifestation, the divine birth from above, the eternal and universal Godhead descended into a form of individual humanity, *ātmānaṁ sṛjāmi,* and conscious not only behind the veil but in the outward nature.

There is an intermediary idea, a more mystical view of Avatarhood which supposes that a human soul calls down this descent into himself and is either possessed by the divine consciousness or becomes an effective reflection or channel of it. This view rests upon certain truths of spiritual experience. The divine birth in man, his ascent, is itself a growing of the human into the divine consciousness, and in its intensest culmination is a losing of the separate self in that.... The Gita itself speaks of the soul becoming the Brahman, *brahmabhūta,* and of its thereby dwelling in the Lord, 6.27
in Krishna, but it does not, it must be marked, speak of it as becoming the Lord or the Purushottama, though it does declare that the Jiva himself is always Ishwara, the partial being of the Lord, *mamaivāṁśaḥ*. For this greatest 15.7

union, this highest becoming is still part of the ascent; while it is the divine birth to which every Jiva arrives, it is not the descent of the Godhead, not Avatarhood, but at most Buddhahood according to the doctrine of the Buddhists, it is the soul awakened from its present mundane individuality into an infinite super-consciousness. That need not carry with it either the inner consciousness or the characteristic action of the Avatar.

On the other hand, this entering into the divine consciousness may be attended by a reflex action of the Divine entering or coming forward into the human parts of our being, pouring himself into the nature, the activity, the mentality, the corporeality even of the man; and that may well be at least a partial Avatarhood....

But also the higher divine consciousness of the Purushottama may itself descend into the humanity and that of the Jiva disappear into it. This is said by his contemporaries to have happened in the occasional transfigurations of Chaitanya when he who in his normal consciousness was only the lover and devotee of the Lord and rejected all deification, became in these abnormal moments the Lord himself and so spoke and acted, with all the outflooding light and love and power of the divine Presence. Supposing this to be the normal condition, the human receptacle to be constantly no more than a vessel of this divine Presence and divine Consciousness, we should have the Avatar

according to this intermediary idea of the incarnation. That easily recommends itself as possible to our human notions; for if the human being can elevate his nature so as to feel a unity with the being of the Divine and himself a mere channel of its consciousness, light, power, love, his own will and personality lost in that will and that being, – and this is a recognised spiritual status, – then there is no inherent impossibility of the reflex action of that Will, Being, Power, Love, Light, Consciousness occupying the whole personality of the human Jiva. And this would not be merely an ascent of our humanity into the divine birth and the divine nature, but a descent of the divine Purusha into humanity, an Avatar.

The Gita, however, goes much farther. It speaks clearly of the Lord himself being born; Krishna speaks of his many births that are past and makes it clear by his language that it is not merely the receptive human being but the Divine of whom he makes this affirmation, because he uses the very language of the Creator, the same language which he will employ when he has to describe his creation of the world. "Although I am the unborn Lord of creatures, I 4.6
create (loose forth) my *self* by my Maya," presiding over the actions of my Prakriti. Here there is no question of the Lord, and the human Jiva or of the Father and the Son, the divine Man, but only of the Lord and his Prakriti. The Divine descends by his own Prakriti into birth in its human form and type and brings into it the divine Consciousness and the divine Power, though consenting,

though willing to act in the form, type, mould of humanity, and he governs its
4.6 actions in the body as the indwelling and over-dwelling Soul, *adhiṣṭhāya.* From above he governs always, indeed, for so he governs all nature, the human included; from within also he governs all nature, always, but hidden; the difference here is that he is manifest, that the nature is conscious of the divine Presence as the Lord, the Inhabitant, and it is not by his secret will from above, 'the will of the Father which is in heaven,' but by his quite direct and apparent will that he moves the nature. And here there seems to be no room
4.6 for the human intermediary; for it is by resort to his own nature, *prakṛtiṁ svām*, and not the special nature of the Jiva that the Lord of all existence thus takes upon himself the human birth.

This doctrine is a hard saying, a difficult thing for the human reason to accept; and for an obvious reason, because of the evident humanity of the Avatar[14]. The Avatar is always a dual phenomenon of divinity and humanity; the Divine takes upon himself the human nature with all its outward limitations and makes them the circumstances, means, instruments of the divine consciousness and the divine power, a vessel of the divine birth and the divine works. But so surely it must be, since otherwise the object of the Avatar's descent is not fulfilled; for that object is precisely to show that the human birth with all its limitations can be made such a means and instrument of the divine birth and divine works, precisely to show that the human type of consciousness can be compatible with the divine essence of consciousness made manifest, can be converted into its vessel, drawn into nearer conformity with it by a change of its mould and a heightening of its powers of light and love and strength and purity; and to show also how it can be done. If the Avatar were to act in an entirely supernormal fashion, this object would not be fulfilled. A merely supernormal or miraculous Avatar would be a meaningless absurdity; not that there need be an entire absence of the use of supernormal powers such as Christ's so-called miracles of healing, for the use of supernormal powers is quite a possibility of human nature; but there need not be that at all, nor in any case is it the root of the matter, nor would it at all do if the life were nothing else but a display of supernormal fireworks. The Avatar does not come as a thaumaturgic magician, but as the divine leader of humanity and the exemplar of a divine humanity. Even human sorrow and physical suffering he must assume and use so as to show, first, how that suffering may be a means

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[14] *If the Divine were not in essence omnipotent, he could not be omnipotent anywhere... Because he chooses to limit or determine his action by conditions, it does not make him less omnipotent. His self-limitation is itself an act of omnipotence....*

Why should the Divine be tied down to succeed in all his operations? What if failure suits him better and serves better the ultimate purpose? What rigid primitive notions are these about the Divine!

Certain conditions have been established for the game and so long as those conditions remain unchanged certain things are not done, – so we say they are impossible, can't be done. If the conditions are changed then the same things are done or at least become licit – allowable, legal according to the so-called laws of Nature, and then we say they can be done. The Divine also acts according to the conditions of the game. He may change them, but he has to change them first, not proceed, while maintaining the conditions, to act by a series of miracles.

An Avatar or Vibhuti have the knowledge that is necessary for their work, they need not have more. There was absolutely no reason why Buddha should know what was going on in Rome. An Avatar even does not manifest all the Divine omniscience and omnipotence; he has not come for any such unnecessary display; all that is behind him but not in the front of his consciousness. As for the Vibhuti, the Vibhuti need not even know that he is a power of the Divine.

of redemption, – as did Christ, – secondly, to show how, having been assumed by the divine soul in the human nature, it can also be overcome in the same nature, – as did Buddha."

The Modern Mind and the Doctrine of Avatarhood

"... to the modern mind Avatarhood is one of the most difficult to accept or to understand of all the ideas that are streaming in from the East upon the rationalised human consciousness. It is apt to take it at the best for a mere figure for some high manifestation of human power, character, genius, great work done for the world or in the world, and at the worst to regard it as a superstition, – to the heathen a foolishness and to the Greeks a stumbling-block. The materialist, necessarily, cannot even look at it, since he does not believe in God; to the rationalist or the Deist it is a folly and a thing of derision; to the thoroughgoing dualist who sees an unbridgeable gulf between the human and the divine nature, it sounds like a blasphemy. The rationalist objects that if God exists, he is extracosmic or supracosmic and does not intervene in the affairs of the world, but allows them to be governed by a fixed machinery of law, – he is, in fact, a sort of far-off constitutional monarch or spiritual King Log, at the best an indifferent inactive Spirit behind the activity of Nature, like some generalised or abstract witness Purusha of the Sankhyas; he is pure Spirit and cannot put on a body, infinite and cannot be finite as the human being is finite, the ever unborn creator and cannot be the creature born into the world, – these things are impossible even to his absolute omnipotence. To these objections the thoroughgoing dualist would add that God is in his person, his role and his nature different and separate from man; the perfect cannot put on human imperfection; the unborn personal God cannot be born as a human personality; the Ruler of the worlds cannot be limited in a nature-bound human action and in a perishable human body. These objections, so formidable at first sight to the reason, seem to have been present to the mind of the Teacher in the Gita when he says that although the Divine is unborn, imperishable in his self-existence, the Lord of all beings, yet he assumes birth by a supreme resort to the action of his Nature and by force of his self-Maya;
9.11 that he whom the deluded despise because lodged in a human body, is verily in his supreme being the Lord of all... And the Gita is able to meet all these oppositions and to reconcile all these contraries because it starts from the Vedantic view of existence, of God and the universe. For in the Vedantic view of things all these apparently formidable objections are null and void from the beginning. The idea of the Avatar is not indeed indispensable to its scheme, but it comes in naturally into it as a perfectly rational and logical conception. For all here is God, is the Spirit or Self-existence, is *Brahman*, *ekamevādvitīyam*, – there is nothing else, nothing other and different from it and there can be

nothing else, can be nothing other and different from it; Nature is and can be nothing else than a power of the divine consciousness; all beings are and can be nothing else than inner and outer, subjective and objective soul-forms and bodily forms of the divine being which exist in or result from the power of its consciousness. Far from the Infinite being unable to take on finiteness, the whole universe is nothing else but that; we can see, look as we may, nothing else at all in the whole wide world we inhabit. Far from the Spirit being incapable of form or disdaining to connect itself with form of matter or mind and to assume a limited nature or a body, all here is nothing but that, the world exists only by that connection, that assumption."

The Secret of Divine Birth and Work

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ।। 4.9।।

4.9. He who knoweth thus in its right principles My divine birth and My divine work, when he abandons his body, comes not to rebirth, he comes to Me, O Arjuna.

"The work for which the Avatar descends has like his birth a double sense and a double form. It has an outward side of the divine force acting upon the external world in order to maintain there and to reshape the divine law by which the Godward effort of humanity is kept from decisive retrogression and instead decisively carried forward in spite of the rule of action and reaction, the rhythm of advance and relapse by which Nature proceeds. It has an inward side[15] of the divine force of the Godward consciousness acting upon the soul of the individual and the soul of the race, so that it may receive new forms of revelation of the Divine in man and may be sustained, renewed and enriched in its power of upward self-unfolding.

[15] *...it is very easy to explain how a person who has this experience can spread it, can act on others; because to have the experience you must touch the one, supreme Essence of the whole manifestation, the Origin and the Essence, the Source and the Reality of all that is; and at once you enter the realm of Unity – there is no longer any separation of individuals, there is only one single vibration that can be repeated indefinitely in external form.... This single vibration is static everywhere, but when one realises it consciously, one has the power of making it active wherever one directs it; that is to say, one doesn't move anything, but the stress of the consciousness makes it active wherever one directs one's consciousness.*

If you rise high enough, you find yourself at the heart of all things. And what is manifest in this heart can manifest in all things. That is the great secret, the secret of the divine incarnation in an individual form, because in the normal course of things what manifests at the centre is realised in the external form only with the awakening and the response of the will in the individual form. Whereas if the central Will is represented constantly and permanently in an individual being, this individual being can serve as an intermediary between this Will and all beings, and will for them. Everything this individual being perceives

The Avatar does not descend merely for a great outward action, as the pragmatic sense in humanity is too often tempted to suppose....

The crisis in which the Avatar appears, though apparent to the outward eye only as a crisis of events and great material changes, is always in its source and real meaning a crisis in the consciousness of humanity when it has to undergo some grand modification and effect some new development. For this action of change a divine force is needed; but the force varies always according to the power of consciousness which it embodies; hence the necessity of a divine consciousness manifesting in the mind and soul of humanity. Where, indeed, the change is mainly intellectual and practical, the intervention of the Avatar is not needed; there is a great uplifting of consciousness, a great manifestation of power in which men are for the time being exalted above their normal selves, and this surge of consciousness and power finds its wave-crests in certain exceptional individuals, Vibhutis, whose action leading the general action is sufficient for the change intended. The Reformation in Europe and the French Revolution were crises of this character... But when the crisis has a spiritual seed or intention, then a complete or a partial manifestation of the God-consciousness in a human mind and soul comes as its originator or leader. That is the Avatar.[16]..."

"The Avatar may descend as a great spiritual teacher and saviour, the Christ, the Buddha, but always his work leads, after he has finished his earthly manifestation, to a profound and powerful change not only in the ethical, but in the social and outward life and ideals of the race. He may, on the other hand, descend as an incarnation of the divine life, the divine personality and power in its characteristic action, for a mission ostensibly social, ethical and political, as is represented in the story of Rama or Krishna; but always then this descent becomes in the soul of the race a permanent power for the inner living and the spiritual rebirth. It is indeed curious to note that the permanent,

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and offers in his consciousness to the supreme Will is answered as if it came from each individual being. And if for any reason the individual elements have a more or less conscious and voluntary relation with that representative being, their relation increases the efficacy, the effectiveness of the representative individual; and thus the supreme Action can act in Matter in a much more concrete and permanent manner. That is the reason for these descents of consciousness – which we may describe as "polarised", for they always come to earth with a definite purpose and for a special realisation, with a mission – a mission which is decided upon, determined before the incarnation. These are the great stages of the supreme incarnations on earth.

[16] An Avatar, roughly speaking, is one who is conscious of the presence and power of the Divine born in him or descended into him and governing from within his will and life and action; he feels identified inwardly with this divine power and presence.

A Vibhuti is supposed to embody some power of the Divine and is enabled by it to act

vital, universal effect of Buddhism and Christianity has been the force of their ethical, social and practical ideals and their influence even on the men and the ages which have rejected their religious and spiritual beliefs, forms and disciplines... On the other hand, the life of Rama and Krishna belongs to the prehistoric past which has come down only in poetry and legend and may even be regarded as myths; but it is quite immaterial whether we regard them as myths or historical facts, because their permanent truth and value lie in their persistence as a spiritual form, presence, influence in the inner consciousness of the race and the life of the human soul. Avatarhood is a fact of divine life and consciousness which may realise itself in an outward action, but must persist, when that action is over and has done its work, in a spiritual influence; or may realise itself in a spiritual influence and teaching, but must then have its permanent effect, even when the new religion or discipline is exhausted, in the thought, temperament and outward life of mankind.

We must then, in order to understand the Gita's description of the work of the Avatar, take the idea of the Dharma in its fullest, deepest and largest conception, as the inner and the outer law by which the divine Will and Wisdom work out the spiritual evolution of mankind and its circumstances and results in the life of the race."

"The Gita lays stress upon the struggle of which the world is the theatre, in its two aspects, the inner struggle and the outer battle. In the inner struggle the enemies are within, in the individual, and the slaying of desire, ignorance, egoism is the victory. But there is an outer struggle between the powers of the Dharma and the Adharma in the human collectivity.... This outer struggle too the Avatar comes to aid, directly or indirectly, to destroy the reign of the Asuras, the evil-doers, and in them depress the power they represent and to restore the oppressed ideals of the Dharma. He comes to bring nearer the kingdom of heaven on earth in the collectivity as well as to build the kingdom of heaven within in the individual human soul."

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with great force in the world, but that is all that is necessary to make him a Vibhuti: the power may be very great, but the consciousness is not that of an inborn or indwelling Divinity. This is the distinction we can gather from the Gita which is the main authority on this subject. If we follow this distinction, we can confidently say from what is related of them that Rama and Krishna can be accepted as Avatars; Buddha figures as such although with a more impersonal consciousness of the Power within him. Ramakrishna voiced the same consciousness when he spoke of Him who was Rama and who was Krishna being within him. But Chaitanya's case is peculiar; for according to the accounts he ordinarily felt and declared himself a bhakta of Krishna and nothing more, but in great moments he manifested Krishna, grew luminous in mind and body and was Krishna himself and spoke and acted as the Lord. His contemporaries saw in him an Avatar of Krishna, a manifestation of the Divine Love.

Shankara and Vivekananda were certainly Vibhutis; they cannot be reckoned as more, though as Vibhutis they were very great.

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ।। 4.11 ।।

4.11. As men approach Me, so I accept them to My love (*bhajāmi*); men follow in every way My path, O son of Pritha.

"...in whatever way men accept, love and take joy in God, in that way God accepts, loves and takes joy in man ...for in all ways, varying with their nature, men are following the path set to them by the Divine which will in the end lead them to him and the aspect of him which suits their nature is that which they can best follow when he comes to lead them..."

"...How many who have the religious faith and the religious temperament, are following the impulses of their heart, the cravings of their desire, the urgency of their senses, the dictates of their opinion when they fully imagine that their God is leading them! And they do well, for God is leading them. It is the way He has chosen for them, and since He has chosen it, it is the best and wisest and most fruitful way for them. Still it is their God – not one they have made in their own image as the Atheist believes, but One who makes Himself in the image that they prefer, the image that best suits with their nature or their development. 'In whatever way men come to me, in that way I love and cleave[17] to them.' It is a saying of fathomless depth which contains the seed of the whole truth about God and religion. After all it is only in this way that the conditioned can meet the Absolute, that which has a nature or Dharma of its own with that which is beyond all limit of nature or Dharma..."

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[17] *...the Divine gives to each individual exactly what he expects of Him. If you believe that the Divine is far away and cruel, He will be far away and cruel, because it will be necessary for your ultimate good that you feel the wrath of God; He will be Kali for the worshippers of Kali and Beatitude for the Bhakta. And He will be the All-knowledge of the seeker of Knowledge, the transcendent Impersonal of the illusionist; He will be atheist with the atheist and the love of the lover... The Divine is indeed what you expect of Him in your deepest aspiration.*

And when you enter into this consciousness where you see all things in a single look, the infinite multitude of relations between the Divine and men, you see how wonderful all that is, in all details. You can look at the history of mankind and see how much the Divine has evolved according to what men have understood, desired, hoped, dreamed and how He was materialist with the materialist and how He grows every day and becomes nearer, more luminous according as human consciousness widens itself....

The Divine is with you according to your aspiration. Naturally that does not mean that He bends to the caprices of your outer nature, — I speak here of the truth of your being. And yet, sometimes he does fashion himself according to your outer aspirations... The attitude is thus very important, even the outer attitude. People do not know how important is faith, how faith is miracle, creator of miracles. If you expect at every moment to be lifted up and pulled towards the Divine, He will come to lift you and He will be there, quite close, closer, ever closer.

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ।। 4.39 ।।

4.39. He who has faith[18], who has controlled the mind and senses, who has fixed his whole conscious being on the supreme Reality, he attains knowledge; and having attained knowledge he goes swiftly to the supreme Peace.

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्दधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।
नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ।। 4.40 ।।

4.40. The ignorant who has not faith, the soul of doubt goeth to perdition; neither this world, nor that beyond, nor any happiness is for the soul full of doubts.

"In fact, it is true that without faith nothing decisive can be achieved either in this world or for possession of the world above, and that it is only by laying hold of some sure basis and positive support that man can attain any measure of terrestrial or celestial success and satisfaction and happiness; the merely sceptical mind loses itself in the void. But still in the lower knowledge doubt and scepticism have their temporary uses; in the higher they are stumbling-blocks: for there the whole secret is not the balancing of truth and error, but a constantly progressing realisation of revealed truth. In intellectual knowledge there is always a mixture of falsehood or incompleteness which has to be got rid of by subjecting the truth itself to sceptical inquiry; but in the

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[18] *... faith in the spiritual sense is not a mental belief which can waver and change. It can wear that form in the mind, but that belief is not the faith itself, it is only its external form. Just as the body, the external form, can change but the spirit remains the same, so it is here. Faith is a certitude in the soul which does not depend on reasoning, on this or that mental idea, on circumstances, on this or that passing condition of the mind or the vital or the body.... Faith does not depend upon experience; it is something that is there before experience. When one starts the yoga, it is not usually on the strength of experience, but on the strength of faith. It is so not only in yoga and the spiritual life, but in ordinary life also. All men of action, discoverers, inventors, creators of knowledge proceed by faith and, until the proof is made or the thing done, they go on in spite of disappointment, failure, disproof, denial because of something in them that tells them that this is the truth, the thing that must be followed and done.... Faith is the soul's witness to something not yet manifested, achieved or realised, but which yet the Knower within us, even in the absence of all indications, feels to be true or supremely worth following or achieving. This thing within us can last even when there is no fixed belief in the mind, even when the vital struggles and revolts and refuses. Who is there that practises the yoga and has not his periods, long periods of disappointment and failure and disbelief and darkness? But there is something that sustains him and even goes on in spite of himself, because it feels that what it followed after was yet true and it more than feels, it knows.*

higher knowledge falsehood cannot enter and that which intellect contributes by attaching itself to this or that opinion, cannot be got rid of by mere questioning, but will fall away of itself by persistence in realisation. Whatever incompleteness there is in the knowledge attained, it must be got rid of, not by questioning in its roots what has already been realised, but by proceeding to further and more complete realisation through a deeper, higher and wider living in the Spirit. And what is not yet realised must be prepared for by faith, not by sceptical questioning, because this truth is one which the intellect cannot give and which is indeed often quite opposed to the ideas in which the reasoning and logical mind gets entangled: it is not a truth which has to be proved, but a truth which has to be lived inwardly, a greater reality into which we have to grow."

Equality and Yoga of Works

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ।।2.48।।

2.48. Fixed in Yoga do thy actions, having abandoned attachment, having become equal in failure and success, O Dhananjaya, for it is equality that is meant by Yoga.

"Self-knowledge, desirelessness, impersonality, bliss, freedom from the modes of Nature, when withdrawn into themselves, self-absorbed, inactive, have no need of equality; for they take no cognisance of the things in which the opposition of equality and inequality arises. But the moment the spirit takes cognisance of and deals with the multiplicities, personalities, differences, inequalities of the action of Nature, it has to effectuate these other signs of its free status by this one manifesting sign of equality.... Hence the immense importance attached by the Gita in its elements of Karmayoga to equality; it is the nodus of the free spirit's free relations with the world.

Equality is the sign and also for the aspirant the test. Where there is inequality in the soul, there there is in evidence some unequal play of the modes of Nature, motion of desire, play of personal will, feeling and action, activity of joy and grief or that disturbed and disturbing delight which is not true spiritual bliss but a mental satisfaction bringing in its train inevitably a counterpart or recoil of mental dissatisfaction. Where there is inequality of soul, there there is deviation from knowledge, loss of steadfast abiding in the all-embracing and all-reconciling oneness of the Brahman and unity of things. By his equality the Karmayogin knows in the midst of his action that he is free.

It is the spiritual nature of the equality enjoined, high and universal in its

character and comprehension, which gives its distinctive note to the teaching of the Gita in this matter. For otherwise the mere teaching of equality in itself as the most desirable status of the mind, feelings and temperament in which we rise superior to human weakness, is by no means peculiar to the Gita. Equality has always been held up to admiration as the philosophic ideal and the characteristic temperament of the sages. The Gita takes up indeed this philosophic ideal, but carries it far beyond into a higher region where we find ourselves breathing a larger and purer air. The Stoic poise, the philosophic poise of the soul are only its first and second steps of ascension out of the whirl of the passions and the tossings of desire to a serenity and bliss, not of the Gods, but of the Divine himself in his supreme self-mastery. The Stoic equality, making character its pivot, founds itself upon self-mastery by austere endurance; the happier and serener philosophic equality prefers self-mastery by knowledge, by detachment, by a high intellectual indifference seated above the disturbances to which our nature is prone, *udāsīnavad āsīnaḥ,* as the Gita 9.9
expresses it; there is also the religious or Christian equality which is a perpetual kneeling or a prostrate resignation and submission to the will of God. These are the three steps and means towards divine peace, heroic endurance, sage indifference, pious resignation, *titikṣā, udāsīnatā, namas* or *nati.* The Gita takes them all in its large synthetic manner and weaves them into its upward soul-movement, but it gives to each a profounder root, a larger outlook, a more universal and transcendent significance. For to each it gives the values of the spirit, its power of spiritual being beyond the strain of character, beyond the difficult poise of the understanding, beyond the stress of the emotions.

The ordinary human soul takes a pleasure in the customary disturbances of its nature-life; it is because it has this pleasure and because, having it, it gives a sanction to the troubled play of the lower nature that the play continues perpetually; for the Prakriti does nothing except for the pleasure and with the sanction of its lover and enjoyer, the Purusha. We do not recognise this truth because under the actual stroke of the adverse disturbance, smitten by grief, pain, discomfort, misfortune, failure, defeat, blame, dishonour, the mind shrinks back from the blow, while it leaps eagerly to the embrace of the opposite and pleasurable disturbances, joy, pleasure, satisfactions of all kinds, prosperity, success, victory, glory, praise; but this does not alter the truth of the soul's pleasure in life which remains constant behind the dualities of the mind. The warrior does not feel physical pleasure in his wounds or find mental satisfaction in his defeats; but he has a complete delight in the godhead of battle which brings to him defeat and wounds as well as the joy of victory, and he accepts the chances of the former and the hope of the latter as part of the mingled weft of war, the thing which the delight in him pursues. Even, wounds bring

him a joy and pride in memory, complete when the pain of them has passed, but often enough present even while it is there and actually fed by the pain. Defeat keeps for him the joy and pride of indomitable resistance to a superior adversary, or, if he is of a baser kind, the passions of hatred and revenge which also have their darker and crueller pleasures. So it is with the pleasure of the soul in the normal play of our life.

The mind recoils by pain and dislike from the adverse strokes of life; that is Nature's device for enforcing a principle of self-protection, *jugupsā,* so that the vulnerable nervous and bodily parts of us may not unduly rush upon self-destruction to embrace it: it takes joy in the favourable touches of life; that is Nature's lure of rajasic pleasure, so that the force in the creature may overcome the tamasic tendencies of inertia and inactivity and be impelled fully towards action, desire, struggle, success, and by its attachment to these things her ends may be worked out. Our secret soul takes a pleasure in this strife and effort, and even a pleasure in adversity and suffering, which can be complete enough in memory and retrospect, but is present too behind at the time and often even rises to the surface of the afflicted mind to support it in its passion; but what really attracts the soul is the whole mingled weft of the thing we call life with all its disturbance of struggle and seeking, its attractions and repulsions, its offer and its menace, its varieties of every kind. To the rajasic desire-soul in us a monotonous pleasure, success without struggle, joy without a shadow must after a time become fatiguing, insipid, cloying; it needs a background of darkness to give full value to its enjoyment of light: for the happiness it seeks and enjoys is of that very nature, it is in its very essence relative and dependent on the perception and experience of its opposite. The joy of the soul in the dualities is the secret of the mind's pleasure in living."

2.56 "The Gita's first description of equality is that of the Stoic philosopher. 'He whose mind is undisturbed in the midst of sorrows and amid pleasures is free from desire, from whom liking and fear and wrath have passed away, is
5.23 the sage of settled understanding'.... 'He who can bear here in the body the
2.14 velocity of wrath and desire, is the Yogin, the happy man.' *Titikṣā*, the will and power to endure, is the means. 'The material touches which cause heat and cold, happiness and pain, things transient which come and go, these learn to
2.15 endure. For the man whom these do not trouble nor pain, the firm and wise who is equal in pleasure and suffering, makes himself apt for immortality.' The equal-souled has to bear suffering and not hate, to receive pleasure and not rejoice. Even the physical affections are to be mastered by endurance and this too is part of the Stoic discipline. Age, death, suffering, pain are not fled from, but accepted and vanquished by a high indifference. Not to flee appalled

from Nature in her lower masks, but to meet and conquer her is the true instinct of the strong nature, *puruṣarṣabha*, the leonine soul among men." 2.15

"The Stoic knowledge is that of the soul's power of self-mastery by fortitude, an equality attained by a struggle with one's nature, maintained by a constant vigilance and control against its natural rebellions: it gives a noble peace, an austere happiness, but not the supreme joy of the liberated self living not by a rule, but in the pure, easy, spontaneous perfection of its divine being, so that 'however it may act and live, it acts and lives in the Divine', 6.31 because here perfection is not only attained but possessed in its own right and has no longer to be maintained by effort, for it has become the very nature of the soul's being. The Gita accepts the endurance and fortitude of our struggle with the lower nature as a preliminary movement; but if a certain mastery comes by our individual strength, the freedom of mastery only comes by our union with God, by a merging or dwelling of the personality in the one divine Person and the loss of the personal will in the divine Will.... The freedom of the Gita is that of the freeman, the true freedom of the birth into the higher nature, self-existent in its divinity. Whatever he does and however he lives, the free soul lives in the Divine; he is the privileged child of the mansion, *bālavat,* who cannot err or fall because all he is and does is full of the Perfect, the All-blissful, the All-loving, the All-beautiful."

"The pure philosopher, the thinker, the born sage... starts from the sattwic equality. He too observes the transitoriness of the material and external world and its failure to satisfy the desires or to give the true delight, but this causes in him no grief, fear or disappointment. He observes all with an eye of tranquil discernment and makes his choice without repulsion or perplexity. 'The 5.22 enjoyments born of the touches of things are causes of sorrow, they have a beginning and an end; therefore the sage, the man of awakened understanding, *budhaḥ*, does not place his delight in these.' 'The self in him is unattached to 5.21 the touches of external things; he finds his happiness in himself.'... He is equal 6.9 in soul to friend and enemy and to neutral and indifferent, because he sees that these are transitory relations born of the changing conditions of life. Even by the pretensions of learning and purity and virtue and the claims to superiority which men base upon these things, he is not led away. He is equal- 5.18 souled to all men, to the sinner and the saint, to the virtuous, learned and cultured Brahmin and the fallen outcaste. All these are the Gita's descriptions of the sattwic equality, and they sum up well enough what is familiar to the world as the calm philosophic equality of the sage."

"It is an equality of philosophic indifference; it brings a high calm, but not the greater spiritual joy; it is an isolated freedom... in the end something

after all aloof and ineffective. The Gita admits the philosophic motive of indifference as a preliminary movement; but the indifference to which it finally arrives, if indeed that inadequate word can be at all applied, has nothing in it of the philosophic aloofness. It is indeed a position as of one seated above,
9.9 *udāsīnavat,* but as the Divine is seated above, having no need at all in the world, yet he does works always and is present everywhere supporting, helping, guiding the labour of creatures. This equality is founded upon oneness with all beings. It brings in what is wanting to the philosophic equality; for its soul is the soul of peace, but also it is the soul of love. It sees all beings without exception in the Divine, it is one self with the Self of all existences and therefore it is in
9.30 supreme sympathy with all of them. Without exception, *aśeṣeṇa*, not only with all that is good and fair and pleases; nothing and no one, however vile, fallen, criminal, repellent in appearance, can be excluded from this universal, this whole-souled sympathy and spiritual oneness. Here there is no room, not merely for hatred or anger or uncharitableness, but for aloofness, disdain or any petty pride of superiority. A divine compassion for the ignorance of the struggling mind, a divine will to pour forth on it all light and power and happiness there will be, indeed, for the apparent man; but for the divine Soul within him there will be more, there will be adoration and love. For from all, from the thief and the harlot and the outcaste as from the saint and
6.31 the sage, the Beloved looks forth and cries to us, "This is I.' 'He who loves Me in all beings', – what greater word of power for the utmost intensities and profundities of divine and universal love, has been uttered by any philosophy or any religion?

Resignation is the basis of a kind of religious equality, submission to the divine will, a patient bearing of the cross, a submissive forbearance. In the Gita this element takes the more ample form of an entire surrender of the whole being to God. It is not merely a passive submission, but an active self-giving; not only a seeing and an accepting of the divine Will in all things, but a giving up of one's own will to be the instrument of the Master of works, and this not with the lesser idea of being a servant of God, but eventually at least, of such a complete renunciation both of the consciousness and the works to him that our being becomes one with his being and the impersonalised nature only an instrument and nothing else. All result good or bad, pleasing or unpleasing, fortunate or unfortunate, is accepted as belonging to the Master of our actions, so that finally not only are grief and suffering borne, but they are banished: a perfect equality of the emotional mind is established. There is no assumption of personal will in the instrument; it is seen that all is already worked out in the omniscient prescience and omnipotent effective power of the universal Divine and that the egoism of men cannot alter the workings of

that Will. Therefore, the final attitude is that enjoined on Arjuna in a later chapter, 'All has been already done by Me in my divine will and foresight; become only the occasion, O Arjuna', *nimitta-mātraṁ bhava savyasācin.* This 11.33
attitude must lead finally to an absolute union of the personal with the Divine Will and, with the growth of knowledge, bring about a faultless response of the instrument to the divine Power and Knowledge. A perfect, an absolute equality of self-surrender, the mentality a passive channel of the divine Light and Power, the active being a mightily effective instrument for its work in the world, will be the poise of this supreme union of the Transcendent, the universal and the individual.

Equality too there will be with regard to the action of others upon us. Nothing that they can do will alter the inner oneness, love, sympathy which arise from the perception of the one Self in all, the Divine in all beings. But a resigned forbearance and submission to them and their deeds, a passive non-resistance, will be no necessary part of the action; it cannot be, since a constant instrumental obedience to the divine and universal Will must mean in the shock of opposite forces that fill the world a conflict with personal wills which seek rather their own egoistic satisfaction. Therefore Arjuna is bidden to resist, to fight, to conquer; but, to fight without hatred or personal desire or personal enmity or antagonism, since to the liberated soul these feelings are impossible. To act for the *lokasaṁgraha,* impersonally, for the keeping and leading of the 3.20
peoples on the path to the divine goal, is a rule which rises necessarily from the oneness of the soul with the Divine, the universal Being, since that is the whole sense and drift of the universal action. Nor does it conflict with our oneness with all beings, even those who present themselves here as opponents and enemies. For the divine goal is their goal also, since it is the secret aim of all, even of those whose outward minds, misled by ignorance and egoism, would wander from the path and resist the impulsion. Resistance and defeat are the best outward service that can be done to them. By this perception the Gita avoids the limiting conclusion which might have been drawn from a doctrine of equality impracticably overriding all relations and of a weakening love without knowledge, while it keeps the one thing essential unimpaired. For the soul oneness with all, for the heart calm universal love, sympathy, compassion, but for the hands freedom to work out impersonally the good, not of this or that person only without regard to or to the detriment of the divine plan, but the purpose of the creation, the progressing welfare and salvation of men, the total good of all existences."

The Gist of the Karma Yoga

"The first step on this long path is to consecrate all our works as a

sacrifice to the Divine in us and in the world; this is an attitude of the mind and heart, not too difficult to initiate, but very difficult to make absolutely sincere and all-pervasive. The second step is to renounce attachment to the fruit of our works; for the only true, inevitable and utterly desirable fruit of sacrifice – the one thing needful – is the Divine Presence and the Divine Consciousness and Power in us, and if that is gained, all else will be added. This is a transformation of the egoistic will in our vital being, our desire-soul and desire-nature, and it is far more difficult than the other. The third step is to get rid of the central egoism and even the ego-sense of the worker. That is the most difficult transformation of all and cannot be perfectly done if the first two steps have not been taken; but these first steps too cannot be completed unless the third comes in to crown the movement and, by the extinction of egoism, eradicates the very origin of desire."

