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THE HINDU PHILOSOPHY OF CONDUCT

BEING LECTURES ON THE

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

BY

PROFESSOR M. RANGACHARYA, M.A.

Vol. II

EDITED BY

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AND

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PREFACE

This volume of THE HINDU PHILOSOPHY OF CONDUCT comprises part of a series of lectures that my father, Professor M. Rangacharya, delivered many years ago on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Pressed on all hands to publish them for the benefit of a larger audience, he planned to bring them out in three volumes, each dealing with six chapters of the *Gītā*. The first of these three volumes was published during his life-time. His untimely demise, while engaged in the work of preparing the manuscripts for the second volume, interrupted the work of publication: and many difficulties, that need not be recounted here, prevented me till recently from making any attempt to continue and complete the work. Not the least among these was the fact that my father had prepared for the press only the lectures to about the end of the ninth chapter of the *Gītā*. For the rest, I had only transcripts of shorthand reports of the original lectures: and these, as my father pointed out in his preface to Vol. I, stood in need of some editing. I felt this to be a difficult and delicate task, and shrank from undertaking it, relying on my own resources. Fortunately, an old and esteemed friend of my father, Mr. M. B. Varadaraja Iyengar, B.A., B.L., Advocate, Bangalore, came to my rescue and placed his wide and profound scholarship freely and generously at my disposal. Having collaborated with my father in a famous translation of the *Śrī Bhāshya*, he brought to the task, besides his vast erudition, the unique qualification of a fine insight into my father's ways of thinking. I am sure that a fitter or more competent hand could not have guided me in my difficult undertaking. And it is some consolation to me that, though my father was not spared long enough to complete the work on which he spent the last days of his life, Mr. Varadaraja Iyengar should have found it convenient, in spite of his failing health, to help me in this labour of love. I also owe a debt of gratitude to his son, Mr. M.B. Narasimha Iyengar, M. Sc., for numerous helpful suggestions.

A few words are here necessary to explain what we did by way of editing the manuscripts. It must be stated at once that we did not feel ourselves at liberty to alter the text of the lectures to any considerable extent. Our work has consisted mainly in a few verbal alterations here and there. Wherever possible, repetitions have been avoided. Occasionally, it has been found necessary to explain a few allusions,

These define the limits we had set to ourselves. The lectures are thus published almost exactly as they were delivered. It must however be admitted that in regard to the translation of the *ślokas* of the *Gītā*, in some cases we had to give an English rendering ourselves. In many instances, the lectures themselves contained exact translations: but occasionally my father left the verses untranslated, contenting himself with a general explanation in the course of his exposition. In such cases the translation was done by us.

In conclusion, I may be permitted to say that I have looked upon this work as a sacred duty in more ways than one. To a believing Hindu, the theme of the *Gītā* itself is sacred. Śrī Kṛishṇa has promised to look with kindly eyes on all those who try to broadcast the teachings of the *Gītā*. To play a part, however humble and insignificant, in that great endeavour by completing the publication of these lectures has thus seemed to me almost a religious duty. In addition, it is a debt I owe to the hallowed memory of my father, whose versatile genius, profound scholarship and independence and integrity of character created a lasting impression on all those who had the privilege to come into contact wich him. I can only hope that I have not been a completely unworthy instrument in presenting to the public what I regard as the richest legacy he left behind him. Considerations like these induced me to undertake the work of publication even at some pecuniary risk. Whatever may be the deficiency of the volume that I am now placing before the public, and however much those finishing touches that the author alone could give may be missed, I trust that the intrinsic merit of the work will ensure for it a kindly and popular reception.

Triplicane,
1st May 1936.

M. R. SAMPATKUMARAN.

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THE

PHILOSOPHY OF CONDUCT ACCORDING TO THE RELIGION OF THE HINDUS

BEING

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

BHAGAVADGITA

VOL. II

यो नित्यो यमुपासतेऽखिलजना येनेदमावास्यते
यस्मै कर्म करोति सात्त्विककुलं यस्माज्जगज्जायते ।
यस्यैश्वर्यमवेद्यनैजविभवं यस्मिन् हि विश्वं स्थितं
तं दूरे पुनरन्तिकेऽपि विदितं ध्यायामि नारायणम् ॥

CHAPTER VII

xxxii

GENTLEMEN,

In our last class we finished our study of the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*; and to-day we commence the study of the seventh chapter. In concluding the study of the sixth chapter, I drew your attention to the fact, that the eighteen chapters of the Gītā are, in relation to their contents, capable of being divided into three distinct parts or divisions. Each of these three divisions is made up of six chapters taken in regular order, so that the first six chapters constitute the first division, the second six chapters the second division, and the third six chapters the third division. The first of these divisions deals with the great question of self-realization; it treats of the reality of the soul and of its immateriality, immutability and immortality, as contrasted with the materiality, mutability and mortality of the body, and also tells us of

the natural consequences which flow from self-realization, as it bears upon the goal of life and the ethics of conduct. The second division, made up of the second six chapters, deals with the equally great question of God-realization. It treats of the reality and all-pervasiveness of God, points out how He is the centre and source of all power in the universe, and how devotion to Him becomes a duty and enables us to live our lives aright, so as not to miss its goal or mar its noble fruitfulness. In the third division, the great problems of matter, soul and God are taken together for consideration, so that we may understand the nature of the relation which exists among them and work out our lives in accordance with our knowledge of that relation.

From the study of the *Gītā* as a whole, it is also possible for us to gather that in it three, or, according to some, four, paths of moral discipline are recognised and dealt with as paths leading to the attainment of what constitutes the highest good of life. The highest good of life is, as you know, considered by Śrī-Kṛishṇa to be *moksha*—the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment: and the paths of moral discipline which lead to the goal of *moksha* are generally mentioned as *karma mārga* or the path of work, *jñāna-mārga* or the path of wisdom, and *bhakti-mārga* or the path of divine devotion, the fourth, which is also given sometimes, being called *prapatti-mārga* or the path of self-surrender to God. Every one of these forms of life-discipline is known as a *yoga*; and we may therefore say that *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga* and *prapatti-yoga* are all dealt with in the *Gītā* as suitable means for securing the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment; it should not, however, be forgotten that *prapatti-yoga* is by some included in *bhakti-yoga* and looked upon as a special form or aspect of it.

Two out of these four kinds of moral discipline in life, namely, *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*, have been fairly fully considered in the chapters which we have already studied: and *bhakti-yoga*, or that discipline of life, which is based on love and devotion to God, is dealt with in the second six chapters, the study of which we are going to commence to-day. What is called *prapatti-yoga* happens to be the last of the moral disciplines that are recommended in the *Gītā*, and finds mention in the very last chapter, as we shall see.

You must have made out well enough by this time that *karma-yoga*, the discipline of work, and *jñāna-yoga*, the discipline

of wisdom, are not based upon God-realization. It is not that the *karma-yogin* and the *jñāna-yogin* would be any the worse for knowing God and believing in God; on the other hand, the ethics of their ordered life, as resting on work and on realized spiritual wisdom, would thereby receive further support and further justification. Nevertheless, it is perfectly right to say that neither the discipline of work nor the discipline of spiritual wisdom requires to be built inevitably upon the foundation of God-realization. A pure *karma-yogin* need not have achieved for himself either self-realization or God-realization; and what is necessarily required in the case of a *jñāna yogin* is that he should have arrived at self-realization so as to be able to distinguish well the self from the not-self and distinguish also the appropriate aims and objects of the self from the tendencies and promptings of the not-self.

The essence of *karma yoga* consists in the fact that the *karma-yogin* is expected to live a life of work always performing well his duties therein, simply because they happen to be his duties. In the performance of duty for its own sake, irrespective of the consequences and results accruing therefrom to the worker, we may easily observe a moral discipline, in which the end and the means are identified; and some of our great teachers of *karma-yoga* have declared that its characteristic feature consists in this identification of the means with the end. Such an identification of the means with the end seems to be quite possible in the psychology of human nature, and may well be illustrated by the mental attitude of the miser in relation to the wealth he hoards. He manages to forget completely that money is only a means to an end, that end being either the enjoyment of pleasures by the owner of the money or its use in charity so as to enable others to secure and enjoy the comforts and pleasures of life. Please remember that I give this example here simply to illustrate the possibility of people at times identifying the means with the end, but not to suggest that the morality of the life of the miser is in any manner comparable with that of the life of the *karma-yogin*. In the case of the former, this identification of the means with the end leads to the strengthening of his worldly attachment, while, in the case of the latter, a similar identification tends to enable him to become free from such attachment and to get rid of the feelings of i-ness and mine-ness which engender selfishness.

As you already know (III. 27 & 28), it is enough for the *karma-yogin* if he comes to realize that, in all cases, people do

their deeds in life through the influence of the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti*, and that it is only those, whose nature is subjected to delusion owing to their feeling of i-ness, that consider themselves to be the agents of the deed which their *prakṛiti* does. With such knowledge of the actual agency of *prakṛiti* deeply established in his heart, he ceases to be attached to the fruits of work, and thus manages to get out of the bondage of *karma*, so as to attain the emancipation of the soul in the end. An agnostic or even an atheist may well live such an unselfish life of duty, wherein duty is always done for its own sake. Looked at from the speculative standpoint, this life of disinterested duty duly done is certain to appear to be different from the life of spiritual discrimination lived by the *jñāna-yogin*. However, from the practical standpoint of evolving and ensuring unselfishness and freedom from worldly attachments, both these forms of life are of equal value; and the moral worthiness of the life of the *karma-yogin* is thus in itself both high and honourable.

The discipline of *jñāna yoga* is based largely upon self-realization; and we know that self-realization is capable of being accomplished through the practice of the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration. Self-realization, so accomplished, enables the *yogin* to distinguish the self from the not-self, and to understand fully the meaning of the reality of the soul, as contrasted with the unessentiality and mortality of the body, which, by its association with the soul, places limitations upon the freedom and power of the soul. We saw that the practice of the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration may enable *yogins* to arrive at both self-realization and God-realization, and that the attainment of God-realization by *yogins* is less general than the attainment of self-realization. Thus, in effect, there may be *yogins*, who have attained self-realization but not God-realization; and in their case the life of *bhakti-yoga* or of loving and faithful devotion to God cannot be made to rest on their own inner spiritual experience.

The case is, however, different in respect of the life of *jñāna-yoga* or of spiritual discrimination. Such a life is, as I have just told you, based actually upon accomplished self-realization; and its most notable characteristic is that it has to be what we have already spoken of as the life of absolute unselfishness and universal equality. When self-realization is attained by a *yogin*, he is naturally led on to see himself in all beings and all beings in himself. Whether this is the result of his apprehending the sameness of the spiritual entity which

constitutes all souls, or of his apprehending the spiritual similarity between them, there is no doubt that such a vision of the universal equality of all beings is well calculated to kill selfishness, to foster the feelings of love and charity and to stimulate service and sacrifice for accomplishing the good of others. It is really impossible for such a person to be in any manner selfish ; he will look upon the good of others as his own pain and suffering, the result being that, when others are unhappy, he will try to relieve their unhappiness, and when others are happy and joyous, he will feel glad and happy himself in consequence of their joy and happiness.

You must be able to see that, to adopt thus as a guide in life the ethical law of universal equality and absolute unselfishness, self-realization with its necessary consequences is in itself quite enough, although God-realization, as I have told you before, gives to this ethical law a stronger second proof and a higher second authority, so as to make its adoption in life even more imperatively obligatory. In the case of the *karma-yogin*, who is a theist, duty acquires, in his life of disinterested duty duly done, a new meaning, since he understands the moral law to be based upon the will of God. Similarly, in the case of the *jñāna-yogin*, who is a theist, the ethical law of universal equality and absolute unselfishness acquires a fresher and fuller forcefulness and inviolability, owing to its being ultimately based upon that omnipresence and universal immanence of God, which make Him the All and the All in All at the same time.

Still it is worthwhile to bear in mind that,—even as it is possible for the atheist or the agnostic to live well the life of *karma-yoga*, do duty for its own sake, and thus become free from the bondage of *karma* and from the consequent necessity of undergoing rebirth,—even so, it is possible for one, who is an agnostic or an atheist in relation to the great problem of God, to be a good *jñāna-yogin* and live well the life of universal equality and absolute unselfishness. I believe you will not consider it superfluous, if I mention once again that this life of the *jñāna-yogin* may be lived well even by such as have not practised the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration so as to arrive at self-realization, which happens to be the first step of true success therein ; because an intellectual realization of the self,—when intense enough to give rise to a deep conviction,—may enable one to understand the imperative obligatoriness of the ethical law of universal equality and

absolute unselfishness, and impel one to live one's life in full accordance with that law.

But *bhakti-yoga* and *prapatti-yoga*,—whether you consider them to be two different moral disciplines or only two forms of one and the same moral discipline,—have necessarily to be founded upon belief in God. The reason for this is obvious: the life of love and devotion to God implies faith in God as a matter of course: and the life of complete self surrender to God demands that faith no less. Here also what is wanted in one is a strong faith in God, in whatsoever manner or through whatsoever means one may have acquired that faith. Thus both *bhakti* and *prapatti*, as means for securing the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment, are available even to those who have not practised the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration, so as to arrive at God-realization in the state of *samādhi*. There is no doubt that the aspirant gets the best and the most direct proof of the reality of the soul as well as of God by achieving full success in the practice of this *yoga*. But there are also other ways and means, by which lovers of truth and goodness may come to know the reality of the soul and the reality of God so well as to believe in them firmly and to act invariably in accordance with that belief.

With the object of illustrating the relation existing between the common people, living their ordinarily busy and virtuous life in the world, and the great *yogins*, who have accomplished self-realization and God-realization through meditation and mental concentration, I remember having mentioned to you once before that that relation may be taken to be similar to what is seen to exist, for instance, between Faraday, the famous discoverer of certain important electro-magnetic phenomena, and the modern army of telegraph signallers, who, all over the world, use his discoveries in their practice of the art of telegraphy. I am sure that none of us can see any wisdom in maintaining that every member of this army of signallers should rediscover originally for himself the discoveries of Faraday before he could become a worthy and capable signaller. Even in the field of spiritual and religious wisdom, there are those who are the great discoverers of truth, and those who are merely the faithful users, so to say, of the truth found out and promulgated by the discoverers. We may consider their discoveries to be due to divine revelation, or to inspiration, or to the accomplishment of success in the practice of the

yoga of meditation and mental concentration; in any case the fact remains that they are the discoverers, and that th truth found out by them is to be utilised by others fo conducting their lives aright in complete harmony with th God-ordained plan and the enduring reality of things in th universe.

In this utilisation of revealed or discovered spiritual an religious truth for the determination of the ethical aim an manner of our lives, we have to take care to see that the en in view and also the means adopted for attaining that end a both well correlated to truth and made to rest upon truth. W have made out accordingly that the discipline of *karma-yog* as a means for the attainment of the salvation of *moksha* itsel as the supreme end of life, is equally well based upon truth It is easy to see that the immortality of the soul gives t *moksha* its requisite foundation upon truth; and, when v know that work, which is inevitably essential to all being does not of itself cling to man and produce the bondage o *karma*, and that it is the attachment to the fruits of wor which gives rise to this bondage, we cannot fail to see tha *karma-yoga*, as a means for the attainment of *moksha*, rest fully upon truth. We may, with even greater certainty, sa that the discipline of *jñāna-yoga* also, as a means for th attainment of *moksha*, rests upon truth, because it is founde upon the self-realization achieved by the *yogin* in the state o *samādhi* and upon his consequent conviction that all being are in him and that he is himself in all beings. The disciplin of *bhakti-yoga* also is equally well consistent with truth an founded upon truth.

The *karma-yogin's* vision of truth is good and right so fa as it extends; and while the *jñāna-yogin's* vision also is equall good and right, it may be seen to be still more comprehensiv and capable of perceiving more truth. It seems to be mean in the *Gītā*, that it is a progressive advancement in the line o ethical improvement to pass on from the discipline of *bhakt* and *prapatti*, because he, who uses this last discipline to regulat and control his life, is guided by a still wider and more com prehensive vision of truth than that which is commande ordinarily by the *jñāna-yogin*.

When the successful *yogin*, after the attainment of self realization, proves fortunate enough to attain God-realizatio also, he is, as we have been told, led on to see God in all being and all beings in God, at the same time that he thereby make

Him out to be the foundation of all existence and the support of all reality. The very first stanza of the *Īśāvāsyopanishad* tells us, as you may know:—

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्य स्विद्धनम् ॥

—that all this, whatsoever moves in the world, is worthy to be the habitation of the Lord, that we have therefore to live our lives with renunciation, and that we should not be covetous, as none of us has any title to any wealth. The argument employed here tells us clearly that the well proved omnipresence of God is enough as a reason to enforce on us renunciation and freedom from covetousness, obviously because whoever, by his own right, lives in a habitation must be the undisputed owner of that habitation. It is in fact due to the logical sufficiency of this argument that a Hindu devotee of God has been led to declare—*Svatvanāātmani saṁjātaṁ svāmitvaṁ brahmaṇi sthitam*—that what may be called 'propertiness' arises in relation to one's self and that proprietorship is established in the *Brahman*.

We may thus see how the discipline of *bhakti-yoga* happens to be a quite natural and unavoidable result of the God-realization of the successful *yogin*. To all others, who perceive the truth of things through his vision, *bhakti-yoga* becomes quite as natural and unavoidable as it happens to be in his case. Accordingly all true believers in God consider themselves to be no more than the property of God, and therefore hold that all their thoughts and words and deeds belong to Him entirely. They have to place themselves altogether at the disposal of God, much in the manner in which what is undoubtedly the property of a person is wholly at his disposal, so that he may do with it whatever he likes. It is impossible to conceive that such a thing as what may be called the will of the property can ever declare itself to be separate from the will of the proprietor. Indeed, nothing, which is property, can have a will of its own. Using the language of an English poet, we may well say to our God—"O Lord, our wills are ours, we know not how; our wills are ours to make them Thine!" Most great teachers of *bhakti* in Hinduism have taught that it is an always obligatory duty on the part of the devotee of God to direct all his thoughts and feelings and activities towards God and make Him their one invariable object.

Such being the meaning and justification of the discipline of *bhakti-yoga*, the rationality of that absolute self-surrender to God, which is known as *prapatti*, can in no wise be questioned. In fact, the very perfection of the devotion of the devotee to his God is dependent upon the whole-hearted absoluteness of his self-surrender to God. We may in this way realize how *bhakti* and *prapatti* can effectively kill the selfish feelings of i-ness and mine-ness, which so commonly pollute the sacred places in the human heart and go on making the bondage of *karma* more and more lasting and more and more burdensome. Therefore, there can be no doubt that, as means for the attainment of the salvation of soul-emancipation, both *bhakti* and *prapatti* are of very great value, and are certain to produce the desired result. And we have now seen that they fully rest on truth. Moreover, *moksha*, achieved through these means, implies not merely the emancipation of the soul from the bondage of *karma* and from the consequent necessity of its having to undergo re'ncarnation again and again; it also implies the attainment of God by the emancipated soul,—of God, who is its natal home and destined goal. Questions of this kind, related in this manner to the God-realization of the *yogin*, who has attained complete success in the practice of the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration, are all dealt with in the second six chapters of the *Gītā* ; and the seventh chapter, which forms the first of these, starts with the consideration of how God may be known fully and undoubtedly by those who steadily and earnestly endeavour to know Him. This is how the chapter begins :

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन् मदाश्रयः ।
असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥ १ ॥

ŚRĪ-KṚISHṆA SAID :—

1. Practising *yoag* with your mind firmly attached to Me and having Me for your support, how you will come to know Me fully and undoubtedly, listen to that, O Arjuna.

We may say that in the whole of this chapter we have the teaching of Śrī-Kṛishṇa regarding the revelation of God to man and also regarding the mental attitude which it is proper for man to have in relation to God ; and this first stanza, like a

number of other stanzas in the previous chapters, takes it for granted that Śrī-Kṛishṇa is an incarnation of God, and gives us to understand that the *yogin*, who, having his mind firmly attached to God and having God Himself as his support, that is, as the sustainer and sole object of his meditation, practises the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration, comes to know God fully and undoubtedly. To such a *yogin* the revelation of God is complete and convincing, there being no imperfection or uncertainty in relation to his knowledge of God.

Let us see what this means, and how it may take place. You may remember that, in dealing with the question of self-realization, I told you that there are given in the *Gītā* two methods by which we may arrive at the knowledge of the nature and reality of the soul. One of these methods employs a process of psychological analysis, which we can all ordinarily understand in a more or less satisfactory manner. It is mentioned, as you know, in a stanza (III. 42) of the third chapter wherein there is a statement giving the gradation of successive superiority in power in relation to our faculties of perception, attention, intellection and volition. A careful examination of the teaching contained in that stanza led us to learn that the chain of our mental faculties, arranged according to what we saw to be their controlling power, makes it necessary to posit an uncontrollable controller at the superior end of the chain, and that this uncontrollable controller, forming the central fountain, so to say, of our consciousness and mental power, is capable of so unifying the various momentary experiences of every one of us as to give rise in each case to that sense of individuality, which is responsible for our personality and enables us to feel that our experiences are really ours, irrespective of the time and place that go to condition them. Such an uncontrollable controller in the field of our consciousness and the constitution of our mental faculties is the soul; and its proof, so arrived at, rests on logical reasoning and psychological analysis.

The other method of arriving at the knowledge of the nature and reality of the soul consists in the practice of the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration, so as to attain self-realization in the state of *samādhi*. In this practice of concentration, the mind is turned inwards, and whatever happens to be the ego of the aspirant becomes in *samādhi* the sole object of his attention and introspection. You may

remember how, in the *Kaṭhopanishad*, it is declared that, although the senses are so made as to operate from within outwards, certain heroic persons manage to turn their vision inwards and see the internal self. It is difficult for us to understand the exact nature of the experience of the successful *yogin*, when he has got into the state of *samādhi* so as to see the internal self. Nevertheless, from the description which successful *yogins* have, in works on *yoga*, given of their experience in that state, we cannot fail to gather that through their *yoga*, they obtain a direct inner perception of the principle of consciousness forming the spiritual basis and essence of the soul of man. Their knowledge of the soul is accordingly of the direct perceptive kind. And who does not know that direct perception gives us a fuller and more undoubted knowledge of truth, than it is possible for any other means of knowledge to give? Knowledge based upon logical inference is always apt to be less certain and less full.

Exactly the same thing holds true in respect of the realization of the knowledge of God. With the aid of the ladder of logic and observation, men may rise from Nature to Nature's God. The faith of most God-believing men is generally the result of such an ascent from Nature to Nature's God, this ascent itself being very often instinctive and unconscious. Glimpses of the truth regarding the nature and reality of God, we may all obtain to some extent in this manner; and it is not possible for all to have a clear and complete vision of the truth about God, as such a vision of truth can be commanded only by those, who, with firm attachment to God, attain perfect success in that *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration, which has God for its object and support. It is well-known that all those, who practise the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration, do not succeed in arriving at self-realization, which is the first step of achievement therein, and even among those, who succeed in arriving at self-realization, all do not achieve God-realization, since this latter realization takes the *yogin* to the veriest foundation of all truth and is therefore much harder to attain than mere self-realization. There seems to be, however, no doubt that, on the attainment of complete success in the practice of this *yoga*, the *yogin* introspectively perceives the vision of God flashing forth from out of his self in the manner of the lightning flashing forth from out of the cloud.

' We can none of us describe well in our language the *yogin's* vision of God, or his joy of heart, which very naturally flows

from that vision. It is further said that such *yogins*, as have been fortunate enough to see God within themselves and have felt the consequent heart-joy in all its lively glory, do not find any language to be adequate to describe their inner experience of God-perception and its associated blissfulness. So far as they are concerned, this simply brings out the incapacity of language to describe the indescribable, but does in no way indicate that their vision of the truth about God is in any manner uncertain or incomplete. All the great inspired teachers and prophets of all the higher ethical and theistic religions in the world bear testimony to their faith in God, whatever may be the way and the means that made their God-vision an accomplished fact to them. We may take Śrī-Kṛishṇa, Moses, Jesus and Mahommed as notable examples to illustrate this point; and an appreciative and impartial study of their lives and teachings cannot fail to show to us that none of them had any doubt or uncertainty or suspicion of incompleteness in relation to his knowledge of God. In the case of all great seers, their knowledge of God is direct and dependent upon personal perception; and it cannot but be, therefore, both full and undoubted.

ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः।
यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

2. I will teach you fully this knowledge with (information regarding all) its details, on knowing which there remains no other thing here that further deserves to be known.

It is evident that here in this stanza there is reference to a certain something, the knowledge of which is equivalent to the knowledge of all things. What that certain something is, we may make out with fair certainty; for, the idea regarding it appears to be *upanishadic* in origin and is stated and explained in the first *khaṇḍa* of the sixth *prapāṭhaka* of the *Chhāndogya-Upanishad*. Here we are told of 'a certain teaching by which what is not heard becomes heard, what is not thought becomes thought, what is not known becomes known'; and the possibility of such a thing happening is illustrated by means of a mass of clay, a mass of gold and a mass of steel, which form the material causes of the various articles, that are respectively made out of them, and are therefore things the knowledge whereof is equivalent to the knowledge of all their

various products derived through modification. Thus to know the clay, for instance, is the same thing as to know pots and dishes and all other such articles as are made out of clay and are the modifications of clay. That the illustration of the intended idea in the context by means of clay and gold and steel should not be pressed to convey anything more or other than what it is meant to illustrate, is brought out by Rāmānujāchārya in his *Śrī-Bhāshya* in commenting on the aphorism, *Pratijñāvirodhāt* (I. i. 9), where he has shown that the one thing, by knowing which all things become known, cannot be *prakṛiti* or material Nature, but must be the supreme *Brahman*.

In the context here in the *Gītā* also, we cannot fail to see that that certain something, by knowing which all things become known, must be the divine entity we all call God. In fact, what is suggested to us here is that all those, who, in whatsoever manner, come to know God fully and undoubtedly, are certain to make Him out to be the root of all reality, the support of all existence, and the source and centre of all power in the universe. To know God as such may well be equivalent to the same thing as to possess the knowledge of all things, so that in relation to him, who has so come to know God, it cannot be wrong to say that for him there remains nothing more which is worthy to be known.

You are probably aware that it is often declared by those, who are engaged in the examination of the nature of knowledge, that knowledge may be either empirical or rational. An empirical knowledge of things may be said to be a kind of haphazard knowledge of individual items in which the relation of the various parts to one another and also to the whole remains unascertained. This kind of knowledge is good enough so far as it goes ; but its want of scientific co-ordination gives to none of its items any power of revealing any other item or items thereof. What is called rational knowledge is, however, of a different kind. This is well co-ordinated knowledge : and in it the relation of the parts to one another and also to the whole is definitely ascertained, so as to enable us to see the causal connection between things as well as their mutual dependence. It may thus be seen that the natural tendency of rational knowledge is to culminate in a supreme unification ; and all knowledge, when so unified, must take us to God. In the sphere of rational knowledge, it is possible not only to pass from effect to cause, but also to comprehend the effect from the comprehension of the cause. Thus it is that he, who knows God, knows all things.

Since, in our study of the Gītā, we are naturally expected to examine all knowledge in its bearing upon conduct, we shall do well to see that, in relation to the question of conduct also, it is possible to have such a thing as rational knowledge and guidance. In fact, life may be guided in two different ways by those who earnestly wish to conduct it aright. One way is by obeying laws and commandments relating to right conduct. Here the guidance comes, as it were, from an outside authority; it is therefore extraneous. The other way is to know the reason of the laws and commandments relating to right conduct, and then to guide one's life intelligently in accordance with that reason. In this latter case, the guidance proceeds from within one's self, and cannot be extraneous. Moreover, in situations, where a conflict of duties may arise, he, who knows the reason of the laws and commandments bearing upon conduct, will not find it so difficult to guide himself aright as the person, who only knows laws and commandments but not their reason.

I have already drawn your attention to the fact that the difficulty of Arjuna, at the time when he sought Śrī-Kṛishṇa's divine teachings on the philosophy of conduct, was due to his inability to decide which course of conduct he was to adopt in a situation characterised by a serious conflict of duties. There are laws and commandments teaching the obligatoriness of renunciation and retirement, of *nivṛitti* as we call it in Sanskrit; and there are also laws and commandments pointing out duties and urging their performance, or, in other words, laws and commandments ordaining and encouraging the active life of *pravṛitti*. How then is *pravṛitti* to be reconciled with *nivṛitti*? Is *nivṛitti* higher and more obligatory than *pravṛitti*, or is it otherwise? Such questions are sure to trouble the minds of persons, who are anxious to live their lives aright but do not know the reason of the laws and commandments, by which they have to guide those lives aright.

But when self-realization and God-realization are seen to be at the basis of right conduct, forming, as they say, the ontological foundation of ethics, the merely empirical way of judging and guiding conduct ceases to be of any great authority. On knowing that the soul is immaterial, immutable and immortal, as contrasted with the body, which is material, mutable and mortal, one is naturally led to place a higher value on whatever happens to be the good of the soul, than on the satisfaction of the promptings of the body; and this tendency is strengthened by the further knowledge that the soul is

essentially 'existence-knowledge-bliss'—*sachchidānanda* as expressed in Sanskrit—and that its association with matter limits and keeps under restraint the free play of its nature and powers. In this way, *mcksha*—which is the liberation of the soul from its material bondage, so that it may recover fully the freedom, the self-luminosity and the blissfulness of its own intrinsic nature—becomes the supreme end of life.

What prevents the attainment of *moksha* and helps to maintain the material bondage of the soul is the impressed influence of *karma* in the form of *puṇya* and *pāpa*; and, since work in itself does not cling to man, these arise out of the disposition of the mind with which the worker performs his work. When the mind of the worker is actuated by the feelings of i-ness and mine-ness and he is attached to the fruits of work, it is then that *karma* clings to him. As soon as we come to know that the qualities of *prakṛiti*, or the innate tendencies of material Nature, are entirely responsible for all the various kinds of our activities, our feelings of i-ness and mine ness lose their support, our attachment to the fruits of work becomes unjustifiable, and the inevitability of our having to do work and to live by work in our mundane existence receives its strongest demonstration.

On these fundamental principles as the basis, the edifice of the ethical discipline of *karma-yoga* may be securely built; and it may be easily seen that the life of disinterested duty duly lived can in itself be an effective means for the attainment of the salvation of *moksha*. Further, when, through the *yogin's* self-realization, it becomes evident that one has to see one's self in all beings and all beings in one's self, the life of duty is at once transformed, in accordance with the moral law of universal equality and absolute unselfishness, into the life of love and service and sacrifice. Such a life of love and service and sacrifice, which has to be lived for the good of others, receives a higher sanction and a more imperative obligatoriness through God-realization; and on realizing that God is the source of all existence and the fountain of all power, that He is in all beings and that all beings are in Him, the moral law of universal equality, importing the obligatoriness of the life of love and service and sacrifice becomes firmly founded in the will of God. It is in this way that the ethics of conduct is rationalised in the *Gītā*; therefore, from the standpoint of ethics also, the knowledge of God is equivalent to the knowledge of all ethics, that is, of all laws and commandments bearing upon the

regulation and guidance of conduct. Accordingly, when we come to know God and His reality, and understand the nature of His relation to man and the universe, then for us there will be left no other thing that is unknown and is really worthy to be known.

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥ ३ ॥

3. Among thousands of men, some one endeavours for the attainment of success (in *yoga*); and even among those, who endeavour and attain success, only some one knows Me in reality.

Even though the knowldge of God is, in the manner already pointed out, equivalent to the knowledge of all things, still such knowledge of God cannot, as we are told here, be easily acquired; and it is therefore not as common among us, men and women, as it well deserves to be. It cannot be said that such knowledge is uncovetable; its all-comprehensive power and great usefulness are against such a supposition. Who will not like to know that one thing, by knowing which all things become known and the guidance of conduct becomes known and the guidance of conduct becomes easy and unerring? However, we have already learnt that the attainment of success in the practice of *yoga* is no easy matter, that in that success there are two stages, so to say, which are respectively represented by self-realization and God-realization, and that the attainment of God-realization, which belongs to the higher stage of *yogic* success, is even rarer and more difficult than the attainment of self-realization. We know also that the endeavour to prove the existence and reality of God by the ordinary processes of logical ratiocination is never very succcessful even as a feat of reasoning.

In respect of this question of God-knowledge there are, moreover, persons, who, like the astronomer of a story I have heard, are prone to declare that they have seen, surveyed minutely and plotted completely every part of the universe with the aid of their powerful telescopic vision, and that, nevertheless, they have not themselves seen God anywhere in the universe. This is like examining every part—nor even excepting nooks and corners — of a mighty and majestic mansion as it stands above the surface of the earth, and then

declaring emphatically that it has no foundation, inasmuch as no such thing falls within the field of the observer's observation. To be able to see the hidden foundation, it is necessary to dig up and remove at least to some extent the earth which hides it from our view. To be able to see God, who is, as it were, the hidden foundation of the universe, special effort is similarly necessary for the removal of the obstacle which obscures the vision of man ordinarily; or, as it is sometimes put, the eye of faith has to be opened in addition to the eye of reason, if man is to succeed in his search after God, so as to find Him assuredly and without any doubt whatsoever.

It is often found unfortunately, in ordinary experience, that the clearer and more effective the eye of reason is in the case of a person, the greater are the chances of its tending to blind his eye of faith. The combination of the seeing eye of faith with the clear, co-ordinating eye of reason is generally very rare and uncommon. Nevertheless, without such a combination to help him on, man cannot easily rise from Nature to Nature's God, and realize that He is the one unifying power underlying the universe and forming, at the same time, the life and support of everything that lives and moves in it. To arrive at the knowledge of God even in this manner is indeed far from easy; and very naturally many will not try to obtain such knowledge. And among those that do try, only a few can have any chance of success in getting a glimpse of the reality and greatness of God. We have seen how the *yogin*, who succeeds in arriving at self-realization in *samādhi*, alights upon what happens to be the best proof of the soul. Such successful *yogins* may occasionally succeed in arriving at God-realization, and may thus alight upon what must after all be the best proof of God. You can now see how true it is to say, that those, who know God as He is in reality, are indeed very rare.

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।
अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥ ४ ॥

4. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, *manas*, *buddhi*, and also *ahaṅkāra*—thus is this *prakṛiti* of Mine differentiated into eight (principles).

As I mentioned just now, there are two ways in which it s possible to acquire the knowledge of God. One of these is, as you know, the process of rising from Nature to Nature's God,

the other being the direct realization of God by the *yogin* in the state of *samādhi*. Of these, the former way of acquiring God-knowledge is first taken up for consideration. Hence this stanza deals with Nature as the *prakṛiti* of God, and points out that it is differentiated into eight principles. It is evident that these principles are among those that are mentioned in the *Sāṅkhya* system of philosophy. In this system, however, there are twentyfour principles, or *tattvas*, mentioned as derived out of the *mūla-prakṛiti*, which is, as it were, the root-principle of Nature.

According to the *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, the *mūla-prakṛiti*, or the unmodified root-principle of *prakṛiti*, which may be conceived to resemble in some respects what has been called protyle by some modern chemical philosophers, gives rise to twentythree other principles, seven of which are modifications that are further modifiable while the remaining sixteen are immodifiable modifications: and *purusha*, or the soul, is neither a modified nor a modifiable principle, and is thus unlike *prakṛiti* and all the principles that are derived out of it. Regarding the eightfold differentiation of *prakṛiti* mentioned in this stanza, the idea, according to some commentators, is that here we have only the modifiable principles of the *Sāṅkhyas* noted down—the principles out of which are evolved the five grosser elements called *bhūtas*, the internal organ of attention, the five senses of knowledge and the five organs of action, which together make up the sixteen immodifiable modifications of *prakṛiti*. Consequently earth, water, fire, air, and ether are understood in this stanza not to denote the elements or *bhūtas* so named, but to denote their *tanmātras*, which are their finer and yet sufficiently differentiated sources of evolution.

Similarly *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaṅkāra* in this context are interpreted to mean what are respectively called in the *Sāṅkhya* system of philosophy *ahaṅkāra*, *mahat* and *prakṛiti*. It seems to me that, in the evolution of the principle *mahat* from the root-principle *prakṛiti*, the idea of condensation or molecular aggregation is implied, inasmuch as *mahat* may be interpreted to mean that which is big and gross. Evidently this process of condensation and structural aggregation has not gone far enough in the case of the *mahat* to deprive it of its constitutional uniformity and homogeneity. Further differentiation through condensation and aggregation is conceived to put an end to this uniformity and homogeneity, and thus to give rise to the differentiated finer bases of the individualised

lements called *bhūtas*. It is probably owing to this further ifferentiation, which gives rise to elemental individualisation, iat the principle evolved out of the *mahat* has been called *haṅkāra* or the principle of egoity. Such at any rate is a guess f mine, which does not seem to me to be entirely unsupported. : is pointed out by Śaṅkarāchārya, in his commentary on this :anza, that the name *ahaṅkāra*, as given to the *prakṛiti* here, justifiable for the reason that it indicates the primordial :uff of the universe in the state in which it is about to be :arted on its evolution in the line, as we may say, of aggre- ıtion and differentiation.

. There is also another way in which the eight principles ıentioned in this stanza are understood; that is, six out of ıem are taken to represent twentyone principles, earth, ater, fire, air and ether representing the five *bhūtas* as well as ıe five *tanmātras*, and *manas* denoting the internal organ of ttention and the five organs of sense as well as the five organs f action. In this case *ahaṅkāra* need not be interpreted as ıeaning *prakṛiti*, but may denote the principle of egoity as it rdinarily does; and *buddhi* is elsewhere also used to denote ıe principle *mahat*. Thus it amounts to saying that the wentythree principles evolved out of *prakṛiti* are classifiable s eight different kinds of its evolutionary modification. Whether we understand in one way or the other these eight rinciples here mentioned, it is clear that Śrī-Kṛishṇa means, y what He has called His *prakṛiti*, the eternal world of matter nd energy viewed physically in itself and also physiologically s the body of God.

The next stanza tells us of another *prakṛiti* of His:—

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम्।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥ ५ ॥

5. This is the lower (one): but know, O mighty-rmed (Arjuna), that life-constituting *prakṛiti* of Mine, which is other than this, to be the superior one, ›y which this world is sustained.

The *prakṛiti* mentioned in the previous stanza, as differen-iated into eight principles, is the original basis and primordial ubstratum of the universe of matter and energy. In dealing ›ith a stanza in the second chapter (II. 17) of the *Gītā*, we saw,

as you may remember, that, in addition to the ultimate principles known as matter and energy, there is in our universe a third ultimate principle called consciousness, which also pervades the whole universe. The superior *prakṛiti* here mentioned is taken to refer to this universal, all-pervading principle of consciousness. In interpreting the expression *jīvabhūtām*, which I have just translated as 'life-constituting,' Śaṅkarāchārya says in his commentary on this stanza that this 'life-constituting' superior *prakṛiti* is that which has the characteristics of the *kshetrajña* or the soul which knows the field of its play and is at the basis of the sustentation of life. Rāmānujāchārya, in his commentary, understands this same superior *prakṛiti* to be different in nature from the material *prakṛiti*, to be of the nature of consciousness and thereby to be, as its enjoyer, more important than the lower *prakṛiti*. Madhvāchārya also characterises the superior *prakṛiti* mentioned in this stanza as *chidrūpabhūta*, that is, as being of the nature of consciousness.

It may thus be seen that all these three important and authoritative *Vedāntic* commentators on the Gītā agree in thinking that the life-constituting superior *prakṛiti* consists of the principle of consciousness, although they differ in respect of more than one detail concerning the final constitution of this same principle. Śaṅkarāchārya has further mentioned that this higher *prakṛiti* sustains the world made up of the lower *prakṛiti*, through entering into it and thus pervading it. On knowing that the inferior *prakṛiti* consists of matter and energy, that the superior *prakṛiti* is made up of the principle of consciousness, and that this latter pervades the former and thus sustains the world, we cannot fail to see the appropriateness of calling this inner sustainer of the material world as the life-constituting *prakṛiti*; for the function of this higher *prakṛiti* is to know as well as to enjoy the lower *prakṛiti*, and therefore to act in relation to it in the manner in which the soul acts in relation to the body. The soul is, as you are aware, the knower as well as the enjoyer of the body; and when the soul leaves the body, life also goes out of it. We may therefore look upon the soul as the real sustainer of the life of the body. Viewed in this light, what is meant by saying that the superior *prakṛiti* sustains the world and constitutes its life, becomes clear and easily intelligible.

Another point to be noted in connection with this stanza, as well as the previous one is, that Śrī-Kṛishṇa speaks of both

the superior and the inferior forms of *prakṛiti* as 'My *prakṛiti*. This implies that He is the owner of *prakṛiti* in both its forms, even as the soul is *dehin* or the owner of the body. Accordingly, the English poet's statement—'All are but parts of one stupendous whole, whose body Nature is and God the soul'—acquires a significance which is seen to be well-founded, reasonable and true. The world of matter and energy is pervaded by the principle of consciousness, so that this principle, being the knower as well as the enjoyer thereof, is held to be its sustainer and life-giver; and again this same world of matter and energy, so pervaded by consciousness, is further pervaded and entered into by God, so that He becomes its absolute and ultimate owner and enjoyer and supporter. The universe of matter, energy and consciousness may, in this manner, be looked upon as constituting the body of God.

We are, as you may be aware, told sometimes by teachers, worthy of our respect and credence, that our bodies are indeed the temples of our souls; and it is really no less true to say that this mighty, majestic and wonderful universe of ours is also a highly holy shrine of infinite expanse and duration, wherein the Almighty God of universal love is ever enthroned in all the glory of His all-pervading power and all-knowing wisdom. We have seen that the *yogin*, in his progress towards self-realization and God-realization in *samādhi*, passes from the mixed consciousness of body and mind to what may be called the unmixed consciousness of the mind alone and then passes on to the consciousness of God also. In the same manner, those, who examine the outer world with a view to rise from Nature to Nature's God, may also observe first of all merely the world of matter and energy, then learn that this world is penetrated and pervaded by the principle of consciousness, and then see at last that the world so pervaded and permeated by consciousness is further pervaded and supported by God Himself.

Let us here stop our work for to-day.

XXXIII

In our last class, we tried to get an idea of the place, which is to be given in the *Gītā* to the teachings contained in the seventh chapter thereof. We saw then that, in accordance with the subject-matter dealt with in the various chapters, the

Gītā may be looked upon as consisting of three divisions of six chapters each, and that the second division, made up of the second six chapters, treats of the great problem of God-realization. The study of this problem of God-realization is therefore practically begun in the seventh chapter; and from the stanzas, which we went through in the last class, we learnt the great and all-comprehensive value of God-knowledge, and made out at the same time that the acquisition of that knowledge was difficult even for those, who could accomplish noteworthy success in the practice of the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration so as to arrive at self-realization. To come to know the self is difficult in itself; and even to him, who has been fortunate enough to know the self, it is no easy matter to be able to know God. Nevertheless, even those, who are not in any manner successful *yogins*, may come to know God through that revelation of Him which is afforded by Nature under suitable circumstances; and Nature has, as you know, a lower and more readily visible aspect consisting of matter and energy and a higher and less readily visible aspect consisting of the all-permeating principle of consciousness. To him, who knows that Nature is throughout permeated by the principle of consciousness, it will be easy to make out that God is Himself immanent in His universe and that there is no part of it which is not penetrated and permeated by Him. In the work we have to do to-day, our attention will be mainly directed to this manner of attaining God-knowledge; and let us now begin the work.

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय।
अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥ ६ ॥
मत्तः परतरं नान्यत् किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ ७ ॥

6. Bear in mind that all beings have this for (their) birth-source. I am the origin as well as the dissolution of the whole world.

7. O Arjuna, there is no other thing whatever, which is higher than Myself. Like collections of gems on a string, the whole of this (universe) is strung on Me.

I am sure you know that the antecedent of the pronoun 'this', in the statement 'that all beings have this for their

birth-source', is to be found in the previous stanza, with the study of which we concluded our last class-lecture. This pronoun refers, therefore, to that superior, life-constituting *prakṛiti*, by which the world is sustained; and we have already seen that this superior *prakṛiti* consists of the all-pervading principle of consciousness. To understand well what is meant by saying that all beings have this principle of consciousness for their birth-source, it is necessary to note that Śrī-Kṛishṇa has further said—'I am the origin as well as the dissolution of the whole world'. Evidently it is meant here that, while God is the ultimate origin of universal creation, the all-pervading principle of consciousness is a source out of which the various beings in the world are caused to be born; that is, the principle of consciousness is at the basis of the evolution of beings in the world in all their manifold forms and conditions.

In these days, it is not altogether uncommon to hear even educated persons say that the doctrine of evolution is a fresh acquisition of modern thought and culture and gives expression to an entirely new discovery. According to such persons, the idea of evolution, as an element of human thought, has to be considered to be due to Darwin and his *Origin of Species*. It is unnecessary to emphasise the fact that this is not a historically correct view to take, regarding the antiquity of the idea of evolution. There is ample evidence to show that this idea was distinctly known to the ancient Greeks. In India it has formed the basic theme, so to say, of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, and is embodied in a popular way in almost all the *purāṇas*. The followers of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy are often spoken of as *pariṇāma-vādins*, that is, as those who uphold the doctrine that the effect is always and in all cases the result of the modification of the cause. If this doctrine is understood to be really general in its scope, it would apply to all the processes of development and change and growth in the phenomenal world, including the processes relating to the origin of species also.

In this connection, the question which is of immediate interest to us now is, whether the modification in the cause, which gives rise to an altered effect, is of the nature of an accidental variation, or happens to be due to purposive direction and internal guidance. In connection with the view that accidental variations in existing species are ultimately responsible for the origination of new species, I remember the late Lord Salisbury having remarked years ago, in his presidential address delivered to the British Association at Oxford, that

this theory is not complete and adequate in itself, inasmuch as it requires, in addition to accidental variation, which may be granted, an agency to choose and bring together such modified varieties as are suited to give rise to a new species in due time. In the experiments conducted by Darwin and other scientific investigators of this problem, the experimenters themselves have played the part of the requisite choosing agent. Is there anything in Nature corresponding to the guiding hand of the experimenter here? This is a question which readily suggests itself to all thoughtful enquirers. Moreover, to the all comprehensive vision of completed science, there can be no accident in Nature. Consequently, to speak of accidental variation necessarily amounts to a confession of ignorance regarding the natural causes of the variation.

By telling us that all the various beings in the universe have the all-pervading and life-constituting principle of consciousness for their birth-source, this stanza gives us to understand that the evolutional differentiation of beings, which is going on in the universe, is in fact caused by that principle of consciousness. That consciousness may well be all-pervading has been shown to be more than probable by the remarkably interesting researches of Professor Bose of Calcutta, to which, I believe, I drew your attention once before (Vol. I, pp. 74-75); and when consciousness becomes the birth-source of the variation, which gives rise to the differentiation of beings in the universe, evolution ceases to be accidental in any manner whatsoever, and turns out to be the result of inward impulse and guidance.

You may ask, if it is possible for the all-pervading consciousness to do this kind of work. Perhaps you have heard of what students of physiology speak of as cellular consciousness. It is said that the cells, making up the various tissues in animal and vegetable organisms, possess an independent life and consciousness of their own, which they put into use in various ways. When the food we eat is properly digested, it finds its way into the blood and becomes a part of it, so to say: and in the blood so replenished the materials needed for the upkeep and growth of all the tissues of the body are to be found. Under such a circumstance, it indeed requires some explanation as to how it is, that the cells of any tissue pick up from the blood, which is, as it were, their common storehouse of nutrition, that particular food, which alone is suited for their nourishment. If the cells of the muscular tissue took

up, say, the food fitted to nourish the bony tissue, it would assuredly tend to make the human organism abnormal and unhealthy. None of us can afford to have our muscles converted into bones or bones into muscles. This power of what may be called alimentary selection, which all our tissues possess quite undoubtedly, is attributed to the independent life and consciousness of the cells themselves.

In this connection, it is certain to be of interest to you to remember a phenomenon, which most of you must have seen, the phenomenon of independent movement exhibited by the freshly broken bit belonging to the disrupted tail of a house-lizard. It is known that, in the case of some animals, even such a vitally important organ as the heart goes on beating for some time after it is cut off and removed from the body of the organism to which it belonged. In fact physiologists make a distinction between general death and local death, the latter, as they hold, resulting only when the disappearance of the life and consciousness of the cells actually takes place. Such facts and phenomena do demonstrate the existence of what has been called cellular consciousness; and they further show its value in maintaining the life and growth of all organisms.

In respect of the great biological question of the relation between structure and function in the life of organisms, it is observed that a change in the structure of an organ is invariably associated with a change in its function, and that similarly a change in the function is associated with a change in its structure. While the inter-dependence of the variation in structure and the variation in function is thus fully recognised, the question as to which of these variations has formed the cause and which the effect, in the continued course of the evolutional progress of organisms, seems to be still left open and undecided. If the causal position in evolution is assigned to the variation in structure, this variation has to be assumed to be accidental, that is, to be unaccountable. But, if it is assigned, on the other hand, to the variation in function, and it is conceived that this variation is brought about by the determining influence of the all-pervading principle of consciousness, the whole process of universal evolution becomes teleological, and the idea of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, that Nature, in all the processes of evolution, aims at the emancipation of the spirit, may be seen to be an exact statement of demonstrable truth. It is therefore clear that we have

to grant the existence of the all-pervading principle of consciousness, and grant also that it performs noteworthy biological functions in vegetable as well as animal life. To make it responsible for universal evolution and look upon it in consequence as the birth-source of all the beings in the world cannot therefore be said to be unfounded or unreasonable: this position appears to me to be scientifically maintainable with the aid of true and openly acceptable evidence.

The ancient seer, Kapila, the founder of our *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, has declared, as you may know, that it is not possible to prove God through an examination and analysis of the phenomenal universe. The system of philosophy founded by him is therefore often characterised as *nirīśvara* or Godless. In the philosophy of the *Bhagavadgītā*, we have a fusion, so to say, of the *Sāṅkhya* and the *Yoga* systems of philosophy: in fact, the *Vedānta* itself may be seen to be the result of such a fusion. The *Yoga* philosophy of the Hindus not only postulates God, but also declares, as you know, the practical possibility of realizing Him in the *yogic* state of *samādhi*. It is therefore no wonder that the philosophy of the *Bhagavadgītā* si emphatically theistic, and that Śrī-Kṛishṇa says here that He, as God, is the origin as well as the dissolution of the whole world. That all things come out of God and ultimately go back to Him, is a conception, which is current in more than one religion; and in accordance with the idea of universal evolution, as propounded in the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy and popularised in various ways in the *purāṇās*, the very process of evolution has to be cyclic in character, inasmuch as it is the *pariṇāma* or the modification of the cause which gives rise to the effect, and the effect is also apt to be subjected to *pariṇāma* so as to become thereby a cause in its own turn. Such an endless series of causes and effects, each effect becoming a cause in its turn, makes what we may call the circle of evolution, wherein the culmination of creative integration forms the beginning of dissolutional disintegration, and the culmination of this latter process of disintegration forms also the beginning of the former process of integration.

The two processes are frequently spoken of as evolution and involution, and are understood to denote respectively the passage of the material basis of beings from homogeneity to heterogeneity and *vice versa*. Accordingly, in the circle of evolution, the point of origin of the creative process of integration coincides with the point of culmination of the

dissolutional process of disintegration; and if that point is taken to be the position from whence divine energy operates and irradiates in all directions, it becomes possible to conceive how, in universal evolution, God is the origin as well as the dissolution of the whole world, how from Him all things proceed in the beginning and to Him all things return in the end. In strict accordance with the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy of Kapila, which, as you know, does not postulate God, the root-principle *prakṛiti* is itself the origin as well as the dissolution of the whole world; and the purposiveness of Nature, in the process of evolution, in the direction of bringing about the emancipation of the spirit from the bondage of matter, belongs entirely to Nature itself. The teleological character of the processes of Nature seems to be evident from almost every point in the grand march of the procession of evolution; and it is not easy to gainsay the purposiveness of Nature, as understood by Kapila and his followers.

The only difficulty, in the matter of making Nature responsible for the purposiveness of evolutional operations, consists in our having to endow it with consciousness so as to make matter capable of thinking and willing. There is indeed no difficulty in believing that Nature is permeated by the all-pervading principle of consciousness. But can this principle be identified with *prakṛiti*? It is here that the difficulty is felt—in the impossibility of amalgamating and identifying unconscious matter with the principle of consciousness; and purposiveness can and must belong only to consciousness. Thus the apparent spontaneity of Nature, in the course of its beneficent and progressive evolution, is in fact the result of the direction and guidance given to it by the all-knowing, all-powerful and all-loving will of God. The universality of natural evolution, the unity of purpose that is observable in respect of that evolution, and its steady sustentation throughout the course of time, may all be explained and accounted for satisfactorily, only when we come to know and bear in mind the reality of God. The teleology of natural evolution—which the Sāṅkhyas postulate—becomes in this way the fulfilment of the purpose of God, and Nature becomes His willingly obedient and kindly handmaid. It appears to me that all these things are obviously implied in the statement, that God is the origin as well as the dissolution of the whole of this universe.

If, over and above matter and spirit, that is, *prakṛiti* and *purusha*, we postulate God and bring Him into relation

with the world of matter and spirit, so as to explain quite satisfactorily the teleology of natural evolution as understood by the Sāṅkhyas, they may say that, if we go on thus, there will be no end to the postulation of primal entities; and hence Śrī-Kṛishṇa's saying here in this context—'There is no other thing whatever, which is higher than Myself'—is, indeed, of special value, inasmuch as it enables us to see that, provided only the Sāṅkhyas grant God, their philosophy becomes complete and comprehensively rational as an explanation of the nature and aim of the great world-process called creation. It is evident that Śrī-Kṛishṇa means that no higher unifying and purpose-giving power than God is wanted to place the teleological evolution of the universe on a secure and firm basis, since God, as God, is all-powerful and all loving, and is, as such, fully competent to be the one ultimate unifying and purpose-giving power, which is the source as well as the support and the final home of refuge of all the innumerable beings of various kinds that go to make up the universe.

That Śrī-Kṛishṇa does mean this, comes out even more distinctly from His statement that, like collections of gems on a string, the whole of this universe is strung on God. The simile given in this statement appears to be appropriate in every way. The first thing to be noted in the comparison is that, in the necklace of gems thought of here, it is the gems that happen to be externally visible and easily recognisable, while the thread which sustains them and holds them in due position is invisible and out of sight. Exactly in the same manner God, who is the supporter and sustainer of all the innumerable beings of various kinds in the universe, is hidden and invisible to the eye of the common man, while those beings are all readily visible to him. It requires the trained vision of the earnest philosopher to see God as He is immanent in the universe.

Another point, worthy of note, is that the thread of the necklace runs through all the gems; they are all penetrated by the thread. Similarly God has to be conceived as being omnipenetrative; and but for God penetrating and running through all the beings in the universe, the universe would be no universe at all, even as the necklace of gems would be no necklace at all without the thread running through them and holding them in their proper position. I believe I have had to draw your attention to this point once before, when we were going through the sixth chapter, and had to see how

God, who, being immanent in the universe, is contained therein, and forms also at the same time its support and basis of sustentation. Even though we do not readily see the thread that runs through the necklace, we are quite certain that the thread must be there ; and if we examine the universe with the same discrimination, with which we examine the necklace, we cannot fail to arrive at the conclusion that God permeates and infills the whole universe, and thus keeps all its beings in their respective positions in time and in space, and gives to them the aim of their existence and enables them to fulfil that aim. It is in this way that He forwards the progress of universal evolution towards the attainment of its high and benevolent purpose, and helps on the liberation of the spirit from the limiting entanglements of matter, time and space so as to enable it to recover its innate freedom and luminosity and blissfulness.

Now, in the following four stanzas we are told, by means of a few select examples, how all things derive their worth and importance from God, who permeates and abides in them. Let us take them into consideration one by one.

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभाऽस्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।
प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥ ८ ॥

8. O Arjuna, I am the savour in the waters, luminosity in the sun and the moon, the *praṇava* in all the *Vedas*, sound in *ākāśa*, and manliness in men.

After learning, with the aid of the illustration consisting of the thread which runs through a necklace of gems, that all things in the universe are where they are and what they are, because they are penetrated and permeated by God, it must be easy for us to see that whatever is good and worthy and of value in those things may very rightly be looked upon as being due to the abidance of God in them, as it is He, who gives to them all their worthiness and value. Accordingly, Śrī-Kṛishṇa has said here that He is the savour in the waters. Modern chemists say that pure water is tasteless ; and from their standpoint it cannot be right at all to talk of the savour of the waters. What is meant by the Sanskrit word *rasa*, which I have translated as savour, is that which gives to water its deliciousness. How delicious pure cool water can in itself be is certain to be well known to persons like us, who are inhabitants

of warm lands; and this deliciousness is probably due ultimately to the remarkable power of appeasing thirst, which is possessed by water. The word *rasa* may also denote the liquidity of water in this context. Let us imagine water to lose its liquidity and deliciousness and power to appease thirst; then it at once ceases to be of any value or use to us. Therefore, the worthiness and the value of water, as judged from the standpoint of human use, are almost entirely dependent upon these characteristics of water; and they are declared to be due to the abidance of God therein.

Similarly, to think of the sun and the moon, as deprived of their luminosity, is to reduce them to dark and useless masses of matter incapable of rendering any good service of any kind in the economy of human life. We know now that the sun is the centre of our planetary system, and forms its source of energy and life and light; and if he loses his heat and luminosity and becomes cold and dark, the whole of our planetary system will be inevitably invaded and overspread by decay and death, and nothing of the glory of creation will be left in it to testify to the greatness or the goodness of God. I need not tell you that, if the moon loses her lustre, human life becomes thereby decidedly the poorer, since one of the most inspiring objects of human poetry is thus brought to ruin, as we may say. You may have also heard that in Sanskrit the moon is called *oshadhīśa*, and is thus conceived to be a kind of life-giver to the vegetable creation here upon the earth. Therefore, to deprive the sun and the moon of their luminosity is to make them absolutely useless for human purposes; and if we hold that they owe their very luminosity to the abidance of God in them, it must mean that they owe their worthiness and value to Him entirely.

