The Real Awakener



The Light of Lights

Words of Sri Aurobindo – 45

15th August, 2026

Volume 24 **Issue 4**

RNI NO. RAJENG/2002/09480

Name of the Publisher:	The Resurgent India Trust
Name of the Printer :	The Resurgent India Trust
Name of the Owner :	The Resurgent India Trust
Printed at :	Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Press Seth Rambilasrai Kothi, Khetan Mohalla Jhunjhunu - 333 001, Rajasthan
Published at :	Mira Ambica Bhawan, Khetan Mohalla, Jhunjhunu - 333 001, Rajasthan email: sadlecjjn@gmail.com URL : www.sadlec.org
Editor :	Anjana Dharnidharka
Price per copy:	Rs. 65/-

Contents

Selections from Essays on the Gita (CWSA 19)

1. Signs of the Divine Worker.....9

a. Freedom from the Personal Egoism of the Doer – the First Sign..... 9

b. The Second Sign – Freedom from Desire 9

c. The Third Sign – A spiritual Impersonality..... 10

d. The Fourth Sign – Equality..... 11

e. The Fifth Sign – A Perfect Inner Joy and Peace..... 12

2. The True Sannyasa of Action 13

3. The Importance of Equality in the Elements of the Gita's Karmayoga.....13

4. The Spiritual Nature of the Equality Enjoined in the Gita.....14

5. The Fundamental Reason behind Inequality – the Pleasure of the Ordinary Human Soul in the Normal Play of Life.....16

6. Yoga and Knowledge – the Two Wings of the Soul's Ascent 17

7. Equality and Knowledge 18

8. The Higher Knowledge and the Various Forms of the Lower Knowledge 20

9. The Imperative Necessity of Faith and the Utility of Doubt and Scepticism.....21

10. A Synthesis of God-Knowledge and Divine Works

.....22

11. The Varying Nature of the Freedom and Equality Attained Through Stoic Discipline and Through the Yoga of the Gita 23

12. Equality of the Gita and the Equality Based on Philosophic Indifference 25

13. Equality Based on Religious Resignation 26

14. The Laws of Life Arising from the Teachings of the Gita 27

15. The Determinism of Nature 29

16. Freedom Versus Determinism – the Real Versus the Apparent Self 30

17. How the Higher Truth May be Misunderstood and Misused 31

18. The Workings of Nature – the Utility of the Ego Idea and the Sense of Freedom 32

19. The Status Beyond the Modes of Nature 33

20. The Yoga of the Gita 34

21. Among Yogins the Greatest is the Bhakta 35

22. The First Six Chapters of the Gita 36

23. Our Modern Way of Solving the Original Problem of the Gita and the Solution Offered by the Gita 38

24. The Truth of the Ignorance and the Real Truth of

Our Being and the Gist of the Gita's Karmayoga.....40

25. The Great Distinction at the Root of the Gita's Karmayoga.....41

26. The Normal Human Condition – a Subjection and Slavery to the Outward Touches of Things.....41

27. How to Get Out of This State of Things? – the Conditions of the True Soul Life 43

28. The Two Difficulties and the Answer of the Gita Leading to Their Resolution.....45

To Love God in All Beings

""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 love of the world spiritualised, changed from a sense-experience to a soul-experience, is founded on the love of God and in that love there is no peril and no shortcoming. Fear and disgust of the world may often be necessary for the recoil from the lower nature, for it is really the fear and disgust of our own ego which reflects itself in the world. But to see God in the world is to fear nothing, it is to embrace all in the being of God; to see all as the Divine is to hate and loathe nothing, but love God in the world and the world in God." (245)

Selections from Essays on the Gita (CWSA 19)

1. Signs of the Divine Worker

a. Freedom from the Personal Egoism of the Doer – the First Sign

"...the liberated man is not afraid of action, he is a large and universal doer of all works, *kṛtsnakarmakrt*; not as others do them in subjection to Nature, but poised in the silent calm of the soul, tranquilly in Yoga with the Divine. The Divine is the lord of his works, he is only their channel through the instrumentality of his nature conscious of and subject to her Lord. By the flaming intensity and purity of this knowledge all his works are burned up as in a fire and his mind remains without any stain or disfiguring mark from them, calm, silent, unperturbed, white and clean and pure. To do all in this liberating knowledge, without the personal egoism of the doer, is the first sign of the divine worker." (179)

b. The Second Sign – Freedom from Desire

"The second sign is freedom from desire; for where there is not the personal egoism of the doer, desire be-comes impossible; it is starved out, sinks for want of a support, dies of inanition. Outwardly the liberated man seems to undertake works of all kinds like other men, on a larger scale perhaps with a more powerful will and driving-force, for the might of the divine will works in his active nature; but from all his inceptions and undertakings the inferior concept and nether will of desire is entirely banished, *sarve samārambhāḥ kāmasaṁkalpa-varjitāḥ*. He has abandoned all attachment to the fruits of his works, and where one does not work for the fruit, but solely as an impersonal instrument of the Master of works, desire can find no place, — not even the desire to serve successfully, for the fruit is the Lord's and determined by him and not by the personal will and effort, or to serve with credit and to

the Master's satisfaction, for the real doer is the Lord himself and all glory belongs to a form of his Shakti missioned in the nature and not to the limited human personality. The human mind and soul of the liberated man does nothing, *na kiñcit karoti*; even though through his nature he engages in action, it is the Nature, the executive Shakti, it is the conscious Goddess governed by the divine Inhabitant who does the work.

