The Greatness of India and Its Culture

12. The Greatness of Indian Literature – 10

The Bhagavad Gita – 3

Price : Rs. 15/-

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18. The Supreme Word of the Gita

"We have now got to the inmost kernel of the Gita's Yoga, the whole living and breathing centre of its teaching. We can see now quite clearly that the ascent of the limited human soul, when it withdraws from the ego and the lower nature into the immutable Self calm, silent and stable, was only a first step, an initial change. And now too we can see why the Gita from the first insisted on the Ishwara, the Godhead in the human form, who speaks always of himself, *aham*, *mām*, as of some great secret and omnipresent Being, lord of all the worlds and master of the human soul, one who is greater even than that immutable self-existence which is still and unmoved forever and abides forever untouched by the subjective and objective appearances of the natural universe."[1]

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

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

"To make it perfectly and indisputably clear that this is the supreme and entire truth of his teaching, this the integral knowledge which he had promised to reveal, the divine Avatar declares, in a brief reiteration of the upshot of all that he has been saying, that this and no other is his supreme word, *paramam vacaḥ*.... This supreme word of the Gita is, we find,

first the explicit and unmistakable declaration that the highest worship and highest knowledge of the Eternal are the knowledge and the adoration of him as the supreme and divine Origin of all that is in existence and the mighty Lord of the world and its peoples of whose being all things are the becomings. It is, secondly, the declaration of a unified knowledge and Bhakti as the supreme Yoga; that is the destined and the natural way given to man to arrive at union with the eternal Godhead. And to make more significant this definition of the way, to give an illuminating point to this highest importance of Bhakti... the acceptance of it by the heart and mind of the disciple is put as a condition for the further development by which the final command to action comes at last to be given to the human instrument, Arjuna. 'I will speak this supreme word to thee,' says the Godhead, 'from My will for thy soul's good, now that thy heart is taking delight in Me,' *te prīyamāṇāya vakṣyāmi*. For this delight of the heart in God is the whole constituent and essence of true Bhakti..."[2]

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

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

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

10.3. Whosoever knows Me as the Unborn, without origin, mighty Lord of the worlds and

peoples, lives unbewildered among mortals and is delivered from all sin and evil.

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

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

"The idea of the Divine on which the Gita insists as the secret of the whole mystery of existence, the knowledge that leads to liberation, is one that bridges the opposition between the cosmic procession in Time and a supracosmic eternity without denying either of them or taking anything from the reality of either. It harmonises the pantheistic, the theistic and the highest transcendental terms of our spiritual conception and spiritual experience.[1] The Divine is the unborn Eternal

[1] *The Divine is supracosmic, the eternal Parabrahman who supports with his timeless and spaceless existence all this cosmic manifestation of his own being and nature in Space and Time. He is the supreme spirit who ensouls the forms and movements of the universe, Paramatman. He is the supernal Person of whom all self and nature, all being and becoming in*

who has no origin; there is and can be nothing before him from which he proceeds, because he is one and timeless and absolute. 'Neither the gods nor the great Rishis know any birth of Me.... He who knows Me as the unborn without origin...' are the opening utterances of this supreme word.... This spiritual experience of the transcendental Infinite breaks down the limitations of the pantheistic conception of existence. The infinite of a cosmic monism which makes God and the universe one, tries to imprison the Divine in his world manifestation and leaves us that as our sole possible means of knowing him; but this Experience liberates us into the timeless and spaceless Eternal. 'Neither the gods nor the Titans know thy manifestation,' cries Arjuna in his reply: the whole universe or even numberless universes cannot manifest him, cannot contain his ineffable light and infinite greatness. All other lesser God-knowledge has its truth only by dependence on the ever unmanifested and ineffable reality of the transcendent Godhead.

But at the same time the divine Transcendence is not a
10.4 negation, nor is it an Absolute empty of all relation to the
-5 universe. It is a supreme positive, it is an absolute of all absolutes. All cosmic relations derive from this Supreme; all cosmic existences return to it and find in it alone their true

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this or any universe are the self-conception and the self-energising, Purushottama. He is the ineffable Lord of all existence who by his spiritual control of his own manifested Power in Nature unrolls the cycles of the world and the natural evolution of creatures in the cycles, Parameshwara. From him the Jiva, individual spirit, soul in Nature, existent by his being, conscious by the light of his consciousness, empowered to knowledge, to will and to action by his will and power, enjoying existence by his divine enjoyment of the cosmos, has come here into the cosmic rounds.

and immeasurable existence. 'For I am altogether and in every way the origin of the gods and the great Rishis.'...

This transcendent Origin of our existence is not separated from us by any unbridgeable gulf and does not disown the creatures that derive from him or condemn them to be only the figments of an illusion. He is the Being, all are his becomings. He does not create out of a void, out of a Nihil or out of an unsubstantial matrix of dream. Out of himself he creates, in himself he becomes; all are in his being and all is of his being. This truth admits and exceeds the pantheistic seeing of things. Vasudeva is all, *vāsudevaḥ sarvam*, 7.19
but Vasudeva is all that appears in the cosmos because he is too all that does not appear in it, all that is never manifested. His being is in no way limited by his becoming; he is in no degree bound by this world of relations. Even in becoming all he is still a Transcendence; even in assuming finite forms he is always the Infinite...."[3]

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

But there is another supreme reality of the Infinite that must also be recognised as an indispensable element of the

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

This is the fullness of the liberating knowledge. It is a knowledge of the Divine within us and in the world as at the same time a transcendent Infinite. An Absolute who has become all that is by his divine Nature, his effective power of Spirit, he governs all from his transcendence. He is intimately

present within every creature and the cause, ruler, director of all cosmic happenings and yet is he far too great, mighty and infinite to be limited by his creation. This character of the knowledge is emphasised in three separate verses of promise."[4] 10.3, 10.7 & 10.8-11

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

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

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

10.7. Whosoever knows in its right principles this My pervading lordship and this My Yoga, unites himself to Me by an untrembling Yoga; of this there is no doubt.

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

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

"The wisdom of the liberated man is not then, in the view of the Gita, a consciousness of abstracted and unrelated impersonality, a do-nothing quietude. For the mind and soul

of the liberated man are firmly settled in a constant sense, an integral feeling of the pervasion of the world by the actuating and directing presence of the divine Master of the universe,
10.7 *etām vibhūtim mama yo vetti*. He is aware of his spirit's transcendence of the cosmic order, but he is aware also of
10.7 his oneness with it by the divine Yoga, *yogam ca mama*. And he sees each aspect of the transcendent, the cosmic and the individual existence in its right relation to the supreme Truth and puts all in their right place in the unity of the divine Yoga. He no longer sees each thing in its separateness, – the separate seeing that leaves all either unexplained or one-sided to the experiencing consciousness. Nor does he see all confusedly together, – the confused seeing that gives a wrong light and a chaotic action. Secure in the transcendence, he is not affected by the cosmic stress and the turmoil of Time and circumstance. Untroubled in the midst of all this creation and destruction of things, his spirit adheres to an unshaken and untrembling and unvacillating Yoga of union with the eternal and spiritual in the universe.... He becomes of like nature and law of being
14.2 with the Divine, *sādharmyam āgatāḥ*, transcendent even in universality of spirit, universal even in the individuality of mind, life and body. By this Yoga once perfected, undeviating
10.7 and fixed, *avikampena yogena yujyate,* he is able to take up whatever poise of nature, assume whatever human condition, do whatever world-action without any fall from his oneness with the divine Self, without any loss of his constant communion with the Master of existence.