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ।। 5.7।।

5.7. He who is in Yoga, the pure soul, the master of his self, who has conquered the senses, whose self becomes the self of all existences, even though he does works, he is not involved in them.

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ।। 5.10।।

5.10. He who, having abandoned attachment, acts reposing his works on the Brahman, is not stained by sin even as water clings not to the lotus leaf.

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ।।5.13।।

5.13. The embodied soul who has controlled his nature, having renounced all his actions by the mind, sits serenely in its nine-gated city, neither doing nor causing to be done.

"By itself the idea might lead to a doctrine of the mechanical determinism of Nature and the perfect aloofness and irresponsibility of the soul; but the Gita effectively avoids this fault of an insufficient thought by its illumining supertheistic idea of the Purushottama. It makes it clear that it is not in the end Nature which mechanically determines its own action; it is the will of the Supreme which inspires her; he who has already slain the Dhritarashtrians, he of whom Arjuna is only the human instrument, a universal Soul, a transcendent Godhead is the master of her labour. The reposing of works in the Impersonal is a means of getting rid of the personal egoism of the doer, but the end is to give up all our actions to that great Lord of all, *sarvabhūtamaheśvara*." 9.11

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ।।5.29।।

5.29. When a man has known Me as the enjoyer of sacrifice and Tapasya (of all askesis and energisms); the mighty lord of all the worlds, the friend of all creatures, he comes by the peace.

"We get back to the great idea of the Gita, the idea of the Purushottama, – though that name is not given till close upon the end, it is always that which Krishna means by his "I" and "Me", the Divine who is there as the one self in our timeless immutable being, who is present too in the world, in all existences,

in all activities, the master of the silence and the peace, the master of the power and the action, who is here incarnate as the divine charioteer of the stupendous conflict, the Transcendent, the Self, the All, the master of every individual being. He is the enjoyer of all sacrifice and of all Tapasya, therefore shall the seeker of liberation do works as a sacrifice and as a Tapasya; he is the lord of all the worlds, manifested in Nature and in these beings, therefore shall the liberated man still do works for the right government and leading on of the peoples in these worlds, *lokasaṁgraha*; he is the friend of all existences, 3.20
therefore is the sage who has found Nirvana within him and all around, still 5.25
and always occupied with the good of all creatures, – even as the Nirvana of Mahayana Buddhism took for its highest sign the works of a universal compassion."

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ।। 6.17।।

6.17. Yoga destroys all sorrows for him in whom the sleep and waking, the food, the play, the putting forth of effort in works are all *yukta.*

"This is generally interpreted as meaning that all should be moderate, regulated, done in fit measure, and that may indeed be the significance. But at any rate when the Yoga is attained, all this has to be *yukta* in another sense, the ordinary sense of the word everywhere else in the Gita. In all states, in waking and in sleeping, in food and play and action, the Yogin will then be in Yoga

with the Divine, and all will be done by him in the consciousness of the Divine as the self and as the All and as that which supports and contains his own life and his action. Desire and ego and personal will and the thought of the mind are the motives of action only in the lower nature; when the ego is lost and the Yogin becomes Brahman, when he lives in and is, even, a transcendent and universal consciousness, action comes spontaneously out of that, luminous knowledge higher than the mental thought comes out of that, a power other and mightier than the personal will comes out of that to do for him his works and bring its fruits: personal action has ceased, all has been taken up into the Brahman and assumed by the Divine, *mayi sannyasya karmāṇi.*" 3.30

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ।। 6.31 ।।

6.31. The Yogin who has taken his stand upon oneness and loves Me in all beings, however and in all ways he lives and acts, lives and acts in Me.

"The spiritual seeing of God and world is not ideative only, not even mainly or primarily ideative. It is direct experience and as real, vivid, near, constant, effective, intimate as to the mind its sensuous seeing and feeling of images, objects and persons. It is only the physical mind that thinks of God and spirit as an abstract conception which it cannot visualise or represent to

itself except by words and names and symbolic images and fictions. Spirit sees spirit, the divinised consciousness sees God as directly and more directly, as intimately and more intimately than bodily consciousness sees matter. It sees, feels, thinks, senses the Divine. For to the spiritual consciousness all manifest existence appears as a world of spirit and not a world of matter, not a world of life, not a world even of mind; these other things are to its view only God-thought, God-force, God-form. That is what the Gita means by living and acting in Vasudeva, *mayi vartate*. The spiritual consciousness is aware of the 6.31
Godhead with that close knowledge by identity which is so much more tremendously real than any mental perception of the thinkable or any sensuous experience of the sensible."

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ।। 6.46 ।।

6.46. The Yogin is greater than the doers of askesis, greater than the men of knowledge, greater than the men of works; become then the Yogin, O Arjuna.

"...the Yogin, one who seeks for and attains, by works and knowledge and askesis or by whatever other means, not even spiritual knowledge or power or anything else for their own sake, but the union with God alone; for in that all else is contained and in that lifted beyond itself to a divinest significance. But even among Yogins the greatest is the Bhakta."

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ।।6.47।।

6.47. Of all Yogins he who with all his inner self given up to Me, for Me has love and faith, him I hold to be the most united with Me in Yoga.

"It is this that is the closing word of these first six chapters and contains in itself the seed of the rest, of that which still remains unspoken and is nowhere entirely spoken; for it is always and remains something of a mystery and a secret, rahasyam, the highest spiritual mystery and the divine secret."

We may now consider how far these first six chapters "...have carried the solution of the original problem with which the Gita started. The problem in itself, it may be useful again to remark, need not necessarily have led up to the whole question of the nature of existence and of the replacement of the normal by the spiritual life. It might have been dealt with on a pragmatical or an ethical basis or from an intellectual or an ideal standpoint or by a consideration of all of these together; that in fact would have been our modern method of solving the difficulty.... The Gita recognises that from this standpoint there can be no absolute, only an immediate practical solution and, after offering to Arjuna from the highest ideals of his age just such a practical solution, which he is in no mood to accept and indeed is evidently not intended to accept, it proceeds to quite a different standpoint and to quite another answer.

The Gita's solution is to rise above our natural being and normal mind, above our intellectual and ethical perplexities into another consciousness with another law of being and therefore another standpoint for our action; where personal desire and personal emotions no longer govern it; where the dualities fall away; where the action is no longer our own and where therefore the sense of personal virtue and personal sin is exceeded; where the universal, the impersonal, the divine spirit works out through us its purpose in the world; where we are ourselves by a new and divine birth changed into being of that Being, consciousness of that Consciousness, power of that Power, bliss of that Bliss, and, living no longer in our lower nature, have no works to do of our own, no personal aim to pursue of our own, but if we do works at all, – and that is the one real problem and difficulty left, – do only the divine works,

those of which our outward nature is only a passive instrument and no longer the cause, no longer provides the motive; for the motive-power is above us in the will of the Master of our works. And this is presented to us as the true solution, because it goes back to the real truth of our being and to live according to the real truth of our being is evidently the highest solution and the sole entirely true solution of the problems of our existence.... We can only know this greater truth by living it, that is to say, by passing beyond the mental into the spiritual experience, by Yoga. For the living out of spiritual experience until we cease to be mind and become spirit, until, liberated from the imperfections of our present nature, we are able to live entirely in our true and divine being is what in the end we mean by Yoga.

This upward transference of our centre of being and the consequent transformation of our whole existence and consciousness, with a resultant change in the whole spirit and motive of our action, the action often remaining precisely the same in all its outward appearances, makes the gist of the Gita's Karmayoga. Change your being, be reborn into the spirit and by that new birth proceed with the action to which the Spirit within has appointed you, may be said to be the heart of its message. Or again, put otherwise, with a deeper and more spiritual import, – make the work you have to do here your means of inner spiritual rebirth, the divine birth, and, having become divine, do still divine works as an instrument of the Divine for the leading of the peoples."

15. *The Two Natures*

"The first six chapters of the Gita form a sort of preliminary block of the teaching; all the rest, all the other twelve chapters are the working out of certain unfinished figures in this block which here are seen only as hints behind the large-size execution of the main motives, yet are in themselves of capital importance and are therefore reserved for a yet larger treatment on the other two faces of the work. ...there are many things here which cannot be properly understood except in the light thrown on them by what is to come after....

Arjuna, himself, if the Teacher were to break off his discourse here, might well object: 'You have spoken much of the destruction of desire and attachment, of equality, of the conquest of the senses and the stilling of the mind, of passionless and impersonal action, of the sacrifice of works, of the inner as preferable to the outer renunciation, and these things I understand intellectually, however difficult they may appear to me in practice. But you have also spoken of rising above the Gunas, while yet one remains in action, and you have not told me how the Gunas work, and unless I know that, it will be difficult for me to detect and rise above them. Besides, you have spoken of Bhakti as the greatest element in Yoga, yet you have talked much of works and knowledge, but very little or nothing of Bhakti. And to whom is Bhakti, this greatest thing, to be offered? Not to the still impersonal Self, certainly, but to you, the Lord. Tell me, then, what you are, who, as Bhakti is greater even than this self-knowledge, are greater than the immutable Self, which is yet itself greater than mutable Nature and the world of action, even as knowledge is greater than works. What is the relation between these three things? between works and knowledge and divine love? between the soul in Nature and the immutable Self and that which is at once the changeless Self of all and the Master of knowledge and love and works, the supreme Divinity who is here with me in this great battle and massacre, my charioteer in the chariot of this fierce and terrible action?' It is to answer these questions that the rest of the Gita is written, and in a complete intellectual solution they have indeed to be taken up without delay and resolved. But in actual *sādhanā* one has to advance from stage to stage, leaving many things, indeed the greatest things to arise subsequently and solve themselves fully by the light of the advance we have made in spiritual experience. The Gita follows to a certain extent this curve of experience and puts first a sort of large preliminary basis of works and knowledge which contains an element leading up to Bhakti and to a greater knowledge, but not yet fully arriving. The six chapters present us with that basis."

"The seventh to the twelfth chapters lay down a large metaphysical statement of the nature of the Divine Being and on that foundation closely

relate and synthetise knowledge and devotion, just as the first part of the Gita related and synthetised works and knowledge. The vision of the World-Purusha intervenes in the eleventh chapter, gives a dynamic turn to this stage of the synthesis and relates it vividly to works and life. Thus again all is brought powerfully back to the original question of Arjuna round which the whole exposition revolves and completes its cycle. Afterwards the Gita proceeds by the differentiation of the Purusha and Prakriti to work out its ideas of the action of the Gunas, of the ascension beyond the Gunas and of the culmination of desireless works with knowledge where that coalesces with Bhakti, – knowledge, works and love made one, – and it rises thence to its great finale, the supreme secret of self-surrender to the Master of Existence.

In this second part of the Gita we come to a more concise and easy manner of statement than we have yet had. In the first six chapters the definitions have not yet been made which give the key to the underlying truth; difficulties are being met and solved; the progress is a little laboured and moves through several involutions and returns; much is implied the bearing of which is not yet clear..." For example, the first six chapters bring in the Yoga the idea of the Ishwara, "...the Divine as master of works and sacrifice, and it is hinted but not yet expressly stated that this Divine exceeds even the immutable Self and that in him lies the key to cosmic existence. Therefore by rising to him through the Self it is possible to have spiritual freedom from our works and yet to continue in the works of Nature. But it has not yet been stated who is

this Supreme, incarnate here in the divine teacher and charioteer of works, or what are his relations to the Self and to the individual being in Nature. Nor is it clear how the Will to works coming from him can be other than the will in the nature of the three Gunas. And if it is only that, then the soul obeying it can hardly fail to be in subjection to the Gunas in its action, if not in its spirit, and if so, at once the freedom promised becomes either illusory or incomplete. Will seems to be an aspect of the executive part of being, to be power and active force of nature, Shakti, Prakriti. Is there then a higher Nature than that of the three Gunas? Is there a power of pragmatic creation, will, action other than that of ego, desire, mind, sense, reason and the vital impulse?

Therefore, in this uncertainty, what has now to be done is to give more completely the knowledge on which divine works are to be founded. And this can only be the complete, the integral knowledge of the Divine who is the source of works and in whose being the worker becomes by knowledge free; for he knows the free Spirit from whom all works proceed and participates in his freedom. Moreover this knowledge must bring a light that justifies the assertion with which the first part of the Gita closes. It must ground the supremacy of Bhakti over all other motives and powers of spiritual consciousness and action; it must be a knowledge of the supreme Lord of all creatures to whom alone the soul can offer itself in the perfect self-surrender which is the highest height of all love and devotion. This is what the Teacher proposes to give in the opening verses of the seventh chapter which initiate the development that occupies all the rest of the book."

The Para Prakriti

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।। 7.3।।

7.3. Among thousands of men one here and there strives after perfection, and of those who strive and attain to perfection one here and there knows Me in all the principles of my existence, *tattvataḥ.*

"....in order to found this integral knowledge, the Gita makes that deep and momentous distinction which is the practical basis of all its Yoga, the distinction between the two Natures, the phenomenal and the spiritual Nature."

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।
अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ।। 7.4।।

7.4. Earth, water, fire, air, ether (the five elements, conditions of material being), mind, reason and ego – this is my eight-fold divided Nature.

"Here is the first new metaphysical idea of the Gita which helps it to start from the notions of the Sankhya philosophy and yet exceed them and give to their terms, which it keeps and extends, a Vedantic significance. An eightfold Nature constituted of the five Bhutas... the mind with its various senses and organs, the reason-will and the ego, is the Sankhya description of Prakriti. The Sankhya stops there, and because it stops there, it has to set up

an unbridgeable division between the soul and Nature; it has to posit them as two quite distinct primary entities. The Gita also, if it stopped there, would have to make the same incurable antinomy between the Self and cosmic Nature which would then be only the Maya of the three Gunas and all this cosmic existence would be simply the result of this Maya; it could be nothing else. But there is something else, there is a higher principle, a nature of spirit, *parā prakṛtir me*. There is a supreme nature of the Divine which is the real source of cosmic existence and its fundamental creative force and effective energy and of which the other lower and ignorant Nature is only a derivation and a dark shadow. In this highest dynamis Purusha and Prakriti are one. Prakriti there is only the will and the executive power of the Purusha, his activity of being, – not a separate entity, but himself in Power."

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ।। 7.5।।

7.5. This is the lower. Know too, O mighty-armed, my other Nature different from this, the supreme which becomes the Jiva and by which this world is upheld.

"The supreme Nature, *parā prakṛtiḥ,* is .. the infinite timeless conscious power of the self-existent Being out of which all existences in the cosmos are manifested and come out of timelessness into Time. But in order to provide a spiritual basis for this manifold universal becoming in the cosmos the supreme Nature formulates itself as the Jiva[19].... the Jiva is the basis of the multiple existence; it is the multiple soul, if we may so call it, or, if we prefer, the soul of the multiplicity we experience here. It is one always with the Divine in its

[19] *We must be careful not to make the mistake of thinking that this supreme Nature is identical with the Jiva manifested in Time in the sense that there is nothing else or that it is*

being, different from it only in the power of its being, – different not in the sense that it is not at all the same power, but in this sense that it only supports the one power in a partial multiply individualised action. Therefore all things are initially, ultimately and in the principle of their continuance too the Spirit. The fundamental nature of all is nature of the Spirit, and only in their lower differential phenomena do they seem to be something else, to be nature of body, life, mind, reason, ego and the senses. But these are phenomenal derivatives, they are not the essential truth of our nature and our existence."

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only nature of becoming and not at all nature of being: that could not be the supreme Nature of the Spirit. Even in time it is something more; for otherwise the only truth of it in the cosmos would be nature of multiplicity and there would be no nature of unity in the world. That is not what the Gita says: it does not say that the supreme Prakriti is in its essence the Jiva, jīvātmikām, *but that it has become the Jiva,* jīvabhūtām*; and it is implied in that expression that behind its manifestation as the Jiva here it is originally something else and higher, it is nature of the one supreme Spirit.*

Swabhava – the Link Between the Supreme (Para) and the Phenomenal or Lower (Apara) Nature (Prakriti)

The Supreme Nature manifests in all as the One – the divine presence – and in each as the Jiva – the individual spiritual presence. It also manifests in all becomings as their Swabhava – the essence of all quality of Nature. These are the concealed spiritual powers behind all phenomena.

Swabhava – the highest quality – is not the working of the three Gunas, which is phenomenon of quality and not its spiritual essence. "It is a fundamental truth of the Becoming, a truth that supports and gives a spiritual and divine significance to all its appearances. The workings of the Gunas are

only the superficial unstable becomings of reason, mind, sense, ego, life and matter, *sāttvikā bhāvā rājasāstāmasāśca....*" Swabhava is the inherent, one, yet variable inner power of all these superficial becomings. It is this which determines the primary law of all becoming and of each Jiva. It constitutes the essence and develops the movement of the nature. 7.12

But this Swabhava is only a middle term, it is a principle in each creature that derives from and is immediately related to the transcendent divine Becoming, that of the Ishwara, referred to as *madbhāvaḥ* by Sri Krishna. It is in this relation of the divine *bhāva* (*madbhāvaḥ*) to the *swabhāva* and of the *swabhāva* to the superficial *bhāvāḥ* (phenomenal nature) that we find the link between that Supreme and this lower nature.

"The degraded powers and values of the inferior Prakriti derive from the absolute powers and values of the supreme Shakti and must go back to them to find their own source and truth and the essential law of their operation and movement. So too the soul or Jiva involved here in the shackled, poor and inferior play of the phenomenal qualities, if he would escape from it and be divine and perfect, must by resort to the pure action of his essential quality of Swabhava go back to that higher law of his own being in which he can discover the will, the power, the dynamic principle, the highest working of his divine nature.

This is clear from the immediately subsequent passage in which the Gita gives a number of instances to show how the Divine in the power of his supreme nature manifests and acts within the animate and so-called inanimate existences of the universe."

I am taste in the waters, O son of Kunti, I am the light of sun and moon, I am Pranava (the basic syllable OM) in all the Vedas, sound in ether and manhood in men. I am pure scent in earth and energy of light in fire; I am life in all existences, I am the ascetic force of those who do askesis. Know Me to be the eternal seed of all existences, O son of Pritha. I am the intelligence of the intelligent, the energy of the energetic. 7.8 7.9 7.10

"In each case it is the energy of the essential quality on which each of these becomings depends for what it has become, that is given as the characteristic sign indicating the presence of the divine Power in their nature.... It is not the phenomenal developments of the senses or of life or of light, intelligence, energy, strength, manhood, ascetic force that are proper to the supreme Prakriti. It is the essential quality in its spiritual power that constitutes the Swabhava. It is the force of spirit so manifesting, it is the light of its consciousness and the power of its energy in things revealed in a pure original sign that is the self-nature. That force, light, power is the eternal seed from which all other things are the developments and derivations and variabilities and plastic circumstances. Therefore the Gita throws in as the most general

statement in the series, 'Know Me to be the eternal seed of all existences, O son of Pritha.' This eternal seed is the power of spiritual being, the conscious will in the being, the seed which, as is said elsewhere, the Divine casts into the great Brahman, into the supramental vastness, and from that all are born into phenomenal existence. It is that seed of spirit which manifests itself as the essential quality in all becomings and constitutes their Swabhava." 14.3

The important question now is how one can ascend from the phenomenal existence to the nature of the divine existence, *madbhāvam*? By taking refuge in the Divine is the Gita's answer. Sri Krishna, speaking of those who were able to successfully do so in the past, says: **Delivered from liking and fear and wrath, full of Me, taking refuge in Me, many purified by austerity of knowledge have arrived at My nature of being.** 4.10

16. THE SYNTHESIS OF DEVOTION AND KNOWLEDGE

"The Gita... after giving us in the first fourteen verses of this chapter a leading philosophical truth of which we stand in need... hastens in the next sixteen verses to make an immediate application of it. It turns it into a first starting-point for the unification of works, knowledge and devotion, – for the preliminary synthesis of works and knowledge by themselves has already been accomplished."

We have seen that the Para Prakriti, whose intrinsic nature is always spiritual, becomes the Jiva, the multiple spiritual personality in which it throws itself out in various essential and spiritual power of quality, the Swabhava. **All acts and becoming which proceed from the Para Prakriti are divine becoming and a pure and spiritual action free from the taint of the three Gunas. Therefore, it follows that in action our effort must be to get back to our true spiritual personality, Swabhava, and to make all work flow from the power of the Para Prakriti and not from our lower personality dominated by mental ideas and vital desires.** So only can we get free from the load of ego and lower nature and find the relation of our true individuality to the Purushottama. The Gita distinguishes between four kinds of Bhaktas who, having put away the sin of rajasic egoism, are moving towards the Purushottama.

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ।। 7.16 ।।

7.16. Four kinds of virtuous men love and adore Me, O Arjuna, those in distress, those seeking for good in the world, the seekers after knowledge, and those who have knowledge, O Best of the Bharatas.

"The Gita distinguishes between three initial kinds of Bhakti, that which seeks refuge in the Divine from the sorrows of the world, *ārta,* that which, desiring, approaches the Divine as the giver of its good, *arthārthī,* and that which attracted by what it already loves, but does not yet know, yearns to know this divine Unknown, *jijñāsu*; but it gives the palm to the Bhakti that knows. Evidently the intensity of passion which says, 'I do not understand, I love' and, loving, cares not to understand, is not love's last self-expression, but its first, nor is it its highest intensity. Rather as knowledge of the Divine grows, delight in the Divine and love of it must increase. Nor can mere rapture be secure without the foundation of knowledge; to live in what we love, gives that security, and to live in it means to be one with it in consciousness, and oneness of consciousness is the perfect condition of knowledge. Knowledge

of the Divine gives to love of the Divine its firmest security, opens to it its own widest joy of experience, raises it to its highest pinnacles of outlook."

Of these the knower, who is ever in constant union with the Divine, whose devotion is all concentrated on Him, is the best. I am supremely dear to the knower, and he is dear to Me. Noble are all these without exception, but I hold the knower as verily Myself; for he, the soul in union, accepts Me as his highest goal. 7.17 7.18

"All are approved by the Gita, but only on the last does it lay the seal of its complete sanction. All these movements without exception are high and

7.18 good, *udārāḥ sarva evaite,* but the Bhakti with knowledge excels them all, *viśiṣyate.*
-17 We may say that these forms are successively the Bhakti of the vital-emotional and affective nature, that of the practical and dynamic nature, that of the reasoning intellectual nature, and that of the highest intuitive being which takes up all the rest of the nature into unity with the Divine. Practically, however, the others may be regarded as preparatory movements. For the Gita itself here says that it is only at the end of many existences that one can, after possession of the integral knowledge and after working that out in oneself
7.19 through many lives, attain at the long last to the Transcendent."

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ।। 7.19।।

7.19. At the end of many births, the man of knowledge attains to Me; and sees that Vasudeva, the omnipresent Being, is all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।
तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ।। 7.20।।

7.20. Led by various outer desires by which their knowledge is carried away, men resort to other godheads setting up this or that rule impelled by their own nature.

"...where there is not knowledge, the devotee does not approach the
7.19 Divine in his integral all-embracing truth, *vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti,* but constructs imperfect names and images of the Godhead which are only reflections of his own need, temperament and nature, and he worships them to help or appease his natural longings.... It may be asked how is that devotion high and noble,
7.18 *udāra,* which seeks God only for the worldly boons he can give or as a refuge in sorrow and suffering, and not the Divine for its own sake? Do not egoism, weakness, desire reign in such an adoration and does it not belong to the lower nature?"

7.21 **Whatever form of Me any devotee with faith desires to worship, I**
7.22 **make that faith of his firm and undeviating. He, endowed with that faith, worships that form, and by that he obtains his desires; verily it is I myself who give these to him.**

"...the supreme Godhead does not at all reject these devotees because of their imperfect vision. For the Divine in his supreme transcendent being, unborn, imminuable and superior to all these partial manifestations, cannot be easily known to any living creature. He is self-enveloped in this immense cloak of Maya, that Maya of his Yoga, by which he is one with the world and yet beyond it, immanent but hidden, seated in all hearts but not revealed to any and every being. Man in Nature thinks that these manifestations in Nature are all the Divine, when they are only his works and his powers and his veils. He knows all past and all present and future existences, but him none yet knoweth. If then after thus bewildering them with his workings in Nature, he were not to meet them in these at all, there would be no divine hope for man

or for any soul in Maya. Therefore according to their nature, as they approach him, he accepts their Bhakti and answers to it with the reply of divine love and compassion. These forms are after all a certain kind of manifestation through which the imperfect human intelligence can touch him, these desires are first means by which our souls turn towards him: nor is any devotion worthless or ineffective, whatever its limitations."

"All love, indeed, that is adoration has a spiritual force behind it; even when it is offered ignorantly and to a limited object, something of that splendour appears through the poverty of the rite and the smallness of its issues. For love that is worship is at once an aspiration and a preparation: it can bring even within its small limits in the Ignorance a glimpse of a still more

or less blind and partial but surprising realisation; for they are moments when it is not we but the One who loves and is loved in us, and even a human passion can be uplifted and glorified by a slight glimpse of this infinite Love and Lover. It is for this reason that the worship of the god, the worship of the idol, the human magnet or ideal are not to be despised; for these are steps through which the human race moves towards that blissful passion and ecstasy of the Infinite which, even in limiting it, they yet represent for our imperfect vision when we have still to use the inferior steps Nature has hewn for our feet and admit the stages of our progress. Certain idolatries are indispensable for the development of our emotional being, nor will the man who knows be hasty at any time to shatter the image unless he can replace it in the heart of the worshipper by the Reality it figures."

7.23 **But temporary are these fruits, sought after by those of petty intelligence. To the gods go the worshippers of the gods, but my devotees come to Me.**

"And so far as there is a spiritual attainment by this way, it is only to the gods; it is only the Divine in formations of mutable nature and as the giver of her results that they realise. But those who adore the transcendent and integral Godhead embrace all this and transform it all, exalt the gods to their highest, Nature to her summits, and go beyond them to the very Godhead, realise and attain to the Transcendent."

Whoever leaves his body and departs remembering Me at the time of his end, comes to My Bhava (my status of being); there is no doubt of that. Whoever at the end abandons the body, thinking upon any form of becoming, to that form he attains, O Kaunteya, into which the soul was at each moment growing inwardly during the physical life. 8.5 8.6

"The Gita here lays a great stress on the thought and state of mind at the time of death, a stress which will with difficulty be understood if we do not recognise what may be called the self-creative power of the consciousness. What the thought, the inner regard, the faith, *śraddhā,* settles itself upon with a complete and definite insistence, into that our inner being tends to change. This tendency becomes a decisive force when we go to those higher spiritual

and self-evolved experiences which are less dependent on external things than is our ordinary psychology, enslaved as that is to outward Nature. There we can see ourselves steadily becoming that on which we keep our minds fixed and to which we constantly aspire. Therefore there any lapse of the thought, any infidelity of the memory means always a retardation of the change or some fall in its process and a going back towards what we were before, – at least so long as we have not substantially and irrevocably fixed our new becoming. When we have done that, when we have made it normal to our experience, the memory of it remains self-existently because that now is the natural form of our consciousness. In the critical moment of passing from the mortal plane of living, the importance of our then state of consciousness

becomes evident. But it is not a death-bed remembrance at variance with or insufficiently prepared by the whole tenor of our life and our past subjectivity that can have this saving power. The thought of the Gita here is not on a par with the indulgences and facilities of popular religion; it has nothing in common with the crude fancies that make the absolution and last unction of the priest, an edifying "Christian" death after an unedifying profane life or the precaution or accident of a death in sacred Benares or holy Ganges a sufficient machinery of salvation. The divine subjective becoming on which the mind has to be fixed firmly in the moment of the physical death, *yaṁ smaran bhāvaṁ tyajati ante* 8.5
kalevaram, must have been one into which the soul was at each moment growing 8.6
inwardly during the physical life, *sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ*."

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामेवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ।। 8.7।।

8.7. Therefore at all times remember Me and fight; for if thy mind and thy understanding are always fixed on and given up to Me, without doubt thou shalt come to Me.

Here are thus unified all the three – the works, knowledge and devotion.

17. WORKS, DEVOTION AND KNOWLEDGE

"The inner soul in man is here a partial self-manifestation of the Divine, self-limited for the works of his Nature in the universe, *prakṛtir jīva-bhūtā*. In his spiritual essence the individual is one with the Divine.... Since he is a spirit, a soul with a nature of mind and reason, of will and dynamic action, of emotion and sensation and life's seeking for the delight of existence, it is by turning all these powers Godwards that the return to the highest truth of himself can be made entirely possible. He must know with the knowledge of the supreme Self and Brahman; he must turn his love and adoration to the supreme Person; he must subject his will and works to the supreme Lord of cosmos. Then he passes from the lower to the divine Nature...

This integral turning of the soul Godwards bases royally the Gita's synthesis of knowledge and works and devotion. To know God thus integrally is to know him as One in the self and in all manifestation and beyond all manifestation, – and all this unitedly and at once. And yet even so to know him is not enough unless it is accompanied by an intense uplifting of the heart and soul Godwards, unless it kindles a one-pointed and at the same time all-embracing love, adoration, aspiration. Indeed the knowledge which is not companioned by an aspiration and vivified by an uplifting is no true knowledge, for it can be only an intellectual seeing and a barren cognitive endeavour. The vision of God brings infallibly the adoration and passionate seeking of the Divine, – a passion for the Divine in his self-existent being but also for the Divine in ourselves and for the Divine in all that is. To know with the intellect is simply to understand and may be an effective starting-point, – or, too, it may not be and it will not be if there is no sincerity in the knowledge, no urge towards inner realisation in the will, no power upon the soul, no call in the spirit: for that would mean that the brain has externally understood, but inwardly the soul has seen nothing. True knowledge is to know with the inner being, and when the inner being is touched by the light, then it arises to embrace that which is seen, it yearns to possess, it struggles to shape that in itself and itself to it, it labours to become one with the glory of its vision. Knowledge in this sense is an awakening to identity and, since the inner being realises itself by consciousness and delight, by love, by possession and oneness with whatever of itself it has seen, knowledge awakened must bring an over-mastering impulse towards this true and only perfect realisation.

But to arrive at this movement at all is difficult for the ego-bound nature. And to arrive at its victorious and harmonious integrality is not easy even when we have set our feet on the way finally and for ever."

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ।। 9.11 ।।

9.11. Deluded minds despise Me lodged in the human body because they know not My supreme nature of being, the great Lord of existences.

9.12 **They are of vain hopes, vain actions, and vain knowledge. Devoid of true consciousness, they dwell in the deluding Rakshashic and Asuric nature.**

"Mortal mind is bewildered by its ignorant reliance upon veils and appearances; it sees only the outward human body, human mind, human way

of living and catches no liberating glimpse of the Divinity who is lodged in the creature. It ignores the divinity within itself and cannot see it in other men, and even though the Divine manifest himself in humanity as Avatar and Vibhuti, it is still blind and ignores or despises the veiled Godhead, *avajānanti* 9.11
mām mūḍhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam. And if it ignores him in the living creature, still less can it see him in the objective world on which it looks from its prison of separative ego through the barred windows of the finite mind."

The great-souled, O Partha, who dwell in the divine nature, know 9.13
Me as the imperishable from whom all existences originate and so knowing they turn to Me with a sole and entire love. Hymning always 9.14

My divine glory, steadfast in spiritual endeavour, bowing down before Me, ever in Yoga, they worship Me with devotion.

"All the world and all the thought become one hymning of the universal greatness, Light, Beauty, Power and Truth that has revealed itself in its glory to the human spirit and a worship of the one supreme Soul and infinite Person. All the long stress of the inner self to break outward becomes a form now of spiritual endeavour and aspiration to possess the Divine in the soul and realise the Divine in the nature. All life becomes a constant Yoga and unification of that Divine and this human spirit. This is the manner of the integral devotion; it creates a single uplifting of our whole being and nature through sacrifice by the dedicated heart to the eternal Purushottama."

Others again seek Me out by the sacrifice of knowledge and worship Me in My oneness and in every separate being and in all My million universal faces. 9.15

"Those who lay a predominant stress on knowledge, arrive to the same point by an always increasing, engrossing, enforcing power of the vision of the Divine on the soul and the nature. Theirs is the sacrifice of knowledge and by an ineffable ecstasy of knowledge they come to the adoration of the Purushottama, *jñāna-yajñena yajanto mām upāsate*. This is a comprehension filled 9.15 with Bhakti, because it is integral in its instruments, integral in its objective. It is not a pursuit of the Supreme merely as an abstract unity or an indeterminable Absolute. It is a heart-felt seeking and seizing of the Supreme and the Universal,

a pursuit of the Infinite in his infinity and of the Infinite in all that is finite, a vision and embracing of the One in his oneness and of the One in all his several principles, his innumerable visages, forces, forms, here, there, everywhere, timelessly and in time, multiply, multitudinously, in endless aspects of his Godhead, in beings without number, all his million universal faces
9.15 fronting us in the world and its creatures, *ekatvena pṛthaktvena bahudhā viśvatomukham*. This knowledge becomes easily an adoration, a large devotion, a vast self-giving, an integral self-offering because it is the knowledge of a Spirit, the contact of a Being, the embrace of a supreme and universal Soul which claims all that we are even as it lavishes on us when we approach it all the treasures of its endless delight of existence."

I am the ritual action, I the sacrifice, I the food-oblation, I the fire-giving herb, the mantra I, I the butter, I the flame, and the offering too I am. 9.16

"The way of works too turns into an adoration and a devotion of self-giving because it is an entire sacrifice of all our will and its activities to the one Purushottama. The outward Vedic rite is a powerful symbol, effective for a slighter though still a heavenward purpose; but the real sacrifice is that inner oblation in which the Divine All becomes himself the ritual action, the sacrifice and every single circumstance of the sacrifice. All the working and forms of that inner rite are the self-ordinance and self-expression of his power in us mounting by our aspiration towards the source of its energies. The Divine Inhabitant becomes himself the flame and the offering, because the flame is the Godward will and that will is God himself within us. And the offering too

is form and force of the constituent Godhead in our nature and being; all that has been received from him is given up to the service and the worship of its own Reality, its own supreme Truth and Origin."