We have next to consider what the statement, that God is the *praṇava* in all the *Vedas*, means. You know that the *praṇava* is otherwise called *oṁkāra*, and denotes the syllable *oṁ*. The importance and great religious value of the *oṁkāra* may be made out well from an *anuvāka* in the *Taittirīyopanishad* (I. 8), where its use in connection with *Vedic* ceremonials and *Vedāntic* speculation and meditation is fairly set out. Regarding the *praṇava*, we find the following high appreciation in the fourth *khāṇḍa* (IV. 25-29) of the *Māṇḍūkyopanishad*—which *khāṇḍa* is by some looked upon as constituting the first *prakaraṇa* of the *Gauḍapādakārikā*:

युञ्जीत प्रणवे चेतः प्रणवो ब्रह्म निर्भयम् ।
प्रणवे नित्ययुक्तस्य न भयं विद्यते क्वचित् ॥
प्रणवो ह्यपरं ब्रह्म प्रणवश्च परः स्मृतः ।
अपूर्वोऽनन्तरोऽबाह्योऽनपरः प्रणवोऽव्ययः ॥
सर्वस्य प्रणवो ह्यादिर्मध्यमन्तस्तथैव च ।
एवं हि प्रणवं ज्ञात्वा व्यश्नुते तदनन्तरम् ॥
श्रणवं हीश्वरं विद्यात् सर्वस्य हृदि संस्थितम् ।
सर्वव्यापिनमोङ्कारं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥

From these *Upanishadic* sources, it is possible to gather that the syllable *oṁ* originally conveyed in all probability the same meaning as the English word 'yes', that it was used later on as a solemn sacrificial formula importing permission to do the various acts to be done in the sacrifice, and that still later on it was largely utilised as an aid to yogic meditation leading to self-realization and God-realization. Thus, there came into existence a sacred halo of tradition around the *oṁkāra*; and in the literature of the *Vedānta*, it is made to signify the highest harmonization and unity, which are predicable about God; and in this way the *praṇava* came to denote God Himself. It is further an interesting feature about the syllable *oṁ* that, according to the rules of Sanskrit grammar, it may be seen to be the result of the fusion of the three primary phonetic elements, *a*, *u* and *m*; and this fact has been taken advantage of to make the *praṇava* symbolic of all varieties of unity in trinity. In the familiar formula, *bhūrbhuvas-suvarom*, for instance, the *oṁ* represents the unified universe consisting of the three worlds, *bhūḥ*, *bhuvaḥ* and *suvaḥ*, as known to our ancient *Vedic* literatue; it is often made to represent the unity of the Supreme *Brahman*, as made up of the trinity of Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva; and almost equally frequently it typifies the unity of the universe as consisting of God, soul and matter. Moreover, *a*, *u* and *m*, of which *oṁ* is made up, are taken to denote the beginning, middle and end of all speech, as they happen to be the typical vowels that are produced at the beginning, middle and end of the mouth, looked upon as the organ, which is responsible for the articulation of spoken sounds. In consequence of this way of looking at the *oṁkāra*, it has come to signify all the *Vedas* and the whole of the contents of the revealed scripture of the Hindus. In these and other ways it is possible for us to see that the *praṇava* denotes the essence of all the *Vedas*—that essence which gives to them all their worth and value; and what we have to note in this context is that God Himself is declared to be this *praṇava*.

The next point requiring explanation is in relation to the statement that God forms the sound in *ākāśa*. You know that *ākāśa* is one of the five natural elements recognised by more than one system of Hindu philosophy. It is sometimes translated by the English word ether'; and we cannot say that this translation is quite correct, because ether has acquired a peculiar significance in modern science. The five elements known to the *Sāṅkhya* and the other systems of Hindu philosophy seem to indicate five different conditions of atomic matter, differing from one another in respect of the degree of their aggregation; and these conditions may be described as solid, liquid, luminiferous, gaseous, and ultra-gaseous, the corresponding elements being called earth, water, light, air and *akāśa*. Accordingly, the element earth is the grossest among the elements, and *ākāśa* the finest among them. It is conceived that sound is the characteristic attribute of *ākāśa*, so that, if *ākāśa* ceases to have the power of producing and transmitting sound, it ceases to be *ākāśa*.

It is difficult to understand this relation between sound and *ākāśa* in the light of modern science, since the power of producing and transmitting sound is, as demonstrated by it, possessed by solids and liquids and gases equally well. If you will allow me, I shall risk a guess, to which you are at liberty to attach whatever value you please. In the process of the evolution of the five material elements, from the root-principle of primordial *prakṛiti*, *ākāśa* is declared to be the first element to come into existence, and it necessarily happens to be the finest among the elements. It must be evident from this, that all such conditions of evolving primordial *prakṛiti*, as are finer than the condition of *ākāśa*, cannot be characterised by what may be calld concrete materiality, which, if you like, may also be called material elementality by us. That the power of producing and transmitting sound is dependent upon the materiality of the medium, in which it is produced and through which it is transmitted, is fully borne out by modern science. Since, in the continued course of the evolution of primordial *prakṛiti*, what we have called concrete materiality first appears at the stage when the element, *ākāśa*, is seen to come into existence, and since such materiality is necessary for the production and propagation of sound, it may well be said that sound forms the characteristic attribute particularly of *ākāśa*, so that, in the contrary process of involution, *ākāśa* would become too fine to be *ākāśa*, as soon as it lost the power of producing and propagating sound. Thus, the very essence of

ākāśa may be said to be dependent upon *śabda* or sound; and this *śabda* being here identified with God, we may rightly say that the very essence of *ākāśa* is dependent upon God.

And lastly in this stanza Śrī-Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with manliness in men. It goes without saying that the man, who has no manliness in him, deserves to be no man. In the economy of human society, it is evidently the duty of man to be the food-producer, the wage-earner and the guardian and protector of the homestead and of the commonwealth. For discharging this duty well, he certainly requires manliness; and I am sure you can all see clearly that there is as much manliness in the honest, confident and fearless labour of the food-producer and wage-earner, as in the heroism, valour and chivalry of the guardian of the homestead and the protector of the commonwealth. Thus, it is easy to make out how, without manliness, it becomes impossible for man to fulfil his due function in society; in the absence of manliness his manhood is simply wasted upon him. Consequently, what gives man his worth and value as man is his manliness: and it is this that is here identified with God.

The next stanza reads thus :—

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।
जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥ ९ ॥

9. I am the fragrant smell in the (element) earth, and (am) the (element of) light in the sun, in all beings (I am their) life, and in those, who practise austere penance, I am (their) austerity.

The aim of this stanza is the same as that of the last one; it is also intended to show that all things owe their worthiness and value to the abidance of God in them, inasmuch as whatever constitutes their excellence is declared to be identifiable with God. The first thing so mentioned in this stanza is the identification of the fragrant smell of the element earth with God. In the manner in which *śabda* or sound is conceived to be the characteristic attribute of the element *ākāśa*, in that same manner *gandha* or smell is conceived to be the characteristic attribute of the element earth. With the disappearance of this characteristic quality of smell, the very earthiness of the element earth becomes lost. The smell, which so forms the characteristic quality of the element earth, may,

however, be good or bad, agreeable or disagreeable ; and it is worth noting that Śrī-Kṛishṇa identifies Himself here with good, agreeable, fragrant smell. This clearly indicates that the object aimed at in this context is to point out that all things owe their worthiness and excellence to their being penetrated and permeated by God.

The word *tejas* means the element of light, which is evidently conceived to be ultimately material in nature. This material conception of the nature of light is not unknown to the history of thought in Europe. In fact, till almost recently, it was the current conception there quite as much as in the old philosophic thought of India. How far the luminiferous ether of modern science deserves to be looked upon as material, and how far it is really immaterial, are questions which still require elucidation. Although *tejas* is often translated as the element of light, it is known to be an element which is held to be the source of heat also, so that it is really the element of heat and light. I have already told you, how the sun is the centre of heat and light and life and energy to us in our planetary system ; and it cannot be hard to see that this is due to the abundance of *tejas* in the sun. To speak of the luminosity of the sun is different, as you may see, from speaking of the *tejas* in the sun. The former of these is commonly called *prabhā* ; and it means the light which radiates and spreads out from a luminous body. Therefore, to be the luminosity of the sun is not the same as to be the element of *tejas* in the sun, although his luminosity is itself dependent upon the *tejas* which is contained in him. This double identification of God with the *tejas* and the *prabhā* of the sun means that God has to be looked upon as constituting not only the element of heat and light, but also the shining luminosity of that element.

The next point, that we have to note here, is the import of the statement—" In all beings I am their life." You know that, according to the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, all the processes of natural evolution have for their aim the final emancipation of the spirit from the sorrows and entanglements of the recurring series of rebirths and redeaths making up what is called *samsāra*; and all beings in the universe are so organised as to subserve this aim, each of them performing and fulfilling in its own place,and time some small part of what has to be accomplished for its certain achievement in the end. All living beings in the universe can serve this purpose of their existence, only so long as they are alive ; with the cessation of their life, the utility

and purposefulness of their very existence vanishes, and they practically become non-existent in the world. Therefore, to be the life of all living beings is no less than to be everything which constitutes their excellence, utility and purposefulness in the grand scheme of universal evolution; and when we are told that we have to look upon God as forming the life in all living beings, we have to understand that He not only vitalises them, but also gives to them all their worthiness and value.

Similarly, by the statement, that God constitutes the austerity of those who perform austere penance, we have to understand that the value and worthiness of their lives also are dependent upon God, who pervades them and happens to be their internal controller or *antaryāmin*, as it is expressed in Sanskrit. By *tapasvin* we understand the man of austerities and he utilises his life largely, if not wholly, for the purpose of practising austerities with a view to acquire the power of self-control and renunciation. The traditions of Hindu religion as recorded in the *purāṇas*, enable us to know that many of our ancient sages and saints made the acquisition of the power of self-control and renunciation the chief object of their lives and that they steadily practised severe austerities to achieve that object, notwithstanding obstacles and powerful temptations tending to thwart their success. Let us think of a modern man, whose aim and practice in life are like theirs. If we ask him what it is that he cares for most in life, I am sure he will tell us that it is his *tapas*, the practising of his austerities, since he knows that the very worthiness of his life consists in his sincere, earnest and fully practical devotion to the ideal of absolute unselfishness on the strong and unshakable foundation of a perfect self-mastery. If he falls away from this high ideal either because his efforts are baffled by obstacles, or because he is overpowered by temptations, and then descends to the lower levels occupied by frail humanity, his life, for the time being, becomes indeed worse than worthless. Therefore, it is but proper that God, who is Himself the source as well as the support of the excellence and worthiness of all beings in the universe, is declared here to be the *tapas* in the *tapasvin*.

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम् ।
बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥ १० ॥

10. O Arjuna, know Me to be the everlasting seed of all beings: I am the intelligence of the intelligent, and the heroism of the heroic.

The first half of this stanza tells us that God is the everlasting seed of all beings; and it is necessary for us to understand fully what this statement means. We all know how in the vegetable world the seed is the source, out of which the germ, the plant, the flower and the fruit are all produced in due order. When we are told that God is the seed of all beings, it means that He is the source and centre of universal evolution. But in the case of the seed, as the source of plant-evolution, we observe that, unless the seed decays and dies in the process, the birth of the plant out of the seed cannot take place. Similarly, it may be supposed by persons, who are not carefully thoughtful, that to speak of God as the seed of all beings implies that, in the process of the evolution of the universe, He also has to cease to be God. To guard against the possibility of such an error being committed by careless thinkers, we are told here that God, as the seed-source of the universe, is everlasting and therefore undecaying and imperishable. In regard to the evolution and growth of the mighty, majestic and wonderful universe, looked upon as an immense and infinitely expanded tree, the peculiarity is that the seed, out of which it grows, neither decays nor dies.

In fact, there is another way of looking at the relation between God and the universe, when we are told that He constitutes its seed and source of birth. Although the seed decays and dies in bringing the tree into existence, we cannot fail to observe that this death of the seed as seed serves as the means, whereby life itself becomes extended and multiplied. Just now I told you that the seed is the source out of which the germ, the plant, the flower and the fruit are all produced in due order; and the fruit, which is thus derived ultimately out of a seed that has had to decay and die therefor, is, as you all know, a precious cabinet containing gems of value in the form of new seeds, which are vitally as potent as the parent seed. Hence in the life of the vegetable world, as it is generally known to us, the decay and death of one seed brings into existence many more seeds, which also, in their turn, become like their parent seed the originators of new life and new growth. From the seed to the plant, from the plant to the seed, and again from this seed to the plant and thence to other seeds, and so on and on, we have an unending chain made up of alternating links of evolution and involution. The seed is as much the source of the evolution of plant-life, as it is the culmination of what may be called its involution.

In the course of the evolution of plant-life from the seed, the unmanifest and indwelling potential power of the seed is made manifest; and a tiny seed, not bigger than a grain of mustard, becomes the parent of a gigantic banyan tree spreading and casting its shadow over hundreds of square-yards underneath. As the plant-life, so evolved, develops and grows to maturity, the seed is produced as the result of its culmination; and in it the whole of the manifested power and energy of that same plant-life is again potentialised, so to say. On understanding this, we may easily realize that to look upon God as the seed of all beings in the universe is to make Him out to be the source and centre of the cyclic processes of universal evolution and involution. Accordingly, this comparison tells us that God is the source, from whence proceed all those creative forces, which cause the evolution of the universe out of Him; and He is also at the same time the centre to which the manifested universe is made to go back in the course of its dissolution so as to become absorbed in it and be held there in all its potential might. We have further to note that this centre is an ever living fountain of life, inasmuch as we are told that God, as the seed of all beings in the universe, is everlasting. The potential existence of the mighty tree in the tiny seed is easily enough apprehended by us; and through apprehending it, we may come to know how the infinite universe is potentially existent in God, who is its eternally living source.

As if to direct our attention more pointedly to this great potentiality of God, we are taught here that He is the intelligence of the intelligent and the heroism of the heroic. It is, I believe, fairly generally recognised by modern psychologists that both intelligence and heroism are dependent upon what they call natural endowment. Men of very great intelligence, geniuses as they are called, are, it is believed, invariably born as such; similarly heroes also are born with the full potentiality of heroism in them. When the potentiality relating to the evolution of the universe is itself established in God as the source and centre of that evolution, it follows naturally from it, that the potentiality of the hero as well as of the man of genius is derived out of Him. Now please think, for instance, of Shakespeare as deprived of his poetic genius or of Napoleon Bounaparte as deprived of his military heroism, and let me know what fall there will be in their glory and greatness in consequence of such a deprivation. In this supposed condition of extinguished endowment and unborn

glory, there would be no charm of any kind about their names; and they would be to us as insignificant as any John or James, who, by his birth, serves no other purpose than that of increasing the population of his country by one. Therefore, it must be evident to you that the worthiness and value of the hero and of the man of genius are also due to God, and are indeed derived from Him.

बलं बलवतां चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम् ।
धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥ ११ ॥

11. In relation to those who are possessed of strength (I) am (their) strength as dissociated from desire and the love of enjoyment; and O Arjuna, (I) am in (all) beings (that kind of) desire, which is unopposed to righteousness.

Perhaps some of you have already noted that this stanza has a peculiarity, when compared with the three previous stanzas, inasmuch as we have here the identification of God with what particularly deserves to be called moral excellence. The three preceding stanzas and this stanza together tell us that all the elements of physical, intellectual and moral excellence and worthiness, which may be found in association with any being in the universe, are entirely due to God, who pervades all beings in the universe and is their internal controller and sustainer. Śrī-Kṛishṇa does not say in an unqualified manner—"I am the strength of those who are possessed of strength." On the other hand He says—"In relation to those, who are possessed of strength, I am their strength as dissociated from desire and the love of enjoyment." From this, it is clear that strength in itself is not considered to be worthy and excellent. As a matter of fact, strength may be used either to serve good purposes or to serve bad ones. You have very probably heard it said that it is good to have a giant's streugth, but not good to use it like a giant. The worthiness and excellence of strength is therefore dependent upon the purpose for which it is utilised, and also upon the manner in which it is used.

It is within the range of common human experience that, in the competitive struggle for existence, which is going on between the various beings in the world in accordance with the law of natural evolution, the weaker beings invariably go to the wall, because they are overpowered by the strength of their stronger rivals. In the competitive struggle of natural

evolution, the strength of the strong is utilised for selfish ends, for the egoistic accomplishment of self-aggrandisement; and accordingly the rule that might is right becomes the most commonly accepted guide of life. It cannot be said that strength, which is so utilised, is really dissociated from desire and the love of enjoyment. Some of you are perhaps aware that certain European philosophers have made a distinction between natural evolution and ethical evolution, and have maintained that, just as the rule that might is right prevails in the realm of natural evolution, even so the rule that right is might has to prevail in the realm of ethical evolution.

The strength that is morally well used, cannot discard the distinction of right and wrong; nor will it wantonly override all considerations of what is due to others in the hot pursuit of self-advantage and personal gain. Moreover, the common dynamic power of strength does not allow it to lie dormant and ineffective: it is in the very nature of strength, as strength, to seek and find expression in action and achievement. Hence, when it is not utilised selfishly for the satisfaction of desire and the love of enjoyment, it is apt to be used for the good of others and in the cause of what is right and just. If you bring to your mind in this connection that, as we have been already told, God incarnates Himself here upon the earth as a man among men, so that He may thereby render protection to the good and deal out destruction to evil-doers, you will find it quite easy to understand and appreciate the meaningfulness of the identification of God with the strength that is dissociated from desire and the love of enjoyment. The excellence and worthiness of the strong man really consists in his using his strength for the good of others and in the cause of what is right and just; and in the light of what we are taught here, he owes that excellence and that worthiness to his being penetrated and permeated by God.

It is, however, possible to suppose, from the appreciation, which is bestowed here on that kind of strength which is dissociated from desire and the love of enjoyment, that both desire and love of enjoyment are considered to be in an equal degree morally blameworthy. You know that desire may be said to be a mental impulse aiming at securing for one's self such things as are pleasant and agreeable; and the love of enjoyment is dependent upon the knowledge that the experience of pleasure is always pleasing, and indicates at the same time a longing to have such pleasing experience as unbrokenly as possible. Many of you may have heard

it said that men may well learn the luxury of doing good, and that they, by learning it, may become able to conduct themselves aright in life and also to fulfil its highest aims. It is not merely in desiring and enjoying the pleasurable objects of the senses and in the consequent feeling of self-gratification that we, as human beings, always take delight. I am sure you are aware that to us higher delights, which are of an intellectual and moral nature, are also within easy reach, provided we sustainedly aim at them and continuously strive for them. Although it cannot be denied that the lowest and the most common tendency of desire is to stimulate effort in the direction of seeking and securing self-gratification, still it has to be granted that the potency of desire is fully capable of being utilised for higher and nobler purposes as well. Desire can thus be either of a selfish and therefore of an unrighteous character, or be of an unselfish and therefore of a righteous character. The stanza, which we are now studying, makes it clear to us that, while the desire of the former kind is in every way worthy of condemnation, that of the latter kind is positively praiseworthy—indeed so praiseworthy as to deserve to be identified with God Himself.

From the emphasis which Hinduism lays on resignation and renunciation, and also from the unambiguous condemnation, to which it subjects all desire of the morally lower kind, it has sometimes been carelessly argued by unfavourable critics of that religion, that it teaches passivity and pessimism and benumbs all effort in the direction of achieving progress and accomplishing the good of life. It is surely a crushing answer to such critics to point out to them that Śrī-Kṛishṇa has, in the *Bhagavadgītā*, identified Himself as God with that kind of desire which is not opposed to righteousness. Hinduism is not unaware that noble desire is the foundation of all noble achievement, and that, without such desire actuating the heart of man, the moral advancement of humanity through love and service and sacrifice will ever remain unaccomplished. In a society the members of which are devoid of righteous desire, the attainment of the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment will be never more than a mere day-dream. Why, it is doubtful if the thought of it will arise there at all, even as a day-dream; and the supreme purpose of the processes of universal creation and dissolution, as aiming at the invigoration and ultimate emancipation of the spirit, will itself be frustrated owing to the absence of the impelling ethical force arising from the play of righteous desire.

Indeed, all righteous desire represents the desire of God Himself; and it is no wonder therefore that such desire is here identified with God.

I hope it has now become fully clear to you, how much meaning we have to gather from the statement that, "like collections of gems on a string, the whole of this universe is strung on God." This beautiful simile not only tells us that God so pervades the universe, as to be omnipenetrative, and thus to form the hidden support and source of sustentation of all the beings therein, but also gives us to understand that all things in the universe owe their physical, intellectual and moral excellence and worthiness to the fact of their being intimately interpenetrated by God—to His *anupraveśa*, as it is said in Sanskrit. In the logical process of reasoning, by which we successfully rise from Nature to Nature's God, the idea of the omnipenetrativeness of God is, as I consider, necessarily implied; for, otherwise, the fulfilment of the teleological aim of universal evolution will have to depend upon extraneous guidance and distant direction. As a matter of fact, this teleological aim is made out from the observation and study of the progress of natural evolution, and also from the course of the history of the development of man's humanity with the process of the suns; and whether, adopting the language of some European thinkers and philosophers, we call it the gradual unfoldment of absolute reason, or speak of it, in the language of the Sāṅkhyas, as the emancipation of the spirit, there can be no doubt that the fulfilment of this aim requires the universe to be infilled throughout with the ever-wakeful love and life of God and also to be subjected to His ever-true and ever-watchful guidance and intrinsic influence. That is how the matter strikes me; and it deserves in every way your close and careful thought and continued attention. Please let me conclude here our work for to-day.

XXXIV

In our last class we saw to some extent how it is possible for us to rise from Nature to Nature's God by means of the observation and analysis of the phenomena of Nature and of man and human communities. We were told, you may remember, that everything in the universe has its source in God and finds its end and culmination in God; and we tried to understand the possibility of this in the light of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy as well as of modern thought. In this connection,

we had to arrive at the conclusion that in the universe there is and can be nothing higher than God, that the universe is intimately interpenetrated and thus supported by God, and that all the power and excellence and worthiness possessed by all beings in the world are therefore derived from Him as the inexhaustible source and centre of infinite power, infinite excellence and infinite worthiness. The proneness of thought to endeavour to arrive at God as the final source and ultimate cause of all the various phenomena that go to make up the universe for us, is a perfectly natural one in the case of very many earnest thinkers and philosophers.

Questions like 'What is this visible universe of ours?', 'Whence has it come?' and 'Whither is it going?'—often arise of themselves even in our minds; and you know that all thinkers do not give or approve of the same kind of answer to these questions. Some are of opinion that there is no reality of any kind about this visible universe of ours, and that it is a fleeting phantasmagoria of unreal pictures whereby the non-existent is made to appear to us as existent. Some again are of opinion that there is indeed a reality behind the appearance which we cognise as the universe, and that the appearance exhibits the reality otherwise than as it is. Some others are, however, of opinion that both reality and appearance are true and that the appearance corresponds to the reality as a matter of course. All the variety of thought about this philosophical problem regarding the reality or unreality of the phenomenal universe may well be brought under these three heads; and all those thinkers, who believe in a reality underlying the universe, have inevitably to rise in their reasoning from Nature to Nature's God.

In the stanzas, which we have to study to-day, the consideration of the revelation of God to man through Nature is continued; and the first of them, with which we have to begin our work now, deals with an interesting aspect of the problem. It reads thus:

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये।
मत्त एवेति तान् विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥ १२ ॥

12. Those beings which are *sāttvika*, and those which are *rājasa* and *tāmasa*, understand them (all to have proceeded) wholly from Me: I (am) not in them, but they (are) in Me.

From the statement, that the whole of this universe is strung on God in the manner of the gems in a necklace, we learnt that we have to look upon God as having penetrated all the beings in the universe, that is, as being omnipenetrative and therefore immanent in it so as to be its internal controller and centre of support. We further learnt from this intimate relation between God and the universe that He is the real fountain of power and goodness in it and that all things owe their excellence and worthiness, physical, intellectual and moral, to Him from whom alone they can be truly derived. The simile of the string running through the necklace of gems may, when understood in relation to God in this manner, give rise to two misconceptions. One of these is to suppose that, since the excellence and worthiness of all good and worthy things are ultimately due to God, in such worthy things alone He happens to be the immanent in-dweller. The other possible misconception is that the omnipenetrative in-dwelling God of the universe has necessarily to be contained in the universe and is therefore really dependent upon it for support. Both these misconceptions are corrected in this stanza.

In regard to the first misconception, we are told here for its correction that all the various beings in the universe, whether they are *sāttvika* or *rājasa* or *tāmasa*, are all derived from God as their primal source of origin. In dealing with a stanza of the second chapter (II. 45), we tried, as you may remember, to understand what *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* meant as the 'qualities' or *guṇas* of *prakṛiti*, which is the root-principle out of which the material universe is considered to be evolved. I then quoted a stanza from the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* to show that these three 'qualities' of *prakṛiti* are to be looked upon as three attributes of primordial matter playing their part in all the processes of its evolution and involution directed towards the ultimate liberation of the spirit from the bondage of recurring reincarnation. As that stanza gives it, *sattva* is light, ethereal and illuminating, and is that which is desirable, while *rajas* is stimulating and active, and *tamas* is wholly heavy and darkening. In other words, internal illumination, wisdom, peacefulness and the love of goodness and righteousness in beings are held to be due to the preponderance of the 'quality' of *sattva* in the composition of their material embodiment. Vigorous activity and aggressive endeavour, which we generally associate with all forms of successful and heroic achievement, are similarly held to be due to the preponderance of the 'quality' of *rajas*: and to the

preponderance of *tamas* they attribute inert dullness, immobile sloth and unwillingness to exert and to work and to obey well the regulations and restrictions of righteousness in life.

Those beings in whom *sattva* preponderates are, as you know, characterised to be *sāttvika*; those in whom *rajas* preponderates are characterised as *rājasa*; and those in whom *tamas* preponderates are *tāmasa*. Thus, in the light of their physical, intellectual and moral peculiarities and predispositions, all the beings in the universe may be classified under these three heads. As a matter of fact, the Sanskrit word *bhāva*, which is derived from the root *bhū* 'to be' and has been translated here as 'being', means also feeling or disposition or a tendency of the mind; and this is evidently due to the recognition of the existence of a very close relationship between the preponderant 'quality' of the material embodiment of a being on the one hand and the nature of its mental disposition on the other. You are already aware that the *sāttvika* being is morally superior to the *rājasa* being, and that the *rājasa* being is in its turn morally superior to the *tāmasa* being. Indeed, intellectual and ethical progress in Nature may be observed to consist in the gradual and step by step advance of beings from the *tāmasa* to the *rājasa* condition and thence finally to the *sāttvika* condition.

The *sāttvika* condition represents what may be called the state of perfected wisdom and absolute goodness; it is entirely free from all taint of selfishness. The *rājasa* condition is not, however, necessarily unpolluted by selfishness; on the other hand, it is invariably affected more or less by selfishness; and its goodness or badness is determined by the amount of selfishness with which it is associated, it being good, when the associated selfishness is notably less, and bad, when the same associated selfishness is markedly more. The *tāmasa* condition, which has ignorance, slothfulness and selfishness as its important characteristics, can under no circumstances be other than bad; and in relation to it we have to bear in mind that the selfishness of the slothful drone is always very much more unjustifiable than the selfishness of a person of *rājasa* temperament, who works well, achieves desirable results, and wishes to enjoy the pleasures and advantages that are derivable from the fruition of his sustained and undaunted efforts. These three conditions may be taken to typify respectively what we may call wise and illuminated saintliness, common humanism and unmitigated animalism; and all beings—whichever of

these three conditions may happen to characterise them—proceed from God who is the source of all reality and the foundation of all existence. Accordingly, God is the immanent in-dweller and internal controller of all beings, whether they are in the *sāttvika* or *rājasa* or *tāmasa* condition of evolution and ethical advancement.

Incidentally, I may say here that it is considered by some that this very intimacy of the relation between God on the one hand and the various beings in the world on the other hand gives rise to a great religious and philosophical difficulty compelling us to look upon God not only as the source of all goodness, but also as the source of all evil. They maintain that, since all beings proceed from God, the unmitigated animalism of the person of the *tāmasa* temperament must be quite as much due to God as is the illuminated saintliness of the person of the *sāttvika* temperament. You can easily see that to have to look upon God in this manner as the source of all evil mars altogether the beauty and the holiness of our ideal conception of God. Secondly, such a view is distinctly calculated to give a fatal blow to our sense of moral responsibility. If beings are born with their *sāttvika* or *rājasa* or *tāmasa* temperaments, if the innate temperament is generally above personal control and largely determines one's course of conduct in life, and if all beings, as associated with their inborn temperament, proceed from God, then surely it cannot be wrong to say that men and women are what they are physically, intellectually and morally, because God has made them so to be, and that the saint deserves as little credit for his saintliness as the villain deserves blame for his villainy and moral turpitude.

This process of argument is based on a misconception. To believe that all beings proceed from God as their ultimate source does not necessarily require the further belief that all beings owe their inborn tendencies and temperaments also to God. We have had occasion before this, as you may remember, to take into consideration the effect of a person's past *karma* in relation to his reincarnations occurring thereafter; and then we came to the conclusion that in every state of reincarnation a person's natural endowment and environment are determined by his past *karma*, and that he has always the freedom and the power, if he chooses so to do, to utilise them to subserve the higher ends of purity, holiness and spiritual emancipation, although, by not exercising well the innate potency of his will, he may place himself

more at their disposal than endeavour to subdue them so as to get over the disadvantages that may ordinarily flow from them. It is never absolutely impossible for the *tāmasa* man to rise to be *rājasa*, or for the *rājasa* man in his turn to rise to be *sāttvika*; as a matter of fact, moral and spiritual evolution among mankind is, according to the view of the Śāṅkhyas, considered to proceed actually along the line of progress from the *tāmasa* to the *rājasa* and thence to the *sāttvika*. The history of the progress of human civilization also confirms this view; and the evolution of living organic beings and the procession of their advancement to higher and still higher stages of development in Nature also bear witness to the possibility of beings passing from the *tāmasa* to the *rājasa* and thence to the *sāttvika* condition of existence.

To grant this possibility—and facts require that it should be granted—is to own that no man need be inevitably and out of sheer necessity a slave of his own natural temperaments and tendencies; and to own that these are determined by *karma* cannot be reasonably looked upon as amounting to disowning the freedom of the will, so as thereby to destroy the truth and rationality of man's moral responsibility. Those difficulties in the way of progress, which arise from the unfavourable conditions attaching to one's natural environment and endowment, are capable of being met successfully by the power of the will; in fact, it is maintained that in the divine scheme of cosmic organisation such difficulties are thrown in the way of progressive and evolving beings, so that their will may have the scope to assert itself against all imposed limitations of all sorts. It is not at all hard to see that all men may claim to be heroes equally well, so long as there is no battle to be fought, seeing that the gold of true heroism can be accurately tested only by the touchstone of battle. We may go even further and say that it is battle alone which brings heroism into existence. Thus men's trials and temptations in life, the struggle between the tendencies of the flesh and the promptings of the spirit, and the opposition between natural evolution and ethical evolution are all intended to strengthen the power of the will and exalt the sovereignty of the spirit. Clearly, there is much meaning of value in this view.

Let us bear in mind that *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are conceived to be attributes of *prakṛiti* or primordial matter, and are therefore physical in their nature; and it is these 'qualities' which largely determine the mental, moral and other constitutional peculiarities of embodied beings. It is becoming,

through careful observation, more and more clearly evident that the mental and moral endowments of individuals are dependent upon their physical constitution and equipment, as determined by the formative forces which are involved in heredity. Even under these circumstances, the question has to be answered why it is that certain beings are made to come into possession of bodies characterised by the preponderance of the 'quality' of *sattva*, and that certain other beings are made to have bodies markedly characterised by the 'quality' of *rajas*, while certain other beings again are led to own bodies notably characterised by the 'quality' of *tamas*. Śrī Kṛishṇa's teaching in respect of this question is that the preponderant 'quality' of the bodies of all reincarnated beings is determined by their past *karma*; and the *Vedānta* also endorses the same view. The individual souls, which become imprisoned, so to say, in different bodies characterised by the preponderance of different 'qualities', owe their very imprisonment to their *karma*. It has therefore to be noted that, for the physical, mental and moral tendencies and constitutional temperaments of individuals, God cannot be held to be directly responsible.

The position here may be illustrated by the following example. Think of a king allowing his son to go to the armoury and take up any weapon he likes, so that he may be made to learn the use of warlike weapons and be fitted for his duties in life. The son accordingly goes and chooses a sword, with the object of utilising it well and thus becoming worthy of the freedom given to him by his father. It must be plain to you that this sword may be used by the prince either for rendering protection or for inflicting injury. If he uses it for the former purpose, he thereby establishes his title to be a prince worthy to look forward to the attainment of real sovereignty in due time. If, on the other hand, he uses that same sword for doing harm and inflicting undeserved injury, he thereby makes his unworthiness distinctly evident and loses his title to the attainment of sovereignty. There is no doubt that it is the possession of the sword by the prince which gives him the opportunity to show himself either as worthy or as unworthy to be a king by the way in which he utilises that sword. Nevertheless, it cannot be right to make the royal father responsible either for the proper or for the improper use of the sword by the prince.

In the same manner, God, with the object of making the souls in the universe strong enough to rise above all imposed

limitations so as to attain the high level of divinity itself, brings them into association with material embodiments and sets the adsolutely just law of *karma* in operation in the field of activity of those souls, giving them full freedom either to hasten or to retard the attainment by them of their own appointed divine destiny. If, under these circumstances, certain embodied beings misuse their freedom and thereby cause more and more hindrances to come into existence in the way of their moral and spiritual advancement, then the blame of it all must entirely belong to themselves; they cannot make God in any way responsible for it. Indeed, we have no right to understand that God rules, over His infinite universe, like an absolutely autocratic sovereign, whose unregulated and chaotically meddlesome will leaves no kind of room for any law to operate anywhere under His authority. On the other hand, the advancement of science and the increased insight into the working of Nature, which is thereby obtained, make it distinctly evident day by day that this universe of ours is indeed a well co-ordinated cosmos, resting enduringly on firm, harmoniously related and uniform laws. The law of *karma* has been shown to be based on clearly observable facts of Nature. It is, moreover, an all-pervasive law which is ethically faultless and absolutely just in its operation; and it in no way affects injuriously the integrity or the freedom of the individual will.

Thus, the teleological purpose of natural as well as ethical evolution, the universality and absolute justice of the law of *karma*, and its utter incapacity to injure the freedom of the individual will—all these go to show that the teaching that all beings, whether *sāttvika* or *rājasa* or *tāmasa* in their nature, proceed from God, cannot at all tend to destroy man's moral responsibility. In the matter of the righteous and dutiful conduct of life whereby people may attain the divine destiny that is appointed for their souls, the law of *karma* really enhances their moral responsibility by making them see that the fulfilment as well as the frustration of what happens to be the true aim of life is entirely in their own hands. The obligatoriness of righteousness and disinterested duty is insisted upon quite unambiguously; and yet it is left to be optional to obey or not to obey the obligation, it being made clear that the good consequences of obedience and the evil consequences of disobedience are both equally certain to arise and tell upon the developing life of the spirit in the progressive procession of universal evolution.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned here that what is often called the problem of evil also finds its solution in a perfectly satisfactory manner in the operation of the law of *karma*. Since God is the source of all beings and the centre of all power in the universe, it may be, and in fact is, sometimes argued that He is also the creator of evil—of all the sin and sorrow and suffering that prevail under the sun. There is a well-known aphorism in the *Vedānta-sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa, by which we are enabled to see that the universal operation of the law of *karma* makes it impossible for us to attribute either unjust partiality or merciless cruelty to God. For the inequalities that are observable in the life of human beings and communities here upon the earth, and also for the sin and sorrow and suffering prevailing among mankind everywhere, we cannot with any justice or rationality make God responsible. It is the misuse in greater or lesser degree of the freedom given by God to individual souls in regard to their conduct in the material world of embodied life—it is this misuse which has brought inequality and evil into existence; and as a matter of fact, it is both inspiring and wonderful to contemplate that the inequality and evil so brought into existence are utilised in the grand scheme of God's government of the universe to invigorate and put power into the spiritual entity they call *purusha*, by affording it the requisite scope for struggle, failure and final victory and complete self-assertion in the course of that cosmic evolution which is postulated and fully expounded in the philosophy of the Sāṅkhyas.

You know that Śrī-Kṛishṇa has very largely adopted the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy as His own; and in doing so, He has made it distinctly theistic. We may accordingly conceive His presenting the position of embodied souls in respect of their relation to God and the universe thus, in what we may take to be the language of God, as addressed to those souls at the time of their embodiment and introduction into the material universe:— "Now here you are; and you have for your own final good to get into relation with this universe. When you do get into relation with it, your condition therein will be invariably determined by the manner in which you utilise the favourable and helpful opportunities as well as the trials and temptations which come in your way in consequence of your association with it. If you use well the helpful opportunities it affords and thus make it serve the higher ends of your embodied existence and fulfil your divine destiny, it will prove an inexhaustible source of inestimable good to you,

If, on the other hand, you allow yourself to be overpowered by the temptations it offers and break down under its hard trials, then it will be full of evil and sorrow and suffering and pain to you. Whether it will be helpful or harmful to you depends upon how you use it. With its aid, you may achieve the highest good appertaining to your own spiritual nature and embodied existence, or you may create evil in it so as to tarnish its fair fame and obstruct its progress towards the fuller unfoldment of the power and luminosity of the spirit. Since it is for your own final good that you have been brought into this sort of relation with the material universe, your trials and failures also will prove serviceable to you in the long run. I wish you all steady progress and happy prosperity in your journey to your appointed goal of accomplished power and completed self-realization." Please think and say if, under such circumstances, it can be in any manner justifiable to make God Himself responsible for the evil that is found in the world.

I am sure you remember well that the omnipenetrative all-pervasiveness of God has been illustrated in the *Gītā* with the aid of the thread which runs through a necklace and permeates all its gems, so as to support and sustain every one of them in its proper place and thus enable it to fulfil its due function in the formation of the necklace. When dealing with this analogical illustration of the omnipenetrativeness of God, I tried to draw your attention to the possibility of pressing this analogy too far, and thereby making it appear that, in the relation between God and the universe the latter is the supporting and sustaining container, while the former is simply contained in and supported by it. It was shown even then that so to press the analogy is altogether wrong and that on the other hand the example of the necklace shows the contained string to be clearly the sustainer of the containing gems forming the necklace. Accordingly, we have to see that the omnipenetrative God, who is immanent in the universe and may thus be conceived to be contained therein, is Himself the sustainer and supporter of the universe.

Therefore, the stanza under consideration tells us that all *sāttvika*, *rājasa* and *tāmasa* beings in the universe proceed from God, that they are in Him, but that He is not in them. God is, as we are told here, the source of their origination, and upholds and maintains them in His own bosom, so to say. It is, however, understood, by some that this stanza has in view

the idea that all things in the universe are but parts of one stupendous whole, of which Nature is the body and God the soul; and they declare that in the manner in which the soul is, even in its embodied condition, intrinsically and of its own nature independent of the body, God is also independent of all the beings in the universe, in spite of His close and intimate association with it so as to form its soul. Almost all the well-known commentators on the *Gītā* seem to agree in considering this statement, that all the beings in the universe are in God but that He is not in them, to mean that God is absolutely independent of those beings, although all of them actually proceed from Him and find the culmination of their evolution in Him.

In the context here, the assertion of this divine independence is of particular importance, as it enables us to see how He, notwithstanding His closely intimate relation with the universe as its source of origin and centre of power, remains entirely untouched by the evil, which, out of their own free will, struggling souls in the universe bring into existence in the course of their life of embodied existence. Their endeavour to evolve themselves and to grow in power and in capacity, as they move on consciously or unconsciously towards the goal of spiritual self-realization and God-attainment, produces, when not directly and immediately well-aimed and successful, the result which we call evil. Therefore evil is in fact a by-product of natural evolution, and is utilised in furthering ethical evolution and the attaiment of that spiritual end which creation itself is conceived to have in view.

Though God is the centre of all power and the source of all beings in the universe, and though His relation with every one of them is indeed very close and intimate, He does not, on account of His not being in them as they are in Him, become so modified in nature as to resemble them completely and be susceptible of catching their defects and weaknesses. While they are all in Him, He is indeed above them; while immanent in the universe, He at the same time transcends it in reality. To this the next stanza draws our attention, and tells us that God is indeed so transcendent as to make it possible for the world to hide Him from our view.

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत्।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

13. The whole of this world is deluded by these three conditions of existence markedly characterised by the 'qualities,' and does not recognise Me, as the Indestructible (Being) who is above them.

I have already pointed out to you that the word *bhāva* means 'being' and also 'feeling' or 'disposition' or 'tendency of the mind.' You will notice that here I have translated the same word as a 'condition of existence'. It is in fact a word of very varying meanings, all of which are, however, quite logically related to one another and to the meaning of the root *bhū*. In this context, its meaning is, as we shall see, best brought out by the expression with which I have translated it.

The first twelve stanzas of this chapter, which we have so far studied, have dealt with the problem of the realization of God through Nature, with how it is that men may rise from Nature to Nature's God. In this stanza, we are told that Nature does not always serve as the revealer of God; often enough she hides God away from our human vision and acts like a blind veil. Whether Nature reveals God to human vision, or hides Him from it, is dependent upon the mental attitude and the power of true insight characterising the enquiring aspirant. The three conditions of existence which are markedly characterised by the 'qualities' of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are, as you must be well aware of, the *sāttvika*, the *rājasa* and the *tāmasa* conditions; and all the various beings in the universe are notably in some one or other of these conditions, so as to be in consequence *sāttvika* or *rājasa* or *tāmasa* in their nature. The result of this is that almost all embodied *purushas* in the universe are brought under a kind of materialistic spell, and their vision becomes limited by the range of their ordinary physical and physiological experiences. Our experience of the universe is mostly made up of our sense-perceptions; and we are apt to base our comprehensive conception of it on those perceptions.

That none of us can rise above the limitations of our own experience is, indeed, brought home to us so frequently and in so many ways. It must be known to most of you how, for instance, in judging others, we invariably fail to be right, till we succeed in placing ourselves in the position of those whom we undertake to judge. Suppose I undertake to judge any one of you in relation to anything which you have done in your life. To my mind, as I judge you from my own

standpoint, you may appear to be good or bad; and if I wish to make out whether my judgment of you is correct or not, the first thing I have to do is to get out of the narrow groove of my own limited personal experience and endeavour to get into your position, so as to be able to understand you aright from your own standpoint. In other words, we have to understand how different people may act differently under different circumstances and in varying situations in life; and it is clear that it is then only that we become capable of judging others aright.

Thus, it is evident that it is a natural weakness on our part that we judge others most generally from our own standpoint; and this is due to the fact that so few of us can at all pierce beyond the boundary of the world of sense-perceptions, even though the inspiration of enlightened reason may impel us to get at the reality which transcends that world and forms its foundation. The conditions of existence characterised by the 'qualities' of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* may well be conceived to make up what is, in the language of European philosophy, called the phenomenal world; and most human minds are ordinarily apt to look upon it as a complete and self-contained whole requiring nothing else to make its existence rational and truly intelligible. This is how the whole of this world becomes deluded and fails to recognise the reality of the transcendental God who is at the same time invisibly immanent in the visible universe.

Let us now try to see what Śrī-Kṛishṇa may have meant by the statement that the deluded world does not recognise Him as the Indestructible Being who is above the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti*. When, in the course of our study of the Gītā, we dealt with the question of the immortality of the soul, we learnt, as you may remember, to distinguish between the body and the soul by observing that, while the body is material, mutable and mortal, the soul is immaterial, immutable and immortal. In spite of the intimacy of the relation between the body and the soul, it is possible not only to distinguish them from each other, but also to see that the soul is the essential reality, of which the body is an instrument and a possession. In what is sometimes called *Paurāṇika Sāṅkhya*, which is distinctly theistic, the relation between God and the universe is conceived to be similar to the relation between the soul and the body. Accordingly, God forms the soul of the universe and pervades it throughout; still He is apart and

above the materiality and mutability of the universe. The continued reincarnation of individual souls, that is, their successive embodiment in matter, is due, as you know, to the influence of their *karma*, which impresses on their embodiments *sāttvika* or *rājasa* or *tāmasa* tendencies and characteristics as the case may be. Consequently, it cannot at all be said that they are above the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti*; and so long as they are not above these 'qualities', they cannot be said to be absolutely unaffected in their nature by their intimate association with matter. It is, however, very different in the case of God, who, as we know, has the whole of the universe for His embodiment: He cannot, like individual souls, become subject to the bondage of *karma*.

Seeing that He is the All and the All-in-All, such a thing as selfishness is impossible with Him; using the technical language of the science of ethics, we may say that the distinction between egoism and altruism is altogether inconceivable in His case. I have on a former occasion drawn your attention to the fact of God's almighty power and omniscience making Him both *satyakāma* and *satyasaṅkalpa*. Accordingly, almighty God can have no unfulfilled desires, and His all-knowing will is always law. Evidently, the result is that He cannot at all be selfish. If we thus understand the impossibility of associating the idea of selfishness with God, we at once see how it is absolutely impossible for us to think of Him as being capable of ever becoming subject to the bondage of *karma*. You know already that it is not work which clings to man and forces him to suffer the bondage of *karma*; he owes his bondage to the selfishness, which prevails in his heart, and to the consequent attachment to the fruits of work which he persistently cherishes. Since God is, in the language of all His most famous devotees, All Love, it is quite natural and easy for Him to be untouched by the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti*, even though He is always wakefully active in governing the universe of His creation.

The idea we have to grasp is that, in spite of His immanence in the universe, God is essentially distinct and detached from it; and if we succeed in grasping this, we at once come to know how He is indestructible and above the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti*. It is generally very hard for most people to arrive at such a knowledge of God and of His relation to the universe. Indeed, without a Godward inclination of the mind, such God-knowledge cannot be attained: we are so told in the next stanza.

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ १४ ॥

14. Indeed, this deluding thing, belonging to Me, which is markedly characterised by the 'qualities,' is divine and difficult to get over. Those, who take refuge with Me entirely, they cross beyond this delusion.

The word *māyā* which occurs twice in this stanza is not easily translated into English. All those things and conditions of existence, which are markedly characterised by the 'qualities' of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and delude the world so as to prevent it from knowing and recognising God,—they are all obviously denoted by the word *māyā* quite comprehensively here. This is in fact how we have to understand it in the light of the immediately preceding stanza which we have just studied. Thus, *māyā* means *prakṛiti* as representing the whole of the material universe. It also means the delusion which *prakṛiti* ordinarily produces—the delusion which tends to hide the reality of God from human vision. It is no doubt a delusion to believe, like materialists, in the all-sufficiency of *prakṛiti* to account for all the subjective as well as the objective phenomena of the universe; because *prakṛiti* is by nature *jaḍa*, as they say in Sanskrit, that is, inert and unconscious. Nevertheless, owing to the perfection and completeness of the wonderful order in which *prakṛiti* works and causes her manifold evolutions to arise in the course of the continuous march of time, even thoughtful people are frequently enough seen to be apt to believe that the great problem of the universe may very well be explained without what, in their language, would be called the postulation of God. It is this God-hiding delusion due to *prakṛiti*, which is denoted by the word *māyā*, as used in the second half of the stanza now under consideration. Moreover, that word also means very often the wonderful power of God, through which the world and all its varied phenomena are brought into manifestation and existence. Consequently, it is quite right to say that *prakṛiti*, as representing the whole of the material universe, belongs to God.

We consider rightly that there is justification enough to hold that embodied individual souls are the owners of their respective bodies, even though these bodies are not actually produced by the power of the souls concerned, owing to the reason that the origin of *prakṛiti* has to be considered to be absolutely independent of the power of the souls that from

time to time become embodied therein. In the case of God, it has to be realized that *prakṛiti* arises out of the actual manifestation of His wonderful and almighty power. Accordingly, God, who is the Supreme Soul of the universe, becomes at the same time, fully entitled to be looked upon as the Creator of the universe as well. It may therefore be said to be doubly true that *prakṛiti*, as representing the visible material universe, really belongs to Him.

The statement, that this *prakṛiti* is divine, relates, however, not only to its origin, but also to the purpose of its manifestation. I have already tried to point out to you how the evolution of *prakṛiti* in all its varied departments of activity may be seen to be aiming at the emancipation of the spirit, or, as it is sometimes said, at the gradual unfoldment of absolute reason. You have seen that it has to be granted that the evolution of Nature has a teleological end in view, and that this end may well be conceived to be the emancipation of the spirit from its limiting entanglement in matter. There is very satisfactory evidence available to support such a position. Nevertheless, we cannot safely follow the atheistic Sāṅkhyas in attributing to *prakṛiti* itself this purposiveness which is brought to light in all its multiform activities and manifestations: for, *prakṛiti* is essentially *jaḍa*, though it may well be granted that it is pervaded by consciousness. It is thus self-evident that *prakṛiti*, which, being *jaḍa*, is inert and unconscious, cannot be made responsible for the purposiveness of universal evolution. Nor can we say quite logically that this purposiveness is due in any manner to the principle of consciousness which clearly appears to pervade the *prakṛiti*; because it is the emancipation and unfoldment of this very principle of consciousness that happens to be aimed at by all the processes of universal evolution. I am sure you are aware that the object of a purpose has generally to be distinguished from the agent who entertains that purpose. In the case we are now considering, it must be evident that even though purposiveness is distinctly and independently observable in relation to all the processes of universal evolution, the purpose itself is that of God: it is to work out His aim in regard to the invigoration and emanciption of the *puruṣha* that *prakṛiti* serves Him as His willing and obedient handmaid. Thus, it is fully possible to make out that *prakṛiti* is divine in origin as well as in purpose.

Please bring to your mind what I told you a little while ago about the king's son and the sword which he freely chose for use from the armoury of his royal father. The sword is

often a very tempting weapon; and it is always easier to use it in inflicting injury and causing undeserved harm than to employ it heroically in safeguarding virtue or upholding justice or protecting innocence. Similarly, the field of *prakṛiti* is very tempting to the *purusha* or the individual soul. It is easier there for the *purusha* to yield to the sway of *tamas* and *rajas* than to keep up the even balance of illuminated and unselfish *sattva*. If the plan of creation had been designed otherwise and the alluring force of the flesh was less tempting therein than the wise illumination of the spirit, then the field of *prakṛiti* constituting creation would not have been to the soul that magnificent and marvellous training ground which it now undoubtedly is. Nevertheless, it must be easy to see that considerable care is necessary on the part of man to prevent his own lamentable moral fall in this training ground—a fall by which he is apt to be thrown headlong into a dark abyss from whence he can never command anything like a hope-encouraging vision of God. In such a trying situation, his best and most unfailing support is such trust in God as will make him rely upon God with complete confidence.

I believe many of you have gone to our Hindu temples to worship God therein according to the usage and practice of the Hindu religion. When you go there, it sometimes happens, as you know, that the regular conduct of the temple-service does not permit of your offering your worship immediately, and you observe a curtain drawn across in front of the image of God as represented in that temple. Then you have to wait for the curtain to be drawn aside, so that you may obtain the vision of the image of God behind it. If, when you were on this side of the curtain, you did not realize that the divine object of your worship was on the other side of it and that it was your duty to offer your worship to that object, you would surely not wait to have the curtain drawn aside. The fact that you wait, often for long, patiently is due to your knowing that the divine object of your worship is really behind the curtain and that it is your bounden duty in life to be entirely devoted to God.

Now, imagine that God, who transcends *prakṛiti* and is above its three 'qualities', is like the image of God behind the curtain in our temples. So long as you have no faith in God and are not devoted to Him entirely in sincerity and in earnestness, *prakṛiti* is certain to act as the blinding wall of *māyā*, shutting off the vision of God from you and making you

feel that that wall is truly the ultimate boundary of all knowledge and of all reality. But as soon as you come to know that *prakṛiti* is in itself *jaḍa*, that is, inert and unconscious, and that the blinding power of *māyā* is altogether due to delusion, the material universe and all its well ordered wonders assume a very different aspect and enable you to see that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. When Nature becomes to you the revealer of God in this manner, your progress from Nature to Nature's God is effected easily and as a matter of course.

That is why Śrī-Kṛishṇa says that those, who take refuge with God entirely, manage to cross beyond the delusion of *māyā* : to them the curtain of *prakṛiti* is drawn aside, and the glory of the vision of God shines before their eyes in all its benevolent splendour and mighty magnificence. In spite of the possibility of getting beyond the delusion of *māyā* in this manner by believing in God and relying upon Him absolutely, there are, as you know, many people with whom the world is always too much and to whom the vision of God can never be anything other than an unfounded and unrealizable day-dream. Why it is so with such people, we may learn from the next stanza.

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।
माययापहृतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥ १५ ॥

15. The very worst of men, wrong-doing fools, whose wisdom is stolen away by delusion and who have resorted to the (ungodly) demoniacal condition, do not come to Me for refuge.

As you may know, more than one religion says that it is the fool who says in his heart that there is no God. When belief in God and reliance upon God are calculated to give to man the power to rise from Nature to Nature's God as a matter of truth and certainty, the fact that there are persons, whose mental proclivities are not in favour of such belief and such reliance, has to be explained by taking into consideration the effect of their *karma* on their natural endowment and inborn temperament. We are indeed told here that their foolishness is the result of their wrong-doing, of their *pāpa* produced in previous conditions of reincarnation. The word *dushkṛita* is synonymous with *pāpa* ; and a *dushkṛitin* is he who

is characterised by *dushkṛita* or *pāpa*. Accordingly, the fool who is a *dushkritin*, is such a wrong-doer as has created for himself a burden of *pāpa* or sin, which he has himself to bear. That the sinfulness and selfishness of a man's previous lives give rise to his ignorance and folly in the present life is, indeed, what we are told here. This ignorance and innate proclivity in favour of foolishness are in their turn responsible for his becoming easily subject to the delusion of *māyā*.

We have to understand that the philosophical and moral blindness of the man, who has no faith in God and puts no reliance upon God, is the result of his inborn folly, determined by the influence of his life-activities in previous conditions of material embodiment. Of all such men, it may truly be said that their wisdom has been stolen away by delusion. In their case, *prakṛiti* acts as a blinding wall and prevents them from seeing the power, which is behind and above it and gives to it all its potency of manifestation and progressive evolution. The consequence of this is that they are made to get into the ungodly demoniacal condition, which is described here in Sanskrit as *āsura-bhāva*. This, you know, is a condition of existence which is opposed to what may be called the *daiva-bhāva* or the divine condition; and persons who have had to resort to the ungodly demoniacal condition called *āsura-bhāva*, are characterised as the very worst of men.

Those, who believe in the philosophical sufficiency of materialism as associated with the ethical efficiency and adequacy of self interest, cannot represent in any manner an ideal of goodness which is really supreme. On the other hand, in the light of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the foundation of their life may be seen to be what may well be called a basis of badness, if only it is clearly remembered that, according to Śrī-Kṛishṇa, the essential reality of man is in his soul, that the purpose of his existence is consequently spiritual, and that this purpose can be achieved only by killing the flesh so completely as to become assured of absolute unselfishness. Those, who live the life of selfishness and sensuality and consider that sort of life to be really the ideal life, surely deserve to be ranked among the very worst of men, when judged according to the teachings given in the *Bhagavadgītā*.

It is not at all unnatural to consider that the standpoint of pure materialism in philosophy is rationally incompatible with absolute altruism in ethics, although it has been possible

to observe here and there and now and then in actual life persons who have with rare strength of will managed to combine ethical altruism with philosophical materialism. It is therefore worth bearing in mind that the life lived by certain enlightened and strong-minded men and women may often be ethically above the level which is strictly rationally deducible from their accepted philosophic creed. Nevertheless, in judging this creed, we have to take into consideration only that form of ethics which is capable of being logically upheld by it. The *āsura-bhāva* here mentioned is a condition, which is demoniacal, for the reason that it is ungodly and therefore inevitably unethical. In this connection it has to be remembered that the association of ungodliness with sensuality and selfishness, that is, with what may comprehensively be called immorality, is invariably seen to be so easy and so common as to appear to be quite natural and even necessary.

This universe, which is built out of *prakṛiti* and the various principles evolved out of it, should be looked upon as the temple of God. To those who can see, it is in fact a temple—a divine and holy temple everywhere inhabited by God and pervaded throughout by the glory of His transcendental power and light. To be born into the world of *saṁsāra* is accordingly no less than acquiring the privilege of living in such a temple, if only we knew it. To know and to be ever conscious that, wherever we are and whatever we do in our lives, we are always living quite close to the holy of holies of the Lord of the Universe—ah! what a great moral responsibility the consciousness of this great truth throws upon us! How can any person have the courage to sin in such a holy surrounding and illuminating atmosphere and under the keen and watchful eye of God Himself? The fact of the matter is that, as soon as a person arrives at the realization that the visible universe is most assuredly the holy and majestic temple of God, he is steadily strengthened and helped on to rise securely above all temptations to sin; and yet even to him the burden can never be light—the burden of the great responsibility of having to live the unerringly pure and holy life of love and service and sacrifice worthy to receive the fullest approbation of the Lord.

It is anyhow pitiable that there are so many to whom the visible universe is nothing more than the visible universe—at best nothing more than matter and energy, and space and time, and the invariable antecedence and consequence of causation.

To all such persons, the Lord of the Universe is hidden behind the curtain of *māyā*; although He is all-filling and omnipenetrative, and although everything in the universe lives, moves and has its very being in Him, the veil of delusion drawn before their eyes is so thick and so impenetrably opaque, that they fail to obtain even the faintest glimpse of the glory of His all-pervading and all-hallowing presence. Such is the magnitude of their misfortune; and they are very rarely, if at all, prompted to endeavour to peep behind the curtain of *prakṛiti*, for to them this same curtain appears like the impassable boundary-wall of the universe, a boundary-wall the beyond and the behind of which are to them absolutely inconceivable. These can therefore never aim at the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment as the highest object of human pursuit. To them the spiritual life of the soul itself becomes a sealed book for ever; and even their highest aspirations do not and cannot rise above the world of *saṁsāra*, which, as you know, is the same as the world of ever-changing matter and never ending *karma*. Those, whose wisdom is in this manner stolen away by delusion, how can they—why will they—go to God for refuge?

XXXV

You may remember that, in our last class, we were dealing with how God is the centre and source of all power in the universe, how all the beings in the universe proceed from Him and go back to Him in the cycle of evolution and involution, how in consequence all that we feel, think, say and do, is ultimately the result of the impelling power which proceeds from God, and how, nevertheless, our moral responsibility in the matter of the appropriate conduct of life is absolutely binding. It may, as you know, be easily argued with an apparent reasonableness that, since, without the power of God even the minute end of a blade of grass does not move, all that human beings do in living their lives rightly or wrongly here upon the earth is in fact done by God Himself, and that therefore no human being deserves either to be praised and honoured for right conduct or to be blamed and punished for wrong conduct. Men and women conduct themselves and think their thoughts and do their deeds exactly in the way in which the almighty power of God guides them, and hence He alone is,

one may say, responsible for their lives being virtuous or otherwise. We, however, saw that such an argument aiming at the establishment of the doctrine of the moral irresponsibility of the individual cannot be safely and securely founded upon the fact that God is the centre and source of all power in the universe. The belief in the moral responsibility of the individual is not, as you may well know, incompatible with the fact that God is in reality the centre and source of all power in the universe.

