The Greatness of India and Its Culture

11. The Greatness of Indian Literature – 9

The Bhagavad Gita – 2

Price : Rs. 15/-

Contents

12. The Action of Desire 3
Desire and Will 6
13. The Gita's Doctrine of Avatarhood and Its Process, Purpose and Method 8
The Purpose of Avatarhood 11
The Method or the Process of Avatarhood 15
The Modern Mind and the Doctrine of Avatarhood 21
The Secret of Divine Birth and Work 23
14. Faith, Equality and the Gist of the Karmayoga 29
Equality and Yoga of Works 31
The Gist of the Karma Yoga 40
15. The Two Natures 48
The Para Prakriti 51
Swabhava – the Link Between the Supreme (Para) and the Phenomenal or Lower (Apara) Nature (Prakriti) 54
16. The Synthesis of Devotion and Knowledge 57
17. Works, Devotion and Knowledge 64

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[1], 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*."[1]

"...desire is the most obscure and the most obscuring

---

[1]*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.

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 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."[2]

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. Enveloped is knowledge, O Kaunteya, by this eternal enemy of the wise 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. 3.38 3.39 3.40

"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]

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

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."[4]

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."[5]

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..."[6] Sri Krishna

4.1 declares 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 the Solar line).**

4.2 **Thus handed down from one to another, the Royal Sages knew it till it was lost to the world through the great lapse**

4.3 **of Time, O 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 Yoga in its most physical sense and asks:

4.4 **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?

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. 4.5

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, *prakṛtim svām avaṣṭabhya,*'[2] it will say later, 'I loose forth variously, *visṛjāmi,* this multitude of creatures helplessly subject owing to the control of Prakriti, *avaśam prakṛter vaśāt.*' 'Standing upon my own Nature,' it says here, 'I am born by my self-Maya, *prakṛtim svām adhiṣṭhāya*... 9.8

---

[2]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.

ātmamāyayā, I loose forth myself, *ātmānam sṛjāmi.*' The action implied in the word *avastabhya* 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, *avaśam 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...."[7] "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...."[8] "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."[9]

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
4.10 consciousness, *madbhāvam āgataḥ*; it is 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...."[10] "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 4.9
becoming full of him and even as he and taking refuge in him they arrive at his nature and status of being, *madbhāvam.* 4.10
For then we shall understand the divine birth and its object, not 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."[11]

"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...."[12] "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
4.8 seekers of light and perfection, *sādhūnām,* and the overthrow of those who fight for the continuance of 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."[13]

The Method or the Process of Avatarhood

"This is the object of the incarnation, but what is the method[3]? First, we have the rational or minimising view of Avatarhood which sees 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.... '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. 10.37

---

[3] *.... 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.*

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 the
9.8 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, *ātmānam 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 6.27
Lord, 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
4.6 he has to describe his creation of the world. "Although I am the unborn Lord of creatures, I 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 actions in the body as the indwelling and
4.6 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 for the human intermediary; for it is by resort to his own nature, *prakṛtim svām*, and not the special nature of the Jiva that the Lord of all existence thus takes upon himself the human birth. 4.6

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[4]. The Avatar is always

[4] *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.

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 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."[14]

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; that he whom the
9.11 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."[15]

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

---

[5] *...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*

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

---

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 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.

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.[6]...."[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

---

[6] *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 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.

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, 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."[17]

"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."[18]

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...."[19]

"...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[7] 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...."[20]

---

[7] *...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.

14. Faith, Equality and the Gist of the Karmayoga

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

4.39. He who has faith[8], 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

[8] *... 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*

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

---

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.

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."[21]

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,
9.9 *udāsīnavad āsīnaḥ,* 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.