9.17 **I am the Father of this world, the Mother, the Ordainer, the first Creator, the object of knowledge, the sacred syllable OM[20] and also the**
9.18 **Rik, Sama and Yajur (Vedas). I am the path and the goal, the upholder, the master, the witness, the abode and the refuge, the benignant friend, the origin, the foundation and the dissolution, the resting place and the**
9.19 **imperishable seed of all. I give heat, I withhold and send forth the rain; I am immortality and also death, and the existent and the non-existent**

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[20]*AUM, – A the spirit of the gross and external, Virat, U the spirit of the subtle and internal, Taijasa, M the spirit of the secret superconscient omnipotence, Prajna, OM the Absolute, Turiya.*

— Mandukya Upanishad

am I, O Arjuna. The knowers of the triple Veda, who drink the Soma, purified from sin, worshipping Me with sacrifice, pray of Me the way to heaven; they, ascending to the heavenly worlds of Indra by their righteousness, enjoy in paradise the divine feasts of the gods. They, having enjoyed heavenly worlds of larger felicities, the reward of their good deeds exhausted, return to mortal existence. Resorting to the virtues enjoined by the three Vedas, seeking the satisfaction of desire, they follow the cycle of birth and death.

9.20

9.21

"Nothing but the highest knowledge and adoration, no other way than an entire self-giving and surrender to this Highest who is all, will bring us to the Highest. Other religion, other worship, other knowledge, other seeking has always its fruits, but these are transient and limited to the enjoyment of divine symbols and appearances..."

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ।।9.22।।

9.22. To those men who worship Me making Me alone the whole object of their thought, to those constantly in Yoga with Me, I spontaneously bring every good and all their inner and outer getting and having.

"The God-lover advances constantly towards this ultimate necessity of our birth in cosmos through a concentrated love and adoration by which he makes the supreme and universal Divine the whole object of his living – not

either egoistic terrestrial satisfaction or the celestial worlds – and the whole object of his thought and his seeing. To see nothing but the Divine, to be at every moment in union with him, to love him in all creatures and have the delight of him in all things is the whole condition of his spiritual existence. His God-vision does not divorce him from life, nor does he miss anything of the fullness of life; for God himself becomes the spontaneous bringer to him of every good and of all his inner and outer getting and having, *yogakṣemaṁ* 9.22 *vahāmyaham*. The joy of heaven and the joy of earth are only a small shadow of his possessions; for as he grows into the Divine, the Divine too flows out upon him with all the light, power and joy of an infinite existence."

येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ।। 9.23।।

9.23. Even the devotees who sacrifice to other godheads with faith, they also sacrifice to Me, O son of Kunti, though not according to the true law.

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।
न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ।। 9.24।।

9.24. It is I myself who am the enjoyer and the Lord of all sacrifices, but they do not know Me in the true principles and hence they fall.

"All sincere religious belief and practice is really a seeking after the one supreme and universal Godhead; for he always is the sole master of man's sacrifice and askesis and infinite enjoyer of his effort and aspiration. However small or low the form of the worship, however limited the idea of the godhead, however restricted the giving, the faith, the effort to get behind the veil of one's own ego-worship and limitation by material Nature, it yet forms a thread of connection between the soul of man and the All-Soul and there is a response. Still the response, the fruit of the adoration and offering is according to the knowledge, the faith and the work and cannot exceed their limitations, and

therefore from the point of view of the greater God-knowledge, which alone gives the entire truth of being and becoming, this inferior offering is not given according to the true and highest law of the sacrifice. It is not founded on a knowledge of the supreme Godhead in his integral existence and the true principles of his self-manifestation, but attaches itself to external and partial
9.24 appearances, – *na mām abhijānanti tattvena.* Therefore its sacrifice too is limited in its object, largely egoistic in its motive, partial and mistaken in its action and
9.23 giving, *yajanti avidhipūrvakam.*"

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान् पितॄन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ।। 9.25।।

9.25. They who worship the gods go to the gods, to the Ancestors go the Ancestor worshippers, to elemental spirits go those who sacrifice to elemental spirits; but My worshippers come to Me.

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ।। 9.26।।

9.26. A leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, whatever one offers to Me with devotion, that offering of love from the striving soul is acceptable to Me.

"...it is not only any dedicated external gift that can be so offered with love and devotion, but all our thoughts, all our feelings and sensations, all our outward activities and their forms and objects can be such gifts to the Eternal. It is true that the especial act or form of action has its importance, even a great importance, but it is the spirit in the act that is the essential factor; the spirit of which it is the symbol or materialised expression gives it its whole value and justifying significance. Or it may be said that a complete act of divine love and worship has in it three parts[21] that are the expressions of a single whole, – a practical worship of the Divine in the act, a symbol of worship in the form of the act expressing some vision and seeking or some relation with the Divine, an inner adoration and longing for oneness or feeling of

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[21] *There is a purely physical form of the act, like those forms in cults in which a particular gesture, a particular movement is meant to express the consecration. That is purely material, as for example, lighting incense, arranging offerings, or even looking after a temple, decorating an idol, indeed all such purely physical acts.*

The second part is a sort of mental consecration which makes the act that is performed a symbol. One is not satisfied with merely lighting the incense, but while lighting the incense one makes this gesture symbolic – for example, of the aspiration burning in the body or of self-giving in a dissolution, in the purification of the fire. That is to say, first the act, then the symbol in this act and the symbolic understanding of what is done.

And finally, behind these two, an aspiration for union; that all this, these acts and the symbol you make of them, may be only a means of drawing closer and closer to the Divine and making yourself fit to unite with Him.

These three things must be there for the act to be complete: that is, something purely material, something mental, and something psychic, the psychic aspiration. If one of the three is there without the other two, it is incomplete. As a rule, very rarely are the three consciously combined. That produces beings of exceptional sincerity and consecration: the entire being, in all its parts, participates in the action.

oneness in the heart and soul and spirit. It is so that life can be changed into worship, – by putting behind it the spirit of a transcendent and universal love, the seeking of oneness, the sense of oneness; by making each act a symbol, an expression of Godward emotion or a relation with the Divine; by turning all we do into an act of worship, an act of the soul's communion, the mind's understanding, the life's obedience, the heart's surrender."

"This absolute self-giving, this one-minded surrender is the devotion which the Gita makes the crown of its synthesis. All action and effort are by this devotion turned into an offering to the supreme and universal Godhead."[61]

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासियत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ।। 9.27।।

9.27. Whatever thou doest, whatever thou enjoyest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever energy of Tapasya, of the soul's will or effort thou puttest forth, make it, O Kaunteya, an offering unto Me.

"Here the least, the slightest circumstance of life, the most insignificant gift out of oneself or what one has, the smallest action assumes a divine significance and it becomes an acceptable offering to the Godhead who makes it a means for his possession of the soul and life of the God-lover."

"This, in short, is the demand made on us, that we should turn our whole life into a conscious sacrifice. Every moment and every movement of our being is to be resolved into a continuous and a devoted self-giving to the Eternal. All our actions, not less the smallest and most ordinary and trifling than the greatest and most uncommon and noble, must be performed as consecrated acts. Our individualised nature must live in the single consciousness of an inner and outer movement dedicated to Something that is beyond us and greater than our ego. No matter what the gift and to whom it is presented by us, there must be a consciousness in the act that we are presenting it to the one divine Being in all beings. Our commonest or most grossly material actions

must assume this sublimated character; **when we eat, we should be conscious that we are giving our food to that Presence in us; it must be a sacred offering in a temple and the sense of a mere physical need or self-gratification must pass away from us.*** In any great labour, in any high discipline, in any difficult or noble enterprise, whether undertaken for ourselves, for others or for the race, it will no longer be possible to stop short at the idea of the race, of ourselves or of others. The thing we are doing must be consciously offered as a sacrifice of works, not to these, but either through them or directly to the One Godhead; the Divine Inhabitant who was hidden by these figures must be no longer hidden but ever present to our soul, our

* *The stress is not there in the original.*

mind, our sense. The workings and results of our acts must be put in the hands of that One in the feeling that that Presence is the Infinite and Most High by whom alone our labour and our aspiration are possible. For in his being all takes place; for him all labour and aspiration are taken from us by Nature and offered on his altar. Even in those things in which Nature is herself very plainly the worker and we only the witnesses of her working and its containers and supporters, there should be the same constant memory and insistent consciousness of a work and of its divine Master. Our very inspiration and respiration, our very heart-beats can and must be made conscious in us as the living rhythm of the universal sacrifice.

It is clear that a conception of this kind and its effective practice must carry in them three results that are of a central importance for our spiritual ideal. It is evident, to begin with, that, even if such a discipline is begun without devotion, it leads straight and inevitably towards the highest devotion possible; for it must deepen naturally into the completest adoration imaginable, the most profound God-love. There is bound up with it a growing sense of the Divine in all things, a deepening communion with the Divine in all our thought, will and action and at every moment of our lives, a more and more moved consecration to the Divine of the totality of our being. Now these implications of the Yoga of works are also of the very essence of an integral and absolute Bhakti. The seeker who puts them into living practice makes in himself

continually a constant, active and effective representation of the very spirit of self-devotion, and it is inevitable that out of it there should emerge the most engrossing worship of the Highest to whom is given this service. An absorbing love for the Divine Presence to whom he feels an always more intimate closeness, grows upon the consecrated worker. And with it is born or in it is contained a universal love too for all these beings, living forms and creatures that are habitations of the Divine – not the brief restless grasping emotions of division, but the settled selfless love that is the deeper vibration of oneness. In all the seeker begins to meet the one Object of his adoration and service. The way of works turns by this road of sacrifice to meet the path of Devotion; it can be itself a devotion as complete, as absorbing, as integral as any the desire of the heart can ask for or the passion of the mind can imagine.

Next, the practice of this Yoga demands a constant inward remembrance of the one central liberating knowledge, and a constant active externalising of it in works comes in too to intensify the remembrance. In all is the one Self, the one Divine is all; all are in the Divine, all are the Divine and there is nothing else in the universe, – this thought or this faith is the whole background until it becomes the whole substance of the consciousness of the worker. A memory, a self-dynamising meditation of this kind, must and does in its end turn into a profound and uninterrupted vision and a vivid and all-embracing consciousness of that which we so powerfully remember or on which we so constantly meditate. For it compels a constant reference at each moment to the Origin of all being and will and action and there is at once an embracing and exceeding of all particular forms and appearances in That which is their cause and

upholder. This way cannot go to its end without a seeing vivid and vital, as concrete in its way as physical sight, of the works of the universal Spirit everywhere. On its summits it rises into a constant living and thinking and willing and acting in the presence of the Supramental, the Transcendent. Whatever we see and hear, whatever we touch and sense, all of which we are conscious, has to be known and felt by us as that which we worship and serve; all has to be turned into an image of the Divinity, perceived as a dwelling-place of his Godhead, enveloped with the eternal Omnipresence. In its close, if not long before it, this way of works turns by communion with the Divine Presence, Will and Force into a way of Knowledge more complete and integral than any the mere creature intelligence can construct or the search of the intellect can discover.

Lastly, the practice of this Yoga of sacrifice compels us to renounce all the inner supports of egoism, casting them out of our mind and will and actions, and to eliminate its seed, its presence, its influence out of our nature. All must be done for the Divine; all must be directed towards the Divine. Nothing must be attempted for ourselves as a separate existence; nothing done for others, whether neighbours, friends, family, country or mankind or other creatures merely because they are connected with our personal life and thought and sentiment or because the ego takes a preferential interest in their welfare. In this way of doing and seeing, all works and all life become only a daily dynamic worship and service of the Divine in the unbounded temple of his own vast cosmic existence. Life becomes more and more the sacrifice of

the eternal in the individual constantly self-offered to the eternal Transcendence. It is offered in the wide sacrificial ground of the field of the eternal cosmic Spirit; and the Force too that offers it is the eternal Force, the omnipresent Mother. Therefore is this way a way of union and communion by acts and by the spirit and knowledge in the act as complete and integral as any our Godward will can hope for or our soul's strength execute.

It has all the power of a way of works integral and absolute, but because of its law of sacrifice and self-giving to the Divine Self and Master, it is accompanied on its one side by the whole power of the path of Love and on the other by the whole power of the path of Knowledge. At its end all these three divine Powers work together, fused, united, completed, perfected by each other."

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ।। 9.29।।

9.29. I am equal in all existences, none is dear to Me, none hated; yet those who worship Me with devotion, they are in Me and I also in them.

"The Divine Eternal is the inhabitant in all existences: he is equal in all and the equal friend, father, mother, creator, lover, supporter of all creatures. He is the enemy of none and he is the partial lover of none; none has he cast out, none has he eternally condemned, none has he favoured by any despotism of arbitrary caprice: all at last equally come to him through their circlings in the ignorance. But it is only this perfect adoration that can make this indwelling

of God in man and man in God a conscious thing and an engrossing and perfect union. Love of the Highest and a total self-surrender are the straight and swift way to this divine oneness."

"...the more you give yourself to the Divine the more He is with you, totally, constantly, at every minute, in all your thoughts, all your needs, and that there's no aspiration which does not receive an immediate answer; and you have the sense of a complete, constant intimacy, of a total nearness. It is as though you carried... as though the Divine were all the time with you; you walk and He walks with you, you sleep and He sleeps with you, you eat and He eats with you, you think and He thinks with you, you love and He is the love you have. But for this one must give himself entirely, totally, exclusively, reserve nothing, keep nothing for himself and not keep back anything, not disperse

anything also: the least little thing in your being which is not given to the Divine is a waste; it is the wasting of your joy, something that lessens your happiness by that much, and all that you don't give to the Divine is as though you were holding it in the way of the possibility of the Divine's giving Himself to you. You don't feel Him close to yourself, constantly with you, because you don't belong to Him, because you belong to hundreds of other things and people; in your thought, your action, your feelings, impulses... there are millions of things which you do not give Him, and that is why you don't feel Him always with you, because all these things are so many screens and walls between Him and you. But if you give Him everything, if you keep back nothing, He will be constantly and totally with you in all that you do, in all that you think, all that you feel, always, at each moment."

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ।। 9.30।।

9.30. If even a man of very evil conduct turns to Me with a sole and entire love, he must be regarded as a saint, for the settled will of endeavour in him is a right and complete will.

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्माशश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
कौन्तेय प्रति जानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ।। 9.31।।

9.31. Swiftly does he become a soul of righteousness and obtains eternal peace. Know it for certain, O Kaunteya, that My devotee never perishes.

"The equal Divine Presence in all of us makes no other preliminary condition, if once this integral self-giving has been made in faith and in sincerity and with a fundamental completeness. All have access to this gate, all can enter into this temple: our mundane distinctions disappear in the mansion of the All-lover. There the virtuous man is not preferred, nor the sinner shut out from the Presence; together by this road the Brahmin pure of life and exact in observance of the law and the outcaste born from a womb of sin and sorrow and rejected of men can travel and find an equal and open access to the supreme liberation and the highest dwelling in the Eternal. Man and woman find their equal right before God; for the divine Spirit is no respecter of persons or of social distinctions and restrictions: all can go straight to him without intermediary or shackling condition.... In other words a will of entire self-giving opens wide all the gates of the spirit and brings in response an entire descent and self-giving of the Godhead to the human being[22], and that at once reshapes and assimilates everything in us to the law of the divine existence by a rapid transformation of the lower into the spiritual nature. The will of self-giving forces away by its power the veil between God and man; it annuls every error and annihilates every obstacle. Those who aspire in their human strength by effort of knowledge or effort of virtue or effort of laborious self-discipline, grow with much anxious difficulty towards the Eternal; but when the soul

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[22] *If one wanted the Divine, the Divine himself would take up the purifying of the heart and develop the sadhana and give the necessary experiences; it can and does happen in that way if one has trust and confidence in the Divine and the will to surrender. For such a taking up involves one's putting oneself in the hands of the Divine rather than relying on one's own efforts alone and this implies one's putting one's trust and confidence in the Divine and a progressive self-giving. It is in fact the principle of sadhana that I myself followed and it is the central process of yoga as I envisage it. It is, I suppose, what Sri Ramakrishna meant by the method of the baby-cat in his image. But all cannot follow that at once; it takes time for them to arrive at it – it grows most when the mind and vital fall quiet....*

The core of the inner surrender is trust and confidence in the Divine. One takes the attitude: "I want the Divine and nothing else. I want to give myself entirely to him and since my soul wants that, it cannot be but that I shall meet and realise him. I ask nothing but that and his action in me to bring me to him, his action secret or open, veiled or manifest. I do not insist on my own time and way; let him do all in his own time and way; I shall believe in him, accept his will, aspire steadily for his light and presence and joy, go through all difficulties and delays, relying on him and never giving up. Let my mind be quiet and trust him and let him open it to his light; let my vital be quiet and turn to him alone and let him open it to his calm and joy. All for him and myself for him. Whatever happens, I will keep to this aspiration and self-giving and go on in perfect reliance that it will be done."

That is the attitude into which one must grow; for certainly it cannot be made perfect at once – mental and vital movements come across – but if one keeps the will to it, it will grow in the being. The rest is a matter of obedience to the guidance when it makes itself manifest, not allowing one's mental and vital movements to interfere.

gives up its ego and its work to the Divine, God himself comes to us and takes up our burden. To the ignorant he brings the light of the divine knowledge, to the feeble the power of the divine will, to the sinner the liberation of the divine purity, to the suffering the infinite spiritual joy and Ananda. Their weakness and the stumblings of their human strength make no difference. 'This is My word of promise,' cries the voice of the Godhead to Arjuna, 'that he who loves Me[23] shall not perish'."

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ।।9.32।।

9.32. Those who take refuge in Me, O Partha, though outcastes, born from a womb of sin, women, Vaishyas, even Shudras, they also attain to the highest goal.

"In the spiritual life all the external distinctions of which men make so much because they appeal with an oppressive force to the outward mind, cease before the equality of the divine Light and the wide omnipotence of an impartial Power."

किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।
अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ।।9.33।।

33. What then to say of the holy Brahmins and devoted king-sages; having come to this transient and unhappy world, do thou turn to Me and worship Me.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ।।9.34।।

9.34. Become My minded, My lover and adorer, a sacrificer to Me, bow thyself to Me, thus united with Me in the Self thou shalt come unto Me, having Me as thy supreme goal.

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[23] Thou who pervadest all the worlds below,
Yet sitst above,
Master of all who work and rule and know,
Servant of Love!

18. THE SUPREME WORD OF THE GITA

"We have now got to the inmost kernel of the Gita's Yoga, the whole living and breathing centre of its teaching. We can see now quite clearly that the ascent of the limited human soul, when it withdraws from the ego and the lower nature into the immutable Self calm, silent and stable, was only a first step, an initial change. And now too we can see why the Gita from the first insisted on the Ishwara, the Godhead in the human form, who speaks always of himself, *aham*, *mām*, as of some great secret and omnipresent Being, lord of all the worlds and master of the human soul, one who is greater even than that immutable self-existence which is still and unmoved forever and abides forever untouched by the subjective and objective appearances of the natural universe."

श्रीभगवान् उवाच
भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया ।। 10.1 ।।

10.1. The Blessed Lord said: Again O mighty-armed, hearken to My supreme word which I will speak to thee from My will for thy soul's good, now that thy heart is taking delight in Me.

"To make it perfectly and indisputably clear that this is the supreme and entire truth of his teaching, this the integral knowledge which he had promised to reveal, the divine Avatar declares, in a brief reiteration of the upshot of all that he has been saying, that this and no other is his supreme word, *paramaṁ vacaḥ*.... This supreme word of the Gita is, we find, first the explicit and unmistakable declaration that the highest worship and highest knowledge of the Eternal are the knowledge and the adoration of him as the supreme and divine Origin of all that is in existence and the mighty Lord of the world and its peoples of whose being all things are the becomings. It is, secondly, the declaration of a unified knowledge and Bhakti as the supreme Yoga; that is the destined and the natural way given to man to arrive at union with the eternal Godhead. And to make more significant this definition of the way, to give an illuminating point to this highest importance of Bhakti... the acceptance of it by the heart and mind of the disciple is put as a condition for the further development by which the final command to action comes at last to be given to the human instrument, Arjuna. 'I will speak this supreme word to thee,' says the Godhead, 'from My will for thy soul's good, now that thy heart is taking delight in Me,' *te prīyamāṇāya vaksyāmi*. For this delight of the heart in God is the whole constituent and essence of true Bhakti..."

न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः ।
अहमादिर्हि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः ।। 10.2 ।।

10.2. Neither the gods nor the great Rishis know any birth of Me, I am altogether and in everyway the origin of the gods and the great Rishis.

यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् ।
असंमूढः स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ।। 10.3 ।।

10.3. Whosoever knows Me as the Unborn, without origin, mighty Lord of the worlds and peoples, lives unbewildered among mortals and is delivered from all sin and evil.

बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसंमोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमः शमः ।
सुखं दुःखं भवोऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च ।। 10.4 ।।
अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः ।
भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः ।। 10.5 ।।

10.4-5. Understanding and knowledge and freedom from the bewilderment of the ignorance, forgiveness and truth and self-control, serenity, grief and pleasure, coming into being and destruction, fear and fearlessness, glory and ingloriousness, non-injury, equality, contentment, austerity and giving, all here in their separate diversities are subjective becoming of existences, and they all proceed from Me.

"The idea of the Divine on which the Gita insists as the secret of the whole mystery of existence, the knowledge that leads to liberation, is one that bridges the opposition between the cosmic procession in Time and a supracosmic eternity without denying either of them or taking anything from the reality of either. It harmonises the pantheistic, the theistic and the highest transcendental terms of our spiritual conception and spiritual experience.[24] The Divine is the unborn Eternal who has no origin; there is and can be nothing before him from which he proceeds, because he is one and timeless

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[24] *The Divine is supracosmic, the eternal Parabrahman who supports with his timeless and spaceless existence all this cosmic manifestation of his own being and nature in Space and Time. He is the supreme spirit who ensouls the forms and movements of the universe, Paramatman. He is the supernal Person of whom all self and nature, all being and becoming in this or any universe are the self-conception and the self-energising, Purushottama. He is the ineffable Lord of all existence who by his spiritual control of his own manifested Power in Nature unrolls the cycles of the world and the natural evolution of creatures in the cycles, Parameshwara. From him the Jiva, individual spirit, soul in Nature, existent by his being, conscious by the light of his consciousness, empowered to knowledge, to will and to action by his will and power, enjoying existence by his divine enjoyment of the cosmos, has come here into the cosmic rounds.*

and absolute. 'Neither the gods nor the great Rishis know any birth of Me.... He who knows Me as the unborn without origin...' are the opening utterances of this supreme word.... This spiritual experience of the transcendental Infinite breaks down the limitations of the pantheistic conception of existence. The infinite of a cosmic monism which makes God and the universe one, tries to imprison the Divine in his world manifestation and leaves us that as our sole possible means of knowing him; but this Experience liberates us into the timeless and spaceless Eternal. 'Neither the gods nor the Titans know thy manifestation,' cries Arjuna in his reply: the whole universe or even numberless universes cannot manifest him, cannot contain his ineffable light and infinite greatness. All other lesser God-knowledge has its truth only by dependence on the ever unmanifested and ineffable reality of the transcendent Godhead.

But at the same time the divine Transcendence is not a negation, nor is it an Absolute empty of all relation to the universe. It is a supreme positive, it is 10.4 an absolute of all absolutes. All cosmic relations derive from this Supreme; all -5 cosmic existences return to it and find in it alone their true and immeasurable existence. 'For I am altogether and in every way the origin of the gods and the great Rishis.'...

This transcendent Origin of our existence is not separated from us by any unbridgeable gulf and does not disown the creatures that derive from him or condemn them to be only the figments of an illusion. He is the Being, all are his becomings. He does not create out of a void, out of a Nihil or out of an unsubstantial matrix of dream. Out of himself he creates, in himself he becomes; all are in his being and all is of his being. This truth admits and exceeds the pantheistic seeing of things. Vasudeva is all, *vāsudevaḥ sarvam*, but 7.19 Vasudeva is all that appears in the cosmos because he is too all that does not appear in it, all that is never manifested. His being is in no way limited by his becoming; he is in no degree bound by this world of relations. Even in becoming all he is still a Transcendence; even in assuming finite forms he is always the Infinite..."

"The Gita recognises and stresses the distinction between Being and becoming, but does not turn it into an opposition. For that would be to abrogate the universal oneness. The Godhead is one in his transcendence, one all-supporting Self of things, one in the unity of his cosmic nature. These three are one Godhead; all derives from him, all becomes from his being, all is eternal portion or temporal expression of the Eternal. In the Transcendence, in the Absolute, if we are to follow the Gita, we must look, not for a supreme negation of all things, but for the positive key of their mystery, the reconciling secret of their existence.

But there is another supreme reality of the Infinite that must also be recognised as an indispensable element of the liberating knowledge. This reality is that of the transcendent downlook as well as the close immanent presence of the divine government of the universe. The Supreme who becomes all creation, yet infinitely transcends it, is not a will-less cause aloof from his
5.29 creation.... He is the mighty lord of the worlds and peoples, *loka-maheśvara,* and governs all not only from within but from above, from his supreme transcendence. Cosmos cannot be governed by a Power that does not transcend cosmos. A divine government implies the free mastery of an omnipotent Ruler and not an automatic force or mechanical law of determinative becoming limited by the apparent nature of the cosmos. This is the theistic seeing of the universe, but it is no shrinking and gingerly theism afraid of the world's contradictions, but one which sees God as the omniscient and omnipotent, the sole original Being who manifests in himself all, whatever it may be, good and evil, pain and pleasure, light and darkness as stuff of his own existence and governs himself what in himself he has manifested. Unaffected by its oppositions, unbound by his creation, exceeding, yet intimately related to this Nature and closely one with her creatures, their Spirit, Self, highest Soul, Lord, Lover, Friend, Refuge, he is ever leading them from within them and from above through the mortal appearances of ignorance and suffering and sin and evil, ever leading each through his nature and all through universal nature towards a supreme light and bliss and immortality and transcendence.

This is the fullness of the liberating knowledge. It is a knowledge of the Divine within us and in the world as at the same time a transcendent Infinite. An Absolute who has become all that is by his divine Nature, his effective power of Spirit, he governs all from his transcendence. He is intimately present within every creature and the cause, ruler, director of all cosmic happenings and yet is he far too great, mighty and infinite to be limited by his creation.
10.3,7 &8-11 This character of the knowledge is emphasised in three separate verses of promise."

महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा ।
मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ।। 10.6।।

10.6. The great Rishis, the seven Ancients of the world, and also the four Manus are my mental becomings; from them are all these living creatures in the world.

एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
सोऽविकम्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ।। 10.7।।

10.7. Whosoever knows in its right principles this My pervad-

ing lordship and this My Yoga, unites himself to Me by an untrembling Yoga; of this there is no doubt.

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ।। 10.8 ।।

10.8. I am the birth of everything and from Me all proceeds into development of action and movement; understanding thus, the wise adore Me in rapt emotion.

"The wisdom of the liberated man is not then, in the view of the Gita, a consciousness of abstracted and unrelated impersonality, a do-nothing quietude. For the mind and soul of the liberated man are firmly settled in a constant sense, an integral feeling of the pervasion of the world by the actuating and directing presence of the divine Master of the universe, *etām vibhūtim mama yo vetti*. He is aware of his spirit's transcendence of the cosmic order, but he is aware also of his oneness with it by the divine Yoga, *yogam ca mama*. And he sees each aspect of the transcendent, the cosmic and the individual existence in its right relation to the supreme Truth and puts all in their right place in the unity of the divine Yoga. He no longer sees each thing in its separateness, – the separate seeing that leaves all either unexplained or one-sided to the experiencing consciousness. Nor does he see all confusedly together, – the confused seeing that gives a wrong light and a chaotic action. Secure in the transcendence, he is not affected by the cosmic stress and the turmoil of Time and circumstance. Untroubled in the midst of all this creation and destruction of things, his spirit adheres to an unshaken and untrembling and unvacillating Yoga of union with the eternal and spiritual in the universe.... He becomes of like nature and law of being with the Divine, *sādharmyam āgatāḥ*, transcendent even in universality of spirit, universal even in the individuality of mind, life and body. By this Yoga once perfected, undeviating and fixed, *avikampena yogena yujyate,* he is able to take up whatever poise of nature, assume whatever human condition, do whatever world-action without any fall from his oneness with the divine Self, without any loss of his constant communion with the Master of existence. 10.7 10.7 14.2 10.7

This knowledge translated into the affective, emotional, temperamental plane becomes a calm love and intense adoration of the original and transcendental Godhead above us, the ever-present Master of all things here, God in man, God in Nature. It is at first a wisdom of the intelligence, the *buddhi*; but that is accompanied by a moved spiritualised state of the affective nature, *budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*. This change of the heart and mind is the beginning of a total change of all the nature. A new inner birth and becoming prepares us for oneness with the supreme object of our love and adoration, *madbhāvāya*." 10.8 4.10

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ।। 10.9।।

10.9. Their consciousness full of Me, their life wholly given up to Me, mutually understanding and speaking of Me, they are ever contented and joyful.

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ।। 10.10।।

10.10. To these who are thus in constant union with Me and adore Me with an intense delight of love, I give the Yoga of the Buddhi by which they come to Me.

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ।। 10.11।।

10.11. Out of compassion for them, I, lodged in their self, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the blazing lamp of knowledge.

19. THE VIBHUTI YOGA

"A very important step has been reached, a decisive statement of its metaphysical and psychological synthesis has been added to the development of the Gita's gospel of spiritual liberation and divine works. The Godhead has been revealed in thought to Arjuna; he has been made visible to the mind's search and the heart's seeing as the supreme and universal Being, the supernal and universal Person, the inward-dwelling Master of our existence for whom man's knowledge, will and adoration were seeking through the mists of the Ignorance. There remains only the vision of the multiple Virat Purusha to complete the revelation on one more of its many sides.

The metaphysical synthesis is complete. Sankhya has been admitted for the separation of the soul from the lower nature – a separation that must be effected by self-knowledge through the discriminating reason and by transcendence of our subjection to the three Gunas constituent of that nature. It has been completed and its limitations exceeded by a large revelation of the unity of the supreme Soul and supreme Nature, *para puruṣa*, *parā prakṛti*. Vedanta of the philosophers has been admitted for the self-effacement of the natural separative personality built round the ego. Its method has been used to replace the little personal by the large impersonal being, to annul the separative illusion in the unity of the Brahman and to substitute for the blind seeing of the ego the truer vision of all things in one Self and one Self in all things. Its truth has been completed by the impartial revelation of the Parabrahman from whom originate both the mobile and the immobile, the mutable and the immutable, the action and the silence. Its possible limitations have been transcended by the intimate revelation of the supreme Soul and Lord who becomes here in all Nature, manifests himself in all personality and puts forth the power of his Nature in all action. Yoga has been admitted for the self-surrender of the will, mind, heart, all the psychological being to the Ishwara, the divine Lord of the nature. It has been completed by the revelation of the supernal Master of existence as the original Godhead of whom the Jiva is the partial being in Nature. Its possible limitations have been exceeded by the soul's seeing of all things as the Lord in the light of a perfect spiritual oneness.

The Yoga of knowledge has been fulfilled sovereignly in this integral seeing and knowing of the One. The Yoga of works has been crowned by the surrender of all works to their Master, – for the natural man is now only an instrument of his will. The Yoga of love and adoration has been declared in its amplest forms. The intense consummation of knowledge, works and love conducts to a crowning union of soul and Oversoul in a highest amplitude. In that union the revelations of knowledge are made real to the heart as well as to the intelligence. In that union the difficult sacrifice of self in an instrumental

action becomes the easy, free and blissful expression of a living oneness. The whole means of the spiritual liberation has been given; the whole foundation of the divine action has been constructed.

Arjuna accepts the entire knowledge that has thus been given to him by the divine Teacher. His mind is already delivered from its doubts and seekings; his heart, turned now from the outward aspect of the world, from its baffling appearance to its supreme sense and origin and its inner realities, is already released from sorrow and affliction and touched with the ineffable gladness of a divine revelation. The language which he is made to use in voicing his acceptance is such as to emphasise and insist once again on the profound integrality of this knowledge and its all-embracing finality and fullness."

अर्जुन उवाच
परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् ।
पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम् ।। 10.12।।

10.12. Arjuna said: Thou art the supreme Brahman, the supreme Abode, the supreme Purity, the one eternal and divine Purusha, the original Godhead, the Unborn, the all-pervading Lord.

10.13 10.14 **All the Rishis say this of Thee and the divine seers Narada, Asita, Devala, Vyasa; and Thou Thyself sayest it to me. All this that Thou sayest, my mind holds for the truth, O Keshava. Neither the Gods nor the Titans, O blessed Lord, know Thy manifestation.**

स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम ।
भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते ।। 10.15।।

10.15. Thou alone, O Purushottama, knowest Thyself by Thyself; Source of beings, Lord of beings, God of gods, Master of the world!

"He accepts first the Avatar, the Godhead in man, who is speaking to him as the supreme Brahman, as the supracosmic All and Absolute of existence in which the soul can dwell when it rises out of this manifestation and this partial becoming to its source, *paraṁ brahma, paraṁ dhāma*. He accepts him as the supreme purity of the ever-free Existence to which one arrives through the effacement of ego in the self's immutable impersonality calm and still for ever, *pavitram paramam*. He accepts him next as the one Permanent, the eternal

Soul, the divine Purusha, *puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyam*. He acclaims in him the original Godhead, adores the Unborn who is the pervading, indwelling, self-extending master of all existence, *ādi-devam ajaṁ vibhum*. He accepts him therefore not only as that Wonderful who is beyond expression of any kind, for nothing is sufficient to manifest him, – 'neither the gods nor the Titans, O
10.14 blessed Lord, know thy manifestation,' *na hi te bhagavan vyaktim vidur devā na dānavāḥ*, – but as the lord of all existences and the one divine efficient cause of all their becoming, God of the gods from whom all godheads have sprung, master of the universe who manifests and governs it from above by the power of his supreme and his universal Nature, *bhūta-bhāvana bhūteśa deva-deva jagat-pate*. And lastly he accepts him as that Vasudeva in and around us who is all things here by virtue of the world-pervading, all-inhabiting, all-constituting
10.16 master powers of his becoming, *vibhūtayaḥ*...

He has accepted the truth with the adoration of his heart, the submission of his will and the understanding of his intelligence. He is already prepared to act as the divine instrument in this knowledge and with this self-surrender. But a desire for a deeper constant spiritual realisation has been awakened in his heart and will."