It does not follow that the work is not to be done perfectly, with success, with a right adaptation of means to ends: on the contrary a perfect working is easier to action done tranquilly in Yoga than to action done in the blindness of hopes and fears, lamed by the judgments of the stumbling reason, running about amidst the eager trepidations of the hasty human will: Yoga, says the Gita elsewhere, is the true skill in works, *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*. But all this is done impersonally by the action of a great universal light and power operating through the individual nature. The Karmayogin knows that the power given to him will be adapted to the fruit decreed, the divine thought behind the work equated with the work he has to do, the will in him, — which will not be wish or desire, but an impersonal drive of conscious power directed towards an aim not his own, — subtly regulated in its energy and direction by the divine wisdom. The result may be success, as the ordinary mind understands it, or it may seem to that mind to be defeat and failure; but to him it is always the success intended, not by him, but by the all-wise manipulator of action and result, because he does not seek for victory, but only for the fulfilment of the divine will and wisdom which works out its ends through apparent failure as well as and often with greater force than through apparent triumph." (179-80)

c. The Third Sign – A spiritual Impersonality

"The liberated man has no personal hopes; he does not seize on things as his personal possessions; he receives what the divine Will brings him, covets nothing, is jealous of none:

what comes to him he takes without repulsion and without attachment; what goes from him he allows to depart into the whirl of things without repining or grief or sense of loss. His heart and self are under perfect control; they are free from reaction and passion, they make no turbulent response to the touches of outward things. His action is in-deed a purely physical action, *śāriraṁ kevalaṁ karma*; for all else comes from above, is not generated on the human plane, is only a reflection of the will, knowledge, joy of the divine Purushottama. Therefore he does not by a stress on doing and its objects bring about in his mind and heart any of those reactions which we call passion and sin. For sin consists not at all in the outward deed, but in an impure reaction of the personal will, mind and heart which accompanies it or causes it; the impersonal, the spiritual is always pure, *apāpaviddham*, and gives to all that it does its own inalienable purity. This spiritual impersonality is a third sign of the divine worker." (180-81)

d. The Fourth Sign – Equality

"The result of this knowledge, this desirelessness and this impersonality is a perfect equality in the soul and the nature. Equality is the fourth sign of the divine worker. He has, says the Gita, passed beyond the dualities; he is *dvandvātīta*. We have seen that he regards with equal eyes, without any disturbance of feeling, failure and success, victory and defeat; but not only these, all dualities are in him surpassed and reconciled. The outward distinctions by which men determine their psychological attitude towards the happenings of the world, have for him only a subordinate and instrumental meaning. He does not ignore them, but he is above them. Good happening and evil happening, so all-important to the human soul subject to desire, are to the desireless divine soul equally welcome since by their mingled strand are worked out the developing forms of the eternal good. He cannot be defeated,

since all for him is moving towards the divine victory in the Kurukshetra of Nature, *dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre*, the field of doings which is the field of the evolving Dharma, and every turn of the conflict has been designed and mapped by the foreseeing eye of the Master of the battle, the Lord of works and Guide of the dharma. Honour and dishonour from men cannot move him, nor their praise nor their blame; for he has a greater clear-seeing judge and another standard for his action, and his motive admits no dependence upon worldly rewards. Arjuna the Kshatriya prizes naturally honour and reputation and is right in shunning disgrace and the name of coward as worse than death; for to maintain the point of honour and the standard of courage in the world is part of his dharma: but Arjuna the liberated soul need care for none of these things, he has only to know the *kartavyaṁ karma*, the work which the supreme Self demands from him, and to do that and leave the result to the Lord of his actions. He has passed even beyond that distinction of sin and virtue which is so all important to the human soul while it is struggling to minimise the hold of its egoism and lighten the heavy and violent yoke of its passions, — the liberated has risen above these struggles and is seated firmly in the purity of the witnessing and enlightened soul." (181-82)

e. The Fifth Sign – A Perfect Inner Joy and Peace

"Again, the sign of the divine worker is that which is central to the divine consciousness itself, a perfect inner joy and peace which depends upon nothing in the world for its source or its continuance; it is innate, it is the very stuff of the soul's consciousness, it is the very nature of divine being. The ordinary man depends upon outward things for his happiness; therefore he has desire; therefore he has anger and passion, pleasure and pain, joy and grief; therefore he measures all things in the balance of good fortune and evil for-tune. None of these things can affect the divine soul; it is ever satisfied

without any kind of dependence, *nityatṛpto nirāśrayaḥ*; for its delight, its divine ease, its happiness, its glad light are eternal within, in-grained in itself...." (184)

2. The True Sannyasa of Action

"...equality, impersonality, peace, joy, freedom do not depend on so outward a thing as doing or not doing works. The Gita insists repeatedly on the difference between the inward and the outward renunciation, *tyāga* and *sannyāsa*. The latter, it says, is valueless without the former, hardly possible even to attain without it, and unnecessary when there is the inward freedom. In fact *tyāga* itself is the real and sufficient Sannyasa. "He should be known as the eternal Sannyasin who neither hates nor desires; free from the dualities he is happily and easily released from all bondage." The painful process of outward Sannyasa, *duḥkham āptum*, is an unnecessary process. It is perfectly true that all actions, as well as the fruit of action, have to be given up, to be renounced, but inwardly, not outwardly, not into the inertia of Nature, but to the Lord in sacrifice, into the calm and joy of the Impersonal from whom all action proceeds without disturbing his peace. The true Sannyasa of action is the reposing of all works on the Brahman. "He who, having abandoned attachment, acts reposing (or founding) his works on the Brahman, *brahmaṇyādhāya karmāṇi*, is not stained by sin even as water clings not to the lotus-leaf."" (184-85)

3. The Importance of Equality in the Elements of the Gita's Karmayoga

"Since knowledge, desirelessness, impersonality, equality, the inner self-existent peace and bliss, freedom from or at least superiority to the tangled interlocking of the three modes of Nature are the signs of the liberated soul, they must accompany it in all its activities. They are the condition of that unalterable calm which this soul preserves in all the movement, all the

shock, all the clash of forces which surround it in the world. That calm reflects the equable immutability of the Brahman in the midst of all mutations, and it be-longs to the indivisible and impartial Oneness which is for ever immanent in all the multiplicities of the uni-verse. For an equal and all-equalising spirit is that Oneness in the midst of the million differences and inequalities of the world; and equality of the spirit is the sole real equality. For in all else in existence there can only be similarity, adjustment and balance; but even in the greatest similarities of the world we find difference of inequality and difference of unlikeness and the adjusted balancings of the world can only come about by a poising of combined unequal weights.