This knowledge translated into the affective, emotional, temperamental plane becomes a calm love and intense adoration of the original and transcendental Godhead above us, the ever-present Master of all things here, God in man,

God in Nature. It is at first a wisdom of the intelligence, the *buddhi*; but that is accompanied by a moved spiritualised state of the affective nature, *budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*. This change of the heart and mind is the beginning of a total change of all the nature. A new inner birth and becoming prepares us for oneness with the supreme object of our love and adoration, *madbhāvāya*."[5] 10.8 4.10

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

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

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

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

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ।। 10.11।।

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

19. The Vibhuti Yoga

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

The metaphysical synthesis is complete. Sankhya has been admitted for the separation of the soul from the lower nature – a separation that must be effected by self-knowledge through the discriminating reason and by transcendence of our subjection to the three Gunas constituent of that nature. It has been completed and its limitations exceeded by a large revelation of the unity of the supreme Soul and supreme Nature, *para puruṣa*, *parā prakṛti*. Vedanta of the philosophers has been admitted for the self-effacement of the natural separative personality built round the ego. Its method has been used to replace the little personal by the large impersonal being, to annul the separative illusion in the unity of the Brahman and to substitute for the blind seeing of the ego the truer vision of all things in one Self and one Self in all things. Its truth has been completed by the impartial revelation of the Parabrahman from whom originate both the mobile and the immobile, the mutable and the immutable, the action and

the silence. Its possible limitations have been transcended by the intimate revelation of the supreme Soul and Lord who becomes here in all Nature, manifests himself in all personality and puts forth the power of his Nature in all action. Yoga has been admitted for the self-surrender of the will, mind, heart, all the psychological being to the Ishwara, the divine Lord of the nature. It has been completed by the revelation of the supernal Master of existence as the original Godhead of whom the Jiva is the partial being in Nature. Its possible limitations have been exceeded by the soul's seeing of all things as the Lord in the light of a perfect spiritual oneness.

The Yoga of knowledge has been fulfilled sovereignly in this integral seeing and knowing of the One. The Yoga of works has been crowned by the surrender of all works to their Master, – for the natural man is now only an instrument of his will. The Yoga of love and adoration has been declared in its amplest forms. The intense consummation of knowledge, works and love conducts to a crowning union of soul and Oversoul in a highest amplitude. In that union the revelations of knowledge are made real to the heart as well as to the intelligence. In that union the difficult sacrifice of self in an instrumental action becomes the easy, free and blissful expression of a living oneness. The whole means of the spiritual liberation has been given; the whole foundation of the divine action has been constructed.

Arjuna accepts the entire knowledge that has thus been given to him by the divine Teacher. His mind is already delivered from its doubts and seekings; his heart, turned now from the outward aspect of the world, from its baffling appearance to its supreme sense and origin and its inner

realities, is already released from sorrow and affliction and touched with the ineffable gladness of a divine revelation. The language which he is made to use in voicing his acceptance is such as to emphasise and insist once again on the profound integrality of this knowledge and its all-embracing finality and fullness."[6]

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

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

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

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

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

"He accepts first the Avatar, the Godhead in man, who is speaking to him as the supreme Brahman, as the supracosmic All and Absolute of existence in which the soul can dwell

when it rises out of this manifestation and this partial becoming to its source, *param brahma, param dhāma.* He accepts him as the supreme purity of the ever-free Existence to which one arrives through the effacement of ego in the self's immutable impersonality calm and still for ever, *pavitram paramam.* He accepts him next as the one Permanent, the eternal Soul, the divine Purusha, *puruṣam śāśvatam divyam.* He acclaims in him the original Godhead, adores the Unborn who is the pervading, indwelling, self-extending master of all existence, *ādi-devam ajam vibhum.* He accepts him therefore not only as that Wonderful who is beyond expression of any kind, for nothing is sufficient to manifest him, – 'neither the gods nor the Titans, O blessed Lord, know thy manifestation,' *na hi te bhagavan vyaktim vidur devā na dānavāḥ*, – but as the lord of all existences and the one divine efficient cause of all their becoming, God of the gods from whom all godheads have sprung, master of the universe who manifests and governs it from above by the power of his supreme and his universal Nature, *bhūta-bhāvana bhūteśa deva-deva jagat-pate.* And lastly he accepts him as that Vasudeva in and around us who is all things here by virtue of the world-pervading, all-inhabiting, all-constituting master powers of his becoming, *vibhūtayaḥ*... 10.14 10.16

He has accepted the truth with the adoration of his heart, the submission of his will and the understanding of his intelligence. He is already prepared to act as the divine instrument in this knowledge and with this self-surrender. But a desire for a deeper constant spiritual realisation has been awakened in his heart and will."[7]

Thou shouldst tell me of Thy divine self-manifestations, all without exception, Thy Vibhutis by 10.16

10.17 **which Thou standest pervading these worlds. How shall I know Thee, O Yogin, by thinking of Thee everywhere at all moments and in what pre-eminent becomings**
10.18 **should I think of Thee, O Blessed Lord? In detail tell me of Thy Yoga and Vibhuti O Janardana; tell me ever more of it; it is nectar of immortality to me, and however much of it I hear, I am not satiated.**

"Now the way to arrive at that realisation has been given to Arjuna. And so far as regards the great self-evident divine principles, these do not baffle the mind; it can open to the idea of the supreme Godhead, to the experience of the immutable Self, to the direct perception of the immanent Divinity, to the contact of the conscient universal Being. One can, once the mind is illumined with the idea, follow readily the way and, with whatever preliminary difficult effort to exceed the normal mental perceptions, come in the end to the self-experience of these essential truths that stand behind our and all existence, *ātmanā ātmānam*. One can do it with this readiness because these, once conceived, are evidently divine realities; there is nothing in our mental associations to prevent us from admitting God in these high aspects. But the difficulty is to see him in the apparent truths of existence, to detect him in this fact of Nature and in these disguising phenomena of the World's becoming; for here all is opposed to the sublimity of this unifying conception. How can we consent to see the Divine as man and animal being and inanimate object, in the noble and the low, the sweet and the terrible, the good and the evil? If, assenting to some idea of God extended in the things of the cosmos, we see him in ideal light of knowledge and greatness of power and charm of beauty and beneficence of love and ample largeness of

spirit, how shall we avoid the breaking of the unity by their opposites which in actual fact cling to these high things and envelop them and obscure? And if in spite of the limitations of human mind and nature we can see God in the man of God, how shall we see him in those who oppose him and represent in act and nature all that we conceive of as undivine? If Narayana is without difficulty visible in the sage and the saint, how shall he be easily visible to us in the sinner, the criminal, the harlot and the outcaste? To all the differentiations of the world-existence the sage, looking everywhere for the supreme purity and oneness, returns the austere cry, 'not this, not this', *neti neti*. Even if to many things in the world we give a willing or reluctant assent and admit the Divine in the universe, still before most must not the mind persist in that cry 'not this, not this'? Here constantly the assent of the understanding, the consent of the will and the heart's faith become difficult to a human mentality anchored always on phenomenon and appearance. At least some compelling indications are needed, some links and bridges, some supports to the difficult effort at oneness.