Thou shouldst tell me of Thy divine self-manifestations, all without exception, Thy Vibhutis by which Thou standest pervading these worlds. 10.16

How shall I know Thee, O Yogin, by thinking of Thee everywhere at all moments and in what pre-eminent becomings should I think of Thee, 10.17

O Blessed Lord? In detail tell me of Thy Yoga and Vibhuti O Janardana; 10.18

tell me ever more of it; it is nectar of immortality to me, and however much of it I hear, I am not satiated.

"Now the way to arrive at that realisation has been given to Arjuna. And so far as regards the great self-evident divine principles, these do not baffle the mind; it can open to the idea of the supreme Godhead, to the experience of the immutable Self, to the direct perception of the immanent Divinity, to the contact of the conscient universal Being. One can, once the mind is illumined with the idea, follow readily the way and, with whatever preliminary difficult effort to exceed the normal mental perceptions, come in the end to the self-experience of these essential truths that stand behind our and all existence, *ātmanā ātmānam*. One can do it with this readiness because these, once conceived, are evidently divine realities; there is nothing in our mental associations to prevent us from admitting God in these high aspects. But the difficulty is to see him in the apparent truths of existence, to detect him in this

fact of Nature and in these disguising phenomena of the World's becoming; for here all is opposed to the sublimity of this unifying conception. How can we consent to see the Divine as man and animal being and inanimate object, in the noble and the low, the sweet and the terrible, the good and the evil? If, assenting to some idea of God extended in the things of the cosmos, we see him in ideal light of knowledge and greatness of power and charm of beauty and beneficence of love and ample largeness of spirit, how shall we avoid the breaking of the unity by their opposites which in actual fact cling to these high things and envelop them and obscure? And if in spite of the limitations of human mind and nature we can see God in the man of God, how shall we see him in those who oppose him and represent in act and nature all that we

conceive of as undivine? If Narayana is without difficulty visible in the sage and the saint, how shall he be easily visible to us in the sinner, the criminal, the harlot and the outcaste? To all the differentiations of the world-existence the sage, looking everywhere for the supreme purity and oneness, returns the austere cry, 'not this, not this', *neti neti*. Even if to many things in the world we give a willing or reluctant assent and admit the Divine in the universe, still before most must not the mind persist in that cry 'not this, not this'? Here constantly the assent of the understanding, the consent of the will and the heart's faith become difficult to a human mentality anchored always on phenomenon and appearance. At least some compelling indications are needed, some links and bridges, some supports to the difficult effort at oneness.

Arjuna, though he accepts the revelation of Vasudeva as all and though his heart is full of the delight of it, – for already he finds that it is delivering him from the perplexity and stumbling differentiations of his mind which was crying for a clue, a guiding truth amid the bewildering problems of a world of oppositions, and it is to his hearing the nectar of immortality, *amṛtam*, – yet feels the need of such supports and indices. He feels that they are indispensable to overcome the difficulty of a complete and firm realisation; for how else can this knowledge be made a thing of the heart and life? He requires guiding indications, asks Krishna even for a complete and detailed enumeration of the sovereign powers of his becoming and desires that nothing shall be left out of the vision, nothing remain to baffle him.

The divine Teacher accedes to the request of the disciple, but with an initial reminder that a full reply is not possible. For God is infinite and his manifestation is infinite. The forms of his manifestation too are innumerable. Each form is a symbol of some divine power, *vibhūti*, concealed in it and to the seeing eye each finite carries in it its own revelation of the infinite. Yes, he says, I will tell thee of my divine Vibhutis, but only in some of my principal pre-eminences and as an indication and by the example of things in which thou canst most readily see the power of the Godhead, *prādhānyataḥ*, *uddeśataḥ*. For there is no end to the innumerable detail of the Godhead's self-extension
10.19 in the universe, *nāsti anto vistarasya me*. This reminder begins the passage and is repeated at the end in order to give it a greater and unmistakable emphasis. And then throughout the rest of the chapter we get a summary description of these principal indications, these pre-eminent signs of the divine force present in the things and persons of the universe."

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।
अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ।। 10.20।।

10.20. I, O Gudakesha, am the Self, which abides in the heart of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.

वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः ।
इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना ।। 10.22।।

10.22. Among the Vedas I am the Sama-Veda; among the gods I am Vasava (Indra); I am mind among the senses, and in living beings I am consciousness.

पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।
झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ।। 10.31।।

10.31. I am the wind among purifiers; I am Rama among warriors; I am the alligator among fishes; and among the rivers the Ganges am I.

सर्गाणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन ।
अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ।। 10.32।।

10.32. Of creation I am the beginning and the end and also the middle, O Arjuna. I am spiritual knowledge among the many branches of knowledge, and I am the logic of those who debate.

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनंजयः ।
मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः ।। 10.37।।

10.37. Among the Vrishnis, I am Krishna, among the Pandavas I am Arjuna, among the sages I am Vyasa and among the seer-poets seer Ushanas am I.

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन ।
न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ।। 10.39।।

10.39. And whatsoever is the seed of all existences, that also am I, O Arjuna; no being is there, moving or unmoving, that could be there without Me.

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंऽशसंभवम् ।। 10.41 ।।

10.41. Whatsoever is glorious, beautiful or mighty and forceful, do thou know all that verily as born from a fragment of My splendour.

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ।। 10.42 ।।

10.42. But what need hast thou, O Arjuna, to know all this detail? (Take it thus that) I support this entire universe with an infinitesimal portion of Myself.

"If we look at things... unblinded by differentiations of quality and quantity or by difference of values and oppositions of nature, we shall see that all things are in fact and can be nothing but powers of this manifestation, Vibhutis of this universal Soul and Spirit, Yoga of this great Yogin, self-creations of this marvellous self-Creator.... But since it is through power in his becoming that he is apparent to us, he is especially apparent in whatever is of a pre-eminent value or seems to act with a powerful and pre-eminent force. And therefore in each kind of being we can see him most in those in whom the power of nature of that kind reaches its highest, its leading, its most effectively self-revealing manifestation. These are in a special sense Vibhutis. Yet the highest power and manifestation is only a very partial revelation of the Infinite; even the whole universe is informed by only one degree of his greatness, illumined by one ray of his splendour, glorious with a faint hint of his delight and beauty. This is in sum the gist of the enumeration, the result we carry away from it, the heart of its meaning."

"The liberated vision sees three things at once as the whole occult truth of the natural being. First and foremost it sees the divine Prakriti in all, secret, present, waiting for evolution; it sees her as the real power in all things, that which gives its value to all this apparent action of diverse quality and force, and it reads the significance of these latter phenomena not in their own language of ego and ignorance, but in the light of the divine Nature. Therefore it sees too, secondly, the differences of the apparent action in Deva and Rakshasa, man and beast and bird and reptile, good and wicked, ignorant and learned, but as action of divine quality and energy under these conditions, under these masks. It is not deluded by the mask, but detects behind every mask the Godhead.... Finally, it sees the upward urge of the striving powers of the Will-to-be towards Godhead; it respects, welcomes, encourages all high manifestations of energy and quality, the flaming tongues of the Divinity, the mounting greatnesses of soul and mind and life in their intensities uplifted from the levels of the lower nature towards heights of luminous wisdom and knowledge, mighty power, strength, capacity, courage, heroism, benignant sweetness and ardour and grandeur of love and self-giving, pre-eminent virtue, noble action, captivating beauty and harmony, fine and godlike creation. The eye of the spirit sees and marks out the rising godhead of man in the great Vibhuti."

"This is a truth which all ancient cultures recognised and respected, but one side of the modern mind has singular repugnances to the idea, sees in it a worship of mere strength and power, an ignorant or self-degrading hero-worship or a doctrine of the Asuric superman. Certainly, there is an ignorant

way of taking this truth as there is an ignorant way of taking all truths; but it has its proper place, its indispensable function in the divine economy of Nature. The Gita puts it in that right place and perspective. It must be based on the recognition of the divine self in all men and all creatures; it must be consistent with an equal heart to the great and the small, the eminent and the obscure manifestation. God must be seen and loved in the ignorant, the humble, the weak, the vile, the outcaste. In the Vibhuti himself it is not, except as a symbol, the outward individual that is to be thus recognised and set high, but the one Godhead who displays himself in the power. But this does not abrogate the fact that there is an ascending scale in manifestation and that Nature mounts upward in her degrees of self-expression from her groping, dark or suppressed symbols to the first visible expressions of the Godhead. Each great being, each great achievement is a sign of her power of self-exceeding and a promise of the final, the supreme exceeding. Man himself is a superior degree of natural manifestation to the beast and reptile, though in both there is the one equal Brahman. But man has not reached his own highest heights of self-exceeding and meanwhile every hint of a great power of the Will-to-be in him must be recognised as a promise and an indication. Respect for the divinity in man, in all men, is not diminished, but heightened and given a richer significance by lifting our eyes to the trail of the great Pioneers who lead or point him by whatever step of attainment towards supermanhood....

The Power as the self of the cosmos is equal to all, therefore to each being he gives according to the workings of his nature; but there is also a personal relation of the Purushottama to the human being in which he is especially near to the man who has come near to him. All these heroes and men of might who have joined in battle on the plain of Kurukshetra are vessels of the divine Will and through each he works according to his nature but behind the veil of his ego. Arjuna has reached that point when the veil can be rent and the embodied Godhead can reveal the mystery of his working to his Vibhuti. It is even essential that there should be the revelation. He is the instrument of a great work, a work terrible in appearance but necessary for a long step forward in the march of the race, a decisive movement in its struggle towards the kingdom of the Right and the Truth, *dharmarājya*. The history of the cycles of man is a progress towards the unveiling of the Godhead in the soul and life of humanity; each high event and stage of it is a divine manifestation. Arjuna, the chief instrument of the hidden Will, the great protagonist, must become the divine man capable of doing the work consciously as the action of the Divine. So only can that action become psychically alive and receive its spiritual import and its light and power of secret significance. He is called to self-knowledge; he must see God as the

Master of the universe and the origin of the world's creatures and happenings, all as the Godhead's self-expression in Nature, God in all, God in himself as man and as Vibhuti, God in the lownesses of being and on its heights, God on the topmost summits, man too upon heights as the Vibhuti and climbing to the last summits in the supreme liberation and union. Time in its creation and destruction must be seen by him as the figure of the Godhead in its steps, – steps that accomplish the cycles of the cosmos on whose spires of movement the divine spirit in the human body rises doing God's work in the world as his Vibhuti to the supreme transcendences. This knowledge has been given; the Time-figure of the Godhead is now to be revealed and from the million mouths of that figure will issue the command for the appointed action to the liberated Vibhuti."

20. THE VISION OF THE WORLD-SPIRIT

"The vision of the universal Purusha is one of the best known and most powerfully poetic passages in the Gita, but its place in the thought is not altogether on the surface. It is evidently intended for a poetic and revelatory symbol and we must see how it is brought in and for what purpose and discover to what it points in its significant aspects before we can capture its meaning. It is invited by Arjuna in his desire to see the living image, the visible greatness of the unseen Divine, the very embodiment of the Spirit and Power that governs the universe."

अर्जुन उवाच
मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् ।
यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ।।11.1।।

11.1. Arjuna said: This word concerning the highest spiritual secret of existence which Thou hast spoken out of compassion for me; by this my delusion is dispelled.

"Arjuna has heard the highest spiritual secret of existence, that all is from God and all is the Divine and in all things God dwells and is concealed and can be revealed in every finite appearance. The illusion which so persistently holds man's sense and mind, the idea that things at all exist in themselves or for themselves apart from God or that anything subject to Nature can be self-moved and self-guided, has passed from him, – that was the cause of his doubt and bewilderment and refusal of action."

11.2 **The birth and passing away of existences have been heard by me in detail from Thee, O Lotus-eyed, and also Thy imperishable greatness.**
11.3 **As Thou hast declared Thyself to be, O Supreme Lord, even so it is,**
11.4 **(still) I desire to see Thy divine form and body, O Purushottama. If Thou thinkest that it can be seen by me, O Lord, show me then, O Master of Yoga, Thy imperishable Self.**

श्रीभगवान् उवाच
पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।
नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च ।।11.5।।

11.5. The Blessed Lord said: Behold, O Partha, my hundreds and thousands of divine forms, various in kind, various in shape and hue.

11.6 **Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Aswins and also the Maruts; behold many wonders never seen before, O Bharata.**
11.7 **Here, today, behold the whole world, with all that is moving and unmoving, unified in My body, O Gudakesha, and whatever else thou**

willest to see. But verily thou canst not see Me by these eyes of thine, I give thee the eye divine, behold Me in My sovereign Yoga. 11.8

संजय उवाच
एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।
दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ।। 11.9।।

11.9. Sanjaya said: Having thus spoken, O King, the great Master of Yoga, Hari (Sri Krishna) showed to Partha His supreme divine form.

Of many mouths and eyes, of many wonderful visions, with many 11.10
divine ornaments, with many divine uplifted weapons. Wearing divine 11.11
garlands and raiments, anointed with divine perfumes, the infinite and all-wonderful Godhead with faces everywhere. If the light of a thousand 11.12
suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, that might resemble the splendour of that Great Soul. There, at that time, the Pandava saw the 11.13
whole universe with its manifold divisions, yet situated unified in the body of the God of gods. Then he, Dhananjaya, overwhelmed with 11.14
astonishment, his hair standing on end, bowing down his head to the Lord and with hands folded (in salutation) said: – Arjuna said: I see all 11.15
the gods in Thy body, O God, and different companies of beings, Brahma the creating Lord seated in the Lotus, and all the Rishis and the divine Serpents. I see Thee, infinite in forms on all sides, with 11.16
numberless arms and bellies and eyes and faces; but I see not Thy end, nor Thy middle, nor Thy beginning, O Lord of the universe, O Form universal.

I behold Thee without end or middle or beginning, of infinite power 11.19
and numberless arms, Thy eyes are sun and moon, Thou hast mouth of burning fire, burning up the whole universe by the flame of Thy energy. The whole space between earth and heaven and all directions are 11.20
pervaded by Thee alone. Beholding this Thy fierce and astounding form, the three worlds are all in pain, O Thou great Spirit.

Seeing, O Mighty-armed, Thy immense form of many mouths 11.23
and eyes, of many arms and thighs and feet and bellies, and with terrible tusks, the worlds are in anguish and shaken, as also am I. I see Thee, O 11.24
Vishnu, touching heaven, shining in many hues, with mouths wide open and with enormous burning eyes. My soul is in anguish and I find no peace or poise. As I look upon Thy mouths with terrible tusks, like the 11.25
fires of Death and Time, I lose the sense of directions and find no peace. Turn Thy heart to grace, O God of gods, Abode of the worlds!

11.26 -27 11.30 **All these sons of Dhritarashtra, along with the companies of the kings and heroes, Bhishma and Drona as well as Karna, along with the foremost warriors on our side too are hastening into Thy tusked and terrible jaws and some are seen with crushed heads caught between Thy teeth. Devouring all the worlds with Thy flaming mouths. Thou art licking all the regions around. All the world, O Vishnu, is filled with Thy burning energies and baked by Thy fierce lustres.**

"It is an aspect of the supreme and universal Being from which the mind in men willingly turns away and ostrich-like hides its head so that perchance, not seeing, it may not be seen by the Terrible. The weakness of the human heart wants only fair and comforting truths or in their absence pleasant fables; it will not have the truth in its entirety because there there is much that is not clear and pleasant and comfortable, but hard to understand and harder to bear. The raw religionist, the superficial optimistic thinker, the sentimental idealist, the man at the mercy of his sensations and emotions agree in twisting away from the sterner conclusions, the harsher and fiercer aspects of universal existence. Indian religion has been ignorantly reproached for not sharing in this general game of hiding, because on the contrary it has built and placed before it the terrible as well as the sweet and beautiful symbols of the Godhead.

But it is the depth and largeness of its long thought and spiritual experience that prevent it from feeling or from giving countenance to these feeble shrinkings.

Indian spirituality knows that God is Love and Peace and Calm and Eternity, – the Gita which presents us with these terrible images, speaks of the Godhead who embodies himself in them as the lover and friend of all creatures. But there is too the sterner aspect of his divine government of the world which meets us from the beginning, the aspect of destruction, and to ignore is to miss the full reality of the divine Love and Peace and Calm and Eternity and even to throw on it an aspect of partiality and illusion, because the comforting exclusive form in which it is put is not borne out by the nature of the world in which we live. This world of our battle and labour is a fierce

dangerous destructive devouring world in which life exists precariously and the soul and body of man move among enormous perils, a world in which by every step forward, whether we will it or no, something is crushed and broken, in which every breath of life is a breath too of death. To put away the responsibility for all that seems to us evil or terrible on the shoulders of a semi-omnipotent Devil, or to put it aside as part of Nature, making an unbridgeable opposition between world-nature and God-Nature, as if Nature were independent of God, or to throw the responsibility on man and his sins, as if he had a preponderant voice in the making of this world or could create anything against the will of God, are clumsily comfortable devices in which the religious thought of India has never taken refuge. We have to look courageously in the face of the reality and see that it is God and none else who

has made this world in his being and that so he has made it. We have to see that Nature devouring her children, Time eating up the lives of creatures, Death universal and ineluctable and the violence of the Rudra forces in man and Nature are also the supreme Godhead in one of his cosmic figures. We have to see that God the bountiful and prodigal creator, God the helpful, strong and benignant preserver is also God the devourer and destroyer... It is only when we see with the eye of the complete union and feel this truth in the depths of our being that we can entirely discover behind that mask too the calm and beautiful face of the all-blissful Godhead and in this touch that tests our imperfection the touch of the friend and builder of the spirit in man. The discords of the worlds are God's discords and it is only by accepting and proceeding through them that we can arrive at the greater concords of his

supreme harmony, the summits and thrilled vastnesses of his transcendent and his cosmic Ananda.

The problem raised by the Gita and the solution it gives demand this character of the vision of the World-Spirit... when he (Arjuna) is put face to face with the embodiment of this truth, he sees in it magnified by the image of the divine greatness this aspect of terror and destruction and is appalled and can hardly bear it. For why should it be thus that the All-spirit manifests himself in Nature? What is the significance of this creating and devouring flame that is mortal existence, this world-wide struggle, these constant disastrous revolutions, this labour and anguish and travail and perishing of creatures? He puts the ancient question and breathes the eternal prayer..."

आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपा नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद ।
विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ।। 11.31 ।।

11.31. Declare to me who Thou art that wearest this form of fierceness. Salutation to Thee, O Thou great Godhead, turn Thy heart to grace. I wish to know Thee, O Thou who wast from the beginning, for I know not the will of Thy workings?

11.32 **The Blessed Lord said: I am the Time-Spirit, the Destroyer of worlds, here arisen huge statured for the destruction of the worlds. Even without thee all these warriors, who are ranked in the opposing armies, shall not remain.**

"It is the Timeless manifest as Time and World-Spirit from whom the command to action proceeds. For certainly the Godhead when he says, 'I am Time the Destoyer of beings,' does not mean either that he is the Time-Spirit alone or that the whole essence of the Time-Spirit is destruction. But it is this which is the present will of his workings, *pravṛtti*. Destruction is always a simultaneous or alternate element which keeps pace with creation and it is by destroying and renewing that the Master of Life does his long work of preservation... Whoever prematurely attempts to get rid of this law of battle and destruction, strives vainly against the greater will of the World-Spirit. Whoever turns from it in the weakness of his lower members, as did Arjuna in the beginning... is showing not true virtue, but a want of spiritual courage to face the sterner truths of Nature and of action and existence. Man can only

exceed the law of battle by discovering the greater law of his immortality... No real peace can be till the heart of man deserves peace; the law of Vishnu cannot prevail till the debt to Rudra is paid. To turn aside then and preach to a still unevolved mankind the law of love and oneness? Teachers of the law of love and oneness there must be, for by that way must come the ultimate salvation. But not till the Time-Spirit in man is ready, can the inner and ultimate prevail over the outer and immediate reality. Christ and Buddha have come and gone, but it is Rudra who still holds the world in the hollow of his hand. And meanwhile the fierce forward labour of mankind tormented and oppressed by the powers that are profiteers of egoistic force and their servants cries for the sword of the Hero of the struggle and the word of its prophet."

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व जित्वा शत्रून्भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।
मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ।। 11.33।।

11.33. Therefore, arise thou and gain glory, conquer thy enemies and enjoy an opulent kingdom. By Me already are they slain, do thou become the occasion only, O Savyasachin.

संजय उवाच
एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य कृताञ्जलिर्वेपमानः किरीटी ।
नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य ।। 11.35।।

11.35. Sanjay said: Having heard these words of Keshava, Kiriti (the man of crown), with folded hands and trembling, saluted again bowing down and spoke to Krishna in a faltering voice overwhelmed with fear.

"Even while the effects of the terrible aspect of this vision are still upon him, the first words uttered by Arjuna after the Godhead has spoken are eloquent of a greater uplifting and reassuring reality behind this face of death and this destruction."

11.36 **Arjuna said: Rightly, O Hrishikesha, does the world rejoice and take pleasure in Thy name. The Rakshasas are fleeing in terror to all the quarters and the companies of the Siddhas (the perfected ones) bow down before Thee in adoration.**

"From the first words there comes the suggestion that the hidden truth behind these terrifying forms is a reassuring, a heartening and delightful truth. There is something that makes the heart of the world to rejoice and take pleasure in the name and nearness of the Divine. It is the profound sense of that which makes us see in the dark face of Kali the face of the Mother and to perceive even in the midst of destruction the protecting arms of the Friend of creatures, in the midst of evil the presence of a pure unalterable Benignity and in the midst of death the master of Immortality... Nothing has real need to fear except that which is to be destroyed, the evil, the ignorance, the veilers in Night, the Rakshasa powers. All the movement and action of Rudra the Terrible is towards perfection and divine light and completeness."

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराणस्त्वमस्य विश्वस्यपरं निधानम् ।
वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ।। 11.38 ।।

11.38. Thou art the original Godhead, the ancient Soul and the supreme resting place of this world; Thou art the knower and that which is to be known and the highest status; O infinite in form, by Thee was extended the universe.

वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणः शशाङ्कः प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च ।
नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ।। 11.39 ।।

11.39. Thou art Vayu (the Lord of wind), Yama (the Lord of Death), Agni (the Fire God), Varuna (the Lord of water) and Sasanka (the Moon) and Prajapati (the Lord of creatures), and the great-grandsire; salutation to Thee a thousand times over and again and yet again salutation.

For whatsoever I have spoken to Thee in rash vehemence, thinking of Thee only as my human friend and companion, addressing Thee as 'O Krishna, O Yadava, O Comrade', not knowing this Thy greatness, in negligent error or in love; And for whatsoever disrespect was shown by me to Thee in jest, at play, on the couch and the seat or at meals, alone or in company, O Achyuta (Infallible), I pray forgiveness from Thee, O Thou Immeasurable. I have seen what never was seen before and I rejoice, but my mind is troubled with fear. O Godhead, show me that other form of Thine; turn Thy heart to grace, O Thou Lord of the gods, O Thou abode of this universe. I would see Thee even as before crowned and with Thy mace and discus. Assume Thy four-armed shape, O thousand-armed, O Form universal.

11.41 11.42 11.45 11.46

"The Godhead in answer to Arjuna's prayer reassumes his own normal Narayana image, *svakam rūpam,* the desired form of grace and love and sweetness and beauty. But first he declares the incalculable significance of the other mighty Image which he is about to veil."

11.47 **The Blessed Lord said: This that thou now seest by My favour, O Arjuna, is My supreme shape, My form of luminous energy, the universal, the infinite, the original which none but thou amongest men**
11.48 **has yet seen. I have shown it by My self-yoga. Neither by the study of Vedas and sacrifices, nor by charities or ceremonial rites or severe austerities, this form of Mine can be seen by any other than thyself, O**
11.54 **foremost of the Kurus. By that Bhakti which regards, adores and loves Me alone in all things, can I be thus seen, known, and even entered into, O Parantapa.**

"But what then is the uniqueness of this Form by which it is lifted so far beyond cognizance that all the ordinary endeavour of human knowledge and even the inmost austerity of its spiritual effort are insufficient, unaided, to reach the vision? It is this that man can know by other means this or that exclusive aspect of the one existence, its individual, cosmic or world-excluding figures, but not this greatest reconciling Oneness of all the aspects of the Divinity in which at one and the same time and in one and the same vision all is manifested, all is exceeded and all is consummated. For here transcendent, universal and individual Godhead, Spirit and Nature, Infinite and finite, space and time and timelessness, Being and Becoming, all that we can strive to think

and know of the Godhead, whether of the absolute or the manifested existence, are wonderfully revealed in an ineffable oneness. This vision can be reached only by the absolute adoration, the love, the intimate unity that crowns at their summit the fullness of works and knowledge. To know, to see, to enter into it, to be one with this supreme form of the Supreme becomes then possible, and it is that end which the Gita proposes for its Yoga... This is difficult indeed for limited man imprisoned in his mind and body: but, says the Godhead..."

11.55 **He who does My works and accepts Me as the supreme object, who is devoted to Me and is free from attachment and is without enmity to all existences, he comes to Me, O Pandava.**

21. *The Way and the Bhakta*

"In the eleventh chapter of the Gita the original object of the teaching has been achieved and brought up to a certain completeness. The command to divine action done for the sake of the world and in union with the Spirit who dwells in it and in all its creatures and in whom all its working takes place, has been given and accepted by the Vibhuti. The disciple has been led away from the old poise of the normal man and the standards, motives, outlook, egoistic consciousness of his ignorance, away from all that had finally failed him in the hour of his spiritual crisis. The very action which on that standing he had rejected, the terrible function, the appalling labour, he has now been brought to admit and accept on a new inner basis... But there is something more to be said in order to bring out all the meaning of the great spiritual change. The twelfth chapter leads up to this remaining knowledge and the last six that follow develop it to a grand final conclusion. This thing that remains still to be said turns upon the difference between the current Vedantic view of spiritual liberation and the larger comprehensive freedom which the teaching of the Gita opens to the spirit. There is now a pointed return to that difference."

"The liberation of the Gita is not a self-oblivious abolition of the soul's personal being in the absorption of the One, *sāyujya mukti*; it is all kinds of union at once... The orthodox Yoga of knowledge aims at a fathomless immergence in the one infinite existence, *sāyujya*; it looks upon that alone as the entire liberation. The Yoga of adoration envisages an eternal habitation or nearness as the greater release, *sālokya*, *sāmīpya*. The Yoga of works leads to oneness in power of being and nature, *sādṛśya*: but the Gita envelops them all in its catholic integrality and fuses them all into one greatest and richest divine freedom and perfection....

It must be remembered that the distinction between the impersonal immutable Akshara Purusha and the supreme Soul that is at once impersonality and divine Person and much more than either, – that this capital distinction implied in the later chapters and in the divine "I" of which Krishna has constantly spoken, *aham*, *mām*, has as yet not been quite expressly and definitely drawn... Arjuna is made to raise the question of this difference."

अर्जुन उवाच
एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ।। 12.1 ।।

12.1. Arjuna said: Those devotees who thus by a constant union seek after Thee, and those who seek after the unmanifest Immutable, which of these have the greater knowledge of Yoga?

"Thou, he says in substance, art the supreme Source and Origin of all beings, a Presence immanent in all things, a Power pervading the universe with thy forms, a Person manifest in thy Vibhutis, manifest in creatures, manifest in Nature, seated as the Lord of works in the world and in our hearts by thy mighty world-Yoga. As such I have to know, adore, unite myself with thee in all my being, consciousness, thoughts, feelings and actions, *satata-yukta*. But what then of this Immutable who never manifests, never puts on any form, stands back and apart from all action, enters into no relation with the universe or with anything in it, is eternally silent and one and impersonal and immobile? This eternal Self is the greater Principle according to all current notions and the Godhead in the manifestation is an inferior figure: the unmanifest and not the manifest is the eternal Spirit. How then does the union which admits the manifestation, admits the lesser thing, come yet to be the greater Yoga-knowledge? To this question Krishna replies with an emphatic decisiveness."

श्रीभगवान् उवाच
मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ।। 12.2।।

12.2. The Blessed Lord said: Those who found their mind in Me and by constant union, possessed of a supreme faith, seek after Me, I hold to be the most perfectly in union of Yoga.

12.3-4 12.5 **And those who seek after the Immutable, the Ineffable, the Unmanifest, the Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the High-seated Self, the Immobile, the Permanent, – all their senses under control, equal visioned everywhere, intent on the welfare of all beings, they also attain to Me. Greater is the difficulty (anguish of nature) for those whose consciousness is attached to the unmanifest, for the attainment of the unmanifest by the embodied souls is arduous and painful indeed.**

"And it must not be thought that because it is more arduous, therefore it is a higher and more effective process. The easier way of the Gita leads more rapidly, naturally and normally to the same absolute liberation... The Yogin of exclusive knowledge imposes on himself a painful struggle with the manifold demands of his nature; he denies them even their highest satisfaction and cuts away from him even the upward impulses of his spirit whenever they imply relations or fall short of a negating absolute. The living way of the Gita, on the contrary, finds out the most intense upward trend of all our being and by turning it Godwards uses knowledge, will, feeling and the instinct for perfection as so many puissant wings of a mounting liberation... The indefinable Oneness accepts all that climb to it, but offers no help of relation and gives no foothold to the climber. All has to be done by a severe austerity and a stern and lonely

individual effort. How different is it for those who seek after the Purushottama in the way of the Gita! When they meditate on him with a Yoga which sees none else, because it sees all to be Vasudeva, he meets them at every point, in every moment, at all times, with innumerable forms and faces, holds up the lamp of knowledge within and floods with its divine and happy lustre the whole of existence. Illumined, they discern the supreme Spirit in every form and face, arrive at once through all Nature to the Lord of Nature, arrive through all beings to the Soul of all being, arrive through themselves to the Self of all that they are; incontinently they break through a hundred opening issues at once into that from which everything has its origin. The other method of a difficult relationless stillness tries to get away from all action even though that is impossible to embodied creatures."

22. *The Field and its Knower*

"The Gita in its last six chapters, in order to found on a clear and complete knowledge the way of the soul's rising out of the lower into the divine nature, restates in another form the enlightenment the Teacher has already imparted to Arjuna... in the first six chapters the knowledge necessary for the distinction between the immutable self and the soul veiled in nature was accorded an entire prominence. The references to the supreme Self and Purusha were summary and not at all explicit... But now it is necessary to bring out more definitely the precise relations between the supreme Purusha, the immutable Self, the Jiva and Prakriti in her action and her Gunas. Arjuna is therefore made to put a question which shall evoke a clearer elucidation of these still ill-lighted matters."

अर्जुन उवाच
प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च ।
एतद्वेदितुमिच्छामि ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं च केशव ।। 13.1 ।।

1. Arjuna said: Prakriti and Purusha, the Field and the Knower of the Field, Knowledge and the object of Knowledge, these I would like to learn, O Keshava.

13.2 **The Blessed Lord said: This body, O son of Kunti, is called the Field; and he who knows it is called the Knower of the Field by the men**
13.3 **of knowledge. Know Me as the Knower of the Field in all Fields, O Bharata; it is the knowledge of the Field and its Knower that, in My**
13.4 **view, is knowledge. What that Field is and what its character, source and deformations, and what He (the Knower of the Field) is and what**
13.6 **His powers, hear that now briefly from Me. The unmanifest, the (five)**
-7 **great elements, the ten senses and the one (mind), intelligence and ego, and the five objects of the senses; liking and disliking, pleasure and pain, collocation, consciousness and steadfastness, this in sum is described as the Kshetra (field) with its deformations.**

"All these things taken together constitute the fundamental character of our first transactions with the world of Nature, but it is evidently not the whole description of our being; it is our actuality but not the limit of our possibilities. There is something beyond to be known, *jñeyam*, and it is when the knower of the field turns from the field itself to learn of himself within it and of all that is behind its appearances that real knowledge begins, *jñānam*, – the true knowledge of the field no less than of the knower. That turning inward alone delivers from ignorance. For the farther we go inward, the more we seize on greater and fuller realities of things and grasp the complete truth both of God and the soul and of the world and its movements. Therefore,

says the divine Teacher, it is the knowledge at once of the field and its knower, *kṣetra-kṣetrajñayor jñānam*, a united and even unified self-knowledge and world-knowledge, which is the real illumination and the only wisdom."

Absence of pride and arrogance, non-violence, forgiveness, 13.8
straightforwardness, purity (of mind and body), steadfastness, self-
control and veneration of the Teacher. Detachment from the objects of 13.9
the senses, absence of egoism, the perception of the evil of birth, death, -10
old age, disease and pain; absence of attachment and my-ness for son,

wife, home and the like, and a constant equal-mindedness in the midst
13.11 **of all desirable and undesirable happenings. Unswerving devotion for**
-12 **Me with exclusive union, resort to solitary places, absence of interest for crowds and assemblies of men, constancy in the spiritual knowledge, direct perception of the true sense of the real knowledge, this is declared**
13.13 **to be knowledge, and all that is otherwise, ignorance. I shall now describe that which is to be known, and by knowing which one gets immortality; the beginningless supreme Brahman, called neither Sat (Existence) nor Asat (Non-existence).**

"The consciousness of the transcendent Absolute with its consequence in individual and universal is the last, the eternal knowledge. Our minds may deal with it on various lines, may build upon it conflicting philosophies, may limit, modify, overstress, understress sides of the knowledge, deduce from it truth or error; but our intellectual variations and imperfect statements make no difference to the ultimate fact that if we push thought and experience to their end, this is the knowledge in which they terminate. The object of a Yoga of spiritual knowledge can be nothing else than this eternal Reality, this Self, this Brahman, this Transcendent that dwells over all and in all and is manifest yet concealed in the individual, manifest yet disguised in the universe... by fixity in whom the soul clouded here and swathed in the mists of Nature recovers and enjoys its native and original consciousness of immortality and transcendence.

Sat and Asat[25] are the last antinomy through which we look up to the Unknowable... All antinomies confront each other in order to recognise one Truth in their opposed aspects and embrace by the way of conflict their mutual Unity. Brahman is the Alpha and the Omega. Brahman is the One besides whom there is nothing else existent.

But this unity is in its nature indefinable. When we seek to envisage it by the mind we are compelled to proceed through an infinite series of conceptions and experiences. And yet in the end we are obliged to negate our largest conceptions, our most comprehensive experiences in order to affirm that the Reality exceeds all definitions. We arrive at the formula of the Indian sages, *neti neti*, 'It is not this, It is not that', there is no experience by which we can limit It, there is no conception by which It can be defined."