From the standpoint of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's teachings in regard to this matter, it is indeed not hard to see that the individual's freedom of the will need not at all be negatived by God being the omnipotent and one only source of creation as well as dissolution. The idea is that God Himself has given to all created beings the freedom to use well or ill the innumerable streams of power which keep flowing out from Him at all times and in all directions, apportioning to all those beings the results of their life-activities according to the indisputably just law of *karma*. It has to be noted that, in itself, *karma* is conceived to be incapable of producing the results which are ordinarily attributed to it. Nor does God produce, as a rule, such results in relation to the lives of individuals apart from the operation of His justly established law of *karma*.

To explain the self-insufficiency of *karma* and its interrelated dependence upon God for proving efficient, the example of an axe and a wood-cutter is sometimes given in illustration. The axe is, as you all know, a very useful weapon to cut trees with; and yet can it of itself cut the trees? Surely not; we want a wood-cutter to wield the axe and use it effectively for the purpose of cutting the trees. Otherwise, the trees cannot be cut, although the axe is quite good and readily available. Let us now think of the wielder of the axe—the wood-cutter. Although he is strong and clever enough, and possesses well the power to cut the trees in question, can he really cut them without the aid of the axe? No, of course; both the axe and the wielder of the axe are together wanted in the situation. In the light of this illustration, we may understand how it is unjustifiable to endeavour to shift on to God Himself the moral responsibility of the individual, on the score that He happens to be the ultimate source of all power in the universe.

The position of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, as accepted generally by Hinduism in this matter, is that the incarnated soul in the

world of creation is given from the beginning of creation the freedom to act and live as it likes;—that is, in the life of *saṁsāra*, the will of the individual is always free: and it is in accordance with the law of *karma*, which we have had the opportunity to study and to examine more than once already, that each individual is made to reap the due reward of his or her life. The final bestower of the reward is God; but what, according to the plan of justice arranged and ordained by God, determines the nature of the reward is the *karma* of the individual, to whom it is left to build up good or bad *karma* as it pleases his own sweet will and fancy.

Please take note that it is far from my mind to convey to you by these remarks that God, who is the omnipotent ordainer of the law of *karma*, does never, out of the abundance of His overflowing love, temper the rigorous justice of this law by varying measures of mercy. In fact the two doctrines of salvation through works and salvation through grace do not contradict each other; and neither of them weakens or vitiates in any manner the doctrine of the freedom of the individual will. The play of the spontaneous grace of God is a proof of His omnipotence on the one hand and unstinting and generous love on the other.

We have already had, as you know, occasions to take into consideration this great and important question of the law of *karma* and its place in the plan of God's government of the universe. It is a matter of daily experience that every *karma* produces its *saṁskāra*, that is, every action leaves its impress behind on what we may call the constitution of the agent or actor. "Practice makes perfect" is a well-known English adage, the truth of which none can fail to recognise; and it cannot be hard to see that this perfecting power of practice is dependent upon the inevitable production by every *karma* of its corresponding *saṁskāra*. It is because every action leaves its own impress behind on the constitution of the agent, that it has become possible for us to observe that, in the matter of thinking, saying, or doing, the greater the practice, the greater is the facility in the performance of the work and the greater also the perfection of the work turned out by the agent. All the various modes and systems of training, discipline and education, which are adopted by human communities and their varied institutions all over the world to bring about the betterment of moral and material conditions in the progressive

march of civilization, depend ultimately upon this well-observed power of *karma* to leave its own *saṁskāra* behind.

When endeavouring to account for the influence of heredity in determining the innate potentialities of individuals in respect of character and capacity for culture, it is freely assumed that the accumulated *saṁskāra* of *karma* is capable of being transmitted from generation to generation; and the explanation, which modern science gives of the origin of instincts and instinctive powers in animal life, is also made to rest upon this assumed transmissibility of the *saṁskāra* of *karma* from generation to generation. Accordingly, we may say, in the language of biologists, that both ontogenetically and philogenetically the production and operation of the *saṁskāra* of *karma* deserve to be looked upon as being demonstrably true; and if we bear in mind that biological ontogeny and philogeny have both to be utilised in giving effect to the process of reincarnation as induced by the *saṁskāra* of *karma*, it becomes evident that the doctrine of reincarnation does not rest on anything like an unsure foundation.

Still, it is open to us to ask why, in relation to reincarnating souls, the stream of *karma* began to flow at all. It is not enough, in the way of an answer, if we say that this stream is *anādi* or beginningless, that is, that we cannot trace it back to its original source. In this connection, it is a point of noteworthy importance to observe that the stream of *karma* is fully as old as the stream of *saṁskara* and the stream of creation, and that its origination is due to the God-endowed freedom of the individual will. You have been already told that, in so far as reincarnation is concerned, work in itself does not cling to man, that is, that *karma* as *karma* does not compel rebirth, and that what causes the clinging of *karma* so as to give rise to rebirth is the motive behind the *karma*—the selfish motive seeking to enjoy the fruits of work. Thus the freedom of the individual will forms, as it were, the very basis of the well-known Hindu doctrines of *karma* and reincarnation: and if, in spite of this, there are people who maintain that these doctrines take away from man his moral responsibility and shift the burden of his sins, weaknesses and backslidings on to God Himself, our only explanation of it lies in the strange fact that there are so many among even cultured human beings, who do not take care to see that their opinions are always made to rest on absolutely true and irrebuttable evidence and reason.

Please remember that, in a stanza we studied in our last class, we were told that all beings in the universe—*sāttvika* and *rājasa* and *tāmasa*—proceed from God, and that they are all in Him but that He is not in them. This we understood to mean that God, who is immanent in the universe, at the same time transcends the universe; His immanence is one of the consequences of His being the centre and source of all power in the universe, and His transcendence makes it inevitable that all created beings in the universe should bear the burden of their own moral responsibility. They are all in Him so as to be ultimately supported and sustained by Him; and He is not in them in such a manner as will make them lose their own individuality.

Indeed, it is on account of this necessary recognition of the moral responsibility of the individual that Śrī Kṛishṇa has had to teach us that to those, who, under the influence of bad *karma*, allow their wisdom to be stolen away by delusion,—to all such, *prakṛiti* is a blinding boundary wall preventing them from ever obtaining the great blessing of the vision of God, and that in relation to such persons there can be no rising from Nature to Nature's God. Therefore, all those, who are mere materialists and atheists, are what they are, because their *karma* has made them so. But, as we have been told, there are also those, to whom *prakṛiti* acts as a revealer of God, or at any rate does not act as a blinding wall preventing the vision of God; and this peculiarity in their character, capacity and temperament, they owe to their good *karma*. Without the accumulated influence of good *karma*, people rarely become devoted to God. Such is the opinion of Śrī-Kṛishṇa; and He further says—

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥ १६ ॥

16. O Arjuna, the most excellent among the Bharatas, four kinds of people, possessed of good *karma*, become devoted to Me—the man in affliction, the man who wishes to procure knowledge, the man who is desirous of acquiring wealth, and the man of wisdom.

By pointing out that these four kinds of people become devoted to God, what Śrī-Kṛishṇa evidently means is that such

persons, as do not belong to any one of these four kinds, are not generally apt to be impelled to become devoted to God. The common experience of mankind fully bears out the truth of this opinion; for, in relation to persons, who are in happy, prosperous and well-to-do circumstances, and are at the same time neither inclined to seek knowledge nor blessed with any fund of wisdom, one of the most readily noticeable characteristics happens to be very frequently their assured and self-complacent forgetfulness of God. I am sure you all know very well how fatal to the best and truest interests of the soul this forgetfulness of God is, and how, therefore, to all those, who set any value upon the salvation of the soul, nothing can be more welcome than whatever tends to remove from them this aptness to be self-satisfied and forgetful of God.

Accordingly, it is as the result of good *karma* that suitable opportunities arise in the life of people leading them to think of God in serious earnest and become sincerely devoted to Him. Looked at in this light, even affliction and poverty are blessings in disguise; and you probably know that it is a widely accepted view in more than one religion that God bestows affliction and poverty on those whom He wishes to save. According to the tenets of Hinduism, it is believed that God says—*yasyānugrahamichchhāmi tasya vittaṁ harāmyaham*—'On whomsoever I wish to bestow My grace, from him I take away his wealth.' You perhaps know that in the New Testament of the Bible, it is declared to be easier for a camel to go through the needle's eye than for a rich man to go to heaven.

From this, it should not, however, be inferred that the possession of wealth is in itself spiritually dangerous and that wealth ought to be in consequence shunned like fatal poison. It is possible for the wealthy man to be thrown into affliction and be subjected to sorrow and suffering. Then, as the well-known Kanarese proverb—*Saṅkaṭa bandare Veṅkaṭaramaṇa*—says, even the rich man's eyes are turned towards God in search of succour, and his wealth rarely acts as an obstacle in the way of his moral and spiritual progress. In the life of the world, sorrow and suffering afflict the rich man quite as much as they afflict the poor man; and their positive power to impel people to seek succour and relief from God is certainly stronger than the negative power of wealth to withdraw the thoughts of men and women in the world altogether away from God.

Moreover, it is also possible for a wealthy person to be either a seeker after knowledge or be in possession of wisdom

itself; and I need not tell you that love of knowledge and the possession of wisdom are both capable of counteracting the harmful power of wealth to draw away altogether the minds of men and women from God. You know that love of knowledge naturally leads to the acquisition of knowledge; and as the knowledge acquired becomes fuller and fuller and more and more completely co-ordinated, it inevitably leads to the earnest search after God and then to the whole-hearted trust in God. Further, it may well be that seekers after knowledge endeavour very naturally to beseech the support and win the grace of God, so that they may thereby readily attain the knowledge to which they in such real earnestness aspire.

Lastly, it indeed requires no elaborate proving that the wisdom of the man of wisdom absolutely ceases to be wisdom, as soon as he ceases to be devoted to God. Nay, more, it is quite impossible to conceive how the true wisdom of the wise man can ever be dissociated from real devotion to God, inasmuch as such divine devotion forms an essential part of that wisdom. The interdependence of true wisdom and real devotion to God may in fact be taken to be so well established that not to be devoted to God can never be anything other than unwisdom. To be wise and at the same time not to be devoted to God are mutually incompatible.

Therefore, where these other inducements in favour of devotion to God are found in existence, the possession of wealth need not act harmfully at all; in such cases the wealth of the rich person may be made to serve as an additional means to accomplish much moral good, and through it he may receive much spiritual benefit. In any case, it cannot be in the least unintelligible that people generally seek to secure wealth, seeing that wealth invariably serves as a means of power and enjoyment and saves one from undergoing the troubles and trials of poverty: and the desire and the endeavour to secure wealth also impel people to look up to God and beseech His help.

In this manner, it is possible to see how it is that the four kinds of people mentioned in this stanza are all naturally prone to look up to God and be devoted to Him. In the next stanza, the nature of the devotion of the man of wisdom is described and appreciated. It runs thus:—

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्तः एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

17. Among them, the man of wisdom, being always attached (to Me) and (also) single-minded in (his) devotion, is specially good. I am indeed exceedingly dear to the man of wisdom, and he too is dear to Me.

In the immediately preceding stanza, we were told, as you know, that there are four different kinds of people who are naturally prone to be devoted to God—namely, the afflicted person, the seeker of wealth, the seeker of knowledge and the man of wisdom; and here in this stanza, we are given to understand that, among these four different kinds of God-devoted people, the *jñānin* or the man of wisdom is specially good. There are two reasons given for considering him to be specially good. The first of them is that he is always attached to God; and this means that his devotion to God is unceasing and enduring. Evidently, such is not the case with the devotion of the other three kinds of people.

It often happens that the devotion of the afflicted person to God ceases soon after he, through the grace of God, succeeds in obtaining relief from his affliction and makes sure that the causes thereof are entirely removed. The grace of God is prayed for and sought after, only when its want is felt keenly to be the source of sorrow and suffering; and the need for that same healing grace is forgotten as soon as it has done its healing work. Such is indeed the short-sighted and forgetful self-complacency of common humanity all over the world; and the ordinary seeker of wealth also, who, when in poverty and want, turns to God for help and favour, forms no exception to this rule after his desire for wealth is sufficiently well fulfilled. Therefore, he too cannot be described to be a person, who is, by nature, always devoted to God.

In the case of the seeker of knowledge, it may well be argued that the more knowledge of the truth of things he obtains, the nearer is he to the attainment of wisdom; and he cannot therefore become forgetful of God quite so readily. It is quite possible for this reasoning to hold true in some cases; but we should never forget the distinction between mere knowledge and true wisdom. Moreover, you are aware that there are in fact various kinds of knowledge, some of which are fit, even like wealth, to be utilised for selfish ends. Even part from this, particular items and aspects of knowledge

may be sought after for their own sake. In all such cases, the gaining of knowledge is the main end that is kept in view, and the synthesis of all aspects of knowledge, so as to transform it into wisdom, remains altogether unaccomplished; we may say that very often it is not even so much as thought of at all.

In this connection, you may take into consideration some of our university students, who study, for instance, mathematics or medicine or linguistics with the immediate object of passing an examination and obtaining a degree. They seek knowledge as knowledge, although it is expected in their case that their knowledge also should duly ripen into wisdom; and when they obtain their coveted degree, they feel that their heart's desire is fulfilled and are not apt to be agitated by anxiety so as to be impelled to beseech the grace of God. This kind of seeking and securing of knowledge may well make the seeker thereof turn away from God as soon as he secures what he seeks. But the wise man's devotion to God is in this respect wholly unlike that of these three kinds of people, because he is always attached to God and his devotion to God never ceases.

The second reason why, among those who are devoted to God, the man of wisdom is specially good, is that he is single-minded in his devotion. From what has been said already, it must have become plain to you all that, in the case of the afflicted person and the seeker of wealth as well as of knowledge, devotion to God is generally made to serve as a means for an end which is highly valued and desired. The afflicted person becomes devoted to God and seeks the grace of God with a view to have his affliction removed. Similarly, the seeker of wealth becomes devoted to God and prays for God's grace and support with the object of obtaining the wealth he seeks. Again, as a matter of fact, the seeker of knowledge is ordinarily in no way different from the seeker of wealth, in so far as this is concerned; he also prays for God's grace and becomes devoted to God with the object of securing the knowledge which he seeks. In his case, too, devotion to God is thus a means to an end. Consequently, each of these three kinds of persons may be said to have a double devotion at heart—firstly, devotion to the desired object as the end in view, and secondly devotion to God as the means to attain that end. It is hence impossible for them to be single-minded in their devotion to God.

To the man of wisdom, however, devotion to God is an end in itself; his wisdom rightly makes him see it in the light of an ever obligatory duty, which is worthy and valuable in itself and has to be carried out for itself. As we are told in this stanza, it is to the wise man even more than such a duty; he becomes devoted to God because his wisdom has made it a part of his very nature, so to say, to love God exceedingly well. Is it any wonder that he, to whom God is exceedingly dear, becomes spontaneously devoted to God always? Who does not know that the delight of love is ever more and more in the free and unrestricted exercise of love? Although God may, and very often does, out of His grace, love those who do not love Him, we may easily enough understand how the man of wisdom, who very dearly loves Him, is certain to be dear to God. Such is the nature and peculiar excellence of the truly wise man's devotion to God; its unceasingness, its single-mindedness and spontaneity are characteristics, which it is always well for us to take note of and bear distinctly in mind.

This way of appreciating as specially good the wise man's disinterested devotion to God and differentiating it from that of others, who beseech the grace of God for the fulfilment of their own interested aims and objects may, naturally lead us to conclude that the latter form of devotion to God is of no value at all. According to Śrī Kṛishṇa we cannot be right, if we draw such an inference; for, it has to be seen that, although disinterested and naturally spontaneous godliness is undoubtedly superior to what may be called interested godliness, even this inferior form of godliness is equally undoubtedly superior to absolute ungodliness, whether it be the result of unthinking ignorance or perverse intellectual obstinacy. No one should therefore say that there is no virtue in the afflicted person's devotion to God or in that of the seeker of wealth or of knowledge. Apart from the fact that even the interested divine devotion of weak persons of this description may frequently bring about the fulfilment of their desires—because God in His great mercy answers the prayers of such persons also, there is the other fact to be noted that the manifestation of truly disinterested and perfectly spontaneous devotion to God is not easily possible to all humam beings. The power of manifesting such spontaneous and disinterested devotion to God comes to them only step by step and little by little: indeed, the practice of interested devotion prepares the way for the incoming of disinterested devotion. Accordingly Śrī-Kṛishṇa further tells us—

उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥ १८ ॥

18. All these are indeed noble; but I understand the man of wisdom to be assuredly Myself, because he, with dedicated self, is devoted exclusively to Me as the highest goal.

By saying that all these, that is, all the four different kinds of people, who are prone to be devoted to God, are noble, what Śrī-Kṛishṇa means is not that they are all equally noble, but that there is real virtue in all of them in consequence of their tendency to be devoted to God. The power of entertaining and manifesting sincere and earnest devotion to God is evidently considered to be a rare virtue in itself, whatever may be the cause which gives rise to that power. The godly man is always and in himself good and noble, for the very reason that he is godly. Still, the godliness of the man of wisdom deserves to be held in special esteem owing to the fact that his devotion to God is altogether spontaneous and disinterested and therefore enduring and single-minded. That God is exceedingly dear to the man of wisdom is easily enough understood, if it is borne in mind that love of God forms naturally and necessarily an essential element of the wise man's wisdam.

How God reciprocates the love of the wise man to Him, we must endeavour to understand with the aid of this stanza. Here we are told that God understands the man of wisdom to be assuredly Himself, because, with dedicated self, the man of wisdom is exclusively devoted to God as the highest goal of attainment. The measure of the wise man's love of God is to be found in the fact that he dedicates himself to God so as to be exclusively devoted to Him and look upon Him as the supreme good and the highest object of attainment. From this we may gather that, to the man of wisdom, there can indeed be no higher object of love than God, and that God in Himself is always so worthy an object of love as to deserve the whole of the wise man's love and longings of the heart. In reciprocating this exclusive and intense love of the wise man, what God does is that He completely identifies Himself with the wise man. Can the love of God to the man of wisdom go any further?

What I want you to see is that God returns the wise man's love in the fullest measure possible. On the afflicted person, the seeker of wealth and the seeker of knowledge, God bestows the gracious blessing of His love obviously in due proportion to the sincerity and depth of their loving devotion to Him; but to the love, which He bestows on the man of wisdom, there is in fact no limit at all. To the extent to which all these four different kinds of people deserve the love of God—to that extent they are all surely worthy and noble; and yet, as we have seen, the wise man's nobility and worthiness in this way are quite unique and difficult of attainment. So we are told—

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥ १९ ॥

19. At the conclusion of many births the man of wisdom resorts to Me, believing that Vāsudeva is everything: such a great personage is very rarely to be found.

From the very translation of this stanza, you may well have gathered that in it we have more than a mere expression of the unique nobility and worthiness of the wise man's devotion to God. In the statement that, at the conclusion of many births, the man of wisdom resorts to God as his supreme goal of attainment, it is evidently implied that the man of wisdom becomes such only at the conclusion of many births, and that, on his so becoming a man of wisdom, he resorts to God in the belief that God is indeed everything. The construction of the Sanskrit sentence in the stanza fully permits this interpretation, and hence it may quite appropriately be interpreted thus—'He, who has, at the end of many births, become a man of wisdom, resorts to Me in the belief that Vāsudeva is everything.' The context also is, as you may easily see, in favour of this implication involved in the stanza, as it really tends to enhance the value as well as the uniqueness appertaining to the wise man's devotion to God.

It surely requires no proving to you that the doctrines of *karma* and reincarnation fully enable us to give a rational explanation of what has been very aptly called the ascent of man, that is, of his evolutionary progress from lower to

higher conditions of moral fitness and spiritual strength. In the light of these doctrines, it is easy to see that the wise man's perfection of wisdom, sustaining the flawlessness of his morality and the entirety of his devotion to God, cannot have been secured by him altogether in the course of his present life of reincarnation, inasmuch as all the potentialities of this life of his have themselves had to be determined by the *saṁskāra* of the *karma* of his previous lives of reincarnation.

Thus, even in the matter of attaining that wisdom, which impels people to be absolutely devoted to God—impels them to resort to God in the belief that God is everything—the practice of divine devotion in previous lives has to be taken into account. Now the question very naturally arises as to who has the better chance of progressing favourably in the ascent towards the attainment of such wisdom, the man who never feels impelled to think of God at all, or the man who, under the influence of affliction or love of wealth or desire for knowledge, is impelled—it may be selfishly—to serve God and to be devoted to God. Those who are too happy and prosperous to think of God, too wealthy to think of God, and too knowing, according to themselves, to think of God—these surely can have no chance of becoming devoted to God; and even in the matter of love and devotion to God, the great value of practice as a means of attaining perfection cannot be denied. I believe even modern moral philosophers are ready to grant that the evolutionary progress of ethics in the history of humanity has been from more egoism and less altruism to more altruism and less egoism, as they put it in technical language. The repeated practice of interested devotion to God may therefore make disinterested devotion to God more and more easily possible.

This is obviously the reason why Śrī-Kṛishṇa is of opinion that, whatever may be the reason which turns the mind of people to God and makes them become devoted to Him in love and in faith, we should not despise their Godward inclination and should not endeavour to judge it in the light of the personal motive which lies behind it. On the other hand, we should see that, in this very tendency towards God, there are potent spring forces, so to say, which are quite capable of gradually leading people to a condition wherein they may come into possession of that wisdom which will produce in their

hearts such a true, disinterested and spontaneous devotion to God as is altogether exclusive and always enduring. Thus, the wisdom of the wise man, to whom God is everything, comes to him generally at the end of many births, the lives associated with those births being entirely periods of steady training and progressive advancement in winning the power to be wise and godly.

Let us now try to understand somewhat more fully the meaning of the truly wise man's belief that Vāsudeva is everything. I am sure you are all aware that Vāsudeva is a patronymic of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, and as such presents Him as the son of Vasudeva. It may be rightly said therefore that this interpretation makes the name purely human, although it represents the divine Śrī-Kṛishṇa Himself. The name Vāsudeva is also capable of being interpreted in a purely divine sense; and it is most probably in this sense that it occurs in the well-known twelve-syllabled sacred prayer-formula of the Bhāgavatas—*Om Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*. The divine import of the name Vāsudeva is, as many of you may know, brought out well in the *śloka*—

वासनाद्वासुदेवस्य वासितं ते जगत्त्रयम् ।
सर्वभूतनिवासोऽसि वासुदेव नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

Careful thought bestowed on this famous *śloka* of the Bhāgavatas will enable us to see that God Himself is called Vāsudeva, for the reason that it is through His inhabiting that the whole universe is inhabited, as also for the reason that He happens to be the abode of all the beings in the universe. Accordingly, Vāsudeva is interpretable as the *deva* or divine being who is denotable by the name Vāsu, this name being itself derived from the root *vas*, meaning to dwell or to inhabit. That God dwells in the universe and is immanent in it everywhere, is a doctrine of great importance in the Vedāntic religion of the Hindus; and we have already seen how well it rests on truth. Indeed, there is nothing wrong or inappropriate in coming to the conclusion that the universe without God can never be anything more than a dark uninhabited mansion of infinite size and aimless splendour. That all things in the universe live, move and have their being in God, is another Hindu doctrine of equally great and characteristic importance, and this also rests equally well on truth.

Therefore, in our endeavour to understand God as the enlivening and omnipresent indweller of the universe, who is at the same time the supporting home of love and security to all the beings in the universe, the purely divine interpretation of the name Vāsudeva is sure to be of considerable help to us. As a matter of fact, this name suggests to us both its meanings simultaneously, and thus tends to confirm the conviction that Kṛishṇa, the son of Vasudeva, is Himself the omnipresent and all-sustaining God, who has become incarnate in human form. Accordingly, the wise man's belief, that Vāsudeva is everything, may mean that the two doctrines of Hindu religion and philosophy just mentioned constitute two very essential elements in his religious faith, and that he therefore holds God to be all and also all in all.

There is nothing incongruous or unreasonable in so interpreting the belief of the wise man of true and enduring devotion to God; but, in this context, what we have to understand is evidently that, to such a wise man, there can be no higher or more important object of desire and devotion than the all-permeating, all-enlivening and all-sustaining God, who is so very appropriately nameable as Vāsudeva. It cannot be hard to see that, in persons of this description, their complete God-love must necessarily kill all their self-love. The wisdom, which enables one to realise God so truly and so well and also develops one's devotion to God so completely as to make one absolutely unselfish,—such wisdom is very naturally very rare. Hence it is entirely right to maintain that the personage, who is in possession of such rare wisdom, really deserves to be called great and happens to be very rarely found in this world of ours, wherein both unwisdom and selfishness are seen to prevail so much. In this connection it is well to bear in mind that, at the very beginning of the chapter, we have been told that only one out of thousands endeavours to attain wisdom and that among the few, who so attain wisdom, fewer still happen to know God as He is in reality. The common lot of the common man is therefore to be always actuated more or less by selfish desires and to seek from time to time the aids that may be needed for their fulfilment; and so we are told—

कामैस्तैस्तैर्हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।
तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥ २० ॥

20. Bound down by (their) own nature, such (persons), as have (their) wisdom stolen away by various desires, adopt various (other) religious disciplines and resort to other deities.

This stanza will most probably remind you of another, which we studied (IV. 12) while going through the fourth chapter, inasmuch as we were told in it in a somewhat similar strain that all those who aim at and seek the fruition of their deeds, worship the gods, and that in the world of men the deed-born attainment of the fruits of work takes place quite quickly. The worship of the all-pervading and all-sustaining Vāsudeva, as the God who is all and all in all, has to be conducted, as you know, with a devotion which is enduring and exclusively directed to Him. The ultimate and established truth about God and about the duty of man's devotion to God being of this nature, it may very appropriately be asked why it is that so few people conduct themselves in harmony with the light and leading that may be derived from such established truth about God and about man's devotion to God. The answer to this question is, as given here, that people are generally bound down by their own nature, which means that there are inborn physical, intellectual and moral tendencies in all persons, tendencies which control and give direction to all their thoughts and activities in life. These tendencies are conceived to be the result of the impress of the *karma* of one's previous conditions of embodied life, and are as such very hard to repress and to overcome. In other words, the preponderating 'qualities' or *guṇas* of the *prakṛiti* making up the embodiments of persons is determined by their *karma* belonging to their previous conditions of reincarnation, and, as you know, these 'qualities' of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* determine, each according to its preponderance, the details of the character and the mental and moral tendencies and endowments of individuals.

The idea meant here obviously is that, unless the quality of *sattva* is preponderant in the *prakṛiti* of one's embodiment, one cannot really be that sort of great personage, who sincerely believes that Vāsudeva is everything, and whose devotion to Vāsudeva is accordingly both enduring and exclusive. Such great personages have been declared to be rare; and experience also tells us that they are very rare. Generally it is the 'quality' of *rajas* or *tamas* that is seen to

be preponderant in the composition of the *prakṛiti* of most persons; and the result of it is that they become prone to be actuated in their lives by various desires leading them to seek pleasure and to avoid pain in all manner of imaginable ways. To give room for the sway of such desires in the mind is, according to what is said in this stanza, to allow all wisdom to be stolen away therefrom.

We have been already told (II. 62 and 63) that longing for the objects of the senses may, and very often does, bring about the moral ruin of persons step by step. "In the case of the man who keeps meditating on the objects of the senses, there arises an attachment," as we have been told, in relation to those objects. "From attachment desire is born, and from desire anger is born. From anger comes bewilderment; from bewilderment, confusion of memory; from failure of memory comes loss of intelligence; and from loss of intelligence one becomes completely ruined." Such is the psychology connecting desires with loss of wisdom.

There is, however, this saving grace in the situation, that desire itself makes people seek sometimes the aid of some form of religion or other for its fulfilment. In fact, in Hindu religious literature, all the various forms of religious worship, which are practised by all sorts of people, are classified under two heads, as worship which is *kāmya*, that is, desire-impelled, and worship which is absolutely selfless and aims at the goal of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. The worship of Vāsudeva, with the firm and sincere belief that He is everything, is worship of this latter kind. All other worships, from the sacrificial worship of Vedic gods to the aboriginal worship of the village goddesses, for instance, are considered to be *kāmya*—desire-impelled. It is held, as you are most probably aware, that even the one only Omnipresent and Almighty God Vāsudeva Himself may be made the object of desire-impelled worship. You also know, I believe, that desire-impelled worship is inferior to the worship which is offered in the spirit of duty and selflessness to the great God Vāsudeva who is All and All in All

Nevertheless, unwise and imperfectly developed persons allow themselves to be actuated by desires, and endeavour to attain their fulfilment through the favour of various deities, to whom they become devoted in consequence. The worshippers of these deities consider and believe that each

of them possesses particular powers in the way of bestowing special blessings and removing trials and troubles: and in conducting their worship, the worshippers naturally adopt the rules, regulations and courses of discipline prescribed in relation to the cults and creeds, wherein these deities dominate and reign with supreme power.

Though this sort of worship of other deities than Vāsudeva is looked upon as inferior in quality and merit, it is worthy of note that Śrī-Kṛishṇa does not altogether prohibit such worship. Nevertheless, it is a point of great contention among certain classes of religious controversialists that, truth being only one, there ought to be no room for differences in religion and for varieties of creeds and cults in human society. It is impossible to deny that truth is only one. But it need not follow from this that the whole world is bound to be of one religion; because, even if we grant the position that the incontestable oneness of truth compels a unity of religions among all human communities all over the world at all times, the difficulty is sure to arise that no religion, which is believed in by any human community and is fairly current among its members, will decline to claim exclusively for itself the title for the possession of the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Moreover, by granting the obligatoriness of this kind of unity of religions, we make it impossible to account for the actually observable historical and evolutionary progress that has taken place in religions and discredit at the same time the conception of the gradual and step by step revelation of God to man. Consequently, that way of apprehending the undeniably true doctrine of the oneness of truth, which encourages every one of us to believe that he alone is in possession of the whole of true truth, is not in harmony with truth itself, and does not therefore deserve to be encouraged.

Here I may draw your attention to the fact that, in our worthily famous *Purusha-sūkta*, we are told that only one-fourth of the divine Purusha constitutes the whole of this universe, and that three-fourths of Him are immortal in heaven. This evidently means that, so long as we are subject to the limitations of embodied life in this phenomenal universe of matter, it is not possible for us to know the whole truth about God. Only a certain proportion and some aspects of that truth are capable of being revealed to mankind here upon the earth; and the knowledge of

even that revealable part thereof is gained by us little by little and step by step. Accordingly, there is another and a truer way of apprehending the meaning of the doctrine of the oneness of truth, wherein all the various aspects and grades of the realization of divine truth and wisdom by man are conceived not to be self-separate and incompatible with each other, but to be concordant and capable of harmonious synthesis and unification.

To illustrate this view that all the various aspects of revealed truth are so in agreement with one another, as to be capable of harmonious unification, I may mention to you, as an analogy, that the knowledge of arithmetic does not clash with the knowledge of algebra, although the former deals with particular concrete quantities and represents a lower apprehension of certain mathematical truths, than does the latter, which deals with quantities and their operations in general. Many other suitable analogies of this kind may be thought out easily enough by yourselves; and it certainly requires no special demonstration or urging that to know a part of the truth—whichever may be the part—can never be the same as to know what is untruth. Therefore Śri-Kṛishṇa says further—

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. Whichever devotee desires to worship with faith whatsoever manifestation (of Mine), – in relation to every such (devotee), I make that same faith (of his) firm and unshakable

In this translation of the stanza just read, there are one or two points to which I wish to draw your attention. The first of these is the translation of the Sanskrit word, *tanu*, by the English word 'manifestation', taken as its equivalent. When used as a noun, this Sanskrit word *tanu* generally means the 'body' or a 'limb' of the body; and being derived from the root *tan*, which means to stretch, to extend, to expand, to spread out and so on, it has also the logically associated meanings of self, nature, form and manifestation. One of these many meanings has been chosen here as being the most appropriate in this context. To translate *tanu* as 'limb' here may well be seen to be quite equally appropriate, since every limited conception of God by man deserves to

form a limb in the absolutely comprehensive conception of God as He is. The word *achala* means that which does not move and is therefore immovable and immobile; it is used here in the feminine gender and the accusative case so as to qualify the word *śraddhām* which denotes 'faith'. It must be easy to see that the faith which does not move is really that sort of faith which is firm and unshakable: indeed, the immobility of the faith has to denote evidently both its firmness and unshakableness. The possibility of understanding the word *tanu* here as 'body' brings to my mind an analogy which may be utilised to illustrate the natural and necessary incompleteness of all human realizations of God, who is the Great Soul of the stupendous whole constituting the universe, and is at the same time the Purusha with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet, as described in the *Purusha-sūkta*.

I believe some of you have read Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and know his very interesting description of Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians. If a numerous assembly of the tiny Lilliputians went near a typically gigantic Brobdingnagian with a view to make out how he looked, and each of them endeavoured personally to ascertain the giant's features, they would all, as you know, fail in their endeavour, owing to their own exceedingly small smallness making it absolutely impossible for any one of them to succeed in obtaining a comprehensive view of the big body of the giant as a whole. To some of them, only the tip of his little finger would be visible; to some others among them, the tip of his nose might be visible; and to some others again, some other small part of his body, say the lobe of one of his ears, might be visible: and each of them would naturally apprehend him according to what he had seen of him. The description of the giant, as given by the little Lilliputian, whose vision was confined to the tip of the giant's little finger, connot of course tally with the description of him as given by another Lilliputian, who had only seen the tip of the giant's nose: and this description again cannot tally with that given by another who had only perceived the lobe of one of the ears of the giant. In spite of their disagreeement, it cannot be said that these descriptions contradict one another; on the other hand, it ought to be quite easy to see that they supplement one another.

Kindly excuse the comparison. We small men can know the great God only in a much more incomplete and imperfect

manner: none of us can comprehend more than a little limb of His, so to say. And yet every limb that is comprehended by us is to us no less than a real manifestation of God; indeed, none of the many imperfect forms of the human comprehension of the Power that is divine can contradict other forms of such comprehension or be untrue in itself. It is by the harmonisation and synthesis of all the various incomplete and imperfect forms of the human comprehension of God that we may hope to acquire the capacity to comprehend Him more and more fully with the process of the suns. In the whole sphere of human life, there is in fact nothing, which is more unwanted and unjustifiable than the bickerings and hatreds arising from differences in religion. Therefore, whatever may be the manifestation of God, which a person desires to worship, his faith in that manifestation as an object of worship deserves fully to be encouraged; and it cannot be hard to see that the nature of the manifestation of God to man is always dependent upon his cultivated capacity to know God, and that his faith in God is also always well correlated to his knowledge of God.

Accordingly, there is nothing strange in the statement of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, as given here, that He Himself makes the faith of all religious devotees firm and unshakable, whatever may be the form of manifestation of the great Divine Power that they desire to worship. Just as all our incomplete and imperfect comprehensions of God are ultimately related to God in reality, even so are all our forms of faith ultimately impelled by God. Since God is one and one only, the centre of all power in the universe is also one and one only. That is why all thoughtful students of history see the finger of God working in the progressive evolution of all human communities at all times and in all places. There is no gainsaying that man's power to know and power to believe are inter-related and interdependent; and it is no less true and rational to maintain that his power to know and power to believe are both what God makes them from time to time in inducing the onward march of his progressive advancement to reach his God-appointed goal. The inter-relation and the interdependence, which exist between man's power to know and power to believe, is so real that faith, which is not truly related to knowledge, deserves to be characterised either as superstition or as credulity:

and the study of comparative religion, conducted in these modern days in the strictly scientific spirit of the impartial love of truth, has made it quite evident, that religion also, as an institution of civilization, has had its stages of evolution and has progressed from lower to higher conditions of enlightenment and realization.

Thus, it is fully borne in upon our minds that the centre of power in the universe is one, and that all forms of religious realizations tend towards the fulfilment of the belief that God is one, even as truth is one, and that He is All and All in All. Hence, if it is seen in actual human experience that any particular form of faith correlated to any particular kind of religion is productive of moral good to the person, who possesses that faith and follows that religion, how can it be wrong then to maintain that that religion also has the support of God, and that the faith, on which it is built up, is made firm and unshakable by God Himself? It is indeed highly illuminating to conceive, in accordance with the teaching given in this stanza, that all forms of worship conducted by human individuals and communities at all times and places constitute the worship of the one great and good God and are intended to lead mankind slowly and step by step to the top of the highest and the holiest altar of Truth.

You may remember that exactly this same lesson was taught to us in a stanza in the fourth chapter (IV. 11), which I, in a former class of ours, translated thus:— "Whoever in whatsoever manner resort unto Me as their refuge, them do I receive in that very same manner. In all manner of ways men follow My path, O Arjuna." The faiths of men may and do vary; and in consonance with them, their religions also may be seen to vary. And yet in all cases, the causes of the faiths, and of the fruits of the faiths, are as God desires that they should be. Accordingly, we are told by Śrī-Kṛishṇa—

स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते।
लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान्हि तान् ॥ २२ ॥

22. In association with that faith, he performs the worship of that (deity), and thence obtains the objects of (his) desire, those (objects) which are in fact bestowed by Myself.

In the course of our study of the *Gītā* to-day, we have been able to learn some very interesting and important lessons bearing upon the philosophy of religion as taught by Śrī-Kṛishṇa. In summarising these lessons here, it may be said that the most prominent of these relates to the fact that the wisdom of the truly wise man enables him to see that Vāsudeva is everything, that is, that the only great and good God, who, by intimately permeating and living in the universe of His creation, enlivens, energises and beautifies it, and in whom all things in the universe live, move and have their being, is All and All in All beyond the slightest shadow of any doubt whatsoever.

What may, without any disrespect, be called the cult of Vāsudeva is, therefore, a form of monotheism of the most absolute kind; and it is expected of all sincere and really wise devotees of Vāsudeva that their devotion to Him should be uniquely exclusive and uniquely enduring in that it has to be an end in itself. This absolute monotheism has, for the very reason that it is so absolute, to be all-comprehensive even in respect of creeds and cults. Since that kind of true wisdom, which enables a person to become uniquely devoted to Vāsudeva thus, is hard to acquire and can come to him only at the end of many reincarnations and as the result of their varied and successive disciplines of life, this highest conception of the nature of God and of the duty of man's devotion to Him cannot be commonly grasped and adopted in practice by all sorts of persons in all conditions in life and in all stages of mental and moral development. Consequently, we have been told that the commoner thing for people is to be devoted either to God Vāsudeva Himself or to other deities of their own conception with a view to seek and secure the fulfilment of the objects of their desire.

In all such cases, the selfishness underlying their devotion and also the imperfection of their divine conception are both indicative of their incomplete development; and still they do not deserve to be despised, since irreligion is the only enemy of true religion, but not imperfect religion. Accordingly, all those who are religiously inclined and are swayed by divine devotion in any manner whatever, are noble and have to be looked upon as pilgrims moving along the path that leads to the goal and occupying nearer or farther wayside inns as the case may be.

Since there is a correlation between the wisdom of a devotee and the form of his faith, since also there is equally well a correlation between the form of his faith and the nature of his cult, and since again there is such correlation between the nature of the cult adopted by him and the fruit it yields to him, we cannot be wrong in understanding that the very absoluteness of the monotheism represented by the religion of Vāsudeva demands that the various creeds and cults adopted by mankind should all find their harmonious synthesis and happy culmination in that same religion of Vāsudeva, that is, of the one only God, who pervades and sustains the universe and is the source of all its power and light and life. Accordingly, the gods and goddesses known to the numerous religions followed by mankind are all aspects or partial realizations of this one only God; and the worship, which is offered to those aspects, is in reality worship, which is offered to Him, of whom they are all aspects. Consequently, the faith of those, who worship such aspects of God, is strengthened by God Himself, and the fruit of their worship is also bestowed upon them by God Himself.

Please permit me now to draw your attention to the fact that the last quarter of the stanza, which we are now studying, is sometimes read as *mayaiva vihitān hitān*, thereby making it appear that to indulge in desire and to obtain the objects of desire are in themselves good and worthy, because God Himself considers them to be beneficial and bestows them on those who seek them through worship and religious devotion. You may appropriately recollect here the chain of causes and effects which I mentioned to you a little while ago in dealing with a previous stanza (VII. 20.),—the chain beginning with attachment and desire and ending with loss of intelligence and ruin: and then you will see that to indulge in desire and obtain the objects of desire cannot surely be good and worthy in themselves. Let me therefore draw your attention to another stanza (VII. 11.) in this chapter, which we went through in one of our recent classes, and in which Śrī-Kṛishṇa, while identifying Himself as God with all the items of excellence that are to to be found in various things, so as to show that excellent things are excellent owing to the abidance of God in them, says—"O Arjuna, I am, in all beings, that kind of desire which is unopposed to righteousness". From this, it must be quite easy for you to see that desire in itself is not

condemned by Śrī-Kṛishṇa; according to Him, it becomes condemnable only when it is opposed to righteousness. When unopposed to righteousness, desire deserves to be looked upon as an excellent thing, that is, as something which is in itself good and worthy.

Let us examine this position with some care. In doing so, the main thing that we have to note is that, in the chain of causes and effects, wherein the fruition of desire is declared to culminate in ruin, the desire itself is shown to be related to the objects of the senses; we have to infer from this that it is sensual desire—or the desire for the enjoyment of the pleasures of the senses—which is calculated to bring about ruin and hence deserves to be condemned. Your own experience must surely tell you that all human desires need not be, and in fact are not, sensual, inasmuch as human beings are often enough quite apt to be actuated by higher and nobler desires of a more or less markedly unselfish character. These latter desires do not at all deserve any kind of condemnation; on the other hand, they are good and worthy and deserve to be encouraged, because it is through them that the uprightness of conduct is maintained and earnest work is put forth for safeguarding social welfare, as also for securing the advancement of society and civilization.

To condemn desire absolutely is nothing short of endeavouring to kill action completely; and at this stage of our study of the *Bhagavadgītā* you surely do not require to be told that the gospel of inaction and passivity forms no part of the religion of Vāsudeva, wherein we are distinctly taught that the attainment of the divine destiny of the soul becomes possible to human beings only through the due and disinterested performance of duty in life. When, in this manner, duty happens to be recognised as the chief, if not the only, means for the attainment of the salvation of the soul, and when duty, as we all know, requires almost always energetic and even aggresive work for its fulfilment, then that desire, which is the necessary precursor and natural progenitor of the action that is needed for the due fulfilment of duty, cannot but be a really good and worthy thing—a thing so good and so worthy as to constitute an excellence in relation to all those who are actuated by such desire.

The fact that Śrī-Kṛishṇa has said that He is Himself responsible for the multiplicity of the forms of faith known to

mankind, and that the results they reap from those forms of faith are all ultimately derived from Himself, shows that the underlying unity of the absolute and comprehensive monotheism of the religion of Vāsudeva rests upon the thorough recognition of the one in the many and upon what may very appropriately be understood to be a correlated doctrine, namely, the doctrine of the harmony of religions. The oneness of truth, as embodied in this doctrine consists in its all-comprehensiveness, but not in any kind of insulated isolation and uniqueness. It is the Hindu religion alone—which, in other words, is the same as the all-comprehensively monotheistic religion of Vāsudeva—that has this doctrine of the harmony of religions as one of its essential elements.

It follows quite naturally from this doctrine that all religions are to be looked upon as containing truth, some more and some less: in fact, they are all aspects of the one true religion, which holds that the one only God, who is rightly describable as Vāsudeva, is All and All in All. The imperfections, which are more or less noticeable in connection with the various religions adopted by various human communities and individuals, are in fact due to the greater or lesser incompleteness of their capacity to perceive and to comprehend the truth: and this weakness of theirs is in its turn due to the stage of progress which they have reached in their upward evolution and advancement in thought and purity and goodness. Thus, the variations in the fitness and power of communities and individuals to know the truth, as it is in its entire completeness, are really at the bottom of the differences in religion that are so readily observable everywhere among mankind. As long as it is impossible for us to remove altogether the inequalities in the fitness and power of persons and communities to know the truth, even so long is it impossible for us to do away with differences in religious realization and faith and worship. Evidently, this cannot happen till all the varying grades of human capacity are levelled up so as to reach the highest possible position, or are levelled down to occupy the lowest possible position.

What is true of religion in this way, is true also in respect of other more or less similar attributes or institutions of civilization, such as social organization, politics, law and culture. It is indeed worthy of note how very readily it is granted that variations in the capabilities of human communities inevitably compel corresponding variations in

respect of these other attributes of civilization. No serious student of human civilization and its progress will ever say that some one particular form of government is always the best for all human communities; nor can it be rightly believed that some one code of laws, based on a certain set of underlying principles, will serve equally well all the ends that are to be served by law in all human communities at all times. Similarly, the necessity for variations in the social organization of human communities and also in the characteristics of their culture is never seriously denied by any one who knows the truth about these things. And the wonder is why, in the case of religion alone, such a thing as an advancing gradation in progress is not to be accepted, and the conception of the progressive revelation of God to man is to be treated as being untrue.

The historical as well as the comparative study of religions, conducted by learned and capable scholars in these modern days in the strictly scientific spirit of absolute impartiality, has tended firstly to confirm the conception of the progressive revelation of God to man, and secondly to prove the entire truthfulness and trustworthiness of the old Hindu doctrine of the harmony of religions. Nevertheless, it may be urged by some, from the purely practical standpoint, that the recognition of this doctrine of the harmony of religions, leading us to the conclusion that all religions are true and worthy and are at the same time complementary to one another, is apt to weaken human effort to uplift those that are in comparatively lower conditions to higher and truer and nobler conditions of thought and life. To believe in the harmony of religions need not surely compel us to shut our eyes to the distinction between the higher and the lower, or between the truer and the less true, in matters connected with religions; nor can such a belief take away from us the obligation of unselfish service aiming at the moral and spiritual elevation of mankind so as to secure for it in due time the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. You will all do well to carry firmly in your minds that, in the religion and the philosophy of conduct taught by Śrī-Kṛishṇa, the obligation of the unselfish service of man is ever binding and never ceases.

XXXVI

You may remember that on the last occasion we were chiefly dealing with what I spoke of as the great doctrine

of the harmony of religions as propounded by Śrī-Kṛishṇa in the *Bhagavadgītā*. According to Him, every kind of religion prevailing in the world should be, as you saw, considered as forming an aspect or component part of the all-comprehensive religion of Vāsudeva. Hence it follows as a matter of course that, in respect of religion, progress can never mean anything like a passage from falsehood to truth, but is always an advancement from less comprehensive to more comprehensive truth. How much of real truth is embodied in any religion is dependent upon what the capacity for comprehending truth is on the part of those who have adopted that religion as their own. The greater this capacity, the greater will be the proportion of truth contained in the religion; and indeed none can succeed in sincerely adopting to his true advantage a religion which requires a higher comprehension of truth than his capabilities permit him to possess. As the worshipper's capacity for comprehending the truth is, even so is the character of the religion he adopts; and again as the character of the religion he adopts is, even so is the fruit that he realizes therefrom. This latter relation between the character of a religion and the nature of the fruit it yields is generally spoken of as *yathā-kratu-nyāya* in Sanskrit.

I am sure it cannot be hard for you to see that it follows, as a matter of course, from these two aforesaid relations, that every form of religion known to the history of man is calculated to be helpful to some human community or other at some one or other stage of its evolution and progressive advancement in culture and civilization. Just as no human community or individual can with real advantage adopt a religion which is disproportionately too high in respect of what it demands in thought and life, even so, no human community or individual can long continue to be ridden by a religion which is too low for the capacity possessed by that community or individual to think rightly and to live well. In the former case, the general tendency is to bring the higher religion down to the suitable level; and in the latter case, it happens to be the other way; and the unsuitably lower religion is lifted up to the required higher level.

These things are well borne out by the results of accurate and unbiassed investigations conducted in relation to the history of religions and also in relation to the history

of civilization as influenced by religions; and there can be no doubt that a suitable religion, when suitably adopted, is certain to serve as an important factor under all circumstances in evolving the progress of civilization and human perfection. Nevertheless, in regard to the beneficial fruits which various religions yield, there must necessarily be a difference between what is yielded by the supreme and all-comprehensive religion of Vāsudeva on the one hand and on the other hand by other religions, which, unlike it, are neither supreme nor all-comprehensive; and to this difference our attention is directed in the stanza with which we have to begin our work to-day. It runs thus:—

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।
देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥ २३ ॥

23. However, in relation to such (persons) of little intelligence, the fruit (of their worship) happens to be consequently finite. Those, who worship the gods with sacrifices, go unto the gods; (and) those, who are devoted to Me, go even unto Me.

You may remember that, from the very last stanza that we studied in our last class, we gathered that the worshippers of all the forms or manifestations of the one great and good God Vāsudeva, who is All and All in All, have their faith in those forms encouraged and strengthened by Vāsudeva Himself, and that they obtain through their worship the fulfilment of their desires ultimately as bestowed by Vāsudeva Himself. It may thereby appear to some that, between the worship of Vāsudeva Himself and the worship of any one of the many forms of His divine manifestation, there ought to be no difference at all. But this *śloka* tells us that it is wrong to arrive at such a conclusion. We have been already told, as you know, that it is at the conclusion of many reincarnations that the wise man resorts to the worship of Vāsudeva in the belief that He is everything, and that the wise man of that description is in fact a very great personage very rarely to be met with in this world of ours. In this way, the absolute supremacy of the religion of Vāsudeva has been emphatically declared. Other religions, which are not comprehensively monotheistic like the religion of Vāsudeva and are based on the worship of some one

or other of the many forms of His manifestation, are consequently of a lower rank and belong to a less developed stage of evolutional progress.

Accordingly, the good yielded by these religions cannot be infinite like what is yielded by the religion of Vāsudeva ; on the other hand, it is bound to be finite. As we shall soon see, a stanza (VIII. 16) in the next chapter tells us that, after going to Vāsudeva, there is no reincarnation, no returning from Him ; and here we are told that all those, who are devoted to Vāsudeva, go unto Him. Thus, the bliss of God-attainment is infinite ; and those who seek the attainment of anything less than this are persons of little intelligence, that is, their intelligence is such as cannot enable them to understand and appreciate the supreme excellence of the religion of devotion to Vāsudeva and also the unsurpassable character of the *summum bonum* consisting of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. Those, who worship with sacrifices the Vedic gods, such as Indra and Varuṇa, for instance, are here mentioned as examples of persons of such little intelligence.

This will not of course be surprising to you, who have already learnt that Śrī-Kṛishṇa has declared that the *Vedas* have the three 'qualities' of *prakṛiti* for their subject-matter, and that, to a knowing Brāhmaṇa, there is therefore only as little utility in all the *Vedas* as there is in a well which is on all sides inundated with water (II. 45 and 46). It is a well known fact that the performance of Vedic sacrifices is recognised to be generally desire-impelled ; we may say that it is even required to be so in the old scriptural literature bearing on those sacrifices. The well known injunction—*Jyotishṭomena svargakāmo yajeta*—that he, who is desirous of attaining *Svarga*, the world of the gods, should perform the sacrifice known as *Jyotishṭoma*, is understood to be typical in the way of showing how all Vedic sacrifices are desire-impelled. The consequence of these sacrifices being desire-impelled is that, when they are duly performed, they give rise to *puṇya*, which takes those who perform them to the world of the gods and enables them to enjoy their innumerable celestial pleasures and delights in due proportion to the *puṇya* acquired by them. Such is the law of *karma* in relation to all desire-impelled deeds of merit; and it must follow from this that, when, through enjoyment, the acquired *puṇya* is exhausted in relation to any person, then he leaves the

celestial world of *Svarga* and is reborn again here upon the earth in the mortal world of men.

I am sure you can now see how the fruit of worship derived by persons of inferior intelligence from their adoption of comparatively less developed religions is to be finite. The religion of the *Vedas* enjoins the sacrificial worship of the gods; and it is the *Vedānta* religion that proclaims devotion to God to be the means for the attainment of the everlasting bliss of soul-salvation and God-attainment. The former of these two religions in fact represents an earlier dispensation in the history of Hinduism, which, as you all know, has its culmination in the *Vedānta* and its well known doctrine of *bhakti* or loving devotion to God. I may say here at once that all forms of religious attainment, other than the bliss of soul-salvation and God-attainment, are bound to be finite in character and inferior in value, even though they also happen to be ultimately derived from God Himself.

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥

24. Not knowing My supreme condition of existence, which is imperishable and unsurpassed, those (persons), who are wanting in intelligence, consider Me, who am unmanifest, to have attained manifestation.

In this connection, we may very well ask—"What is the mistake, which persons of inferior intelligence commit in regard to the choice of their religion and the manner of their worship?" The answer to such a question is given in this stanza; and in the light of what is said here, it may be gathered that their weakness consists in their inability to penetrate the veil of Nature and go behind it soas to know God as He is in His supreme condition of existence.

You are perhaps aware that the famous sage, Kapila, the founder of the Sāṁkhya system of Hindu philosophy, is considered by ancient Hindu tradition to have lived even before the days of Śrī-Kṛishṇa. This tradition finds support in the *Bhagavadgītā* itself (X. 26); and in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, the sage Kapila is identified with the everlasting

Vāsudeva, and is thus looked upon as an incarnation of God Himself (I. 40.25). Some maintain the existence of more than one ancient Kapila, and distinguish the Kapila of the *Bhagavadgītā* from the Kapila of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. This is not a matter of any serious consequence to us now, so long as it is granted that Kapila, the original expounder of the Sāṅkhya philosophy, was looked upon as an ancient and honoured sage even in the days of Śrī-Kṛishṇa.

In Kapila's analysis of the universe, God finds no place, for the reason that His existence is not demonstrable with the aid of ordinary logic. Consequently, the Sāṅkhya philosophy is sometimes characterised as atheistic. It is, however, more correct to speak of it as non-theistic, because it does not actually deny the existence of God. In fact, it is Kapila's analysis of the universe into the two ultimate entities known as *prakṛiti* and *purusha*, which may well be denoted and explained by the English philosophical terms, 'matter' and 'soul', and also his conception of the relation between matter and soul, as exhibited in embodied beings, that made it possible for Vyāsa and Śrī-Kṛishṇa to postulate that theistic view of the universe, which is sometimes designated as the *Paurāṇika-Sāṅkhya* by some, and in which it is conceived that God is *Parama-purusha* or the Supreme Soul and that the relation between Him and the universe is in many respects similar to the relation between the ordinary individual soul and its material embodiment. Just as, in regard to our understanding aright the essential nature of the soul, we have to be beforehand in possession of the power of *dehātma-viveka*, that is, of the power of distinguishing the body from the soul, so also, for understanding the essential nature of God aright, it is necessary for us to possess the power of what may, with your permission, be called *loka-brahma-viveka*, as, through it alone, we become able to distinguish the world, which is the body of God, from God Himself, who is its indwelling and all-pervading Supreme Soul.

It is now easy to see that to mistake the world or anything in the world to be God is to exhibit that want of intelligence by which the unmanifest comes to be considered as manifest. I need not tell you that Nature-worship, or the worship of natural objects, in all its varied forms, is characterised by the unintelligent person's common mistake of misunderstanding the manifest to be the non-manifest. The

careful student of the comprehensive history of civilization, and also of the history of religion as associated therewith, cannot fail to notice that the true advance of human intelligence has everywhere tended to help on step by step the upward movement of mankind in their slow and steady religious progress from Nature to Nature's God. Thus, history not only ratifies the great religious doctrine of the progressive revelation of God to man, but also confirms the view that the progressiveness of this revelation consists in the divine ideal of the religious mind passing from what is more and more manifest to what is less and less manifest, till at last the non-manifest Supreme Vāsudeva is realized as the all indwelling one only God, who is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, and in whom all things live and move and have their very being. It is only when God is realized in this supreme condition that He is fully understood to be imperishable and unsurpassed. Indeed, it is not in the nature of anything, that is patently manifest, to be imperishable and unsurpassed: manifest matter is both perishable and surpassable. The supreme and supporting Soul of the Universe—how can He be either perishable or surpassable ?

Although it appears to me that, in this context, such certainly is the meaning to be gathered from this stanza, I ought not to omit to tell you that it is sometimes interpreted in a different manner. It is pointed out by some that in this stanza Śrī-Kṛishṇa says that ignorant people wanting in intelligence understand Him to be merely the human Vāsudeva, that is, to be no more than the son of the Yādava chief, Vasudeva, through his consort Devaki, while He is in reality no less than an incarnation of the Supreme Vāsudeva—of that one only God, who dwells in all things and in whom all things live and move and have their being. According to this view, the undesirable effect of the defectiveness of intelligence consists in mistaking a personage, who is a human incarnation of the Supreme Spirit—of the transcendental God Himself—to be a mere human being.

It may be learnt from the *Mahābhārata*, that, among the notable contemporaries of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, some, like Bhishma and Vidura for instance, recognised even then that He was no ordinary human mortal, but was indeed God incarnate. However, other contemporaries like Śiśupāla and Jarāsandha did not recognise Śrī-Kṛishṇa's greatness, not to say His

divinity. In this connection it is worth observing that Vidura was a pious and saintly devotee of God blessed with much spiritual wisdom, and that Bhishma was a great philosopher and accomplished *yogin*; and their apprehension of the divinity of Śrī-Kṛishṇa during His own lifetime on earth was evidently due to their specially trained intelligence and spiritual insight.

As I have already told you, I consider this later interpretation of the stanza to be quite possible, although the context clearly justifies, why, even demands, the former interpretation. It is only step by step that man rises from the apprehension of the grosser to that of the subtler things in Nature, from the apprehension of the physical to that of the psychical, from the apprehension of the material to that of the spiritual and thus from the apprehension of the manifest world to that of the unmanifest God in and above the world.

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।
मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥ २५ ॥

25. Being surrounded by (My) 'yogically' associated *prakṛiti*, I am not clearly evident to all (persons). This foolish world does not perceive Me, who am unborn and indestructible.

This stanza also may be interpreted in complete accordance with the two interpretations, which we considered to be possible in relation to the immediately preceding stanza; and here we have the reason given as to why it is that persons, who are wanting in intelligence, do not know the supreme spiritual condition of the nature and existence of God, a condition in which He is best described as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. This reason is because, as stated in this stanza, God is surrounded by His own *yoga-māyā*, which I have somewhat crudely translated as His *yogically* associated *prakṛiti*. In the language of the theistic philosophy, which we have called by the name of *Paurāṇika-Sāṅkhya*, the word *māyā* denotes invariably the phenomenal world looked upon as a mysterious manifestation of the wonderful creative power of God, who is the *Parama Purusha* or the Supreme Soul of the universe. It is this *Paurāṇika-Sāṅkhya*, which is sometimes called *Vyāsa-mata*. The problem of the association of the phenomenal world with its Supreme Soul is considered in it to be in certain

respects analogous to the problem of the association of the individual soul with its material embodiment. Nevertheless, it has to be borne in mind that the embodied condition of individual souls is due to what we have all along spoken of as the bondage of *karma*, while God, who is the Supreme Soul, is, in His own nature, so absolute and unconditioned as to be above all those limitations which are implied in the law and bondage of *karma*.