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. 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." (188)

4. The Spiritual Nature of the Equality Enjoined in the Gita

"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 āsinaḥ*, as the Gita 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." (189-90)

5. The Fundamental Reason behind Inequality – the Pleasure of the Ordinary Human Soul in the Normal Play of Life

"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 ad-verse 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 shad-ow 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." (190-92)

6. Yoga and Knowledge – the Two Wings of the Soul's Ascent

"Yoga and knowledge are, in this early part of the Gita's teaching, the two wings of the soul's ascent. By Yoga is meant union through divine works done without desire, with equality of soul to all things and all men, as a sacrifice to the Supreme, while knowledge is that on which this desirelessness, this equality, this power of sacrifice is founded. The two wings indeed assist each other's flight; acting together, yet with a subtle alter-nation of mutual aid, like the two eyes in

a man which see together because they see alternately, they increase one another mutually by interchange of substance. As the works grow more and more desireless, equal-minded, sacrificial in spirit, the knowledge increases; with the increase of the knowledge the soul becomes firmer in the desireless, sacrificial equality of its works. The sacrifice of knowledge, says the Gita therefore, is greater than any material sacrifice. "Even if thou art the greatest doer of sin beyond all sinners, thou shalt cross over all the crookedness of evil in the ship of knowledge. . . . There is nothing in the world equal in purity to knowledge." By knowledge desire and its first-born child, sin, are destroyed. The liberated man is able to do works as a sacrifice because he is freed from attachment through his mind, heart and spirit being firmly founded in self-knowledge, *gata-saṅgasya muktasya jñānāvasthi-tacetasaḥ*. All his work disappears completely as soon as done, suffers *laya*, as one might say, in the being of the Brahman, *pravilīyate*; it has no reactionary consequence on the soul of the apparent doer. The work is done by the Lord through his Nature, it is no longer personal to the human instrument. The work itself becomes but power of the nature and substance of the being of the Brahman." (200)

7. Equality and Knowledge

"...we are bewildered by the natural ignorance which hides from us the eternal self-knowledge of the Brahman secret within our being. But knowledge comes to its persistent seeker and removes the natural self-ignorance; it shines out like a long-hidden sun and lights up to our vision that self-being supreme beyond the dualities of this lower existence, *ādityavat prakāśayati tat param*. By a long whole-hearted endeavour, by directing our whole conscious being to that, by making that our whole aim, by turning it into the whole object of our discerning mind and so seeing it not only in ourselves but everywhere, we become one thought and self with that,

tad-buddllayas tad-ātmānaḥ, we are washed clean of all the darkness and suffering of the lower man by the waters of knowledge,[1] *jñāna-nirdhūta-kalmaṣāḥ*. The result is, says the Gita, a perfect equality to all things and all persons; and then only can we repose our works completely in the Brahman. For the Brahman is equal, *samam· brahma*, and it is only when we have this perfect equality, *s ¯amye sthitam· manah*. , "seeing with an equal eye the learned and cultured Brahmin, the cow, the elephant, the dog, the outcaste" and knowing all as one Brahman, that we can, living in that oneness, see like the Brahman our works proceeding from the nature freely without any fear of attachment, sin or bondage. Sin and stain then cannot be; for we have overcome that creation full of desire and its works and reactions which belongs to the ignorance, *tair jitah. sargah.* , and living in the supreme and divine Nature there is no longer fault or defect in our works; for these are created by the inequalities of the ignorance. The equal Brahman is faultless, *nirdoṣaṁ hi samaṁ brahma*, beyond the confusion of good and evil, and living in the Brahman we too rise beyond good and evil; we act in that purity, stainlessly, with an equal and single purpose of fulfilling the welfare of all existences, *kṣīṇa-kalmaṣāḥ sarvabhūta-hite ratāḥ*. The Lord in our hearts is in the ignorance also the cause of our actions, but through his Maya, through the egoism of our lower nature which creates the tangled web of our actions and brings back upon our egoism the recoil of their tangled reactions affecting us inwardly as sin and virtue, affecting us outwardly as suffering and pleasure, evil fortune and good fortune, the great chain of Karma. When we are freed by knowledge, the Lord, no longer hidden in our hearts, but manifest as our supreme self, takes up our works and uses

[1] The Rigveda so speaks of the streams of the Truth, the waters that have perfect knowledge, the waters that are full of the divine sunlight, *ṛtasya dhārāḥ*, *āpo vicetasaḥ, svarvatīr apaḥ*. What are here metaphors, are there concrete symbols.

us as faultless instruments, *nimitta-mātram*, for the helping of the world. Such is the intimate union between knowledge and equality; knowledge here in the buddhi reflected as equality in the temperament; above, on a higher plane of consciousness, knowledge as the light of the Being, equality as the stuff of the Nature." (202-03)

8. The Higher Knowledge and the Various Forms of the Lower Knowledge

"Always in this sense of a supreme self-knowledge is this word *jñāna* used in Indian philosophy and Yoga; it is the light by which we grow into our true being, not the knowledge by which we increase our information and our intellectual riches; it is not scientific or psychological or philosophic or ethical or aesthetic or worldly and practical knowledge. These too no doubt help us to grow, but only in the becoming, not in the being; they enter into the definition of Yogic knowledge only when we use them as aids to know the Supreme, the Self, the Divine, — scientific knowledge, when we can get through the veil of processes and phenomena and see the one Reality behind which explains them all; psychological knowledge, when we use it to know ourselves and to distinguish the lower from the higher, so that this we may renounce and into that we may grow; philosophical knowledge, when we turn it as a light upon the essential principles of existence so as to discover and live in that which is eternal; ethical knowledge, when by it having distinguished sin from virtue we put away the one and rise above the other into the pure innocence of the divine Nature; aesthetic knowledge, when we discover by it the beauty of the Divine; knowledge of the world, when we see through it the way of the Lord with his creatures and use it for the service of the Divine in man. Even then they are only aids; the real knowledge is that which is a secret to the mind, of which the mind only gets reflections, but which lives in the spirit.