13.14 **With His hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths on all sides, with ears everywhere, He dwells enveloping all in this world.**
13.15 **Without any senses, but reflected in all the senses and their qualities;**
unattached and yet all-supporting; beyond all gunas (qualities), and yet
13.16 **the enjoyer of the gunas. Inside all beings and outside, the moving and the unmoving[26], the far and the very near, all this He is at once; He is too subtle to be perceptible. He stands undivided in beings and yet as**
13.17 **if divided. He is to be known, the creator, the supporter, and the devourer of beings.**

[25] *Pure Being* (Sat) *is the affirmation by the Unknowable of Itself as the free base of all cosmic existence. We give the name of Non-Being* (Asat) *to a contrary affirmation of Its freedom from all cosmic existence, – freedom, that is to say, from all positive terms of actual existence which consciousness in the universe can formulate to itself, even from the most abstract, even from the most transcendent. It does not deny them as a real expression of Itself, but It denies Its limitation by all expression or any expression whatsoever. The Non-Being permits the Being, even as the Silence permits the Activity. By this simultaneous negation and affirmation, not mutually destructive, but complementary to each other like all contraries, the simultaneous awareness of conscious Self-being as a reality and the Unknowable beyond as the same Reality becomes realisable to the awakened human soul.*

[26] *Stability and movement, we must remember, are only our psychological representations of the Absolute, even as are oneness and multitude. The Absolute is beyond stability and movement as it is beyond unity and multiplicity. But it takes its eternal poise in the one and the stable and whirls round itself infinitely, inconceivably, securely in the moving and multitudinous. World-existence is the ecstatic dance of Shiva which multiplies the body of the God numberlessly to the view: it leaves that white existence precisely where and what it was, ever is and ever will be; its sole absolute object is the joy of the dancing.*

*[The Absolute is] neither Being nor not-being, (*sat, asat*), neither Becoming nor non-Becoming (*sambhūti, asambhūti*), neither Quality nor non-Quality (*saguṇa, nirguṇa*); neither Consciousness nor non-Consciousness (*caitanya, jaḍa*); neither Soul nor Nature (*puruṣa, prakṛti*), neither Bliss nor non-Bliss; neither man, nor god nor animal; He is beyond all these things, He maintains and contains all these things in Himself as world; He is and becomes all these things.*

"The finite is looked upon as a division of the Indivisible, but there is no such thing: for this division is only apparent; there is a demarcation, but no real separation is possible. When we see with the inner vision and sense and not with the physical eye a tree or other object, what we become aware of is an infinite one Reality constituting the tree or object, pervading its every atom and molecule, forming them out of itself, building the whole nature, process of becoming, operation of indwelling energy; all of these are itself, are this infinite, this Reality: we see it extending indivisibly and uniting all objects so that none is really separate from it or quite separate from other objects. 'It stands,' says the Gita, 'undivided in beings and yet as if divided.' Thus each object is that Infinite and one in essential being with all other objects that are also forms and names, – powers, numens, – of the Infinite.

This incoercible unity in all divisions and diversities is the mathematics of the Infinite, indicated in a verse of the Upanishads, – 'This is the complete and That is the complete; subtract the complete from the complete, the complete is the remainder.'

To Brahman there are no whole and parts, but each thing is all itself and benefits by the whole of Brahman... it is indivisible and gives, not an equal part of itself, but its whole self at one and the same time to the solar system and to the ant-hill."

13.18 **That, the Light of all lights, is said to be beyond darkness;**
knowledge, the object of knowledge and attainable by knowledge, seated
13.19 **in the hearts of all. Thus the Field, Knowledge and the Object of**

Knowledge, have been briefly told. My devotee, thus knowing, attains to My *bhāva,* My nature and status of being.

This knowing meant by the Gita, then, is not merely intellectual conception or clear discrimination of the truth, nor is it an enlightened psychological experience of the modes of our being. "It is a 'realisation,' in the full sense of the word; it is the making real to ourselves and in ourselves of the Self, the transcendent and universal Divine, and it is the subsequent impossibility of viewing the modes of being except in the light of that Self and in their true aspect as its flux of becoming under the psychological and physical conditions of our world-existence. This realisation consists of three successive movements, internal vision, complete internal experience and identity.

This internal vision, *dṛṣṭi*, the power so highly valued by the ancient sages, the power which made a man a Rishi or Kavi and no longer a mere thinker, is a sort of light in the soul by which things unseen become as evident and real to it – to the soul and not merely to the intellect – as do things seen to the physical eye. In the physical world there are always two forms of knowledge, the direct and the indirect, *pratyakṣa*, of that which is present to the eyes, and *parokṣa*, of that which is remote from and beyond our vision. When the object is beyond our vision, we are necessarily obliged to arrive at an idea of it by inference, imagination, analogy, by hearing the descriptions of others who have seen it or by studying pictorial or other representations of it if these are available. By putting together all these aids we can indeed arrive at a more or

less adequate idea or suggestive image of the object, but we do not realise the thing itself; it is not yet to us the grasped reality, but only our conceptual representation of a reality. But once we have seen it with the eyes, – for no other sense is adequate, – we possess, we realise; it is there secure in our satisfied being, part of ourselves in knowledge. Precisely the same rule holds good of psychical things and of the Self. We may hear clear and luminous teachings about the Self from philosophers or teachers or from ancient writings; we may by thought, inference, imagination, analogy or by any other available means attempt to form a mental figure or conception of it; we may hold firmly that conception in our mind and fix it by an entire and exclusive concentration; but we have not yet realised it, we have not seen God. It is only when after long

and persistent concentration or by other means the veil of the mind is rent or swept aside, only when a flood of light breaks over the awakened mentality, *jyotirmaya brahman*, and conception gives place to a knowledge-vision in which the Self is as present, real, concrete as a physical object to the physical eye, that we possess in knowledge; for we have seen. After that revelation, whatever fadings of the light, whatever periods of darkness may afflict the soul, it can never irretrievably lose what it has once held. The experience is inevitably renewed and must become more frequent till it is constant; when and how soon depends on the devotion and persistence with which we insist on the path and besiege by our will or our love the hidden Deity.

This inner vision is one form of psychological experience; but the inner experience is not confined to that seeing; vision only opens, it does not embrace. Just as the eye, though it is alone adequate to bring the first sense of realisation, has to call in the aid of experience by the touch and other organs of sense before there is an embracing knowledge, so the vision of the self ought to be completed by an experience of it in all our members. Our whole being ought to demand God and not only our illumined eye of knowledge. For since each principle in us is only a manifestation of the Self, each can get back to its reality and have the experience of it. We can have a mental experience of the Self and seize as concrete realities all those apparently abstract things that to the mind constitute existence – consciousness, force, delight and their manifold

forms and workings: thus the mind is satisfied of God. We can have an emotional experience of the Self through Love and through emotional delight, love and delight of the Self in us, of the Self in the universal and of the Self in all with whom we have relations: thus the heart is satisfied of God. We can have an aesthetic experience of the Self in beauty, a delight-perception and taste of the absolute reality all-beautiful in everything whether created by ourselves or Nature in its appeal to the aesthetic mind and the senses; thus the sense is satisfied of God. We can have even the vital, nervous experience and practically the physical sense of the Self in all life and formation and in all workings of powers, forces, energies that operate through us or others or in the world: thus the life and the body are satisfied of God.

All this knowledge and experience are primary means of arriving at and of possessing identity. It is our self that we see and experience and therefore vision and experience are incomplete unless they culminate in identity, unless we are able to live in all our being the supreme Vedantic knowledge, He am I. We must not only see God and embrace Him, but become that Reality."

Know that both Prakriti (Nature) and Purusha (Soul) are beginningless; and know thou also that the deformations and the gunas are born of Prakriti. Prakriti is said to be the origin of cause and effect and the sense of doership; Purusha is said to be the cause of the enjoyment of pleasure and pain. The soul in Nature enjoys the gunas born of Nature; attachment to the gunas is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs. 13.20 13.21 13.22

उपद्रष्टानुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः ।
परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन्पुरुषः परः ।। 13.23।।

13.23. The Witness, the Sanctioner, the Sustainer and Enjoyer, the almighty Lord and supreme Self, thus is called the supreme Soul seated in this body.

"The distinction made in the Gita between the Purusha and the Prakriti gives us the clue to the various attitudes which the soul can adopt towards Nature in its movement towards perfect freedom and rule. The Purusha is, says the Gita, witness, upholder, source of the sanction, knower, lord, enjoyer; Prakriti executes, it is the active principle and must have an operation

corresponding to the attitude of the Purusha. The soul may assume, if it wishes, the poise of the pure witness, *sākṣī*; it may look on at the action of Nature as a thing from which it stands apart; it watches, but does not itself participate. We have seen the importance of this quietistic capacity; it is the basis of the movement of withdrawal by which we can say of everything, – body, life, mental action, thought, sensation, emotion, – 'This is Prakriti working in the life, mind and body, it is not myself, it is not even mine,' and thus come to the soul's separation from these things and to their quiescence... The attitude of the Witness at its highest is the absolute of unattachment and freedom from affection by the phenomena of the cosmic existence.

As the pure Witness, the soul refuses the function of upholder or sustainer of Nature. The upholder, *bhartā,* is another, God or Force or Maya, but not the soul... Unless there is a clear and real duality in existence, this cannot be the whole truth of the matter; the soul is the upholder also, it supports in its being the energy which unrolls the spectacle of the cosmos and which conducts its energies. When the Purusha accepts this upholding, it may do it still passively and without attachment, feeling that it contributes the energy but not that it controls and determines it. The control is another, God or Force or the very nature of Maya... But if the attitude of the upholder is fully accepted, an important step forward has been taken towards identification with the active

Brahman and his joy of cosmic being... For when the Purusha consents entirely to uphold, the sanction has become active, even though the soul may do no more than consent to reflect, uphold and thereby maintain in action all the energies of Prakriti, not determining, not selecting, believing that it is God or Force itself or some Knowledge-Will that selects and determines... But if it habitually selects and rejects in what is offered to it, it determines; the relatively passive has become an entirely active sanction and is on the way to be an active control.

This it becomes when the soul accepts its complete function as the knower, lord and enjoyer of Nature. As the knower the soul possesses the knowledge of the force that acts and determines, it sees the values of being

which are realising themselves in cosmos, it is in the secret of Fate. But the force is itself determined by the knowledge which is its origin and the source and standardiser of its valuations and effectuations of values. Therefore in proportion as the soul becomes again the knower, it becomes also the controller of the action. Nor can it do this without becoming the active enjoyer, *bhoktā*. In the lower being the enjoyment is of a twofold kind, positive and negative, which in the electricity of sensation translates itself into joy and suffering; but in the higher it is an actively equal enjoyment of the divine delight in self-manifestation. There is no loss of freedom, no descent into an ignorant attachment... The absolute joy of the soul in itself and, based upon that, the absolute joy of the soul in Nature are the divine fulfilment of the relation."

23. *The Yoga of the Division of the Three Gunas*

श्रीभगवान् उवाच
परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।
यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ।। 14.1 ।।

14.1. The Blessed Lord said: I shall again declare unto thee the supreme knowledge, the highest of all knowledges, which having known, all the sages have gone hence to the highest perfection.

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।
सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ।। 14.2 ।।

14.2. Having taken refuge in this knowledge and become of like nature with Me, they are not born again in the creation, nor troubled by the universal dissolution (Pralaya).

"And this great thing, to rise from the human into the divine nature, we can only do by an effort of Godward knowledge, will and adoration. For the soul sent forth by the Supreme as his eternal portion, his immortal representative into the workings of universal Nature is yet obliged by the character of those workings, *avaśaṁ prakṛter vaśāt*, to identify itself in its external 9.8
consciousness with her limiting conditions, to identify itself with a life, mind and body that are oblivious of their inner spiritual reality and of the innate Godhead. To get back to self-knowledge... is an indispensable means of this perfection. Perfection cannot come without self-knowledge and God-knowledge and a spiritual attitude towards our natural existence, and that is why the ancient wisdom laid so much stress on salvation by knowledge, – not an intellectual cognizance of things, but a growing of man the mental being into a greater spiritual consciousness. The soul's salvation cannot come without the soul's perfection, without its growing into the divine nature...."

"Mark that nowhere in the Gita is there any indication that dissolution of the individual spiritual being into the unmanifest, idefinable or absolute Brahman, *avyaktam anirdeśyam*, is the true meaning or condition of immortality 12.3
or the true aim of Yoga. On the contrary, it describes immortality later on as an indwelling in the Ishwara in his supreme status, *mayi nivasiṣyasi, param dhāma*, 15.6
and here as *sādharmya*, *parām siddhim*, a supreme perfection, a becoming of one law of being and nature with the Supreme, persistent still in existence and conscious of the universal movement but above it, as all the sages still exist, *munayaḥ sarve*, not bound to birth in the creation, not troubled by the dissolution of the cycles."

"To be immortal was never held in the ancient spiritual teaching to consist merely in a personal survival of the death of the body: all beings are immortal

in that sense and it is only the forms that perish. The souls that do not arrive at liberation, live through the returning aeons; all exist involved or secret in the Brahman during the dissolution of the manifest worlds and are born again in the appearance of a new cycle... To be immortal in the deeper sense is something different from this survival of death and this constant recurrence. Immortality is that supreme status in which the Spirit knows itself to be superior to death and birth, not conditioned by the nature of its manifestation, infinite, imperishable, immutably eternal, – immortal, because never being born it never dies."

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ।। 14.5।।

14.5. Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, these Gunas born of Prakriti, bind down in the body, O mighty-armed, the imperishable dweller in the body.

"The modes of Nature are all qualitative in their essence and are called for that reason its Gunas or qualities. In any spiritual conception of the universe this must be so, because the connecting medium between spirit and matter must be psyche or soul-power and the primary action psychological and qualitative, not physical and quantitative; for quality is the immaterial, the more spiritual element in all the action of the universal Energy, her prior dynamics. The predominance of physical Science has accustomed us to a different view of Nature, because there the first thing that strikes us is the importance of the quantitative aspect of her workings and her dependence for the creation of forms on quantitative combinations and dispositions... The analysis of the ancient Indian thinkers allowed for the quantitative action of Nature, *mātrā*; but that it regarded as proper to its more objective and formally executive working, while the innately ideative executive power which disposes things according to the quality of their being and energy, *guṇa*, *svabhāva*, is the primary determinant and underlies all the outer quantitative dispositions. In the basis of the physical world this is not apparent only because there the underlying ideative spirit, the Mahat Brahman, is overlaid and hidden up by the movement of matter and material energy. But even in the physical world the miraculous varying results of different combinations and quantities of elements otherwise identical with each other admits of no conceivable explanation if there is not a superior power of variative quality of which these material dispositions are only the convenient mechanical devices. Or, let us say at once, there must be a secret ideative capacity of the universal energy, *vijñāna*, – even if we suppose that energy and its instrumental idea, *buddhi*, to be themselves mechanical in their nature, – which fixes the mathematics and decides the resultants of these

outer dispositions: it is the omnipotent Idea in the spirit which invents and makes use of these devices. And in the vital and mental existence quality at once openly appears as the primary power and amount of energy is only a secondary factor. But in fact the mental, the vital, the physical existence are all subject to the limitations of quality, all are governed by its determinations, even though that truth seems more and more obscured as we descend the scale of existence. Only the Spirit, which by the power of its idea-being and its idea-force called *mahat* and *vijñāna* fixes these conditions, is not so determined, not subject to any limitations either of quality or quantity because its immeasurable and indeterminable infinity is superior to the modes which it develops and uses for its creation."

"But, again, the whole qualitative action of Nature, so infinitely intricate in its detail and variety, is figured as cast into the mould of three general modes of quality[27] everywhere present, intertwined, almost inextricable, *sattva, rajas, tamas*. These modes are described in the Gita only by their psychological action in man, or incidentally in things such as food according as they produce a psychological or vital effect on human beings. If we look for a more general definition... we might define the three modes or qualities in terms of the motion of the universal Energy as Nature's three concomitant and inseparable powers of equilibrium, kinesis and inertia. But that is only their appearance in terms of the external action of Force... since consciousness is always there even in an apparently inconscient Force, we must find a corresponding psychological power of these three modes which informs their more outward executive action. On their psychological side the three qualities may be defined, Tamas as Nature's power of nescience, Rajas as her power of active seeking ignorance enlightened by desire and impulsion, Sattwa as her power of possessing and harmonising knowledge. The three qualitative modes of Nature are inextricably intertwined in all cosmic existence."

These modes affect every part of our natural being. "They have indeed their strongest relative hold in the three different members of it, mind, life and body. Tamas, the principle of inertia, is strongest in material nature and in our physical being. The action of this principle is of two kinds, inertia of force and inertia of knowledge. Whatever is predominantly governed by Tamas, tends in its force to a sluggish inaction and immobility or else to a mechanical action which it does not possess, but is possessed by obscure forces which

[27] *The idea of the three essential modes of Nature is a creation of the ancient Indian thinkers and its truth is not at once obvious because it was the result of long psychological experiment and profound internal experience. Therefore without a long inner experience, without intimate self-observation and intuitive perception of the Nature-forces it is difficult to grasp accurately or firmly utilise.*

drive it in a mechanical round of energy... The principle of Rajas has its strongest hold on the vital nature. It is the Life within us that is the strongest kinetic motor power, but the life-power in earthly beings is possessed by the force of desire, therefore Rajas turns always to action and desire; desire is the strongest human and animal initiator of most kinesis and action... Moreover, Rajas finding itself in a world of matter which starts from the principle of inconscience and a mechanically driven inertia, has to work against an immense contrary force; therefore its whole action takes on the nature of an effort, a struggle, a besieged and an impeded conflict for possession which is distressed in its every step by a limiting incapacity, disappointment and suffering: even its gains are precarious and limited and marred by the reaction of the effort and an after-taste of insufficiency and transience. The principle of Sattwa has its strongest hold in the mind; not so much in the lower parts of the mind which are dominated by the rajasic life-power, but mostly in the intelligence and the will of the reason. Intelligence, reason, rational will are moved by the nature of their predominant principle towards a constant effort of assimilation, assimilation by knowledge, assimilation by a power of understanding will, a constant effort towards equilibrium, some stability, rule, harmony of the conflicting elements of natural happening and experience. This satisfaction it gets in various ways and in various degrees of acquisition. The attainment of assimilation, equilibrium and harmony brings with it always a relative but more or less intense and satisfying sense of ease, happiness, mastery, security, which is other than the troubled and vehement pleasures insecurely bestowed by the satisfaction of rajasic desire and passion. Light and happiness are the characteristics of the sattwic Guna. The whole nature of the embodied living mental being is determined by these three gunas."

14.6 **Of these Sattwa, by virtue of its stainless purity, O sinless one, is**
the giver of illumination and well-being; it binds by attachment to
14.7 **happiness and by attachment to knowledge. Rajas, know thou, is of the**
nature of attraction; springing from craving and attachment, it binds
14.8 **the embodied soul by attachment to action, O Kaunteya. And Tamas,**
born of ignorance, know thou, is the deluder of all embodied beings; it
14.9 **binds, O Bharata, by negligence, indolence and sleep. Sattwa attaches**
one to happiness, Rajas to action and Tamas, covering up knowledge,
attaches one to negligence, O Bharata.

14.10 **Sattwa leads having overpowered Rajas and Tamas, O Bharata;**
Rajas leads having overpowered Sattwa and Tamas; and Tamas leads
14.11 **having overpowered Sattwa and Rajas.[28] When through all the doors of**

[28] *The dominant gunas are not the essential soul-type of the embodied being but only the*

the body the light of knowledge shines forth, it should be understood that there is an increase of Sattwa. Greed, kinesis, initiative of action, unrest and craving of desire, these come forth, O Best of the Bharatas, when there is an increase of Rajas. Obscurity, inertia, negligence and delusion, these come forth, O Joy of the Kurus, when there is an increase of Tamas. 14.12 14.13

index of the formation he has made for this life or during his present existence and at a given moment of his evolution in Time.

14.14 **If Sattwa prevails when the embodied soul meets with dissolution,**
then he attains to the spotless worlds of the knowers of the Highest.
14.15 **Meeting with dissolution when Rajas prevails, he is born among those**
attached to action; and if dissolved when Tamas prevails, he is born in
14.16 **the wombs of beings involved in nescience. It is said that the fruit of**
works rightly done is pure and sattwic; grief is the fruit of rajasic and
14.17 **ignorance the fruit of tamasic works. From Sattwa arises knowledge**
and from Rajas greed; from Tamas proceed negligence, delusion and
14.18 **also ignorance. Those who dwell in Sattwa rise upwards; those in Rajas**
remain in the middle; and those who are in Tamas, they, dwelling in the
tendencies of the lowest Guna, go downwards.

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ।। 14.19।।

14.19. When the seer perceives that the Gunas are the doer and none else, and knows That which is beyond the Gunas, he attains to My status of being.

"The error that accepts the action of the modes of Nature must cease; for as long as it is accepted, the soul is involved in their operations and subjected to their law... The Gita prescribes to this end a new method of self-discipline. It is to stand back in oneself from the action of the modes and observe this unsteady flux as the Witness seated above the surge of the forces of Nature. He is one who watches but is impartial and indifferent, aloof from them on their own level and in his native posture high above them. As they rise and fall

in their waves, the Witness looks, observes, but neither accepts nor for the moment interferes with their course. First there must be the freedom of the impersonal Witness; afterwards there can be the control of the Master, the Ishwara.

The initial advantage of this process of detachment is that one begins to understand one's own nature and all Nature. The detached Witness is able to see entirely without the least blinding by egoism the play of her modes of the Ignorance and to pursue it into all its ramifications, coverings and subtleties – for it is full of camouflage and disguise and snare and treachery and ruse. Instructed by long experience, conscious of all act and condition as their interaction, made wise of their processes, he cannot any longer be overcome by their assaults, surprised in their nets or deceived by disguises. At the same time he perceives the ego to be nothing better than a device and the sustaining

knot of their interaction and, perceiving it, he is delivered from the illusion of the lower egoistic Nature. He escapes from the sattwic egoism of the altruist and the saint and the thinker; he shakes off from its control on his life-impulses the rajasic egoism of the self-seeker and ceases to be the laborious caterer of self-interest and the pampered prisoner or toiling galley-slave of passion and desire; he slays with the light of knowledge the tamasic egoism of the ignorant or passive being dull, unintelligent, attached to the common round of human life. Thus convinced and conscious of the essential vice of the ego-sense in all our personal action, he seeks no longer to find a means of self-correction and self-liberation in the rajasic or sattwic ego but looks above, beyond the instruments and the working of Nature, to the Master of works alone and his supreme Shakti, the supreme Prakriti. There alone all the being is pure and free and the rule of a divine Truth possible."

14.21 **Arjuna said: By what signs is he marked, O Lord, who has risen above the three Guna? How he acts and behaves and how does he go beyond the three Gunas?**

14.22 **The Blessed Lord said: O Pandava, he who does not abhor illumination nor impulsion to action, nor delusion when they occur,**
14.23 **nor longs for them when they cease; He who is seated as one unconcerned, unperturbed by the Gunas, who stands apart, unwavering, knowing that it is only the Gunas that act.**

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिंदात्मसंस्तुतिः ।। 14.24 ।।
मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ।। 14.25 ।।

14.24-25. He who, established in the self, imperturbable, equal in happiness and suffering, regards gold and mud and stone alike, is equal before the pleasant and the unpleasant, equal before praise and blame, equal before honour and dishonour, and to whom the faction of friends and the faction of enemies are alike, and who has abandoned all initiative, he is said to be above the Gunas.

"This is the impersonality of the Brahmic status... But still there is evidently here a double status, there is a scission of the being between two opposites; a liberated spirit in the immutable Self or Brahman watches the action of an unliberated mutable Nature, – Akshara and Kshara. Is there no greater status, no principle of more absolute perfection, or is this division the highest consciousness possible in the body, and is the end of Yoga to drop the

mutable nature and the Gunas born of the embodiment in Nature and disappear into the impersonality and everlasting peace of the Brahman? Is that *laya* or dissolution of the individual Purusha the greatest liberation? There is, it would seem, something else; for the Gita says at the close, always returning to this one final note..."

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।
स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ।। 14.26।।

14.26. He who loves and strives after Me with an undeviating Yoga of devotion, he passes beyond the three Gunas and is prepared for becoming the Brahman.

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ।। 14.27।।

14.27. I am the foundation of the Brahman and of immortality and imperishable existence and of the eternal Dharma and of an utter bliss of happiness.

There is then according to the Gita, a status which is greater than the indifference and the peace of the Akshara (as it watches unmoved the strife of the triple Gunas) and is found and possessed by dwelling in the being and power of the Purushottama. In that Divine status the "..three Gunas become purified and refined and changed into their divine equivalents: *sattva* becomes *jyoti*, the authentic spiritual light; *rajas* becomes *tapas*, the tranquilly intense divine force; *tamas* becomes *śama*, the divine quiet, rest, peace.

...the disharmonies of the triple mode of our inferior existence are overpassed and there begins a greater triple mode of a divine Nature. There is no obscurity of Tamas or inertia. Tamas is replaced by a divine peace and tranquil eternal repose out of which is released as from a supreme matrix of

calm concentration the play of action and knowledge. There is no rajasic kinesis, no desire, no joyful and sorrowful striving of action, creation and possession, no fruitful chaos of troubled impulse. Rajas is replaced by a self-possessed power and illimitable act of force, that even in its most violent intensities does not shake the immovable poise of the soul or stain the vast and profound heavens and luminous abysses of its peace. There is no constructing light of mind casting about to seize and imprison the Truth, no insecure or inactive ease. Sattwa is replaced by an illumination and a spiritual bliss identical with the depth and infinite existence of the soul and instinct with a direct and authentic knowledge that springs straight from the veiled glories of the secret Omniscience. This is the greater consciousness into which our inferior consciousness has to be transformed, this nature of the Ignorance with its unquiet unbalanced activity of the three modes changed into this greater luminous supernature."

श्रीभगवान् उवाच
ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।
छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ।। 15.1।।

15.1. The Blessed Lord said: With its roots above, its branches below, the Aswattha (Peepal tree) is said to be imperishable, the leaves of it are the hymns (of the Vedas), and he who knows it is the Veda-knower.

The branches of this tree, nourished by the Gunas, extend both 15.2
below and above; the sense objects are its foliage; below into the world
of men stretch its roots which bind men with karma. Its form is not so 15.3
perceived here, nor its beginning, nor end, nor its foundation. Having -4
cut down this firm-rooted Aswattha by the strong sword of detachment, one should seek for that status (supreme goal) from which there is no return, saying: "I take refuge only in that Original Purusha from whom proceeds the sempiternal urge to action."

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ।। 15.6।।

15.6. The sun does not illumine that, nor the moon, nor fire; that is My supreme abode, from which those who reach it return not.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।
मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ।। 15.7।।

15.7. It is an eternal portion of Me that becomes the Jiva in a world of Jivas and draws to itself the six senses, including the mind, that abide in Prakriti.

"This is an epithet, a statement of immense bearing and consequence. For it means that each soul, each being in its spiritual reality is the very Divine, however partial its actual manifestation of him in Nature. And it means too, if words have any sense, that each manifesting spirit, each of the many, is an eternal individual, an eternal unborn undying power of the one Existence. We call this manifesting spirit the Jiva, because it appears here as if a living creature in a world of living creatures, and we speak of this spirit in man as the human soul and think of it in the terms of humanity only. But in truth it is something greater than its present appearance and not bound to its humanity: it was a lesser manifestation than the human in its past, it can become something much greater than mental man in its future. And when this soul rises above all ignorant limitation, then it puts on its divine nature of which its humanity is only a

temporary veil, a thing of partial and incomplete significance. The individual spirit exists and ever existed beyond in the Eternal, for it is itself everlasting, *sanātana*. It is evidently this idea of the eternal individual which leads the Gita to avoid any expression at all suggestive of a complete dissolution, *laya*, and to speak rather of the highest state of the soul as a dwelling in the Purushottama, *nivasiṣyasi mayyeva*. If, when speaking of the one Self of all, it seems to use the language of Adwaita, yet this enduring truth of the eternal individual, *mamāṁśaḥ sanātanaḥ*, adds something which brings in a qualification and appears almost to accept the seeing of the Visishtadwaita, – though we must not therefore leap at once to the conclusion that that alone is the Gita's philosophy or that its doctrine is identical with the later doctrine of Ramanuja. Still this much is clear that there is an eternal, a real and not only an illusive principle of multiplicity in the spiritual being of the one divine Existence."

15.8 **When the Lord takes up a body and when he abandons it, he goes forth taking these (the senses and the mind) with him, as the wind carries**
15.9 **with it the perfumes from their retreats. Presiding over the ear, the eye, and the senses of touch, taste, and smell, and also the mind, he enjoys**
15.10 **the objects of the senses. Whether passing beyond the body or abiding in it, whether enjoying the Gunas or assuming them, the deluded ones do not perceive (the indwelling Lord); they who have the eye of**
15.11 **knowledge, perceive. The Yogins who strive, see Him abiding in their self; but those not yet conscious, not formed in the spiritual mould, even though striving, see Him not.**

"Man, to know himself, must be *kṛtātmā*, formed and complete in the spiritual mould, enlightened in the spiritual vision. The Yogins who have this eye of knowledge, see the Divine Being we are in their own endless reality, their own eternity of spirit. Illumined, they see the Lord in themselves and are delivered from the crude material limitation, from the form of mental personality, from the transient life formulation: they dwell immortal in the truth of the self and spirit. But they see him too not only in themselves, but in all the cosmos."

15.12 **The light in the sun that illumines the whole world, and that which**
15.13 **is in the moon and in the fire, know that light to be Mine. I enter into the earth and sustain all beings by My might, and becoming the godhead of Soma full of *rasa* (the sap in the earth-mother), I nourish all the**
15.14 **plants and herbs. I, having become the flame of life (*Vaisvānara*), established into the body of living creatures and united with Prana and Apana (the incoming and outgoing breath), digest the four kinds of**
15.15 **food. I am lodged in the hearts of all, from Me are memory and knowledge and their absence. I am verily the One to be known by all the Vedas; the author of Vedanta and the knower of Vedas also am I.**

"In other words, the Divine is at once the Soul of matter and the Soul of life and the Soul of mind as well as the Soul of the supramental light that is beyond mind and its limited reasoning intelligence."

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ।। 15.16।।

15.16. There are the two Purushas in this world, Kshara and Akshara (mutable and immutable); the Kshara is all these existences, and the Kutastha (the stable and high-seated) is called Akshara.

"The difficulty which baffles our intelligence is that these two seem to be irreconcilable opposites with no real nexus between them or any transition

from the one to the other except by an intolerant movement of separation. The Kshara acts, or at least motives action, separately in the Akshara; the Akshara stands apart, self-centred, separate in its inactivity from the Kshara. ...when we live in the mobility of the becoming, we may be aware of but hardly live in the immortality of timeless self-existence. And when we fix ourselves in timeless being, Time and Space and circumstance fall away from us and begin to appear as a troubled dream in the Infinite. The most persuasive conclusion would be, at first sight, that the mobility of the spirit in Nature is an illusion, a thing real only when we live in it, but not real in essence, and that is why, when we go back into self, it falls away from our incorruptible essence. That is the familiar cutting of the knot of the riddle, *brahma satyaṁ jagan mithyā*.

The Gita does not take refuge in this explanation which has enormous difficulties of its own, besides its failure to account for the illusion, – for it only says that it is all a mysterious and incomprehensible Maya, and then we might just as well say that it is all a mysterious and incomprehensible double reality, spirit concealing itself from spirit. The Gita speaks of Maya, but only as a bewildering partial consciousness which loses hold of the complete reality, lives in the phenomenon of mobile Nature and has no sight of the Spirit of which she is the active Power, *me prakṛtiḥ*. When we transcend this Maya, the 7.5
world does not disappear, it only changes its whole heart of meaning. In the spiritual vision we find not that all this does not really exist, but rather that all is, but with a sense quite other than its present mistaken significance: all is self

and soul and nature of the Godhead, all is Vasudeva. The world for the Gita is real, a creation of the Lord, a power of the Eternal, a manifestation from the Parabrahman, and even this lower nature of the triple Maya is a derivation from the supreme divine Nature. ...the Gita insists that we can and should, while we live, be conscious in the self and its silence and yet act with power in the world of Nature. And it gives the example of the Divine himself who is not bound by necessity of birth, but free, superior to the cosmos, and yet
3.22 abides eternally in action, *varta eva ca karmaṇi*. Therefore it is by putting on a likeness of the divine nature in its completeness that the unity of this double experience becomes entirely possible. But what is the principle of that oneness?"

There is another, the Uttama Purusha (the highest Being), called the Supreme Self, who enters the three worlds and upbears them, the imperishable Lord. Since I am beyond the Kshara (mutable), and greater and higher even than the Akshara (immutable), I am proclaimed as the Purushottama (the supreme Purusha) in the Veda and in the world. 15.17 15.18

"The Gita finds it in its supreme vision of the Purushottama, for that is the type, according to its doctrine, of the complete and the highest experience, it is the knowledge of the whole-knowers, *kṛtsnavidaḥ*. The Akshara is *para*, supreme, in relation to the elements and action of cosmic Nature. It is the immutable Self of all, and the immutable Self of all is the Purushottama. The Akshara is he in the freedom of his self-existence unaffected by the action of his own power in Nature, not impinged on by the urge of his own becoming, 3.29

undisturbed by the play of his own qualities. But this is only one aspect, though a great aspect of the integral knowledge. The Purushottama is at the same time greater than the Akshara, because he is more than this immutability and
15.6 he is not limited even by the highest eternal status of his being, *paraṁ dhāma*. Still, it is through whatever is immutable and eternal in us that we arrive at that highest status from which there is no returning to birth, and that was the liberation which was sought by the wise of old, the ancient sages. But when pursued through the Akshara alone, this attempt at liberation becomes the seeking of the Indefinable, a thing hard for our nature embodied as we are here in Matter. The Indefinable, to which the Akshara, the pure intangible self
8.20 here in us rises in its separative urge, is some supreme Unmanifest, *paraḥ avyaktaḥ*, and that highest unmanifest Akshara is still the Purushottama.