Accordingly, the embodiment of the Supreme Soul in the phenomenal world of matter, energy and consciousness cannot be due to any kind of compulsion from outside; it must therefore be due to the spontaneous display of the creative power possessed by the Supreme Soul itself. This power is so wonderful and so mysterious as to be comparable to the occult powers—the eight *siddhis* or accomplishments, as they are called—which a *yogin* is generally expected to acquire in the course of his natural progress towards the attainment of self-realization and God-realization in that peculiar psychological state, which is known by the name of *samādhi*. Consequently, there is a well considered appropriateness in speaking of *prakṛiti*, which is evolved out of the wonderful creative power of God, as his *yoga-māyā*; and He is surrounded by it and hidden in it, much in the same manner in which we may conceive a magician to be surrounded by and also hidden in the deluding phantasms produced by his own skill in magic.

As I have told you already, no analogy can safely be either pressed too much or pushed too far; and from the use of the expression *yoga-māyā* here, we cannot draw, with the inevitable force of strict logic, the conclusion that thereby the unreality of the phenomenal world is positively postulated. Let it be clearly understood that only two points are intended to be illustrated by this analogy. The first of these is that God is the producer of the visible world, and the second is that He is hidden in and behind the world produced by Himself. Since nothing more is intended to be illustrated by the analogy, we are entitled to draw nothing more from it as a logical inference.

If you will please bear well in mind this limitation on the power of analogy, then we may safely endeavour to distinguish the incarnation of the Supreme Soul in the visible world from the incarnation of the individual soul in a material embodiment, by saying that, in the former case, the Supreme Soul is

yoga-māyā-samāvṛita—surrounded by the *yogically* associated *prakṛiti*, and that, in the latter case, the individual soul is *karma-māyā-samāvṛita*, that is, surrounded by what may be called its *karmically* associated *prakṛiti*. Even as the common people, who mostly make up the world, do not perceive and recognise that they have each a soul, forming the basis of their reality as apart from their material embodiment and its physiological vitality, even so, the common world, which is generally foolish, does not perceive and recognise God in the universe, although He happens to be its Supreme Soul and Fundamental Reality.

It is equally true that the foolish world cannot perceive and readily recognise the personage, who is an incarnation of God, so as to be able to distinguish Him from other personages, who are all of the common human kind. Let us imagine that a person, who is in fact an incarnation of God, comes to us. How many of us, do you think, will be able to recognise that he is in reality an incarnation of God? Some of us may be able to see that he is a great and worthy person, a man of genius and high divine inspiration: some of us may recognise his superior endowments and potentialities. But how can any of us make out that his embodiment is made up of his own *yoga-māyā*, while our embodiments are the product of our *karma-māyā*? It is no doubt true that, when God becomes man for the protection of the good and the destruction of the wicked and the establishment of righteousness, He does so out of His own free will and overflowing love. His embodiment as man is in no way due to the compulsion of *karma*. Between the common man and the man who is an incarnation of God, there is much real difference. Nevertheless, the foolish world does not know how to distinguish the latter from the former.

It is worthy of note that the distinguishing characteristics of God are mentioned here in this stanza to consist in His being unborn and indestructible, particularly because we have been told in connection with the question of the immortality of the individual soul that it is also unborn and indestructible. Accordingly, we have to distinguish the unbornness and indestructibility of God from the unbornness and indestructibility of the individual soul. In the course of our study of the second chapter of the *Gītā*, we had to deal with the important question of the immortality of the individual soul; and you may remember that we

there learnt that its immortality is dependent upon its immateriality. In this light we had to understand by birth and death only certain changes or mutations in condition. Birth may also mean, as you have been told, the coming into existence from a previous state of non-existence, even as death may mean the getting into non-existence from a previous state of existence. In this sense we have to look upon both matter and spirit as unborn and indestructible. The first of these two ways of interpreting birth and death enables us to distinguish matter from spirit, but the second one does not serve any such purpose. There is, moreover, a third way of understanding the conceptions underlying these words; and that third way is indeed what is applicable here.

When we say that a thing, which is essentially spiritual and therefore absolutely immaterial, is born, we cannot give expression to any other idea thereby than what is conveyed by the statement that that same invisible spiritual entity has got into a visible material embodiment. Similarly, when we say that a spiritual entity dies, we simply mean that it has become dissociated from its already associated material embodiment. The acquisition of a material embodiment by an individual soul may in this manner constitute its birth, and the dissolution of that embodiment may constitute its death. All the individual souls are, as such, subject to the operation of the law of *karma*, and their material embodiment and disembodiment are therefore determined by the law. We may in consequence say that birth and death, understood as embodiment and disembodiment, are natural and necessary accidents in relation to individual souls. But in relation to God, who is the Supreme Soul of the universe, these things are neither so natural nor so necessary.

I need not tell you that it is not to be understood from this that God does not at all become incarnated as anembodied being in the visible world of matter: what we have indeed to note is, that whenever God becomes incarnate—as in fact He does very often—His embodiment is entirely self-imposed, so that His appearance in and disappearance from the material world of manifestation are both voluntary and avoidable. The two distinguishing characteristics of God as given in this stanza, namely, His unbornness and indestructibility, are both to be understood in this manner; and when so understood, they are both completely consistent with the idea that the embodiment of the incarnate God

consists of His *yoga-māyā*, but not of *karma-māyā* as in the case of ordinary embodied individual souls. Nor is it intended to convey by means of this stanza that individual souls are not immortal and eternal: they too are, as spiritual entities, unborn and indestructible. But, being subject to the operation of the law of *karma*, they cannot be so absolutely unborn and indestructible as God, who is the Supreme Soul of the universe, can be.

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।
भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥ २६ ॥

26. I know those beings that have passed away, (those) that are in existence now, and also (those) that will come into existence in future: but Me, no one knows.

Let us think of God again as the Supreme Soul of the universe, and understand that the universe, which consists of His *yoga-māyā* is His embodiment. Let us further note that this Supreme Soul of the universe may become—and often indeed does become—incarnated in human form. In both these cases God, who is *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ānanda*, that is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, or, in other words, a blissful and all-knowing Spirit as some say, imposes upon Himself the limitations due to His getting into a material embodiment. This stanza tells us that such limitations in the case of the embodied Supreme Soul are very different from what they are known to be in the case of embodied individual souls: it may even be said, with the aid of what we are told here, that no material embodiment of any kind can impose any limitations upon the essential nature and power of the Supreme Soul.

The statement made by Śrī-Kṛishṇa that He, as an incarnation of God, knows all the beings that have passed away, all the beings that are in existence at present, and also all the beings that will come into existence in future, logically amounts to this, that material embodiment cannot subject God, who is the Supreme Soul of the universe, to the limitation of time. Even in His embodied condition, He knows the past, the present and the future—all equally well and simultaneously so to say. We may well say that He lives in an ever continuous present. Moreover, when we think of Him as incarnated in the universe, we cannot conceive how it

is at all possible for such an embodiment in matter to subject Him to the limitation of space; for, in the case of Him, who owns the whole universe as His body, the distinction between *here* and *there* has necessarily to vanish, and in the world of His omnipresent experience it has to be *here* everywhere and *there* nowhere. Indeed, it is always *now* and everywhere *here* for God—whether we look upon Him as an all-pervading everlasting Spirit or as the Supreme Soul of the universe incarnate in that very universe.

In this connection let me draw your attention to what Śrī-Kṛishṇa is known to have told Arjuna about the nature of His own human incarnation, as it is given in one of the previous chapters of the *Gitā* (IV.5–6). You may remember that there Śrī-Kṛishṇa is said to have declared to Arjuna—"O foe-vexing Arjuna, many of My births have passed away, and many of yours also: I know them all, but you do not know them. Though I am unborn and essentially imperishable in nature, though I am the Lord of all beings, I get into My own *prakṛiti* and am born through My wonderful power." From this, it is plain to us that God, out of His own free will, assumes many incarnations, and that no incarnation is able to subject Him to the limitation of time. Individual souls also undergo incarnation after incarnation under the influence of *karma*; and in their case, incarnation and material embodiment impose limitations upon them. That is why Arjuna did not know his past births, while Śrī-Kṛishṇa, as God incarnate, knew all His own past births.

It may, however, be said here that even such persons as are mere embodied individual souls are known to be capable of acquiring, through the successful practice of the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration, the power of recollecting their former births, that is, of becoming *jātismaras*, as they are called in Sanskrit. It is easily made out that Buddhism and Jainism also believe in the possibility of *yogins* acquiring this power of recollecting their former births. To grant this possibility, as it indeed has to be granted, is not the same thing as to say that incarnated individual souls do not, in consequence of their incarnation, become subject to the limitation of time. In the case of all such persons as are *jātismaras*, what actually happens is that the impressed *samskāra* of their memory, which is, according to the Sāṅkhya philosophy of the Hindus, transmitted

from incarnation to incarnation with the aid of what is called the *liṅga-śarīra*, is revived by means of the extra-ordinary mental concentration effected in the course of the practice of *yoga*. Consequently, the past is still past to them, and they can know its contents only as objects of memory. How can we think of them as not being subject to the limitation of time? In the case of the incarnate God, the very distinction of past, present and future does not exist; it is all, as I have said, one continuous present to Him. But in the case of the *jātismara*, it is altogether impossible for him not only to know the past as the present, but also to have anything like a present knowledge of the future.

That Śrī-Kṛishṇa's knowing all His past births is in this manner different from any *jātismara* knowing his past births, is well borne out by the statement of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, that, unlike Arjuna and other embodied individual souls, He Himself had to be looked upon as being specially unborn and imperishable in His essential nature, although, through His wonderful power, He could enter His own *prakṛiti* and come to be born as a man among men. This statement clearly means that the incarnate God's embodiment in matter and subsequent disembodiment do not resemble the birth and death of individual souls in their *saṁsāra*-series of re-incarnations, which they undergo in accordance with the universal law of *karma*. In other words, it amounts to saying that God becomes incarnate out of His own free choice and through the instrumentality of His own *yoga-māyā*. And when He is surrounded by and hidden in His own *yoga-māyā*, it is no wonder that, Him, no one knows; the foolish world not only mistakes the incarnate God for man, but also believes the universe to be a mere soulless mechanism, in which there is no place at all for God. The wisdom of the truly wise man has naturally to see things in a very different light, and indeed does see so. Those, that are foolish in respect of this matter, are only too many; and those that are wise are always few and far between.

The next *śloka* tells us why it is that the many are foolish.

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।
सर्वभूतानि संमोहं सर्गे यान्ति परन्तप ॥ २७ ॥

27. O foe-fatiguing Arjuna, through that illusion of the pairs (of opposites) which arises from desire and aversion, all beings get into delusion at (their very) creation.

This stanza tells us why it is that the world is so foolish and incapable of apprehending spiritual as well as divine truths and realities. We have already learnt what is meant by the pairs of opposites, which are called *dvandvas* in Sanskrit. They are pairs, like heat and cold, pain and pleasure, and desire and aversion, in relation to which we may notice the existence of a kind of mutual psychological antithesis. The experience of heat is opposed to the experience of cold, and the experience of pain to the experience of pleasure. Similarly, desire as a feeling is opposed to aversion as a feeling. Although each of these three pairs is a pair of opposites, it has to be noted that in the case of the pair, consisting of desire and aversion, the antecedent play of the will has to be presupposed, while in the case of the other two pairs the mere functioning of the senses suffices for the production of the experiences involved in those pairs. Hence it is ordinarily understood that pairs of opposites like these latter ones give rise to the pair consisting of desire and aversion. This really amounts to saying that pleasure and pain are at the basis of volition in all ordinary cases of human experience, inasmuch as in all such cases the will operates in the direction of securing pleasure and avoiding pain. But here in this stanza, the illusion of the pairs of opposites is evidently conceived to arise out of desire and aversion : and this certainly requires an explanation.

Before attempting to find out what this needed explanation is, we have to understand exactly the meaning in this context of the expression—"the illusion of the pairs of opposites." Since this illusion is conceived here to be the consequence of desire and aversion, these two things, constituting in themselves a pair of opposites, are evidently not included in the pairs of opposites to the illusion of which they give rise. Those pairs of opposites, to the illusion of which, as mentioned here, desire and aversion give rise, have therefore to be such as are, like heat and cold, or pain and pleasure, entirely dependent upon sense-experience only. From pure sense-experience alone, it

is possible to become aware of the agreeablenesss of pleasure and the disagreeableness of pain; and we all know how very natural it is on the part of most of us to mistake that which is agreeable to be good and that which is disagreeable to be bad. The fact that with so many men and women in all parts of the world pleasure happens to be the object of desire and pain the object of aversion, is in itself proof of the other fact that we mistake the agreeable to be what is good and the disagreeable to be what is bad. It is the mistake which is here spoken of as the illusion of the pairs of opposites.

It cannot be hard for you to see that, out of this illusion, the other mistake of understanding interest to be the same as reason may well arise. While it is natural to seek to enjoy what is agreeable and to shun and avoid what is disagreeable, it is reasonable to desire the good and to feel an aversion for all that is bad; and conduct based on the illusion of the pairs of opposites can therefore be right, only when the good completely coincides with what is pleasurable and the bad with what is painful. It cannot be denied that this sort of coincidence does occur sometimes, but human experience and human history amply bear testimony to the fact that not a few among mankind have been hurled down to physical and moral ruin through the doorway of pleasure, and that not unoften have moral excellence and the salvation of the soul been reached through the doorway of pain and willing suffering and sacrifice. The senses enable us to experience pleasure and pain; wrongly utilized intelligence leads us to mistake the pleasing to be the good and the painful to be the bad; and then the will is exercised so as to seek the enjoyment of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. The longer we allow our desire and aversion to operate in this manner, the stronger becomes the hold on us of the illusion of the pairs of opposites—the illusion which leads us to confound the good with the pleasant and makes us ignore altogether the moral value of pain in the economy of human life.

Accordingly, this illusion may be said to arise from the operation of desire and aversion: at any rate, the pre-natal tendency in favour of such an illusion—which tendency all human and other living beings clearly seem to possess—is due to the *samskāra* or internal impress that is produced by the operation of desire and aversion. Hence it is that, even

at their very birth or creation, as it is called here, all beings get into delusion and become prone to reason wrongly and misunderstand the truth in relation to the immediate aim as well as the final goal of conduct in life. When, in this manner, all human beings are apt to be overborne by pre-natal tendencies in favour of foolishness, is it any wonder that the foolish world does not perceive God in His own universe and does not understand the rationality of the ethics ordaining the life of unselfish duty and dispassionate disinterestedness? It is in the very blood, so to say, of all common people to be foolish in this manner. Nevertheless, even such foolishness is, as we are told in the next *śloka*, capable of being counteracted.

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।
ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ॥ २८ ॥

28. (Those) persons of good deeds, whose sin has come to an end —they, however, become free from the illusion of the pairs (of opposites) and resort unto Me with an enduring devotion

The words *puṇya* and *pāpa* occurring in this *śloka* do not here import, as they usually do, those forms of the internal impress or *saṁskāra* of *karma*, which are very often called *sukṛita* and *dushkṛita* respectively. It is worthy of note that, while *pāpa* is used here as a noun, *puṇya* occurs as an adjective qualifying *karman* in the expression *puṇya-karmaṇām*. Moreover, it is evidently presumed here that the performance of good deeds by persons of good deeds tends to bring their sins to an end. To express it in another way with the aid of Sanskrit, the *puṇyatva* of their *karma* is considered to possess the power of putting an end to their *pāpa*. You may remember having learnt sometime ago (II. ⁵C) that *puṇya*, understood as the *saṁskāra* called *sukṛita*, is as undesirable to the aspirant after the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment as *pāpa*, which denotes the *saṁskāra* known as *dushkṛita*. Moreover, these results of *karma*—I mean *puṇya* and *pāpa*—do not and cannot counteract each other. They may be accumulated together; in fact, it is conceived that they are so accumulated together in the life-history of more than one reincarnating soul. For the attainment of *naishkarmya* or freedom from the bondage

of *karma*, it is necessary to work out and cause the exhaustion of *puṇya* quite as much as of *pāpa*.

Therefore, it is clear that, in the expression *puṇya-karmaṇām*, the word *puṇya* simply means what the English word 'good' as an adjective ordinarily denotes. A reference to the ninth stanza of this chapter—a stanza which we have already studied—will enable you to see how the word *puṇya* as an adjective is fully capable of being used in this sense; for therein we find Śrī-Kṛishṇa saying that He is *puṇyo gandhah pṛithivyām*—the good smell, that is, fragrant smell in the element earth. The goodness of the smell denotes of course its fragrance; but what does the goodness of the deeds of the man of good deeds, denote here? This is clearly an important question having a vital bearing upon the meaning of the whole stanza, which we are now engaged in studying and understanding; and the answer to it is to be found in the implied idea that, through the goodness of the good deeds of persons of good deeds, their sins come to an end.

Accordingly, the goodness of the good deeds here denotes their sin-destroying power; and you know from your knowledge of the *Vedāntic* doctrine of *karma*, when it is that deeds happen to possess this power. It is only when deeds are done absolutely unselfishly as disinterested duty—it is only then that they destroy the bondage of *karma* and accomplish the purification of the soul, so as to enable it to attain both self-realization and God-realization. Therefore, those alone are persons of good deeds, who are ever steady and unfailing in the practice of unselfishness in their life of disinterested duty duly done. Even as continued yielding to the sway of selfish desires and aversions makes people become subject instinctively, as it were, to the delusion of mistaking pleasure for happiness and interest for reason, even so the sustained practice of unselfishness delivers them from this delusion, not only by freeing them from the illusion of the pairs of opposites, but also by inducing them to resort unto God with a true and enduring devotion. To such people, God is necessarily both the stay of life and the aim of life.

It is easy enough to understand how the sustained practice of unselfishness leads to the deliverance of all those, who practise it, from the illusion of the pairs of opposites as

well as from the pressure of physical pleasure in the determination of their motives of action. But why such people are, by their practice of unselfishness, led to resort unto God with a true and enduring devotion, requires a little explanation. To those, who believe that duty is ultimately determined by pleasure and personal interest, no doubt can arise as to its obligatoriness. It is indeed never so easy to understand the obligatoriness of unselfishness. For this purpose, one has to know and to believe that this universe is owned as His habitation by the Lord God, who is ever present in it everywhere. When God is the proprietor of the universe and of all its contents, none other than God can claim to be any kind of owner of any thing whatsoever in this or any other world. This is why one of our famous and authoritative *Upanishads* says—"Therefore, enjoy life by resignation. Do not be covetous. Whose is wealth?"

One may thus see the unrighteousness of selfishness in all its many forms; but willingly to carry out what may be called the duty of unselfish action and achievement, one has to know and to believe something more. And this something is that God is the loving and omnipotent ordainer of the absolutely just and ever inexorable law of *karma*. To know and to believe in the divine origin of this law and to understand well its reality and efficacy can alone make people realize truly that their highest interests in life are served best by the practice of unselfishness and love and also by the perfect performance of disinterested duty. Only thus is it possible to establish the obligatoriness of unselfishness. I believe it is well recognised by at least certain moral philosophers that unless the moral law is understood to be a law which is in consonance with the will of God, what they speak of as the categorically imperative character of the obligatoriness of morality cannot be made to rest on a secure and enduring foundation. The great German philosopher, Kant, is known to have defined religion itself as 'a representation to ourselves of the moral law as the will of God.'

It must therefore be easy for you to see that all those, whose ideal of morality and righteous conduct is not based upon pleasure and pain and personal interest, will resort unto God with an enduring devotion, finding Him to be the surest support of all true morality and righteousness. Without so resorting to God, such persons can obtain

no authoritative guidance for conducting themselves aright in life. When they, in this manner, resort to God as their surest and safest guide in life, the supreme purpose they have in view is pointed out in the next *śloka*; and to it let us now direct our attention.

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये।
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥ २९ ॥

29. Those, who, having resorted unto Me (as their support and guide), endeavour for the (attainment of) liberation from old age and death,—they know that (great) *Brahman*, (know) the whole of what constitutes the instrinsic essence of the soul, and (know) also *karma* in (all its) entirety.

You may remember how, in a previous stanza (16) in this chapter, we were told that generally four different kinds of persons resort unto God and become devoted to Him, namely, the person in affliction, the person who wishes to procure knowledge, the person who is desirous of acquiring wealth, and lastly the person who is possessed of wisdom. From the same context we also learnt that, of these four kinds of persons, the person possessed of wisdom is the most excellent devotee of God, for the reason that his devotion is enduring and one-pointed, inasmuch as there is no interested motive of any sort behind it. The durability and the one-pointedness of his devotion being due to the utter absence of selfishness in his life, he resorts to God, because, as we have seen, God alone can form to him the source and support of the moral law and of the obligatoriness of unselfishness and and disinterested duty.

This utter absence of selfishness in his life need not, and really does not, make it aimless and devoid of all purposiveness. You are aware, I am sure, that Hindu thinkers speak of the aims of life as *purushārthas* and have classified them under four heads as *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksha*, translatable respectively as duty, wealth, desire and deliverance. Of these, the last one is often called *parama-purushārtha* or the supreme purpose of life. The performance of duty, the acquisition of wealth, and the fulfilment of desire may well be, and frequently are, associated with selfishness. But the attainment of deliverance from the bondage of

recurring births and deaths is possible only to him, in whom all selfishness is completely extinguished, and whose life is one of disinterested duty duly done. Therefore, it is easy to see that those wise persons, who put an end to their sins by means of their good deeds and resort unto God as their support and guide in life, are certain to aim at *moksha* as the supreme purpose of life.

It is this idea which is given expression to in this stanza, by the statement that such persons endeavour for the attainment of liberation from old age and death. It goes without saying that, since old age and death are well-known conditions of change in relation to the mutable material embodiment of the soul, liberation from them means the deliverance of the soul from *saṁsāra* or the bondage of recurring births and deaths. In other words, it is the winning of *moksha*, which forms the purpose of the life of those wise and unselfish personages, who resort unto God with a devotion that is enduring and one-pointed; and *moksha* ultimately means, as you know, the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. Accordingly it is far from true to say that the inevitable unselfishness of the life of truly wise saints and sages makes it aimless and devoid of all purposiveness; on the other hand, this very unselfishness tends to make their life an earnest and unceasing endeavour to secure, through service and sacrifice and divine devotion, the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment.

Let us now note that the reason, as well as the result of such endeavour on their part, is said to be that they know that great *Brahman*, know the whole of what constitutes the self, and know *karma* in all its entirety. I remember that we once before took into consideration the relation between true theory and correct practice in regard to the question of conduct and arrived at the conclusion that correct practice leads to the ascertainment of the truth of the theory, as much as true theory leads to the formulation of correct conduct; in fact, theory and practice, when they are both sound, have to verify each other. In this light, we may see that even as the unselfish man of wisdom and purity, who resorts to God as his support and guide in life, strives to win the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment as the supreme object of his life, even so the man, whose endeavour in life is directed to secure such salvation, becomes so wise as to know the great *Brahman*,

know the whole of what constitutes the soul, and know also *karma* in all its entirety. The epithet ' that ' in relation to the *Brahman* here is noteworthy and has the meaning of ' well-known '. Thus the knowledge of God, the knowledge of the soul and the knowledge of the world, in its relation to God on the one hand and the individual soul on the other hand, are all comprised within this wisdom.

To know the great *Brahman*, is to know God as the Infinite Indestructible Being, who is in and above the universe and forms its powerful source, its immanent life and everlasting support. To know all about the soul is to know what it is in itself, what its relation to God is, and what again its relation to the mutable world of matter and mortality is. Similarly, to know *karma* in all its entirety is to know the world in itself and also in its relation to God as well as to the individual soul. You know that the world of matter is the world of work; that is, outside the world of matter, work, as we understand it, is entirely impossible; nay, it is even inconceivable. To those, who know the inseparable association of matter and energy in Nature and understand at the same time that what is commonly called expenditure of energy is always involved in work, it must in fact be self-evident that the world of matter is the world of work. Therefore, the knowledge of the world of matter and energy and space and time has to be included in the knowledge of *karma* or work in all its entirety.

In addition to this physical aspect, *karma* or work has also a moral aspect. It is well for you to remember that the soul in its intrinsic condition of unlimited self-illumination and absolute freedom is too pure and holy to be tainted by any kind of evil or any moral pollution: as a matter of fact, considerations of morality arise practically in relation to the soul, only after it becomes embodied and is subjected to the limitations of matter. And the law of *karma* is the great moral law of the material universe; it is a law of absolutely impartial justice, leaving the destiny of every embodied individual in his or her own hands and not at all shutting off the highest bliss of beatitude from any one whatsoever. The relation of *karma* to God is that He is the ordainer of the law of *karma* in its physical as well as moral aspect; and its relation to the embodied individual soul is that its own life of embodiment has to be lived in obedience to that same law of *karma*.

Such in brief outline is the knowledge of God, soul and the world, which the unselfish and wise seeker after the salvation of soul-emancipation attains as a consequence of his endeavour to live the life of love and sacrifice and disinterested duty. There is, however, yet another way of knowing God, which is referred to in the next stanza, forming the very last one in the chapter. Let us now turn our attention to it.

साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः।
प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ॥ ३० ॥

30. Those, who know Me to be in association with the intrinsic essence of (all) beings and of deities and also with the intrinsic essence of all acts of worship,—(they), being of a (divinely) devoted mind, realize Me even at the time of (their) departure (from life).

To know God, to know the soul, and to know *karma* is in fact to know God in His relation to the individual soul as well as to the material world of energy, action and ethics. There are also other ways in which God has to be realized by the wise person, who is convinced that Vāsudeva is All and All in All. Of these other ways of knowing God, three are mentioned in the stanza that has been just read and translated. These three aspects of God-knowledge constitute a summary of what we have been taught about God in this seventh chapter of the *Gītā*.

We have been told (VII. 7) that in the way in which the string runs through all the gems in a necklace, in that same way God passes through and is immanent in every thing in the universe. This means that He is in intimate association with the intrinsic essence of all beings; He indeed forms their source and support, as I have said so often. Again, you know that it is one of the items of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's teachings given in this chapter (VII. 21) that the various gods and goddesses, whom various individuals and communities worship for attaining the fulfilment of various desires, are all limbs or minor forms of the one great God Vāsudeva, who, being All and All in All, is the producer as well as the sustainer of the faith in those various deities. From a stanza in a previous chapter (IV. 11) we learnt, as you may remember,

that, in whatsoever way people resort to the divine power for succour and for support, in that same way will God accept them, and that in all manner of ways people follow in fact that very path which ultimately leads to the great God. Thus, it cannot but be evident to you that God is in intimate association with the intrinsic essence of all the deities known to the history of human religions.

Thirdly, from this sort of intimate association of God with the intrinsic essence of all deities, it must follow as a matter of course that He is also in association similarly intimately with the intrinsic essence of all forms and acts of worship. As a matter of fact, we have been given to understand (VII. 22) that all the various worshippers of the various deities, known to various religions, reap the reward of their varied forms of worship through the one only God, Vāsudeva, who is Himself the ultimate bestower of all such rewards. This shows the intimacy of the association of God with the intrinsic essence of all acts of worship.

Accordingly, the one only God, the supreme Vāsudeva, who is immanent in all things in the universe and in whom all things live and move and have their being, has to be understood to be the source and support of all existing objects, to be the God of all gods and to be also the ultimate recipient and rewarder of all forms of faithful worship. Those, who are able to realize God in this all-comprehensive manner, are certain to have their mind always and intensely devoted to God. Indeed, in the case of such persons, it is impossible for their minds to have any other object of devotion than God, owing to the all-comprehensive character of their God-conception. Such being the nature of their devotion to God, it is perfectly intelligible how, even at the time of their departure from life, they are sure to be in possession of God-knowledge and to be infilled with divine devotion. The idea evidently is that ordinarily, in the crisis of death, it is hard for most people to be in possession of God-knowledge and to be devoted to God. Of what special value to the embodied soul this kind of conscious death-bed devotion to God is, we shall learn in the course of our study of the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

XXXVII

In our last class, we stopped with the study of the last stanza of the seventh chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*; and to-day we have to begin the study of the eighth chapter. Before doing this, let us, as usual, take a brief survey of the teachings given to us in the previous chapter. I remember having told you on a former occasion that the first six chapters of the *Gītā* deal chiefly with the question of the reality of the soul, and that the second six chapters have the reality of God for their main subject-matter; and it is the problem of God-realization that is accordingly dealt with in the seventh chapter. When we were studying the sixth chapter, we learnt that, through the practice of *yoga*, both self-realization and God-realization are made possible to the *yogin*, and that he thereby not only sees himself in all beings and all beings in himself, but sees also God in all beings and all beings in God. Although the most crucial and convincing evidence for establishing the reality of the soul is, as we observed already, derivable from the attainment of success in the psychological experiment commonly called *yoga*, still we were able to make out that a careful analysis and examination of our mental phenomena relating to the acquisition of knowledge are also capable of leading us to the logical necessity of postulating the soul as a reality. In the same manner, the reality of God is demonstrable on the one hand by means of the attainment of complete success in the practice of *yoga*, and also on the other hand by means of the cosmological analysis of the universe conducted with a free, open and unprejudiced mind. We may rightly say that the former method of God-demonstration is internal, while the latter method is external.

In the external method of proving God, the chief argument is, no doubt, based on the cosmological analysis of the universe; this argument has, however, been shown to be further capable of being supplemented by two other arguments derived respectively from the generally felt need for religion in the human heart and from the authority required to establish the imperative character of the obligatoriness of morality. Indeed, these problems, as they are

associated with the external method of proving God, have also been, as you know, taken into consideration in the seventh chapter. If you study with due care and attention the totality of universal phenomena and endeavour to ascertain how they are all produced, what their interrelations are, and on what they ultimately rest, you are very naturally led to arrive quite logically, at a Supreme Being, who has to serve as the great centre of power, from which the universe proceeds in the course of its evolution, and to which it returns during its dissolution and disappearance. The very reality of all things as well as their worthiness and value is due to that Being.

The cosmological examination and analysis of the visible universe are thus in themselves fully competent to establish the reality of God. So, it may well be asked why it is that there are some, who are, nevertheless, atheistic in their conviction as well as conduct. The answer to such a question is, as you know, that it is because God is hidden behind the veil of His wonderful *māyā* and in consequence cannot be readily realized by all. This veil of *māyā*, however, does not act in the case of all as a blind that ever prevents the vision of God. In fact, whether it serves as a help or a hindrance to people in the matter of the realization of God, has been pointed out to be dependent upon upon their own nature being either *daivī*—divine, or *āsurī*—demoniacal. We have really to understand by this that God-vision is possible to man more through the eye of faith than through the eye of reason.

This statement does not mean that to believe in the reality of God is irrational; it simply means that, solely with the aid of the intellect and its process of logical reasoning, it is not possible for any one of us to rise from Nature to Nature's God. To pierce through the veil of God's wonderful *māyā*, so as to be able to see the wonder-working God Himself behind that veil, what may be called the faculty of faith is required; and all those, who are endowed with this faculty, feel the need for religion in their lives as for a natural necessity. It is worth bearing in mind that the relation between the feeling of the natural need for religion and the possession of the faculty of faith is one of complete reciprocity, so that it is hard to say which of them is the cause and which the effect. All that we know for certain is that they always co-exist.

As judged from outside characteristics, four different kinds of persons have been pointed out to feel the need for religion and to be therefore devoted to God; and these are—the man in affliction, the person who wishes to obtain knowledge, the person who is desirous of acquiring wealth, and lastly the man of wisdom. Although all these four types of persons are worthy and honourable and their religious instinct is fully of value in removing the blinding veil of *māyā* from before their eyes, still among them the man of wisdom has to be looked upon as the most excellent divine devotee, for the reason that his devotion to God is solely truth-impelled, enduring and absolutely disinterested. In any case, in the endeavour to arrive at God-realization through the felt human need for religion, it is not possible to ignore the fact that the nature of the realization is largely dependent upon the nature of the culture and character of the person who feels the need for religion and its support in life. No human individual or community of human individuals can sincerely own and adopt with advantage a religion which is either positively too high or markedly too low; and, in consequence, the general religious instinct of mankind makes itself manifest in various forms—in the forms represented by innumerable religions of different degrees of advancement in respect of the right apprehension of truth and the appropriate guidance of conduct. Nevertheless, the wise man, whose rare and most highly valuable wisdom has enabled him to see that Vāsudeva—the one only God who enduringly dwells in all things and in whom all things live and move and have their being—is All and All in All, cannot fail to discern the unity which underlies all this variety in the open manifestation of the religious instinct of mankind in the form of concrete creeds and institutions.

The rationality of this sort of religious synthesis, which rests upon the accomplished wisdom of the perfectly wise seer, requires no special demonstration of any kind, seeing that it amounts to saying nothing more than that the power of the almighty and omnipenetrative God is always operating for good everywhere and in all things in the universe. Indeed, it is thus that the doctrine of the harmony of religions happens to be established; and all the deities known to the numerous forms of religion adopted by various human communities in various times and places become thereby fit at once to be

looked upon as the limbs of the one only God—the great Vāsudeva. It follows further from this that the beneficial results, which accrue from the worship of these various deities to their several worshippers, have all to flow ultimately from the same great Vāsudeva, although those beneficial results have to be necessarily transient and unenduring, unlike the noble moral and spiritual results accruing from the worship of Vāsudeva Himself. Step by step evolution is the process adopted by God in His plan of the government of the universe in all its departments; and the aim of that government is, as it has been pointed out to you more than once, the gradual unfoldment of the power of the spirit, culminating in its complete enfranchisement from the burdensome bondage of matter. In the spiritual evolution of mankind the most important means whereby it is achieved may be seen to be the true understanding of the moral law, associated with a natural and never-failing obedience to it.

All those who believe in religion and are devoted to God believe also, as a matter of course, that the moral law is the will of God. It has, however, to be said that, in the case of persons who are representable by the three types—the man in affliction, the man wishing to procure knowledge, and the man desirous of acquiring wealth—the immediate impulse which compels obedience to the moral law is the fear of God. But in the case of those who resemble the man of true wisdom, to whom the great Vāsudeva is All and All in All, and whom God considers to be so fully like unto Himself as to be Himself, that same impulse compelling obedience to the moral law happens to be a natural and inborn love of God. Such persons cannot contradict the moral law, without being untrue to themselves, and without violating their own inner spiritual tendencies and potentialities.

The history of man, as lighted and explained by the associated modern auxiliary sciences, gives ample support to the view that the unfoldment of the power of the spirit is in reality the aim of God's government of the universe, and that this unfoldment takes place more through ethical evolution than through what has in contrast been called natural evolution, that is, more through self-sacrifice than through self-assertion, more through altruism than through egoism. Thus, the call for self-sacrifice comes from God Himself; and the

imperative authoritativeness of the moral law as well as the inviolable obligatoriness of our obedience to it leads us quite inevitably to God who, in being the rock of ages, is indeed the infinitely strong and extensive and ever-enduring bedrock for supporting securely the mighty foundation of all true and elevating morality from eternity to eternity. It is worthy of note that in that line of universal evolution, which represents the march of events to that far-off divine goal to which the whole creation moves, the self assertive process of natural evolution serves as a preparation for bringing out the power of self-abnegation as evidenced in ethical evolution, even as ethical evolution in its turn serves as a preparation for the full unfoldment of the power of the spirit through soul-emancipation and God-attainment.

Yāmunāchārya in his *Gītārthasaṅgraha* summarises thus the teachings contained in the seventh chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* :—

स्वयाथात्म्यं प्रकृत्याऽस्य तिरोधिः शरणागतिः ।
भक्तभेदः प्रबुद्धस्य श्रैष्ठ्यं सप्तम उच्यते ॥

According to him, therefore, the seventh chapter deals (i) with the question of the reality of God, (ii) with His obscuration by and behind the veil of Nature, (iii) with the need and value of taking trustful refuge in God, (iv) with the various types of persons possessed of God-devotion and (v) with the special excellence among them of the type represented by the man of wisdom. You now know well enough that all these things are dealt with in that chapter ; and you also know, I am sure, that the chief topic dealt with therein may comprehensively be called the external proof of God, the internal proof being that which is attainable through the introverted vision of the successful *yogin* in the psychically mystic state of *samādhi* conducing to God-realization.

To all those whose ordinary vision is in no way perverse or abnormal, Nature necessarily implies Nature's God ; and a disposition which is favourable to trust in God tends to make Nature herself the great revealer of God to man. The ascent from Nature to Nature's God is helped on by the common religious instinct of normal humanity ; and divine authority is further wanted to uphold unfailingly the imperative obligatoriness of man's obedience to the moral law and and also to

establish conclusively that ethical evolution is in complete consonance with the highest aim of universal evolution. Thus, the external proof of God is really a three-pointed proof, the points being respectively logical, psychological and ethical in order: and all the three points of the proof are such as demonstrate the oneness of the great God Vāsudeva, who abides in all beings in the universe and in whom all beings live and move and find their very existence. We have already had occasion to learn that the intrinsic proof of God—which, as you know, consists in the *yogin's* God-realization in the perfected state of *samādhi*—enables him to see God in all beings and also to see all beings in God.

The one great God, who pervades and sustains all the beings in the universe, is established equally well by both the proofs, quite as well by the external proof as by the internal proof; and the identical character of the revelation of God arrived at by means of these two different kinds of proof is not only remarkable in itself but also gives an added emphasis to the truthfulness of the great Hindu doctrine of the harmony of religions. Accordingly, those who know God to be in intimate association with the intrinsic essence of all beings,—that is, all those who know God to be Vāsudeva—cannot but know that He is equally naturally in intimate association with the intrinsic essence of all deities and of all acts of worship, whatever may be the form of religion to which they relate In other words, their true and accurate knowledge of the *Brahman*, of the whole of what constitutes the self or soul, and also of *karman* in its entirety, enables them to see clearly that the final goal of all forms of faith is the great Vāsudeva, and that it is from Him ultimately that the good results of all religions flow as from a fountainhead, each religion giving rise to such results as are in keeping with its own characteristics and determining its position in the march of onward progress as planned by God in His scheme of universal evolution.

Variations in the forms of religion and the ways of worship and in the conceptions of the divine power and of human responsibility in relation thereto have all been brought into existence, not with the object of sanctioning and spreading falsehood, nor with the object of creating quarrels and conflicts among the various communities of mankind. They are all rungs in the ladder of ascent enabling man to rise from Nature

to Nature's God; they are all stages in the onward advance of humanity from the realization of the lesser truth to that of the larger truth till at last truth in its undiminished completeness is reached by arriving at the conviction that the great God Vāsudeva is All and All in All. The aim of the person, who at last arrives at such a conviction, is to seek freedom from old age and death, that is, to obtain the supreme bliss of everlasting life by winning the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment; and with his divinely devoted mind his realization of God is certain to be firm and vivid even at the time of his death and departure from the world of mortal mankind.

It is thus that the seventh chapter deals with the great question of the proof of God, enabling us to see that, in realizing God as the one great Vāsudeva, we realize the truth of all religion and of all philosophy. In the last two stanzas of the chapter, which are obviously intended to summarise the teachings contained in it, there are, as you know, certain things mentioned under the names of *Brahman, adhyātma, karma, adhibhūta, adhidaiva* and *adhiyajña*. Although what these things mean is ascertainable fairly well from the contents of that chapter itself, still Arjuna sought from Śrī Kṛishṇa further light regarding them, by putting Him thus the questions with which the eighth chapter begins.

अर्जुन उवाच :

किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥ १ ॥
अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन ।
प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ २ ॥

ARJUNA SAID:—

1. O (You Kṛishṇa, who are) the Highest Person, what is that *Brahman*? What is the intrinsic essence of the soul? What is *karma*? What again is that which is declared to be the intrinsic essence of (material beings? What is that which is said to be the intrinsic essence of (all) deities?

2. What is the intrinsic essence (of all acts) of worship, O Kṛishṇa, here in this (very) embodiment,

and how? How may You be realized by persons of well-controlled nature at the time of (their) departure (from life)?

It may quite easily be counted that there are seven questions here addressed to Śrī Kṛishṇa by Arjuna. Of these, the first three questions relate to God, soul and *karma*, the last of which is, in its entirety, conceived to be the active impulse that brings the visible universe of beings into existence. The fourth question relates to matter as the intrinsic essence of all physical entities. Thus matter, energy, soul and God are brought forward here as subjects requiring further elucidation. The fifth and the sixth questions relate to the unity of divinity and the unity of worship, as they arise naturally out of the established unity and omnipresence of the great God as Vāsudeva. The seventh question is about the effects of meditation on God at the time of death.

One of our authoritative commentators on the *Gītā* has, moreover, pointed out that, among the four types of persons who are prone to be devoted to God, it is the *jñānin* or the philosophic devotee of accomplished wisdom, who is apt to concern himself with the problems which underlie the first three questions. According to the same commentator, the fourth and the fifth questions are apt to command the interest and attention of the wealth-seeking type of the divine devotee, obviously because wealth is ultimately material in character and has to be won by the propitation of the various powers of Nature, which, as you know, are often looked upon as deities. If you will try to bear in mind that, out of the four types of divine devotees, it is only in the case of the philosophic devotee of accomplished wisdom that his devotion to God is characterised by disinterestedness, constancy and singleness of purpose, it cannot be hard for you to understand why again, according to the same commentator, the sixth question—the question regarding the intrinsic essence of all acts of worship—does not appertain to such a wise and philosophic devotee so much as to the remaining three types of devotees represented respectively by the man in affliction, the seeker after knowledge and the seeker of wealth, all of whom have to propitiate the divine power in some form or other by means of various acts of divine worship conducted in various ways.

To us, earnest students of the *Bhagavadgītā*, all the six questions are of course of equal importance; and the seventh

question, which deals with the problem of the sustained realisation of God at the critical time of death and departure from life, is also bound to be of no less importance. Let us now proceed to learn how these questions are answered one by one.

श्रीभगवानुवाच :

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ ३ ॥

ŚRĪKRISHṆA SAID :—

3. The *Brahman* is the Indestructible that is supreme. The entity forming one's own self is said to be the intrinsic essence of the soul. The creative process which causes the production of material entities is designated as *karma*.

You know already that the word *Brahman* means more than one thing in the Sanskrit language. Literally, it means, as you know, a big thing—an unlimitedly big thing: and it may denote ordinarily things like the *Veda*, a particular sacrificial priest, a Brahmin and even *prakṛiti* or material Nature. It also denotes God, who is the Great infinite Being. We were told in the last chapter (VII. 29) that those wise philosophers and seers of truth, who, depending upon God, endeavour to attain the salvation of everlasting life, are in a position to understand that well-known *Brahman*, to understand the whole of what constitutes the intrinsic essence of the soul, and to understand also the nature of *karma* in its entirety. That well-known *Brahman* is here explained to be the Indestructible that is supreme.

You are aware that indestructibility is almost exactly the same thing as immortality; and I wish to bring to your mind that, when we were studying the problem of the immortality of the soul as expounded in the second chapter of the *Gītā*, we had to understand by its immortality its immutability and also the necessarily implied immateriality. Nothing that is material can be immortal or indestructible; and the *Brahman* is here declared to be indestructible. Consequently *Brahman* has in this context to denote a spiritual entity as distinguished from a material entity. The individual soul may well be, and is, as you know, such an entity. But it cannot be said to be the supreme spiritual entity. The epithet 'supreme' is therefore clearly intended to distinguish the *Brahman* from the

individual soul. Accordingly *Brahman*, as defined here, can only denote God as the Supreme Soul of the universe.

In answer to the second question raised by Arjuna here, it is said that the intrinsic essence of the soul is the entity forming one's own self. To be able to make out well the full import of this reply, we have to understand accurately the nature of that entity which forms one's own self. Evidently it is assumed in this context that we are already in possession of this requisite knowledge; for, in all cases of explanation, the process generally consists in assimilating the unknown to something that is known. I am sure you will grant that the assumption is not unwarranted; because, in dealing with the question of the immortality of the soul in our study of the second chapter, we had to examine and understand the nature of the entity which forms the ego or the *ahampadārtha* in the case of each of us—in fact, in the case of every embodied being.

The *ahampadārtha* is, as you know, the thing that is denoted by the word 'I'; and in common parlance this word may denote either one's body or a certain something else, which, being other than the body, is still one's own even more than one's body is one's own. When a person says—'I am stout', or 'I am thin'—what that person means by the word 'I' is undeniably his or her body; for, the body alone is capable of being stout or thin as the case may be. When, for example, that same person says—'I take delight in the poetry of Kālidāsa'—it is clearly not his or her body which is denoted by the word "I"; in this case what is meant by 'I' is certainly something other than the body.

Which of these two meanings indicates the real ego is a point of importance; and it cannot be determined, unless we bear in mind what is in Sanskrit known as *dehātma-viveka*, an expression which denotes the distinction between the body and the soul. That certain something, which, being other than the body, is denoted by the word 'I', is spoken of generally in Sanskrit psychology as *bhoktṛi*—as the enjoyer or the experiencer of experiences. And the body is, according to the same psychology, a *bhogopakaraṇa*, an associated auxiliary instrument enabling the enjoyer of experiences to experience experiences. That it is possible for the enjoyer of experiences to experience experiences even otherwise than through the instrumentality of the body is demonstrable by means of the practice of the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration. In the peculiar and highly interesting psychic state of

samādhi, which is attained by practising this *yoga*, there arises, it is said, an experience wherein the experiencing subject and the experienced object become identical; and in relation to this remarkable experience the instrumentality of the body is altogether unfelt.

The body-sense, so to say, fades away completely from before the vision of the *yogin* in *samādhi*. Accordingly, the root-reality of the ego cannot be the body; it must be that other thing which happens to be the enjoyer of experiences and as such, has to be of the nature of consciousness, *chaitanya-svarūpa*, as they put it in Sanskrit. This principle of consciousness, constituting the enjoyer of experiences, is *svayam-prakāśa* or self-luminous: and it therefore makes itself known to itself at the same time that it brings other things than itself within the range of cognition and knowledge.

These are characteristics which cannot belong to matter as matter; and since the body is made up of matter, it cannot be such an enjoyer of experiences as we have made out to be the thing denoted by the word, 'I'. When, however, the word, 'I', denotes the body — as it in fact does in some cases — it does so owing to a mistaken apprehension of the truth, due to the close association of the body with the soul The entity forming one's own self is the thing which is rightly denoted by the word, 'I', and this thing is the self-luminous and illuminating enjoyer of experiences. Such an enjoyer has to consist of the principle of consciousness, and has therefore to be immaterial, and therefore immutable, and therefore immortal. Such are some of the ideas and facts which we have had to learn already in relation to the soul; and in the light of these ideas and facts, the statement, that the intrinsic essence of the soul is the entity forming one's own self, may be seen to be fully intelligible and adequately explanatory.

The next question dealt with in the stanza which we are now studying refers to *karma*; and it is, as you know, taken into consideration here in its entirety. Accordingly, the definition of *karma* as that creative process, which causes the production of material entities, has to be understood to be a completely comprehensive definition. In the language of Hindu philosophy, *srishti* and *pralaya*, that is, creation and

dissolution, as appertaining to the universe, are, as most of you are aware equivalent respectively to the processes of evolution and involution. Such certainly is the view maintained in the Sāṅkhya philosophy of Kapila, and here we have to notice that *karma* is made responsible for the production of all material beings in the universe.

It is, moreover, evident that the creative process which is responsible for the production of material entities, is a process of evolution and, it may be said in a general way in the language of physical science that creation and dissolution consist of changes in the aggregation and configuration of matter in association with due changes in the manner of manifestation of energy, and that in the process of creative evolution potential energy is transformed into kinetic energy, while in the process of dissolving involution kinetic energy is transformed into potential energy. It should be distinctly borne in mind that energy, as we know it in the physical world, is always intimately and inseparably bound up with matter, so much so that matter itself is sometimes defined as the vehicle of energy.

Thus *karma*, as defined here, means such a transformation of potential into kinetic energy as gives rise to those forms of change in the aggregation and configuration of matter which are creative and thus bring new material beings into existence. Another noteworthy point here is the complete reciprocity in relation as well as value between potential and kinetic energy in all the transformations which energy in any form undergoes. Hence it is that, in the material processes of creation and dissolution, whatever is potential becomes kinetic and whatever is kinetic becomes potential. Therefore, we have to see that, in so far as the various material beings in the universe are at all and are also what they respectively are, they would neither have been at all nor be what they are, but for *karma* understood in accordance with the comprehensive definition of it as given in this stanza.

When kinetic *karma* gets potentialised, so to say, it becomes what they call *saṃskāra* in Sanskrit, and it is the actualisation of potential *saṃskāra* which brings material beings into existence in their differentiated condition and makes each of them what it is. It must of course be quite evident to you

that the conversion of active *karma* into *samskāra* is a process of involution, while the conversion of *samskāra* into kinetic *karma* is a process of evolution. So far as we can make out, both these processes may be said to be going on always and everywhere in relation to all the physical entities and their activities in the universe. In this connection, it is well not to lose sight of the fact that the bodies of all living beings are also physical entities, and are as such subject to these processes of evolution and involution.

I remember having spoken to you once about the Hindu doctrine which maintains *karma* to be beginningless (or *anādi*). Seeing that *karma* has been comprehensively defined here as the immediate cause of creation, it must follow as a matter of course that creation is also *anādi*. In fact, the beginninglessness of creation is also a well known doctrine of Hindu religion and philosophy. In taking into consideration the relation between *karma* and creation, we cannot fail to observe that the former looks more at the energy-aspect and the latter more at the matter-aspect of the physical universe. The stream of *karma* and the course of material changes are both actually observable by us in the world as it is. But for active *karma* becoming potential *samskāra* and this in turn becoming kinetic *karma*, there can be, as I have told you, no such thing at all as the power of practice to produce perfection in any art, and no educational effort of any kind can prove to be of any consequence.

The reality of the stream of *karma* and also of the connected course of material changes in the universe being unquestioned and unquestionable, the enquiry regarding when and where the stream of *karma* first began to flow, or when and why the course of material changes in the universe had its start, is naturaly apt to possess no prime importance of any noticeable kind. Moreover, it must be quite obvious to you all that an enquiry regarding the origin of the cycle of the connected processes of evolution and involution in the universe is certain to turn out to be fruitless altogether. First of all, we cannot make out and say with certainty whether evolution precedes involution or involution precedes evolution. The problem of finding out whether the seed precedes the tree or the tree precedes the seed—that is, whether in the process of

world-creation the seed or the tree was first brought into existence—is much like the enquiry regarding the anteriority or posteriority of evolution to involution. A little thought will tell you that in reality it is the same enquiry characterised by the same kind of futility. Secondly, to find out the starting point of a cycle wherein the conclusion of the culmination coincides with the commencement of the beginning, is like finding out definitely the starting point of a circle whose very nature requires that in it every point should be capable of serving both as beginning and end at the same time. Thirdly, the questions connected with the discovery of the origin of *karma* and of the origin of creation have no direct and important bearing on the conduct of human life. So long as we are on this side of the world's veil of *māyā*, these questions cannot but be insoluble to us. When we manage to go behind the veil of *māyā* and get an insight into the mind of God, then we may know the manner and purpose of creation from the standpoint of the Creator. But till we succeed in becoming more than ordinarily human in this way, all that our philosophy can at best do is to indulge in more or less plausible guesses.

In any case, it is well to remember that, in so far as this visible world is concerned, *karma* is real, that creation is real, and that they are both very closely interrelated and have been and are simultaneously in operation in all the various parts of the phenomenal universe. According to me, fully so much seems to be implied in the comprehensive definition of *karma* given in this context.

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम्।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर॥ ॥ ४ ॥

4. The destructible entity is the intrinsic essence of (material) beings, and the *purusha* is the intrinsic essence of (all) deities ; and O (Arjuna) most excellent among all (embodied persons), I am Myself (here) in this (very) embodiment the intrinsic essence of (all) acts of worship.

You may remember that when, in our study of the second chapter of the *Gītā*, we were dealing with the problem of the immortality of the soul as contrasted with the mortality of the body, we learnt that mortality, which is the same thing as

destructibility, meant the mutability which is invariably associated with the materiality of matter. We further understood that the immortality of the soul meant its immutability consequent upon its immateriality. Now we are told here that the destructible entity forms the intrinsic essence of all material beings. Please take note of the fact that in the Sanskrit expression *adhibhūta* as used here I have interpreted the word *bhūta* to mean a material being; and the reason for adopting this interpretation is that beings which are immaterial are, owing to their very immateriality, immutable and immortal. In other words, immaterial beings are indestructible beings. The *Brahman* is, as we have just been told, the indestructible being that is supreme. There is also, as you know, another variety of the indestructible being, which is different from the *Brahman* in that it is not supreme; and this kind of indestructible being is the individual soul. Materiality, mutability and mortality go together; and destruction, as we know it, is invariably nothing more than mutation — nothing more than a change in the collocation and configuration of matter.

It is easily possible for all of us to conceive that the almighty power of God can be fully equal to the creation of some thing out of nothing as well as to the conversion of any thing into nothing. But there is no evidence to show to us that God, in His government of the universe, has been exercising His undoubtedly almighty power for the accomplishment of such feats of creation and annihilation. On the other hand, what we may distinctly observe is that in Nature, the cyclic processes of evolution and involution give rise to that kind of creation and destruction which is entirely dependent upon mutation of matter. It is true that these processes throw no light on the problem of the origin of *prakṛiti* or matter even as they throw no light on the problem of the origin of the individual soul. That both these problems are practically held to be insoluble may be made out from the fact that Hindu philosophy puts matter and soul into the category of such entities as have had no beginning and are hence regarded to be *anādi*. I may, however, mention here that it is maintained by some of our great philosophic teachers, that the basic principles of matter and consciousness, required for the creation of the universe, have always formed an integral part, as it were of the essential nature of God Himself. This is evidently implied in the *Vedāntic* conception of the Supreme *Brahman*—a

the unlimited absolute Being—as consisting of *sat*, *chit* and *ānanda*, that is, of existence, consciousness and bliss. Anyhow, the Hindu idea of creation is that it is the production of some thing out of something else already existing—that it is the result of mutation, but not of any new act of fresh origination. Similarly, destruction also means mutation, but not annihilation. Accordingly, the destructible entity is nothing other than mutable matter: and this is the intrinsic essence of all material beings.

Let us now try to understand the statement that the *Purusha* is the intrinsic essence of all deities. The idea intended to be conveyed by this statement is that the fundamental source of all gods and goddesses known to all religions is the *Purusha*. This word *Purusha* has more than one meaning in Sanskrit as you already know. It is literally interpreted to mean the dweller within the body, and is understood to denote the soul within, an embodiment of God Himself as embodied within His own universe.

In the course of our study of the fourth chapter of the Gītā we had, as you may remember, to take into consideration the highly interesting and important question of divine incarnation. Then I referred to a famous Vedic hymn, called the *Purushasūkta* - which is indeed one of the well-known hymns of the *Rigveda* (X *90.*) -and even quoted from it a few stanzas pertinent to the question of divine incarnation. The main teaching contained in that hymn is that God, the Supreme Soul of the universe, sacrificing Himself, causes the evolution of the universe out of Himself. In this great and momentous cosmic evolution, there is involved as a matter of course the production of the powers forming the deities of religions. In fact, some of the Vedic gods, such as Indra, Agni and Vāyu, are in that hymn actually declared to have been so produced.

Accordingly, it is the *Purusha* of the *Purushasūkta* constituting the Supreme Soul of the universe as embodied and immanent in the universe, who is stated here to be the intrinsic essence of all deities. That is, He is the central source from which all manifestations of divine power proceed—all such manifestations as have found a place in the history of religion in response to the gradually growing capacity of man

to comprehend God in all His great glory and infinite fullness. In one of the stanzas of the last chapter (VII. 21) we were told, as you may remember, that whatsoever manifestation of divine power a devotee wishes to worship with faith, that same faith of his is made to be firm and unshakable in him by God Himself. Every such manifestation of divine power is, in the language of that stanza, a *tanu* or embodied representation of God, or, as we may say here in this context, a limb of the great *Purusha*, who, being the Supreme Soul of the universe, is embodied and immanent in the universe. All the various gods and other divine powers, whom men and women in the various parts of the world have worshipped, are worshipping and may yet worship in the future, have in fact to be limbs of the great *Purusha* of the *Purushasūkta*; hence He is undoubtedly the *adhidaivata*, inasmuch as all the gods are in Him and He is in all the gods.

To the question regarding *adhi-yajña* or the intrinsic essence of all acts of worship, the answer given by Śrī Kṛishṇa in the stanza we are now studying, is—"I am Myself here in this very embodiment the intrinsic essence of all acts of worship." Evidently Śrī Kṛishṇa means by this that He is in all acts of worship and that all acts of worship necessarily have Him for their ultimate aim. It may be easily seen that this idea is in full accord with the teaching, which we learnt some weeks ago (IV 11), that, in whatsoever manner people resort unto God as their refuge, in that same manner does He receive them, and that in all manner of ways men follow His path. When all the gods known to humanity and the history of religion are limbs of the great *Purusha* of the *Purushasūkta* the worships that are offered to them are indeed offered to that Supreme Person Himself. This appears to me to be quite self-evident. You can see at once that the famous Hindu doctrine of the harmony of religions rests on the proved possibility of the synthesis, firstly, of all gods and other such divine powers, and, secondly, of all acts of worship of all forms; and the possibility of such a synthesis depends as a matter of course upon the fact that all the gods of all the religions known to mankind are in God, who is the Supreme Person, and that He is Himself in all those gods.

So far, Śrī Kṛishṇa's answer to the question regarding *adhi-yajña* seems to be easily intelligible. But there is in that

answer, as you know, the expression—"here in this very embodiment"; and it requires some explanation. The expression may evidently refer to the embodiment of Śrī Kṛishṇa as the historical Yādava king, who was the son of Vasudeva and Devaki and the destroyer of Kamsa. If we understand it in that sense, the object of its use in this context cannot be anything more than to affirm that the human Śrī Kṛishṇa is no less than God incarnate. We know well enough that Śrī Kṛishṇa has emphatically identified Vāsudeva, the son of Vasudeva, with the other Vāsudeva, the great God who lives in all the beings in the universe and in whom all the beings in the universe live and move and have their being.

Nevertheless, it is somewhat hard to see why the affirmation of this identity is wanted in this context. Consequently I am inclined to believe that the expression, "in this very embodiment", refers to the embodiment of God as *Purusha* or the Supreme Person. By understanding the expression thus, we are led to see that the Supreme Person who is the intrinsic essence of all gods, is also the intrinsic essence of all acts of worship; and that seems to me to be exactly what has to be conveyed in the context. It is worth noting that the expression may also refer to the embodiment of the worshipper. In that case, the meaning is that, in every worshipper as he is, God Himself is the intrinsic essence of all acts of worship; that is, He prompts the worship and receives the worship. This interpretation also is worthy of being taken into careful consideration here. In any case it is an essential point not to forget that the *adhi-yajña* has to be naturally and necessarily identical with the *adhi-daiva*; their interrelation is indeed fully so intimate.