The Gita in describing how we come by this knowledge, says that we get first initiation into it from the men of knowledge who have *seen*, not those who know merely by the intellect, its essential truths; but the actuality of it comes from within ourselves: "the man who is perfected by Yoga, finds it of himself in the self by the course of Time," it grows within him, that is to say, and he grows into it as he goes on increasing in desirelessness, in equality, in devotion to the Divine. It is only of the supreme knowledge that this can altogether be said; the knowledge which the intellect of man amasses, is gathered laboriously by the senses and the reason from outside. To get this other knowledge, self-existent, intuitive, self-experiencing, self-revealing, we must have conquered and con-trolled our mind and senses, *saṁyatendriyaḥ*, so that we are no longer subject to their delusions, but rather the mind and senses become its pure mirror; we must have fixed our whole conscious being on the truth of that supreme reality in which all exists, *tat-paraḥ*, so that it may display in us its luminous self-existence." (203-04)

9. The Imperative Necessity of Faith and the Utility of Doubt and Scepticism

"...we must have a faith which no intellectual doubt can be allowed to disturb, *śraddhāvān labhate jñānam*. "The ignorant who has not faith, the soul of doubt goeth to perdition; neither this world, nor the supreme world, 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 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 op-posed 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. Finally, it is in itself a self-existent truth and would be self-evident if it were not for the sorceries of the ignorance in which we live; the doubts, the perplexities which prevent us from accepting and following it, arise from that ignorance, from the sense-bewildered, opinion-perplexed heart and mind, living as they do in a lower and phenomenal truth and therefore questioning the higher realities, *ajñānasambhūtaṁ hṛtsthaṁ saṁśayam*. They have to be cut away by the sword of knowledge, says the Gita, by the knowledge that realises, by resorting constantly to Yoga, that is, by living out the union with the Supreme whose truth being known all is known, *yasmin vijñāte sarvam vijñātam*." (204-05)

10. A Synthesis of God-Knowledge and Divine Works

"...the knowledge by which we rise beyond all relapse back into the bewilderment of our mental nature, is "that by

which thou shalt see all existences without exception in the Self, then in Me." Elsewhere the Gita puts it more largely, "Equal-visioned everywhere, he sees the Self in all existences and all existences in the Self. He who sees Me everywhere and all and each in Me, is never lost to Me nor I to him. He who has reached oneness and loves Me in all beings, that Yogin, howsoever he lives and acts, is living and acting in Me. O Arjuna, he who sees all equally everywhere as himself, whether it be happiness or suffering, I hold him to be the supreme Yogin." That is the old Vedantic knowledge of the Upanishads which the Gita holds up constantly before us; but it is its superiority to other later formulations of it that it turns persistently this knowledge into a great practical philosophy of divine living. Always it insists on the relation between this knowledge of oneness and Karmayoga, and therefore on the knowledge of oneness as the basis of a liberated action in the world. Whenever it speaks of knowledge, it turns at once to speak of equality which is its result; whenever it speaks of equality, it turns to speak too of the knowledge which is its basis. The equality it enjoins does not begin and end in a static condition of the soul useful only for self-liberation; it is always a basis of works. The peace of the Brahman in the liberated soul is the foundation; the large, free, equal, worldwide action of the Lord in the liberated nature radiates the power which proceeds from that peace; these two made one synthesise divine works and God-knowledge." (205-06)

11. The Varying Nature of the Freedom and Equality Attained Through Stoic Discipline and Through the Yoga of the Gita

"Endurance, philosophic indifference, resignation are, we have said, the foundation of three kinds of equality; but the Gita's truth of knowledge not only gathers them all up together, but gives them an infinitely profound, a magnificently ample significance. 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," 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. There is a divine Master of Nature and her works, above her though inhabiting her, who is our highest being and our universal self; to be one with him is to make ourselves divine. By union with God we enter into a supreme freedom and a supreme mastery. The ideal of the Stoic, the sage who is king because by self-rule he becomes master also of outward conditions, resembles superficially the Vedantic idea of the self-ruler and all-ruler, *svarāṭ samrāṭ*; but it is on a lower plane. The Stoic kingship is maintained by a force put upon self and environment; the entirely liberated kingship of the Yogin exists naturally by the eternal royalty of the divine nature, a union with its unfettered universality, a finally unforced dwelling in its superiority to the instrumental nature through which it acts. His mastery over things is because he has become one soul with all things. To take an image from Roman institutions, the Stoic freedom is that of the *libertus*, the freedman, who is still really a dependent on the power that once held him enslaved; his is a freedom allowed by Nature because he has merited it. 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 kingdom which he enjoys, *rājyaṁ ṣamrddham*, is a sweet and happy dominion of which it may be said, in the pregnant phrase of the Greek thinker, "The kingdom is of the child."" (206-07)

12. Equality of the Gita and the Equality Based on Philosophic Indifference

"The knowledge of the philosopher is that of the true nature of mundane existence, the transience of out-ward things, the vanity of the world's differences and distinctions, the superiority of the inner calm, peace, light, self-dependence. It is an equality of philosophic indifference; it brings a high calm, but not the greater spiritual joy; it is an isolated freedom, a wisdom like that of the Lucretian sage high in his superiority upon the cliff-top whence he looks down on men tossed still upon the tempestuous waters from which he has escaped, — 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, *udāsinavat*, 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 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, in-deed, 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 the sage, the Be-loved 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?" (207-08)

13. Equality Based on Religious Resignation

"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 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." (208-09)

14. The Laws of Life Arising from the Teachings of the Gita

"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 arises 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 *lokasaṅgraha*, impersonally, for the keeping and leading of the 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 out-ward 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.