Therefore, the Gita has said, those also who follow after the Indefinable, come to Me, the eternal Godhead. But yet is he more even than a highest unmanifest Akshara, more than any negative Absolute, *neti neti*, because he is to be known also as the supreme Purusha who extends this whole universe in his own existence. He is a supreme mysterious All, an ineffable positive Absolute of all things here. He is the Lord in the Kshara, Purushottama not only there, but here in the heart of every creature, Ishwara. And there too even in his highest eternal status, *paraḥ avyaktaḥ*, he is the supreme Lord, Parameshwara, no aloof 8.20
and unrelated Indefinable, but the origin and father and mother and first foundation and eternal abode of self and cosmos and Master of all existences and enjoyer of askesis and sacrifice. It is by knowing him at once in the Akshara 5.29
and the Kshara, it is by knowing him as the Unborn who partially manifests

himself in all birth and even himself descends as the constant Avatar, it is by
7.1 knowing him in his entirety, *samagraṁ mām*, that the soul is easily released from the appearances of the lower Nature and returns by a vast sudden growth and broad immeasurable ascension into the divine being and supreme Nature. For the truth of the Kshara too is a truth of the Purushottama.

Thus the Divine is manifest in a double soul of his mystery, a twofold
15.16 power, *dvāvimau puruṣau*; he supports at once the spirit of mutable things that
15.16 is all these existences, *kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni*, and the immutable spirit that stands above them in his imperturbable immobility of eternal silence and calm. And it is by the force of the Divine in them that the mind and heart and will of man are so powerfully drawn in different directions by these two spirits as

if by opposing and incompatible attractions one insistent to annul the other. But the Divine is neither wholly the Kshara, nor wholly the Akshara. He is greater than the immutable Self and he is much greater than the Soul of mutable things. If he is capable of being both at once, it is because he is other than they, *anyaḥ*, the Purushottama above all cosmos and yet extended in the world and extended in the Veda, in self-knowledge and in cosmic experience." 15.17

यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।
स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ।। 15.19।।

15.19. He who, undeluded, thus knows Me as the Purushottama, he, the all-knowing, adores Me in every way of his natural being, O Bharata.

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानघ ।
एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ।। 15.20।।

15.20. Thus by Me the most secret Shastra has been told, O sinless one. Absolutely to know it is to be perfected in understanding and successful in the supreme sense, O Bharata.

"And whoever thus knows and sees him as the Purushottama, is no longer bewildered whether by the world-appearance or by the separate attraction of these two apparent contraries... He embraces and escapes them, overcomes
15.19 their opposition and becomes all-knowing, *sarvavid*, a whole-knower. He sees the entire sense both of the self and of things; he restores the integral reality of the Divine; he unites the Kshara and the Akshara in the Purushottama. He loves, worships, cleaves to and adores the supreme Self of his and all existence,

the one Lord of his and all energies, the close and far-off Eternal in and beyond the world. And he does this too with no single side or portion of himself, exclusive spiritualised mind, blinding light of the heart intense but divorced from largeness, or sole aspiration of the will in works, but in all the perfectly illumined ways of his being and his becoming, his soul and his nature. Divine in the equality of his imperturbable self-existence, one in it with all objects and creatures, he brings that boundless equality, that deep oneness down into his mind and heart and life and body and founds on it in an indivisible integrality the trinity of divine love, divine works and divine knowledge. This is the Gita's way of salvation.

And is that not too after all the real Adwaita which makes no least scission in the one eternal Existence? This utmost undividing Monism sees the one as the one even in the multiplicities of Nature, in all aspects, as much in the reality of self and of cosmos as in that greatest reality of the supracosmic which is the source of self and the truth of the cosmos and is not bound either by any affirmation of universal becoming or by any universal or absolute negation. That at least is the Adwaita of the Gita. This is the most secret Shastra, says the Teacher to Arjuna; this is the supreme teaching and science which leads us into the heart of the highest mystery of existence. Absolutely to know it, to seize it in knowledge and feeling and force and experience is to be perfected in the transformed understanding, divinely satisfied in heart and successful in the supreme sense and objective of all will and action and works. It is the way to be immortal,[29] to rise towards the highest divine nature and to assume the eternal Dharma."

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[29] *The truest reason why we must seek liberation is not to be delivered, individually, from the sorrow of the world, though that deliverance too will be given to us, but that we may be one with the Divine, the Supreme, the Eternal. The truest reason why we must seek perfection, a supreme status, purity, knowledge, strength, love, capacity, is not that personally we may enjoy the divine Nature or be even as the gods, though that enjoyment too will be ours, but because this liberation and perfection are the divine Will in us, the highest truth of our self in Nature, the always intended goal of a progressive manifestation in the universe. The divine Nature, free and perfect and blissful, must be manifested in the individual in order that it may manifest in the world. Even in the Ignorance the individual lives really in the universal and for the universal Purpose, for in the very act of pursuing the purposes and desires of his ego, he is forced by Nature to contribute by his egoistic action to her work and purpose in the worlds; but it is without conscious intention, imperfectly done, and his contribution is to her half-evolved and half-conscient, her imperfect and crude movement. To escape from ego and be united with the Divine is at once the liberation and the consummation of his individuality; so liberated, purified, perfected, the individual – the divine soul – lives consciously and entirely, as was from the first intended, in and for the cosmic and transcendent Divine and for his Will in the universe.*

25. *Deva and Asura*

"The development of the idea of the Gita has reached a point at which one question alone remains for solution, – the question of our nature bound and defective and how it is to effect, not only in principle but in all its movements, its evolution from the lower to the higher being and from the law of its present action to the immortal Dharma. The difficulty is one which is implied in certain of the positions laid down in the Gita, but has to be brought out into greater prominence than it gets there and to be put into a clearer shape before our intelligence.

...For at present all our activities are determined in their trend and shape by the nature, and this Nature here is the nature of the three Gunas, and in all natural being and in all natural activities there is the triple Guna, Tamas with its ignorance and inertia, Rajas with its kinesis and action, its passion and grief and perversion, Sattwa with its light and happiness, and the bondage of these things. And granted that the soul becomes superior in the self to the three Gunas, how does it escape in its instrumental nature from their working and result and bondage? For even the man of knowledge, says the Gita, must act according to his nature. To feel and bear the reactions of the Gunas in the outer manifestation, but to be free from them and superior in the observing conscious self behind is not sufficient; for it leaves still a dualism of freedom and subjection, a contradiction between what we are within and what we are without, between our self and our power, what we know ourselves to be and what we will and do. Where is the release here, where the full elevation and transformation to the higher spiritual nature, the immortal Dharma, the law proper to the infinite purity and power of a divine being? If this change cannot be effected while in the body, then so it must be said, that the whole nature cannot be transformed and there must remain an unreconciled duality until the mortal type of existence drops off like a discarded shell from the spirit. But in that case the gospel of works cannot well be the right or at least cannot be the ultimate gospel: a perfect quiescence or at least as perfect a quiescence as possible, a progressive Sannyasa and renunciation of works would seem still to be the true counsel of perfection, – as indeed the Mayavadin contends, who says that the Gita's way is no doubt the right way so long as we remain in action, but still all works are an illusion and quiescence the highest path. To act in this spirit is well, but only as a transition to a renunciation of all works, to cessation, to an absolute quiescence.

This is the difficulty which the Gita has still to meet in order to justify works to the seeker after the Spirit....

To act is to be subject to the three qualities of Nature; to be beyond these conditions of her working is to be silent in the spirit. The Ishwara, the

Supreme who is master of all her works and functions and guides and determines them by his divine will, is indeed above this mechanism of quality, not touched or limited by her modes; but still it would seem that he acts always through them, always shapes by the power of the Swabhava and through the psychological machinery of the Gunas. These three are fundamental properties of Prakriti, necessary operations of the executive Nature-force which takes shape here in us and the Jiva himself is only a portion of the Divine in this Prakriti. If then the liberated man still does works, still moves in the kinetic movement, it must be so that he moves and acts, in Nature and by the limitation of her qualities, subject to their reactions, not, in so far as the natural part of him persists, in the freedom of the Divine. But the Gita has said exactly the opposite, that the liberated Yogin is delivered from the Guna reactions and whatever he does, however he lives, moves and acts in God, in the power of his freedom and immortality, in the law of the supreme eternal Infinite, *sarvathā vartamāno'pi sa yogī mayi vartate*. There seems here to be a contradiction, an impasse. 6.31

But this is only when we knot ourselves up in the rigid logical oppositions of the analytic mind, not when we look freely and subtly at the nature of spirit and at the spirit in Nature. What moves the world is not really the modes of Prakriti, – these are only the lower aspect, the mechanism of our normal nature. The real motive power is a divine spiritual Will which uses at present these inferior conditions, but is itself not limited, not dominated, not mechanised, as is the human will, by the Gunas. No doubt, since these modes are so universal in their action, they must proceed from something inherent in the power of the Spirit; there must be powers in the divine Will-force from which these aspects of Prakriti have their origin. For everything in the lower normal nature is derived from the higher spiritual power of being of the Purushottama, *mattaḥ pravartate*; it does not come into being *de novo* and without a spiritual cause. Something in the essential power of the spirit there must be from which the sattwic light and satisfaction, the rajasic kinesis, the tamasic inertia of our nature are derivations and of which they are the imperfect or degraded forms. But once we get back to these sources in their purity above this imperfection and degradation of them in which we live we shall find that these motions put on a quite different aspect as soon as we begin to live in the spirit. Being and action and the modes of being and action become altogether different things, far above their present limited appearance. 10.18

For what is behind this troubled kinesis of the cosmos with all its clash and struggle? What is it that when it touches the mind, when it puts on mental values, creates the reactions of desire, striving, straining, error of will, sorrow,

sin, pain? It is a will of the spirit in movement, it is a large divine will in action which is not touched by these things; it is a power[30] of the free and infinite conscious Godhead which has no desire because it exercises universal possession and a spontaneous Ananda of its movement. Wearied by no striving and straining, it enjoys a free mastery of its means and its objects; misled by no error of the will, it holds a knowledge of self and things which is the source of its mastery and its Ananda: overcome by no sorrow, sin or pain, it has the joy and purity of its being and the joy and purity of its power. The soul that lives in God acts by this spiritual Will and not by the normal will of the unliberated mind: its kinesis takes place by this spiritual force and not by the rajasic mode of Nature, precisely because it no longer lives in the lower movement to which that deformation belongs, but has got back in the divine nature to the pure and perfect sense of the kinesis.

The strife of the gunas is only a representation in the imperfection of the lower nature; what the three gunas stand for are three essential powers of the Divine which are not merely existent in a perfect equilibrium of quietude, but unified in a perfect consensus of divine action. Tamas in the spiritual being becomes a divine calm, which is not an inertia and incapacity of action, but a perfect power, *śakti*, holding in itself all its capacity and capable of controlling and subjecting to the law of calm even the most stupendous and enormous activity: Rajas becomes a self-effecting initiating sheer Will of the spirit, which is not desire, endeavour, striving passion, but the same perfect power of being, *śakti*, capable of an infinite, imperturbable and blissful action. Sattwa becomes not the modified mental light, *prakāśa*, but the self-existent light of the divine being, *jyotiḥ*, which is the soul of the perfect power of being and illumines in their unity the divine quietude and the divine will of action... That light is full of a luminous spiritual will and there is no gulf or disparateness between its knowledge and its action. That delight is not our paler mental happiness, *sukham*, but a profound concentrated intense self-existent bliss extended to all that our being does, envisages, creates, a fixed divine rapture, Ananda. The liberated soul participates more and more profoundly in this light and bliss and grows the more perfectly into it, the more integrally it unites itself with the Divine. And while among the Gunas of the lower Nature there is a necessary disequilibrium, a shifting inconstancy of measures and a perpetual struggle for domination, the greater light and bliss, calm, will of kinesis of the Spirit do not exclude each other, are not at war, are not even merely in equilibrium, but each an aspect of the two others and in their fullness all are inseparable and one. Our mind when it approaches the Divine may

[30] tapas, cit-śakti.

seem to enter into one to the exclusion of another, may appear for instance to achieve calm to the exclusion of kinesis of action, but that is because we approach him first through the selecting spirit in the mind. Afterwards when we are able to rise above even the spiritual mind, we can see that each divine power contains all the rest and can get rid of this initial error[31].

We see, then, that action is possible without the subjection of the soul to the normal degraded functioning of the modes of Nature. That functioning depends on the mental, vital and physical limitation into which we are cast; it is a deformation, an incapacity, a wrong or depressed value imposed on us by the mind and life in matter. When we grow into the spirit, this Dharma or inferior law of Nature is replaced by the immortal Dharma of the spirit; there is the experience of a free immortal action, a divine illimitable knowledge, a transcendent power, an unfathomable repose. But still there remains the question of the transition; for there must be a transition, a proceeding by steps, since nothing in God's workings in this world is done by an abrupt action without procedure or basis. We have the thing we seek in us, but we have in practice to evolve it out of the inferior forms of our nature[32]. Therefore in the action of the modes itself there must be some means, some leverage, some *point d'appui*, by which we can effect this transformation. The Gita finds it in the full development of the sattwic Guna till that in its potent expansion reaches a point at which it can go beyond itself and disappear into its source. The reason is evident, because Sattwa is a power of light and happiness, a force that makes for calm and knowledge, and at its highest point it can arrive at a certain reflection, almost a mental identity with the spiritual light and bliss from which it derives. The other two Gunas cannot get this transformation, Rajas into the divine kinetic will or Tamas into the divine repose and calm, without the intervention of the sattwic power in Nature... The sattwic quality is a first mediator between the higher and the lower nature... To develop Sattwa

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[31] *The account given here of the supreme spiritual and supramental forms of highest Nature action corresponding to the Gunas is not derived from the Gita, but introduced from spiritual experience. The Gita does not describe in any detail the action of the highest Nature,* rahasyam uttamam*; it leaves that for the seeker to discover by his own spiritual experience. It only points out the nature of the high sattwic temperament and action through which this supreme mystery has to be reached and insists at the same time on the overpassing of Sattwa and transcendence of the three Gunas.*

[32] *This is from the point of view of our nature ascending upwards by self-conquest, effort and discipline. There must also intervene more and more a descent of the divine Light, Presence and Power into the being to transform it; otherwise the change at the point of culmination and beyond it cannot take place. That is why there comes in as the last movement the necessity of an absolute self-surrender.*

till it becomes full of spiritual light and calm and happiness is the first condition of this preparatory discipline of the nature.

That, we shall find, is the whole intention of the remaining chapters of the Gita. But first it prefaces the consideration of this enlightening movement by a distinction between two kinds of being, the Deva and the Asura; for the Deva is capable of a high self-transforming sattwic action, the Asura incapable. We must see what is the object of this preface and the precise bearing of this distinction. The general nature of all human beings is the same, it is a mixture of the three Gunas; it would seem then that in all there must be the capacity to develop and strengthen the sattwic element and turn it upward towards the heights of the divine transformation. That our ordinary turn is actually towards making our reason and will the servants of our rajasic or tamasic egoism, the ministers of our restless and ill-balanced kinetic desire or our self-indulgent indolence and static inertia, can only be, one would imagine, a temporary characteristic of our undeveloped spiritual being, a rawness of its imperfect evolution and must disappear when our consciousness rises in the spiritual scale. But we actually see that men, at least men above a certain level, fall very largely into two classes, those who have a dominant force of sattwic nature turned towards knowledge, self-control, beneficence, perfection and those who have a dominant force of rajasic nature turned towards egoistic greatness, satisfaction of desire, the indulgence of their own strong will and personality which they seek to impose on the world, not for the service of man or God, but for their own pride, glory and pleasure. These are the human representatives of the Devas and Danavas or Asuras, the Gods and the Titans[33]. This distinction is a very ancient one in Indian religious symbolism... The ancient mind, more open than ours to the truth of things behind the physical veil, saw behind the

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[33] *Ignorance means Avidya, the separative consciousness and the egoistic mind and life that flow from it and all that is natural to the separative consciousness and the egoistic mind and life... Falsehood, on the other hand, is not this Avidya, but an extreme result of it. It is created by an Asuric power which intervenes in this creation and is not only separated from the Truth and therefore limited in knowledge and open to error, but in revolt against the Truth or in the habit of seizing the Truth only to pervert it...*

These are the forces and beings that are interested in maintaining the falsehoods they have created in the world of the Ignorance and in putting them forward as the Truth which men must follow. In India they are termed Asuras, Rakshasas, Pishachas (beings respectively of the mentalised vital, middle vital and lower vital planes) who are in opposition to the Gods, the Powers of Light.

If there were no hostile forces and there were still the evolutionary world, there could be ignorance still but not perversity in the ignorance. All would be a partial truth acting through imperfect instruments but for the best purposes of this or that stage in a progressive manifestation.

life of man great cosmic Powers or beings representative of certain turns or grades of the universal Shakti, divine, titanic, gigantic, demoniac, and men who strongly represented in themselves these types of nature were themselves considered as Devas, Asuras, Rakshasas, Pisachas[34]. The Gita for its own purposes takes up this distinction and develops the difference between these two kinds of beings, *dvau bhūtasargau*. It has spoken previously of the nature which is Asuric and Rakshasic and obstructs God-knowledge, salvation and perfection; it now contrasts it with the Daivic nature which is turned to these things."

The Blessed Lord said: Fearlessness, purity of nature, steadfastness 16.1
in the Yoga of knowledge, charity, self-control and sacrifice, study of
the Scriptures, askesis, and straightforwardness. Harmlessness, 16.2
truthfulness, absence of wrath, renunciation[35], peace, aversion to fault-
finding, compassion for all beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty,
and steadiness (absence of fickleness). Vigour, forgiveness, patience, 16.3
purity, absence of envy and pride, these, O Bharata, are the endowments
of him who is born with the Daivic nature.

Hypocrisy, arrogance and conceit, wrath as well as harshness and 16.4
ignorance, these, O Partha, are the endowments of him who is born
with the Asuric nature. The Daivic endowments are said to lead towards 16.5
liberation, the Asuric towards bondage. Grieve not, O Pandava, thou
art born with the Daivic endowments.

"Arjuna, says the Teacher, is of the Deva nature. He need not grieve with the thought that by acceptance of battle and slaughter he will be yielding to the impulses of the Asuras. The action on which all turns, the battle which Arjuna has to fight with the incarnate Godhead as his charioteer at the bidding of the Master of the world in the form of the Time-Spirit, is a struggle to establish the kingdom of the Dharma, the empire of Truth, Right and Justice.

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[34] *The Asuras and Rakshasas etc. do not belong to the earth, but to supraphysical worlds; but they act upon the earth-life and dispute the control of human life and character and action with the Gods. They are the Powers of Darkness combating the Powers of Light.*

Sometimes they possess men in order to act through them, sometimes they take birth in a human body. When their use in the play is over, they will either change or disappear or no longer seek to intervene in the earth-play.

[35] *...its gentleness and self-denial and self-control are free...from all weakness: it has energy and soul-force, strong resolution, the fearlessness of the soul that lives in the right and according to the truth as well as its harmlessness,* tejaḥ, abhayam, dhṛtiḥ, ahiṁsā, satyaṁ. *The whole being, the whole temperament is integrally pure; there is a seeking for knowledge and a calm and fixed abiding in knowledge.*

He himself is born in the Deva kind; he has developed in himself the sattwic being, until he has now come to a point at which he is capable of a high transformation and liberation from the *traiguṇya* and therefore even from the sattwic nature."

द्वौ भूतसर्गौ लोकेऽस्मिन्दैव आसुर एव च ।
दैवो विस्तरशः प्रोक्त आसुरं पार्थ मे शृणु ।। 16.6।।

16.6. There are two types of beings created in this world, the Daivic and the Asuric; the Daivic has been described at length. Hear now from me, O Partha, about the Asuric.

"The distinction between the Deva and the Asura is not comprehensive of all humanity, not rigidly applicable to all its individuals, neither is it sharp and definite in all stages of the moral or spiritual history of the race or in all phases of the individual evolution. The tamasic man who makes so large a part of the whole, falls into neither category as it is here described, though he may have both elements in him in a low degree and for the most part serves tepidly the lower qualities. The normal man is ordinarily a mixture; but one or the other tendency is more pronounced, tends to make him predominantly rajaso-tamasic or sattwo-rajasic and can be said to be preparing him for either culmination, for the divine clarity or the titanic turbulence. For here what is in question is a certain culmination in the evolution of the qualitative nature, as will be evident from the descriptions given in the text. On one side there can be a sublimation of the sattwic quality, the culmination or manifestation of the unborn Deva, on the other a sublimation of the rajasic turn of the soul in nature, the entire birth of the Asura. The one leads towards that movement of liberation on which the Gita is about to lay stress; it makes possible a high self-exceeding of the Sattwa quality and a transformation into the likeness of
16.5 the divine being, *vimokṣāya*. The other leads away from that universal potentiality and precipitates towards an exaggeration of our bondage to the ego. This is the point of the distinction."

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ।। 16.7।।

16.7. Asuric men have not the knowledge of the way of action (Pravritti) or the way of abstention (Nivritti); in them there is neither purity, nor right conduct, nor truth.

16.8 **"The world", they say, "is without God, not true, without foundation, brought about by mutual union, its sole cause is Desire,**
16.9 **nothing else." Holding fast to this view, these lost souls of little**

understanding, of violent and evil deeds, arise as the enemies of the world for its destruction. Given to insatiable desire, full of self-esteem, 16.10
arrogance and excessive pride, holding wrong views through delusion, addicted to impure resolutions, they act in the world. Obsessed with 16.11
innumerable anxieties which would end only with (their) death, looking upon gratification of desires as the highest aim, feeling sure that this is all. Bound by a hundred ties of hope, given over to desires and wrath, 16.12
they strive to amass riches by unjust means for the gratification of desires.

अहंकारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं च संश्रिताः ।
मामात्मपरदेहेषु प्रद्विषन्तोऽभ्यसूयकाः ।। 18।।

16.18. Given over to egoism, power, insolence, desire and wrath, these malicious people despise Me dwelling in their own bodies and in the bodies of others.

These evil and cruel haters, the vilest among men, I cast down 16.19
constantly into Asuric wombs in the world. Cast into Asuric wombs 16.20
birth after birth, these deluded ones, O Kaunteya, attain not to Me and sink down into the lowest status of soul-nature.

"This graphic description, even giving its entire value to the distinction it implies, must not be pressed to carry more in it than it means. When it is said that there are two creations of beings in this material world, Deva and Asura[36], it is not meant that human souls are so created by God from the beginning each with its own inevitable career in Nature, nor is it meant that there is a rigid spiritual predestination and those rejected from the beginning by the Divine are blinded by him so that they may be thrust down to eternal perdition and the impurity of Hell. All souls are eternal portions of the Divine, the Asura as well as the Deva, all can come to salvation: even the greatest sinner can turn to the Divine. But the evolution of the soul in Nature is an adventure of which Swabhava and the Karma governed by the Swabhava are ever the chief powers; and if an excess in the manifestation of the Swabhava, the self-becoming of the soul, a disorder in its play turns the law of being to the perverse side, if the rajasic qualities are given the upper hand, cultured to the

[36] *The distinction between the two creations has its full truth in supraphysical planes where the law of spiritual evolution does not govern the movement. There are worlds of the Devas, worlds of the Asuras, and there are in these worlds behind us constant types of beings which support the complete divine play of creation indispensable to the march of the universe and cast their influence also on the earth and on the life and nature of man in this physical plane of existence.*

diminution of Sattwa, then the trend of Karma and its results necessarily culminate not in the sattwic height which is capable of the movement of liberation, but in the highest exaggeration of the perversities of the lower nature. The man, if he does not stop short and abandon his way of error, has eventually the Asura full-born in him, and once he has taken that enormous turn away from the Light and Truth, he can no more reverse the fatal speed of his course because of the very immensity of the misused divine power in him until he has plumbed the depths to which it falls, found bottom and seen where the way has led him, the power exhausted and misspent, himself down in the lowest state of the soul nature, which is Hell. Only when he understands and turns to the Light, does that other truth of the Gita come in, that even the greatest sinner, the most impure and violent evil-doer is saved the moment he turns to adore and follow after the Godhead within him. Then, simply by that turn, he gets very soon into the sattwic way which leads to perfection and freedom."

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ।। 16.21।।

16.21. Threefold are the doors of Hell, leading to the ruin of the soul – desire, wrath and greed: therefore let man renounce these three.

A man liberated from these three doors of darkness, O Kaunteya, practises what is good for his soul and reaches the highest status. 16.22

26. *Action Done According to the Shastra and The Threefold Faith*

At the end of the sixteenth chapter (Deva and Asura) the Gita makes a distinction between action done according to the licence of personal desire and action done according to the shastra – the recognised science, and art if life which is the outcome of mankind's collective living, its culture, religion, science, its progressive discovery of the best rule of life. "The action of personal desire belongs to the unregenerated state of our nature and is dictated by ignorance or false knowledge and an unregulated or ill-regulated kinetic or rajasic egoism. The action controlled by Shastra is an outcome of intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, social and religious culture; it embodies an attempt at a certain right living, harmony and right order and is evidently an effort, more or less advanced according to circumstances, of the sattwic element in man to overtop, regulate and control or guide, where it must be admitted, his rajasic and tamasic egoism. It is the means to a step in advance, and therefore mankind must first proceed through it and make this Shastra its law of action rather than obey the impulsion of its personal desires."

16.23 **He who, disregarding the rule of the Shastra, acts under the impulsions of desire, attains not to perfection, nor happiness, nor the**
16.24 **highest status. Therefore let the Shastra be for thee the authority to determine what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Knowing what has been declared by the rules of the Shastra, thou shouldst work here.**

"To follow the law of desire is not the true rule of our nature; there is a higher and juster standard of its works. But where is it embodied or how is it to be found? In the first place, the human race has always been seeking for this just and high Law and whatever it has discovered is embodied in its Shastra, its rule of science and knowledge, rule of ethics, rule of religion, rule of best social living, rule of one's right relations with man and God and Nature. Shastra does not mean a mass of customs, some good, some bad, unintelligently followed by the customary routine mind of the tamasic man. Shastra is the knowledge and teaching laid down by intuition, experience and wisdom, the science and art and ethic of life, the best standards available to the race. The half-awakened man who leaves the observance of its rule to follow the guidance of his instincts and desires, can get pleasure but not happiness, for the inner happiness can only come by right living. He cannot move to perfection, cannot acquire the highest spiritual status. The law of instinct and desire seems to come first in the animal world, but the manhood of man grows by the pursuit of truth and religion and knowledge and a right life. The Shastra, the recognised Right that he has set up to govern his lower members by his reason and

intelligent will, must therefore first be observed and made the authority for conduct and works and for what should or should not be done, till the instinctive desire nature is schooled and abated and put down by the habit of self-control and man is ready first for a freer intelligent self-guidance and then for the highest supreme law and supreme liberty of the spiritual nature.

For the Shastra in its ordinary aspect is not that spiritual law, although at its loftiest point, when it becomes a science and art of spiritual living Adhyatma-shastra, – the Gita itself describes its own teaching as the highest and most

secret Shastra, – it formulates a rule of the self-transcendence of the sattwic nature and develops the discipline which leads to spiritual transmutation. Yet all Shastra is built on a number of preparatory conditions, Dharmas; it is a means, not an end. The supreme end is the freedom of the spirit when abandoning all Dharmas the soul turns to God for its sole law of action, acts straight from the divine will and lives in the freedom of the divine nature, not in the Law, but in the Spirit. This is the development of the teaching which is prepared by the next question of Arjuna."

अर्जुन उवाच
ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ।। 17.1।।

17.1. Arjuna said: Those who offer sacrifice full of faith (*śraddhā*), but abandoning the rule of the Shastra, what is that concentrated will of devotion (*niṣṭhā*) in them, O Krishna? Is it Sattwa, Rajas or Tamas?

"...there is a freer tendency in man other than the leading of his desires and other than his will to accept the Law, the fixed idea, the safe governing rule of the Shastra. The individual frequently enough, the community at any moment of its life is seen to turn away from the Shastra, becomes impatient

of it, loses that form of its will and faith and goes in search of another law which it is now more disposed to accept as the right rule of living and regard as a more vital or higher truth of existence. This may happen when the established Shastra ceases to be a living thing and degenerates or stiffens into a mass of customs and conventions. Or it may come because it is found that the Shastra is imperfect or no longer useful for the progress demanded; a new truth, a more perfect law of living has become imperative... This movement begins with the individual, who is no longer satisfied with the law because he finds that it no longer corresponds to his idea and largest or intensest experience of himself and existence and therefore he can no longer bring to it the will to believe and practise. It does not correspond to his inner way of being, it is not

to him *sat*, the thing that truly is, the right, the highest or best or real good; it is not the truth and law of his or of all being. The Shastra is something impersonal to the individual, and that gives it its authority over the narrow personal law of his members; but at the same time it is personal to the collectivity and is the outcome of its experience, its culture or its nature. It is not in all its form and spirit the ideal rule of fulfilment of the Self or the eternal law of the Master of our nature, although it may contain in itself in small or larger measure indications, preparations, illuminating glimpses of that far greater thing. And the individual may have gone beyond the collectivity and be ready for a greater truth, a wider walk, a deeper intention of the Life-Spirit.

But what then shall be the secure base of an action which departs both from the guidance of desire and from the normal law? For the rule of desire has an authority of its own, no longer safe or satisfactory to us as it is to the animal or as it might have been to a primitive humanity, but still, so far as it goes, founded on a very living part of our nature and fortified by its strong indications; and the law, the Shastra has behind it all the authority of long established rule, old successful sanctions and a secure past experience. But this new movement is of the nature of a powerful adventure into the unknown or partly known, a daring development and a new conquest, and what then is the clue to be followed, the guiding light on which it can depend or its strong basis in our being? The answer is that the clue and support is to be found in

man's *śraddhā*, his faith, his will to believe, to live what he sees or thinks to be the truth of himself and of existence. In other words this movement is man's appeal to himself or to something potent and compelling in himself or in universal existence for the discovery of his truth, his law of living, his way to fullness and perfection. And everything depends on the nature of his faith, the thing in himself or in the universal soul – of which he is a portion or manifestation – to which he directs it and on how near he gets by it to his real self and the Self or true being of the universe. If he is tamasic, obscure, clouded, if he has an ignorant faith and inapt will, he will reach nothing true and will fall away to his lower nature. If he is lured by false rajasic lights, he can be carried away by self-will into bypaths that may lead to morass or precipice. In either case his only chance of salvation lies in a return of Sattwa upon him

to impose a new enlightened order and rule upon his members which will liberate him from the violent error of his self-will or the dull error of his clouded ignorance. If, on the other hand, he has the sattwic nature and a sattwic faith and direction for his steps, he will arrive in sight of a higher yet unachieved ideal rule which may lead him even in rare instances beyond the sattwic light some way at least towards a highest divine illumination and divine way of being and living. For if the sattwic light is so strong in him as to bring him to its own culminating point, then he will be able advancing from that point to make out his gate of entrance into some first ray of that which is divine, transcendent and absolute. In all effort at self-finding these possibilities are there; they are the conditions of this spiritual adventure."

श्रीभगवान् उवाच
त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।
सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु ।। 17.2।।

17.2. The Blessed Lord said: The faith of embodied beings is of three kinds, born of their nature; it is sattwic, rajasic, or tamasic. Hear thou of these.

"When we live, when we are and do according to our desires, that is a persistent act of *śraddhā* belonging mostly to our vital and physical, our tamasic and rajasic nature. And when we try to be, to live and to do according to the Shastra, we proceed by a persistent act of *śraddhā* which belongs, supposing it to be not a routine faith, to a sattwic tendency that is constantly labouring to impose itself on our rajasic and tamasic parts. When we leave both these things and try to be, to live and to do according to some ideal or novel conception of truth of our own finding or our own individual acceptance, that too is a persistent act of *śraddhā* which may be dominated by any one of these three qualities that constantly govern our every thought, will, feeling and act. And again when we try to be, to live and to do according to the divine nature, then too we must proceed by a persistent act of *śraddhā*, which must be according to the Gita the faith of the sattwic nature when it culminates and is preparing to exceed its own clear-cut limits. But all and any of these things implies some kinesis or displacement of nature, all suppose an inner or outer or ordinarily both an inner and an outer action. And what then will be the character of this action? The Gita states three main elements of the work we have to do, *kartavyaṁ karma*, and these three are sacrifice, giving[37] and askesis[38].

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[37] *When the Dana (gift) is given for the sake of giving, to one from whom no benefit in return is expected, and in the right place, at the right time and to the right person, that gift is said to be sattwic. "The culmination of the sattwic way of* dāna *will bring into the action an increasing element of that wide self-giving to others and to the world and to God,* ātmadāna*,* ātma-samarpaṇa*, which is the high consecration of the sacrifice of works enjoined by the Gita... All this manifold universe comes into birth and is constantly maintained by God's giving of himself and his powers and the lavish outflow of his self and spirit into all these existences; universal being, says the Veda, is the sacrifice of the Purusha. All the action of the perfected soul will be even such a constant divine giving of itself and its powers, an outflowing of the knowledge, light, strength, love, joy, helpful Shakti which it possesses in the Divine and by his influence and effluence on all around it according to their capacity of reception or on all this world and its creatures. That will be the complete result of the complete self-giving of the soul to the Master of our existence."*

[38] *The Gita describes three kinds of sattwic askesis (Tapa). Worship of the godhead, of the twice-born, of the guru and of the wise, purity, straightforwardness, chastity and non-violence, are called the askesis (Tapa) of the body. Speech which gives no offence, truthful,*

18.1 For when questioned by Arjuna on the difference between the outer and inner
18.5 renunciation, *sannyāsa* and *tyāga*, Krishna insists that these three things ought not to be renounced at all but ought altogether to be done, for they are the work before us, *kartavyaṁ karma*, and they purify the wise. In other words these acts constitute the means of our perfection. But at the same time they may be done unwisely or less wisely by the unwise."

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।
श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ।। 17.3।।

17.3. The faith of each man takes the shape given to it by his stuff of being, O Bharata. This Purusha, this soul in man, is made of faith; and whatever is that faith in him, he is that and that is he.