So far, six out of the seven questions asked at the beginning of the chapter have been answered; and in the following half a dozen stanzas, the answer to the seventh question—the question as to how God may be realised by persons of well-controlled nature at the time of their departure from life—is given in some detail. Let us now proceed to study and understand that answer.

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन् मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥ ॥ ५ ॥
यं यं वापि स्मरन् भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥ ॥ ६ ॥

5. And (he), who, at the time of the end, remembering Me exclusively, gives up the body and departs (from life),—he attains My condition: in respect of this, there is no doubt.

6. Remembering whichsoever thing, O Arjuna, (one) gives up the body at the end, (one) attains that very same (thing), being ever inspired by the thought thereof.

We have already been able to see that the one only God, the supreme Vāsudeva, who is immanent in all things and in whom all the things in the universe live and move and have their being, is not only the source and support of all existence, but also happens to be the god of all gods and the ultimate recipient and rewarder of all forms of worship offered by all sorts of people in accordance with all kinds of religion. Whoever is in possession of such an absolutely comprehensive God-realisation, cannot, as a matter of course, have any other object of devotion than the all-comprehensive God Himself. His devotion to God becomes necessarily exclusive, that is, entirely confined to his God. It also becomes, for the same reason, both constant and enduring: even in the crisis of death, his devotion to God cannot cease, for he can never forget his God.

Persons of this description undoubtedly deserve to be called persons of well-controlled nature; and to them it must be quite easy and natural to be consciously devoted to God even at the critical time of death. There may well be other persons also, who are somehow so fortunately circumstanced as to be able to be consciously devoted to God at the time of their death and departure from life. In the case of all such persons—whatever may be the cause of their conscious devotion to God at the time of their death—it is pointed out here that that devotion of theirs is of special value in that it assuredly enables them to attain what Śrī Kṛishṇa speaks of as *madbhāva* or 'My condition'. The meaning is that they attain what we may call God-condition. I remember having on a previous occasion drawn your attention to the fact that the import of the attainment of God-condition may point either to the attainment of oneness with God or to the attainmen

of similarity with God. In either case, it amounts to God-attainment—that God-attainment which perfects and completes the salvation of soul emancipation known by the name of *moksha* in Sanskrit.

What we, therefore, have to understand from the first of the two stanzas, just now read and translated is, that the special value of conscious death-bed devotion to God consists in that it unfailingly secures for the devotee the salvation of soul emancipation and God-attainment. Why such devotion has such special value is explained in the second stanza. In it we are told that the thought of anything in the mind of a person at the time of his death is apt thereafter to be continuously operative therein, so as to make its influence specially effective.

You know that whatever we think or do or say leaves its impress upon us, and that this impress is known in Sanskrit as the *saṁskāra* of *karma*. You know further that, but for the reality of this *saṁskāra* of *karma*, such a thing as the improvement of our capacity for thought and work by means of practice would be unintelligible, and all education and training would turn out to be futile and fruitless. According to the conception of Hindu philosophy and religion, the *saṁskāra* of *karma* is so real that it not only operates in the present life but also happens to be effective in determining the main conditions of the coming embodied states of the soul's re-incarnation. The *saṁskāra*, which is consequent upon conscious death-bed devotion to God, possesses, as we are told here, the power of destroying all other accumulated *saṁskāras* of previous *karma* and of thereby putting an end to the soul's career of continued re-incarnation so as to give to it the final peace of emancipation and God-attainment.

It is a part of the Hindu doctrine of *karma* that, although the *saṁskāra* of *karma* is generally additive in character and goes on growing by accumulation, it can also operate under suitable circumstances as a conteractive agent in relation to previously accumulated *saṁskāras*. When it is that the *saṁskāra* of *karma* happens to be additive, and when counteractive, in character, is already well known to us, inasmuch as we have been taught distinctly that what

really makes *karma* cling to man, is the selfishness of his mental disposition. As a matter of fact, work done with the aid of any of the three instruments of the soul—*mano-vāk-kāya*, mind, language and body—produces *saṁskāra* of the additive kind, when the worker is actuated by selfish motives. If, however, the worker works with absolute unselfishness, the *saṁskāra* of his work becomes counteractive in character and helps to remove the burden of accumulated *karma* altogether.

This is why, as we learnt in studying the second chapter of the Gītā (II. *49*), Arjuna was taught—"Work in itself is far inferior to the disposition of the mind with which it is done, O Arjuna! Therefore seek refuge in the appropriate mental disposition. They are pitiable creatures, whose motive for action is the fruit of their work." Accordingly, we have to see that conscious death-bed devotion to God is incapable of being tainted with selfishness.

Another point, which has to be taken note of here, is that the counteractive power of the *saṁskāra* of unselfish work is naturally in proportion, firstly, to the greater or lesser thoroughness of its unselfishness, and, secondly, to the greater or lesser weakness of the force, which it has to counteract. In so far as conscious death bed devotion to God is concerned, it must be quite easy to make out from observation that its disinterestedness is generally very thorough. Most people lose their consciousness in the crisis of death. Some, however, retain their consciousness to the very end, that is, till they actually die. And among these, it may be fairly uniformly noticed that, when they become well assured of the certainty of their coming death, all their worldly attachments cease at once, so that no tinge of selfishness can remain anywhere in their hearts. If, with such a heart so free from selfishness, they are, in the crisis of their death, consciously devoted to God, their devotion is apt to be, like that of the man of wisdom, enduring and single-minded (see VII. *17*). Moreover in the peculiar condition of the crisis of death, what may be called the power of the body over the soul becomes very considerably weakened.

I believe I have already drawn your attention to the fact that the nature of man is ultimately composite in character,

inasmuch as every human being happens to be a spirit clothed in flesh; and owing to this composite character of general human nature, there is, as assuredly most of you know, a very real struggle going on always in every human being between the tendencies of the flesh and the tendencies of the spirit. In this struggle, the power of the flesh is apt to preponderate, so long as the vigour and vitality of the body continue to be noteworthy. When, however, the glow of youth declines, or, when, for some reason or other, the health and energy of the body happen to be at a low ebb, that same power of the flesh becomes crippled and ceases to be aggressive. In conditions like these, wherein the aggressive power of the flesh is notably weakened, the power of the mind to produce *saṁskāras* or potential impressions upon the mind becomes considerably enhanced. The greater the weakening of the power of the body over the mind, the stronger is the power of the mind over the mind. In addition to this, it has to be noted that physical distractions cannot then thwart very much the effective concentration of the mind upon any object or idea, as the case may be.

If these things are all well understood and remembered, and if it is further borne in mind that, at the time of death and departure from life, the power of the body is generally at its lowest possible minimum, then the statement—that, remembering whichsoever thing one gives up the body at the end, one attains that same thing, being ever inspired by the thought thereof—may easily be seen to be fully capable of receiving a satisfactory explanation. The position intended to be maintained here is that the *saṁskāra* or the potential impression produced at the time of death, by the mind upon the mind through conscious devotion to God, so fills the mind with the God-idea as to compel it to be ever afterwards exclusively inspired and actuated by that same idea as a matter of course.

Consequently, the potency of what we have been speaking of as conscious death-bed devotion to God is bound to be markedly great; and we have seen that such devotion to God is altogether incapable of being tainted with selfishness. The result is that the counteractive power of the *saṁskāra* of such devotion is bound to be so great and so strong as to take away from the devotee all his burden

of *karma* and fit him for securing the bliss of the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. That we become what we intently meditate upon, is taken to be almost an axiom in Hindu psychology. Perhaps some of you know that more than one noteworthy religion believes in common with Hinduism that repentance removes sin and that, as a remover of sin, even death-bed repentance is of immense value. Both these doctrines receive their due explanation from the Hindu standpoint, if they are examined in the light of what we have been able to learn from the last two stanzas under consideration.

The next stanza is one of advice and admonition to Arjuna; and in it he is called upon by Śrī-Kṛishṇa to conduct himself aright in accordance with the truth regarding the value of devotion to God at the time of death and departure from life. The stanza runs thus:—

तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामेवैष्यस्यसंशयः॥ ॥ ७ ॥

7. Therefore at all times remember Me continuously and fight (in the war): having dedicated (your faculties of) attention and intellection to Me, you will come to (attain) Me surely: there is no doubt about this.

Please observe that this stanza begins with a 'therefore'. It evidently means that, because conscious devotion to God at the time of death has such a special value as is capable of enabling one to obtain thereby the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment, one ought at all times to remember God continuously. Some of you may ask why indeed it should be so. The reason is that none of us can know beforehand, when our time of death comes to us, and that, nevertheless, we should not miss the chance of obtaining our salvation through conscious devotion to God at the time of our death and depature from life.

To make the point clear, let me illustrate it by taking the case of an intelligent and ambitious merchant into consideration. He is naturally anxious to become rich by trade, and is apt to be always on the look-out to find out

the particular markets, wherein the sale of the commodity, in which he deals, may bring him the largest profit. If ever, after ascertaining such markets, he fails to send that commodity in time to those markets to be sold there for his benefit, he of course misses a favourable opportunity to become rich. As an intelligent and ambitious merchant, he ought not to miss any such opportunity. Similarly, he who knows the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment to be the *parama-purushārtha* or the supreme object of human pursuit, and knows further that that object may be unfailingly secured with the aid of the continued remembrance of God at the time of death and departure from life,—he too ought not to miss his opportunity to attain that same salvation It is easy to see that he is rationally bound to seek it and to obtain it.

In the case of the merchant, however, it is possible for him to get from time to time telegraphic information regarding the current market-rates of various commodities in the various parts of the world, so that he may with such information guide his course aright. The ordinary seeker of salvation has no means at his disposal, whereby he may come to know beforehand the exact time of his death and departure from life To carry out the salvation-securing *anta-kāla-smaraṇa* of God, which, as you are aware, means the remembrance of God at the time of the end, it may well be held to be necessary to know beforehand when the time of the end actually arrives. No telegraphic or any other kind of information is available to us, ordinary mortals, to enable us to obtain previous information regarding the exact hour of death. Therefore, if we wish to be wise in our generation and do not want to miss the opportunity of securing certainly the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment, the only course that is open to us is to look upon every hour of our life as a possible hour of our death.

Thus the obligation at all times of divine *anu-smaraṇa*, that is, of the continued remembrance of God, becomes imposed upon us. What is this continued remembrance—this *anu-smaraṇa*—of God? According to this very stanza which enjoins the *anu-smaraṇa*, it means the dedication of the faculties of attention and intellection to God. In other words, it means the same thing as meditating upon God and keeping

steadily the concept of God before the mind's eye. Devotion to God denotes also the very same thing as you may see quite easily: and it is this thing—whether we call it continued remembrance or meditation or devotion in relation to God—which is, in this context, said to make God-attainment undoubtedly certain. It is noteworthy, however, that, in this stanza, Arjuna is called upon not only to remember God continuously at all times, but also to fight in the impending war. If, because we know that we are all apt to become what we intently meditate upon at the time of our death, we are bound to go on meditating upon God always with a view to secure God-attainment, and should at the same time do nothing else, life itself would prove to be impossible, inasmuch as something more than mere meditation is by the very nature of things necessary for the proper upkeep of life here upon the earth. In fact, it is a double obligation that is really imposed upon us according to this stanza—the obligation of the constant *anu-smarana* of God and also the obligation of doing whatever from time to time happens to be our duty in life. We may even go farther and say that the latter of these two obligations is the main obligation, although the former also is equally imperative.

Here let us conclude our work for to-day.

XXXVIII

The last topic, that we dealt with in our last class, related, as you know, to the great value and importance of the continued remembrance of God at the time of death as a sure means for the attainment of soul-salvation. We saw that such a remembrance of God makes God-attainment certain to him, who so remembers God, and that, since it is not possible for most people to know beforehand the exact hour of their death, it becomes obligatory on the part of every person, who does not want to miss to utilise such a sure means for the attainment of salvation, to practise the *anu-smarana* or continued remembrance of God at all times and in all conditions. We further saw that this obligation of the ever-living *anu-smarana* of God does not absolve us from the equally, if not more, imperious obligation of every person among us having to do dutifully whatever happens to be his or

her work in life from time to time. How, along with the duty of doing well our allotted work in life, we are to carry out the other duty of the constant meditation of God, and what the result of such meditation is, are both pointed out in the stanza, with which we have to begin our lesson to-day. And that stanza is this :—

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥ ॥ ८ ॥

8. Thinking of the Supreme Divine Person continuously with a mind, which is characterised by the practice of repetition and does not move towards anything else, (one) attains (that same Person), O Arjuna.

Please note that the continued remembrance of God and the continuous thought of God are both meant to convey the same idea as the steady and sustained meditation of God, and that we have, therefore, to look upon *anu-smaraṇa*, *anu-chintana* and *dhyāna* as synonymous terms in Sanskrit. Please note also that I have translated the expression *abhyāsa-yoga*, occurring in this stanza, as the practice of repetition, understanding *abhyāsa* to denote repetition and *yoga* to denote practice. Indeed, the meaning of meditation is nothing other than to practise mentally the steady repetition of an idea or notion, so that, at the time, the mind is not at all allowed to be cognisant of any other idea or notion.

In Sanskrit literature, it is not uncommon to find *dhyāna* or meditation explained as a continuous stream of one and the same idea maintained within the field of the cognisance of consciousness; and this stream of the single idea is often compared to the unbroken stream of oil that may be observed when it is poured down from vessel to vessel. The first point of importance to be noted here in the comparison is that the oil in the stream is not broken into drops, in the manner, in which water, for instance, in a similar stream is apt to be broken; and the unbroken continuity of the flow of the single idea or notion is evidently illustrated thereby. There is another equally important point in the comparison which is also noteworthy; and that is, throughout the whole course of the liquid-flow, the stream consists of the self-same

oil and is not mixed up so as to alternate with any other liquid substance—such as honey or treacle—which is, quite as well as oil, capable of flowing in an unbroken stream. It is clear that this point goes to illustrate the continued identity or the steadily maintained self-same character of the notion, the flow whereof within the mind constitutes meditation. Accordingly, the meditating mind has, as I have already indicated, to be characterised by the practice of the mental repetition of the idea or notion, which forms the content of its meditation, and has at the same time to withdraw itself completely from all conscious contact with any other idea or notion.

He, whose mind is engaged in the practice of the mental repetition of the concept of the Supreme Divine Person so as not to be able to move towards anything else, that is, so as not to be cognisant at the time of any other idea or notion,—such a man, we are told here, attains that same Supreme Divine Person. To be devoted to God always is obviously to fix the heart upon God in the manner described here; and, in carrying out well the duty of doing thoroughly whatever our hand finds from time to time to do, we are bound not to forget or ignore the equally obligatory duty of fixing our heart upon God, inasmuch as by that kind of conduct alone we can make sure of securing unfailingly the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. Thus alone does death itself lose all its terrors and become truly helpful to the man of duty. This and also the nature of the notion of God, for the mind to meditate upon, are set forth in the following two stanzas, which we shall now proceed to study.

कविं पुराणमनुशासितारमणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः।
सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूपमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ ॥ ९ ॥

प्रयाणकाले मनसाऽचलेन भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव
भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ १० ॥

9—10. Whoever, being possessed of loving devotion (to God) and also of the power of (strong) mental concentration, and having fixed well (his) vital principle of life (in the space) between the two eye-brows meditates with an unshaking mind, at the time of

departure (from life), upon the all-knowing ancient Ruler, the Upholder of all (things), who is smaller than the smallest and is of unthinkable form, has the lustre of the sun and is (quite) beyond (all) darkness,—he attains that (same) Supreme Divine Person.

The first thing we have to take note of in these two stanzas is what may be taken to be the given psychological composition of the conception of the Supreme Divine Person. In other words, it is the description of the various component ideas, which are to be contained in that notion of God on which we have to fix our attention in meditation, that has to be first taken into consideration by us here. Many of you have probably observed already that the Supreme Divine Person, as described in these stanzas, has eight characteristic attributes mentioned in relation to Him.

To start with, He is said to be all-knowing. The Sanskrit word used in this context to denote His omniscience is *kavi*. This word has come to mean a poet invariably in the later classical Sanskrit; but in its earlier Vedic usage it generally imports a wise and knowing seer. As mentioning an attribute of the Supreme Divine Person, it has obviously to be understood in this latter sense; and when the wise and knowing seer happens to be no other than the Supreme Divine Person, it follows as a matter of course that His wisdom and knowledge and vision have all to be omniscient, as otherwise He cannot be the Supreme Divine Person that He is. Indeed the *Upanishads* declare Him to be *sarvajña*—all-knowing. The second attribute mentioned in relation to Him is that He is *purāṇa*—ancient. Evidently the idea intended to be conveyed by this epithet is that He is more ancient than the most ancient thing imaginable. This idea is sometimes expressed in another manner by saying that God has been in existence from before the beginning of time. To me it amounts to saying that He is the self-born, uncreated, ever-existent Being—the *Sat* of the *Vedānta*.

The next three attributes may well be taken together for consideration: and they are that He is the Ruler and the Upholder of all things and is smaller than the smallest. The statement that He is the Ruler means evidently that He is the

controller of all things in the universe, that every thing that lives and moves and has its being in the universe is completely subject to His guidance and control. In addition to this He is the Upholder of all things: and to be the Upholder of all things means quite distinctly something more than what is implied in His being the Ruler of all things. Indeed all things in the universe are what they are and where they are because He, as the Upholder of all things, has willed and ordained that they should be so; and we have further to see that, since He is such an Upholder, their very creation and continued existence are due to Him entirely.

Since He has to be understood to be in this way the Ruler and Upholder of all things in the universe, we are naturally led to the conclusion that He must be greater than whatever may happen to be the greatest thing of power and glory in the universe—why, even greater than the great universe itself. While he has thus to be greater than the greatest, we are, nevertheless, told here that He is smaller than the smallest. In one of our well-known *Upanishads*, He is actually described as *aṇoraṇiyān mahato mahiyān*, that is, as smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest. We may easily enough make out that the meaning of His being greater than the greatest is nothing short of saying that He is, in His own nature, infinite, absolute and transcendental. But what meaning are we to derive from the statement that He is smaller than the smallest? We have already learnt that, according to Śrī Kṛishṇa, the God, who transcends the universe, is also the God, who pervades it, since both transcendence and immanence are among His essential characteristics in relation to the universe. When God is omnipenetrative and pervades everything in the universe—the most minute thing not excepted—then, He must be smaller than the smallest.

The combination in God of these antithetical attributes of transcendence and immanence is undoubtedly one of the greatest mysteries of philosophic thought; and this mystery alone is enough to enable us to make out how impossible it is for the ordinary human mind to see God as He is in His own essential nature. Very often it is said that there can be no satisfactory definition of God, which does not end in an endeavour to synthesise more than one set of contradictory attributes as forming His necessary characteristics; and, if satisfactory definitions of God are apt to be inconceivable combinations

of contradictory characteristics, it is no wonder that one of our *Upanishads* tells us that to keep silent is the best way of defining God. In this connection I may bring to your notice another *Upanishadic* view regarding the difficulty of defining God—a view which maintains that God becomes known to us not so much by our knowing what He is, as by knowing what He is not. Accordingly, the sixth attribute of God mentioned in the stanzas now under consideration says that He is of unthinkable form, that is, of inconceivable nature.

The seventh attribute of God, as given here, is that He has the lustre of the sun. To conceive God as light is seen to be a fairly common thing in more than one religion. This may well be due to the purity and power of light. When the inconceivable God has to be conceived, we can do so only by a process of comparison. Much of our progress in thought and knowledge consists in a successful endeavour to read the unknown in terms of the known; and there is therefore nothing strange in some of the holiest of human minds having conceived God as light. That God has the lustre of the sun may very rightly be interpreted to mean that He is, like the sun, a self-luminous centre of power and glory. A well-known *Upanishadic* passage says, as some of you may know, *tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvam tasya bhāsā sarvamidam vibhāti*, that is, that every thing here shines in sole association with Him, who is shining of Himself, and that through His light the whole of this universe is distinctly luminous. We have further to understand, from this comparison of God with the sun, that, even as the sun is the dispeller of darkness, God is the dispeller of all ignorance and the destroyer of all sin.

As if to make this point clear, we have the eighth, which is the last characteristic attribute of God mentioned here—the attribute that He is quite beyond all darkness. Just as light appropriately symbolises purity, power and perfection, even so darkness symbolises ignorance and sin with equal appropriateness. It is, I believe, fully self-evident that, as long as God is God, He must be entirely free from all ignorance and sin. I may say in passing that the Sanskrit word *tamas*, which I have translated as 'darkness', has been understood by some commentators to mean in this context the same thing as *prakṛiti*; and the statement, that God is quite beyond *tamas*,

conveys, according to them, the idea that He is altogether supernatural.

Such are the elements, which go to make up the conception of the Supreme Divine Person as described here. Regarding this description of God, it has to be noted that the ideas contained in it are all evidently derived from *Upanishadic* sources, and that the description itself has to be looked upon as being an embodiment of a philosophic endeavour to present to our consciousness as good a view of God as is possible with the aid of human language I am sure it cannot fail to strike you that this picture of God is, in its nature as well as aim, different from those other pictures, which are embodied in many of the *dhyānaślokas* or 'meditation-stanzas' that are utilised as a help to meditation and mental concentration in the practice of *yoga*.

It has been said by certain students of the psychology of *yoga* that, in the practice of *yoga*, the *siddhi* is always in close accordance with the *bhāvanā*. This means clearly that the object of yogic realisation has invariably to accord with the picture of the conception on which the mind of the *yogin* is concentrated. As a matter of fact, a *Vedāntic* school of thought maintains that in yogic realisation there is nothing more than mere *bhāvanā-prakarsha*, that is, nothing more than such an enhancement of the force of the process of mental conception, as will make the concepts contained in the mind become internally converted into corresponding percepts. Even we, common people, are not altogether unfamiliar with the internal conversion of concepts into percepts in the mind—with what is commonly called the process of the actualisation of the idea.

Without any conscious effort on our part, such a thing takes place in a more or less incongruous manner in all our dreams and mental hallucinations. When you see, for instance, an elephant in a dream, it is your idea of the elephant that is, for the time being, actualised for you in your mind. It may be that, in your dream-picture, you see a normal elephant; or it may be that what you see is an abnormal elephant—an elephant, say, with two trunks or with a curved horn on the head. It goes without saying that in the

outer objective world there are generally no elephants with either of these abnormalities or with any other kind of notable abnormality whatsoever. The abnormality of the dream-picture is due to the incongruity in the synthesis of the concepts converted into percepts within the mind itself. In any case it is clear that all our dream-pictures arise out of the inner perceptualisation of previously acquired concepts. In dreams, the conversion of the concepts into corresponding percepts takes place, as you know, without any conscious effort on our part.

But, in relation to *yogic* meditation, it is the conscious effort of mental concentration on the part of the *yogin* that really causes the inner perceptualisation of the concepts forming the object of his meditation. Thus, according as the *yogin* happens to be a *Saiva* or a *Vaishṇava* in his faith, the God of his *yogic* realisation will be Śiva or Vishṇu. This kind of realisation is not only intelligible scientifically, but may also be seen to be abundantly recorded in the vast *purāṇic* literature of Hindu India. Nevertheless, most impartial students of the Yoga philosophy will admit that its aim is something higher than the attainment of this sort of *bhāvanā-prakarsha*: it is in fact nothing less than the attainment of self-realisation and then of true God-realisation—nothing less than the revelation of the self to the self and also the revelation of God, as He is immanent in the self, to the self. The introspective vision of the *yogin*, when he is in the full swoon of self-conscious *samādhi*, is considered to be such a unique and powerful instrument of new knowledge, as, happening to work in that peculiar state of the mind, wherein the distinction between the subjective world and the objective world is wholly obliterated, proves to be a revealer of extraordinary truth and reality.

The experiences of what may be called bifurcated consciousness—that is, of the consciousness which is cognisant of the distinction between subject and object—must necessarily be different in nature from the experiences of what is a self-integrated and absolutely unified consciousness, to which the thinking subject and thought of object have both become one and the same. We cannot therefore rightly argue here from the former set of experiences to the latter; and the

successful yogin's attainment of self-realisation and God-realisation has to be accordingly understood by us to be quite unique and extraordinary. It must be truly a new revelation—a certain something which is inspiring and informing and is positively other than the mere internal actualisation of the idea already entertained in the mind. Evidently the mystic and ecstatic vision of all the famous God-men and seers and prophets known to the great religions of mankind is in its nature akin to this unique and extraordinary vision of the fully successful yogin.

Deep and comprehensive philosophic speculation is competent, as you have most probably made out for yourselves, to convince us of the reality of God and to give us also some knowledge of God—a knowledge, which, though true as far as it goes, is nevertheless apt naturally to be imperfect and incomplete. The uniquely informing introspective vision of the yogin is also capable of enabling him to obtain a true knowledge of God, the scope and character of the yogin's God-knowledge being in all probability different from the scope and character of the knowledge of God acquired by the speculative philosopher. The description of God, as given here, is possibly based on both these recognised sources of God-knowledge; and we, workers in the world, have always to fix our heart upon God so understood and so conceived, if we really do not want to miss what indeed happens to be an excellent opportunity for securing certainly the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment.

To be able to fix the heart upon God as required here, it is necessary that the aspirant after salvation—who alone will endeavour duly to fix his heart always upon God—should be a person full of loving devotion to God and well possessed of the power of strong mental concentration. If he is not full of loving devotion to God, he cannot have the inclination to fix his heart upon God and make him the object of his steady meditation. You know that it is in the very nature of man to be attached to what he loves: surely, no one will ever try to fix his heart upon what he does not love. Although the inclination to fix the heart upon God is really dependent upon the aspirant's love and devotion to God, he cannot give practical effect to that inclination, unless he is able to command the aid of a strong and well-trained will.

That is why we are told here that, in addition to *bhakti* which means loving devotion to God, the aspirant should be in possession of *yoga-bala* also. The expression, *yoga-bala*, means the power that is produced in one's mind by *yoga*, that is, by the practice of meditation and mental concentration; and the power, which appears to be kept in view here, is obviously the power of directing and fixing and concentrating the attention. The direction of the attention, its fixation and concentration—all these three things require the co-operation of a strong and steady will, if they are to be carried out well at all. Moreover, it has to be noted here that what the aspirant is called upon to do is to fix his heart always upon God and be engaged at the same time quite actively in the performance of all his duties well in life. Thus a double direction has to be given to his attention, and it has to be fixed and concentrated on two things simultaneously.

A mental endeavour of this kind is, of course, uncommon, but it need not therefore be pronounced to be impossible. That human attention has ultimately to be one-pointed is undoubtedly true; but this ultimate one-pointedness of attention does not contradict the possibility of concurrent attention. I believe it has been pointed out to you already that, in the feats of extraordinary memory and attention known as *ashṭāvadhāna* and *śatāvadhāna*, we have really the play of concurrent attention. I remember having seen in my younger days a *sādhu* from Hindustan, who was, all the time that he was awake, pronouncing audibly the name of Rāma, his God, and was also doing his work well from hour to hour, whether that work was the cleaning of his room, or the washing of his clothes, or the cooking of his meals, or the counting of his coins, or any other such thing. I have also observed a young man whistling to himself in a quite faultless manner a musical tune, while engaged in the silent study of a piece of English poetry. Instances like these must have come more or less numerously within the range of your observation as well. Accordingly, there can be no doubt at all as to the possibility of concurrent attention; and it is the practice of such attention, to which the aspirant has to get himself accustomed, so that he may have his heart always fixed upon God, whatever may be the work in the performance of which he is from time to time actively engaged.

In the case of the *sādhu* as well as the student of English poetry, both of whom I just mentioned as instances to illustrate the possibility of there being a double line of concurrent attention in the human mind, it must be easy enough for you to see that the maintenance of the attention along one of the two lines has, through practice, become almost automatic. The attention directed to the continued utterance of the name of his divine Rāma was evidently largely automatic in the working of the mind of the *sādhu* ; and our whistling student of English poetry also must have done his whistling work more or less automatically. Similarly, in the case of the aspirant, who, not wishing to miss the excellent opportunity, which death-bed devotion to God gives for the attainment of salvation, endeavours to have his heart always fixed upon God and is simultaneously engaged in the active and energetic performance of all his duties in life,—in the case of such an aspirant, the study and abiding fixation of his heart upon God should be made to become, through incessant practice, almost entirely natural and automatic.

It is probably with a view to enable him to acquire this needed power of automatic attention in relation to the constant fixation of his heart upon God, that he is asked here to have his vital principle of life fixed well in the space between the two eyebrows. Please note that it is the word *prāṇa* which has been translated as the vital principle of life. This word generally means the breath of life or often life itself. But in this context it cannot correctly have either of these meanings. The signifying power of the word and its required value in the context,—both these seem to be satisfied by its translation as 'the vital principle of life'. I believe you can all easily see that this expression has to denote here mainly the thought-energy, which forms, as it were, the very life of the brain as the organ of the mind. The space between the two eyebrows corresponds in position to the central region of the lower part of the frontal lobes of the cerebrum ; it is also the meeting place of certain important cerebral veins inside the skull. Hindu physicians, who practise, according to their ancient medical lore, the art of curing madness and other mental maladies, are known to attach some special importance in their treatment of those maladies to the space between the two eye-brows, looking upon that space as being somehow related closely to the vigour as well as the sanity of thought in the mind.

Voluntarily to endeavour to concentrate thought-energy in that part of the cerebrum, which is, in respect of its position, close to the space between the two eye-brows, means evidently the same thing as utilising the will-power to stimulate vigorous mental activity in the form of thought or attention, or meditation, or memory, as the case may be. And we are told that, when, with such concentration of thought-energy, the aspirant goes on steadily meditating upon God, that is, continuously thinking of God, as he has been described here, then in no very long time will he certainly acquire the power of automatic attention in relation to God-meditation.

You may remember that, in connection with the practice of *yoga*, so as to attain the illuminating and uniquely informing trance of *samādhi*, we were told in a stanza of one of the previous chapters (VI. *13*) that the aspirant should, while engaged in the practice of that yoga, keep steadily looking at the tip of his own nose. This, we saw, was a practical hint of value to help on the attainment of *samādhi* by the earnest aspirant engaged in the practice of the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration. In the same way, the instruction, which is given here to the effect that the vital principle of life should be fixed well in the space between the two eyebrows, contains a useful practical hint to help on all those, whose endeavour is to have their heart always devoted to God, even though they are constantly engaged in the active discharge of all their duties in life.

After a person acquires, through steady and appropriate practice, the power to have his heart always fixed upon God quite spontaneously, as it were, it does not matter when death comes to him, or what he happens to be engaged in at the time of his death and departure from earthly life; under all circumstances he is certain to command unfailingly all the benefit that may well accrue to him from death-bed devotion to God and certain thereby to attain assuredly the Supreme Divine Person as his final refuge and everlasting home of bliss.

Let us now proceed to study the next stanza:

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये॥ ॥ ११॥

11. (That) which the knowers of *Vedas* speak of as the Indestructible; (that) which the ascetic sages, who are devoid of passion, enter; (that) wishing (to know) which (they) live the life of celibate studentship—that goal of attainment I shall declare to you in brief.

It has been just pointed out that the goal to be attained with the aid of what we have called death-bed devotion to God by all those, who aspire to secure the salvation of soul-emancipation, is the Supreme Divine Person Himself. Those who know the *Vedas* are persons possessing a full and accurate knowledge of the most authoritative works among the sacred scriptures of the Hindus; and they speak of this divine goal of the the soul's attainment as the Indestructible. It must be easy to see that whatever is indestructible must be immutable and therefore immortal. Consequently one and the same thing happens to be denoted by immortality, immutability and indestructibility; and this thing is, as we have learnt, predicable in relation to the individual soul also. It has, however, to be borne in mind that the individual soul is generally apt to become incarnated in matter under the compulsion of *karma*; and the intimacy as well as the inevitability of its contact with matter is such as makes it possible for us to predicate without deep discernment both mutability and mortality, which, as we know, are noteworthy characteristics of matter. We know that God also becomes incarnated in matter; and you do not require to be told here again that, in regard to His incarnation, there is no compulsion of *karma* and no inevitability. We cannot therefore even indirectly attribute the mutability and mortality of matter to God; and He is in consequence pre-eminently the Indestructible Being. It is this very same divine goal of the soul's attainment, which the ascetic sages, who are devoid of passion, enter; that is, it is this same God, whom dispassionate yogins realise in their yogic trance. Again, it is to know this same God, who is the goal of the soul's attainment, that earnest students live their life of celibacy, self-restraint and devoted discipleship, either as learners of the *Vedas* or as strivers after the attainment of *samādhi* in the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration.

The Supreme Divine Person, who, while being the goal of the soul's attainment, is also thus the object of scriptural

revelation as well as of *yogic* realisation, has been described in the two previous stanzas in such a highly philosophical manner as makes it hard for us to get a fully integrated and handy notion, so to say, of Him to fix our heart upon in the practice of continued meditation and mental concentration. As a help to enable the aspirant to get over this difficulty, this goal of the soul's attainment is, as may be seen in the next two stanzas, comprehensively and yet in brief designated by a single, simple, monosyllabic verbal symbol, which has very naturally acquired much sacredness and great religious value in the literature bearing upon Hinduism and its rituals and formulas of worship.

I have heard logicians say that naming is defining. They also know that there are cases of naming, which, in no way, approach defining. The indefinable God cannot be defined by a name. But even He may, with the aid of a suitable name with which as many as possible of His essential characteristics get to be associated, be made to become a convenient object of thought and meditation. To secure this convenience in relation to the Supreme Divine Person, who is the goal of the soul's attainment, is distinctly a matter of great importance as well as advantage to all aspirants after soul-salvation. Accordingly, we are told—

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुद्ध्य च।
मूर्ध्न्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥ ॥ १२ ॥

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन् मामनुस्मरन्।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन् देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ ॥ १३ ॥

12 & 13. Whoever, controlling all (his) door-ways (of knowledge), confining (his) mind inside the heart, and fixing his own vital principle of life within the head, engages (himself) in yogic concentration, and gives up the body and departs (from life), uttering (to himself) the monosyllable *Om*, which is (denotative of) the *Brahman*, and (thus) remembering Me continuously,—he reaches the supreme goal.

In the stanzas I have just read and translated, we are not only given the promised declaration in brief—the declaration

by means of a single, simple, symbolic designation—of the Supreme Divine Person, who forms the goal of the soul's attainment, but are also told of the use, to which that symbolic designation is to be put, as well as of the end, which is to be gained thereby. The monosyllabic *Om* is the brief verbal symbol that is denotative of the *Brahman*, who is, as you know, the Supreme Being of the *Vedānta*. I believe I ought to tell you that the word *Brahman* has been understood by some in this context in the sense of the *Vedas*, so as to make the monosyllabic symbol *Om* denote these scriptural works of the Hindus. It is not merely a possible interpretation, but is even a permissible one. Nevertheless, so long as the *Vedas* in themselves do not constitute the goal of the soul's attainment, this interpretation cannot be well allowed in this context. In fact we have no alternative here but to understand by the monosyllabic *Om*, the Supreme Being of the *Vedānta*—that Supreme Divine Person, who forms the goal of the soul's attainment.

This monosyllabic symbol is generally called by the name of *praṇava* in Sanskrit and is put to more than one kind of use in connection with the rites and formulas relating to Hinduism in its practical aspect. Its chief use, as we are taught in these stanzas, is to be made to serve as an aid to the *anusmaraṇa* or continued remembrance of God by all such persons as are desirous of securing the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment by means of an unceasing and ever vigilant devotion to God—a devotion which does not cease and is vigilantly exercised even at the moment of death. As an aid for the attainment of this object, the *praṇava* should be constantly uttered to himself by the earnest aspirant all the time that he is engaged in the meditation or continued remembrance of the God-idea.

It must be evident to all of you that the art of meditation is not at all easily learnt; the learning of that art requires steady and careful practice quite as much as the learning of any other art. As a preliminary to the attainment of success in the practice of meditation, the previous practice of the yogic concentration of attention is evidently considered to be necessary; and this yogic concentration of attention requires, as we are told here, that all the door-ways of knowledge should be kept under complete control, that

the mind should be confined within the heart, and that the aspirant's vital principle of life should be fixed within the head.

I believe I need not tell you that the door-ways of knowledge are the senses, as it is through them that all of us acquire our knowledge of the outside world and all its varied contents. To keep these door-ways under control is to be able to close them well at will so as to overcome the commonly current mastery of the senses over the mind by preventing the inflow of all perceptive stimulations from outside. While this is being done, it is quite possible for the mind itself to endeavour to go out. The disturbance coming into the mind from the outside world through the senses can indeed be not more harmful to the attainment of success in the practice of the yogic concentration of attention than the endeavour of the mind itself to go out into the external world. Therefore this also has to be guarded against and prevented ; and that is why the aspirant is asked here to keep his mind confined inside the heart. The third requirement, which is to be fulfilled by him, is that he should have his vital principle of life fixed within the head. We have already seen that, by the expression, 'vital principle of life', we have to understand the thought-energy, which forms, as it were, the very life of the brain as the organ of the mind. The fixation of this vital principle within the head is clearly indicative of a positive effort in favour of mental concentration.

To a person, whose mind is thus prepared and disciplined, and who duly takes advantage of the use of the *praṇava*, it surely cannot be hard to go on continuously meditating upon God always with unceasing vigilance, so that his devotion to God may be quite alive and strong even at the time of his death and departure from this world. Such a person, so meditating upon God, reaches the supreme goal assuredly; and this supreme goal is, as you know, the Supreme Divine Person Himself. Accordingly, the end, which is to be gained by the proper use of the *praṇava*, as an aid to meditation, is nothing less than the supreme purpose of human life ; it is in fact the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. This being so, I have no doubt that you will all esteem highly the monosyllabic divine symbol *Oṁ* and its great religious use

is a means that makes God-attainment easy to the earnest aspirant. How the *praṇava* makes God-attainment easy to the earnest aspirant, we may well learn from the next stanza; and let us now turn our attention to it.

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः॥ ॥ १४ ॥

14. I am easy of attainment, O Arjuna, to that ever-devoted devotee, whose mind is not in anything else, and who continuously remembers Me at all times.

The ever-devoted devotee is evidently the person, who continuously remembers God at all times, and whose mind is not in anything other than God. We have already learnt that to remember God continuously is the same thing as to meditate steadily upon God; and to be ever-devoted to God is not only to meditate steadily upon God always, but also to take care to see that the mind has at no time any other object of devotion than God. Knowing, as we do, the divine significance of the *praṇava* and its great helpfulness in the practice of meditation, we cannot fail to grasp how it is capable of making a devotee become ever-devoted thus to God. It is in fact in this way that the *praṇava* makes God-attainment easy to the earnest aspirant, inasmuch as God is, as we are told here, easy of attainment to the ever-devoted devotee. What the special value of God-attainment is to such a devotee is brought out in the next stanza.

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम्।
नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः॥ ॥ १५ ॥

15. Great souls, who, having come to Me, have attained the supreme consummation (of beatitude),—(they) do not obtain (again) the unenduring (life of) re-birth, which is the abode of misery.

It is at once clear from this stanza that God-attainment means the same thing as the attainment of the supreme consummation of beatitude. There is nothing strange in the idea that only great souls are capable of attaining this supreme

consummation of beatitude. We may, if you prefer it, put it in another way and say that those souls, that have attained the supreme consummation of beatitude, are really great, seeing that their great achievement in winning their salvation is itself a positive proof of their greatness. Another point, which we have particularly to note here, is the contrast between the soul's life of God-attainment and its life of recurring re-births. The latter of these is explicitly declared to be unenduring and to be the abode of misery ; and you can easily see that it is distinctly implied that the former life, which is the life of God-attainment, is the everlasting life of bliss.

To be able to understand this contrast well, it has to be borne in mind that the attainment of the supreme consummation of beatitude becomes possible to embodied souls, only after they have, through undergoing complete disembodiment, come to realise their own intrinsic nature and innate potentialities and are absolutely free from the limitations, which matter is known to be capable of imposing upon them. When disembodied souls achieve their self-realisation, they will, as you are probably aware, know themselves as being *sat*, *chit* and *ānanda*, that is, as being 'existence', 'consciousness' and 'bliss', in their own essential and intrinsic nature. You may remember our having learnt already that, according to the teachings of the *Vedānta*, God also is *sat*, *chit* and *ānanda*, and that, in consequence, everlasting reality, omniscient consciousness and infinite bliss constitute His most essential characteristics.

To distinguish God from Nature and from all the mutable material things which go to make up Nature, they generally say in English that God is a spirit. By this statement they give expression not only to His immateriality, immutability and everlasting reality, but also to the idea that He is, in essence, what we may call pure, self-luminous and all-knowing consciousness. We may therefore gather that the statement, that God is a spirit, means very much the same thing as saying that He is *sat*, *chit* and *ānanda*. Moreover, it is worthy of note that they further say in English that the soul also is a spirit, thereby making it distinctly a partaker of God-nature. And we hold, as you know, that the soul also is *sat*, *chit* and *ānanda*.

These remarks have probably made it evident to you already that the emancipated soul's life of God-attainment has necessarily to be an everlasting life of bliss. The essential nature of God and the essential nature of the soul—both these require the soul's life of God-attainment to be eternally enduring and infinitely blissful. It is equally obvious that the bound soul's mundane life of recurring re-births can neither be enduring nor intrinsically blissful. Since in this life, the soul is in intimate association with a material embodiment, the mutability and mortality of matter are apt so to affect it as to make it undergo birth after death and death after birth in endless succession. The contact of the soul with matter—that contact which is due to its being embodied in matter—causes the soul, as we have been told already, to come into relation with the external world, thereby making it prone to experience the pains and pleasures of the senses. We may confidently say that there is no sensible man, who does not know that these pains and pleasures are all impermanent and fleeting, and that the life, which is based on them, is certain to culminate in misery and bitter disappointment. It has to be further noted that, like the bushel, which covers up the light of a lamp and prevents it from removing darkness and spreading out illumination, the material embodiment of the soul covers up its inner light and prevents it from cognising its own innate joy. Thus, both positively and negatively the material embodiment of the soul makes its embodied life invariably a life of misery, of sorrow and suffering and disappointment.

Accordingly, it is quite easily made out that the life of re-birth is unenduring, and is the abode of misery. Such a pronounced contrariety as is seen to exist between the soul's life of God attainment and its life of recurring re-births makes it impossible for both these kinds of life to co-exist in relation to the same soul. Therefore, as soon as a soul is enabled to live the life of God-attainment, it ceases to have any connection whatever with the life of recurring re-births; and the natural eternality of the life of God-attainment prevents the great souls, that have thereby secured the supreme consummation of beatitude, from obtaining again the unenduring life of re-birth.

Although it is in contrast with the life of God-attainment that the unenduring life of re-birth is here declared to be

an abode of misery, still unsympathetic critics of Hindu thought may, as they do sometimes, utilise this statement in their endeavour to demonstrate that Hindu religion and philosophy are so dolorously pessimistic as not only to take away all guste from human life but also to declare it to be altogether unworthy to live. Such is not Śri-Krishṇa's idea at all. He distinctly holds that life is worth living. To make it worth living, its object must be, according to Him, high and noble. Life should be looked upon as a field wherein we have to learn the discipline of unselfishness and the duty of service.

It is not easy to learn these lessons; we have many chances to fight against, many temptations to overcome. In a field of battle where there are no enemies, no man can become a hero. If life had not its trials and temptations, and if it had not been associated with sorrow and suffering, its value, as a field, wherein the discipline of unselfishness and the duty of service are to be learnt, would naturally vanish. It may therefore be said that it is these sorrows and sufferings in life, which, by giving scope for service and sacrifice, make life really worth living. In such teaching there is really no pessimism. And since we have seen that the self-realization of the soul amounts to the same thing as its God-attainment, it cannot be hard to see that tho e who have rea ised the God within themselves are great souls who have won the supreme attainment.

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।
मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥ ॥ १६ ॥

6. All the worlds, beginning from the world of Brahmā, are such as give rise to re-birth, O Arjuna. After attaining Me, however, O Arjuna, there is no re-birth.

In our *Vedic* literature the universe is conceived as being divided into three worlds, the *bhūloka*, the *bhuvarloka* and *suvarloka*, being the earth-world, the mid-world and the heaven-world. In the *Purāṇas*, the worlds become increased into seven upper worlds and seven nether worlds. Of these fourteen the highest is the world of Brahmā which is mentioned here in this stanza. The division of the universe into a

series of worlds is known to Buddhistic and Jaina literatures also. There is of course the idea of 'higher' and 'lower' associated with these worlds in respect of their spatial relation, but there is also something more which we have to know about them.

We have already been told that there are two different ethical ideas taken into consideration in the *Bhagavadgītā*. One of these is the common ideal in which self is not abnegated but selfishness is made to counteract selfishness. The other ideal is that of disinterested duty, an ideal of absolute unselfishness. Life lived according to the former ideal gives rise to *karma* in the form of *puṇya* and *pāpa*, while the absolutely unselfish life of disinterested duty gives rise to no such *karma* at all. Although this latter ideal is declared to be decidedly the higher ideal, still the former ideal is also recognised as one which is widely prevalent in life, when life is lived well according to what we may call the ideal of interested ethics in contrast with the ideal of disinterested duty. *Puṇya* accrues to the individual who lives such a life. When, however, this same life is lived ill or indifferently, it gives rise to *karma* in the form of *pāpa*, and the greater the *puṇya* and the less the *pāpa* in the composition of the *karma* of one's life, the higher is the world to which he is destined, and the more ethereal are the pleasures and joys of his world of attainment.

From this it is clear that all these worlds are worlds fitted for the enjoyment of the fruit of *karma*, and the rule, *kshīṇe puṇye martyalokam visanti*, that, when the *puṇya* is exhausted, the souls enter the common world of human mortality, happens to be operative in relation to all of them. The other ethical ideal of absolute unselfishness and disinterested duty aims at the attainment of *mokṣha* through self-realisation and God-realisation. Owing to the utter selflessness of the worker which is demanded by this ideal, work produces no taint of *karma* in his case. The *Upanishadic* teaching, *na karma lipyate nare*, that *karma* in itself does not cling to man, holds good in his case. His life is on a plane which is wholly above that wherein *puṇya* and *pāpa* are apt to be produced. The longer he lives this life of non-attachment and disinterested duty, the greater becomes his fitness to attain self-realisation and God-realisation.

You know, as a matter of fact, that to realise God means not only to know God, but also to attain God. In fact, God-realisation and God-attainment are synonymous. Thus the life of disinterested duty leads the aspirant to God-attainment, and God-attainment means the same thing as the attainment of the everlasting life; and the everlasting life is no other than that which is free from all tendency to re-birth. It is life which is unpolluted by contact with matter. It is therefore wholly spiritual and divine. From these remarks, it must have become clear to you how, after attaining God, there is no re-birth, and how, to the soul who has attained God, there is no reincarnation.

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।
रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥ ॥ १७ ॥

अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयस्सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।
राज्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥ ॥ १८ ॥

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।
राज्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥ ॥ १९ ॥

17. Those persons who know the nature of the day and the night understand that a period ending with a thousand *yugas* forms the day of Brahmā, and that (his) night is (also) a period ending with a thousand *yugas*.

18. On the approach of the day (of Brahmā) all the manifest things (in the universe) arise out of the non-manifest. On the approach of the night (of Brahmā), they become absorbed in that same thing which is designated the non-manifest.

19. This same collection of produced beings is, O Arjuna, after having been born again and again, absorbed inevitably (into the non-manifest) on the approach of the night (of Brahmā). On the approach of the day (of Brahmā), it arises into being.

You know that Brahmā is conceived to be the creator of the universe. His work of creation is described here to be cyclic in character, that is, to be made up of a period of evolution followed by a period of involution, which again is followed by a period of evolution followed by a period of involution, and so on. It is thus an unending sucession of periods of evolution and involution coming one after another, an endless chain, if you like, of successive periods of evolution and involution. Modern science also is an upholder of such a theory of evolution and involution as is propounded in our Sāṅkhya system of philosophy. Evolution is understood by modern science to be the production of the heterogeneous out of the homogeneous, while involution is conceived to be the production of the homogeneous out of the heterogeneous; in other words, evolution is the production of the gross material things out of the fine primordial matter, and involution is the reconversion of the gross material things into the fine primordial matter. This primordial matter is spoken of as *mūla-prakṛiti* by the Sāṅkhyas; and it is here mentioned as the non-manifest. The production of the manifest out of the non-manifest is the same thing as the production of the heterogeneous out of the homogeneous; and the production of the homogeneous out of the heterogeneous is the same thing as the absorption of the manifest into the non-manifest.

Thus, the agreement between modern science and the teaching given here is very close; only modern science does not hold that evolution and involution go on for specific periods of time in succession. That there are periods which are purely those of evolution and periods again which are purely those of involution in the universe is the peculiarity of the teaching given here. This conception seems to be due to the *Purāṇic* theory of creation. Brahmā, the creator, does his work of creation during what happens to be his day-time, and goes to sleep, as it were, during his night-time. Brahmā's day-time thus becomes the period of evolution, and his night-time the period of involution in the universe, which is his handiwork.

Indian astronomy and the *Purāṇas* have together given us an idea of the duration of the day-time as well as of the night-time of Brahmā in the measure of our human years. What is

mentioned here as *yuga* really denotes a *mahāyuga*, which latter is made up of all the four *yugas*, *Kṛita*, *Tretā*, *Dvāpara* and *Kali*. By a well-known course of calculation, it has been established that *4,320,000* of our human years make up this *mahāyuga*. One thousand of these *mahāyugas* is called a *kalpa*; and this measures the day-time as well as the night-time of Brahmā. Although creation, as viewed here, is both beginningless and endless, still the *Purānas* give Brahmā only *100* years of life, made up, of course, of his own days and nights. They, however, get over the difficulty of limitation due to this view by postulating an endless series of Brahmās, who hold office, one after another, each having his turn to finish his life work of creation. Thus also creation may be seen to be beginningless and endless; and evolution and involution may go on, one after the other, time after time, unendingly, for ever.

This beginningless and endless process of creation—is it wholly the result of the potential power possessed by the non-manifest *mūlaprakṛiti*? In other words, is this process of creation entirely self-contained, or is it stimulated and guided and controlled by some outside agency? Such a doubt is naturally apt to arise, because primordial matter, being matter, has to be by nature unconscious and inert. Will-power is at the basis of all activity in the universe. Therefore, the conception, that the beginningless and endless process of creation is self-operative and self-contained, is unsatisfactory. Evidently, it is from such a point of view, that we have to study the teaching given in the next two stanzas. I shall proceed to read and translate them.

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्यो व्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः।
यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥ ॥ २० ॥

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम्।
यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ ॥ २१ ॥

20. There is, however, another non-manifest entity, higher than this non-manifest—(an entity) which is eternal and is not destroyed (even) when all born beings are destroyed.

21. (This) non-manifest which is said to be indestructible.—this, they say, is the supreme goal, after attaining which (souls) do not return. That is My own Supreme Light.

It must be clear to you that these stanzas deal with a power that is superior to the *mūlaprakṛiti*, which is, as you know the evolving and involving fine primordial matter of the Sāṅkhyas. That is, indeed, why we are told here that there is another and higher non-manifest which is eternal. What is meant by eternality deserves to be carefully noted. Scientific men speak of the indestructibility of matter; and in the light of that indestructibility, matter also may be said to be eternal. It is not this kind of mere indestructibility which is conveyed by the word *sanātana* used here. That word denotes not only indestructibility but also unchangeability. The eternality characterising the superior non-manifest is in fact such as compels it to be unchangeable and always the same, for ever and ever, throughout eternity. Evolving and involving primordial matter cannot surely be said to be possessed of this kind of eternality. We may also gather from this why the superior non-manifest is specially called the indestructible (*akshara*). The words, *akshara* and *sanātana*, evidently interpret each other. As if to have no doubt on this point, we are distinctly told that this superior non-manifest does not become destroyed, even when all born beings are destroyed, and this is further emphasised by the statement that it forms the supreme goal of attainment.

From what I have said already, you are certain to have made out that these stanzas amplify and explain the teaching already given in a stanza in the seventh chapter (VII 24) regarding the nature of God. The higher non-manifest is God Himself; and, after God-attainment, there is no re-incarnation to souls. They do not then return to the world of mutation and mortality. In brief, what is this other, superior, indestructible, everlasting non-manifest, which forms the supreme goal of attainment, and after attaining which there is no reincarnation for souls? The answer to this question is given in the statement, "That is my own Supreme Light." Here Śrī Kṛishṇa says, "I am Myself that Superior 'Non-manifest'". In theistic religious literature, God is often

conceived as light and described as light. This is a fact too well-known to require any exemplification. I refer you, however, to our own *Kaṭhopanishad* (II—*5*—*15*), wherein we are told in relation to the *Brahman*—" There the sun does not shine, and the moon and the stars also do not shine, nor do these lightnings shine Where then is the scope for the fire to shine? All things shine through the light derived from Him who is self-luminous; and it is through His light that the whole of this universe shines." It is this resplendent light of unsurpassed brilliance which we have to look upon as forming the glorious essence of Śrī Kṛishṇa. Cardinal Newman's famous Christian hymn—"Lead, kindly Light, lead Thou me on'—may naturally come to the mind of some of you. The Superior Non-manifest is the Supreme Light Divine.

One other stanza relates to it in the context in this chapter; let us, as it is already late in the morning, study it in our next class.

XXXIX.

In our last class we dealt, as you may remember, with more than one interesting topic. The first thing we paid attention to was how one who thinks of God and meditates upon God at the time of death, attains *moksha* or final deliverance, so that he is no longer subjected to the influence of *karma* and compelled to become re-incarnated in the material world of *saṁsāra*. Then we saw that the soul's goal of attainment is the *Brahman*. Incidentally, the Sāṅkhya theory of universal evolution and involution was taken into consideration, and we learnt that there are two things which deserve to be called the non-manifest, one of which is the lower and the other the higher. The lower non-manifest we made out to be the *mūlaprakṛiti*, that is, the evolving and involving primordial matter: the higher non-manifest we learnt to be the divine principle, the Light, which is God Himself. The stanza with which we begin our work to-day gives a further description of that divine principle, and also tells us how God-attainment is to be achieved by aspiring souls.

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।
यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिद ततम् ॥ ॥ २२ ॥

22. O Arjuna, that is that Supreme Person, who is to be attained by loving devotion exclusively directed to Him, in whom exist all beings, and by whom the whole of this (universe) is pervaded.

In this stanza, the being mentioned before as the superior non-manifest is identified with the Supreme Person, that is, with God who is naturally the goal of attainment to all aspiring souls. With the meaning and means of achievement of God-attainment, we have had to deal more than once already. It is, however, noteworthy that special emphasis is laid here on undeviating devotion as a means of God-attainment. Here you may well bring to your mind what we learnt from a previous stanza of this chapter (VIII. *14*). The Supreme Person is He in whom all beings exist and by whom the whole universe is pervaded. This clearly means saying more than that all things live and move and have their being in God. The additional idea involved is that God pervades the universe, that He is contained in the universe, at the same time that all the beings in the universe are contained in Him.

Can He be the container and the contained at the same time? This apparently contradictory position has been, as you know, explained to be possible by the analogy of the thread which runs through a necklace of gems; and we shall see that it is further dealt with at the beginning of the ninth chapter. The statement that all beings are contained in God enables us to understand that He is their sustainer and supporter; and the statement that the whole of this universe is pervaded by Him means that the very life of the universe is due to Him. It is inevitably by such apparent contradictions that God has to be described in human language.

The next five stanzas deal with an interesting topic which it is not quite easy to understand fully well. Let us try to understand them as well as we can.

यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।
प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥ ॥ २३ ॥

अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥ ॥ २४ ॥

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।
तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥ ॥ २५ ॥

शुक्लकृष्णे गतीह्येते जगतश्शाश्वते मते ।
एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययाऽऽवर्तते पुनः ॥ ॥ २६ ॥

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन् योगी मुह्यति कश्चन ।
तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥ ॥ २७ ॥

23. O Arjuna, I shall tell you (now) the time, when active workers in life, after departing from this life, do not come back, and also the time when (after departing) they come back.

24. Fire, light, the day, the bright (fortnight) and the six months of the northern progress of the sun—departing therein, those persons who know the *Brahman* go to the *Brahman*.

25. Smoke, night, and similarly, the dark (fortnight) and the six months of the southern progress of the sun, (departing) therein, the active worker in life attains the light of the moon and comes back.

26. Indeed, those two paths—the bright and the dark (paths)—are understood to be ever enduring in relation to the world. By adopting the one, one does not return; by adopting the other (however), one returns.

27. O Arjuna, on knowing these two paths, no wise man of action becomes deluded by doubt. Therefore, O Arjuna, do you at all times be devoted to thoughtful meditation and disinterested action.

The first difficulty which strikes one here is that, starting with the object of mentioning propitious and unpropitious times of for dying—times of death which cause the non-return and return of the soul to re-incarnation—the context concludes with what it speaks of as two paths of departing from life. Another difficulty is that fire, light and smoke have to be taken to represent periods of time like day and night. Orthodox commentators have evidently thought over the matter with considerable care and attention. Their opinion is that here we have really a description of the two paths along which departing souls may travel, stage by stage, to reach the goal at which they aim and for which they are fit. Accordingly, fire, light and smoke, and the periods of time, like day and night, do not represent to them what they actually mean under ordinary circumstances, but represent certain deities which are conceived to preside over those things It is these deities that lead departing souls, stage after stage, to the goal for which they are fit. In this way, both the difficulties we have noticed, seem to be got over at once.

But the mind still remains unsatisfied. As a matter of fact, we have here a problem which takes us back to very ancient times in the history of the Aryan people, to a time when the Iranian Aryans and the Indian Aryans had not become separated and probably lived together in colder and more northern latitudes. In the religion of the Parsis also it is considered unpropitious to die during the southern progress and propitious to die during the northern progress of the sun. Mr. B.G.Tilak, in his work, *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*, has adduced considerable interesting evidence to demonstrate that the original home of all the undivided eastern and western Aryans was near the Polar regions. It is well known that an important characteristic of the comparatively higher northern latitudes is the prominence which is acquired by the phenomenon of the twilight both in the morning and in the evening. If this is borne in mind, it is possible for us to find a fairly rational natural explanation to get over the first difficulty pointed above. With this object in view, it may well be conceived here that fire (*Agni*) possibly represents the dawn, light (*Jyotis*) represents the morning twilight and smoke (*Dhūma*) the evening twilight.

It is quite easy to gather from the study of our Vedic literature that Agni, Ushas and the Aśvini-devatas are the

chief deities that are representative of the dawn. Therefore it is not without reason to believe that Agni represents the dawn, since, corresponding to the dawn in the morning, there is no special phenomenon in the evening. Preceding the evening twilight, we find, in relation to the *dark path* here described, only the smoke (*Dhūma*) mentioned, while, in relation to the *bright path*, the two things, fire (*Agni*) and light (*Jyotis*), are mentioned. This also tends to strengthen the probability of the suggestion I have thrown out to the effect that fire means the dawn, light the morning twilight and smoke the evening twilight. Orthodox opinion will look upon this interpretation as being too original to be true. I have placed it before you in all seriousness, and you may give to it such value as you think it deserves.