Oneness with God, oneness with all beings, the realisation of the eternal divine unity everywhere and the drawing onwards of men towards that oneness are the law of life which arises from the teachings of the Gita. There can be none greater, wider, more profound. Liberated oneself, to live in this oneness, to help mankind on the path that leads towards it and meanwhile to do all works for God and help man also to do with joy and acceptance all the works to which he is called, *kṛtsnakarmakrt*, *sarvakarmāṇi joṣayan*, no greater or more liberal rule of divine works can be given. This freedom and this oneness are the secret goal of our human nature and the ultimate will in the existence of the race. It is that to which it must turn for the happiness all mankind is now vainly seeking, when once men lift their eyes and their hearts to see the Divine in them and around, in all and everywhere, *sarveṣu*, *sarvatra*, and learn that it is in him they live, while this lower nature of division is only a prison-wall which they must break down or at best an infant-school which they must outgrow, so that they may become adult in nature and free in

spirit. To be made one self with God above and God in man and God in the world is the sense of liberation and the secret of perfection." (209-11)

15. The Determinism of Nature

"The passages in which the Gita lays stress on the subjection of the ego-soul to Nature, have by some been understood as the enunciation of an absolute and a mechanical determinism which leaves no room for any freedom within the cosmic existence. Certainly, the language it uses is emphatic and seems very absolute. But we must take, here as elsewhere, the thought of the Gita as a whole and not force its affirmations in their solitary sense quite detached from each other, — as indeed every truth, however true in itself, yet, taken apart from others which at once limit and complete it, becomes a snare to bind the intellect and a misleading dogma; for in reality each is one thread of a complex weft and no thread must be taken apart from the weft. Everything in the Gita is even so interwoven and must be understood in its relation to the whole. The Gita itself makes a distinction between those who have not the knowledge of the whole, *akṛtsnavidaḥ*, and are misled by the partial truths of existence, and the Yogin who has the synthetic knowledge of the totality, *kṛtsnavit*. To see all existence steadily and see it whole and not be misled by its conflicting truths, is the first necessity for the calm and complete wisdom to which the Yogin is called upon to rise. A certain absolute freedom is one aspect of the soul's relations with Nature at one pole of our complex being; a certain absolute determinism by Nature is the opposite aspect at its opposite pole; and there is also a partial and apparent, therefore an unreal eidolon of liberty which the soul receives by a contorted reflection of these two opposite truths in the developing mentality. It is the latter to which we ordinarily give, more or less inaccurately, the name of free will; but the Gita regards nothing as freedom which is not a complete

liberation and mastery." (212-13)

16. Freedom Versus Determinism – the Real Versus the Apparent Self

"The perception of the ignorance of our assumption of freedom while one is all the time in the meshes of this lower nature, is the view-point at which the Gita arrives and it is in contradiction to this ignorant claim that it affirms the complete subjection of the ego-soul on this plane to the gunas. "While the actions are being entirely done by the modes of Nature," it says, "he whose self is bewildered by egoism thinks that it is his 'I' which is doing them. But one who knows the true principles of the divisions of the modes and of works, realises that it is the modes which are acting and reacting on each other and is not caught in them by attachment. Those who are bewildered by the modes, get attached to the modes and their works; dull minds, not knowers of the whole, let not the knower of the whole disturb them in their mental standpoint. Giving up thy works to Me, free from desire and egoism, fight delivered from the fever of thy soul." Here there is the clear distinction between two levels of consciousness, two standpoints of action, that of the soul caught in the web of its egoistic nature and doing works with the idea, but not the reality of free will, under the impulsion of Nature, and that of the soul delivered from its identification with the ego, observing, sanctioning and governing the works of Nature from above her.

We speak of the soul being subject to Nature; but on the other hand the Gita in distinguishing the properties of the soul and Nature affirms that while Nature is the executrix, the soul is always the lord, *īśvara*. It speaks here of the self being bewildered by egoism, but the real Self to the Vedantin is the divine, eternally free and self-aware. What then is this self that is bewildered by Nature, this soul that is subject to her? The answer is that we are speaking here in the common parlance

of our lower or mental view of things; we are speaking of the apparent self, of the apparent soul, not of the real self, not of the true Purusha. It is really the ego which is subject to Nature, inevitably, because it is itself part of Nature, one functioning of her machinery; but when the self-awareness in the mind-consciousness identifies itself with the ego, it creates the appearance of a lower self, an ego-self. And so too what we think of ordinarily as the soul is really the natural personality, not the true Person, the Purusha, but the desire-soul in us which is a reflection of the consciousness of the Purusha in the workings of Prakriti: it is, in fact, itself only an action of the three modes and therefore a part of Nature. Thus there are, we may say, two souls in us, the apparent or desire-soul, which changes with the mutations of the gunas and is entirely constituted and determined by them, and the free and eternal Purusha not limited by Nature and her gunas." (214-15)