"...a remarkable line in which the Gita tells us that this Purusha, this soul in man, is, as it were, made of *śraddhā*, a faith, a will to be, a belief in itself and existence, and whatever is that will, faith or constituting belief in him, he is that and that is he, *śraddhā-mayo'yam puruṣo yo yac-chraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ*. If we look into this pregnant saying a little closely, we shall find that this single line contains implied in its few forceful words almost the whole theory of the modern gospel of pragmatism. For if a man or the soul in a man consists of the faith which is in him, taken in this deeper sense, then it follows that the truth which he sees and wills to live is for him the truth of his being, the truth of himself that he has created or is creating and there can be for him no other real truth. This truth is a thing of his inner and outer action, a thing of his becoming, of the soul's dynamics, not of that in him which never changes. He is what he is today by some past will of his

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pleasant and beneficial, and the regular study of Scripture, are called the askesis of speech. Serenity of mind, gentleness, silence, self-control, purity of feelings, are called the askesis of mind. This threefold askesis, practised with a supreme faith, by men in Yoga and with no desire for fruit, is said to be sattwic. "Here comes in all that quiets or disciplines the rajasic and egoistic nature and all that replaces it by the happy and tranquil principle of good and virtue. This is the askesis of the sattwic Dharma so highly prized in the system of the ancient Indian culture. Its greater culmination will be a high purity of the reason and will, an equal soul, a deep peace and calm, a wide sympathy and preparation of oneness, a reflection of the inner soul's divine gladness in the mind, life and body. There at that lofty point the ethical is already passing away into the spiritual type and character. And this culmination too can be made to transcend itself, can be raised into a higher and freer light, can pass away into the settled godlike energy of the supreme nature. And what will remain then will be the spirit's immaculate Tapas, a highest will and luminous force in all the members, acting in a wide and solid calm and a deep and pure spiritual delight, Ananda. There will then be no farther need of askesis, no Tapasya, because all is naturally and easily divine, all is that Tapas."

nature sustained and continued by a present will to know, to believe and to be in his intelligence and vital force, and whatever new turn is taken by this will and faith active in his very substance, that he will tend to become in the future. We create our own truth of existence in our own action of mind and life, which is another way of saying that we create our own selves, are our own makers.

But very obviously this is only one aspect of the truth, and all one-aspected statements are suspect to the thinker. Truth is not merely whatever our own personality is or creates; that is only the truth of our becoming, one point or line of emphasis in a movement of widest volume. Beyond our personality there is, first, a universal being as well as a universal becoming of which ours is a little movement; and beyond that too there is the eternal Being out of which all becoming derives and to which it owes its potentialities, elements, original and final motives..."

"Purusha is able by this power of its nature to take whatever poise it may will and to follow the law and form of being proper to any self-formulation. It is eternal soul and spirit in its own power of self-existence superior to and governing its manifestations; it is universal soul and spirit developed in power of becoming of its existence, infinite in the finite; it is individual soul and spirit absorbed in development of some particular course of its becoming, in appearance mutably finite in the infinite. All these things it can be at once, eternal spirit universalised in cosmos, individualised in its beings; it can too found the consciousness rejecting, governing or responding to the action of Nature in any one of them, put the others behind it or away from it, know itself as pure eternity, self-supporting universality or exclusive individuality. Whatever the formulation of its nature, soul can seem to become that and view itself as that only in the frontal active part of its consciousness; but it is

never only what it seems to be; it is too the so much else that it can be; secretly, it is the all of itself that is yet hidden. It is not irrevocably limited by any particular self-formulation in Time, but can break through and beyond it, break it up or develop it, select, reject, new-create, reveal out of itself a greater self-formulation. What it believes itself to be by the whole active will of its consciousness in its instruments, that it is or tends to become, *yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ* : what it believes it can be and has full faith in becoming, that it changes to in nature, evolves or discovers.

This power of the soul over its nature is of the utmost importance in the Yoga of self-perfection; if it did not exist, we could never get by conscious endeavour and aspiration out of the fixed groove of our present imperfect human being; if any greater perfection were intended, we should have to wait

for Nature to effect it in her own slow or swift process of evolution. In the lower forms of being the soul accepts this complete subjection to Nature, but as it rises higher in the scale, it awakes to a sense of something in itself which can command Nature; but it is only when it arrives at self-knowledge that this free will and control becomes a complete reality. The change effects itself through process of nature, not therefore by any capricious magic, but an ordered development and intelligible process. When complete mastery is gained, then the process by its self-effective rapidity may seem a miracle to the intelligence, but it still proceeds by law of the truth of Spirit, – when the Divine within us by close union of our will and being with him takes up the Yoga and acts as the omnipotent master of the nature. For the Divine is our highest Self and the self of all Nature, the eternal and universal Purusha."

27. *Sannyasa and Tyaga*

अर्जुन उवाच
संन्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ।
त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ।। 18.1।।

18.1. Arjuna said: I desire to know, O Mighty-armed, the essence of Sannyasa and Tyaga, O Hrishikesha, and their difference[39], O Keshinisudana (destroyer of Keshi).

The Blessed Lord said: The seers understand by Sannyasa the giving up of works prompted by desire; the abandonment of the fruits of all works is called Tyaga by the wise. 18.2

"In that sense Tyaga, not Sannyasa, is the better way. It is not the desirable actions that must be laid aside, but the desire which gives them that character has to be put away from us. The fruit of the action may come in the dispensation of the Master of works, but there is to be no egoistic demand for that as a reward and condition of doing works. Or the fruit may not at all come and still the work has to be performed as the thing to be done, *kartavyaṁ karma*, 18.9 the thing which the Master within demands of us. The success, the failure are in his hands and he will regulate them according to his omniscient will and inscrutable purpose. Action, all action has indeed to be given up in the end, not physically by abstention, by immobility, by inertia, but spiritually to the Master of our being by whose power alone can any action be accomplished. There has to be a renunciation of the false idea of ourselves as the doer; for in reality it is the universal Shakti that works through our personality and our ego. The spiritual transference of all our works to the Master and his Shakti is the real Sannyasa in the teaching of the Gita."

"Action as such should be given up as an evil," declare some learned men. "Acts of sacrifice, giving and askesis should not be given up," say others. 18.3

"The question still arises, what works are to be done? Those even who

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[39] *The frequent harping, the reiterated emphasis of the Gita on this crucial distinction has been amply justified by the subsequent history of the later Indian mind, its constant confusion of these two very different things and its strong bent towards belittling any activity of the kind taught by the Gita as at best only a preliminary to the supreme inaction of Sannyasa. As a matter of fact, when people talk of Tyaga, of renunciation, it is always the physical renunciation of the world which they understand by the word or at least on which they lay emphasis, while the Gita takes absolutely the opposite view that the real Tyaga has action and living in the world as its basis and not a flight to the monastery, the cave or the hill-top. The real Tyaga is action with a renunciation of desire and that too is the real Sannyasa.*

stand for a final physical renunciation are not at one in this difficult matter. Some would have it that all works must be excised from our life, as if that were possible. But it is not possible so long as we are in the body and alive; nor can salvation consist in reducing our active selves by trance to the lifeless immobility of the clod and the pebble... What then are the actions to be done? The thoroughgoing ascetic answer, not noted by the Gita – it was perhaps not altogether current at the time – might be that solely begging, eating and meditation are to be permitted among voluntary activities and otherwise only the necessary actions of the body. But the more liberal and comprehensive solution was evidently to continue the three most sattwic activities, sacrifice, giving and askesis. And these certainly are to be done, says the Gita, for they purify the wise."

18.4 **Hear, O best of the Bharatas, My conclusions about Tyaga (renunciation). Tyaga, O tiger of men, has been declared to be threefold.**

यज्ञदानतपः कर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।
यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ।। 18.5।।

18.5. Acts of sacrifice, giving and askesis ought not to be abandoned. Sacrifice, giving and askesis purify the wise; therefore, they should certainly be performed.

18.6 **But even these works ought to be performed giving up attachment and desire for fruit. This, O Partha, is my decided and highest view.**
18.7 **Verily, renunciation of rightly regulated actions is not proper; to**
18.8 **renounce them out of delusion is declared to be tamasic. He who gives up works because they bring sorrow or out of fear of physical suffering, thus doing rajasic renunciation, obtains not the fruit of renunciation.**
18.9 **When one performs the rightly regulated actions, O Arjuna, as a thing that ought to be done, renouncing attachment to action as well as to the**
18.10 **fruit, that Tyaga is regarded as sattwic. The wise Tyagi, fully imbued with sattwa and with doubts cast away, has no aversion to unpleasant action, no attachment to pleasant action.**

"There must be no attachment to pleasant, desirable, lucrative or successful work and no doing of it because it has that nature; but that kind of work too has to be done, – done totally, selflessly, with the assent of the spirit,
18.9 – when it is the action demanded from above and from within us, *kartavyam karma*. There must be no aversion to unpleasant, undesirable or ungratifying action or work that brings or is likely to bring with it suffering, danger, harsh conditions, inauspicious consequences; for that too has to be accepted, totally, selflessly, with a deep understanding of its need and meaning, when it is the

work that should be done, *kartavyaṁ karma*. The wise man puts away the shrinkings and hesitations of the desire-soul and the doubts of the ordinary human intelligence, that measure by little personal, conventional or otherwise limited standards."

Nor indeed is it possible for an embodied being to abandon work altogether; verily he who gives up the fruit of work is called a Tyagi, a renouncer. 18.11

"The essence of renunciation, the true Tyaga, the true Sannyasa, is not any rule of thumb of inaction but a disinterested soul, a selfless mind, the transition from ego to the free impersonal and spiritual nature. The spirit of this inner renunciation is the first mental condition of the highest culminating sattwic discipline."

28. *Swabhava and Swadharma*

"**We must realise that the ancient Aryan Rishis meant by the Chaturvarnya not a mere social division, but a recognition of God manifesting Himself in fundamental Swabhava, which our bodily distinctions, our social orders are merely an attempt to organise in the symbols of human life, often a confused attempt, often a mere parody and distortion of the divine thing they try to express. Every man has in himself all the four Dharmas, but one predominates, in one he is born and that strides the note of his character and determines the type and cast of all his actions; the rest is subordinated to the dominant type and helps to give it its complement. No Brahamana is a complete Brahmana unless he has the Kshatratejas in him, the Vaishyashakti and the Shudrashakti, but all these have to serve in him the fullness of his Brahmanyam. God manifests Himself as the four**
10.6 **Prajapatis or Manus, *catvāro manavaḥ* of the Gita, and each man is born in the *aṁśa* of one of the four; the first characterised by wisdom and largeness, the second by heroism and force, the third by dexterity and enjoyment, the fourth by work and service. The perfected man develops in himself all four capacities and contains at once the god of wisdom and largeness, the god of heroism and force, the god of skill and enjoyment, the god of work and service. Only one stands dominant and leads and uses the others.**"

"All action on the normal level is determined by the Gunas; the action which is to be done, *kartavyaṁ karma*, takes the triple form of giving, askesis and sacrifice, and any or all of these three may assume the character of any of the Gunas. Therefore we have to proceed by the raising of these things to the highest sattwic height of which they are capable and go yet farther beyond to a largeness in which all works become a free self-giving, an energy of the divine Tapas, a perpetual sacrament of the spiritual existence. But this is a general law and all these considerations have been the enunciation of quite general principles and refer indiscriminately to all actions and to all men alike. All can eventually arrive by spiritual evolution to this strong discipline, this large perfection, this highest spiritual state. But while the general rule of mind and action is the same for all men, we see too that there is a constant law of variation and each individual acts not only according to the common laws of the human spirit, mind, will, life, but according to his own nature; each man fulfils different functions or follows a different bent according to the rule of his own circumstances, capacities, turn, character, powers. What place is to be assigned to this variation, this individual rule of nature in the spiritual discipline?

The Gita has laid some stress on this point and even assigned to it a great preliminary importance. At the very start it has spoken of the nature, rule and function of the Kshatriya as Arjuna's own law of action, *svadharma*; it has proceeded to lay it down with a striking emphasis that one's own nature, rule, function should be observed and followed, – even if defective, it is better than the well-performed rule of another's nature. Death in one's own law of nature is better for a man than victory in an alien movement. To follow the law 3.35
of another's nature is dangerous to the soul, contradictory, as we may say, to the natural way of his evolution, a thing mechanically imposed and therefore imported, artificial and sterilising to one's growth towards the true stature of

the spirit. What comes out of the being is the right and healthful thing, the authentic movement, not what is imposed on it from outside or laid on it by life's compulsions or the mind's error. This Swadharma is of four general kinds formulated outwardly in the action of the four orders of the old Indian social culture, *cāturvaṃya*. That system corresponds, says the Gita, to a divine law, it 'was created by Me according to the divisions of the Gunas and works',
4.13 – created from the beginning by the Master of existence. In other words, there are four distinct orders of the active nature, or four fundamental types of the soul in nature, *svabhāva*, and the work and proper function of each human being corresponds to his type of nature. This is now finally explained in preciser detail."

न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।
सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ।। 18.40।।

18.40. Neither on earth, nor in heaven among the gods, is there a being that is free from the workings of these three Gunas, born of Prakriti (nature).

18.41 **The works of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras are**
divided, O Parantapa, according to the Gunas born of their Swabhava
18.42 **(self-nature). Calm, self-control, askesis, purity, long-suffering, candour,**
essential and comprehensive knowledge, acceptance and practice of
spiritual truth are the work of the Brahmin, born of his Swabhava (self-
18.43 **nature). Heroism, high spirit, resolution, ability, not fleeing in the battle,**
18.44 **giving and lordship are the natural work of the Kshatriya. Agriculture,**
cattle-keeping and trade are the natural works of the Vaishya. All the
actions of the character of service are the natural work of the Shudra.

Devotedly engaged in one's own work, man attains perfection; how, engaged in one's own work, one attains perfection, that do thou hear. 18.45
He from whom all beings originate and by whom all this is pervaded, by worshipping Him by his own work, a man attains perfection. 18.46
Better is one's Swadharma (own law of works) though in itself faulty, than an alien law well carried out; one does not incur sin when one does the work regulated by one's self-nature. 18.47
The inborn work, O Kaunteya, though defective, ought not to be abandoned, for all initiations are clouded by defects as fire by smoke. 18.48

"These verses and the earlier pronouncements of the Gita on the same subject have been seized upon in current controversies on the caste question and interpreted by some as a sanction of the present system, used by others as a denial of the hereditary basis of caste. In point of fact the verses in the Gita have no bearing on the existing caste system, because that is a very different thing from the ancient social ideal of *caturvarṇa*, the four clear-cut orders of the Aryan community, and in no way corresponds with the description of the Gita. Agriculture, cattle-keeping and trade of every kind are said here to be the work of the Vaishya; but in the later system the majority of those concerned in trade and in cattle-keeping, artisans, small craftsmen and others are actually

classed as Sudras, – where they are not put altogether outside the pale, – and, with some exceptions, the merchant class is alone and that too not everywhere ranked as Vaishya. Agriculture, government and service are the professions of all classes from the Brahmin down to the Sudra. And if the economical divisions of function have been confounded beyond any possibility of rectification, the law of the Guna or quality is still less a part of the later system. There all is rigid custom, *ācāra*, with no reference to the need of the individual nature. If again we take the religious side of the contention advanced by the advocates of the caste system, we can certainly fasten no such absurd idea on the words of the Gita as that it is a law of a man's nature that he shall follow without regard to his personal bent and capacities the profession of his parents or his

immediate or distant ancestors, the son of a milkman be a milkman, the son of a doctor a doctor, the descendants of shoemakers remain shoemakers to the end of measurable time, still less that by doing so, by this unintelligent and mechanical repetition of the law of another's nature without regard to his own individual call and qualities a man automatically farthers his own perfection and arrives at spiritual freedom. The Gita's words refer to the ancient system of *caturvaṃa*, as it existed or was supposed to exist in its ideal purity, – there is some controversy whether it was ever anything more than an ideal or general norm more or less loosely followed in practice, – and it should be considered in that connection alone. Here too there is considerable difficulty as to the exact outward significance."

The ancient system of the four orders had a triple aspect: (i) Social and Economic (ii) Cultural and (iii) Spiritual.

(i) Social and Economic Aspect: "On the economic side it recognised four functions of the social man in the community, the religious and intellectual, the political, the economic and the servile functions. There are thus four kinds of works, the work of religious ministration, letters, learning and knowledge, the work of government, politics, administration and war, the work of production, wealth-making and exchange, the work of hired labour and service. An endeavour was made to found and stabilise the whole arrangement of society on the partition of these four functions among four clearly marked

classes[40]. This system was not peculiar to India, but was with certain differences

[40]*A man's social function and position were no doubt determined originally, as they are still in freer, less closely ordered communities by environment, occasion, birth and capacity; but as there set in a more fixed stratification, his rank came practically to be regulated by birth mainly or alone and in the later system of caste birth came to be the sole rule of status... This was an inevitable evolution, because the external signs are the only ones which are easily and conveniently determinable and birth was the most handy and manageable in an increasingly mechanised, complex and conventional social order. For a time the possible disparity between the hereditary function and the individual's real inborn character and capacity was made up or minimised by education and training: but eventually this effort ceased to be sustained and the hereditary convention held absolute rule.*

the dominating feature of a stage of social evolution in other ancient or mediaeval societies. The four functions are still inherent in the life of all normal communities, but the clear divisions no longer exist anywhere. The old system everywhere broke down and gave place to a more fluid order or, as in India, to a confused and complex social rigidity and economic immobility degenerating towards a chaos of castes."

(ii) The Cultural Aspect: The cultural idea gave to each class its religious custom, its law of honour, ethical rule, suitable education and training, type of character, family ideal and discipline. "The facts of life did not always correspond to the idea, – there is always a certain gulf found between the

mental ideal and the vital and physical practice, – but there was a constant and strenuous endeavour to keep up as much as possible a real correspondence. The importance of this attempt and of the cultural ideal and atmosphere it created in the past training of the social man, can hardly be put too high; but at the present day it has little more than a historical, a past and evolutionary significance."

(iii) The Spiritual Aspect: Wherever the system of fourfold orders existed, it was given more or less a religious section (more in the East, very little in Europe) and in India a profounder spiritual use and significance. The Gita is primarily concerned with this spiritual significance.

In the passage quoted above (shlokas 18.40 to 18.48) the eye of the thought is fixed on the spiritual value. The Gita always lays a very great stress on the internal law and very little on the mere external rule and practice. "The Gita accepted the Vedic theory of sacrifice, but gave it a profound turn, an inner, subjective and universal meaning, a spiritual sense and direction which alters all its values. Here too and in the same way it accepts the theory of the four orders of men, but gives to it a profound turn, an inner, subjective and universal meaning, a spiritual sense and direction. And immediately the idea

behind the theory changes its values and becomes an enduring and living truth not bound up with the transience of a particular social form and order. What the Gita is concerned with is not the validity of the Aryan social order now abolished or in a state of deliquescence, – if that were all, its principle of the Swabhava and Swadharma would have no permanent truth or value, – but the relation of a man's outward life to his inward being, the evolution of his action from his soul and inner law of nature.

And we see in fact that the Gita itself indicates very clearly its intention when it describes the work of the Brahmin and the Kshatriya not in terms of external function, not defined as learning, priest-work and letters or government, war and politics, but entirely in terms of internal character. The language reads a little curiously to our ear. Calm, self-control, askesis, purity, long-suffering, candour, knowledge, acceptance and practice of spiritual truth would not ordinarily be described as a man's function, work or life occupation. Yet this is precisely what the Gita means and says, – that these things, their development, their expression in conduct, their power to cast into form the

law of the sattwic nature are the real work of the Brahmin: learning, religious ministration and the other outer functions are only its most suitable field, a favourable means of this inner development, its appropriate self-expression, its way of fixing itself into firmness of type and externalised solidity of character. War, government, politics, leadership and rule are a similar field and means for the Kshatriya; but his real work is the development, the expression in conduct, the power to cast into form and dynamic rhythm of movement the law of the active battling royal or warrior spirit. The work of the Vaishya and Sudra is expressed in terms of external function, and this opposite turn

may have some significance. For the temperament moved to production and wealth-getting or limited in the circle of labour and service, the mercantile and the servile mind, are usually turned outward, more occupied with the external values of their work than its power for character, and this disposition is not so favourable to a sattwic or spiritual action of the nature. That too is the reason why a commercial and industrial age or a society preoccupied with the idea of work and labour creates around it an atmosphere more favourable to the material than the spiritual life, more adapted to vital efficiency than to the subtler perfection of the high-reaching mind and spirit. Nevertheless, this

kind of nature too and its functions have their inner significance, their spiritual value and can be made a means and power for perfection. As has been said elsewhere, not alone the Brahmin with his ideal of spirituality, ethical purity and knowledge and the Kshatriya with his ideal of nobility, chivalry and high character, but the wealth-seeking Vaishya, the toil-imprisoned Sudra, woman with her narrow, circumscribed and subject life, the very outcaste born from a
9.32 womb of sin, *pāpayonayaḥ*, can by this road rise at once towards the highest inner greatness and spiritual freedom, towards perfection, towards the liberation and fulfilment of the divine element in the human being.

Three propositions suggest themselves even at the first view and may be taken as implicit in all that the Gita says in this passage. First, all action must be determined from within because each man has in him something his own, some characteristic principle and inborn power of his nature... that creates the dynamic form of his soul in nature and to express and perfect it by action, to make it effective in capacity and conduct and life is his work, his true Karma: that points him to the right way of his inner and outer living and is the right

starting-point for his farther development. Next, there are broadly four types of nature each with its characteristic function and ideal rule of work and character and the type indicates the man's proper field and should trace for him his just circle of function in his outer social existence. Finally, whatever work a man does, if done according to the law of his being, the truth of his nature, can be turned Godwards and made an effective means of spiritual liberation and perfection."

The external idea of the four orders of men in life is concerned only with the more outward working of this truth of the divine action implicit in the teachings of the Gita. "It is true that in this birth men fall very largely into one of four types, the man of knowledge, the man of power, the productive vital man, the man of rude labour and service. These are not fundamental divisions, but stages of self-development in our manhood. The human being starts with a sufficient load of ignorance and inertia; his first state is one of rude toil enforced on his animal indolence by the needs of the body, by the impulsion of life, by necessity of Nature and, beyond a certain point of need, by some form of direct or indirect compulsion which society lays upon him, and those who are still governed by this Tamas are the Sudras, the serfs of society who give it their toil and can contribute nothing or very little else in

comparison with more developed men to its manifold play of life. By kinetic action man develops the rajasic Guna in him and we get a second type of man who is driven by a constant instinct for useful creation, production, having, acquisition, holding and enjoying, the middle economic and vital man, the Vaishya. At a higher elevation of the rajasic or kinetic quality of our one common nature we get the active man with a more dominant will, with bolder ambitions, with the instinct to act, battle, and enforce his will, at the strongest to lead, command, rule, carry masses of men in his orbit, the fighter, leader, ruler, prince, king, the Kshatriya. And where the sattwic mind predominates, we get the Brahmin, the man with a turn for knowledge, who brings thought, reflection, the seeking for truth and an intelligent or at the highest a spiritual rule into life and illumines by it his conception and mode of existence.

There is always in human nature something of all these four personalities developed or undeveloped, wide or narrow, suppressed or rising to the surface, but in most men one or the other tends to predominate and seems to take up sometimes the whole space of action in the nature. And in any society we should have all four types, – even, for an example, if we could create a purely productive and commercial society such as modern times have attempted, or for that matter a Sudra society of labour, of the proletariate such as attracts the most modern mind and is now being attempted in one part of Europe and advocated in others. There would still be the thinkers moved to find the

law and truth and guiding rule of the whole matter, the captains and leaders of industry who would make all this productive activity an excuse for the satisfaction of their need of adventure and battle and leadership and dominance, the many typical purely productive and wealth-getting men, the average workers satisfied with a modicum of labour and the reward of their labour. But these are quite outward things, and if that were all, this economy of human type would have no spiritual significance. Or it would mean at most, as has been sometimes held in India, that we have to go through these stages of development in our births; for we must perforce proceed progressively through

the tamasic, the rajaso-tamasic, the rajasic or rajaso-sattwic to the sattwic nature, ascend and fix ourselves in an inner Brahminhood, *brāhmaṇya*[41], and then seek salvation from that basis. But in that case there would be no logical room for the Gita's assertion that even the Sudra or Chandala can by turning his life Godwards climb straight to spiritual liberty and perfection."

[41] *The ancients held that all men are born in their lower nature as Sudras and only regenerated by ethical and spiritual culture, but in their highest inner self are Brahmanas capable of the full spirit and godhead, a theory which is not far perhaps from the psychological truth of our nature.*

"The fundamental truth is not this outward thing, but a force of our inner being in movement, the truth of the fourfold active power of the spiritual nature. Each Jiva possesses in his spiritual nature these four sides, is a soul of knowledge, a soul of strength and of power, a soul of mutuality and interchange, a soul of works and service, but one side or other predominates in the action and expressive spirit and tinges the dealings of the soul with its embodied nature; it leads and gives its stamp to the other powers and uses them for the principal strain of action, tendency, experience. The Swabhava then follows, not crudely and rigidly as put in the social demarcation, but

subtly and flexibly the law of this strain and develops in developing it the other three powers. Thus the pursuit of the impulse of works and service rightly done develops knowledge, increases power, trains closeness or balance of mutuality and skill and order of relation. Each front of the fourfold godhead moves through the enlargement of its own dominant principle of nature and enrichment by the other three towards a total perfection[42]. This development

[42] *None of these four types of personality can be complete even in its own field if it does not bring into it something of the other qualities. The man of knowledge cannot serve Truth with freedom and perfection, if he has not intellectual and moral courage, will, audacity, the strength to open and conquer new kingdoms, otherwise he becomes a slave of the limited*

undergoes the law of the three Gunas. There is possible a tamasic and rajasic way of following even the Dharma of the soul of knowledge, a brute tamasic and a high sattwic way of following the Dharma of power, a forceful rajasic or a beautiful and noble sattwic way of following the Dharma of works and service. To arrive at the sattwic way of the inner individual Swadharma and of

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intellect or a servant or at most a ritual priest of only an established knowledge, – cannot use his knowledge to the best advantage unless he has the adaptive skill to work out its truths for the practice of life, otherwise he lives only in the idea, – cannot make the entire consecration of his knowledge unless he has the spirit of service to humanity, to the Godhead in man and the Master of his being. The man of power must illumine and uplift and govern

the works to which it moves us on the ways of life is a preliminary condition of perfection. **And it may be noted that the inner Swadharma is not bound to any outward social or other form of action, occupation or function. The soul of works that is satisfied to serve or that element in us can, for example, make the life of the pursuit of knowledge, the life of struggle and power or the life of mutuality, production and interchange a means of satisfying its divine impulse to labour and to service.**

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his force and strength by knowledge, light of reason or religion or the spirit, otherwise he becomes the mere forceful Asura, – must have the skill which will help him best to use and administer and regulate his strength and make it creative and fruitful and adapted to his

And in the end to arrive at the divinest figure and most dynamic soul-power of this fourfold activity is a wide doorway to a swiftest and largest reality of the most high spiritual perfection. This we can do if we turn the action of the Swadharma into a worship of the inner Godhead, the universal Spirit, the transcendent Purushottama and, eventually, surrender the whole

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relations with others, otherwise it becomes a mere drive of force across the field of life, a storm that passes and devastates more than it constructs, – must be capable too of obedience and make the use of his strength a service to God and the world, otherwise he becomes a selfish dominator, tyrant, brutal compeller of men's souls and bodies. The man of productive mind and work must have an open inquiring mind and ideas and knowledge, otherwise he

action into his hands, *mayi sannyasya karmāṇi*. Then as we get beyond the limitation of the three Gunas, so also do we get beyond the division of the fourfold law and beyond the limitation of all distinctive Dharmas, *sarvadharmān parityajya*. The Spirit takes up the individual into the universal 18.57 3.30 12.6 18.66

moves in the routine of his functions without expansive growth, must have courage and enterprise, must bring a spirit of service into his getting and production, in order that he may not only get but give, not only amass and enjoy his own life, but consciously help the fruitfulness and fullness of the surrounding life by which he profits. The man of labour and service becomes a helpless drudge and slave of society if he does not bring knowledge and honour and aspiration and skill into his work, since only so can he rise by an opening mind

Swabhava, perfects and unifies the fourfold soul of nature in us and does its self-determined works according to the divine will and the accomplished power of the godhead in the creature."

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and will and understanding usefulness to the higher dharmas. But the greater perfection of man comes when he enlarges himself to include all these powers, even though one of them may lead the others, and opens his nature more and more into the rounded fullness and universal capacity of the fourfold spirit. Man is not cut out into an exclusive type of one of these dharmas, but all these powers are in him at work at first in an ill-formed confusion, but he gives shape to one or another in birth after birth, progresses from one to the other even in the same life and goes on towards the total development of his inner existence.

29. *The Supreme Secret*

"An ordinary religious teaching or philosophical doctrine is well enough satisfied to seize on certain great and vital aspects of truth and turn them into utilisable dogma and instruction, method and practice for the guidance of man in his inner life and the law and form of his action; it does not go farther, it does not open doors out of the circle of its own system, does not lead us out into some widest freedom and unimprisoned largeness. This limitation is useful and indeed for a time indispensable. Man bounded by his mind and will has need of a law and rule, a fixed system, a definite practice selective of his thought and action; he asks for the single unmistakable hewn path hedged, fixed and secure to the tread, for the limited horizons, for the enclosed resting-places. It is only the strong and few who can move through freedom to freedom. And yet in the end the free soul ought to have an issue out of the forms and systems in which the mind finds its account and takes its limited pleasure. To exceed our ladder of ascent, not to stop short even on the topmost stair but move untrammelled and at large in the wideness of the spirit is a release important for our perfection; the spirit's absolute liberty is our perfect status. And this is how the Gita leads us: it lays down a firm and sure but very large way of ascent, a great Dharma, and then it takes us out beyond all that is laid down, beyond all Dharmas, into infinitely open spaces, divulges to us the hope, lets us into the secret of an absolute perfection founded in an absolute spiritual liberty, and that secret, *guhyatamam*, is the substance of what it calls its supreme word, that the hidden thing, the inmost knowledge." 18.64

"The essence of the teaching and the Yoga has .. been given to the disciple on the field of his work and battle and the divine Teacher now proceeds to apply it to his action, but in a way that makes it applicable to all action. Attached to a crucial example, spoken to the protagonist of Kurukshetra, the words bear a much wider significance and are a universal rule for all who are ready to ascend above the ordinary mentality and to live and act in the highest spiritual consciousness. To break out of ego and personal mind and see everything in the wideness of the self and spirit, to know God and adore him in his integral truth and in all his aspects, to surrender all oneself to the transcendent Soul of nature and existence, to possess and be possessed by the divine consciousness, to be one with the One in universality of love and delight and will and knowledge, one in him with all beings, to do works as an adoration and a sacrifice on the divine foundation of a world in which all is God and in the divine status of a liberated spirit, is the sense of the Gita's Yoga. It is a transition from the apparent to the supreme spiritual and real truth of our being, and one enters into it by putting off the many limitations of the separative consciousness and the mind's attachment to the passion and unrest and ignorance, the lesser light and knowledge, the sin and virtue, the dual law and standard of the lower nature. Therefore, says the Teacher..."

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।
बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ।। 18.57।।

18.57. Devoting all thyself to Me, giving up in thy conscious mind all thy actions into Me, resorting to Yoga of the will and intelligence, be always one in heart and consciousness with Me.

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।
अथ चेत्त्वमहंकारान्न श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्ष्यसि ।। 18.58।।

18.58. One in heart and consciousness with Me at all times, by My grace thou shalt pass safe through all difficult and perilous passages; but if from egoism thou hear not, thou shalt fall into perdition.

यदहंकारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।
मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ।। 18.59।।

18.59. If in thy egoism, thou thinkest, "I will not fight", then vain is this thy resolve; thy nature shall appoint thee to thy work.

स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।
कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ।। 18.60।।

18.60. What from delusion thou desirest not to do, O Kaunteya, that helplessly thou shalt do bound by thy own work born of thy Swabhava (self-nature).

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ।। 18.61।।

18.61. The Lord is stationed in the heart of all existences, O Arjuna, and turns them all round and round, mounted on a machine by his Maya.

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ।। 18.62।।

18.62. In Him, O Bharata, take refuge in every way of thy being and by His grace thou shalt come to the supreme peace and the eternal status.

The verses 57 to 62 "...carry in them the innermost heart of this Yoga and lead to its crowning experience and we must understand them in their innermost spirit and in the whole vastness of that high summit of experience. The words express the most complete, intimate and living relation possible between God and man; they are instinct with the concentrated force of religious feeling that springs from the human being's absolute adoration, his upward surrender of his whole existence, his unreserved and perfect self-giving to the transcendent and universal Divinity from whom he comes and in whom he lives. This stress of feeling is in entire consonance with the high and enduring place that the Gita assigns to Bhakti, to the love of God, to the adoration of the Highest, as the inmost spirit and motive of the supreme action and the crown and core of the supreme knowledge. The phrases used and the spiritual emotion with which they vibrate seem to give the most intense prominence

possible and an utmost importance to the personal truth and presence of the Godhead. It is no abstract Absolute of the philosopher, no indifferent impersonal Presence or ineffable Silence intolerant of all relations to whom this complete surrender of all our works can be made and this closeness and intimacy of oneness with him in all the parts of our conscious existence imposed as the condition and law of our perfection or of whom this divine intervention and protection and deliverance are the promise. It is a Master of our works, a Friend and Lover of our soul, an intimate Spirit of our life, an indwelling and overdwelling Lord of all our personal and impersonal self and nature who alone can utter to us this near and moving message. And yet this is not the common relation established by the religions between man living in his sattwic or other ego-mind and some personal form and aspect of the Deity, *iṣṭa-deva*, constructed by that mind or offered to it to satisfy its limited

ideal, aspiration or desire. That is the ordinary sense and actual character of the normal mental being's religious devotion; but here there is something wider that passes beyond the mind and its limits and its Dharmas. It is something deeper than the mind that offers and something greater than the Ishta-deva that receives the surrender.

That which surrenders here is the Jiva, the essential soul, the original central and spiritual being of man, the individual Purusha... This is the profound comprehensiveness of the teaching of the Gita that while it recognises the truth of the universalised impersonality into which we enter by the extinction of ego, *brahma-nirvāṇa*, – for indeed without it there can be no liberation or at least no absolute release, – it recognises too the persistent spiritual truth of our personality as a factor of the highest experience. Not this natural but that divine and central being in us is the eternal Jiva. It is the Ishwara, Vasudeva 5.24 -26

who is all things, that takes up our mind and life and body for the enjoyment
7.5 of the lower Prakriti; it is the supreme Prakriti, the original spiritual nature of the supreme Purusha that holds together the universe and appears in it as the Jiva. This Jiva then is a portion of the Purushottama's original divine spiritual being, a living power of the living Eternal. He is not merely a temporary form
15.7 of lower Nature, but an eternal portion of the Highest in his supreme Prakriti, an eternal conscious ray of the divine existence and as everlasting as that supernal Prakriti.