Arjuna, though he accepts the revelation of Vasudeva as all and though his heart is full of the delight of it, – for already he finds that it is delivering him from the perplexity and stumbling differentiations of his mind which was crying for a clue, a guiding truth amid the bewildering problems of a world of oppositions, and it is to his hearing the nectar of immortality, *amṛtam*, – yet feels the need of such supports and indices. He feels that they are indispensable to overcome the difficulty of a complete and firm realisation; for how else can this knowledge be made a thing of the heart and life? He requires guiding indications, asks Krishna even for a complete

and detailed enumeration of the sovereign powers of his becoming and desires that nothing shall be left out of the vision, nothing remain to baffle him.

The divine Teacher accedes to the request of the disciple, but with an initial reminder that a full reply is not possible. For God is infinite and his manifestation is infinite. The forms of his manifestation too are innumerable. Each form is a symbol of some divine power, *vibhūti*, concealed in it and to the seeing eye each finite carries in it its own revelation of the infinite. Yes, he says, I will tell thee of my divine Vibhutis, but only in some of my principal pre-eminences and as an indication and by the example of things in which thou canst most readily see the power of the Godhead, *prādhānyataḥ*, *uddeśataḥ*. For there is no end to the innumerable detail of the
10.19 Godhead's self-extension in the universe, *nāsti anto vistarasya me*. This reminder begins the passage and is repeated at the end in order to give it a greater and unmistakable emphasis. And then throughout the rest of the chapter we get a summary description of these principal indications, these pre-eminent signs of the divine force present in the things and persons of the universe."[8]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10.39. And whatsoever is the seed of all

existences, that also am I, O Arjuna; no being is there, moving or unmoving, that could be there without Me.

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

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

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

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

"If we look at things... unblinded by differentiations of quality and quantity or by difference of values and oppositions of nature, we shall see that all things are in fact and can be nothing but powers of this manifestation, Vibhutis of this universal Soul and Spirit, Yoga of this great Yogin, self-creations of this marvellous self-Creator.... But since it is through power in his becoming that he is apparent to us, he is especially apparent in whatever is of a pre-eminent value or seems to act with a powerful and pre-eminent force. And therefore in each kind of being we can see him most in those in whom the power of nature of that kind reaches its highest, its leading, its most effectively self-revealing manifestation. These are in a special sense Vibhutis. Yet the highest power

and manifestation is only a very partial revelation of the Infinite; even the whole universe is informed by only one degree of his greatness, illumined by one ray of his splendour, glorious with a faint hint of his delight and beauty. This is in sum the gist of the enumeration, the result we carry away from it, the heart of its meaning."[9]

"The liberated vision sees three things at once as the whole occult truth of the natural being. First and foremost it sees the divine Prakriti in all, secret, present, waiting for evolution; it sees her as the real power in all things, that which gives its value to all this apparent action of diverse quality and force, and it reads the significance of these latter phenomena not in their own language of ego and ignorance, but in the light of the divine Nature. Therefore it sees too, secondly, the differences of the apparent action in Deva and Rakshasa, man and beast and bird and reptile, good and wicked, ignorant and learned, but as action of divine quality and energy under these conditions, under these masks. It is not deluded by the mask, but detects behind every mask the Godhead.... Finally, it sees the upward urge of the striving powers of the Will-to-be towards Godhead; it respects, welcomes, encourages all high manifestations of energy and quality, the flaming tongues of the Divinity, the mounting greatnesses of soul and mind and life in their intensities uplifted from the levels of the lower nature towards heights of luminous wisdom and knowledge, mighty power, strength, capacity, courage, heroism, benignant sweetness and ardour and grandeur of love and self-giving, pre-eminent virtue, noble action, captivating beauty and harmony, fine and godlike creation. The eye of the spirit sees and marks out the rising godhead of man in the great Vibhuti."[10]

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

of attainment towards supermanhood....

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

in its creation and destruction must be seen by him as the figure of the Godhead in its steps, – steps that accomplish the cycles of the cosmos on whose spires of movement the divine spirit in the human body rises doing God's work in the world as his Vibhuti to the supreme transcendences. This knowledge has been given; the Time-figure of the Godhead is now to be revealed and from the million mouths of that figure will issue the command for the appointed action to the liberated Vibhuti."[11]

20. The Vision of the World-Spirit

"The vision of the universal Purusha is one of the best known and most powerfully poetic passages in the Gita, but its place in the thought is not altogether on the surface. It is evidently intended for a poetic and revelatory symbol and we must see how it is brought in and for what purpose and discover to what it points in its significant aspects before we can capture its meaning. It is invited by Arjuna in his desire to see the living image, the visible greatness of the unseen Divine, the very embodiment of the Spirit and Power that governs the universe."[12]

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

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

"Arjuna has heard the highest spiritual secret of existence, that all is from God and all is the Divine and in all things God dwells and is concealed and can be revealed in every finite appearance. The illusion which so persistently holds man's sense and mind, the idea that things at all exist in themselves or for themselves apart from God or that anything subject to Nature can be self-moved and self-guided, has passed from him, – that was the cause of his doubt and bewilderment and refusal of action."[13]

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

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

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

11.6 **Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Aswins and also the Maruts; behold many wonders never**
11.7 **seen before, O Bharata. Here, today, behold the whole world, with all that is moving and unmoving, unified in My body, O Gudakesha, and whatever else thou willest**
11.8 **to see. But verily thou canst not see Me by these eyes of thine, I give thee the eye divine, behold Me in My sovereign Yoga.**

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

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

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

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

Seeing, O Mighty-armed, Thy immense form of 11.23
many mouths and eyes, of many arms and thighs and feet and bellies, and with terrible tusks, the worlds are in

11.24 **anguish and shaken, as also am I. I see Thee, O Vishnu, touching heaven, shining in many hues, with mouths wide open and with enormous burning eyes. My soul is in**
11.25 **anguish and I find no peace or poise. As I look upon Thy mouths with terrible tusks, like the fires of Death and Time, I lose the sense of directions and find no peace. Turn Thy heart to grace, O God of gods, Abode of the**
11.26 **worlds! All these sons of Dhritarashtra, along with the**
-27 **companies of the kings and heroes, Bhishma and Drona as well as Karna, along with the foremost warriors on our side too are hastening into Thy tusked and terrible jaws and some are seen with crushed heads caught**
11.30 **between Thy teeth. Devouring all the worlds with Thy flaming mouths. Thou art licking all the regions around. All the world, O Vishnu, is filled with Thy burning energies and baked by Thy fierce lustres.**