We need not enter into any discussion as to why it was that the ancient Aryans considered it propitious to die during the northern progress of the sun and unpropitious to die during the southern progress. From this ancient partiality in favour of the period of the northern, and against the period of the southern progress of the sun, aided evidently by the general Vedic tendency to look upon light as divine and darkness as demoniacal, there arose, probably, the partiality in favour of the day and the bright fortnight, as opposed to the night and the dark fortnight. When we thus come upon the position that to die at certain times is good, and to die at certain other times is bad, the goodness or badness of the death occurring at those times has to be determined by the goal to which the departing soul goes. When, in this way, two goals became established for the departing souls, two paths of their departure also became established. In this way, the sliding from the idea of the propitious and the unpropitious times of death to the idea of the two paths of the soul's departure, may be seen to become intelligible. The path leading to the propitious goal was called the path of the gods, *Devayāna*: similarly, the path leading to the unpropitious goal was called the *Pitṛiyāna*, or the path of the departed ancestors. How the departed ancestors came to be opposed to the gods here is also a problem requiring solution. That those paths were given these names pretty early seems to be certain in any case.

In the stanzas under consideration now, we have a definite description of the nature of the goals to which these two path s

take the departing souls. It is to be noted that we have to recognise here the superposition of a well known *Vedāntic* teaching upon the old tradition of the *Devayāna* and the *Pitṛiyāna*. We are told that souls proceeding along the propitious path do not return to be re-born in the mutable, material and mortal world of man. Similarly, souls proceeding along the unpropitious path are said to go to a goal from which they come back to be re-born in the mutable, material and mortal world of man. You know that there are two ideals of ethics recognised in the *Bhagavadgītā*. We have designated them as the ideal of interested ethics and the ideal of disinterested ethics. Though the *Gītā* holds that the latter of these ideals is undoubtedly superior to the former, still the common currency of the former ideal also is distinctly taken note of therein. Please observe that each of the two paths leading to the two different goals is stated to be enduring in relation to this world. It is in this way that I interpret these stanzas ; and I see in them distinctly a superposition of latter *Vedāntic* ideas on an ancient tradition.

It may be of interest to you here to listen to a quotation from Mr. B.G. Tilak's work—*The Arctic Home in the Vedas*—in which he deals incidentally with the question of the *Devayāna* and the *Pitṛiyāna*. He says in that work (pp. *73* to *75*)—" I may, however, mention here the fact that the oldest *Vedic* year appears to have been divided only into two portions, the *Devayāna* and the *Pitṛiyāna*, which originally corresponded with the *Uttarāyaṇa* and the *Dakshiṇayana*, or the day and the night of the gods. The word *Devayāna* occurs several times in the *Rig Veda Samhitā* and denotes the path of the gods. Thus in the *Rig Veda* (i. *72. 7*), Agni is said to be cognisant of the *Devayāna* road; and in I. *183. 6* and I. *184. 6*, the poet says—'We have, O Aśvins ! reached the end of darkness; now come to us by the *Devāyāna* road.' In VII. *76.2* we again read—'The *Devayāna* path has become visible to me.....The banner of the dawn has appeared in the east.' Passages like these clearly indicate that the road of the *Devayāna* commenced at the rise of the dawn, or after the end of darkness ; and that it was the road by which Agni, Aśvins, Ushas, Sūrya and other matutinal deities travelled during their heavenly course.

" The path of the *Pitris* or the *Pitṛiyāna* is, on the other hand, described in X. *16*—, *1* as the reverse of *Devayāna*, or

the path of Death. In the *Rig Veda* (X. *88. 15*) the poet says that he has heard only of two roads, one of the Devas and the other of the Pitṛis. If the *Devayāna*, therefore, commenced with the Dawn, we must suppose that the *Pitṛiyāna* commenced with the advent of darkness. Sāyana is, therefore, correct in interpreting *V. 77. 3* as stating that the evening is not for the gods.

"Now, if the *Devayānā* and the *Pitṛiyāna* were synonymous with ordinary day and night, there was obviously no propriety in stating that these were the only two paths or roads known to the ancient Ṛishis ; and they could not have been described as consisting of three seasons each, beginning with the spring (*Śat. Brāh. II. 1.3, 1—3.*) It seems, therefore, very probable that the *Devayāna* and the *Pitṛiyāna* originally represented a twofold division of the year, one of continuous night and the other of continuous darkness at the North Pole; and that, though it was not suited to the later home of the Vedic people, it was retained because it was an established and recognised fact in the language, like the seven suns, or the seven horses of a single sun. The evidence, in support of this view, will be stated in subsequent chapters. It is sufficient to observe in this place that if we interpret the two fold division of the *Devayāna* and the *Pitṛiyāna* in this way, it fully corroborates the statement in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* that a year was but a day of the gods.

"We may also note in this connection that the expression, 'path of the gods' occurs even in the Parsi scriptures. Thus in the *Farvardin Yasht*, paras *56*, *57*, the Fravashis who correspond with the *pitṛis* in the Vedic literature, are said to have shown to the sun and the moon the path made by Mazda, the way made by the gods, along which the Fravashis themselves are going. The sun and the moon are, again, said to have stood for a long time in the same place, without moving forwards, through the oppression of the Daevas (Vedic *Asuras*) or the demons of darkness, before the Fravashis showed ' the path of Mazda ' to these two luminaries. This shows that 'the path of Mazda ' commenced, like the *Devayāna* road, when the sun was set free from the clutches of the demons of darkness. In other words, it represented the period of the year when the sun was above the horizon at the place where the ancestors of the Indo-Iranians lived in ancient days. We have seen that

Devayāna, or the path of the gods, is the way along which Sūrya, Agni and other matutinal deities are said to travel in the *Rig Veda*; and the Parsi scriptures supplement this information by telling us that the sun stood still before the Fravashis showed to him 'the path of Mazda', evidently meaning that the *Devayāna*, or 'the path of Mazda', was the portion of the year when the sun was above the horizon, after being confined for some time by the powers of darkness."

If we understand the paths of the *Devayāna* and the *Pitṛiyāna* to represent, as I have suggested, the two ethical ideals of interested and disinterested duty, and if we further bear in mind that the life of disinterested duty through its absolute unselfishness naturally leads to the attainment of the emancipation of the soul, it naturally follows that it does not matter when the person who lives the life of absolute unselfishness dies: whenever he dies, he must attain the emancipation of his soul from the bondage of *samsāra*. This difficulty also is recognised, and its solution seems to lie in the conservative tendency of the Indian mind, which, whenever it adopts the new, never gives up the old altogether.

The case of the great Bhishma, the heroic warrior and yogin of the *Mahābhārata* war, deserves to be taken into consideration here. His *yogic* powers are said to have been complete, so that he could easily get into the state of *samādhi* whenever he chose. Through his *yoga*, he had attained both self-realisation and God-realisation: and in the whole host of that great army of the *Mahābhārata* war he was the only hero to whom the divinity of Śrī Kṛishṇa was as evident as the light of day. And yet it is said that he waited for the arrival of the *uttarāyana* before taking steps to die. The *yogin*, who has attained full success in the practice of *yoga*, is known to acquire the power of dying whenever he chooses. Bhishma must have had that power; and in his days the commencement of the *uttarāyana* or the northern progress of the sun coincided with the festive day which we now observe as the *Ratha-saptamī* in the month of *Māgha*. That day is called the *Ratha-saptamī* for the reason that on that day the chariot of the sun turns round at the end of its southern course to move towards the north. After waiting for the arrival of the day of the *Ratha-saptamī* and making sure that

the *uttarāyana* had commenced, Bhīshma gradually gave up his life in the course of five days. The day following the *Ratha-saptamī* is even now called *Bhīshma-ashṭamī* among us, and the eleventh day of the fortnight goes by the name of *Bhīshmaikādaśī*, that being the day on which Bhīshma's effort to give up his life became fulfilled.

The successful yogin gets into the state of *samādhi*, and manages to die, in case he chooses to do so, by intensely willing to die. He wills to die, and he dies. This power, however, is not evidently within the easy reach of all persons. They cannot therefore choose the day and hour of their death. Moreover, we have been told that those, who live the life of absolute unselfishness and disinterested duty, achieve as a natural consequence the emancipation of their souls: that is, they go to the goal from which there is no return, whatever may be the time of their death and departure from life. After knowing that the life, which is lived according to what we have called the ideal of interested ethics, leads to the soul's return and re incarnation after death, while the life, lived according to the spiritual ideal of disinterested ethics, leads to the final emancipation of the soul from the bondage of matter, no wise man of action will feel any doubt in regard to the ethical ideal that he should follow in life. Hence, the injunction to Arjuna that he should at all times be devoted to *yoga*, that is, to thoughtful meditation and disinterested action.

This injunction is certain to remind us of another injunction that has been given to Arjuna in a previous stanza (VIII. 7) of this same chapter, wherein Śrī Kṛishṇa enjoins—"Therefore, at all times, remember Me continuously and fight in the war." There is a point here which requires explanation. It is ordinarily understood that yoga means meditation and mental concentration—such meditation and mental concentration as compel one to retire from all work and be absolutely inactive. If *yoga* is understood in this sense, the practice of it becomes incompatible with the performance of active work; and the injunction to be at all times devoted to thoughtful meditation and disinterested action becomes thereby entirely incapable of accomplishment. In the same manner, to remember God always, to meditate upon Him uninterruptedly, may also be held to be incompatible with going on strenuously fighting in

the war. The truth is that we are not entitled to understand here by the word *yoga* anything like the meditation which compels complete inaction and absolute passivity. On the other hand, it means the life of Śrī Kṛishṇa's *karma-yoga*, which is, as you know, an active life of unselfishness and non-attachment. We have already learnt that the practice of self-control and mental concentration is helpful to us in making our devotion steady and in enabling us to overcome our natural tendency in favour of selfishness and all its numerous attractions. Accordingly, the practice of *yoga* is not inimical to the exercise of *bhakti*; nor does that practice prevent us from performing well all our duties in life. All the three injunctions, that we have now been considering—the injunctions to be devoted to *yoga*, to meditate upon God, and to go on fighting in the war—are very well capable of being carried out effectively: and that is why Arjuna was called upon by Śrī Kṛishṇa to obey them and carry them out in his life.

I am sure it has, by this time, become evident to you that the seventh and the twentyseventh stanzas in this chapter fully support each other: as a matter of fact, they really interpret each other, and the main lessons to be learnt from this chapter are contained in them. To know well those lessons and to live, in consonance with them, the life of unwavering devotion to God, of thoughtful meditation and active unselfish work, is of great importance to the earnest aspirant after the salvation of the soul. The next stanza, which is the last one in the chapter, gives us an idea of the importance of acquiring such knowledge. Let us proceed to study that stanza:—

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपस्सु चैव दानेषु यत् पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम्।
अत्येति तत् सर्वमिदं विदित्वा योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥२८॥

28. (That) fruit in the form of *puṇya*, which is taught (as arising) in relation to (the study of) the *Vedas*, the (performance of) sacrifices, the (practice of) austerities, and also the (giving of) charitable gifts,—the *yogin* transcends all that on knowing this, and goes to the abode which is supreme and primordial.

I have already drawn your attention more than once to the two ideals of ethics recognised in the *Bhagavadgītā*. Morality may be viewed either from the standpoint of social order and progress, or from the standpoint of the salvation of the soul. The former of these standpoints is mainly intellectual and utilitarian; here morality is based on the adjustment of interests. The latter standpoint is religious and spiritual; and according to it, morality rests on absolute unselfishness, on the annihilation of all self-interest. It cannot be hard for you to see that this spiritual morality is more comprehensive in its scope than simple utilitarian morality. Utilitarian morality has no direct bearing on the emancipation of the soul from the bondage of matter; but spiritual morality is capable of securing social order and progress quite as effectively as utilitarian morality. It is this more comprehensive spiritual morality, which is enjoined in the *Bhagavadgītā*; nevertheless, it permits utilitarian morality also to be concurrent with the spiritual, so that the utilitarian ideal at least may be adopted by those who are not yet fit to follow the higher ideal of spiritual morality.

Among the four objects of human pursuit mentioned in Hindu literature,—the four *purushārthas*, as they are called in Sanskrit,—*moksha*, or the deliverance of the soul from the bondage of matter, is the highest; that is the supreme object of human pursuit, and hence constitutes what is called *parama-purushārtha*. The adoption of the interested utilitarian ideal of morality in life is not calculated to secure for one the salvation of *moksha*. But the adoption of the disinterested spiritual ideal of morality leads directly to the attainment of *moksha*. To know these things makes the obligatoriness of the life of entire unselfishness quite imperative. On coming into the possession of a knowledge of this kind and endeavouring to work out his life in consonance with it, the *yogin*, who is our typical worker, acquires a result of great importance, a result which transcends in value the *puṇya* that accrues from the study of the *Vedas*, the performance of sacrifices, the practice of austerities, and the giving of gifts in charity.

You are aware that *puṇya* is the product of good work done with attachment to the fruit of work. It is finite in character, and may, at best, enable one to enjoy, for a limited period, the pleasures of *svarga* or the paradise of the gods: it cannot be made to serve as a means for the securing of *moksha*

and for bestowing upon the soul the bliss of its final deliverance from the bondage of matter. The study of the *Vedas*, the performance of sacrifices, the practice of austerities, and the giving of gifts in charity are all ordained in our sacred law books; and each of these four things, so ordained, is capable of giving rise to *puṇya* as its fruit. We are told here that even the *puṇya*, which is derivable from all the four of them, is inferior in value to that result of great importance, which accrues to the *yogin* from his life of absolute non-attachment and wholehearted unselfishness because the very disinterestedness of such an unselfish life of duty done makes him go to the abode which is supreme and primordial.

You may ask what this supreme and primordial abode is. Being supreme, it must be the highest world of attainment. There should be no doubt whatsoever about that. That it is primordial implies its existence from the beginning of time. It is worthy to be noted here that it is the word *ādya* which has been translated as primordial. The highest world of attainment, that has been in existence from the beginning of time, has also necessarily to continue to exist till the end of time. Therefore, the abode, which is supreme and primordial, is the world of everlasting life commonly called heaven. It is a world of unlimited bliss, because the happy soul which goes to heaven not only realises its own spiritual nature and immortality, but also becomes blessed with the glory of God-attainment. I hope it is clear to you now how the *yogin*, who knows 'the two paths', rises above all doubt and goes to the divine goal of everlasting life and infinite bliss.

In the context here, it is perhaps necessary to utter a word of warning. The statement, that this knowledge of the two 'paths' yields a result, which transcends in value the *puṇya* accruing from the study of the *Vedas*, the performance of sacrifices, the practice of austerities and the giving of gifts in charity should not be understood to tell us that, in the search for the salvation of the soul, we are called upon to give up the study of the *Vedas*, the performance of sacrifices, the practice of austerities and the bestowal of gifts in charity. These things are all good in themselves, and are, as you know, ordained, in our sacred law-books. We cannot and ought not to give them up actually. What has to be done is that they should all be carried out without any selfish attachment to the results accruing from them.

It cannot be gainsaid that it is perfectly possible so to carry them out, and make them serve as the means for the acquisition, not of *puṇya*, but of *mokṣha*. The chief thing to be taken care of in respect of carrying them out is the absolute unselfishness of the motive; and when the motive of any worker is not, even in the least, tainted with selfishness, the performance of all duties by him becomes wholly disinterested and thus capable of liberating the soul for ever from the bondage of *saṃsāra*.

Therefore, what we are taught here to discard is the fruit in the form of *puṇya*, which may be derived from the interested performance of good deeds. There is no suggestion whatsoever that we should give up the doing of the good deeds themselves. The study of the scriptures, the conduct of worship, the practice of self-restraint, and the exercise of charity are accordingly never to be discarded. Like all other duties, these also have to be carried out by the *yogin* in a spirit of complete disinterestedness; and they will themselves then bestow on him the great blessing of *mokṣha*, which he earnestly seeks to attain. In this digression, I felt it necessary to warn you against a possible mistake.

With these comments on this stanza (VIII. 28), we practically finish our study of the eighth chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Before we begin the study of the next chapter let us, in accordance with our practice, summarise what we learnt from the eighth chapter. This chapter begins, as you know, with seven questions put by Arjuna to Śrī Kṛishṇa for favour of elucidation. They are questions relating to some of the most important and fundamental problems of philosophy and religion; and Śrī Kṛishṇa's reply to them makes up the whole of the chapter. The first six questions, you may remember, relate in order (i) to the *Brahman*, (ii) to the soul, (iii) to *karma*, (iv) to matter, (v) to divinity and (vi) to worship.

In their elucidation, 'matter' has been shown to be the mutable destructible entity, as contrasted with the 'soul', which, being the knowing entity constituting one's own self, is immutable, and hence indestructible and immortal. Thus, in the case of every embodied being, the body, which is mutable and mortal, is material, while the embodied 'soul' is spiritual and therefore immaterial, immutable and immortal. It is a

common thing in Sanskrit to speak of the soul as the owner and also as the enjoyer of the body. The creative process, which brings material bodies into existence—it would perhaps be better to say material embodiments into being,—is *karma*. In other words, it may be said that *karma* builds for the soul its house. Indeed, the mutations of mutable matter are all brought about by *karma*. In the explanation of *karma*, as given in the eighth chapter of the *Gītā*, some of you may see its resemblance to the conception of energy with its transformations, as known to modern science.

It is worth noting that 'matter', 'energy' and 'soul' do not complete the compass of ultimate philosophical entities; and for its completion the fourth entity, *Brahman*, comes in appropriately as the Indestructible Being that is Supreme. You know that we have had under consideration another Indestructible Being, namely, the soul; and the *Brahman* is different from this inasmuch as it is supreme. This same *Brahman* is also the Supreme Person, the centre and source of all power in the universe, and the object of love and devotion to all perfected saints and selfless devotees. The *Brahman*, the fourth ultimate philosophical entity, is accordingly God. It is desirable to bear in mind that the question raised here in regard to 'divinity' is not concerned directly with the Supreme Godhood of the *Brahman* as the Indestructible Being that is supreme. It relates to the divinity attaching to Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Vināyaka, Durgā, and all other such *Vedic* and *Purāṇic* and popular gods and goddesses. Nevertheless, from the teaching that the 'Purusha' constitutes the intrinsic essence of all deities, we were able to learn that the divinity of all such gods and goddesses also comes from the Supreme God Himself. So long as it is well understood that the divinity of every deity, known to man, is a spark, so to say, of the divinity of the Supreme Person, it cannot be hard to see that the worship offered to any deity tends to become ultimately the worship of God Himself.

Hence, to the question respecting the intrinsic essence of all acts of worship carried out by various embodied beings—each in his or her own way, of course,—the right and reasonable answer is that God Himself is the intrinsic essence of all acts of worship, carried out by all embodied beings in their

various states and conditions of embodiment. Such is the summary of the answers given to the first six, out of the seven questions, with which the eighth chapter starts.

The seventh question asks how God is to be known and remembered by His devotees at the time of their death and departure from life. This question led us, you know, to the consideration, first, of the value to them of the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration culminating in self-realisation and God-realisation, and then secondly, to the study of the two paths followed by departing souls. The importance of the unfailing and continued remembrance of God at the time of death and departure from life consists in the fact that such God-remembrance gives rise to God-attainment. Since God attainment happens to be the supreme purpose of life, and since it is in no way easy for most people to achieve success in the practice of the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration, the enquiry as to the existence of other means of God-attainment became natural and necessary. Incidentally, we had to make out beforehand the cyclic character of the processes of evolution and involution, as they prevail inuniversal creation, and had to learn therefrom that God-attainment enables souls to get out of the common whirl of this cycle of creation and be free from the unending succession of re-births and re-deaths which, in Sanskrit, is called *samsāra*.

Thereafter, we had to pass on to the study in detail of the *archirādi-mārga* and the *dhūmādi-mārga*. The former of these is the path leading departing souls to the goal of God-attainment and freedom from re-birth, and the latter is the path which leads to re-birth. We saw that originally these paths were known as *Devayāna* and *Pitṛiyāna*, and related to an ancient tradition regarding auspicious and inauspicious times for dying and departing from life. Since successful *yogins* alone can command the power of dying whenever they choose, it is not possible for all to die only when it is auspicious, so as to have their souls led assuredly along that path—the *archirādi-mārga*—which takes them to the goal of God-attainment and freedom from re-birth. Moreover, it cannot be intended by any teacher seriously to teach us that the mere accident of the time of one's death determines of itself whether his soul shall obtain its salvation or not. Accordingly Śrī Kṛishṇa makes the two 'paths' of the soul's journey after death represent

two different ideals of the ethics of conduct. The *dhūmādi-mārga* represents that ideal in which morality is the result of the intellectual harmonisation of conflicting human interests. This is a comparatively lower ideal, and may be called the interested ideal. The *archirādi-mārga*, however, represents that other ideal, wherein the emancipation of the soul from the bondage of *samsāra* through the practice of absolute unselfishness in life happens to be the all important object that is kept in view. This is a spiritual ideal, and is evidently a higher ideal of ethics: seeing that absolute unselfishness is the characteristic feature of the conduct demanded by it, we may call it the 'disinterested ideal'.

We have seen that both these ideals of morality are considered to be permissible in the philosophy of conduct, as taught by Śrī Kṛishṇa. The lower intellectual ideal is the one that is more commonly in vogue; the higher spiritual ideal is harder to follow in practice, and is therefore much less in vogue. Nevertheless, the knowing aspirant, with adequate power of self-control, will make no mistake in his choice of the path that is fitted to lead to the goal of God-attainment and the everlasting freedom of the soul. In so summarising the contents of the eighth chapter of the Gītā, I hope I have made clear to you the course of thought which runs though it.

Yāmunāchārya's *Gītārtha-saṅgraha* gives in one *śloka* the main points of the teaching contained in it. Please permit me to read to you that *śloka*, and translate it thus:—

ऐश्वर्याक्षरयाथात्म्यभगवच्छरणार्थिनाम् ।
वेद्योपादेयभावानामष्टमे भेद उच्यते ॥

"The varieties relating to the things that are to be known and to be adopted by those (persons) who seek lordship, the true nature of the indestructible and (ultimate) refuge in God, are mentioned in the eighth (chapter)."

In the introductory part of a well-recognised and authoritative commentary on this chapter, we find it

stated that those who seek refuge in God with a view to attain freedom from re-birth, are naturally apt to be interested in the three initial questions, which, in order, appertain to the *Brahman*, to the soul and to *karma*. It is further stated there that those who seek lordship, that is, the seekers of wealth and power and prosperity, are similarly apt to be interested in the two questions, which, in order, relate to matter and divinity. The seeker of lordship, the seeker of soul-salvation and God-attainment and also the seeker of the true nature of the indestructible—all these three—are apt, we are also told there, to be interested in the two questions, which respectively relate to worship as the intrinsic essence of religion and to how God is to be known and remembered at the time of death and departure from life.

In this way, the seven questions, with which the chapter commences, and the answers to which make up its contents, are all shown to be included within the scope of its summary as given by Yāmunāchārya. He also must have had the seven initial questions in mind, when he gave out his summary of the chapter. The special point to be noted in his summary is the appropriate division of the questions, and their attribution to three different kinds of aspirants.

CHAPTER IX.

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To-day we begin the study of the ninth chapter. In the way of answering seven very important initial questions, the eighth chapter, as you are aware, dealt with certain fundamental problems of philosophy and religion, such as the problems of matter, energy, soul and God, and God-nature and God-worship and God-attainment. As related to the consideration of these problems, the Sāṅkhya view of creation and its cyclic processes of evolution and involution had to be taken note of; and an attempt to understand aright the true meaning of the two paths, known as *dhūmādi-mārga* and *archirādi-mārga*,—paths of the soul's departure after death,—had also to be made by us. This ninth chapter particularly treats of the peculiar and supreme greatness of God, of His undiminished divinity in His incarnation as man, and of the special value of loving devotion to God as a means of God-attainment. After we finish its study, we shall of course

try to obtain a comprehensive view of all its contents. What we have now to do is to begin to study it. So let me begin:—

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ ॥ १ ॥
राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम्।
प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥ ॥ २ ॥
अश्रद्दधानाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परन्तप।
अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि ॥ ॥ ३ ॥

ŚRĪ KṚISHṆA SAID:—

1. To you, who are without envy, I shall teach this most secret 'knowledge', as associated with its practical application, on knowing which you will be freed from what is inauspicious.

2. This is a royal learning, a royal mystery, holy and highest; it is capable of being ascertained by direct personal experience; is accordant with virtue; is very easy to be worked out (in practice); and is incapable of becoming (ever) exhausted.

3. Persons, who have no faith in this *dharma*, persist, without attaining Me, in living on in the mortal path of *samsāra*, O (Arjuna) foiler of foes!

It is worth noting that Śrī Kṛishṇa Himself begins the teaching in this chapter. It must be clearly a natural continuation of the previous chapter, the concluding portion whereof is also in the language of Śrī Kṛishṇa. In regard to the contents of this ninth chapter, one of the well-known commentators remarks that, after having, in the previous chapter, shown that all religious aspirants fall within three classes according to the nature of their aspirations, this chapter gives briefly a description of the peculiar greatness of God, and then deals with *bhakti* or loving devotion as a means of worshipping God so as to secure soul-salvation and

God-attainment. It may, accordingly, be said to be a chapter which is mainly concerned with the teaching of *bhakti-yoga*. We have already seen that, according to the general consensus of opinion of the various authoritative commentators on the Gītā, *karma*—work, *jñāna*—wisdom, *bhakti*—loving devotion to God, and *prapatti*—self-surrender to God, are all held to be good and worthy means to enable us to live the unselfish life and thereby attain soul-salvation. In fact, it is known to all serious and impartial students of the Gītā that it teaches the three yogas or systems of realisation and attainment, which are in fact systems of God-worship, known as *karma-yoga*—the system of work, *jñāna yoga*—the system of wisdom, and *bhakti-yoga*—the system of loving devotion, there being no such thing as *prapatti-yoga* evidently for the reason that *prapatti*, which is absolute self-surrender to God, has to be looked upon as an exalted form of *bhakti*.

In the course of our study of the first six chapters of the Gītā, our attention was drawn largely to *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*, to how work and wisdom may be made to become worship, each in its own way: in those chapters there are only passing references to *bhakti-yoga*. We are now favoured with its fuller exposition here in the ninth chapter of the Gītā: we may well say that the teaching of *bhakti-yoga* is its main object. That it is so, is fully borne out by the fact, that the 'most secret knowledge' as well as 'the royal learning' and the 'royal mystery', mentioned in this very context, is said to be a *dharma*, that is, to be a duty which ought to be accepted and performed. I have already indicated to you that some other things are also found dealt with in this chapter, than the worship of God through loving devotion directed exclusively and incessantly to Him: we shall see, as we proceed, that we are in addition taught therein about the greatness of God and about His undiminished divinity even when He becomes incarnate as man: but these things do not constitute the principal topic of the chapter, and neither of them can in any sense be construed to form a duty. Therefore, the thing, to which Arjuna's attention is pointedly drawn by Śrī Kṛishṇa here at the very commencement of the chapter, must be *bhakti-yoga*.

Before we try to understand its characteristics, as given by Śrī Kṛishṇa in the stanzas which we are now studying, it is necessary to note that Arjuna is considered to be fit to receive

the teaching regarding the duty of divine devotion on account of his freedom from envy. We can easily see that the teaching is held to be very important, because it is spoken of as the most secret knowledge and as a royal learning and a royal mystery; and to receive such an important teaching, the disciple's freedom from envy appears to be held as an inevitable requisite. It seems to be further obvious that the greater the importance of the teaching that is offered, the greater must be the disciple's freedom from envy. When going through the concluding part of the third and the commencement of the fourth chapter, we saw, as many of you may remember, why it is really necessary for the ideal disciple to be free from envy. I now take the liberty of drawing your attention to it. In Sanskrit, *asūyā* or envy is explained to be *parotkarshāsahishṇutvam*, which means one's unwillingness to put up with the superiority of others. The disciple, to whom the superiority of his teacher is insufferable, cannot surely have much faith in the value of his teaching. The mind of such a disciple is prone to underestimate the worthiness of truth itself. To teach him truth is therefore even worse than casting pearls before swine, which do not estimate the pearls at all: they neither underestimate nor overestimate, and the blame which attaches to them, is that they cannot appreciate the pearls. To be in a worthily receptive mood, the mind of the disciple should be completely free from envy in relation to the teacher. Let it be observed that it was no ordinary demand that was made upon the faith of Arjuna in respect of the superiority of his teacher; he had to see God Himself in Śrī Kṛishṇa.

Some of the important characteristics of *bhakti-yoga* are given in these stanzas; and we shall now take them up for examination and explanation. The first thing, which is said of it, is that, on knowing it, the aspirant becomes free from what is inauspicious It has to be remembered that here knowing the *bhakti-yoga* implies the practice of it also; for this 'most secret knowledge is taught to Arjuna 'as associated with its practical application'. Accordingly, on understanding *bhakti-yoga* and putting it well into practice, the aspirant becomes free from the inauspicious thing. What is this inauspicious thing? It has been generally interpreted to be *samsāra*, the unending chain of recurring re-births and re-deaths, to which the soul is subject when in material bondage. The subjection of the soul to re-births and re-deaths prevents

it from knowing itself as it is, and stands in the way of its becoming blessed with final freedom and God-attainmen t That is why *samsāra* is inauspicious; and *bhakti-yoga*, being an effective means for securing self-realisation and God-realisation and God-attainment, enables the aspirant to become free from the inauspicious *samsāra*. We should not, however, fail to observe in this connection that the statement, that the knowledge and practice of *bhakti-yoga* enables the aspirant to be freed from what is inauspicious, may also be quite justifiably interpreted to mean that the knowing aspirant is never troubled by anything that is inauspicious.

The next point we have to note and explain is that *bhakti-yoga*, which is said to be royal as a learning and as a mystery, is 'holy'. It is royal in the sense that it is of great value and importance. Let us try to understand why it is said to be 'holy'. Since the underlying emotion on which *bhakti* rests is love, the aspirant, who adopts *bhakti-yoga* as his means for securing soul-salvation and God-attainment, has particularly to cultivate the feeling of love in his heart. It cannot be unknown to you that the feeling of love has a lower and also a higher form. Love, in its animal aspect, is lower; in its ethical aspect, it is higher in form. Animal love tends to encourage selfishness and sensuality; it is in fact based upon them, and is therefore impure and unholy. But ethical love has self-effacement and service for its foundation; it encourages unselfishness and charity of heart, and is therefore pure and holy. The object and also the motive of the love have to be taken into consideration in determining the purity or impurity of love. The love demanded by *bhakti-yoga*, has for its object God Himself; and the motive of that love is, as we know, the securing of soul-salvation and God-attainment. The aspirant himself may not, on occasions, be aware of this motive, seeing that the best devotee is he to whom devotion to God is an end in itself. In any case, both soul-salvation and God-attainment result from the love that is intimately associated with *bhakti-yoga*. It cannot be hard to see why love of this kind makes *bhakti-yoga* holy. Indeed it is not only holy, but also hallowing.

The next characteristic of *bhakti-yoga*, which we have to examine and understand, is found in the statement that it is the 'highest'. Evidently the idea intended to be conveyed by it is that, among the *yogas* or systems of God-worship taught in the *Gītā*, the system known as *bhakti-yoga* is the best. It is

accordingly held to be superior to *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*, which are, as you have been taught, two other systems of God, worship and means for the securing of soul-salvation and God-attainment. Seeing that each of them is fully effective in securing the object in view, the determination of their comparative merit is not quite easy. We have to make sure beforehand of what the criterion of superiority is in relation to the case under examination : only then we shall be in a position to find out which of these three systems of God-worship is the best. Certain authoritative exponents of *bhakti-yoga* have declared that its supremacy is due to what may be spoken of as the universality of its availability. According to them, the greater the availability of a system of God-worship is to the aspirants, the greater must be its value and worthiness. Here we have the required criterion ; and in applying it to the case of *bhakti-yoga*, the most noteworthy point is that it requires no particular *adhikārins* or specially fitted persons to adopt it.

In the case of *karma-yoga*, and *jñāna-yoga*, each of them needs for its adoption its own *adhikārins*. We learnt long ago that *karma-yoga* may represent either the ritualistic life of works or the life of disinterested duty duly done for its own sake. According to our sacred laws, the life of *Vedic* ritualism is not equally open to all ; it is closed against women and Śūdras and inferior twice-born men. The disinterested life of duty is possible, only when the worker is entirely free from attachment to the fruit of his work. It requires strong will-power to command such non-attachment ; and they are not many, who have the strong will. Accordingly, *karma-yoga* is available only to some elite. Similarly, *jñāna-yoga* also requires its chosen elite; and the power of mind, needed to acquire the wisdom of *jñāna-yoga*, is known to belong more to the few than to the many. Therefore, the aspirants, to whom *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga* are appropriate and suitably available, are limited in number. But, in regard to *bhakti-yoga*, the aspirants are under no such limitation, since it is equally possible for all to love : the statement, that it requires no particular *adhikārins*, means really that all are suitable *adhikārins*, in relation to it. The universality of its availability is thus evident, and so its supremacy may well be taken to be proved.

Moreover, *bhakti-yoga* is 'capable of being ascertained by direct personal experience'. This implies that its efficacy as a

means of soul-salvation and God—attainment may be demonstrated to be true with the aid of the loving devotee's ordinary personal experience itself. Such a thing is not possible in the case of *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*. We may well believe—indeed we are bound to believe—that the absolute unselfishness, which is involved in the life of disinterested duty duly done, is fully competent to bestow the blessing of soul-salvation and God-attainment on the successful aspirant. Nevertheless, in his life here upon the earth, neither self-realisation nor God-realisation need ever form a part of his personal experience. That, after death, he obtains the final deliverance from the bondage of *samsāra*, and thereby finds his ultimate and eternal home of everlasting bliss in God, cannot be doubted at all. But this is a very different thing from his obtaining self realisation and God-realisation as a part of ordinary personal experience in life. In the case of *jñāna-yoga*, the successful aspirant obtains both self-realisation and God-realisation, as we have already learnt. It has, however, to be observed that they do not form part of his ordinary experience, since he obtains them in that peculiar psychological condition of trance called *samādhi*, wherein the distinction between subject and object is caused to disappear altogether. The realisations derived from *jñāna-yoga* are accordingly peculiar and extraordinary. To *bhakti-yoga* alone belongs the credit of giving rise to these realisations as a part of the ordinary experience of the successful aspirant. How it does so, we have to see.

I am sure it is evident to you that that higher form of love, which we made out to be holy and hallowing, is based upon complete self-effacement – upon the total disappearance of the self of the lover in relation to the beloved, the effaced self of the lover being, as it were, absorbed in the self of the beloved. Accordingly, the aspirant, who is a true and sincere lover of God, endeavours to identify himself with God: such an aspirant, in proceeding to efface his old self through the exercise of the love of God, acquires a new self, which is ecstatically infilled with God. The intense concentration of the love of the aspirant upon God gives to him what is in Sanskrit called *tanmayatā;* that is, it makes him feel that his very essence consists of God. As this sense of God-consisted-ness, so to call it, grows and increases more and more in power and in volume in the heart of the aspirant, the conviction of his

identity with God becomes more and more complete so that, in the end, he actually realises his oneness with God. Both self-realisation and God-realisation underlie this realisation of oneness with God, which comes to the loving devotee of God quite naturally as a part of his ordinary experience. Thus is *bhakti-yoga*—the system of God-worship through loving devotion—ascertained to be true and worthy, by means of the earnest devotee's ordinary personal experience itself.

Further, it is 'accordant with virtue'. In explaining this characteristic of *bhakti-yoga*, a well known commentator remarks that in the world it has been observed to be possible for a thing possessed of many excellent qualities to be lacking in this quality of being accordant with virtue, and that such a defect is not at all found to exist in this case. As a matter of fact, many evil things are known to have been practised under the cover of the religion of love. We hear of such things taking place even now here and there. But true *bhakti-yoga*, when properly adopted, does not permit the devotee to stray away from the path of virtue. We have seen that the love, which is involved in this system of God-worship, is holy and hallowing; and such love can never prompt the loving worshipper of God to do anything, which is unworthy and contrary to virtue. So, *bhakti-yoga* is accordant with virtue.

Again, 'it is very easy to be worked out (in practice)': the exact translation of the Sanskrit expression given in the context is—'very easy to do'. I believe the meaning is better brought out by my translation, although it is not quite exact and literal. What is evidently intended to be conveyed is that the practice of *bhakti-yoga* is much easier than that of the other two well known systems of God-worship. Is this really so? Let us look into the matter somewhat closely and see if it is so. In relation to *karma-yoga*, it has to be remarked that the tendency to be attached to the fruit of one's own work is natural and generally very strong. This tendency has to be resisted and overcome with the aid of a strong opposing will by all such aspirants as desire to achieve success in the practice of that system of God worship which is founded upon unselfish work and disinterested duty. Here, a strong natural tendency has to be inhibited, as they say. Similarly, in the case of *jñāna-yoga* also, the strong natural tendency of the common man in favour of selfishness and sensuality has to be inhibited.

What is, however, required in the case of *bhakti-yoga* is that love, which is also a natural tendency, is not tobe inhibited but to be guided and controlled. So much is certainly clear to all of us And who, among us, does not know that the process of inhibiting a natural tendency is always harder than the process of guiding and controlling such a tendency? Accordingly, *bhakti-yoga* is 'very easy to do'; that is, it is very easy to be worked out in practice.

Lastly, it is said to be 'incapable of becoming (ever) exhausted'. You must have yourself seen that, to the loving devotee, the love of God, which is involved in *bhakti-yoga*, is an end in itself, not simply a means for an end. A thing, which is only a means to an end, ceases to be of value as soon as the end is accomplished; it then becomes exhausted. To the devotee, who is an earnest and sincere lover of God, there is always a joy in the exercise of his feeling of love in relation to God. Indeed, his delight in God-love may even make him think lightly of God-attainment. An eminent teacher of *bhakti*, which is God-ward love, once remarked—'I would rather be an ant and go on tasting sugar, than become sugar myself.' Being thus a means to an end and also an end in itself, *bhakti-yoga* is incapable of becoming ever exhausted.

The various characteristics of *bhakti-yoga*, as given in the stanzas under consideration, have all now been examined and explained. Although it is possessed of such excellent characteristics, still some persons may have no faith in it. It is to be expected, as a matter of course, that those, who have nofaith in it, will not adopt it in life as a means to secure God-attainment. As they thus fail to secure God-attainment, their souls are apt to persist in the bondage of *samsāra* and be subject to recurring re-births and re-deaths. This is how they 'go on living in the mortal path of *samsāra*'.

Let us now proceed to study the next three stanzas, which deal with the peculiar greatness of God:—

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥ ॥ ४ ॥

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।
भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥ ॥ ५ ॥

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान्।
तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥ ॥ ६ ॥

4. The whole of this world is pervaded by Me, whose form is not manifest. All beings abide in Me; and I do not abide in them.

5. Again, the beings do not abide in Me. Look at My lordly power! I am the upholder of (all) beings; and I do not abide in the beings: My will brings beings into existence.

6. Bear in mind that, in whatsoever manner the air which ever abides in the atmosphere, moves everywhere and is (unboundedly) great, in that same manner all beings abide in Me.

This description of the greatness of God is evidently intended to enable us to see how He is both immanent and transcendent at the same time; and what cannot fail to strike the attentive student first, in the context, is the simultaneous postulation of contradictory characteristics in relation to God. It is apt to appear to many that immanence and transcendence contradict each other. Many profound philosophical thinkers are known to have expressed the opinion that the peculiarity in the greatness of God consists in His description having to be made up of contradictory characteristics. In any case, on understanding the whole aright, the contradictions in the description disappear. Therefore, they are only apparent and do not in any way affect the correctness of the description. Here, we are told that God pervades the whole of this world, and that yet He does not abide in the beings in the world. This is the first contradiction to be explained. Then again we are told that all beings abide in God, and that at the same time the beings do not abide in Him.

A little thought will make it clear that the key for the explanation of these apparent contradictions is to be found in the fact that the form of God, as He pervades the whole of the world, is declared to be not manifest. By this, we are distinctly taught that God is a spirit in reality, and that

accordingly the manner of His pervasion of the world must be different from that of the pervasion of one material substance by another. When, for instance, a piece of blotting paper is pervaded by ink, the paper is seen to be the container of the ink: in other words, the ink is in the paper. By being in the paper thus, the ink has its scope of existence limited by the paper. In respect of the relation of container and contained as between two material substances, it is always the case that the container limits the scope of existence of the contained, so that it is never possible for the contained to transcend the bounds imposed on it by the container. Where, however, this same relation of container and contained happens to be between a material being and the divine spiritual essence, it is easily possible for the contained spirit to transcend the bounds of the containing material being. God abides in all beings, because He pervades them. God does not abide in beings, because He, being a spirit, transcends them and is incapable of being limited by them. Such is, according to me, the explanation of the first apparent self-contradiction in the description of God, to which we have now been paying our attention

The next apparent self-contradiction, which has to be explained is in our having been told that all beings abide in God, and that, at the same time, the beings do not abide in God. Here God is the container, and the beings are the things contained. Although it is so, we are not entitled to conceive that God holds within Himself all the beings in the world in the manner in which a bag, for instance, holds within itself all its material contents. The reason for this is, because we are told in this very context that, 'in whatsoever manner the air, which ever abides in the atmosphere, moves everywhere and is (unboundedly) great, in that same manner all beings abide in Me'. From this illustration, we have to learn that the abidance of the beings in God imposes no limitation upon them, and that neither their individuality nor their freedom is affected unfavourably by such abidance in God. Since Śrī-Kṛishṇa says—'I am the upholder of all beings', we are logically bound to come to the conclusion that all beings do abide in God: and since again, unlike the abidance of one material substance within another material substance, this abidance of all beings in God imposes no limitation upon them and produces no alteration of any kind in their

individuality or freedom, it may well be assumed that they do not abide in God; what we have to note here is that, so far as the beings themselves are concerned, there is practically no difference between their abiding in God and not abiding in God. Accordingly, it seems to be true to say that all beings abide in God and yet at the same time do not abide in God.

This is the explanation I offer in relation to the second self-contradictory statement involved in the description of the peculiar greatness of God as given here. Before proceeding further, it is desirable to note that our close and careful examination of these apparent self-contradictions in the characterisation of God has so far revealed to us the essential spirituality of His divine nature, His all-pervasive immanence in the universe and His unbounded and illimitable transcendence; it has also brought to light the important fact the He is the one support of the whole universe.

We are told further that God is the one ultimate source of the universe. Śrī Kṛishṇa says positively—'My will brings beings into existence': accordingly, it is because God willed that there should be a world, we have the world with all its variety of beings. What I have translated as 'My will' is *mama ātmā* in the original Sanskrit; some may doubt the accuracy of the translation. The expression *ātman* has more than one meaning, and one of its meanings denotes the mind. Adopting that meaning here, we are led to learn that it is the mind of God which brings beings into existence. Evidently because the mind works through the will, one of our authoritative commentators has interpreted *ātman* as the will in the mind. This interpretation is very reasonable and deserves to be accepted. Since the will of God has brought all beings into existence, God Himself has to be taken to be the one ultimate source of the universe.

The way in which I have expressed myself, does not, I believe, give you room to think that, in pointing out God to be the ultimate source of the universe, I am identifying Him with *prakṛiti*, which, as you know, is that primordial undifferentiated matter-stuff, wherefrom, according to our Sāṅkhya system of philosophy, all the various kinds of matter and material beings in the universe are naturally evolved. The creation and dissolution of the universe are explained by this system of Hindu

philosophy as being due to the process of evolution and involution, which *prakṛiti* undergoes of its own accord. In consequence of this self sufficiency predicated of *prakṛiti*, the Sāṅkhya system is generally declared to be an atheistic system. In the construction of its cosmic scheme, there is no place for God : the postulation of God is indeed not needed by it. Can unconscious, unknowing *prakṛiti* be self-sufficient in this manner? Seeing that it fails to account for consciousness itself, itsself sufficiency is a mere assumption, which cannot be logically established. Consequently, the *Vedānta* maintains that the power of *prakṛiti* proceeds from God, who, being immanent in it, impels and guides its processes of evolution and involution. To make the point clear regarding the inadequacy of *prakṛiti* to be self-sufficient, it may be said that what clay is in the hands of the potter, that is *prakṛiti* in the hands of God. It can be no more; independently of Him, it is wholly powerless. God is the one centre of power in the universe; all power belongs to Him, proceeds out of Him, and goes back to Him. As the one centre of power in the universe, He is the one ultimate source of the universe.

In saying this, we surely do not identify God with *prakṛiti*. It is quite as absurd to identify God with *prakṛiti*, as it would be to identify the potter with the clay. When our aim is to understand the supremacy of the peculiar greatness of God as well as we can, there is certainly no wisdom in bringing Him down so to say, to the level of matter, by identifying Him with *prakṛiti*. In reality, God is the master of *prakṛiti*, which is entirely subordinate to Him. It is an important feature of His greatness that He is master of *prakṛiti*, and that, as such, He impels, controls and guides all its operations and activities. Immediately, the universe proceeds from *prakṛiti* : but ultimately, it proceeds from God. The next four stanzas in the *Bhagavadgītā* make this point clear; and let us now study them.

सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् ।
कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम् ॥ ७ ॥

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥ ८ ॥

न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ।
उदासीनवदासीनमसक्तं तेषु कर्मसु ॥ ९ ॥

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम् ।
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्धि परिवर्तते ॥ ॥ १० ॥

7. At the conclusion of the *kalpa*, all beings, O Arjuna, resort to My *prakṛiti* : at the commencement of the *kalpa*, I send them out again.

8. Utilising My own *prakṛiti*, I again and again send out from the control of *prakṛiti* the whole of this collection of beings, which is helplessly powerless.

9. And, O Arjuna, these actions (of Mine) do not bind Me, who am sitting (still) like an indifferent person and am unattached to the activities.

10 With Me, as the superintending overlord, *prakṛiti* gives birth to the world with (all its) moveable and immoveable (beings). Indeed, owing to this (same) cause, O Arjuna, the world undergoes (its) tranformations.

These stanzas bring to light clearly the Vedāntic conception of the relation of God to *prakṛiti*; and we have to try and understand what they teach. The very first stanza tells us that *prakṛiti* belongs to God, and that the work involved in the processes of universal creation and dissolution, which take place cyclically time after time, is not effected by *prakṛiti* of its own accord, as maintained by the Sāṅkhya philosophy, but is in fact performed by God. You are probably aware that the commonly current Hindu theory regarding universal creation and dissolution is given in the *Purāṇas*, and happens to be the result of a combination of the Sāṅkhya doctrine of evolution and involution with the calculation of the long and recurring periods of time known by the name of *kalpa* to Hindu astronomers. Their astronomy is geocentric; and, without going into details, I may say that, according to them, the *kalpa* is a period of *4,320,000,000* years. The duration of this period is determined by the consideration that, at its commencement, all the planets and their nodes and apogees have to be at the same position in the celestial sphere. It is said that, if you imagine a tightly drawn thread to

be attached at one end to the first point of the zodiacal circle, and at the other end to the centre of the earth then, at the commencement of each *kalpa*, the planets and their nodes and apogees would become so arranged as to appear to be strung on that thread in the order of their distance from the earth.

The first day of the *kalpa* is therefore conceived to be the day on which they, as it were, start in their race; it is the day of creation; and, according to the calculation based upon the data given in all Indian astronomical works, it takes them *4,320,000,000* years to come to line again at the same point in the same manner. Since the conclusion of one *kalpa* necessarily coincides with the commencement of the next *kalpa*, and since again the work of universal creation and the work of universal dissolution cannot evidently be conducted concurrently side by side owing to their antithetical character, it has been declared that *kalpas* are divisible into two classes, as those of creation and those of dissolution, and that each *kalpa* of creation is followed by a *kalpa* of dissolution, which is, in its turn, followed by a *kalpa* of creation. Accordingly, at the conclusion of a *kalpa* of dissolution, all beings resort to *prakṛiti* which belongs to God: and, at the commencement of the next *kalpa*, which is a *kalpa* of creation, God sends out those beings again. Thus, universal creation and universal dissolution follow each other continuously in regular order; and *prakṛiti*, which belongs to God, is under the complete control of God, so that, whatever work *prakṛiti* is conceived to do, is ultimately done by God Himself. The *kalpa* of creation is called *sṛishṭi-kalpa*, and the *kalpa* of dissolution *pralaya kalpa*, in Sanskrit.

What happens to the beings in the universe, when, at the end of a *pralaya-kalpa*, they resort the *prakṛiti* of God? Why does God send them out again at the beginning of the next *sṛishṭi-kalpa*? I believe we may answer these questions with the aid of the next stanza, which, as you know, is the second one among the four stanzas we are now studying. When a *pralaya* or universal dissolution takes place, all beings resort to *prakṛiti*; that is, they all become subject to the control of *prakṛiti* and are reduced to a condition of helplessness and powerlessness: with a view to free them from this subjection and this abject powerlessness, God sends out into creation the whole collection of all beings: and to do this,

He utilises His own *prakṛiti*. The idea evidently is that, at the time of universal dissolution, all embodied beings become disembodied owing to their embodiments also getting dissolved. But this forced disembodiment is not like that other disembodiment of beings, which is the fore-runner, so to say, of their final deliverance from the bondage of matter. This forced disembodiment is no preparation for soul-salvation; it simply disorganises the beings and the disroganised and disembodied beings have, in consequence, their material bondage pressed upon them more than ever, and become, as it were, so closely entangled in the meshes of *prakṛiti* as to be wholly unable to get out of it of their own accord. To enable them to rise above this condition of hopeless powerlessness and abject subjection to the control of *prakṛiti*, it is necessary to re-organise them and make them into beings once again. This is the work which God does in every *sṛishṭi-kalpa*: and for this purpose of re-organising the disorganised beings, He very naturally utilises His own *prakṛiti*. It must now be clear to you how, at the commencement of the *kalpa*, He sends out the beings again, and how, utilising His own *prakṛiti*, He again and again sends out from the control of *prakṛiti* the whole of this collection of beings, which is helplessly powerless.

The next stanza tells us what the kind of responsibility is, which God has chosen to take upon Himself, in respect of this work of re-organising the disorganised beings with a view to enable them to play their part in the created world. To understand this stanza aright, we have to bear in mind that the law of *karma* is a law of absolute justice, a law, which is universal and inexorable. It comes out according to that law that all beings in the universe are what they are, because they have made themselves so. The work we do and the life we live, from time to time in re-incarnation after re-incarnation, always act as determining factors in moulding the condition of our current life. In other words, we reap what we sow. In fact, each one of us is inevitably formed and fashioned by his or her own *karma*.

The justice of a law like this is self-evident and altogether unquestionable; and the very absoluteness of its justice bestows on it the title to be a universal law. What is meant by a universal law is a law which operates effectively at all times, and in all places, and in relation to all beings: time, place and

circumstances have no power to limit in any way the operation of such a law. The law of *karma* is a universal law in this sense; and no exception can be admitted in relation to it; Almighty God Himself will not choose to go against it. It is an inexorable law in the sense that it is irrevocable and unalterable.

God is the promulgator of this great law of universal justice; and the authority, which enables it to be unfailingly effective, is derived from Him. Nevertheless, even He cannot revoke it without stultifying Himself. As a matter of fact, He will not revoke it. Therefore, when, at the end of a *kalpa* of dissolution and the beginning of a *kalpa* of creation, all the the various disorganised beings become re-organised and re-shaped, each of them has its organisation and embodiment determined by its own *karma*. So far as this work of the re-embodiment and re-organisation of beings at the time of creation is concerned, it may well be said that God is sitting still like an indifferent person and is unattached to the activities, while the work itself keeps going on according to the law of *karma*. And yet, it is God, who, utilising His own *prakṛiti*, sends out again and again from the control of *prakriti* the whole collection of helpless and powerless beings: and it is to Him that all beings are made to resort at the time of dissolution.

Since He is an unattached worker, these actions of His do not bind Him. As I have pointed out to you more than once, it is a well known *Upāñishadic* teaching that work does not cling to the unattached worker. It may also be said here that, since God is God, work cannot cling to Him. Nothing can impose any limitation upon Him. A commentator tells us that, in the manner in which the water on the lotus leaf is on the leaf and yet does not adhere to it, in that same manner, *karma* does not cling to the unattached worker. In relation to the work of universal creation and univetsal dissolution, God has been seen to be both worker and indifferent onlooker.

To conceive Him as such is not quite easy to most of us: and His relation to *prakṛiti* is described in the next stanza, to enable us to comprehend Him as well as we may. In it, we are told that God is the *adhyakṣha* or superintending overlord in

relation to *prakṛiti*. As the superintending overlord of *prakṛiti*, He is ultimately responsible for all the work which *prakṛiti* does; He is the worker. In His capacity as the superintending overlord, He does not directly determine the existing variety in the nature and condition of the created beings: this variety is allowed to be determined by their *karmas*; hence, He is a mere onlooker. Variety in the nature and condition of created beings implies inequality in relation to them; to most minds, inequality spells injustice; and in the infliction of injustice, cruelty is ever involved. Because God is a mere onlooker as creator, it is possible for Him to be free from the imputation of injustice and cruelty arising from the inequality that is current in creation. This also is pointed out by the commentators in their explanation of the statement—"These actions (of Mine) do not bind Me". We thus learn that, owing to the fact that God is just and kind, He acts as an indifferent onlooker in relation to the work of creation.

I do not know how far my explanation of why and how God is both worker and indifferent onlooker in relation to the work of creation, is satisfactory to you. I, however, feel assured from my past experience that you will gladly accept it to the extent to which you find it worthy of acceptance. We have so far endeavoured to understand the statement that, with God as the superintending overlord, *prakṛiti* gives birth to the world with all its moveable and immoveable beings: it now remains for us to see what the meaning is of the further statement, that owing to this same cause, the world undergoes its transformations. This same cause here indicates the cause that God is the superintending overlord, in relation to *prakṛiti*: and the transformations of the world denote the evolution and involution of *prakṛiti*. You know that the former of these two processes is associated with universal creation and the latter with universal dissolution. Accordingly, this further statement means that God is the ultimate agent, not only in relation to the work of universal creation, but also in relation to the work of universal dissolution. It is worthy of note that in the last of the four stanzas, the study of which we are now concluding, the word *jagat*, meaning the 'world', occurs only once, and that, nevertheless, the stanza has had to be interpreted, as if it occurred twice therein. This kind of construction by the use of implication is deemed to be passably normal in Sanskrit syntax.

Our work this morning has enabled us to learn that the ninth chapter, the study of which we began to-day, deals with *bhakti-yoga*, or the system of God-worship which is based on loving devotion to God. We have seen what the noteworthy characteristics of this system of God-worship are, and how it is specially valuable as a means for the securing of soul-salvation and God-attainment. The peculiar greatness of God, who is the object of *bhakti-yoga*, was made out to consist in His immanence and transcendence and essential spirituality, in His being the support of the universe and also the source of the universe. As the superintending overlord of *prakṛiti*, He was ascertained to be the one ultimate centre of power in the universe. This peculiar greatness of God, Śrī Kṛishṇa attributed to Himself, and pointedly drew the attention of Arjuna to it by saying to him—'Look at My sovereign power!' Śrī Kṛishṇa probably suspected that Arjuna was feeling in his inner heart that his own human friend and relation—great though undoubtedly he was—was too readily arrogating to himself the attributes of God. It is very natural for such a feeling to arise under the circumstances: and when it arises, it is apt to be betrayed by the face. On observing that Arjuna was evidently being troubled by want of faith in his heart in regard to the divinity of Śrī Kṛishṇa, it became necessary to instil faith into him by pointing out to him that, when God becomes incarnate as man, His divinity remains undiminished. This is the next subject we have to deal with in this chapter.

xli

In our last class, I pointed out to you that the ninth chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* treats of *bhakti-yoga*. In addition to giving us a description of the nature and value of *bhakti-yoga*, it deals with three important topics connected with it, namely, the peculiar and supreme greatness of God, the undiminished divinity of God in His incarnation as man, and the special value of loving devotion to God as a means of soul-salvation and God-attainment. Our work in the last class partially dealt with the first of these topics. The second topic of the undiminished divinity of God in His incarnation as man, we have to take into consideration now. To Arjuna whose faith appeared to be not strong enough to see God Himself in Śrī Kṛishṇa who was his own familiar friend and human relation, Śrī Kṛishṇa went on to say as follows:—

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम् ॥ ॥ ११ ॥

मोघाशा मोघकर्माणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।
राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतीं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥ १२ ॥

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥ ॥ १३ ॥

11. Without knowing My supreme condition of existence, foolish persons disregard Me, who am the great lord (of all beings), and have assumed the human embodiment:

12. Senseless persons, who are dependent upon that deluding Nature, which is monstrous and also demoniacal,– (persons) whose hopes are in vain, whose works are in vain, and whose knowledge (also) is in vain.

13. But the great souls, who are dependent upon that Nature that is divine, understand Me to be the indestructible source of beings, and then become so devoted to Me as to have their mind (bestowed) on none else.

The first thing which is to be noted here is that the examination of the syntax of the eleventh and the twelfth stanzas shows them to be made up of one sentence : and it is but right to interpret them accordingly. They tell us that it is foolish persons, that disregard God who is the great lord of all beings, when He assumes the human embodiment. You may ask who those foolish persons are that disregard God in His human incarnation. They are persons, who are ignorant of the supreme condition of God's existence. It is hard for them to know how the greatness, power and supremacy of God may be found in a man, although he happens to be a human incarnation of God. They cannot see that the assumption of the human body by God does not in the least mar the absoluteness of His power and perfection. They are therefore senseless persons, owing to their inability to understand that, when God assumes the human embodiment, His divinity remains undiminished.

Their hopes are said to he in vain. The hopes, mentioned here, relate, of course, to the attainment of the supreme bliss of soul-salvation. You know that God assumes the human body and comes down to live as a man among men with the object of rendering protection to the good, of dealing destruction to wrong-doers, and of establishing righteousness firmly here upon the earth: and when, out of common human ignorance, the incarnate God-man is disregarded as a teacher, the foolish world of the time loses all chance of deriving any benefit from His omniscient wisdom and unlimited mercifulness. How can they attain salvation, who disregard their own divine teacher? Their hopes, in this matter, are certain to prove in vain.