And he who receives our surrender is no limited Deity but the Purushottama, the one eternal Godhead, the one supreme Soul of all that is and of all Nature, the original transcendent Spirit of existence... It is He, ineffable Absolute but also Friend and Lord and Enlightener and Lover, who is the object of this most complete devotion and approach and this most intimate inner becoming and surrender...

It is not an exclusive impersonality of the Absolute that is the highest secret. This highest secret is the miracle of a supreme Person and apparent vast Impersonal that are one, an immutable transcendent Self of all things and a Spirit that manifests itself here at the very foundation of cosmos as an infinite and multiple personality acting everywhere, – a Self and Spirit revealed to our last, closest, profoundest experience as an illimitable Being who accepts us and takes us to him, not into a blank of featureless existence, but most positively, deeply, wonderfully into all Himself and in all the ways of his and our conscious existence. This highest experience and this largest way of seeing open a profound, moving and endless significance to our parts of nature, our knowledge, will, heart's love and adoration, which is lost or diminished if we put an exclusive stress on the impersonal, because that stress suppresses or

minimises or does not allow of the intensest fulfilment of movements and powers that are a portion of our deepest nature, intensities and luminosities that are attached to the closest essential fibres of our self-experience. It is not the austerity of knowledge alone that can help us; there is room and infinite room for the heart's love and aspiration illumined and uplifted by knowledge, a more mystically clear, a greater calmly passionate knowledge. It is by the perpetual unified closeness of our heart-consciousness, mind-consciousness,
18.57 all-consciousness, *satataṁ maccittaḥ*, that we get the widest, the deepest, the most integral experience of our oneness with the Eternal. A nearest oneness in all the being, profoundly individual in a divine passion even in the midst of universality, even at the top of transcendence is here enjoined on the human soul as its way to reach the Highest and its way to possess the perfection and

the divine consciousness to which it is called by its nature as a spirit. The intelligence and will have to turn the whole existence in all its parts to the Ishwara, to the divine Self and Master of that whole existence, *buddhiyogam upāśritya*. The heart has to cast all other emotion into the delight of oneness with him and the love of him in all creatures. The sense spiritualised has to see and hear and feel him everywhere. The life has to be utterly his life in the Jiva. All the actions have to proceed from his sole power and sole initiation in the will, knowledge, organs of action, senses, vital parts, body. This way is deeply impersonal because the separateness of ego is abolished for the Soul universalised and restored to transcendence. And yet it is intimately personal because it soars to a transcendent passion and power of indwelling and oneness. A featureless extinction may be a rigorous demand of the mind's logic of self-annulment, it is not the last word of the supreme mystery, *rahasyam uttamam*. 18.57

18.58 The refusal of Arjuna to persevere in his divinely appointed work proceeded from the ego sense in him, *ahaṁkāra*. Behind it was a mixture and confusion and tangled error of ideas and impulsions of the sattwic, rajasic, tamasic ego, the vital nature's fear of sin and its personal consequences, the heart's recoil from individual grief and suffering, the clouded reason's covering of egoistic impulses by self-deceptive specious pleas of right and virtue, our nature's ignorant shrinking from the ways of God because they seem other than the ways of man and impose things terrible and unpleasant on his nervous and emotional parts and his intelligence. The spiritual consequences will be infinitely worse now than before, now that a higher truth and a greater way and spirit of action have been revealed to him, if yet persisting in his egoism he perseveres in a vain and impossible refusal. For it is a vain resolution, a futile recoil, since it springs only from a temporary failure of strength, a strong

but passing deviation from the principle of energy of his inmost character and is not the true will and way of his nature. If now he casts down his arms, he will yet be compelled by that nature to resume them when he sees the battle and slaughter go on without him, his abstention a defeat of all for which he has lived, the cause for whose service he was born weakened and bewildered by the absence or inactivity of its protagonist, vanquished and afflicted by the cynical and unscrupulous strength of the champions of a self-regarding unrighteousness and injustice. And in this return there will be no spiritual virtue. It was a confusion of the ideas and feelings of the ego mind that impelled his refusal; it will be his nature working through a restoration of the characteristic ideas and feelings of the ego mind that will compel him to annul his refusal. But whatever the direction, this continued subjection to the ego will mean a worse, a more fatal spiritual refusal, a perdition, *vinaṣṭi*; for it will 18.58

be a definite falling away from a greater truth of his being than that which he has followed in the ignorance of the lower nature. He has been admitted to a higher consciousness, a new self-realisation, he has been shown the possibility of a divine instead of an egoistic action; the gates have been opened before him of a divine and spiritual in place of a merely intellectual, emotional, sensuous and vital life. He is called to be no longer a great blind instrument, but a conscious soul and an enlightened power and vessel of the Godhead.

It is the Lord seated in the heart of every creature who has been turning us in all our inner and outer action during the ignorance as if mounted on a machine on the wheel of this Maya of the lower Nature. And whether obscure in the ignorance or luminous in the knowledge, it is for him in us and him in the world that we have our existence. To live consciously and integrally in this knowledge and this truth is to escape from ego and break out of Maya. All

other highest Dharmas are only a preparation for this Dharma, and all Yoga is only a means by which we can come first to some kind of union and finally, if we have the full light, to an integral union with the Master and supreme Soul and Self of our existence. The greatest Yoga is to take refuge from all the perplexities and difficulties of our nature with this indwelling Lord of all Nature, to turn to him with our whole being, with the life and body and sense and mind and heart and understanding, with our whole dedicated knowledge and will and action, *sarvabhāvena*, in every way of our conscious self and our instrumental nature. And when we can at all times and entirely do this, then the divine Light and Love and Power takes hold of us, fills both self and instruments and leads us safe through all the doubts and difficulties and perplexities and perils that beset our soul and our life, leads us to a supreme peace and the spiritual freedom of our immortal and eternal status, *parāṁ śāntim, sthānaṁ śāśvatam*." 15.19 18.62

इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ।। 18.63।।

18.63. So have I expounded to thee a knowledge more secret than the secret; reflect on it fully, then do as thou wouldst.

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ।। 18.64।।

18.64. Listen again to My supreme word, the most secret truth of all; intimate beloved art thou of Me, therefore shall I speak this for thy highest good.

"For after giving out all the laws, the Dharmas, and the deepest essence of its Yoga, after saying that beyond all the first secrets revealed to the mind of man by the transforming light of spiritual knowledge, *guhyāt*, this is a still deeper more secret truth, *guhyataram*, the Gita, suddenly declares that there is

yet a supreme word that it has to speak, *paramaṁ vacaḥ*, and a most secret truth of all, *sarva-guhyatamam*. This secret of secrets the Teacher will tell to Arjuna as his highest good because he is the chosen and beloved soul, *iṣṭa*. For evidently, as had already been declared by the Upanishad, it is only the rare soul chosen by the Spirit for the revelation of his very body, *tanuṁ svām*, who can be admitted to this mystery, because he alone is near enough in heart and mind and life to the Godhead to respond truly to it in all his being and to make it a living practice. The last, the closing supreme word of the Gita expressing the highest mystery is spoken in two brief, direct and simple Slokas and these are left without farther comment or enlargement to sink into the mind and reveal their own fullness of meaning in the soul's experience. For it is alone this inner incessantly extending experience that can make evident the infinite deal of meaning with which are forever pregnant these words in themselves

apparently so slight and simple. And we feel, as they are being uttered, that it was this for which the soul of the disciple was being prepared all the time and the rest was only an enlightening and enabling discipline and doctrine. Thus runs this secret of secrets, the highest most direct message of the Ishwara."

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ।। 18.65।।

18.65. Become My-minded, My lover and adorer, a sacrificer to Me, bow thyself to Me; to Me thou shalt come, this is My pledge and promise to thee, for dear art thou to Me.

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ।। 18.66।।

18.66. Abandon all Dharmas and take refuge in Me alone. I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve.

"The Gita throughout has been insisting on a great and well-built discipline of Yoga, a large and clearly traced philosophical system, on the Swabhava and the Swadharma, on the sattwic law of life as leading out of itself by a self-exceeding exaltation to a free spiritual Dharma of immortal existence utterly wide in its spaces and high-lifted beyond the limitation of even this highest Guna, on many rules and means and injunctions and conditions of perfection, and now suddenly it seems to break out of its own structure and says to the human soul, 'Abandon all Dharmas, give thyself to the Divine alone, to the supreme Godhead above and around and within thee: that is all that thou needst, that is the truest and greatest way, that is the real deliverance.' The Master of the worlds in the form of the divine Charioteer and Teacher of Kurukshetra has revealed to man the magnificent realities of God and Self and Spirit and the nature of the complex world and the relation of man's mind and life and heart and senses to the Spirit and the victorious means by which through his own spiritual self-discipline and effort he can rise out of mortality into immortality and out of his limited mental into his infinite spiritual existence. And now speaking as the Spirit and Godhead in man and in all things he says to him, "All this personal effort and self-discipline will not in the end be needed, all following and limitation of rule and Dharma can at last be thrown away as hampering encumbrances if thou canst make a complete surrender to Me, depend alone on the Spirit and Godhead within thee and all things and trust to his sole guidance. Turn all thy mind to Me and fill it with the thought of Me and My presence. Turn all thy heart to Me, make thy every action, whatever it be, a sacrifice and offering to Me. That done, leave Me to do My will with thy life and soul and action; do not be grieved or perplexed by My dealings with thy mind and heart and life and works or troubled because they do not seem to follow the laws and Dharmas man imposes on himself to guide his limited will and intelligence. My ways are the ways of a perfect wisdom and power and love that knows all things and combines all its movements in view of a perfect eventual result; for it is refining and weaving together the many threads of an integral perfection. I am here with thee in thy chariot of battle revealed as the Master of existence within and without thee and I repeat the absolute assurance, the infallible promise that I will lead thee to Myself through and beyond all sorrow and evil. Whatever difficulties and perplexities arise, be sure of this that I am leading thee to a complete divine life in the universal and an immortal existence in the transcendent Spirit.'

The secret thing, *guhyam*, that all deep spiritual knowledge reveals to us, mirrored in various teachings and justified in the soul's experience, is for the Gita the secret of the spiritual self hidden within us of which mind and external Nature are only manifestations or figures. It is the secret of the constant

relations between soul and Nature, Purusha and Prakriti, the secret of an indwelling Godhead who is the lord of all existence and veiled from us in its forms and movements. These are the truths taught in many ways by Vedanta and Sankhya and Yoga and synthetised in the earlier chapters of the Gita. And amidst all their apparent distinctions they are one truth and all the different ways of Yoga are various means of spiritual self-discipline by which our unquiet mind and blinded life are stilled and turned towards this many-aspected One and the secret truth of self and God made so real to us and intimate that we can either consciously live and dwell in it or lose our separate selves in the Eternal and no longer be compelled at all by the mental Ignorance.

The more secret thing, *guhyataram*, developed by the Gita is the profound reconciling truth of the divine Purushottama, at once self and Purusha, supreme Brahman and a sole, intimate, mysterious, ineffable Godhead. That gives to the thought a larger and more deeply understanding foundation for an ultimate knowledge and to the spiritual experience a greater and more fully comprehending and comprehensive Yoga. This deeper mystery is founded on the secret of the supreme spiritual Prakriti and of the Jiva, an eternal portion of the Divine in that eternal and this manifested Nature and of one spirit and essence with him in his immutable self-existence. This profounder knowledge escapes from the elementary distinction of spiritual experience between the Beyond and what is here. For the Transcendent beyond the worlds is at the same time Vasudeva who is all things in all worlds; he is the Lord standing in the heart of every creature and the self of all existences and the origin and supernal meaning of everything that he has put forth in his Prakriti. He is manifested in his Vibhutis and he is the Spirit in Time who compels the action of the world and the Sun of all knowledge and the Lover and Beloved of the soul and the Master of all works and sacrifice. The result of an inmost opening to this deeper, truer, more secret mystery is the Gita's Yoga of integral knowledge, integral works and integral Bhakti. It is the simultaneous experience of spiritual universality and a free and perfected spiritual individuality, of an entire union with God and an entire dwelling in him as at once the frame of the soul's immortality and the support and power of our liberated action in the world and the body.

And now there comes the supreme word and most secret thing of all, *guhyatamam*, that the Spirit and Godhead is an Infinite free from all dharmas and though he conducts the world according to fixed laws and leads man through his dharmas of ignorance and knowledge, sin and virtue, right and wrong, liking and disliking and indifference, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow and the rejection of these opposites, through his physical and vital, intellectual,

emotional, ethical and spiritual forms and rules and standards, yet the Spirit and Godhead transcends all these things, and if we too can cast away all dependence on Dharmas, surrender ourselves to this free and eternal Spirit and, taking care only to keep ourselves absolutely and exclusively open to him, trust to the light and power and delight of the Divine in us and, unafraid and ungrieving, accept only his guidance, then that is the truest, the greatest release and that brings the absolute and inevitable perfection of our self and nature. This is the way offered to the chosen of the Spirit, – to those only in whom he takes the greatest delight because they are nearest to him and most capable of oneness and of being even as he, freely consenting and concordant with Nature in her highest power and movement, universal in soul consciousness, transcendent in the spirit.

For a time comes in spiritual development when we become aware that all our effort and action are only our mental and vital reactions to the silent and secret insistence of a greater Presence in and around us. It is borne in on us that all our Yoga, our aspiration and our endeavour are imperfect or narrow forms, because disfigured or at least limited by the mind's associations, demands, prejudgements, predilections, mistranslations or half-translations of a vaster truth. Our ideas and experiences and efforts are mental images only of greatest things which would be done more perfectly, directly, freely, largely, more in harmony with the universal and eternal will by that Power itself in us if we could only put ourselves passively as instruments in the hands of a supreme and absolute strength and wisdom. That Power is not separate from us; it is our own self one with the self of all others and at the same time a transcendent Being and an immanent Person. Our existence, our action taken up into this greatest Existence would be no longer, as it seems to us now, individually our own in a mental separation. It would be the vast movement of an Infinity and an intimate ineffable Presence; it would be the constant spontaneity of formation and expression in us of this deep universal self and this transcendent Spirit. The Gita indicates that in order that that may wholly be, the surrender must be without reservations; our Yoga, our life, our state of inner being must be determined freely by this living Infinite, not predetermined by our mind's insistence on this or that dharma or any dharma. The divine Master of the Yoga, *yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇaḥ*, will then himself take up our Yoga and raise us to our 18.78
utmost possible perfection, not the perfection of any external or mental standard or limiting rule, but vast and comprehensive, to the mind incalculable. It will be a perfection developed by an all-seeing Wisdom according to the whole truth, first indeed of our human Swabhava, but afterwards of a greater thing into which it will open, a spirit and power illimitable, immortal, free and all-transmuting, the light and splendour of a divine and infinite nature.

All must be given as material of that transmutation. An omniscient consciousness will take up our knowledge and our ignorance, our truth and our error, cast away their forms of insufficiency, *sarva-dharmān parityajya,* and transform all into its infinite light. An almighty Power will take up our virtue and sin, our right and wrong, our strength and our weakness, cast away their tangled figures, *sarva-dharmān parityajya,* and transform all into its transcendent purity and universal good and infallible force. An ineffable Ananda will take up our petty joy and sorrow, our struggling pleasure and pain, cast away their discordances and imperfect rhythms, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*, and transform all into its transcendent and universal unimaginable delight. All that all the Yogas can do will be done and more; but it will be done in a greater seeing way, with a greater wisdom and truth than any human teacher, saint or sage can give us. The inner spiritual state to which this supreme Yoga will take us, will be above all that is here and yet comprehensive of all things in this and other worlds, but with a spiritual transformation of all, without limitation, without bondage, *sarva-dharmān parityajya.* The infinite existence, consciousness and delight of the Godhead in its calm silence and bright boundless activity will be there, will be its essential, fundamental, universal stuff, mould and character. And in that mould of infinity, the Divine made manifest will overtly dwell, no longer concealed by his Yogamaya, and whenever and as he wills build in us whatever shapes of the Infinite, translucent forms of knowledge, thought, love, spiritual joy, power and action according to his self-fulfilling will and immortal pleasure. And there will be no binding effect on the free soul and the unaffected nature, no unescapable crystallising into this or that inferior formula. For all the action will be executed by the power of the Spirit in a divine freedom, *sarva-dharmān parityajya.* An unfallen abiding in the transcendent Spirit, *param dhāma*, will be the foundation and the assurance of this spiritual state. An intimate understanding oneness with universal being and all creatures, released from the evil and suffering of the separative mind but wisely regardful of true distinctions, will be the conditioning power. A constant delight, oneness and harmony of the eternal individual here with the Divine and all that he is will be the effect of this integral liberation. The baffling problems of our human existence of which Arjuna's difficulty stands as an acute example, are created by our separative personality in the ignorance. This Yoga because it puts the soul of man into its right relation with God and world-existence and makes our action God's, the knowledge and will shaping and moving it his and our life the harmony of a divine self-expression, is the way to their total disappearance."

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।
न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ।। 18.67।।

18.67. Never is this to be spoken by thee to one who is without askesis, or devotion, nor to one who does not wish to hear or who despises and belittles Me.

य इमं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ।। 18.68।।

18.68. He who with the highest devotion for Me shall declare this supreme secret among My devotees, he shall undoubtedly come to Me.

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः ।
भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ।। 18.69 ।।

18.69. There is none among men who does dearer service to Me than he, nor shall there be another on earth dearer to Me than he.

अध्येष्यते च य इमं धर्म्यं संवादमावयोः ।
ज्ञानयज्ञेन तेनाहमिष्टः स्यामिति मे मतिः ।। 18.70 ।।

18.70. And he who shall study this sacred discourse of ours, by him I shall be worshipped through the sacrifice of knowledge, – so I hold.

श्रद्धावाननसूयश्च शृणुयादपि यो नरः ।
सोऽपि मुक्तः शुभाँल्लोकान्प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।। 18.71 ।।

18.71. And even he who would listen to it, full of faith and uncarping, being liberated, shall attain to the happy worlds of the righteous.

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।
कच्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनंजय ।। 18.72 ।।

18.72. Has it been heard by thee, O Partha, with concentrated mind? Thy delusion caused by ignorance, has it been destroyed, O Dhananjaya.

अर्जुन उवाच
नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ।। 18.73।।

18.73. Arjuna said: Destroyed is my delusion, I have regained memory through Thy grace O Achyuta (Infallible), I stand firm with my doubts dispelled. I will act according to Thy word.

"The whole Yoga is revealed, the great word of the teaching is given, and Arjuna the chosen human soul is once more turned, no longer in his egoistic mind but in this greatest self-knowledge, to the divine action. The Vibhuti is ready for the divine life in the human, his conscious spirit for the works of the liberated soul, *muktasya karma*. Destroyed is the illusion of the mind; the soul's memory of its self and its truth concealed so long by the misleading shows and forms of our life has returned to it and become its normal consciousness: all doubt and perplexity gone, it can turn to the execution of the command and do faithfully whatever work for God and the world may be appointed and apportioned to it by the Master of our being, the Spirit and Godhead self-fulfilled in Time and universe."

संजय उवाच
इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।
संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ।। 18.74।।

18.74. Sanjaya said: Thus have I heard this wonderful dialogue of Vasudeva and the great-souled Partha, causing my hair to stand on end.

व्यासप्रसादाच्छ्रुतवानेतद् गुह्यमहं परम् ।
योगं योगेश्वरात्कृष्णात्साक्षात्कथयतः स्वयम् ।। 18.75।।

18.75. By the grace of Vyasa I have heard this supreme secret Yoga, declared by Krishna Himself, the Master of Yoga, in person.

राजन्संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य संवादमिममद्भुतम् ।
केशवार्जुनयोः पुण्यं हृष्यामि च मुहुर्मुहुः ।। 18.76।।

18.76. O King, as I recall again and again this wonderful and sacred dialogue of Keshava and Arjuna, I am thrilled with joy again and again.

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।
विस्मयो मे महान् राजन्हृष्यामि च पुनः पुनः ।। 18.77।।

18.77. And as often as I recall that extraordinarily marvellous form of Hari (Krishna) great is my wonder, O King, and I am thrilled with joy again and again.

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ।। 18.78।।

18.78. Wherever is Krishna, the Master of Yoga, wherever is Partha, the archer, assured are there glory, victory, prosperity and the undeviating Law of Truth – this is my conviction.

"'The secret of action,' so we might summarise the message of the Gita, the word of its divine Teacher, 'is one with the secret of all life and existence. Existence is not merely a machinery of Nature, a wheel of law in which the soul is entangled for a moment or for ages; it is a constant manifestation of the Spirit. Life is not for the sake of life alone, but for God, and the living soul of man is an eternal portion of the Godhead. Action is for self-finding, for self-fulfilment, for self-realisation and not only for its own external and apparent fruits of the moment or the future. There is an inner law and meaning of all things dependent on the supreme as well as the manifested nature of the self;

the true truth of works lies there and can be represented only incidentally, imperfectly and disguised by ignorance in the outer appearances of the mind and its action. The supreme, the faultless largest law of action is therefore to find out the truth of your own highest and inmost existence and live in it and not to follow any outer standard and Dharma. All life and action must be till then an imperfection, a difficulty, a struggle and a problem. It is only by discovering your true self and living according to its true truth, its real reality that the problem can be finally solved, the difficulty and struggle overpassed and your doings perfected in the security of the discovered self and spirit turn

into a divinely authentic action. Know then your self; know your true self to be God and one with the self of all others; know your soul to be a portion of God. Live in what you know; live in the self, live in your supreme spiritual nature, be united with God and Godlike. Offer, first, all your actions as a sacrifice to the Highest and the One in you and to the Highest and the One in the world; deliver last all you are and do into his hands for the supreme and universal Spirit to do through you his own will and works in the world. This is the solution that I present to you and in the end you will find that there is no other.'"

Notes

Notes

Notes

Name & Addresses	Phone

Name & Addresses	***Phone***

Name & Addresses	*Phone*

Name & Addresses	Phone

READY-REFERENCE CALENDAR

For ascertaining any day of the week for any given time from 1800 to 2050 inclusive

COMMON YEARS, 1800 TO 2050										Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1801	1829	1857	1885	1914	1942	1970	1998	2026													
1807	1835	1863	1891	1925	1953	1981	2009	2037		4	7	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2
1818	1846	1874	1903	1931	1959	1987	2015	2043													
1802	1830	1858	1886	1915	1943	1971	1999	2027													
1813	1841	1869	1897	1926	1954	1982	2010	2038		5	1	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5	1	3
1819	1847	1875	1909	1937	1965	1993	2021	2049													
1803	1831	1859	1887	1921	1949	1977	2005	2033													
1814	1842	1870	1898	1927	1955	1983	2011	2039		6	2	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4
1825	1853	1881	1910	1938	1966	1994	2022	2050													
1805	1833	1861	1889	1907	1935	1963	1991	2019	2047												
1811	1839	1867	1895	1918	1946	1974	2002	2030		2	5	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7
1822	1850	1878	1901	1929	1957	1985	2013	2041													
1800	1823	1851	1879	1913	1941	1969	1997	2025													
1806	1834	1862	1890	1919	1947	1975	2003	2031		3	6	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1
1817	1845	1873	1902	1930	1958	1986	2014	2042													
1809	1837	1865	1893	1911	1939	1967	1995	2023													
1815	1843	1871	1899	1922	1950	1978	2006	2034		7	3	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5
1826	1854	1882	1905	1933	1961	1969	2017	2045													
1810	1838	1866	1894	1917	1945	1973	2001	2029													
1821	1849	1877	1900	1923	1951	1979	2007	2035		1	4	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6
1827	1855	1883	1906	1934	1962	1990	2018	2046													
LEAP YEARS, 1804 TO 2048											29										
1804	1832	1860	1888		1928	1956	1984	2012	2040	7	3	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6
1808	1836	1864	1892	1904	1932	1960	1988	2016	2044	5	1	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4
1812	1840	1868	1896	1908	1936	1964	1992	2020	2048	3	6	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2
1816	1844	1872		1912	1940	1968	1996	2024		1	4	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7
1820	1848	1876		1916	1944	1972	2000	2028		6	2	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5
1824	1852	1880		1920	1948	1976	2004	2032		4	7	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	6	1	3
1828	1856	1884		1924	1952	1980	2008	2036		2	5	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Monday 1	Tuesday 1	Wednesday 1	Thursday 1	Friday 1	Saturday 1	SUNDAY 1
Tuesday 2	Wednesday 2	Thursday 2	Friday 2	Saturday 2	SUNDAY 2	Monday 2
Wednesday 3	Thursday 3	Friday 3	Saturday 3	SUNDAY 3	Monday 3	Tuesday 3
Thursday 4	Friday 4	Saturday 4	SUNDAY 4	Monday 4	Tuesday 4	Wednesday 4
Friday 5	Saturday 5	SUNDAY 5	Monday 5	Tuesday 5	Wednesday 5	Thursday 5
Saturday 6	SUNDAY 6	Monday 6	Tuesday 6	Wednesday 6	Thursday 6	Friday 6
SUNDAY 7	Monday 7	Tuesday 7	Wednesday 7	Thursday 7	Friday 7	Saturday 7
Monday 8	Tuesday 8	Wednesday 8	Thursday 8	Friday 8	Saturday 8	SUNDAY 8
Tuesday 9	Wednesday 9	Thursday 9	Friday 9	Saturday 9	SUNDAY 9	Monday 9
Wednesday 10	Thursday 10	Friday 10	Saturday 10	SUNDAY 10	Monday 10	Tuesday 10
Thursday 11	Friday 11	Saturday 11	SUNDAY 11	Monday 11	Tuesday 11	Wednesday 11
Friday 12	Saturday 12	SUNDAY 12	Monday 12	Tuesday 12	Wednesday 12	Thursday 12
Saturday 13	SUNDAY 13	Monday 13	Tuesday 13	Wednesday 13	Thursday 13	Friday 13
SUNDAY 14	Monday 14	Tuesday 14	Wednesday 14	Thursday 14	Friday 14	Saturday 14
Monday 15	Tuesday 15	Wednesday 15	Thursday 15	Friday 15	Saturday 15	SUNDAY 15
Tuesday 16	Wednesday 16	Thursday 16	Friday 16	Saturday 16	SUNDAY 16	Monday 16
Wednesday 17	Thursday 17	Friday 17	Saturday 17	SUNDAY 17	Monday 17	Tuesday 17
Thursday 18	Friday 18	Saturday 18	SUNDAY 18	Monday 18	Tuesday 18	Wednesday 18
Friday 19	Saturday 19	SUNDAY 19	Monday 19	Tuesday 19	Wednesday 19	Thursday 19
Saturday 20	SUNDAY 20	Monday 20	Tuesday 20	Wednesday 20	Thursday 20	Friday 20
SUNDAY 21	Monday 21	Tuesday 21	Wednesday 21	Thursday 21	Friday 21	Saturday 21
Monday 22	Tuesday 22	Wednesday 22	Thursday 22	Friday 22	Saturday 22	SUNDAY 22
Tuesday 23	Wednesday 23	Thursday 23	Friday 23	Saturday 23	SUNDAY 23	Monday 23
Wednesday 24	Thursday 24	Friday 24	Saturday 24	SUNDAY 24	Monday 24	Tuesday 24
Thursday 25	Friday 25	Saturday 25	SUNDAY 25	Monday 25	Tuesday 25	Wednesday 25
Friday 26	Saturday 26	SUNDAY 26	Monday 26	Tuesday 26	Wednesday 26	Thursday 26
Saturday 27	SUNDAY 27	Monday 27	Tuesday 27	Wednesday 27	Thursday 27	Friday 27
SUNDAY 28	Monday 28	Tuesday 28	Wednesday 28	Thursday 28	Friday 28	Saturday 28
Monday 29	Tuesday 29	Wednesday 29	Thursday 29	Friday 29	Saturday 29	SUNDAY 29
Tuesday 30	Wednesday 30	Thursday 30	Friday 30	Saturday 30	SUNDAY 30	Monday 30
Wednesday 31	Thursday 31	Friday 31	Saturday 31	SUNDAY 31	Monday 31	Tuesday 31

NOTE: To ascertain any day of the week, first look in the table for the year required and under the months are figures which refer to the corresponding figures at the head of the columns of the days below. For Example:- To know on what day of the week 15th Aug., 1872 fell, look in the table of years for 1872, and in a parallel line under August is figure 4, which directs to column 4 in which it will be seen that August 15 fell on Thursday.

CONVERSION FACTORS

CONVERSION FACTORS

Abbreviation	Prefixes		for instance
		Mile (m) $\frac{1}{1000}$ of unit	
Metre-m	kilo (K)-1000 times unit		100 centimetres = 1 metre
Gramme-gm	hecto (h) - 100 times unit	centi (c) $\frac{1}{100}$ of unit	100 milligramme = 1 gramme
Litres-1	deca (dal) - 10 times unit	deci (d) $\frac{1}{10}$ of unit	100 litres = 1 hectolitre

Length

1 inch = 25.4 millimetres (mm)
1 foot = 30.48 centimetres (cm)
1 yard = 0.9144 metre (m)
1 mile = 1.6093 kilometres (km)
1 millimetre = 0.0328 inch.
1 centimetre = 0.0328 foot
1 metre = 1.094 yards
1 kilometre = 0.62137 mile

Centimetres		Inch
2.540	1	0.394
5.080	2	0.787
7.620	3	1.181
10.160	4	1.575
12.700	5	1.969
15.240	6	2.362
17.780	7	2.756
20.320	8	3.150
22.860	9	3.543

Metres		Yards
0.914	1	1.094
1.829	2	2.187
2.743	3	3.281
3.658	4	4.374
4.572	5	5.468
5.486	6	6.562
6.401	7	7.655
7.315	8	8.749
8.230	9	9.843

Kilometres		Miles
1.609	1	0.621
3.219	2	1.243
4.828	3	1.864
6.437	4	2.485
8.047	5	3.107
9.656	6	3.728
11.265	7	4.350
12.875	8	4.971
14.484	9	5.592

Volume

1 inch^3 = 16.387 centimetres^3
1 foot^3 = 28.316 decimetres^3
1 pint^3 = 0.568 litre
1 imperial gallon = 4.546 litres
1 centimetre^3 = 0.0610 inch^3
1 decimetre^3 = 0.035 feet^3
1 litre = 1.76 pints
1 litre = 0.220 Imperial gallon

Litre		Gallons
4.546	1	0.220
9.092	2	0.440
13.638	3	0.660
18.184	4	0.880
22.730	5	1.110
27.276	6	1.320
31.822	7	1.540
36.368	8	1.760
40.914	9	1.980

Weight

1 ounce = 28.349 gm.
1 pound = 0.4536 kg.
1 stone = 6.350 kilogrammes
1 cwt = 50/80 kilogrammes
1 ton = 1.016 metric tonnes
1 gramme = 0.03527 ounce
1 kilogramme = 2.205 pounds
1 kilogramme = 0.158 stone
1 kilogramme = 0.01968 cwt
1 metric tonne = 0.09842

Kilograms		Pounds
0.454	1	2.205
0.907	2	4.405
1.361	3	6.614
1.814	4	8.819
2.268	5	11.023
2.722	6	13.228
3.175	7	15.432
3.629	8	17.637
4.082	9	19.872

Area

1 sq. inch = 6.4516 sq. cm.
1 sq. yard = 0.8361 sq. metre
1 sq. mile = 2.589 sq. kilometres
1 acra = 4047 sq. metres
1 sq. centimetre = 0.155 sq. inch
1 sq. metre = 1.1960 sq. yards
1 sq. kilometre = 0.386 sq. mile
1 hectare = 10.000 sq. metres
1 hectare = 2.471 acres

Sq. Metres		Sq. Yards
0.836	1	1.196
1.672	2	2.392
2.508	3	3.588
3.345	4	4.784
4.181	5	5.980
5.017	6	7.176
5.853	7	8.372
6.689	8	9.568
7.525	9	10.764

Easy Conversion

Metres into yards
add one-tenth
Yards into metres
deduct one-tenth
Kilometres into miles
multiply by 5 and divide by 8
Miles into kilometres
multiply by 8 and divide by 5
Litres into pints
multiply by 7 and divide by 4
Pints into litres
multiply by 4 and divide by 7
Litres into gallons
multiply by 2 and divide by 9
Gallons into litres
multiply by 9 and divide by 2
Kilograms into pounds
divide by 9 and multiply by 20
Pounds into by kilograms
divide by 20 and multiply by 9

Double conversion Tables : The central figures represent either of the two columns besides them, as the case may be Exemple : 1 kilometre = 0.621 mile and one mile = 1.609 kilometres.

The Resurgent India Trust

The fundamental object of this Trust is to work for an integral resurgence of India so that it may assume its rightful place among the community of nations and, by its powerful example and spiritual influence open for humanity the way leading to the establishment of a divine life on earth which will be the supreme fulfilment of the ages long promises and pronouncements of the forthcoming kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

To assume its true position and fulfil its true role in the community of nations India must find back and manifest her soul which, at present, is completely covered up by an overwhelming commercialism which has spread everywhere and which has arisen out of the onslaught on it of the Western spirit of shortsighted utilitarianism. Individually one can fight it by becoming conscious of one's inner being or – better still – psychic being and letting it become conscious of India's soul and interested in knowing and serving it. The individuals who become conscious of India's Soul and its Mission will become the backbone of a group forming a strong body of cohesive will with the spiritual knowledge to save India and the world.

The Resurgent India Trust has been established by just such a group of people who having become conscious of India's Soul have acquired a living faith in its divine destiny and cannot help intensely loving it in spite of all the contrary surface appearances. This Trust hopes to become a powerful instrument of the expression of theirs and their countless other brothers' and sisters' faith and love for India.

It is believed that the most important thing for India – the one which when set right will automatically lead to the dissolution of most of its present problems and difficulties – is to recover the true sense of pride in its great culture, its glorious past and its supreme achievements. Therefore this Trust ardently seeks to awaken Indian people to the truth of their present condition and their great past and thus contribute to the forces leading to the recovery of their lost faith and pride – lost due to over one thousand years of subjugation to the rule of foreign invaders and the still continuing hold of their alien ideas on Indian minds – in the majesty, greatness and invincibility of their spiritual culture.