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

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

Indian spirituality knows that God is Love and Peace and Calm and Eternity, – the Gita which presents us with these terrible images, speaks of the Godhead who embodies himself in them as the lover and friend of all creatures. But there is too the sterner aspect of his divine government of the world which meets us from the beginning, the aspect of destruction, and to ignore is to miss the full reality of the divine Love and Peace and Calm and Eternity and even to throw on it an aspect of partiality and illusion, because the comforting exclusive form in which it is put is not borne out by the nature of the world in which we live. This world of our battle and labour is a fierce dangerous destructive devouring world in which life exists precariously and the soul and body of man move among enormous perils, a world in which by every step forward, whether we will it or no, something is crushed and broken, in which every breath of life is a breath too of death. To put away the responsibility for all that seems to us evil or terrible on the shoulders of a semi-omnipotent Devil, or to put it aside as part of Nature, making an unbridgeable opposition between world-nature and God-Nature, as if Nature were independent of God, or to throw the responsibility on man and his sins, as if he had a preponderant voice in the making of this world or could create anything against the will of God, are clumsily comfortable devices in which the religious thought of India has never taken refuge. We have to look courageously in the face of the reality and see that it is God and none else who has made this world in his being and that so he has made it. We have to see that Nature devouring her children, Time

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

The problem raised by the Gita and the solution it gives demand this character of the vision of the World-Spirit... when he (Arjuna) is put face to face with the embodiment of this truth, he sees in it magnified by the image of the divine greatness this aspect of terror and destruction and is appalled and can hardly bear it. For why should it be thus that the All-spirit manifests himself in Nature? What is the significance of this creating and devouring flame that is mortal existence, this world-wide struggle, these constant disastrous revolutions, this labour and anguish and travail and perishing of creatures? He puts the ancient question and breathes the eternal prayer..."[14]

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

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

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

"It is the Timeless manifest as Time and World-Spirit from whom the command to action proceeds. For certainly the Godhead when he says, 'I am Time the Destoyer of beings,' does not mean either that he is the Time-Spirit alone or that the whole essence of the Time-Spirit is destruction. But it is this which is the present will of his workings, *pravṛtti*. Destruction is always a simultaneous or alternate element which keeps pace with creation and it is by destroying and renewing that the Master of Life does his long work of preservation... Whoever prematurely attempts to get rid of this law of battle and destruction, strives vainly against the greater will of the World-Spirit. Whoever turns from it in the weakness of his lower members, as did Arjuna in the beginning... is showing not true virtue, but a want of spiritual courage to face the sterner truths of Nature and of action and existence. Man can only exceed the law of battle by discovering the greater law of his immortality... No real peace can be till the heart of man deserves peace; the law of Vishnu cannot prevail till the debt to Rudra is paid. To turn aside

then and preach to a still unevolved mankind the law of love and oneness? Teachers of the law of love and oneness there must be, for by that way must come the ultimate salvation. But not till the Time-Spirit in man is ready, can the inner and ultimate prevail over the outer and immediate reality. Christ and Buddha have come and gone, but it is Rudra who still holds the world in the hollow of his hand. And meanwhile the fierce forward labour of mankind tormented and oppressed by the powers that are profiteers of egoistic force and their servants cries for the sword of the Hero of the struggle and the word of its prophet."[15]

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

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

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

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

"Even while the effects of the terrible aspect of this vision are still upon him, the first words uttered by Arjuna after the

Godhead has spoken are eloquent of a greater uplifting and reassuring reality behind this face of death and this destruction."[16]

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

"From the first words there comes the suggestion that the hidden truth behind these terrifying forms is a reassuring, a heartening and delightful truth. There is something that makes the heart of the world to rejoice and take pleasure in the name and nearness of the Divine. It is the profound sense of that which makes us see in the dark face of Kali the face of the Mother and to perceive even in the midst of destruction the protecting arms of the Friend of creatures, in the midst of evil the presence of a pure unalterable Benignity and in the midst of death the master of Immortality... Nothing has real need to fear except that which is to be destroyed, the evil, the ignorance, the veilers in Night, the Rakshasa powers. All the movement and action of Rudra the Terrible is towards perfection and divine light and completeness."[17]

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

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

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

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

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

"The Godhead in answer to Arjuna's prayer reassumes his own normal Narayana image, *svakam rūpam,* the desired form of grace and love and sweetness and beauty. But first he declares the incalculable significance of the other mighty Image which he is about to veil."[18]

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

"But what then is the uniqueness of this Form by which it is lifted so far beyond cognizance that all the ordinary endeavour of human knowledge and even the inmost austerity of its spiritual effort are insufficient, unaided, to reach the vision? It is this that man can know by other means this or that exclusive aspect of the one existence, its individual, cosmic or world-excluding figures, but not this greatest reconciling Oneness of all the aspects of the Divinity in which at one and the same time and in one and the same vision all is manifested, all is exceeded and all is consummated. For here transcendent, universal and individual Godhead, Spirit and Nature, Infinite and finite, space and time and timelessness, Being and Becoming, all that we can strive to think and know of the Godhead, whether of the absolute or the manifested existence, are wonderfully revealed in an ineffable oneness. This vision can be reached only by the absolute adoration, the love, the intimate unity that crowns at their summit the fullness of works and knowledge. To know, to see, to enter into it, to be one with this supreme form of the Supreme becomes then possible, and it is that end which the Gita

proposes for its Yoga... This is difficult indeed for limited man imprisoned in his mind and body: but, says the Godhead..."[19]

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

21. The Way and the Bhakta

"In the eleventh chapter of the Gita the original object of the teaching has been achieved and brought up to a certain completeness. The command to divine action done for the sake of the world and in union with the Spirit who dwells in it and in all its creatures and in whom all its working takes place, has been given and accepted by the Vibhuti. The disciple has been led away from the old poise of the normal man and the standards, motives, outlook, egoistic consciousness of his ignorance, away from all that had finally failed him in the hour of his spiritual crisis. The very action which on that standing he had rejected, the terrible function, the appalling labour, he has now been brought to admit and accept on a new inner basis... But there is something more to be said in order to bring out all the meaning of the great spiritual change. The twelfth chapter leads up to this remaining knowledge and the last six that follow develop it to a grand final conclusion. This thing that remains still to be said turns upon the difference between the current Vedantic view of spiritual liberation and the larger comprehensive freedom which the teaching of the Gita opens to the spirit. There is now a pointed return to that difference."[20]

"The liberation of the Gita is not a self-oblivious abolition of the soul's personal being in the absorption of the One, *sāyujya mukti*; it is all kinds of union at once... The orthodox Yoga of knowledge aims at a fathomless immergence in the one infinite existence, *sāyujya*; it looks upon that alone as the entire liberation. The Yoga of adoration envisages an eternal habitation or nearness as the greater

release, *sālokya*, *sāmīpya*. The Yoga of works leads to oneness in power of being and nature, *sādṛśya*: but the Gita envelops them all in its catholic integrality and fuses them all into one greatest and richest divine freedom and perfection....