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."[22]

"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 the sage of settled understanding'.... 'He who can bear here in the body the 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 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."[23]

2.56
5.23
2.14
2.15
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', 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

6.31

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."[24]

"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
5.22 or perplexity. 'The 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,
5.21 *budhaḥ*, does not place his delight in these.' 'The self in him is unattached to the touches of external things; he finds his
6.9 happiness in himself.'... He is equal 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-souled to all men, to the
5.18 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."[25]

"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, *udāsīnavat,* but as the Divine 9.9
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 4.35
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 the sage, the Beloved looks forth and

6.31 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
11.33 occasion, O Arjuna', *nimittamātram 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.

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 3.20
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 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."[26]

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."[27]

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
9.11 all our actions to that great Lord of all, *sarvabhūtamaheśvara*."[28]

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
3.20 leading on of the peoples in these worlds, *lokasaṁgraha*; he is
5.25 the friend of all existences, therefore is the sage who has found Nirvana within him and all around, still 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."[29]

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* 3.30 *karmāṇi.*"[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
6.31 Gita means by living and acting in Vasudeva, *mayi vartate*. The spiritual consciousness is aware of the 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."[31]

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."[32]

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."[33]

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."[34]

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."[35]

"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..."[36] 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."[37]

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."[38]

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 eightfold 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."[39]

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[9].... 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 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,

[9] *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 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.*

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."[40]

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, *sāttwikā bhāvā rājasāstāmasāśca*...."[41] 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."[42]

I am taste in the waters, O son of Kunti, I am the 7.8
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; 7.9
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 7.10
existences, O son of Pritha. I am the intelligence of the intelligent, the energy of the energetic.

"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
14.3 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."[43]

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
4.10 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.**

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."[44]

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."[45]

7.17 **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**
7.18 **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.**

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

the Bhakti with knowledge excels them all, *viśiṣyate*. 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 through many lives, attain at the long last to the Transcendent."[46] 7.17 7.19

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 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 7.19

need, temperament and nature, and he worships them to help or appease his natural longings.... It may be asked how is that
7.18 devotion high and noble, *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?"[47]

7.21 **Whatever form of Me any devotee with faith desires to worship, I make that faith of his firm and undeviating.**
7.22 **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."[48]

"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."[49]

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. 7.23

"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."[50]

8.5 **Whoever leaves his body and departs remembering Me at the time of his end, comes to My Bhava (my status**
8.6 **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.**

"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, *yam smaran bhāvam tyajati* 8.5 *ante kalevaram,* must have been one into which the soul was at each moment growing inwardly during the physical life, *sadā* 8.6 *tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ.*"[51]

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
7.5 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."[52]

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.

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

"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
9.11 the veiled Godhead, *avajānanti 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."[53]

9.13 **The great-souled, O Partha, who dwell in the divine nature, know Me as the imperishable from whom all existences originate and so knowing they turn to Me with**
9.14 **a sole and entire love. Hymning always 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."[54]

9.15 **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.**

"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 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 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."[55] 9.15 9.15

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."[56]

9.17 **I am the Father of this world, the Mother, the Ordainer, the first Creator, the object of knowledge, the sacred syllable OM[10] and also the Rik, Sama and Yajur**
9.18 **(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 imperishable seed**
9.19 **of all. I give heat, I withhold and send forth the rain; I am immortality and also death, and the existent and the**
9.20 **non-existent 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,**

---

[10]*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

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. 9.21

"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...."[57]

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
9.22 inner and outer getting and having, *yogakṣemam 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."[58]

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 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 giving, *yajanti avidhipūrvakam.*"[59] 9.24 9.23

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[11] 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 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;

---

[11] 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.

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."[60]

"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."[62]

"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 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

---

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

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."[63]

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."[64]

"...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."[65]

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[12], 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

[12] *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

effort of laborious self-discipline, grow with much anxious difficulty towards the Eternal; but when the soul 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[13] shall not perish'."[66]

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,

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.

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

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."[67]

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.