Their works are also said to be in vain. Not knowing the supreme condition of God's existence and not being able to recognise the undiminished divinity of the incarnate God-man, they are sure to find it hard to live the life of disinterested duty duly done,—the life of absolutely unselfish and unattached work. Those that do not understand how God may become man, and why He does actually assume the human embodiment,—how can they realise that, in all that man does, the ultimate responsibility of true agency belongs to God? When we come to know that God can, and often does, become man for the good of the world, it becomes easy for us to see that, in all that man does, God Himself works through man. Therefore our title is only to do work, but not to the fruit that accrues therefrom. God being the real worker, the fruit belongs to Him: it must be His. It is only by knowing this that we can securely lay the foundation of true unselfishness in our heart, by making over the ultimate agency of our work—whether it happens to be ritualistic or otherwise—to God, who is the real worker. For our work to be unselfish and disinterested, and so serve well as a means for the attainment of the final emancipation of the soul from the bondage of matter, it is accordingly necessary for us to know the supreme condition of God's existence and also His undiminished divinity, when He becomes incarnate as man. It must now be evident to you that, in the case of those, who are ignorant of these things, their works are also apt to be in vain.

Moreover, their knowledge also is said to be in vain. They have been already declared to be senseless persons, as you are aware; and you will perhaps ask if it is possible for

senseless persons to be in possession of knowledge I am sure you all know the distinction between knowledge and wisdom. It is possible for a person to possess much knowledge and little wisdom. A man may know many things—things useful as well as useless, things good and worthy as well as bad and unworthy, things accordant with truth as well as not accordant with truth: and yet, in spite of all this knowledge, his life may not be accordant with truth and may not be directed towards the attainment of the supreme good. The fact, that so many of us so often know the better and do the worse, is enough to show that to possess knowledge is not the same thing as to possess wisdom: knowledge is in the mind, and wisdom works itself out in life. A man's life may be said to be wisely lived, when it aims at the attainment of the highest good, and is, in all its details, fully accordant with truth. To make one's life wise thus, no other knowledge avails, than the knowledge of the supreme condition of God's existence, and the knowledge also of His undiminished divinity, when He becomes incarnate as man. This is evident in itself, and requires no proving: and hence all the weight of varied knowledge, possessed by a person, who is devoid of this vitally valuable knowledge, is also apt to prove in vain.

These senseless persons, whose hopes and works and knowledge have been shown to be in vain, owe their senselessness, as we are told here, to their dependence upon that deluding Nature, which is 'monstrous' and also 'demoniacal'. You may remember that, in a previous chapter (VII. *14*), we were taught that, in relation to us, *prakṛiti*, otherwise called *māyā*, is capable of proving 'divine' as well as 'demoniacal'. When *prakṛiti* acts as a blinding wall and prevents us from perceiving God, who is above and beyond it, so as to make of us materialists and atheists, then it is 'demoniacal'. When, however, it enables us to rise, as they say, from Nature to Nature's God, and thus becomes a revealer of God, then it is 'divine'. That is what we learnt there. Here also the same distinction has to be borne in mind. What I mean is that *prakṛiti* is in this manner functionally distinguishable only into two kinds, and that three kinds of it are not intended to be specified by Śrī Kṛishṇa. 'Demoniacal' *prakṛiti* is also 'monstrous' at the same time; owing to the horribly wicked effect, which it produces always on the mind of certain unfortunate people, monstrosity is one of its necessary and

invariable characteristics. In fact, we have on the one hand the 'demoniacal *prakṛiti*, which is also 'monstrous' at the same time; and on the other hand, we have the *prakṛiti*, which is 'divine'.

Of these two functionally distinguishable varieties of *prakṛiti*, the 'demoniacal' variety is indeed deluding, inasmuch as it shuts off the glory of truth from our vision and gives rise to wrong opinion and false belief. It prevents people from knowing God and forces them to become materialists and atheists. Such is the delusion which it causes How much misleading of thought and falsification of truth there is in it, you can certainly judge for yourself. The seriousness of the delusion is proportionate to the harmfulness of the untruth which it foists upon us. The moral harm, arising from the shutting off of God from man, is incalculable and immense. However, it is not every one that can be imposed upon by 'demoniacal' Nature. Weak-minded and spiritually vigourless persons are more prone to be deluded than those who are strong-minded and spiritually vigorous.

So we are told that, in relation to great souls, Nature acts as 'divine'. You know that, when Nature is 'divine' and acts as 'divine', it proves to be a revealer of God to man. It is only when we are dependent upon 'divine' Nature, that we can rise from Nature to Nature's God. We shall do well to note that, in the process of rising from Nature to Nature's God, logic compels us to come upon God as the Indestructible Source of Beings. What is called the design argument for the proof of God leads us to God almost along the same road, so as to compel us to apprehend Him as the Indestructible Source of Beings. When so apprehended, He has to be one and one only. *Ekamevādvitīyam Brahma*—the *Brahman* is one only, and is without a second. Otherwise the *Brahman* cannot be conceived as the ultimate source and centre of all power in the universe. Unless we are willing to grant that the source of the universe is the universe itself in some form or other, we are bound to see that that source is immaterial and immutable and immortal: that is, it has to be indestructible, while the world and all its material contents are destructible.

There is, accordingly, a marked uniqueness about God who is the Indestructible Source of Beings; and this uniqueness of His makes it impossible for those, who are His sincere devotees, to bestow their mind on any one else. We may say

that all such devotees are apt to feel that nothing else than God deserves their attention. Consequently they become so devoted to God as to have their mind bestowed on none else. It must be self-evident that devotees of this description, who are dependent upon the 'divine' variety of Nature, will not disregard God, when He becomes incarnate as man. The undiminished divinity of God in His incarnation as man is always a well established fact to them.

With a view to illustrate further the peculiar greatness of God, the way in which certain other kinds of devotees conceive and worship God is described in some of the following stanzas. The very next stanza, which we have to study, runs thus;—

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः।
नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥ ॥ १४ ॥

14. Those, who are always (absorbed) in *yoga*, worship Me with loving devotion, constantly singing praises of Me, putting forth endeavours with firm resolution, and bowing unto Me in reverence.

It is clear that, in this stanza, we have a description of the way, in which those, who are always absorbed in *yoga*, worship God. Who are the *nitya-yuktas*, whom we have denoted here as those that are always absorbed in *yoga*? It appears to me that, to answer this question aright, we have to take into consideration the definition of *yukta* or the man of *yoga*, as given in an earlier chapter (*VI. 8*). There we are told that 'that *yogin*, whose nature is pleased and satisfied with knowledge and realisation, who is immoveably aloft and has conquered the senses, and to whom a clod of earth, a stone and gold are all alike in value, is said to be truly the man of *yoga*'. I remember having spoken of this kind of *yukta* as the man of accomplished *yoga*; and the *nitya-yukta* may therefore be said to be one who is always a person of accomplished *yoga*. It will be of help to you to bring to your mind now the comments I made at the time on this definition of *yukta*, the man of accomplished *yoga*. Dispassion and non-attachment, lofty aloofness in spirit and the power to take delight in knowledge and realisation are evidently among the most noteworthy characteristics of the man of accomplished *yoga*; and he, who

possesses these characteristics always, is the *nitya-yukta*. Such a person worships God with loving devotion, as, in relation to him, *bhakti-yoga* happens to be the most appropriate system of God-worship. His lofty aloofness in spirit obviously unfits him for the adoption of the other well known systems of God-worship, and his *bhakti*, that is, his God-love, makes itself manifest in the ways pointed out here.

When men of God-love worship God with loving devotion, they constantly sing praises of Him; that is one way in which their God-love makes itself manifest. To them the object of their loving devotion becomes, through their love itself, so dear as to make them feel that it is always worthy of the highest praise. An exalted appreciation of the virtues possessed by the object of love may very often be seen to be one of the results of the love itself. Another way, in which, as pointed out here, their God-love makes itself manifest, is seen in that it enables them to put forth endeavours with firm resolution. I need not tell you that all their endeavours are certain to be Godward endeavours aiming at soul-salvation and God-attainment. The sincerity and depth of their devotion to God are certain to prove effective in endowing their minds with a determination, which neither slackens in force nor undergoes any change in aim or direction in respect of the Godward work, in which they often engage themselves. Their God-love itself leads them to engage themselves in Godward work: and when, under its influence, they are engaged in doing their Godward work, the very same God-love of theirs enables them to put forth their endeavours with firm resolution, that is, with an unshaken determination to accomplish their Godward work fully and well. Such is, as we are given to understand here, the second way in which their loving devotion to God makes itself manifest.

Again, those lucky aspirants, who, depending upon the Nature that is divine, worship God with loving devotion, bow unto Him, as we are told here, in reverence. You know that reverence is a feeling of respectful regard, which arises in our hearts generally in relation to those, whom we recognise to be superior to us in wisdom and power and worthiness of every kind. In respect of these qualifications, the superiority of God is known to be unsurpassed in excellence; and it is, therefore, no wonder, that the feeling of reverence arises in our hearts in

relation to God, as soon as it is prompted by our loving devotion to God. It must surely be known to you that we cannot revere those, whom we do not love. I do not mean to say that we revere all those, whom we happen to love. What I want you to bear in mind is that real reverence in relation to any worthy object presupposes love in relation to that same object. Thus, our love of God gives birth to our reverence for God; and the bowing of the devotees to God is a well recognised form in which their love-born feeling of reverence for God finds its physical expression. These are some of the ways, in which the God-love of the devotees, who are always absorbed in *yoga*, becomes actualised so as to make itself openly manifest.

There is invariably a very remarkable feature about the God-love of the *nitya-yuktas*, which, I believe, cannot have escaped your attention. In connection with the love of human beings to human beings, it may be observed that it is generally characterised by what is called the quality of reciprocity, so much so, that it has become quite a common thing for people to expect to be loved by those, whom they happen to love. This kind of expectation of what may be said to be the return-love is entirely absent from the sphere wherein the God-love of the *nitya-yuktas* is alive and in operation. Please do not misunderstand me as saying that God does not love those, who worship Him with loving devotion. God's love and mercy are unbounded, and He spontaneously bestows them on His creatures with a freedom and liberality that are altogether His own. What is, however, noteworthy is, that the *nitya-yukta*, in loving God, does not expect any love in return for his love. The love, which expects return-love, assumes a more or less mercenary aspect; and the highest love can never and nowhere afford to be mercenary. To be mercenary even in the least degree is incompatible with the highest love. It is in the very nature of the God-love of the *nitya-yukta*, that it flows out freely of its own accord towards its divine object. The heart of the devotee, who is always absorbed in yoga and worships God with loving devotion, becomes filled with joy, when his God-love flows out from it thus, in obedience to the very nature of his pure and perfect love.

Having so far seen how the *nitya-yukta* loves and worships God, we have to proceed to learn that there are others, who

worship God by means of the *jñāna-yajña* or 'wisdom-sacrifice,' and have also to try and see in what way they conceive God and worship God.

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते ।
एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ ॥ १२ ॥

15. Others, again, who offer worship by means of the wisdom-sacrifice, worship Me, who am multiform, in various ways, as being one, and (also) as being divided.

In trying to understand the meaning of this stanza, we are at once prompted to ask the question—'What is the wisdom-sacrifice?' You have been told that the sacrifice is a very ancient institution in the history of religion, and that it has always been conducted as a ceremony of great importance. This ancient institution of sacrifice has, with the progress of civilisation, undergone, in various religions, various changes in manner and in spirit. Nevertheless, the fundamental conception of it is found remaining in all religions; and it is utilised very often for obtaining guidance in regard to the conduct of the worship of God. So long as the sacrifice is looked upon as a rigidly formal ritual, and is scrupulously maintained as a petrified, inelastic institution, no religion can succeed in appealing to the heart and in becoming a source of noble moral inspiration. Formalism is always a deadly enemy to true religion. Therefore, men of wisdom find it necessary to view it in the light of their wisdom, so that they may ascertain and proclaim its true value from time to time. Accordingly, by wisdom-sacrifice, we have to understand the institution of sacrifice as viewed in the light of the wisdom of the man of wisdom. The value, which the ancient institution of sacrifice assumes in this new light, is indicated to us in the next stanza. Those persons, who use the sacrifice, possessed of this new value, as a means of God-worship, conceive God, as we are told here, to be multiform, and worship Him in various ways, sometimes as being one and undivided, and at other times as being divided and more than one.

The contrast here is between the unity of God, as established by philosophy, and the multiformity of that same one only God, as seen in the various religions adopted by mankind. The conception as well as the name of God in one

religion is not the same as in another religion, and frequently enough, in one and the same religion, we find more than one conception and name of God. Philosophy works in the field of abstract thought: but the field, wherein religion works, is in the practical life of man and of the human community. I mention this to show to you that, even as the unity of God is a natural and necessary fruit derived from philosophy, the multiformity of God is the inevitable result of the concretisation of philosophy into religion. The Jehova of the Jews, the Allah of the Mussulmans, the Father in Heaven of the Christians, and the Brahmā and Vishṇu and Śiva of the Hindus are all, for instance, different names and conceptions of the one only God of philosophy. You know how, among us Hindus, Śiva and Vishṇu, as well as some other deities, are praised and worshipped, each with the aid of a thousand significant names. This well understood multiformity of God never means to us the same thing as a multiplicity of gods.

It is worth remarking that only ignorant critics of Hinduism say that it is polytheistic. It is more monotheistic than most monotheistic religions are, in that it recognises and lays stress on the philosophic unity of God, underlying the diversity of deities that are worshipped in the various religions known to mankind. There is thus a noteworthy universalism about the monotheistic belief of the Hindus, which is lacking in other monotheistic religions. The point to be borne in mind by us is that the men of wisdom who offer worship to God by means of the wisdom-sacrifice, worship Him both from the standpoint of abstract philosophy and the standpoint of concrete religion: their wisdom lies in the fact that both the standpoints give to them the mental vision of the same one only God of pure monotheism.

I think that many of you must be feeling in your hearts that our explanation of this stanza is incomplete, inasmuch as we have not yet been told what value the sacrifice assumes in the light of the wisdom of such men of wisdom. That feeling argues rightly; and the value assumed by the sacrifice in the light of the wisdom of the man of wisdom is brought out in the next stanza, from which we are enabled to gather that, even as the object of the worship conducted by the man of wisdom is God, and the end to be attained by his worship of God is God,

even so the means by which he offers his worship to God, is also God Himself. Let us now study that stanza :—

अहं क्रतुरहंयज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।
मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥ ॥ १६ ॥

16. I am the ritual; I am the sacrifice; I am the formula of offering; I am the herb; I am the hymn; I am Myself the ghee; I am the fire; I am the fire-offering.

It must be well-known to you that rituals and sacrifices are means of God-worship. In the Sanskrit stanza, the expressions *kratu* and *yajña* are found; and these we have translated as 'ritual' and 'sacrifice'. Very often they are synonymous in Sanskrit usage; and no difference is made between them in meaning. Here, however, they are used with somewhat different meanings. By 'ritual,' we generally understand a ceremonial process of offering worship to a deity it is a general term including the 'sacrifice' also within its significance, inasmuch as we have to understand by 'sacrifice' nothing other than an elaborate ritual. Thus the 'sacrifice' is a particular form of ritual. Our translation, as you may see, is intended to show this distinction well to us; and what we have to take note of is, that Śrī Kṛishṇa here identifies Himself with all forms of ritual, the more elaborate as well as the less elaborate. Accordingly, the man of wisdom, who worships God by means of the wisdom-sacrifice, identifies all rituals with God. To enable us to see how complete this identification is, certain things associated with the ritual—they may be called the limbs of the ritual—are also specifically identified with God, one by one.

The first limb taken up for such identification is the formula of offering used in the ritual. It is mentioned as *svadhā* in the original Sanskrit. There are, however, two such formulas known to the system of Hindu rituals, namely, *svāhā* and *svadhā*. Of these, the latter is commonly used in the conduct of such rituals as are associated with the manes of departed ancestors, while the former is used in the conduct of all rituals of an auspicious character. Here this well-known distinction is lost sight of, and *svadhā* is used in a general sense to mean the formula of offering; and that is identified with God. The next limb taken up for identification is the

herb. The Sanskrit word translated as 'herb' is *aushadha*. It has been interpreted in more than one way, as meaning plants, grains, food, medicine and so on. None of these constitutes a particularly characteristic limb of the ritual. Another meaning has also been given to it; and a commentator tells us that the 'herb' is the plant from which the *soma* juice is extracted: it is the *soma-latā* or *soma* creeper as they call it. You known that the *soma* is a very characteristic limb, so to say, of certain elaborate sacrifices called *soma-yāgas*. Therefore, the probability is that *aushadha* here denotes the *soma-latā*: and Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with this plant, looked upon as a limb of the ritual.

The third limb, here mentioned, is the 'hymn'. The recital of certain specified Vedic hymns, addressed to the deity intended to be worshipped by the ritual, is, in Hinduism, an essential part of the ritual. Without the recital of the hymn, the ritual cannot be completed; it is apt to be incomplete and imperfect in the absence of the hymn. Therefore the hymn is, as well as the herb, a characteristic limb of the ritual; and Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with that also. Then comes the oblation of ghee to be identified with God. 'I am Myself the ghee'—says Śrī Kṛishṇa. Almost all the rituals of Hinduism are fire-offerings; and the oblation of ghee to the sacred fire is an essential part of all these fire-offerings. Thus, the identification of Śrī Kṛishṇa with the ghee amounts to the identification of another characteristic limb of the ritual with God. Just as the libation of *soma* has been identified with God, so also is the oblation of ghee identified with God.

Śrī Kṛishṇa further says—'I am the fire'. I need not tell you that it is not the ordinary secular fire, which is spoken of here. On the other hand, it is the sacred sacrificial fire, with which Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself,—with the *tretāgni*, as it is called. As you know, the *āhavanīyāgni*, the *gārhapatyāgni* and the *dākshiṇāgni* make up the *tretāgni*. These fires are required for the conduct of the various rituals of Hinduism; and so they, in their turn, constitute another characteristic limb of the ritual. In fact, it is their identification with God, which we have to understand by Śrī Kṛishṇa's statement—'I am the fire'.

After thus identifying Himself with certain characteristic limbs of the ritual, Śrī Kṛishṇa at last says—'I am the fire-offering'. Here, the identification is with the whole of the

ritual. There may be many more limbs of the fire-offering which have not been specifically mentioned here. All of them become included as a matter of course in this identification of the whole of the fire-offering with God. In this way, the identification of the means of God-worship with God has been exhibited to us in full completeness. We have been made to see that the identification is both intimate and thorough. I need not tell you that it is the wisdom of the man of wisdom, who worships God by means of the wisdom-sacrifice, that enables him to realise the peculiar greatness of God through such identification of the means of God-worship with God. The following three stanzas give a further description of the peculiar greatness of God; and let us now study them.

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः।
वेद्यं पवित्रमोङ्कार ऋक्सामयजुरेव च ॥ ॥ १७ ॥

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत्।
प्रभवप्रलयस्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥ ॥ १८ ॥

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च।
अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥ ॥ १९ ॥

17. I (am) the father, mother, upholder (and) grandfather of this world, (I am) the holy (object) that should be known, (I am) the syllable *Om*, and also the *Rigveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, and the *Yajurveda*.

18. (I am) the goal, the supporter, the lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge, (and) the friend; (I am) the seat of the origin and dissolution (of the world), the hidden treasure, (and) the indestructible seed.

19. I give out heat, and withhold and let out rain; (I am) immortality and also death, the entity and the non-entity.

What are we to understand by the statement, that God is the father, mother, upholder and grandfather of this world? The father is the protector of the family, the mother is its nourisher; and both of them are its parents; they generally uphold the family. This being so, the reason, why the upholder is mentioned separately from the father and the mother, is, because it so happens sometimes that somebody

else—say, the eldest son of the family—is its upholder or sustainer. The function of the upholder is thus distinguishable from that of the father as well as of the mother. The grandfather is an earlier progenitor than the father and the mother; the *pitāmaha*, which is the Sanskrit word used here, means the father's father. Accordingly, we have to understand that, while God is, as the generator of the world, its source of origin, He is also its protector, nourisher and sustainer. The world has come from Him, and is protected, nourished and maintained by Him. That is the meaning of God being the father, mother and upholder of the world. God is also said to be its grandfather: this is evidently intended to tell us that, howsoever far we trace back the origin of the world, we come upon God as its one final source. Since God is unborn and everlasting, He may well be said to be His own progenitor. Consequently, God, as the father of the world, is also its grandfather.

Such are some of the special features of His peculiar greatness; and the description here draws our attention to certain other features of His greatness. So, Śri Kṛishṇa says—'I am the holy object that should be known'. According to the *Vedānta*, the *Brahman* is the one thing, by knowing which every thing becomes known. A great thing like the *Brahman* is therefore a mystery really worth knowing: indeed, it should be known, for, without knowing it, no true knowledge of any kind can be acquired by us. Moreover, it is a holy mystery, being pure and flawless and worthy of all reverence. Whether we call God by the name *Brahman* or by any other name, He represents to us the highest and the most perfect embodiment of truth, beauty and goodness: and very naturally He happens to be the holy object that should be known.

The next thing with which Śri Kṛishṇa identifies Himself, with a view to point out His peculiar greatness, is the syllable *Om*. This, you know, goes by the name of *praṇava*; and we already (VII. 8.) had an occasion to obtain an idea of its mystic meaning and religious importance. It is undesirable to repeat all that you were told then. But it is necessary for you to remember that it was then understood to be an essential part of all the three *Vedas*, and to be, at the same time, more than equivalent to all of them in value. The *Vedas* are held to be the most sacred among the revealed scriptures of Hinduism; and their religious importance is considered to be

supreme. The sacredness and the religious importance of the *praṇava* are fully as great and noteworthy as those of the *Vedas*; and when Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with the *praṇava*, He gives expression, in an unmistakable way, to the peculiar greatness of God.

The last identification, mentioned in this context, is that of Śrī Kṛishṇa with the *Rigveda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Sāmaveda*. The *Vedas* are generally said to be four, when the *Atharvaṇa-veda* is also included among them. This *Veda* plays no part in the conduct of the great *Vedic* sacrifices; and there is evidence enough to indicate that it is a later compilation, which received recognition as a *Veda*, only after much special pleading in its favour. The word *trayī* means literally in Sanskrit any collection of three things; and it ordinarily denotes the *Vedas* according to Sanskrit usage. From this, we may gather that only those three *Vedas* which are of use in the conduct of the well known elaborate *Vedic* sacrifices, have been held to be *Vedas* in the proper sense of the term.

Probably, some of you are aware that the great *somayāgas* require sixteen *ṛitviks* or officiating priests. These are generally divided, in consideration of their function, into four groups of four each. The first group consists of the *hotṛi* priests, whose special duty it is to invoke the gods to come to the sacrifice and partake of the offerings therein offered. The second group is made up of the *adhvaryu* priests, who attend to the details of the various kinds of work that are to be performed in the sacrifice, and utter the proper sacrificial formulas on all the occasions, when the offerings are offered. The third group is that of the *udgātṛi* priests, who chant select *Vedic* hymns in praise of the gods from time to time as required. The *Brahman* priest is the superintendent of all the officiating priests in the sacrifice; and he is given three assistants to work immediately under him. These four priests make up the fourth group. The *Rigveda* is the *Veda* of the *hotṛi* priests; the *Yajurveda* belongs to the *adhvaryu* priests; and it is the *Sāmaveda* which is chanted by the *udgātṛi* priests. The *Brahman* priest and his assistants are expected to know all these three *Vedas*, as it is their duty of superintend the work of all the other priests officiating in the sacrifice.

Thus, each of the three *Vedas* has its own special use; and all of them are needed to make the sacrifice complete. And *Śrī* Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with every one of these three *Vedas*. In this, we have to see the most complete identification of the means of God-worship with God Himself: and on taking into consideration, in what high respect the *Vedas* are held, how great they are taken to be among the revealed scriptures of Hinduism, how sacred they are supposed to be, and how all religious knowledge is said to be derived from them, it becomes possible for us to obtain a fair idea of the peculiar greatness and the pure holiness of God, who indeed forms the one object that is worthy to be known.

The peculiar greatness of God is described, in other ways also, in these stanzas. *Śrī* Kṛishṇa says—"I am the goal." It must be quite easy for you to understand what this means. Evidently, the idea conveyed thereby is, that, to all aspirants, God is the ultimate object of attainment. You were told that Hinduism considers *mokṣha* to be the *parama-purushārtha*; this means that, according to Hinduism, the final emancipation of the soul from the bondage of matter is the supreme object of human pursuit. By the achievement of this emancipation, the soul is enabled, as you know, not only to realise itself, but also to realise God and to attain God. Self-realisation, God-realisation and God-attainment are all the outcome of the final emancipation of the soul; as a matter of fact, the *Gītā* teaches that this spiritual emancipation of the soul culminates in God-attainment. Accordingly, God is the ultimate object of attainment to all aspiring souls; He is the goal of life.

Moreover, He is said to be the 'supporter'. That is, God is the supporter of the universe. We have to understand that to be the supporter of the universe is different from being its upholder; otherwise, there would be a repetition of the same idea in the description of God, as given here. To be the upholder is to be the sustainer. I have translated the Sanskrit word *bhartā* as the 'supporter'. This word is very commonly used in the sense of the 'husband'; and the husband, as the supporter of the wife, is conceived to be a person of some authority. When we say that God is the supporter of the universe, the idea that He exercises authority over the universe is certain to be present in our minds: God may be declared to

be the master of the universe ; He takes care of it, and sees that no harm befalls it. That is exactly what it is to be the 'supporter'—to be the master and the authoritative caretaker.

God is said to be even more than this; He is said to be the 'lord'. The authority of the 'lord' is higher and more comprehensive that that of the master. All those, that are lords, are naturally masters also; but every master need not be a lord: many masters may be merely masters and nothing more. The superior and more comprehensive authority of the lord may often possess, in a more or less marked degree, the characteristics of sovereignty. In addition to being the 'lord', God is also 'witness.' You may remember that, in a previous stanza of this chapter (IX. *10*), we were told that God is the *adhyakṣha* or the superintending overlord of *prakṛiti*. God being 'lord' and 'witness' denotes the same thing almost exactly. In relation to the cosmic processes of evolution and involution, *prakṛiti* seems to be self-sufficient ; the Sāṅkhya philosophy holds that it is really self-sufficient, and forms the agent in connection with universal creation and dissolution. The Gītā tells us that God controls and guides *prakṛiti* from within, and that its self-sufficiency is therefore only apparent. Looked at from outside, God appears to be a mere onlooker in regard to the operations of *prakṛiti ;* He is then simply a witness; but, when the workings of *prakṛiti* are examined ftom within, we are inevitably led to the conclusion that God guides and controls them. In such situations, He is the lord whose will prevails.

Nevertheless, the fact of His being a witness, thus, in relation to the cosmic operations of *prakṛiti*, may make us disposed to believe in His aloofness and far-off unconcern regarding the life and destiny of the world. Such an inference is not right, because we are immediately told that He is the 'abode'. This, of course, means that the universe abides in God; and it must be as clear as daylight to you that the abidance of the universe in God deals the death-blow to the wrongly conceived idea of His far-off aloofness. His intimate nearness to the world and close concern with its life and destiny being established in this manner, we are next taught that He is the 'refuge'. I am sure you know that a 'refuge' is an asylum, which gives protection and offers an assurance of safety to all those, who go to it for shelter.

It is therefore a friendly abode ; and its friendliness is due to the love which it bestows on the shelter-seekers, who enter it and live in it.

Accordingly, in the idea, that God is the 'refuge', it is implied that He readily bestows His love on all those who seek it. So, He is the 'friend'. By the word 'friend', we generally understand a person, who is attached to us in love, and whose love is spontaneously bestowed upon us for our good in a free and generous manner. The friend closely identifies himself with the person, whom he befriends, and accomplishes his good, as he would accomplish his own. Since God is the 'friend', as we are told here, it has to be noted that His love is freely and fully available to all His creatures. In the unlimited, spontaneous, and freely flowing love, which God bestows upon His creatures, we are quite certain to observe another manifestation of His peculiar greatness.

The description of the greatness of God, as given in this context of the *Gītā*, does not end with this, for it goes on to say that God is the 'seat of the origin and dissolution' of the world. It has been pointed out to you already how God is the centre from which the universe proceeds during its evolution, and to which the universe returns at the culmination of its involution. Being such a centre of the great cosmic processes of creation and dissolution, He is the 'seat of the origin and dissolution' of the world, the potential source of all the various kinds of power that are actively in operation in the universe.

Again, Śrī Kṛishṇa says that He is "the hidden treasure". People dig up the earth and try to discover hidden treasures on account of the great value of the wealth that is stored up in them. The first point of note in the comparison of God to the hidden treasure is in its being hidden. God is likewise hidden from the ordinary vision of man ; still, it is not at all right to hold that, on account of His being hidden from view, He does not exist at all. The hidden treasure really exists in its place, in spite of its being hidden. In the same manner in which the invisibility of the hidden treasure is no proof of its non-existence, the ordinary invisibility of God to the common human vision is no proof of His non-existence: He exists fully as truly as the hidden treasure exists. The next point of note in the comparison is the great value of the wealth that

is hidden and kept out of view. If the hidden wealth happens to be small and insignificant in value, it does not deserve to be called a treasure: in fact, it is rarely so called, when its value is insignificant. Moreover, the hidden treasure is often considered to be an inexhaustible source of wealth. Thus, the comparison of God to the hidden treasure brings to light the great and inexhaustible value of the discovery of God to man. No wealth of any kind can ever be higher in value than God-realisation and God-attainment, because God is so peculiarly great.

The great God is further said to be the "indestructible seed". It may be in your minds that, in a previous chapter (VII. *10.*), Śrī Kṛishṇa told Arjuna—"I am, O Arjuna, the everlasting seed of all beings." That God is the 'indestructible seed', as mentioned here, evidently denotes that He is the 'everlasting seed of all beings'. It must be known to all of you that the seed is the most widely recognised source of plant-life. The seed, that gives birth to a plant, is not, however, everlasting or indestructible. It invariably happens that, in giving birth to the plant, the seed itself dies. It is, in fact, out of the death of the seed that the plant is born. But God is the 'everlasting seed of all beings'. That is, in giving birth to all the beings in the universe, God, who is their source even as the seed is the source of the plant, does not Himself perish. Plant-life culminates mostly in the production of the seed; and the seed happens to be the source of plant-life. The world is born out of God; and the culmination of the world-producing process of evolution is found in the return of the produced world, in a state of dissolution, back to its original source. Neither the evolution of the world out of God, nor its involution into Him, is capable of affecting, in any manner whatsoever, the infinity of His power and life. The world is born, and the world is dissolved; but God goes on as God for ever. Such is His greatness in being the 'indestructible seed'.

We have now to try and understand the import of Śrī Kṛishṇa's next statement—"I give out heat, and withhold and let out rain". Probably, you know that all the three functions mentioned in this statement are generally attributed to the sun. That the heat, light and life of the solar system are derived from the sun, who is its great central luminary, is distinctly granted by modern science; and authoritative scientific

opinion is also in favour of the view that rainfall and drought are determined by the sun. The very formation of the clouds in our atmosphere is due to the heat of the sun, which causes the free and general evaporation of water from the surface of the earth, and gives rise to the water-vapour, from the condensation of which the rain-giving clouds are created. It is also said that certain peculiarities, connected with the pheomenon of sun spots and the associated internal movements in the gaseous envelope of the sun, are related to the occurrence of famines upon the earth The withholding and the letting out of the rain are thus recognised to be due to the sun. Śrī Kṛishṇa's statement that He Himself performs the three functions, which, as we have seen, are clearly attributable to the sun, means that, in respect of the performance of these functions also, God is in reality the ultimate agent: the power of our mighty and majestic sun is only a small part of His infinite and inexhaustible power. Modern astronomers tell us that there are innumerable suns, like our sun, in the universe, and that each of them may well be associated with a solar system. When we are led to look upon the power of all the innumerable suns in the universe as a part of the power of God, the peculiar greatness of God is apt to become revealed to us in a very remarkable manner.

His greatness is further brought to light by Śrī Kṛishṇa telling us that He is "immortality and also death". It is not unknown to you that in the endeavour of philosophic thought to describe the indescribable God, the device of attributing apparently contradictory characteristics to Him is somewhat largely employed. We have already had examples of such apparently self-contradictory characterisations of God: and to say that He is "immortality and also death", at the same time, is one more of such self-contradictory characterisations of God. As we have learnt that God is an unborn and everlasting spirit of infinite power and infinite life, forming the invisible foundation and support of the universe, the mutability and mortality of material beings cannot at all be predicated in relation to Him. His enduring unchangeability is such as gives Him the title to be represented as 'immortality'. How can He be 'death' also at the same time, you are sure to ask. But, if you bear in mind that, according to Śrī Kṛishṇa, death is not the terrible thing that terminates life, but is a door-way to new life and new possibilities of soul-salvation and God-attainment, the

self-contradiction, implied in the characterisation of God as both 'immortality' and 'death', vanishes at once and leaves no trace of it behind. To say that God is "death" is the same thing as saying that He is the impeller of the progress of souls, through re-incarnation after re-incarnation, towards the goal of self-knowledge and God-knowledge and God-attainment. The enduring unchangeability of God and His constant care and concern for the emancipation of souls from the bondage of matter present His peculiar greatness to us in a remarkably striking manner. We have now seen how He is "immortality and also death".

He is said to be, moreover, 'entity and non-entity'. In this characterisation of God also, there is an apparent self-contradiction. Seeing that we know that God is the 'seat of the origin and dissolution' of the world, it should be easy for us to understand how He is 'entity' and also 'non-entity'. In the state of universal dissolution, all organised beings become disorganised, and thus cease to be beings; and when, next, the state of creation supervenes, they are all re-organised and become beings again. The universe may well be said to be 'non-entity', when it is in the former of these states. Similarly, when it is in the latter of these states, it deserves to be denoted as 'entity'. On our interpreting 'entity' and 'non-entity' in this manner,—the interpretation has the support of Śaṅkarāchārya—the apparent self-contradiction in this characterisation of God also disappears; and it becomes plain to us that 'entity' is derived from 'non-entity', and is resolved again into 'non-entity'. Therefore, it is not only not impossible, but is also natural for God to be both 'entity' and 'non-entity', and thus exhibit in a new light His remarkable greatness. With this characterisation of God as 'entity' and 'non-entity', the description of the greatness of God as realised by those who worship God by means of the wisdom-sacrifice, is brought to a conclusion in this context.

xlii

To make my meaning quite clear to you, and to explain away any apparent inconsistency that may possibly suggest itself to some of you, I feel constrained to go back to a few *ślokas* already dealt with.

Last time we were mainly dealing with the question of how it is that, in the case of certain people, it so happens that the very idea of the immanency of God in the universe leads them to the conclusion that God in so being immanent in the universe comes down from the high position of the Creator to the position of the creature; while, in the case of others, this idea of the immanency of God in the universe is calculated to produce the conviction that, in being immanent in the universe, God does not give up His essential character as one who transcends the universe. That He is both immanent and transcendent is the idea of some, while there are others to whom it is not possible to realise these two conceptions in regard to the nature of God together. These latter, whom the immanency of God leads to the belief that God, by being immanent in the universe, loses His transcendental character, and descends from the high position of the Creator to the low level of the creature, were there said to be subject to the *āsurī prakṛiti*. That is, in so far as they were concerned, the contemplation of the universe was not calculated to make them arrive at the great truth in regard to the the nature of God: it was calculated to lead them astray. That is why they were described as 'senseless persons, whose hopes are in vain, whose works are in vain, and whose knowledge (also) is in vain' in verse 12 above.

But there are others, who do not understand the immanence of God to mean that He is no other than the material universe, or that the Creator is no other than the creature. They may find it difficult to reconcile the transcendence of God with His immanence. Still they are persons of a superior character for the reason that they can perceive no degradation of God on account of His immanence. Such persons are described as great souls. Perhaps they are unconsciously in association with the divine nature of God.

During the course of our study of Chapter VII, we came across a two-fold division of *prakṛiti*. In relation to us it is capable of proving 'divine' as well as 'demoniacal'. When *prakṛiti* acts as a blinding wall and prevents us from seeing God, who is above and beyond it, then it is *āsurī*. When it reveals to us the true nature of God, it is *daivī*. This implies that mere reasoning alone cannot lead us to God. A careful examination of the totality of phenomena which we look upon as the universe, may lead us equally well to theism or atheism. Over and above reasoning, we have to allow some scope for the play of our faith.

Now, those, to whom *prakṛiti* acts as a revealer of God, look upon God as both transcendent and immanent. This conception of God is developed in the verses that we studied last time (IX. *13–19*). I propose to survey them again, paying special attention to the reconciliation therein effected between these two apparently contradictory ideas of transcendence and immanence.

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥ ॥ १३ ॥

In this verse we are told that the *mahātmans*, to whom *prakṛiti* acts as a revealer of God, know Him to be the indestructible source of all beings. They look upon God as *avyaya* and *bhūtādi*. The term *avyaya* signifies that God is free from decay and destruction. Śrī Kṛishṇa has already spoken of two *avyaktas*, the superior and the inferior, of which the former alone is indestructible. Now this freedom from change and decay can appertain only to what is immaterial. The epithet *avyaya* absolutely and in itself can appertain only to Him, who is immaterial in His nature. The other epithet is the term *bhūtādi*. *Ādi* is used here in the sense of material cause. *Ghaṭādi*, for instance, means the clay of which the pot is made. Now, He who is the source of all beings, must Himself be of the nature of those who proceed from Him. Take for instance a long line of descent among men. The first ancestor of that family must have been in a great measure similar in his physical constitution to most of his descendants. The father is like the son, the son like the grandson and the great-grandson like the grandson, and so on. There is in cases like this similarity between the producer and the produced, and this, I think, is implied by the word *ādi*.

Now, it is possible to argue that if God is *bhūtādi*, He must be something like a *bhūta* in order to be able to serve as a *bhūta*, and be at the basis of the evolution of *prakṛiti*. If it were so, He can only be immanent. And we shall fall into the error of supposing that what is *bhūtādi* must also be a *bhūta*. To guard us against this, Śrī Kṛishṇa expressly says that He is *avyaya*, thereby indicating His transcendental character Thus these two epithets reveal to us the dual character of God.

If Nature becomes to us the revealer of God, then we have to look upon that God as being immanent in the universe, and at the same time essentially different from it.

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रताः।
नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥ ॥ १४ ॥

Having understood that the great souls look upon God as both transcendent and immanent at the same time, we have to enquire how their conduct is influenced by their faith. If we look upon God as merely transcendent, He becomes remote and unapproachable. Such a God will be pleased with our devotion and worship and service. It is possible that He may not require anything more of us, that our duty will begin and end in merely meditating on Him and hymning His glories. If, however, God is both transcendent and immanent, our duty will assume a somewhat different form. The fact of divine immanence requires us to lead our lives in such a manner as to help the government of the universe by God, who rules it from both within and without. That is, it imposes on us an obligation to work in the stress of life, performing whatever duties may fall to our lot, without attachment to the results thereof. If you will permit me, I will place before you a rough analogy. A God, who is both immanent and transcendent, controls the universe somewhat in the manner in which the mainspring of a watch governs the movement of its numerous wheels. We are all wheels in the great machine of the universe. It is our duty to move in the direction set by the expanding force of the spring. For otherwise, we shall be obstructing the smooth working of the whole machine. On the other hand, if God controls the universe only from outside, our relation to Him will be similar to that between the passengers in a railway train and the steam that drags the train. What

does it matter to the train, whether the passengers are sleeping or talking, eating or drinking, doing what is right or what is improper? There is no intimate relation between the steam that drags the train and the passengers. The co-operation of the passengers is not necessary fot the running of the train. When our faith is in an absolutely transcendent God, there is no necessity that we should guide ourselves in accordance with the working of the universe around us, so as not to obstruct the government of God by anything that we do or say or think.

Thus the transcendence of God imposes on us the duty of worship, while the immanence of God imposes on us the duty of work. A God, who is merely transcendent, ought to be satisfied with worship and devotion. But a God, who is both transcendent and immanent, expects something more of us. He requires of us continuous and constant action, a life of dispassionate performance of duty. For it is through His power that we are what we are: our power to do and dare is derived from Him. It is not therefore right for anyone to shut himself from this world and say: "I do not care for the life of the world: to me it has no meaning. If I praise God, He will be pleased, and that is the beginning and the end of my duty". On the contrary, everyone of us ought to say: "It is my duty to praise God and be devoted to Him, who is the Lord of the universe. At the same time, as long as my lot is cast in this world, in which God Himself is immanent, and all beings are made to be what they are and propelled to do what they have to do by the power of God, —so long, I must do my duty in accordance with my position".

Fully so much appears to me to be implied by this *śloka*: it is the logical inference of a rule of conduct from the conception of God as both transcendent and immanent.

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते ।
एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ ॥ १२ ॥

Now, among sincere seekers after God, to whom *prakṛiti* has acted as a revealer of the Power beyond it, there may be honest differences of opinion. It is not easy to reconcile the ideas of ttanscendence and immanence. Some devotees may feel that it is irrational to combine these two apparently

contrarious ideas. And such persons may prefer to look upon God as being merely transcendent. Not that the faith in a God, who is both transcendent and immanent, is really irrational, but only that it appears irrational to some minds. In spite of earnestness and sincerity, differences of opinion may persist. Śrī Kṛishṇa does not insist on a compulsory uniformity of thought and creed. "I am *viśvato-mukha*," He says, " and those who worship Me by the sacrifice of thought may look upon Me as being either one with the universe or as separate from it". Oneness may be taken to mean immanence in this context: while separateness may well stand for transcendence. In fact, all concepts of God may be classified according to the prominence given to immanence or trancendence or both.

All these different realisations of God, which may seem mutually contradictory, find their harmony in the complex personality of God, who is multiform. To make my point clear, let me place before you an old story. There was a shield having two sides, one golden and the other silver. One man saw the golden side of the shield and said that the shield was golden another saw only the silver side and was convinced that it was silver. They went on arguing, and from words they proceeded to blows. It was not till they had an opportunity to exchange positions that they saw that they were both right and wrong at the same time. If such a difference of opinion is possible in relation to a shield, which has only two sides, how much more natural is it that there should be differences of opinion about God, who is *viśvato-mukha*? But these different views regarding God are not contradictory: they are complementary. They are like the two sides of the shield. All are based on truth: but each is an incomplete version.

Now, the true conception of God is one in which He is looked upon as both transcendent and immanent at the same time. Sincere seekers after God need not be blamed, if they cannot realise this conception. Suppose a man is placed in a fixed position in regard to the shield of which we have been speaking, so that he can see only the golden side. No great harm is done, if he persists in thinking that there is no other side to the shield. If, however, he can move round the shield, then he can realise the full truth. We may say that he was not

able to arrive at the truth on account of the difficulties of his position. Similarly, although the true view about God is that He is both immanent and transcendent, still those who realise Him as merely transcendent or merely immanent can be considered *mahātmans* to the extent that they tender Him service in he way of sacrifice of thought.

Śrī Kṛishṇa now proceeds to illustrate by means of examples how He is at the same time both transcendent and immanent.

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।
मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥ ॥ १६ ॥

In this stanza, as we saw, Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with the sacrifice and the various limbs of sacrifice. I believe that He is here particularly interested in pointing out that even those who worship the *Vedic* gods with sacrifices are worshipping Him alone. In the light of the wisdom of the *jñānin* the means of God-worship becomes identified with God Himself. You may remember that Śrī Kṛishṇa began his teaching with an exposition of the speculative theory of conduct, which goes by the name of Sāṅkhya. The soul, we were taught, is immortal and essentially different from matter, which is mutable aud mortal. But it is in association with matter, and this association places limitations on the soul's powers of knowledge and enjoyment. And the true interests of the soul require that it should seek to get rid of this bondage and attain to its own essential nature. For this, it is necessary to know the cause of the bondage. Hence it is taught that the influence of *karma* is responsible for the imprisonment of the soul. Every act that we do and every thought that we think tend to strengthen the fetters that bind us. The only way to obtain freedom is by destroying the effects of *karma*. And this can be done, we are told, if we do our duties without attachment to their fruits.

Every link in this chain of reasoning seems convincing, but it is only natural to ask: how is a life of unselfish duty to be lived? Is it really possible to live such a life? It is doubtless an excellent thing to know what philosophical thinking considers to be the ideal course of conduct for us: but if ethical and metaphysical speculation places before us an impossible or

impracticable precept, it is hardly of any value. Śrī Kṛishṇa therefore gives us practical suggestions. Within the first six chapters of the Gītā, Śrī Kṛishṇa tells us that there are four ways by which we can live a life, which will in course of time bring about the emancipation of our souls. One way is to do whatever falls to our lot as duty, without any idea of selfish gain and simply because it is our duty. A second method is to realise with the help of philosophic speculation and knowledge that *saṅga* or attachment is the sole cause of the bondage of the soul and then to overcome any selfish tendency towards attachment by the strength of our will. Yet another way consists in attributing the agency of all our deeds to *prakṛiti*. We may say to ourselves, "We eat because *prakṛiti* makes us hungry; we breathe because *prākṛiti* compels us to breathe, etc". If we believe that all our acts are due to the material forces which actuate us as embodied beings, then also we become free from attachment to results. It is only when we feel that we are the doers and the agents of what we do that we become attached to the results of our work. When this agency is attributed to *prakṛiti*, any selfish clinging to the results becomes absurd. Lastly, Śrī Kṛishṇa points out in the fourth chapter that we can destroy selfishness by looking on God as the agent of all that we do. This last method, which Śrī Kṛishṇa recommends in various places as the easiest and the best, goes by the name of *bhakti-yoga*. To the followers of this path, even as the object of their worship is God and the end to be attained by their worship is God, even so, the means by which they offer their worship is also God. That is why Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with the means of God-worship.

It is also worth noticing that Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself here with all forms of ritual, the more elaborate as well as the less elaborate. Śrī Kṛishṇa says that He is the *yajña* as a whole, and then goes on to identify Himself with the various limbs, so to say, that go to make up the *yajña*, such as *kratu*, *svadhā* and so on. I have already explained to you what those technical terms mean. The main point to be noted is this. He is the part as well as the whole. He is the end as well as the means of sacrifice. If we can understand this, it will be easy for us to to realise how He is transcendent and immanent at the same time.

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः।
वेद्यं पवित्रमोङ्कार ऋक्सामयजुरेव च ॥ ॥ १७ ॥

The first line of this stanza, where Śrī Kṛishṇa describes Himself as the father, the mother, the upholder and the grandfather of this world, brings out prominently the immanence of God in this world. In the second line, He lays stress on His transcendence. He is the holy one that has to be known. And His holiness is obviously due to His complete freedom from the binding influence of matter, or in other words, to His transcendence. The *oṁkāra*, as we have learnt already, is symbolic of the peculiar greatness of God. The three *Vedas*, *Rik*, *Yajus* and *Sāman*, are not merely manuals of sacrifical ritual, they are also revelations of the true nature of God. They embody the experiences of great *rishis*, who were vouchsafed the rare experience of God-realisation. The holy books of all religions reveal to us what those who have realised God have to say. Since the existence of God cannot be satisfactorily established by either perception or inference—we have already seen that the eye of faith has to be opened in addition to the eye of reason, if we are to believe in God—scriptural revelation is necessary for the religious life. And it reveals us a God, who is not perceivable or inferable: that is, a God who is not perceived in the universe, and who is not directly inferred from an examination of the universe, a God who is beyond the *prākṛita-prapañcha* and therefore transcendental.

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत्।
प्रभवप्रलयस्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥ ॥ १८ ॥

Śrī Kṛishṇa continues: "I am the goal, the supporter, the lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge and the friend." All these suggest that God, who is characterised in these ways is above the universe, but is helpful towards it. When Śrī Kṛishṇa adds that He is the seat of the origin and dissolution of the world, and that He is the hidden treasure and the indestructible seed, He suggests a different kind of relationship to the universe. We are led to think that He is somehow closely and intimately connected with the universe and all the beings therein, that He is within the universe and immanent in it. We will do well to note again that Śrī Kṛishṇa describes Himself as the indestructible seed of this world. As we saw

last time, the seed always dies in giving rise to the plant: but though God is the seed out of which the universe grows, the destruction of the seed is not involved in the growth of the universe. Combining the two kinds of relationship herein suggested, we arrive at the idea that God must be both transcendent and immanent at the same time.

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च।
अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन॥ ॥ १९ ॥

By declaring that He gives out heat and withholds and lets out rain, Śrī Kṛishṇa must be understood to refer to the fact that He is the source of all power in the universe. He is immortality and death at the same time, because He is both the mortal, changeable matter of the universe and the immortal, unchangeable principle of consciousness that pervades it through and through. He is also entity and non-entity for the same reason, as we may well look upon mutable matter as non-entity when compared with immutable *chaitanya*. Or again, Śrī Kṛishṇa may be understood to refer to the two states of *pralaya* and *sṛishṭi*. In the former, the universe is in an unorganised, undifferentiated state. In the latter, it is in an organised and differentiated, but continually changing condition.

You may have noticed a number of apparent contradictions in this verse. Judged by the standards of normal human experience, what is immortality cannot be death, nor can the same thing be entity and non-entity at the same time. Indeed, in the last three or four *ślokas* that we re-surveyed, we came across obvious antitheses, apparent contradictions in terms. All these are based on, and can be explained by the fact that God is both ttanscendent and immanent at the same time. This is a somewhat difficult concept to understand, and it is to enable us to grasp it that Śrī Kṛishṇa has been providing us with a series of illustrations. He has explained to us in some detail the characteristics of a God, who combines in Himself the apparently contradictory attributes of transcendence and immanence.

To sum up. Rightly understood, the whole universe is an elaborate revelation of God. The world of matter and

energy is a *prakṛiti* of God. And the principle of consciousness which pervades it through and through, and constitutes its life and support, is also a *prakṛiti* of God Thus all that exists as matter or energy or consciousness is pervaded by God. In fact, everything from the stars and the planets down to stocks and stones, and from the thinking, willing and feeling human being down to inert pieces of matter, owes its very existence to the presence of God within it as *antaryāmin*. The relation between God and the universe is so intimate that not even a blade of grass can move without the power that it has derived from God. Indeed, all the manifestations of power and energy that we notice around us are derived from Him. And thus because the universe is pervaded by God, and owes its very existence to the presence of God in it as *antaryāmin*, we may speak of the universe as God. The *Vedānta*, as you are aware, looks upon it as the embodiment of God, who constitutes its life and soul. All this, however, cannot be understood to mean that God is confined within the bounds of the universe of matter and energy and consciousness. Nature can furnish us at best with only a partial revelation of God. In the very nature of things, the universe cannot show us God as He is in Himself. The limitations of the phenomenal world do not condition His power. The fact of divine immanence does not impose any check on the infinitude of God.

And so we must look upon God as being above and beyond the universe as well. He is the source of its origin and the culmination of its evolution. He is its support and refuge, its lord and master. We must not think that God is contained within the universe because He pervades it. The ink, which pervades a piece of blotting paper, is contained within the blotting paper. But the pervasion of the universe by God is of a different kind. While pervading the universe, He also supports it. It is to illustrate this fact that Śrī Kṛishṇa declares that the whole universe is strung on God, like collections of gems on a string. This again, however, is not a completely satisfactory simile. For the universe is not merely pervaded and supported by God, but is also contained within Him. We cannot obviously find a simile to express the peculiar nature of the relation of God to the universe, because it is unique. And the stray aspects of this relationship, which we may be able to state, may well seem a welter of contradictions. At the beginning of this chapter, you may remember, Śrī Kṛishṇa

says: "I am the upholder of all beings, and I do not abide in the beings". (IX. 5). God abides in all beings, because He intimately pervades them. He does not abide in them, because, being a spirit, He transcends them, and is incapable of being limited by them. And in one of the stanzas that we re-examined to day, (IX. 16), you may recall that Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with the various limbs of the ritual of sacrifice and with the sacrifice as a whole. That seemed an example in illustration of the fact that God may be looked upon as both the part and the whole. He is the *antaryāmin* of the tiniest atom as well as of the vast universe. And just as we cannot limit Him in an atom, because He is its *antaryāmin*, we cannot limit Him in the universe as well. He transcends the universe as surely as He intimately infills it.

That God, while being immanent in the universe, transcends it at the same time, is the central teaching of the Gītā on the nature of God: and this provides a crushing answer to those impatient critics, who see in the teachings of Śrī Kṛishṇa only a maze of inconsistencies. The teaching is indeed one of the fundamentals of Hindu thought, and is accepted in some form or other by all the schools of the *Vedānta*. Differences of opinion there certainly are amongst rival philosophical sects as to the exact nature of the relation between God and the universe. Some look upon the universe as the indescribable manifestation of the wonderful power of God, some others as the embodiment of God, and yet others as the dominion of God. But all agree in looking upon Nature as the true revealer of God and upon God as the immanent and omnipenetrative controller of the universe God by Himself is omnipotent and absolutely free. Nothing can limit His power or circumscribe His freedom. When the unlimited, absolute and transcendental God becomes immanent in the phenomenal universe so as to be its internal controller, He thereby spontaneously subjects Himself to numerous limitations and conditions, which do not at all appertain to Him intrinsically, but appertain only to the phenomenal world. You may call this, if you please, the self-limiting or the self-conditioning of the Infinite. And such a self-limiting or self-conditioning of God is at the very basis of the existence of the world, which comes into existence only when He chooses to become immanent in matter and incarnated in His universal form known as *viśvarūpa*.

When we apprehend God through Nature, we are apt to superimpose on Him all the limitations of Nature, to which He has subjected Himself spontaneously and from which He all the while continues to be free. In other words, the transcendent God makes Himself immanent in the universe and yet continues to be transcendent at the same time. As a famous passage in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* declares: "That is infinite: this is infinite. The infinite rises above and beyond the infinite. On taking the infinite out of the infinite, the infinite itself remains". When I quoted this passage in the course of our discussion of the theory of *avatāras* (Lec. XVIII), I tried to explain its meaning at some length. We are now in a position to grasp its significance much more easily. Reference is here made to two infinities, God as immanent and God as transcendent. The transcendent infinite rises above and beyond the visible infinite, the universe within which God has chosen to become immanent. In other words, though God has become incarnated as the world, He is greater than the universe. His intimate immanency in the world in no way contradicts His sublime transcendency in relation thereto. And when the visible infinite is taken away from the transcendent infinite, what remains is still infinite. Thus God does not cease to be God by somehow becoming the world. The infinitude of the world can take away nothing from His absolute transcendence and complete infinity.

The same ideas, as you are aware, are developed in greater detail in the celebrated *Purusha Sūkta*. I hope you will allow me to quote again the relevant stanzas from this famous hymn. "The *Purusha* has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet." This is one way of saying that God is infinite: His power to know, to see and to move is infinitely great. "He has enveloped the earth all around and risen beyond by ten inches." He is thus both transcendent and immanent at the same time. "All this—whatever has been and whosoever shall be—is *Purusha* Himself. Moreover, He is the Lord of Immortality in that He grows by what He feeds upon." That is, while there is and there can be nothing in the world, which is not in some sense God, He is greater than the universe and is essentially different from it, being the Lord of Immortality. "His greatness is indeed of this measure; and *Purusha* Himself is even greater than that. All beings are a quarter of Him, and His three quarters are immortal in

Heaven. The three-quarters *Purusha*, who is above—He has gone up: and His one quarter, however, has come to be here below. Having then become all-pervading, He has penetrated into the living and the non-living." The teaching of the *Purusha Sūkta* can thus be considered to amount to this: that the infinite universe, which is intimately penetrated by the omnipotent and transcendent God, constitutes but a part of Him. Creation then is an act self-incarnation on the part of God, which, however, does not fetter His absolute freedom or infinite power in any way.

It is in this dual aspect of Godhead that we must seek the key to unravel all the contradictory statements that have been predicated of God. Thus alone can we explain, for example, how He is the parts and the whole at the same time, or how He both contains the universe and is contained in it simultaneously. His relations with the universe are accordingly of a very complex character. He is related thereto both in detail and as a whole. As *antaryāmin*, He is present in the atom, and makes it what it is. Simultaneously, He is the controller and ruler of the universe as a whole, being the trancendent overlord thereof. How these two facts may be related and reconciled is best studied when we come to the eleventh chapter. For the present, please allow me to draw your attention to the statement made in IX. 6, that "in whatsoever manner, the air, which ever abides in the atmosphere, moves everywhere and is (unboundedly) great, in that same manner all beings abide in Me". This means, as I sought to explain to you on a former occasion, that the abidance of the various beings in God does not affect their freedom. The transcendence of God imposes no limitations on them.

The fact that God is both transcendent and immanent at the same time readily leads us to draw some important conclusions on the right course of conduct to be adopted in life. For the present I do not propose to discuss the question whether the presence of God as *antaryāmin* in every individual and His supervising control over the entire process of the universe leave us any freedom at all. We will have occasion to deal with this question at some length in the course of our study of the eleventh chapter. Assuming for the present that we are free within limits to exercise moral choice, we may try to see what sort of conduct is demanded of us by a God, who is

both transcendent and immanent at the same time. As we saw only a few minutes back, the fact of divine transcendence induces in us feelings of awe and reverence, and requires of us worship. But this, by itself, is an incomplete ethical ideal: for it does not take any adequate note of our relations with the world. And a fervent worship of the transcendent God is also apt at times to degenerate into intolerance in the belief that the Supreme Overlord of the universe cannot brook any homage directed to any but Himself. This ideal therefore has to be supplemented by the ethical corollaries that follow from a realisation of God as immanent in the universe. Then alone will the record of history assume any significance for us, and our part in its making be made clear. We have to do our duties in life, because God infills the world intimately, and has to be sought through the due fulfilment of the humble round of our daily life. Our ethical ideal may thus be summed up in two words as work and worship. Neither worship unrelated to the facts of life, nor work, unrelieved by a faith in God, will alone suffice. We must work in the stress of life with faith in God and without caring for the consequences that may result from the performance of our duties. In brief, we must do our duties, but dedicate their fruits to God.

Such is the nature of the *rāja-guhya*, the royal secret which Śrī Kṛishṇa expounds in this chapter. I hope that the digression in which I have ventured to indulge has drawn your attention to the fundamentals of the teaching of the Gītā on the nature of God. The foregoing discussion, when supplemented by a study of the tenth, eleventh and fifteenth chapters, can furnish us with a fairly complete picture of a God at once transcendent and immanent, working in the world and yet not of it, the overlord of the universe, the light of conscience and the guarantor of our moral freedom. In the next class, we shall continue our study of the ninth chapter, beginning with verse *20*.

xliii

In the last class, we re-examined verses *13–19* of this chapter, specially to understand how they explain the conception of God as both transcendent and immanent. Before that you may remember we were engaged in a consideration of the undiminished divinity of God in His incarnation as man. The study of this subject led us to see that *māyā* or *prakṛiti*

is capable of acting in two ways in relation to those who come under its influence. In relation to some of them, it proves to be 'divine', while in relation to others it turns out to be 'demoniacal'. When divine, it is seen to be the revealer of God to man, and when demoniacal, it effectively shuts out God from the vision of man. Those that disregard God in His human incarnation, do so, because, as we have been told, they are dependent on demoniacal *prakṛiti*. But the great souls, who are dependent on the divine variety of it, become deeply devoted to God and bestow their minds always upon Him and upon nothing else. There are various kinds of great souls, who are under the influence of the *prakṛiti* that is divine. The *nitya-yuktas*, who form one kind of them, are devoted persons of ever-accomplished *yoga*. And they worship God with loving devotion. *Bhakti-yoga* is their means of attaining God. Another type is made up of such persons of wisdom as worship God by means of the wisdom-sacrifice. We learnt that these persons of wisdom arrive at the knowledge that God Himself is the means of God-worship and God-attainment. They further manage to realise His peculiar greatness through knowing some of His characteristic attributes. The chapter begins, as you know, with a description of the greatness of God. And the knowledge of God, obtained from a study of these characteristic attributes, makes that description of God fuller and more complete. Another kind, again, of God-worshippers is brought to our notice in the next two stanzas with which we commence our class-work today. The true conception of God, as we saw, is the one in which God is looked upon as both transcendent and immanent at the same time. But even those who look upon God as merely transcendent attain some good: and some them are described thus:

त्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा यज्ञैरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गतिं प्रार्थयन्ते ।
ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोकमश्नन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान् ॥ ॥ २० ॥

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।
एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्नाः गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥ ॥ २१ ॥

20. The followers of the religion of the three *Vedas*, who drink *soma* and are purified of their sins, worship Me by means of sacrifices and wish to go to the celestial world of *svarga*. They go to the happy world of the chief of the gods and enjoy in that celestial world the celestial enjoyments of the gods.