It must be remembered that the distinction between the impersonal immutable Akshara Purusha and the supreme Soul that is at once impersonality and divine Person and much more than either, – that this capital distinction implied in the later chapters and in the divine "I" of which Krishna has constantly spoken, *aham*, *mām*, has as yet not been quite expressly and definitely drawn... Arjuna is made to raise the question of this difference."[21]

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

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

"Thou, he says in substance, art the supreme Source and Origin of all beings, a Presence immanent in all things, a Power pervading the universe with thy forms, a Person manifest in thy Vibhutis, manifest in creatures, manifest in Nature, seated as the Lord of works in the world and in our hearts by thy mighty world-Yoga. As such I have to know, adore, unite myself with thee in all my being, consciousness, thoughts, feelings and actions, *satata-yukta*. But what then of this Immutable who never manifests, never puts on any form, stands back and apart from all action, enters into no relation

with the universe or with anything in it, is eternally silent and one and impersonal and immobile? This eternal Self is the greater Principle according to all current notions and the Godhead in the manifestation is an inferior figure: the unmanifest and not the manifest is the eternal Spirit. How then does the union which admits the manifestation, admits the lesser thing, come yet to be the greater Yoga-knowledge? To this question Krishna replies with an emphatic decisiveness."[22]

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

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

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

"And it must not be thought that because it is more arduous, therefore it is a higher and more effective process. The easier way of the Gita leads more rapidly, naturally and normally to the same absolute liberation... The Yogin of

exclusive knowledge imposes on himself a painful struggle with the manifold demands of his nature; he denies them even their highest satisfaction and cuts away from him even the upward impulses of his spirit whenever they imply relations or fall short of a negating absolute. The living way of the Gita, on the contrary, finds out the most intense upward trend of all our being and by turning it Godwards uses knowledge, will, feeling and the instinct for perfection as so many puissant wings of a mounting liberation... The indefinable Oneness accepts all that climb to it, but offers no help of relation and gives no foothold to the climber. All has to be done by a severe austerity and a stern and lonely individual effort. How different is it for those who seek after the Purushottama in the way of the Gita! When they meditate on him with a Yoga which sees none else, because it sees all to be Vasudeva, he meets them at every point, in every moment, at all times, with innumerable forms and faces, holds up the lamp of knowledge within and floods with its divine and happy lustre the whole of existence. Illumined, they discern the supreme Spirit in every form and face, arrive at once through all Nature to the Lord of Nature, arrive through all beings to the Soul of all being, arrive through themselves to the Self of all that they are; incontinently they break through a hundred opening issues at once into that from which everything has its origin. The other method of a difficult relationless stillness tries to get away from all action even though that is impossible to embodied creatures."[23]

22. The Field and its Knower

"The Gita in its last six chapters, in order to found on a clear and complete knowledge the way of the soul's rising out of the lower into the divine nature, restates in another form the enlightenment the Teacher has already imparted to Arjuna... in the first six chapters the knowledge necessary for the distinction between the immutable self and the soul veiled in nature was accorded an entire prominence. The references to the supreme Self and Purusha were summary and not at all explicit... But now it is necessary to bring out more definitely the precise relations between the supreme Purusha, the immutable Self, the Jiva and Prakriti in her action and her Gunas. Arjuna is therefore made to put a question which shall evoke a clearer elucidation of these still ill-lighted matters."[24]

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

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

The Blessed Lord said: This body, O son of Kunti, 13.2
is called the Field; and he who knows it is called the
Knower of the Field by the men of knowledge. Know 13.3
Me as the Knower of the Field in all Fields, O Bharata; it is the knowledge of the Field and its Knower that, in My
view, is knowledge. What that Field is and what its 13.4
character, source and deformations, and what He (the

Knower of the Field) is and what His powers, hear that
13.6 **now briefly from Me. The unmanifest, the (five) great**
-7 **elements, the ten senses and the one (mind), intelligence and ego, and the five objects of the senses; liking and disliking, pleasure and pain, collocation, consciousness and steadfastness, this in sum is described as the Kshetra (field) with its deformations.**

"All these things taken together constitute the fundamental character of our first transactions with the world of Nature, but it is evidently not the whole description of our being; it is our actuality but not the limit of our possibilities. There is something beyond to be known, *jñeyam*, and it is when the knower of the field turns from the field itself to learn of himself within it and of all that is behind its appearances that real knowledge begins, *jñānam*, – the true knowledge of the field no less than of the knower. That turning inward alone delivers from ignorance. For the farther we go inward, the more we seize on greater and fuller realities of things and grasp the complete truth both of God and the soul and of the world and its movements. Therefore, says the divine Teacher, it is the knowledge at once of the field and its knower, *kṣetra-kṣetrajñayor jñānam*, a united and even unified self-knowledge and world-knowledge, which is the real illumination and the only wisdom."[25]

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

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

13.11 -12

13.13

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

Sat and Asat[2] are the last antinomy through which we

[2] *Pure Being* (Sat) *is the affirmation by the Unknowable of Itself as the free base of all cosmic existence. We give the name of Non-Being* (Asat) *to a contrary affirmation of Its freedom from all cosmic existence, – freedom,*

look up to the Unknowable... All antinomies confront each other in order to recognise one Truth in their opposed aspects and embrace by the way of conflict their mutual Unity. Brahman is the Alpha and the Omega. Brahman is the One besides whom there is nothing else existent.

But this unity is in its nature indefinable. When we seek to envisage it by the mind we are compelled to proceed through an infinite series of conceptions and experiences. And yet in the end we are obliged to negate our largest conceptions, our most comprehensive experiences in order to affirm that the Reality exceeds all definitions. We arrive at the formula of the Indian sages, *neti neti*, 'It is not this, It is not that', there is no experience by which we can limit It, there is no conception by which It can be defined."[26]

13.14 **With His hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths on all sides, with ears everywhere, He dwells**
13.15 **enveloping all in this world. Without any senses, but reflected in all the senses and their qualities; unattached and yet all-supporting; beyond all gunas (qualities), and**
13.16 **yet the enjoyer of the gunas. Inside all beings and outside,**

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

the moving and the unmoving[3], the far and the very near, all this He is at once; He is too subtle to be perceptible. He stands undivided in beings and yet as if divided. He is to be known, the creator, the supporter, and the devourer of beings. 13.17

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

This incoercible unity in all divisions and diversities is the mathematics of the Infinite, indicated in a verse of the

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

Upanishads, – 'This is the complete and That is the complete; subtract the complete from the complete, the complete is the remainder.'

To Brahman there are no whole and parts, but each thing is all itself and benefits by the whole of Brahman... it is indivisible and gives, not an equal part of itself, but its whole self at one and the same time to the solar system and to the ant-hill."[27]

13.18 **That, the Light of all lights, is said to be beyond darkness; knowledge, the object of knowledge and**
13.19 **attainable by knowledge, seated in the hearts of all. Thus the Field, Knowledge and the Object of Knowledge, have been briefly told. My devotee, thus knowing, attains to My *bhāva,* My nature and status of being.**

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

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its sole absolute object is the joy of the dancing.

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

This realisation consists of three successive movements, internal vision, complete internal experience and identity.