List of References:

1. *SABCL 21, Pages 629-30*
2. *CWM 3, Page 117*
3. *SABCL 21, Page 629*
4. *CWM 5, Pages 214-15*
5. *SABCL 21, Pages 631-32*
6. *SABCL 13, Page 137*
7. *SABCL 13, Pages 146-48*
8. *SABCL 13, Page 150*
9. *SABCL 13, Page 148*
10. *SABCL 13, Pages 139-40*
11. *SABCL 13, Page 141*
12. *SABCL 13, Page 140*
13. *SABCL 13, Pages 150-51*
14. *SABCL 13, Pages 151-56*
15. *SABCL 13, Pages 141-43*
16. *SABCL 13, Pages 159-60*
17. *SABCL 13, Pages 161-62*
18. *SABCL 13, Pages 165-66*
19. *SABCL 13, Pages 166-67*
20. *SABCL 17, Pages 174-75*
21. *SABCL 13, Pages 195-96*
22. *SABCL 13, Pages 179-83*
23. *SABCL 13, Pages 186-87*
24. *SABCL 13, Pages 197-98*
25. *SABCL 13, Pages 188-89*
26. *SABCL 13, Pages 198-201*
27. *SABCL 20, Page 235*
28. *SABCL 13, Page 177*
29. *SABCL 13, Page 228*
30. *SABCL 13, Page 232*
31. *SABCL 13, Pages 354-55*
32. *SABCL 13, Pages 234-35*
33. *SABCL 13, Page 235*
34. *SABCL 13, Pages 237-40*
35. *SABCL 13, Pages 236-37*
36. *SABCL 13, Page 51*
37. *SABCL 13, Page 53*
38. *SABCL 20, Page 254*
39. *SABCL 13, Pages 254-55*
40. *SABCL 13, Pages 257-58*
41. *SABCL 13, Page 259*
42. *SABCL 13, Pages 259-60*
43. *SABCL 13, Page 261*
44. *SABCL 13, Page 265*
45. *SABCL 21, Page 526*
46. *SABCL 13, Pages 271-72*
47. *SABCL 13, Page 272*
48. *SABCL 13, Page 273*
49. *SABCL 20, Page 149*
50. *SABCL 13, Page 273*
51. *SABCL 13, Pages 281-82*
52. *SABCL 13, Pages 308-11*
53. *SABCL 20, Pages 311-12*
54. *SABCL 20, Page 313*
55. *SABCL 13, Pages 313-14*
56. *SABCL 13, Page 314*
57. *SABCL 13, Page 316*
58. *SABCL 13, Page 317*
59. *SABCL 13, Page 318*
60. *SABCL 20, Pages 152-53*
61. *SABCL 13, Pages 318-19*
62. *SABCL 13, Page 319*
63. *SABCL 20, Pages 102-06*
64. *SABCL 13, Page 319*
65. *CWM 7, Page 247*
66. *SABCL 13, Pages 319-20*
67. *SABCL 13, Page 321*

Back Cover: *SABCL 29, Page 657*

Footnotes:

1. *SABCL 21, Page 648*
3. *SABCL 22, Page 406*
4. *SABCL 22, Pages 411, 410*
5. *CWM 10, Pages 73-74*
6. *SABCL 22, Pages 406-07*
7. *CWM 13, Pages 77-78*
8. *SABCL 23, Pages 616, 572-73*
9. *SABCL 13, Page 257*
10. *SABCL 13, Page 315*
11. *CWM 8, Pages 235-36*
12. *SABCL 23, Pages 586-88*
13. *SABCL 5, Page 63*

SABCL: Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library
CWM : Collected Works of the Mother

(All the quotations from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are copyright of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry – 605 002)

RNI NO. RAJENG/2002/9480

Name of the Publisher:	Peoples awakening and Service organisation
Name of the Printer :	Peoples awakening and Service organisation
Name of the Owner :	Peoples awakening and Service organisation
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@rediffmail.com URL : www.sadlec.org
Editor :	Anjana Dharnidharka