17. How the Higher Truth May be Misunderstood and Misused

"...higher truths can only be helpful, because there only they are true to experience and can be lived, on a higher and vaster plane of consciousness and being. To view these truths from below is to mis-see, misunderstand and probably to misuse them. It is a higher truth that the distinction of good and evil is indeed a practical fact and law valid for the egoistic human life which is the stage of transition from the animal to the divine, but on a higher plane we rise beyond good and evil, are above their duality even as the Godhead is above it. But the unripe mind, seizing on this truth without rising from the lower consciousness where it is not practically valid, will simply make it a convenient excuse for indulging its Asuric propensities, denying the distinction between good and evil altogether and falling by self-indulgence deeper into the morass of perdition, *sarva-jñāna-vimūḍhān naṣṭān acetasaḥ*. So too with this truth of the determinism of Nature; it will be

mis-seen and misused, as those misuse it who declare that a man is what his nature has made him and cannot do otherwise than as his nature compels him. It is true in a sense, but not in the sense which is attached to it, not in the sense that the ego-self can claim irresponsibility and impunity for itself in its works; for it has will and it has desire and so long as it acts according to its will and desire, even though that be its nature, it must bear the reactions of its Karma. It is in a net, if you will, a snare which may well seem perplexing, illogical, unjust, terrible to its present experience, to its limited self-knowledge, but a snare of its own choice, a net of its own weaving." (217)

18. The Workings of Nature – the Utility of the Ego Idea and the Sense of Freedom

"And error or not, illusion or not, this idea of our will, of our action is not a thing of no consequence, of no utility; everything in Nature has a consequence and a utility. It is rather that process of our conscious being by which Nature in us becomes more and more aware of and responsive to the presence of the secret Purusha within her and opens by that increase of knowledge to a greater possibility of action; it is by the aid of the ego-idea and the personal will that she raises herself to her own higher possibilities, rises out of the sheer or else the predominant passivity of the tamasic nature into the passion and the struggle of the rajasic nature and from the passion and the struggle of the rajasic nature to the greater light, happiness and purity of the sattwic nature. The relative self-mastery gained by the natural man over himself is the dominion achieved by the higher possibilities of his nature over its lower possibilities, and this is done in him when he associates his idea of self with the struggle of the higher guna to get the mastery, the predominance over the lower guna. The sense of free will, illusion or not, is a necessary machinery of the action of Nature, necessary for man during his progress, and it would be disastrous for him to lose it before he is ready

for a higher truth. If it be said, as it has been said, that Nature deludes man to fulfil her behests and that the idea of a free individual will is the most powerful of these delusions, then it must also be said that the delusion is for his good and without it he could not rise to his full possibilities.

But it is not a sheer delusion, it is only an error of standpoint and an error of placement. The ego thinks that it is the real self and acts as if it were the true centre of action and as if all existed for its sake, and there it commits an error of standpoint and placement. It is not wrong in thinking that there is something or someone within ourselves, within this action of our nature, who is the true centre of its action and for whom all exists; but this is not the ego, it is the Lord secret within our hearts, the divine Purusha, and the Jiva, other than ego, who is a portion of his being. The self-assertion of ego-sense is the broken and distorted shadow in our minds of the truth that there is a real Self within us which is the master of all and for whom and at whose behest Nature goes about her works. So too the ego's idea of free will is a distorted and misplaced sense of the truth that there is a free Self within us and that the will in Nature is only a modified and partial reflection of its will, modified and partial because it lives in the successive moments of Time and acts by a constant series of modifications which forget much of their own precedents and are only imperfectly conscious of their own consequences and aims. But the Will within, exceeding the moments of Time, knows all these, and the action of Nature in us is an attempt, we might say, to work out under the difficult conditions of a natural and egoistic ignorance what is foreseen in full supramental light by the inner Will and Knowledge." (225-26)

19. The Status Beyond the Modes of Nature

"Brahman in the Kshara supports wholly the action of Prakriti, Brahman in the Akshara, even while sup-porting,

dissociates itself from the action, preserves its freedom; the individual soul, unified with the Brahman in the Akshara, is free and dissociated, yet, unified with the Brahman in the Kshara, supports but is not affected. This it can do best when it sees that both are aspects of the one Purushottama. The Purushottama, inhabiting all existences as the secret Ishwara, controls the Nature and by his will, now no longer distorted and disfigured by the ego-sense, the Nature works out the actions by the swabhava; the individual soul makes the divinised natural being an instrument of the divine Will, *nimitta-mātram*. He remains even in action *triguṇātīta*, beyond the gunas, free from the gunas, *nistraiguṇya*, he fulfils entirely at last the early injunction of the Gita, *nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna*. He is indeed still the enjoyer of the gunas, as is the Brahman, though not limited by them, *nirguṇaṁ guṇabhoktṛ ca*, unattached, yet all-supporting, even as is that Brahman, *asaktaṁ sarvabhṛt*: but the action of the gunas within him is quite changed; it is lifted above their egoistic character and reactions. For he has unified his whole being in the Purushottama, has assumed the divine being and the higher divine nature of becoming, *madbhāva*, has unified even his mind and natural consciousness with the Divine, *manmanā maccittaḥ*. This change is the final evolution of the nature and the consummation of the divine birth, *rahasyam uttamam*. When it is accomplished, the soul is aware of itself as the master of its nature and, grown a light of the divine Light and will of the divine Will, is able to change its natural workings into a divine action." (232-33)

20. The Yoga of the Gita

"This Yoga, it says, is not for the man who gives up sleep and food and play and action, even as it is not for those who indulge too much in these things of the life and the body; but the sleep and waking, the food, the play, the putting forth of effort in works should all be *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"* (243-44)

21. Among Yogins the Greatest is the Bhakta

""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. "Of all Yogins he who with all his inner self given up to Me, for Me has love and faith, *śraddhāvān bhajate*, 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." (246)

22. The First Six Chapters of the Gita

"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. If the Gita were not a great written Scripture which must be carried to its end, if it were actually a discourse by a living teacher to a disciple which could be resumed in good time, when the disciple was ready for farther truth, one could conceive of his stopping here at the end of the sixth chapter and saying, "Work this out first, there is plenty for you to do to realise it and you have the largest possible basis; as difficulties arise, they will solve themselves or I will solve them for you. But at present live out what I have told you; work in this spirit." True, there are many things here which cannot be properly understood except in the light thrown on them by what is to come after. In order to clear up immediate difficulties and obviate possible misunderstandings, I have had myself to anticipate a good deal, to bring in repeatedly, for example, the idea of the Purushottama, for without that it would have been impossible to clear up certain obscurities about the Self and action and the Lord of action, which the Gita deliberately accepts so that it may not disturb the firmness of the first steps by reaching out prematurely to things too great as yet for the mind of the human disciple.