This internal vision, *dṛṣṭi*, the power so highly valued by the ancient sages, the power which made a man a Rishi or Kavi and no longer a mere thinker, is a sort of light in the soul by which things unseen become as evident and real to it – to the soul and not merely to the intellect – as do things seen to the physical eye. In the physical world there are always two forms of knowledge, the direct and the indirect, *pratyakṣa*, of that which is present to the eyes, and *parokṣa*, of that which is remote from and beyond our vision. When the object is beyond our vision, we are necessarily obliged to arrive at an idea of it by inference, imagination, analogy, by hearing the descriptions of others who have seen it or by studying pictorial or other representations of it if these are available. By putting together all these aids we can indeed arrive at a more or less adequate idea or suggestive image of the object, but we do not realise the thing itself; it is not yet to us the grasped reality, but only our conceptual representation of a reality. But once we have seen it with the eyes, – for no other sense is adequate, – we possess, we realise; it is there secure in our satisfied being, part of ourselves in knowledge. Precisely the same rule holds good of psychical things and of the Self. We may hear clear and luminous teachings about the Self from philosophers or teachers or from ancient writings; we may by thought, inference, imagination, analogy or by any other available means attempt to form a mental figure or conception of it; we may hold firmly that conception in our mind and fix it by an entire and exclusive concentration; but we have not yet realised it, we have not seen God. It is only when after long and persistent concentration or by other means the veil

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

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

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

All this knowledge and experience are primary means of arriving at and of possessing identity. It is our self that we see and experience and therefore vision and experience are incomplete unless they culminate in identity, unless we are able to live in all our being the supreme Vedantic knowledge, He am I. We must not only see God and embrace Him, but become that Reality."[28]

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

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

13.23. The Witness, the Sanctioner, the Sustainer and Enjoyer, the almighty Lord and supreme

Self, thus is called the supreme Soul seated in this body.

"The distinction made in the Gita between the Purusha and the Prakriti gives us the clue to the various attitudes which the soul can adopt towards Nature in its movement towards perfect freedom and rule. The Purusha is, says the Gita, witness, upholder, source of the sanction, knower, lord, enjoyer; Prakriti executes, it is the active principle and must have an operation corresponding to the attitude of the Purusha. The soul may assume, if it wishes, the poise of the pure witness, *sākṣī*; it may look on at the action of Nature as a thing from which it stands apart; it watches, but does not itself participate. We have seen the importance of this quietistic capacity; it is the basis of the movement of withdrawal by which we can say of everything, – body, life, mental action, thought, sensation, emotion, – 'This is Prakriti working in the life, mind and body, it is not myself, it is not even mine,' and thus come to the soul's separation from these things and to their quiescence... The attitude of the Witness at its highest is the absolute of unattachment and freedom from affection by the phenomena of the cosmic existence.

As the pure Witness, the soul refuses the function of upholder or sustainer of Nature. The upholder, *bhartā,* is another, God or Force or Maya, but not the soul... Unless there is a clear and real duality in existence, this cannot be the whole truth of the matter; the soul is the upholder also, it supports in its being the energy which unrolls the spectacle of the cosmos and which conducts its energies. When the Purusha accepts this upholding, it may do it still passively and without attachment, feeling that it contributes the energy but not that it controls and determines it. The control is

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

This it becomes when the soul accepts its complete function as the knower, lord and enjoyer of Nature. As the knower the soul possesses the knowledge of the force that acts and determines, it sees the values of being which are realising themselves in cosmos, it is in the secret of Fate. But the force is itself determined by the knowledge which is its origin and the source and standardiser of its valuations and effectuations of values. Therefore in proportion as the soul becomes again the knower, it becomes also the controller of the action. Nor can it do this without becoming the active enjoyer, *bhoktā*. In the lower being the enjoyment is of a twofold kind, positive and negative, which in the electricity of sensation translates itself into joy and suffering; but in the higher it is an actively equal enjoyment of the divine delight in self-manifestation. There is no loss of freedom, no descent into an ignorant attachment... The absolute joy of the soul in itself and, based upon that, the absolute joy of the soul in Nature are the divine fulfilment of the relation."[29]

23. The Yoga of the Division of the Three Gunas

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

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

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

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

"And this great thing, to rise from the human into the divine nature, we can only do by an effort of Godward knowledge, will and adoration. For the soul sent forth by the Supreme as his eternal portion, his immortal representative into the workings of universal Nature is yet obliged by the
9.8 character of those workings, *avaśam prakṛter vaśāt*, to identify itself in its external consciousness with her limiting conditions, to identify itself with a life, mind and body that are oblivious of their inner spiritual reality and of the innate Godhead. To get back to self-knowledge... is an indispensable means of this perfection. Perfection cannot come without self-

knowledge and God-knowledge and a spiritual attitude towards our natural existence, and that is why the ancient wisdom laid so much stress on salvation by knowledge, – not an intellectual cognizance of things, but a growing of man the mental being into a greater spiritual consciousness. The soul's salvation cannot come without the soul's perfection, without its growing into the divine nature...."[30]

"Mark that nowhere in the Gita is there any indication that dissolution of the individual spiritual being into the unmanifest, indefinable or absolute Brahman, *avyaktam* 12.3
anirdeśyam, is the true meaning or condition of immortality or the true aim of Yoga. On the contrary, it describes immortality later on as an indwelling in the Ishwara in his supreme status, *mayi nivasiṣyasi, param dhāma*, and here as 15.6
sādharmya, *parām siddhim*, a supreme perfection, a becoming of one law of being and nature with the Supreme, persistent still in existence and conscious of the universal movement but above it, as all the sages still exist, *munayaḥ sarve*, not bound to birth in the creation, not troubled by the dissolution of the cycles."[31]

"To be immortal was never held in the ancient spiritual teaching to consist merely in a personal survival of the death of the body: all beings are immortal in that sense and it is only the forms that perish. The souls that do not arrive at liberation, live through the returning aeons; all exist involved or secret in the Brahman during the dissolution of the manifest worlds and are born again in the appearance of a new cycle... To be immortal in the deeper sense is something different from this survival of death and this constant recurrence. Immortality is that supreme status in which the Spirit knows

itself to be superior to death and birth, not conditioned by the nature of its manifestation, infinite, imperishable, immutably eternal, – immortal, because never being born it never dies."[32]

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

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

"The modes of Nature are all qualitative in their essence and are called for that reason its Gunas or qualities. In any spiritual conception of the universe this must be so, because the connecting medium between spirit and matter must be psyche or soul-power and the primary action psychological and qualitative, not physical and quantitative; for quality is the immaterial, the more spiritual element in all the action of the universal Energy, her prior dynamics. The predominance of physical Science has accustomed us to a different view of Nature, because there the first thing that strikes us is the importance of the quantitative aspect of her workings and her dependence for the creation of forms on quantitative combinations and dispositions... The analysis of the ancient Indian thinkers allowed for the quantitative action of Nature, *mātrā*; but that it regarded as proper to its more objective and formally executive working, while the innately ideative executive power which disposes things according to the quality of their being and energy, *guṇa*, *svabhāva*, is the primary determinant and underlies all the outer quantitative dispositions. In the basis of the physical world this is not

apparent only because there the underlying ideative spirit, the Mahat Brahman, is overlaid and hidden up by the movement of matter and material energy. But even in the physical world the miraculous varying results of different combinations and quantities of elements otherwise identical with each other admits of no conceivable explanation if there is not a superior power of variative quality of which these material dispositions are only the convenient mechanical devices. Or, let us say at once, there must be a secret ideative capacity of the universal energy, *vijñāna*, – even if we suppose that energy and its instrumental idea, *buddhi*, to be themselves mechanical in their nature, – which fixes the mathematics and decides the resultants of these outer dispositions: it is the omnipotent Idea in the spirit which invents and makes use of these devices. And in the vital and mental existence quality at once openly appears as the primary power and amount of energy is only a secondary factor. But in fact the mental, the vital, the physical existence are all subject to the limitations of quality, all are governed by its determinations, even though that truth seems more and more obscured as we descend the scale of existence. Only the Spirit, which by the power of its idea-being and its idea-force called *mahat* and *vijñāna* fixes these conditions, is not so determined, not subject to any limitations either of quality or quantity because its immeasurable and indeterminable infinity is superior to the modes which it develops and uses for its creation."[33]

"But, again, the whole qualitative action of Nature, so infinitely intricate in its detail and variety, is figured as cast into the mould of three general modes of quality[4] everywhere

[4] *The idea of the three essential modes of Nature is a creation of the*

present, intertwined, almost inextricable, *sattva, rajas, tamas*. These modes are described in the Gita only by their psychological action in man, or incidentally in things such as food according as they produce a psychological or vital effect on human beings. If we look for a more general definition... we might define the three modes or qualities in terms of the motion of the universal Energy as Nature's three concomitant and inseparable powers of equilibrium, kinesis and inertia. But that is only their appearance in terms of the external action of Force... since consciousness is always there even in an apparently inconscient Force, we must find a corresponding psychological power of these three modes which informs their more outward executive action. On their psychological side the three qualities may be defined, Tamas as Nature's power of nescience, Rajas as her power of active seeking ignorance enlightened by desire and impulsion, Sattwa as her power of possessing and harmonising knowledge. The three qualitative modes of Nature are inextricably intertwined in all cosmic existence."[34]

These modes affect every part of our natural being. "They have indeed their strongest relative hold in the three different members of it, mind, life and body. Tamas, the principle of inertia, is strongest in material nature and in our physical being. The action of this principle is of two kinds, inertia of force and inertia of knowledge. Whatever is predominantly

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

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

other than the troubled and vehement pleasures insecurely bestowed by the satisfaction of rajasic desire and passion. Light and happiness are the characteristics of the sattwic Guna. The whole nature of the embodied living mental being is determined by these three gunas."[35]

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

14.10 **Sattwa leads having overpowered Rajas and Tamas, O Bharata; Rajas leads having overpowered Sattwa and Tamas; and Tamas leads having overpowered Sattwa and**
14.11 **Rajas.[5] When through all the doors of the body the light of knowledge shines forth, it should be understood that**
14.12 **there is an increase of Sattwa. Greed, kinesis, initiative of action, unrest and craving of desire, these come forth, O Best of the Bharatas, when there is an increase of**
14.13 **Rajas. Obscurity, inertia, negligence and delusion, these come forth, O Joy of the Kurus, when there is an increase of Tamas.**

[5] *The dominant gunas are not the essential soul-type of the embodied being but only the index of the formation he has made for this life or during his present existence and at a given moment of his evolution in Time.*

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

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

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

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

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

The initial advantage of this process of detachment is that one begins to understand one's own nature and all Nature. The detached Witness is able to see entirely without the least blinding by egoism the play of her modes of the Ignorance and to pursue it into all its ramifications, coverings and subtleties – for it is full of camouflage and disguise and snare and treachery and ruse. Instructed by long experience, conscious of all act and condition as their interaction, made wise of their processes, he cannot any longer be overcome by their assaults, surprised in their nets or deceived by disguises. At the same time he perceives the ego to be nothing better than a device and the sustaining knot of their interaction and, perceiving it, he is delivered from the illusion of the lower egoistic Nature. He escapes from the sattwic egoism of the altruist and the saint and the thinker; he shakes off from its control on his life-impulses the rajasic egoism of the self-seeker and ceases to be the laborious caterer of self-interest and the pampered prisoner or toiling galley-slave of passion and desire; he slays with the light of knowledge the tamasic egoism of the ignorant or passive being dull, unintelligent, attached to the common round of human life. Thus convinced and conscious of the essential vice of the ego-sense in all our personal action, he seeks no longer to find a means of self-correction and self-liberation in the rajasic or sattwic ego but looks above, beyond the instruments and the working of Nature, to the Master of works alone and his supreme Shakti, the supreme Prakriti. There alone all the being is pure and

free and the rule of a divine Truth possible."[36]

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

The Blessed Lord said: O Pandava, he who does not abhor illumination nor impulsion to action, nor delusion when they occur, nor longs for them when they cease; 14.22

He who is seated as one unconcerned, unperturbed by the Gunas, who stands apart, unwavering, knowing that it is only the Gunas that act. 14.23

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

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

"This is the impersonality of the Brahmic status... But still there is evidently here a double status, there is a scission of the being between two opposites; a liberated spirit in the immutable Self or Brahman watches the action of an unliberated mutable Nature, – Akshara and Kshara. Is there

no greater status, no principle of more absolute perfection, or is this division the highest consciousness possible in the body, and is the end of Yoga to drop the mutable nature and the Gunas born of the embodiment in Nature and disappear into the impersonality and everlasting peace of the Brahman? Is that *laya* or dissolution of the individual Purusha the greatest liberation? There is, it would seem, something else; for the Gita says at the close, always returning to this one final note..."[37]

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

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

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

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

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

tapas, the tranquilly intense divine force; *tamas* becomes *śama*, the divine quiet, rest, peace.

...the disharmonies of the triple mode of our inferior existence are overpassed and there begins a greater triple mode of a divine Nature. There is no obscurity of Tamas or inertia. Tamas is replaced by a divine peace and tranquil eternal repose out of which is released as from a supreme matrix of calm concentration the play of action and knowledge. There is no rajasic kinesis, no desire, no joyful and sorrowful striving of action, creation and possession, no fruitful chaos of troubled impulse. Rajas is replaced by a self-possessed power and illimitable act of force, that even in its most violent intensities does not shake the immovable poise of the soul or stain the vast and profound heavens and luminous abysses of its peace. There is no constructing light of mind casting about to seize and imprison the Truth, no insecure or inactive ease. Sattwa is replaced by an illumination and a spiritual bliss identical with the depth and infinite existence of the soul and instinct with a direct and authentic knowledge that springs straight from the veiled glories of the secret Omniscience. This is the greater consciousness into which our inferior consciousness has to be transformed, this nature of the Ignorance with its unquiet unbalanced activity of the three modes changed into this greater luminous supernature."[38]

24. The Three Purushas – The Yoga of the Purushottama

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"This is an epithet, a statement of immense bearing and consequence. For it means that each soul, each being in its spiritual reality is the very Divine, however partial its actual manifestation of him in Nature. And it means too, if words have any sense, that each manifesting spirit, each of the many, is an eternal individual, an eternal unborn undying power of the one Existence. We call this manifesting spirit the Jiva, because it appears here as if a living creature in a world of living creatures, and we speak of this spirit in man as the human soul and think of it in the terms of humanity only. But in truth it is something greater than its present appearance and not bound to its humanity: it was a lesser manifestation than the human in its past, it can become something much greater than mental man in its future. And when this soul rises above all ignorant limitation, then it puts on its divine nature of which its humanity is only a temporary veil, a thing of partial and incomplete significance. The individual spirit exists and ever existed beyond in the Eternal, for it is itself everlasting, *sanātana*. It is evidently this idea of the eternal individual which leads the Gita to avoid any expression at all suggestive of a complete dissolution, *laya*, and to speak rather of the highest state of the soul as a dwelling in the Purushottama, *nivasisyasi* 12.8
mayyeva. If, when speaking of the one Self of all, it seems to use the language of Adwaita, yet this enduring truth of the

eternal individual, *mamāṁśaḥ sanātanaḥ*, adds something which brings in a qualification and appears almost to accept the seeing of the Visishtadwaita, – though we must not therefore leap at once to the conclusion that that alone is the Gita's philosophy or that its doctrine is identical with the later doctrine of Ramanuja. Still this much is clear that there is an eternal, a real and not only an illusive principle of multiplicity in the spiritual being of the one divine Existence."[39]