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." (247-48)

23. Our Modern Way of Solving the Original Problem of the Gita and the Solution Offered by the Gita

"We may then pause to consider how far they 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. By itself it raises in the first instance just this question, whether Arjuna should be governed by the ethical sense of personal sin in slaughter or by the consideration equally ethical of his public and social duty, the defence of the Right, the opposition demanded by conscience from all noble natures to the armed forces of injustice and oppression? That question has been raised in our own time and the present hour, and it can be solved, as we solve it now, by one or other of very various solutions, but all from the standpoint of our normal life and our normal human mind. It may be answered as a question between the personal conscience and our duty to the society and the State, between an ideal and a practical morality, between "soul-force" and the recognition of the troublesome fact that life is not yet at least all soul and that to take up arms for the right in a physical struggle is sometimes inevitable. All these solutions are, however, intellectual, temperamental, emotional; they depend upon the individual standpoint and are at the best our own proper way of meeting the difficulty offered to us, proper because suitable to our nature and the stage of our ethical and intellectual evolution, the best we can, with the light we have, see and do; it leads to no final solution. And this is so because it proceeds from the normal mind which is always a tangle of various tendencies of our being and can only arrive at a choice or an accommodation between them,

between our reason, our ethical being, our dynamic needs, our life-instincts, our emotional being and those rarer movements which we may perhaps call soul-instincts or psychical preferences. 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." (248-50)

24. The Truth of the Ignorance and the Real Truth of Our Being and the Gist of the Gita's Karmayoga

"Our mental and vital personality is a truth of our natural existence, but a truth of the ignorance, and all that attaches itself to it is also truth of that order, practically valid for the works of the ignorance, but no longer valid when we get back to the real truth of our being. But how can we actually be sure that this is the truth? We cannot so long as we remain satisfied with our ordinary mental experience; for our normal mental experience is wholly that of this lower nature full of the ignorance. 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 re-birth, the divine birth, and, having become divine, do still divine works as an instrument of the Divine for the leading of the peoples. Therefore there are here two things which have to be clearly laid down and clearly grasped, the way to the change, to this upward transference, this new divine birth, and the nature of the work or rather the spirit in which it has to be done, since the outward form of it need not at all change, although really

its scope and aim become quite different." (250-51)

25. The Great Distinction at the Root of the Gita's Karmayoga

"Looking only at the psychological facts on which these philosophical distinctions are founded, — philosophy is only a way of formulating to ourselves intellectually in their essential significance the psychological and physical facts of existence and their relation to any ultimate reality that may exist, — we may say that there are two lives we can lead, the life of the soul engrossed in the workings of its active nature, identified with its psychological and physical instruments, limited by them, bound by its personality, subject to Nature, and the life of the Spirit, superior to these things, large, impersonal, universal, free, unlimited, transcendent, supporting with an infinite equality its natural being and action, but exceeding them by its freedom and infinity. We may live in what is now our natural being or we may live in our greater and spiritual being. This is the first great distinction on which the Karmayoga of the Gita is founded." (253)

26. The Normal Human Condition – a Subjection and Slavery to the Outward Touches of Things

"The whole question and the whole method lie then in the liberation of the soul from the limitations of our present natural being. In our natural life the first dominating fact is our subjection to the forms of material Nature, the outward touches of things. These present themselves to our life through the senses, and the life through the senses immediately returns upon these objects to seize upon them and deal with them, desires, attaches itself, seeks for results. The mind in all its inner sensations, reactions, emotions, habitual ways of perceiving, thinking and feeling obeys this action of the senses; the reason too carried away by the mind gives itself up to this life of the senses, this life in which the inner being is subject

to the externality of things and cannot for a moment really get above it or outside the circle of its action upon us and its psycho-logical results and reactions within us. It cannot get beyond them because there is the principle of ego by which the reason differentiates the sum of the action of Nature upon our mind, will, sense, body from her action in other minds, wills, nervous organisms, bodies; and life to us means only the way she affects our ego and the way our ego replies to her touches. We know nothing else, we seem to be nothing else; the soul itself seems then only a separate mass of mind, will, emotional and nervous reception and reaction. We may enlarge our ego, identify ourselves with the family, clan, class, country, nation, humanity even, but still the ego remains in all these disguises the root of our actions, only it finds a larger satisfaction of its separate being by these wider dealings with external things.

What acts in us is still the will of the natural being seizing upon the touches of the external world to satisfy the different phases of its personality, and the will in this seizing is always a will of desire and passion and attachment to our works and their results, the will of Nature in us; our personal will, we say, but our ego personality is a creation of Nature, it is not and cannot be our free self, our independent being. The whole is the action of the modes of Nature. It may be a tamasic action, and then we have an inert personality subject to and satisfied with the mechanical round of things, incapable of any strong effort at a freer action and mastery. Or it may be the rajasic action, and then we have the restless active personality which throws itself upon Nature and tries to make her serve its needs and desires, but does not see that its apparent mastery is a servitude, since its needs and desires are those of Nature, and while we are subject to them, there can be for us no freedom. Or it may be a sattwic action, and then we have the enlightened personality which tries to live by reason or to realise some preferred ideal of good, truth or beauty; but this reason is still

subject to the appearances of Nature and these ideals are only changing phases of our personality in which we find in the end no sure rule or permanent satisfaction. We are still carried on a wheel of mutation, obeying in our circlings through the ego some Power within us and within all this, but not ourselves that Power or in union and communion with it. Still there is no freedom, no real mastery." (253-54)

27. How to Get Out of This State of Things? – the Conditions of the True Soul Life

" Yet freedom is possible. For that we have to get first away into ourselves from the action of the external world upon our senses; that is to say, we have to live inwardly and be able to hold back the natural running of the senses after their external objects. A mastery of the senses, an ability to do without all that they hanker after, is the first condition of the true soul-life; only so can we begin to feel that there is a soul within us which is other than the mutations of mind in its reception of the touches of outward things, a soul which in its depths goes back to something self-existent, immutable, tranquil, self-possessed, grandiose, serene and august, master of itself and unaffected by the eager runnings of our external nature. But this cannot be done so long as we are subject to desire. For it is desire, the principle of all our superficial life, which satisfies itself with the life of the senses and finds its whole account in the play of the passions. We must get rid then of desire and, that propensity of our natural being destroyed, the passions which are its emotional results will fall into quietude; for the joy and grief of possession and of loss, success and failure, pleasant and unpleasant touches, which entertain them, will pass out of our souls. A calm equality will then be gained. And since we have still to live and act in the world and our nature in works is to seek for the fruits of our works, we must change that nature and do works without attachment to their fruits, otherwise desire and all its results remain. But how can we

change this nature of the doer of works in us? By dissociating works from ego and personality, by seeing through the reason that all this is only the play of the gunas of Nature, and by dissociating our soul from the play, by making it first of all the observer of the workings of Nature and leaving those works to the Power that is really behind them, the something in Nature which is greater than ourselves, not our personality, but the Master of the universe. But the mind will not permit all this; its nature is to run out after the senses and carry the reason and will with it. Then we must learn to still the mind. We must attain that absolute peace and stillness in which we become aware of the calm, motionless, blissful Self within us which is eternally untroubled and unaffected by the touches of things, is sufficient to itself and finds there alone its eternal satisfaction.

This Self is our self-existent being. It is not limited by our personal existence. It is the same in all existences, pervasive, equal to all things, supporting the whole universal action with its infinity, but unlimited by all that is finite, unmodified by the changings of Nature and personality. When this Self is revealed within us, when we feel its peace and stillness, we can grow into that; we can transfer the poise of our soul from its lower immergence in Nature and draw it back into the Self. We can do this by the force of the things we have attained, calm, equality, passionless impersonality. For as we grow in these things, carry them to their fullness, subject all our nature to them, we are growing into this calm, equal, passionless, impersonal, all-pervading Self. Our senses fall into that stillness and receive the touches of the world on us with a supreme tranquillity; our mind falls into stillness and be-comes the calm, universal witness; our ego dissolves itself into this impersonal existence. All things we see in this self which we have become in ourself; and we see this self in all; we become one being with all beings in the spiritual basis of their existence. By doing works in this selfless tranquillity and

impersonality, our works cease to be ours, cease to bind or trouble us with their reactions. Nature and her gunas weave the web of her works, but without affecting our griefless self-existent tranquillity. All is given up into that one equal and universal Brahman." (254-56)

28. The Two Difficulties and the Answer of the Gita Leading to Their Resolution

"But here there are two difficulties. First, there seems to be an antinomy between this tranquil and immutable Self and the action of Nature. How then does the action at all exist or how can it continue once we have entered into the immutable Self-existence? Where in that is the will to works which would make the action of our nature possible? If we say with the Sankhya that the will is in Nature and not in the Self, still there must be a motive in Nature and the power in her to draw the soul into its workings by interest, ego and attachment, and when these things cease to reflect themselves in the soul-consciousness, her power ceases and the motive of works ceases with it. But the Gita does not accept this view, which seems indeed to necessitate the existence of many Purushas and not one universal Purusha, otherwise the separate experience of the soul and its separate liberation while millions of others are still involved, would not be intelligible. Nature is not a separate principle, but the power of the Supreme going forth in cosmic creation. But if the Supreme is only this immutable Self and the individual is only something that has gone forth from him in the Power, then the moment it returns and takes its poise in the self, everything must cease except the supreme unity and the supreme calm. Secondly, even if in some mysterious way action still continues, yet since the Self is equal to all things, it cannot matter whether works are done or, if they are done, it cannot matter what work is done. Why then this insistence on the most violent and disastrous form of action, this chariot, this battle, this warrior, this divine charioteer?

The Gita answers by presenting the Supreme as something greater even than the immutable Self, more comprehensive, one who is at once this Self and the Master of works in Nature. But he directs the works of Nature with the eternal calm, the equality, the superiority to works and personality which belong to the immutable. This, we may say, is the poise of being from which he directs works, and by growing into this we are growing into his being and into the poise of divine works. From this he goes forth as the Will and Power of his being in Nature, manifests himself in all existences, is born as Man in the world, is there in the heart of all men, reveals himself as the Avatar, the divine birth in man; and as man grows into his being, it is into the divine birth that he grows. Works must be done as a sacrifice to this Lord of our works, and we must by growing into the Self realise our oneness with him in our being and see our personality as a partial manifestation of him in Nature. One with him in being, we grow one with all beings in the universe and do divine works, not as ours, but as his workings through us for the maintenance and leading of the peoples.

This is the essential thing to be done, and once this is done, the difficulties which present themselves to Arjuna will disappear. The problem is no longer one of our personal action, for that which makes our personality becomes a thing temporal and subordinate, the question is then only one of the workings of the divine Will through us in the universe. To under-stand that we must know what this supreme Being is in himself and in Nature, what the workings of Nature are and what they lead to, and the intimate relation between the soul in Nature and this supreme Soul, of which bhakti with knowledge is the foundation. The elucidation of these questions is the subject of the rest of the Gita." (256-58)