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

"Man, to know himself, must be *kṛtātmā*, formed and complete in the spiritual mould, enlightened in the spiritual vision. The Yogins who have this eye of knowledge, see the Divine Being we are in their own endless reality, their own eternity of spirit. Illumined, they see the Lord in themselves and are delivered from the crude material limitation, from the form of mental personality, from the transient life formulation: they dwell immortal in the truth of the self and spirit. But they see him too not only in themselves, but in all the cosmos."[40]

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

"In other words, the Divine is at once the Soul of matter and the Soul of life and the Soul of mind as well as the Soul of the supramental light that is beyond mind and its limited reasoning intelligence."[41]

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

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

"The difficulty which baffles our intelligence is that these two seem to be irreconcilable opposites with no real nexus between them or any transition from the one to the other except by an intolerant movement of separation. The Kshara acts, or at least motives action, separately in the Akshara; the

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

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

insists that we can and should, while we live, be conscious in the self and its silence and yet act with power in the world of Nature. And it gives the example of the Divine himself who is not bound by necessity of birth, but free, superior to the cosmos, and yet abides eternally in action, *varta eva ca karmaṇi*. 3.22
Therefore it is by putting on a likeness of the divine nature in its completeness that the unity of this double experience becomes entirely possible. But what is the principle of that oneness?"[42]

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

"The Gita finds it in its supreme vision of the Purushottama, for that is the type, according to its doctrine, of the complete and the highest experience, it is the knowledge of the whole-knowers, *kṛtsnavidaḥ*. The Akshara is *para*, 3.29
supreme, in relation to the elements and action of cosmic Nature. It is the immutable Self of all, and the immutable Self of all is the Purushottama. The Akshara is he in the freedom of his self-existence unaffected by the action of his own power in Nature, not impinged on by the urge of his own becoming, undisturbed by the play of his own qualities. But this is only one aspect, though a great aspect of the integral knowledge. The Purushottama is at the same time greater than the Akshara, because he is more than this immutability and he is not limited even by the highest eternal status of his being, *param dhāma*. Still, it is through whatever is immutable and 15.6

eternal in us that we arrive at that highest status from which there is no returning to birth, and that was the liberation which was sought by the wise of old, the ancient sages. But when pursued through the Akshara alone, this attempt at liberation becomes the seeking of the Indefinable, a thing hard for our nature embodied as we are here in Matter. The Indefinable, to which the Akshara, the pure intangible self here in us rises
8.20 in its separative urge, is some supreme Unmanifest, *paraḥ avyaktaḥ*, and that highest unmanifest Akshara is still the Purushottama. Therefore, the Gita has said, those also who follow after the Indefinable, come to Me, the eternal Godhead. But yet is he more even than a highest unmanifest Akshara, more than any negative Absolute, *neti neti*, because he is to be known also as the supreme Purusha who extends this whole universe in his own existence. He is a supreme mysterious All, an ineffable positive Absolute of all things here. He is the Lord in the Kshara, Purushottama not only there, but here in the heart of every creature, Ishwara. And there too
8.20 even in his highest eternal status, *paraḥ avyaktaḥ*, he is the supreme Lord, Parameshwara, no aloof and unrelated Indefinable, but the origin and father and mother and first foundation and eternal abode of self and cosmos and Master
5.29 of all existences and enjoyer of askesis and sacrifice. It is by knowing him at once in the Akshara and the Kshara, it is by knowing him as the Unborn who partially manifests himself in all birth and even himself descends as the constant Avatar, it is
7.1 by knowing him in his entirety, *samagram mām*, that the soul is easily released from the appearances of the lower Nature and returns by a vast sudden growth and broad immeasurable ascension into the divine being and supreme Nature. For the truth of the Kshara too is a truth of the Purushottama.

Thus the Divine is manifest in a double soul of his mystery, a twofold power, *dvāvimau puruṣau*; he supports at once the spirit of mutable things that is all these existences, *kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni*, and the immutable spirit that stands above them in his imperturbable immobility of eternal silence and calm. And it is by the force of the Divine in them that the mind and heart and will of man are so powerfully drawn in different directions by these two spirits as if by opposing and incompatible attractions one insistent to annul the other. But the Divine is neither wholly the Kshara, nor wholly the Akshara. He is greater than the immutable Self and he is much greater than the Soul of mutable things. If he is capable of being both at once, it is because he is other than they, *anyaḥ*, the Purushottama above all cosmos and yet extended in the world and extended in the Veda, in self-knowledge and in cosmic experience."[43]

15.16

15.16

15.17

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

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

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

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

"And whoever thus knows and sees him as the Purushottama, is no longer bewildered whether by the world-appearance or by the separate attraction of these two apparent contraries... He embraces and escapes them, overcomes their
15.19 opposition and becomes all-knowing, *sarvavid*, a whole-knower. He sees the entire sense both of the self and of things; he restores the integral reality of the Divine; he unites the Kshara and the Akshara in the Purushottama. He loves, worships, cleaves to and adores the supreme Self of his and all existence, the one Lord of his and all energies, the close and far-off Eternal in and beyond the world. And he does this too with no single side or portion of himself, exclusive spiritualised mind, blinding light of the heart intense but divorced from largeness, or sole aspiration of the will in works, but in all the perfectly illumined ways of his being and his becoming, his soul and his nature. Divine in the equality of his imperturbable self-existence, one in it with all objects and creatures, he brings that boundless equality, that deep oneness down into his mind and heart and life and body and founds on it in an indivisible integrality the trinity of divine love, divine works and divine knowledge. This is the Gita's way of salvation.

And is that not too after all the real Adwaita which makes no least scission in the one eternal Existence? This utmost undividing Monism sees the one as the one even in the multiplicities of Nature, in all aspects, as much in the reality of self and of cosmos as in that greatest reality of the supracosmic which is the source of self and the truth of the cosmos and is not bound either by any affirmation of universal becoming or by any universal or absolute negation. That at

least is the Adwaita of the Gita. This is the most secret Shastra, says the Teacher to Arjuna; this is the supreme teaching and science which leads us into the heart of the highest mystery of existence. Absolutely to know it, to seize it in knowledge and feeling and force and experience is to be perfected in the transformed understanding, divinely satisfied in heart and successful in the supreme sense and objective of all will and action and works. It is the way to be immortal,[6] to rise towards the highest divine nature and to assume the eternal Dharma."[44]

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

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SABCL : Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library

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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