21. After enjoying the celestial world of *svarga*, they, on their merit disappearing through decrease, enter again the world of mortals. In this manner, the followers of the *Vedic* religion, who are desirous of attaining objects of desire, gain (only) the going and the coming

In these stanzas, we have, as Rāmānujāchārya points outs in his commentary on them, a clear statement of the contrast between the *Vedic* religion of sacrifices and the *Vedāntic* religion of self realisation and God-attainment. The expression, which I have translated as "the followers of the religion of the three *Vedas*", literally means those who own the three learnings as their authoritative scripture. In Sanskrit *vidyā* denotes learning, and the word is derived from the root *vid*, which means 'to know': the word *veda* is also derived from the same root, and you must be aware that the *Vedas* are held by the Hindus to be the divinely revealed source of all knowledge. Therefore, it is fully justifiable to understand by the term *traividyās*—which is the expression given in the *Gītā*—the followers of the religion of the three *Vedas*. You know that the real use of the three *Vedas* is in the performance of the great sacrifices known at the *soma-yāgas*, and the performers of these sacrifices have the privilege of drinking the juice of the *soma* plant. What we have to note is that only the followers of the religion of three *Vedas* are entitled to drink the *soma* juice. They are said to be purified of their sins. It is not implied here that their purification is due to their drinking the *soma* juice. Evidently, it is the result of purificatory ceremonies performed by them for that purpose. The drinkers of the *soma*, who have got themselves purified of their sins by means of purificatory ceremonies, conduct their sacrifices with a view to attain *svarga*, which is the celestial world of the gods; and Śrī Kṛishṇa says that, in so conducting their sacrifices, they happen to worship Him.

Accordingly, even the performance of *Vedic* sacrifices is a form of worshipping *the one only God* of the *Vedānta*. The sacrificial worshippers of God, however, do not know this themselves. That is why they use the sacrifices only as a means to go to *svarga*. To go to *svarga*, as you know, is a lower aim than to attain *moksha* or the salvation of soul-emancipation. This lower aim of the sacrificial religion of the *Vedas* is also fulfilled by God Himself. Thus God is the receiver of all worship and the fulfiller of all aims, which the worshippers may have in view, whether those aims happen to be lower or higher. Those, whose aim is to go to *svarga*, do go there after the due performance of the requisite sacrifices: and *svarga* is the happy world of the chief of the gods. It is commonly understood to be the world of the well-known *Vedic* god, Indra, and is conceived to be capable of giving scope to unlimited celestial enjoyments of all sorts. Such persons, as acquire and accumulate *puṇya* or merit through the interestad performance of good works in life, are requited by being sent to *svarga* after their death, so that they may enjoy in abundance all the celestial pleasures that are available there. That is perhaps the reason why the epithet *puṇya* is is applied here to the world of the chief of the gods: and I hope that my translation of it as 'happy' will be found by you to be satisfactory.

The celestial world of *svarga* is often spoken of as a *bhoga-bhūmi* or a world of enjoyments. Evidently, the idea meant to be conveyed is that it is a world intended wholly to provide enjoyments to those, who are fortunate enough to acquire and accumulate *puṇya* in their lives. It is an extensive world, full of the celestial enjoyments which are peculiar to the gods, and which are, therefore, ordinarily not available here in the world of mortal men. The extensiveness of *svarga* indicates to us the unlimited abundance of the celestial enjoyments that are available therein. Notwithstanding all this, *svarga* is an unenduring reward for the life of good works. The reason for this is that the *puṇya* or the merit of good works is apt to wear away in proportion to the celestial pleasures enjoyed in *svarga*: the requited *puṇya* ceases to be *puṇya* and becomes, in fact, non-existent. The consequent gradual decrease of *puṇya* must, sooner or later, bring about its exhaustion: and when one's *puṇya* becomes thus exhausted, one's right to stay in *svarga* is at once annulled. Therefore all those who go to

the happy world of the chief of the gods to enjoy celestial enjoyments, enter again the world of mortals, when their accumulated merit disappears through decrease. Those good people who perform sacrifices, live interested lives, and are desirous of attaining objects of desire, are thus led to go to *svarga* and then made to come back again to the world of mortal men: the going to *svarga* and the coming back to the earthly world is all that they gain through their interested life of sacrificial religion and good works.

The highly enduring and valuable reward, consisting of the final emancipation of the soul from the bondage of matter, can never happen to be their portion: on the other hand, they gain only the coming and the going. The inferiority of the *Vedic* religion of sacrifices as compared with the *Vedāntic* religon of self-realisation and God-attainment is easily demonstrable and may be well established. Yet it is quite possible to make sacrifices themselves become the means of such God-worship as is sure to lead to God-attainment in the end. Thus, indeed, do the followers of the religion of the three *Vedas* worship the one only God of the *Vedānta*.

The *Gītā* tells us that there are others again who worship God by constantly directing their attention exclusively to Him. Before passing on to the next verse, which deals with them, we may note one or two points. It is worthy of note that the gods of the *Vedic* religion of sacrifices are merely transcendental. No close and intimate relation is stated to exist between them and the world. Accordingly, the followers of this religion are required only to please their divinities by suitable rituals: they are not commanded to live a life of disinterested duty. Secondly, souls must come back to this world of mortal men in order to prepare themselves for salvation: they cannot attain *moksha* directly from *svarga*. In a celebrated passage, *Śaṅkarāchārya* observes that *manushyatva*, the condition of being born as man, *mūmukshutva*, the desire to obtain release from the bondage of *samsāra*, and *mahāpurushāśraya*, the helpful guidance of a great man who can point out the way to salvation, are three things very difficult of attainment. Now, we may pass on to the consideration of the next *śloka*.

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ ॥ २२ ॥

22. Those people, who, not being (mindful) of any one else, think (of Me) and worship Me well,—the prosperity and welfare of those, whose attention is (thus) always directed (to Me), I look after and carry on.

You know that those who are always absorbed in yoga have been called *nitya-yuktas*: and the way in which they worship God has also been explained to us. In this stanza, mention is made of *nityābhiyuktas*: and these we have understood to be persons whose attention is always directed to God. Because their attention is always directed to God, it is not possible for them at any time to be mindful of anyone else: they have continuously to think of God, and offer worship to Him duly and well. Otherwise their attentiveness will be at a discount. Nothing other than God can occupy their attention, for He is the sole object of their ever-wakeful attention. The people that are always mindful of God and think of nothing else, are, you may reasonably think, too much devoted to God to get on well in life. They cannot and will not attend to their own affairs: the promotion of their prosperity and welfare is left uncared for and unattended to by them. Will they not suffer for this? In reply to such a question, Śrī Kṛishṇa practically says: "No, they will not suffer any harm". His actual declaration that He Himself will look after and carry on the prosperity and welfare of those, whose attention is always directed to Him, amounts to His saying emphatically that the uninterrupted devotion of such persons to God will never land them in difficulties.

When God is the ordainer and care-taker of our destinies, it is the foolish man, who over-confidently believes too much in the half-truth that man is the architect of his own fortune. The care which, Śrī Kṛishṇa says, God bestows on those, who are continuously mindful of Him, may induce some people to believe that He is unfairly partial towards His devotees. As a matter of fact, God is not merely the builder of the fortunes of His own devotees, but is the one builder of the fortunes of all persons, to whatsoever deity they may have directed their attention and devotion. The one only God of the *Vedānta* is the Father as well as the Mother of All: and all the deities who are worshipped by various persons and various human communities all over the world are included in Him, as He is

the ene Centre of Power and the one Source of all beings in the universe. This is what the next *śloka* says.

Let me note in passing that Śaṅkarāchārya interprets the word *ananyāḥ* to mean those who have realised their identity with the *Brahman*. I may also draw your attention to the fact that according to the commentators the words *yoga* and *kshema* in this context also bear the special technical significance, which we tried to understand when we studied II. 47. As you may remember, *yoga* stands for the acquisition of such good things and advantages as have not been obtained: while *kshema* is taken to mean the safeguarding of the good that has already been obtained. We may now pass on to the study of the next stanza.

येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयाऽन्विताः।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम्॥ ॥ २३ ॥

23. Those, however, who, being devoted in love to other deities, and being also possessed of faith, perform sacrifices—they, too, without following the ordered rule, worship Me in reality, O Arjuna.

At the outset we may note that there is also another reading *ye' pyanyadevatā* for *ye tvanyadevatā* in this verse, and it has been adopted by the eminent commentators, Śrī Śaṅkara and Śrī Madhva. Personally, I prefer *tu* to *api*, as *api* occurs in *te'pi* in the next line, while the disjunctive particle *tu* (but, however) may well be deemed to be necessary for clearing a doubt which naturally arises.

The stanza tells us that the worshippers of all deities, whoever they may happen to be, worship in fact the *Brahman* of the *Vedānta*, who is one only without a second. Since they worship their own particular deities with faith in their hearts, they are not aware that, in worshipping them, they are truly engaged in the worship of the one only God of the *Vedānta*: moreover, they are devoted in love to their various deities. The followers of the religion of the *Vedas* worship Indra and other *Vedic* gods in this spirit. Their devotion and love are directed quite consciously to these gods and none other; and their faith in the efficacy of those sacrifices in bestowing

on them the objects of their desire is both great and good. Still they are unconsciously worshipping the one only great God of the *Vedānta*. Their worship of God, however, is not in accordance with the rule of abolute unselfishness, which, as you know, has been commanded with authority.

It may be taken to be an order given to those, whose aim is to secure the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment through the performance of *Vedic* sacrifices, that they should perform them solely with the intention of securing that salvation and without any kind of selfish attachment to the various objects of desire, which they may bestow on the sacrificers. The followers of the sacrificial religion of the three *Vedas* do not obey this order and do not follow the rule of incessant Godwardness and absolute unselfishness, which is commanded by it. They have *svarga* and other such objects of desire in view, when they perform these sacrifices. They obtain what they seek: and God Himself bestows it upon them, although they are prone to believe that they owe the fulfilment of their desires to Indra and the other *Vedic* gods. While they do not follow the ordered rule of incessant Godwardness and absolute unselfishness, they still, without knowing it themselves, conduct the worship of the great God of the *Vedānta*, in reality. That the worshippers of all deities worship God ultimately and in reality, holds true not only in the case of Indra and the other *Vedic* gods, but also in the case of all the gods, who are known to human history and civilisation. Regarding the sacrificers, who follow the religion of the three *Vedas*, *Śrī* Kṛishṇa further says, as follows:

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।
न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥ ॥ २४ ॥

24. Indeed, I am the enjoyer, and (am) also the lord, in fact, of all sacrifices. But (they) do not recognise Me, (as I am) in reality: hence they slip down.

What we are told in this stanza follows naturally from the statement that the worshippers of all deities worship unknowingly the one only God of the *Vedānta*. Sacrifices are generally performed in propitiation of various deities, and with

a view to obtain various objects of desire. Since by worshipping the various deities by means of particular sacrifices, the one only God of the *Vedānta* Himself happens to be worshipped in reality, this great God has naturally to be the enjoyer and also the lord of all sacrifices: He receives the offerings offered in the sacrifices, and is therefore their enjoyer. He rewards the sacrificers by bestowing on them their objects of desire and is therefore the lord of sacrifices. The power to bestow rewards is implied in the idea of lordship: this power belongs only to God. Indra and other gods are not independent bestowers of rewards: their requital of the sacrifices is only apparent. In fact, it is God Himself, who is the requiter of the sacrifices. But they do not know the truth and cannot therefore recognise God as He is in reality: that is, they are not aware that He is truly the enjoyer as well as the lord of all sacrifices. In consequence of this ignorance, they slip down. That is, they err; and the error on their part consists in the fact that they look upon Indra and the other gods as the enjoyers and as also the lords of sacrifices. This of course is not the truth : and the recognition of the truth that God Himself is the enjoyer as well as the lord of all sacrifices, does not entitle us to believe that He bestows the great reward of soul-emancipation and God-attainment on all sacrificers alike. It has been already brought to your notice that, through sacrificial worship, people get just what they want to obtain from the deities to whom they offer their worship. Even the minor rewards, sought by the sacrificial worshippers, are bestowed on them by God Himself; it has, however, to be borne in mind that He does not bestow on them the major reward of soul-salvation, when they seek only minor rewards.

The modern study of comparative religion has brought to light endless variety in the religious beliefs of mankind. And a close correspondence has been observed between the nature of the religious faith of a people and the worthiness of their civilisation. Further, the comparatively higher forms of religion are now seen to have risen from the comparatively lower forms. Here, as elsewhere, man has risen from the lower to the higher, and the lower steps have always been helpful to him in his onward progress. In no society, however high its civilisation and however uniformly it may be spread, is it possible for all men to have the same kind of religious

and moral realisation. Differences in the moral and religious endowments of individuals there will always be: and these will necessarily give rise to differences in religious faith and institutions. Since the lower forms of religion can evolve into the higher, and since it is not possible to impose a compulsory uniformity of thought and creed on the hole of mankind, we must allow each individual to work out his own progress in accordance with his capacity. This does not imply any blurring of the distinction between the high and the low in religion, but only the recognition of the fact that all worship the one only God, though all are not aware of it. Śrī Kṛishṇa says in effect: "I am the enjoyer of all sacrifices and the lord of them all. Every act of worship is directed towards Me, wittingly or unwittingly. But it is only those, who have realised Me as I am, who reach the highest. The rest attain results, which their faith deserves." The next verse makes this point clear.

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान् पितॄन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः।
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥ ॥ २५ ॥

25. The worshippers of the gods go to the gods: the worshippers of the manes go to the manes: the worshippers of ghosts go to the ghosts: likewise, those that worship Me go to Me.

The worshippers of the gods here mentioned are evidently the worshippers of Indra and other *Vedic* gods. You are sure to remember that we have been told that the worshippers of Indra and other *Vedic* gods obtain *svarga* as the reward of their work of worship: and *svarga* is the celestial world of the gods. To go to *svarga* is to go to the world of the gods: and to go to that world is evidently the same thing as to go to the gods. You know that *svarga* is also called *deva-loka* in Sanskrit: and *deva-loka* means the world of the gods. It is a world of celestial enjoyments; but as a reward bestowed on worshippers, it is unenduring and inferior in quality. It seems to me be appropriate to repeat here what is given out regarding the followers of the religion of the three *Vedas* in the two stanzas with which we began our work today: because the worshippers of the gods who are mentioned here are no other than the followers of the religion of the three *Vedas*. Those stanzas described these as persons desirous of obtaining

objects of desire. And after all, what they gain in reality, we were told, is only the going and the coming. The worshippers of the *Brahman*, who is, as you know, the one only God of the *Vedānta*, gain, on the other hand, the great and everlasting reward of soul-salvation and God-attainment. Accordingly, it is clear that, when the worshippers of the gods go to the gods, they obtain a reward, which is inferior and unenduring. It should be noted that it is the reward which they deserve to obtain.

The next thing we are told is that the worshippers of the manes go to the manes. The worship of the manes of departed ancestors is a noteworthy feature of Hinduism, as it, indeed, is of most religions. You may know that there are persons, who opine that Hinduism is nothing more than an elaborate system of ancestor-worship. In the manner in which Hinduism recognises *deva-loka* or the world of the gods, it also recognises *pitṛi-loka* or the world of the manes of departed ancestors. The reward, which ancestor-worshippers reap from their worship, is to go to the world of the manes of departed ancestors. It may be seen to be therefore quite true that the worshippers of the manes go to the manes. What the peculiar features of the *pitṛi-loka* are, we are not told; we know less about it than about the *deva-loka*, which, as we have been given to understand, is a *bhoga-bhūmi* or world of enjoyments. We may, however, presume that those, who, by worshipping the manes, go to the manes, live the life of the manes in their world.

Like the *deva-loka* and the *pitṛi-loka*, we have to think of the *bhūta-loka* also. It is within your knowledge that the word *bhūta* has more than one meaning in Sanskrit. This context clearly requires that it should be understood in the sense of a ghost; and ghosts and goblins are conceived to be spirits. The *bhūta-loka* is therefore the spirit-world, as we may say. The worshippers of the ghosts obtain the *bhūta-loka* as the reward of their worship; that is, they go to the ghosts in the spirit-world. Such is the inferior and unenduring reward which they obtain. They deserve no higher reward, because their worship of the ghosts belongs to a low form of religion in which the high aim of securing soul-salvation and God-attainment finds no place at all.

As we worship, so we attain In further exemplification of this great truth, Śrī Kṛishṇa says : "Likewise, those that worship Me go to Me." The meaning of this is that those who worship God go to God : hence God-attainment is their great reward. And since God-attainment happens to be the culmination of that enduring emancipation of the soul, which is the supreme object of human pursuit, the worshipper of the *Brahman*, who is the one only God without a second, obtains the highest and most valuable reward as the result of his God-worship. This reward of God-attainment is further an enduring reward; it is indeed as everlasting as God Himself, because he who gains the bliss of God-attainment ever lives in God and is never compelled to return to the world of mortals. So precious and so enduring is the God-attainment of the God-worshipper.

It is noteworthy that the true God-worshipper does not seek even the salvation of soul-emancipation by means of his God-worship. That salvation comes to him naturally and of itself as the result of his disinterested God-worship. If he sought it, his God-worship would become coloured with selfishness and might not yield what he wanted. It is not intended to be conveyed that the great God, who is one only without a second, is never worshipped by people with minor selfish objects in view. In fact, He is often enough worshipped with selfish aims by people who seek to attain various objects of desire, and their objects of desire are often enough bestowed on them by God, as the due reward of their interested God-worship. But what is specially important to notice is that even the salvation of soul-emancipation should not be sought selfishly by true worshippers of God. Their worship of God should be absolutely disinterested : and the salvation of soul-emancipation should flow to them altogether unsought. It can flow to them only thus and not otherwise.

I believe you have understood now as fully as possible the nature of the true God and of God-attainment, and it must have struck you that, of the four kinds of religious worship mentioned in the stanza, which we are now studying, the worship of the one only great God, who is without a second, is indeed the best. It is remarkable that the four kinds of religious worship mentioned here are recognised by modern students of comparative religion as four distinct stages in the history of the

development of religion. Most of them look upon demonolatory or the worship of ghosts as the lowest form of religion and consider that ancestor-worship is the next higher form. It has to be said, however, that no causal connection is generally recognised to exist between these two forms of religion. Each of them may be held to be of independent origin: indeed it is so maintained by some. There are others, however, who are of opinion that ghost-worship precedes and gives rise to ancestor-worship. Both these forms of religion are found to be in historic association with all comparatively higher forms of religion. In so far as historic consecution is concerned, the worship of gods is considered to come after the worship of the manes of departed ancestors. Here also it is not possible to obtain any convincing proof to show that ancestor-worship is the parent of polytheism. Lastly comes the manifestation of monotheism.

The worship of ghosts or spirits is now known to have been prevalent among the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, the Teutons, the Celts and other European races. And of course it survives in some form in the faith of many Hindus even today. The worship of ancestors was known to the *smṛiti* literature of ancient India, and formed an integral part of the religions of China, Greece, Rome, etc. Now, in so far as historic succession is concerned, the worship of gods is considered to come after the worship of the manes of departed ancestors. This stage is well exemplified by the religion portrayed in the *Vedic* hymns and the paganism of Greece and Rome. And the last stage of all, the manifestation of monotheism, is of course illustrated by Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Leaving aside the question of the causal connection in relation to the four characteristic forms of religion mentioned in this stanza, it may be noted with advantage that in the popular institutions of more than one admittedly monotheistic religion, the co-existence of all these four forms is readily observable. In all such cases, care is invariably taken to see that, in their co-existence, they do not contradict one another. Hinduism is a noteworthy religion in point; and its remarkable synthesis, which is fully capable of conciliating all the co-existing lower forms of religion found therein, is based on the fact that men differ in their powers to apprehend and realise

the truths of religion. Śrī Kṛishṇa has repeatedly told us that the least inadequate conception of God is the one which regards Him as both transcendent and immanent at the same time. But this does not mean that all other forms of worship are wrong or useless. There are, as it were, grades in religious realisation, and it is alike the duty and privilege of those who have reached the higher stages to help those who are struggling below. This requires sympathy, and sympathy is surely not bred by the conceit that there is only one true way of worshipping God, and that all those who do not follow it are necessarily condemned to eternal darkness. Remember that Śrī Kṛishṇa holds that every form of worship is directed ultimately to Him, that He is responsible for all kinds of religious faith, and that He bestows the fruits which all types of worshippers strive for.

That being so, what is the best way of encouraging the feelings of sympathy and helpfulness among men in varying stages of religious realisation? Hinduism has tried to accomplish this by placing together in the lives of individuals the comparatively lower forms of religion in close association with the worship based on the highest conception of God; only we are required to go through these as forms of the worship of the one only God of the *Vedānta*. Such is the ideal of religious tolerance, which forms one of the characteristic features of Hinduism, and which is fully explained and brought to light in the stanza which we are now studying.

From more than one standpoint, it is a stanza of striking importance in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: and I hope I have made its importance clear to you to some extent. We have certainly learnt from it the great value and worthiness of the disinterested worship of the one only God of the *Vedānta*. This great God is quite easily accessible, so to say, to His devoted worshippers; and the process of worshipping Him in all earnestness and sincerity need not be elaborate or costly or troublesome to the worshipper in any manner. God's worship may be conducted in quite a simple way by the true devotee. That is what we are told in the next stanza.

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ ॥ २६ ॥

26. Whoever offers unto Me with loving devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, (or) water—that devotional offering of the pure-minded (person), I accept.

We have been told that God-worship gives rise to God-attainment; and the doubt naturally arises in the aspirant's anxious heart as to whether it is not hard to conduct correctly the worship of the great God of the *Vedānta*. To such a doubt this stanza gives the quietus. Śrī Kṛishṇa says in effect; "Do not think that I insist on any impossible discipline from My worshippers. All that I require from them is strength of mind and purity of heart". It is very difficult to perform the other three kinds of worship mentioned in the previous stanza. The worship of the *devas* has to be conducted in accordance with the sacrificial religion of the *Vedas*. If the elaborate and complex ceremonials are not properly conducted in accordance with the details laid down in the *Vedas*, the rewards sought for thereby will not be gained. The Vedic story of Tvashṭṛi is a well-known instance to the point. Seeking to avenge the death of his son, Viśvarūpa or Triśirshan, at the hands of Indra, he began a sacrifice for getting a son who would slay the chief of the gods. During the course of the *yajña*, he mispronounced the word *Indra-śatru* by placing the accent on *Indra*, instead of on *śatru*. In consequence, Vṛitra, who was born out of the sacrifice, could not kill Indra: he was himself slain by the latter. Of the costliness of the Vedic sacrifices, which are said to have brought about the bankruptcy of many a prosperous prince, it is needless to speak. The rewards procured by the worship of ancestors and of spirits are fleeting, and the price paid in either case is not a light one.

But the worship of the God of the *Vedānta*, while promising the enduring reward of salvation, requires no costly offerings or elaborate rituals. A leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water will do as an offering: it is only essential that the offering should be made with loving devotion and without selfish motives. The Sanskrit word, *aśnāmi*, which following the commentators I have translated as "I accept", really means "I eat". We may thence conclude that God accepts and enjoys the offering, offered with loving devotion by the earnest and sincere devotee. It deserves to be noted that the acceptability of the offering is said to be due to its being made by a pure-minded person (literally, one with a well controlled mind).

It seems to me that any one who offers anything to God in sincere devotion is bound to be pure-minded. You may remember my having told you on a former occasion that in relation to *bhakti* Sanskrit writers speak of *anurāgād virāgaḥ*. This means that with the growth of devotion to God there is also a development of the spirit of non-attachment in the heart of the devotee. It might seem paradoxical, but it can be shown that intense attachment to God gives rise to non-attachment to objects other than God. The more complete the devotion, the more intense is the spirit of renunciation. The mind of a sincere devotee may therefore be expected to be free from the ordinary human failings of selfishness and sensuality. This is due to the grace of God, which comes to him who seeks it in earnest.

We have now seen that God is more pleased by the love of the worshipper than by the costliness of his offerings or the pomp which accompanies them. The next stanza points out to us the way in which such devotion may be practically cultivated.

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत्।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ ॥ २७ ॥

27. Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever fire-offering you offer, whatever you give (as gift), whatever austere penance you practise, O Arjuna, make that over unto Me as an offering.

The stanza explains further how easy it is to worship God, provided one has sincere devotion. The aspirant, who wishes to win the love of God, is called upon to do nothing that is particularly special for that purpose. The work that belongs to the ordinary course of his daily life is itself quite competent to enable him so to worship God as to feel assured of the invaluable reward of divine love in return. According to the commentators, two types of work are referred to here. The first two phrases, 'whatever you do' and 'whatever you eat', relate to secular actions such as labouring for one's livelihood, etc. The other phrases of the stanza relate to actions enjoined by the scriptures such as the daily or occasional sacrifices, penance and the like. Thus we see that no difficult discipline

or complex ritual is essential to obtain the love of God. A God whom it is so easy to worship and please cannot certainly be a forbidding divinity. It is His easy availability that is emphasised here.

The cultivation of loving devotion to God is thus seen to be easy to all earnest seekers. To make over unfailingly every one of our miscellaneous and multiform activities in life, both secular and religious, to God in a spirit of true worship requires the constant and continued direction of our attention to God. We thereby become in fact *nityābhiyuktas*. In consequence of this, God Himself becomes responsible for our progress and welfare, as Śrī Kṛishṇa has already assured us. Success in the cultivation of devotion to God is thus dependent on God himself, for divine grace seeks the earnest aspirant. When he succeeds, love of God weans him from all other attachments. This is what we are told in the next stanza.

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।
सन्न्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥ ॥ २८ ॥

28. In this manner, you will become free from those bonds of *karma*, which yield auspicious as well as inauspicious fruits. And being in possession of a mind, which is imbued with the discipline of renunciation, you will obtain liberation and then come unto Me.

Here the phrase "in this manner" evidently means "by making over all your day to day and hour to hour activities in life as a religious offering to God". We have already seen that this kind of dedicated life entitles us to be known as *nityābhiyuktas*. Śrī Kṛishṇa here tells us that it enables us to become free from the bonds of *karma*, inasmuch as it imbues the mind with the discipline of renunciation. Let us now try to see how devotion frees us from *karma*. We know that work in itself does not cling to man: it is the desire motivating the work that gives rise to its own clinging *samskāra* in the form of *pāpa* or *puṇya*. The former is its auspicious and the latter its inauspicious fruit. But absolutely unselfish work, done without any kind of attachment to any advantage that may be gained therefrom, produces neither *pāpa* nor *puṇya*. It is the worker's non-attachment to the fruits of his work that

enables him to become free from the fetters of *karma*. Accordingly we are told that devotion to God brings about the attitude of *vairāgya*, necessary for the breaking of the bondage of *karma*. The more earnest our love of God, the greater is its tendency to become exclusively all-absorbing. The true and sincere devotee finds none but God as a fit object of his love. As he bestows all his love on God, there is nothing of it left to be bestowed on other objects. Thus, imbued with the discipline of renunciation, the sincere lover of God can be said to 'enjoy life through renunciation', as the well-known Upanishadic commandment *tena tyaktena bhuñjīthāḥ* adjures us. *Bhakti* is thus seen to be fully capable of securing for mankind emancipation of soul and attainment of God.

Let us conclude here our work for today.

XLIV

In our study of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in the course of our last class, we learnt certain characteristics of God, importing His peculiar greatness. These were given evidently with the object of enabling us to see how worthy God is to be the object of the love of His devotee. From the study of such a description of the greatness of God, it is possible for weak man to conclude that God is too great to be easily propitiated by him through worship, so great that His devotee cannot easily or readily approach Him. We learnt that both these conclusions are wrong, and that to worship Him and approach Him, all sincere and earnest aspirants are generally entitled. God is not more partial to one devotee than to another. Such a thing as special choice or partiality plays no part in the relation of God to His loving devotees. Moreover, there is no considertion of any kind, which is calculated to exclude any aspirant from the privilege of adopting the religion of *bhakti* or loving devotion to God. So Śrī Kṛishṇa says:

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥ ॥ २९ ॥

29. I am the same in relation to all beings. There is none who is hate-worthy to Me; none, who is love-worthy. Those that resort unto Me with loving devotion—they are in Me, and I also am in them.

We have already been taught to look upon all religions with respect. If they are all really complementary to one another and are, as it were, so many steps in a ladder, it is clear that all persons must be found fit to practise the highest form of religion, which Śrī Kṛishṇa has been describing. In regard to the worship of God, there ought to be no difference whatever between man and man. All that is necessary is genuine devotion (*viśishṭa-bhajana*). Śrī Kṛishṇa says in effect: "Whoever worships Me with true devotion comes to live within My bosom, as certainly as I become enshrined within his heart. I do not care who he may be, in what land he has been born, or what conditions of life he has been accustomed to". All are equal in the eyes of God in the sense that all will have equal opportunities to attain the supreme object of human endeavour—soul-emancipation. Note that it is not stated here that wise men or *jñānins* alone can worship the highest form of God and attain salvation. In fact Śrī Kṛishṇa promises in the next verse that He will not scrutinise the antecedents of any devotee with the object of blocking his spiritual progress with the record of his unregenerate past. So that any one, wicked or virtuous, can take to the life of *bhakti* and attain salvation.

It is only in this sense that we have to understand the statement about divine impartiality. A great commentator raises the question whether God does not show favouritism in that He bestows His grace on His devotees and not on others. The answer that he suggests is that God is like fire, and just as fire wards off cold only from those who are near it, and that without the least tinge of partiality, so too, God bestows His grace on His devotees as a matter of course. Another writer elaborates the point with the help of a striking simile which may be mentioned here. The sun's light, he points out, though pervading everywhere, is reflected well only in a clean mirror. Likewise the Lord is specially present only in those from whose minds all dirt has been removed by devotion. These similes might conceivably give rise to mistaken views in regard to the nature of God and His relations with the world. For we have learnt that God is omni-penetrative. We have therefore to understand the similitudes in a special and restricted sense. Fire radiates heat in all directions: but distance acts to a certain extent as an obstacle to the diffusion of heat. So too, though light pervades everywhere, and would

be reflected ordinarily from every shining surface, dirt is an obstructing force. The distance and the dirt are like the lack of devotion on the part of individuals.

Thus the only thing required for the worship of God is sincere devotion. If we have *bhakti*, moral perfection will come of its own accord. That is what we are told in the next stanza.

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यस्सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥ ॥ ३० ॥

30. Be a man never so wicked, if he worships Me, worshipping none else, he must certainly be deemed righteous, for he is rightly resolved.

It may appear to many that the statement here is self-contradictory. The question may well be asked: how can a man leading a wicked life become absolutely devoted to God ? I grant that such an event is rare ; but the possibility of its happening is the very foundation of all religions. A vicious man is not apt to look upon life in a religious light, and consider it as something to be dedicated unto God. But once he does so from whatever cause, he must be deemed righteous, for he is on the road to betterment. The idea is that *bhakti* has the power to overcome all evil tendencies. There are well-authenticated cases in the religious history of the world, which suggest that revolutionary changes of this kind do occur, if only occasionally. Every saint, they say, has a past, even as every sinner has a future, and the statement is significant. We may take it that it is by no means difficult for even the worst of men to take to the life of *bhakti*.

When Śrī Kṛishṇa says He is absolutely impartial as between devotee and devotee, He does not mean that He makes no distinction between virtue and vice. Certainly He prefers virtue, but in one sense, and one only, the virtuous and the vicious are treated alike by Him. Both of them are alike to Him, provided they are both devoted to Him absolutely. It is not that He puts a premium on vice, but that He regards impartially all His devotees, and does not discriminate between them on the score that one is virtuous and another is not. For the vicious person, as soon as he becomes a *bhakta*, is on the high-road to betterment, and is soon bound to become virtuous.

The transforming power of *bhakti* is well indicated in this *śloka*

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ ॥ ३१ ॥

31. Soon he becomes right-minded and attains to enduring peace. O Arjuna, give the assurance (on My behalf) that My devotee is never ruined.

Śrī Kṛishṇa here elaborates the point about the transforming power of *bhakti*. Devotion unto the Lord leads the sinner into the path of righteousness. All his vicious tendencies are subjugated by genuine *bhakti*. Now if we enquire why the vicious man is what he is, we will find that he is something of a crude hedonist. As long as he is hankering after the pleasures of this world,—and it is the nature of these pleasures that the more you seek them, the more you wish to have them—the soul can never have anything like peace. The desire to enjoy is never satisfied by enjoyment. It calls for more and more. That is why hedonism always fails. Now, when our hedonist, through the worship of God, becomes a *dharmātman*—or as the commentators have it, a right-minded person—then he acquires the peace which he never had before. This is the promise which Śrī Kṛishṇa makes. Notice the expression *pratijānīhi* which I have translated as "give the assurance (on My behalf)." The commentators explain that Śrī Kṛishṇa's promise gains an added emphasis in that He authorises Arjuna to give the assurance, instead of giving it Himself.

Let us once again note that Śrī Kṛishṇa's attitude is not one of indifference, where virtue and vice are concerned. The power of that religion in which you worship Śrī Kṛishṇa as your only God, both transcendent and immanent, to purify the sinner's soul and to strengthen it, so that it might not err—it is this power that is pointed out here. It is therefore never too late to be devoted unto God. No man need say: "I have lived such a wretched life till now. Of what avail is it to me to think of God so late in life? It may be that I shall not be saved". This is Śrī Kṛishṇa's assurance to all who might feel, like the Faust of German legend, that their past had been so full of wrongdoing as to deserve no mercy at the hands of the Lord. Genuine and sincere devotion to God will soon make the worst sinner right-minded, and lead him on to salvation.

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिं ॥ ॥ ३२ ॥

32. For, finding refuge in Me, O Arjuna, those who may be of sinful birth, women, Vaiśyas as well as Śūdras—all reach the supreme goal.

When dealing with the problem of religious toleration, Śrī Kṛishṇa does not disdain to descend even into minute details. He is never tired of repeating what He has told us in other contexts. And this, I believe, is due to the fact that the great doctrine of the harmony of religions is the special feature of the teaching of Śrī Kṛishṇa. Social habits and institutions might lead us to make distinctions in regard to the worship to be conducted by men and women in the world. Śrī Kṛishṇa guards us against this mistake.

Let us bear in mind the religion taught in what may be regarded as the Old Testament of our faith, the *karma-kāṇḍa* of the *Vedas*. The path of *deva-vrata*, which is explained there, is limited in its scope and operation. Certain classes of people were alone entitled to practise this religion, and others were not. And even among the privileged classes, some had a higher standard than the others. Woman had no scope in the performance of that worship, independently or of her own accord. If she was to have a position in the religion of *deva-vrata* at all, it must be in association with her husband as his *dharma-patnī*. Vaiśyas, though having a place in the scheme of *Vedic* religion, were assigned only a subordinate position. Besides these, there were large bodies of people who were considered unfit to practise this religion at all. But in the religion of the *Vedānta*, there are no such distinctions as those mentioned above. Women have an independent place here: the Śūdras, who were outside the pale of the old faith, are now taken into the fold : and the Vaiśyas no longer feel any disabilities in their position.

These examples show that all the ancient restrictions find no scope for operation in the religion of the *Vedānta*. It is thoroughly universal. Even men polluted in their birth can be saved by following the *Kṛishṇa-vrata*. The man of noble birth and the low-born man, the worst of villains and

the outcast having no social standing—all these can take to the religion of *Kṛishṇa-vrata*, and attain salvation. This follows as the logical corollary of the very great doctrine of the harmony of religions. If all religions are complementary to one another: and if all the gods, who are worshipped in all religions are different manifestations of the one God, who is both immanent and transcendent: and if all the results, which all people in all conditions derive from the various forms of worship they go through, are results bestowed on them by the one God—then you can see that in regard to the worship of this one immanent and transcendent God, there ought to be no distinctions of any kind between one worshipper and another, whether they are high-born or low-born, men or women. Every one who devotedly worships this one God is entitled to the best reward.

In other words, if you look upon religion as a ladder by means of which man has to climb upwards from lower to higher conditions of self-realisation and God-realisation: and if this ladder is intended for the salvation of the whole of mankind, as *Śri* Kṛishṇa puts it—then you can see that in regard to getting up the ladder no man can say to another: "You shall not get up." Every one is free to go up, and it is solely dependent on one's own self-culture, self-discipline and power of self-control to what step of the ladder one climbs. We can put no limits to the progress of another, saying: "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther". Nor can we shut off from the path any on the ground that they have no place there. All who are on the same level of religious realisation, and who are able to worship this one God—all these must look on one another as equal, whether they are high or low, poor or rich, white or coloured. That is why *Śri* Kṛishṇa says: "I treat them all alike, and I call upon My worshippers to treat them all alike".

किं पुनर्ब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा।
अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥ ॥ ३३ ॥

33. How much more (easily) then the Brahmins and the sage-like warriors, who are of meritorious birth and devoted to God (reach the supreme goal)! Having come into this world, which is transient and full of misery, do you become devoted unto Me.

We have seen that all religions are equally valuable to save the soul of man, but the power of religion to save the worshipper will be seen more clearly in the case of those in whose lives there are less obstacles to be overcome. In the case of a vicious man, it is necessary that the tendency in favour of vice must be modified into one in favour of virtue, before he is fit to attain the salvation of *moksha*. But in the case of one in whom there is already this tendency in favour of virtue, there are obviously less difficulties to be surmounted: such a person will attain salvation more easily. Notice the epithets here—the Brahmin who is worthy and devoted to God, and the sage-like warrior, who is also worthy and devoted to God. The latter is specially mentioned for the reason that, being engaged in the actual duties of life, he is more apt to forget philosophy.

It may seem at first sight as though there is no connection between the two halves of this stanza. If we, however, consider the question for a moment, we can see that they are after all not disconnected. *Śrī* Kṛishṇa has been telling His pupil that the highest goal is open to all. In the second half of this stanza, He points out that this highest goal is something worthy of attainment. The enjoyments of this world, *Śrī* Kṛishṇa points out, are transient. In addition to this, they have much misery hidden in their bosom. You enjoy the pleasures of this world, and very soon, your power of enjoying them becomes weakened. When this happens and the relish for enjoyment is still in your heart, and the hankering after pleasures has not left you—the depth of the misery that you will feel is easily imagined. This is really the ultimate condition to which all persons, who are hedonists, are reduced. Hence this world and all its pleasures are characterised as transient and miserable. The goal which the religion of *Śrī* Kṛishṇa places before you is the goal of the freedom of the soul, a goal in which the soul goes back to its own essential nature as *jñānānanda-svarūpa*. You realise the nature of your soul, and in doing so, your wisdom and power of knowing the truth of things becomes enhanced, as also your capacity to enjoy that kind of bliss, which has no poison lurking in its bosom. Thus the condition of *moksha*, provided we have been given an accurate account of it, is decidedly superior to any of the attractions, which this world can offer to us. Clearly then, the goal is something to be sought after, and the exhortation to Arjuna is quite relevant.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Place your mind upon Me: be devoted unto Me: worship Me: bow down unto Me. Having engaged yourself in this manner and making Me your supreme goal, you will come unto Me.

The path of devotion is further explained in this stanza. According to a great commentator, the stream of our thoughts must flow towards God, without interruption of any kind: it must be as continuous as a stream of oil. I have already sought on a former occasion to explain the force of this well known simile (p. *136*). Devotion, worship and salutation are mere aids to make us God-minded. That is, these help us to fix our thought on God ceaselessly. How we can lead this kind of devoted and dedicated life has already been explained.

It is interesting to note the context here. The lesson taught to Arjuna here is repeated twice over in the course of the *Gītā*. It is to this effect, that the fears entertained by Arjuna as to his committing sin by fighting in the Great War of the *Mahābhārata* are unfounded. *Svarga*, to which Arjuna obviously aspired, is not the highest goal, which is to be attained only by worshipping *Śrī* Kṛishṇa in the manner suggested here. *Śrī* Kṛishṇa says in effect: "I am the greatest God, both transcendent and immanent. I have no objection to all other forms of religion being adopted by men according to their capacities. The position you hold is this—that, if you fight and kill your enemies, there would be confusion of castes and you would go to hell. I do not say that this position is altogether untenable. There are persons to whom this religion of the fear of hell and confusion of castes gives the needed discipline. But this is not the highest form of religion, whose purpose is to realise the one all-pervading God of the universe, and afterwards regulate conduct in accordance with that realisation. This is the highest form of life you can lead. Follow the advice I give you. Take Me to be the highest God: place your mind upon Me: worship Me: bow down unto Me: you then become saved. If you fight in this great war, and dedicate unto Me all the work you do (as stated in IX. 27 above) no sin will pollute you, and you will come unto Me."

This verse ends the ninth chapter, and before concluding our work today, we may as usual make a brief survey of its teachings. It must have been plain to you as we went through this chapter what it was that Śrī Kṛishṇa meant Arjuna to understand by *Rāja-Vidyā* and *Rāja-guhya*. As I pointed out to you, they really consist in our understanding how it is possible to reconcile the idea of the transcendency of God with His immanency in the universe. Once we learn God to be both transcendent and immanent at the same time, then it becomes easy for us to realise how everything proceeds from Him, and how for all the various changes in the universe He is ultimately responsible. If thus we realise that He is not merely a transcendental God, away and above and beyond the universe, but also a God, who is near at hand, always working in the midst of Nature, we may arrive at the principles by which our conduct in life is to be guided. We have to worship and we have to work. The necessity for worship arises out of the fact that our God is a transcendental God, who is the Lord of the Universe, above and beyond it, controlling and guiding the huge machinery thereof. We must therefore worship Him so as to please Him, and make Him realise that our lives are regulated in proper relations to Him. Again, because He is immanent in the universe, He naturally expects us to work in the universe, to do our part of the allotted work, whatever it is, high or low, important or unimportant.

From such a view as to the nature of God follows the great doctrine of the harmony of religions. For if our God is not a stranger to the universe, looking at it from outside, but is immanent therein, guiding all the manifestations of power, force and energy in the universe, it becomes essential for us to look upon the various progressive changes that the universe has gone through as the manifested power of God. As a sequel to such a conception of the process of universal history as the manifestation of the power and purpose of God, we cannot look upon anything that belongs to a past or present or future period, as being untrue or bad, as being altogether wrong or unsuited to evolve any good.

There will be no time in the history of the world when all men and women will be on the same dead level of equality in matters of power, thought and physical, mental and moral constitutions. Variety in such matters has always been ; and

as long as there is variety in such matters, there must be variety also in regard to the way in which truth is propounded and acted upon. But if God is immanent in the universe, we cannot help looking upon all the manifestations of the power of God as valuable and helpful to the realisation of His purpose. Now, the question arises; are all these forces in every phase of civilisation worthy and honourable? Are we to follow every form of religion and adopt every kind of conduct that was known to the history of man in the past or may yet be conceived in the future? To such questions, the answer is simply this. The highest conception of God is the one in which you understand Him to be both transcendental and immanent at the same time. Worship Him and do everything as though it were done for Him Dedicate your whole life unto Him. Then you live the best life. But do not look down on other forms of worship adopted by other people. To ensure this tolerance, it may perhaps be necessary for you to introduce into the composition of your religious life all those other forms of worship which men in various phases of culture and civilisation pass through. Live all those lives yourself. But remember, whether you adopt the *deva-vrata*, the *pitṛi-vrata*, or even the *bhūta-vrata*, you are still genuinely and really the follower of the *Kṛishṇa-vrata*, the believer in the one God who is both transcendent and immanent. Let other forms of religion be only an element in the *Kṛishṇa-vrata* that you go through. Regard the whole of your life as ultimately *Kṛishṇārpaṇa*.

Yāmunāchārya, to whom i have drawn your attention more than once, sums up the contents of this important chapter in the following *śloka*.

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

In the ninth (chapter) are dealt with God's unique greatness, His undiminished divinity in His incarnation as man, the characteristics of great souls, and the special value of devotion as a means of God-attainment.

This summary is thus seen to lay due emphasis on the importance of reconciling the transcendency of God with His

immanency. As we have seen, if one aspect of God leads us to worship, the other brings out the necessity of doing our allotted duty in life. God is distant and yet near; we must not confound His immanence with finiteness, nor His transcendence with unapproachable remoteness. Secondly, we are told that, even when God takes the human form, His divinity is not diminished. This can be understood only by those who are of a *sāttvika* temperament, to whom *prakṛiti* appears to be divine. Those of *rājasic* and *tāmasic* temperaments cannot understand this: to them *prakṛiti* appears to be demoniacal. Thus we are told that *prakṛiti* acts as a revealer of God to some, and as a blind to others. The logical implications of this doctrine are fully developed in a later chapter. For the present Śrī Kṛishṇa has been content to make the distinction, and detail to us the way in which we might practise *bhakti-yoga* For this it is essential not only that we should know the true nature of God, who is the object of our devotion, but also the example set before us by the great devotees to guide our faltering footsteps. The chapter as a whole emphasises the supreme value of devotion as a means of God-attainment.

The ninth chapter is thus a very important chapter, as it deals with the true nature of God and the ethical corollaries that flow from a knowledge thereof. You must remember that the eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters are, as it were, an amplification of the ideas contained in the seventh chapter, which is the introduction to the whole question of God and the relation of the soul to God. The ideas briefly referred to in the seventh chapter are fully developed in the later chapters. In the tenth chapter, whose study we will begin next week, you will find how the vague and difficult conception of God as both transcendent and immanent is brought home to our minds in a vivid and telling manner by a series of illustrations demonstrating His special manifestations in the universe.

CHAPTER TEN

xlv

Last time, in concluding the study of the ninth chapter, we tried to obtain a comprehensive view of its teachings. We

then saw that it taught that we must look upon God as both transcendent and immanent at the same time, and try to realise Him through loving devotion. The path of *bhakti* is the best way of approach to God, because it is the easiest. It is open to all without any restrictions of caste or sex. Even the worst sinner can attain salvation by becoming devoted unto God. In order to instil and develop *bhakti* God must be shown as both realisable and lovable. His daily intercourse with the world in all its intricate detail must be made plain to the human understanding. He must be conceived not merely as the source of all power, but also as the very ground of values, controlling, permeating and penetrating everything in the universe. It is this task which is attempted in the tenth chapter, whose study we begin today.

श्री भगवानुवाच—

भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः।
यत्तेऽहं प्रियमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया॥ ॥ १ ॥

1. Yet again, O might-armed (Arjuna)! listen to My highly valuable words, which I speak to you, who love Me, out of a desire for your welfare.

Śrī Kṛishṇa continues His address to Arjuna, and proceeds to give a brief account of His powers and manifestations. And this He later elaborates at the special request of Arjuna. You can easily gather what idea underlies this stanza. If you love your God He will give you the necessary guidance to make your devotion serve His ends. It is Arjuna's manifestation of pleasure and devotion that induces Śrī Kṛishṇa to continue His discourse further.

न मे विदुस्सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः।
अहमादिर्हि देवानां महर्षीणां च सर्वशः॥ ॥ २ ॥

2. Not the multitudes of gods, nor the great sages know My lordly power. Indeed I am in every way the source of the gods and the sages.

It is very difficult to know God in His essential nature. Not alone men, but even the gods and the sages, who belong to a higher order, have failed to understand His lordly powers. I have translated the word *ādi* as 'source'. As God is the

very source of the gods and the sages, they cannot know Him as He is.

यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् ।
असंमूढस्स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥ ॥ ३ ॥

3. He who knows Me to be unborn, without beginning, and the Great Lord of the universe—(he), among men, is one whose intelligence is not clouded (and through such a knowledge, he) is released from all sins.

From this *śloka* we must understand that true wisdom and accurate knowledge in regard to God consist in knowing that He is both *aja* and *anādi*. He is unborn, that is, He has been Himself, as it were, the cause of Himself. For to say that He had a commencement would involve the postulation of a time, when there was no God. And it is hardly possible to believe in a God, who was absent from the universe at any time or was born and caused. Being unborn and uncaused, He must of necessity be eternal. He is also the Great Lord of the universe. In the affairs and governance of this world, we notice men at various levels of authority and power. Now, taking the universe as a whole, there is no position of authority and power, which can be greater than that which He, whom we have seen to be both beginningless and unborn, holds. For it is through the exercise of His power and authority that everything goes on in the universe, has gone on in the past and will go on in the future.

Whoever understands this is declared to be capable of discerning the truth, and is said to be in a position to be freed from all sins. From this let us not rush to the conclusion that clear intelligence will alone lead to release from all sins. We have to take note of the context to interpret the *śloka* properly. So interpreted, the verse would mean: If your intelligence is clear and unclouded, you can realise God as He is; thence you can understand the proper relation of the soul to God; this in turn will enable you to arrive at the right course of conduct to be pursued. You will thereafter live your life in such a manner as will in no way contradict your own appreciation of the relation of your soul to God, whose real and essential nature you have correctly understood.

Human intelligence is one of the most inquisitive things in the world. The more scope you give it, the more it begins to enquire and work. Its aspiration to make the unknown become known never ceases. So once you understand the real nature of God, your intelligence of its own accord will force you to realise the relation between your soul and that God. Nor will it stop here. It will proceed to apply the knowledge so gained to determine the proper course of conduct in life.

So you can see how this knowledge of the true nature of God will lead you to freedom from sins. What is referred to here is not the mere theoretical knowledge that one gets from a study of books on philosophy to the effect that God is both transcendent and immanent. This point will become clear as we proceed.

बुद्धिर्ज्ञानमसंमोहः क्षमा सत्यं दमश्शमः ।
सुखं दुःखं भवोऽभावो भयं चाभयमेव च ॥ ॥ ४ ॥

अहिंसा समता तुष्टिस्तपो दानं यशोऽयशः ।
भवन्ति भावा भूतानां मत्त एव पृथग्विधाः ॥ ॥ ५ ॥

4-5. Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from illusions, forgiveness, truth, power of self-restraint, internal peace, happiness, misery, existence and non-existence, fear and freedom from fear, freedom from causing injury, the conception of equality among beings, contentment, the practice of austerities, giving away gifts, fame, infamy,—all these different mental states of beings proceed from Me alone.

Śrí Kṛishṇa explains further in these verses His *sarva-loka-maheśvaratva*. If He is the eternally unborn great lord of the universe, then it follows as a matter of course that all the activities in the universe must proceed in accordance with His will. He has the will and authority to make the universe move and work in the way in which it does. In particular, Śrí Kṛishṇa points out here that the various mental conditions of the various beings in the world proceed from Him. In relation to what we feel, think, will, or do, we always believe that we are the centre of power and action. 'I did it: but for me such a thing would never have happened'—this is a feeling which most of us, if not all, naturally have. We readily forget that there is a higher power than ourselves, which is really responsible for all that we think or feel or do. These two

ślokas emphatically point out to us that all our activities, conscious or unconscious, are guided by a Source of Power beyond ourselves.

We are told here in effect that God is responsible for both the good and the evil in the mental conditions of men. This raises again the question of individual moral responsibility, which we have already discussed. It is not right that we should ask why weak man should be blamed, when it is declared that God is responsible for all that comes up in the mind of man, good or bad. For God is responsible for all these in the way in which, for example, a just king is responsible for some men being in jail and others occupying honourable positions in life, while administering equal laws. God causes these things, but through the instrumentality of *karma*. If you do not take *karma* into consideration in relation to a question like this, two difficulties arise. The first is this puzzle about the moral responsibility of the individual. The second is an imputation of partiality to God. Why has God made one man rich and another poor, one man wise and another foolish, one man saintly and another sinful? These difficulties cannot be satisfactorily answered, if we do not take *karma* into account. God is the centre of all power, and at the same time the individual is responsible for all that he does. The doctrine of *karma* enables us to combine the idea of the overlordship of God with that of individual responsibility. You can now see how the Lordship of God is in no way incompatible with either His absolute impartiality, or our absolute responsibility for the good and evil that we do. For our sins and virtues we are responsible, and God is absolutely impartial: still what we feel, will and do are through the power that He gives us.

Let me note here that there is no unanimity of opinion among the commentators in regard to the meaning of the words, *bhava* and *abhāva*. According to some, *bhava* is that mental condition of joy, which is produced by an agreeable experience and *abhāva* a mental condition of depression, derived from a disagreeable experience. Another view is that *bhava*, existence, relates to the production of thought, while *abhāva* is its opposite.

महर्षयस्सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा।
मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः॥ ॥६॥

6. The seven great *rishis* and the four ancient Manus, whose descendants these people in the world are, and whose thoughts were guided by Me, were all born from My mind.

In the mythological cosmogony of the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas*, the question of creation is discussed in various ways. It is in fact a very difficult one. How this universe came into existence, if it did come into existence at any particular point of time: what it was like before it did come into existence: whether it came into existence out of something, which was in some other form, or merely out of nothing, because omnipotent God willed that it should come into existence—these are some of the questions which seemed to have puzzled the ancient thinkers in this country. Various answers have been suggested. It is said that the whole universe came out of nothing. It has also been suggested that it came out of something, which existed before, but which was different from this universe. Yet another view is that it came out of nothing, which was nothing and something. The universe is also believed to have come out of darkness. God alone, according to another theory, was at the beginning and the universe was not, but He willed and the universe came into existence. This raises the question whether the Divine Will brought into existence something out of nothing, a question on which there is considerable difference of opinion.

We have had occasion to see that, in the philosophy of the *Vedānta*, it is held that the material universe or the *prakṛiti*, and also the *Purusha* or God, who is responsible for creation, are both *anādi*. Before He created, the *prakṛiti* was in an unorganised condition. It was undifferentiated and unorganic, so to say. He willed, and it became organic and differentiated into the universe that we see.

Now here, in the production of this organisation and differentiation, it is conceived that God brought into existence certain subordinate beings, holding authority under Him. Instead of doing all the work Himself, the Lord delegated

portions of it to them. Among the beings so created, the *prajāpatis* are said to have been the earliest. In the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata* they are some sometimes identified with the seven *ṛishis*, who are believed to be responsible for the seven *maṇḍalas* of the *Rig Veda*. Here the seven *ṛishis* are spoken of as born from the mind of God, and I believe the reference is to the *prajāpatis*—Marichi, Atri, Bhṛigu Vasishṭa, Pulastya, Pulaha and Kratu.

Who are the four Manus referred to here? The later chronology of the *Purāṇas* speaks of fourteen Manus, each responsible for a period of time known as a *manvantara*. Commentators explain that the reference is to four ancient Manus, known as *sāvarṇas*—Svarochisha, Svāyambhuva, Raivata and Uttama. Their names are otherwise given as Brahma-sāvarṇa, Rudra-sāvarṇa, Dharma-sāvarṇa and Daksha-sāvarṇa. One writer ingeniously gets over the difficulty by interpreting the *śloka* differently. He explains that seven sages, four ancients (*pūrve chatvāro*) and Manus generally are referred to, the four ancients being Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanat-kumāra. It has been suggested that, while the *prajāpatīs* created, it was the function of the Manus to protect. Following this suggestion, can we not take the four Manus to mean those who were responsible for this maintenance, one for each *yuga*? You are free to attach whatever value you think fit to this guess of mine. We may also note in passing that some say that the *prajāpatis* and the Manus mentioned here were not actually created, but that the *śloka* must be understood to relate to the mental aspects of God in creating the universe. It is not, however, essential for our purpose to prolong this discussion any longer, as it is of no material help in understanding the contents of this chapter. The general sense is clear. God brought the *prajāpatis* and Manus into existence, and they are responsible for the detailed work of differentiation and creation.

एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः।
सोऽविकम्प्येन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः॥ ॥ ७ ॥

7. He who knows truly this *yoga* and *vibhūti* of Mine will become attached unflinchingly to the proper course of conduct in life. (There need be) no doubt about this.

Three terms occur here which are of some importance—*yoga* in relation to God, His *vibhūti*, and *yoga* as it appertains to man. A *vibhūti* is a special and peculiar manifestation of God, which is not of ordinary occurrence, and which reveals to us in some way the power, wisdom or beauty of God. *Yoga* is the relation of God to the universe, and explains how He is 'joined on' to it. If you ascribe to God the malicious thoughts that come into your mind and the vicious acts that you do, on the ground that He is the centre of all power, then you do not understand His *yoga* properly. *Yoga* in relation to the individual is really the course of conduct on which he is resolved. To determine the proper course of conduct, a knowledge of the *vibhūti* and the *yoga* of God is essential. That is why the knowledge is said to lead to freedom from sins. You will remember that, when dealing with the third *śloka* of this chapter, I told you that a mere philosophic knowledge of the nature of God derived from books will not lead to freedom from sins, but that it is expected to enable one to adopt the proper course of conduct, which will lead one to liberation. That is the point which is distinctly brought out here.

There is another interesting question about this verse. We have to see whether the antecedent of *etām* or 'this' in the phrase "this *yoga* and *vibhūti* of Mine" is to be found in what precedes or what follows this stanza. Partly, I think, the antecedent goes before, and partly it comes after. Though the subject is developed in detail hereafter, in a manner it has already been touched upon. In the previous verse only the *vibhūti* of God is referred to. The seven *ṛishis* and the four Manus are the peculiar manifestations of His power among created beings. What He means by *yoga* has already been explained in *ślokas* 4 and 5. As we saw, this means that He is ultimately responsible for and the source of all power in the universe. This brief account however does not satisfy Arjuna : he pursues his questions further, and Śrī Kṛishṇa has later to explain in detail what He has already discussed in outline. The knowledge of God's *vibhūti* and *yoga*, which is thus sought by Arjuna, is important only as it bears on conduct: it leads to the proper unshakable course of conduct. This point will become clearer later on.

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तस्सर्वं प्रवर्तते ।
इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥ ८ ॥

8. I am the source of all: everything proceeds from Me—thinking thus, the wise men worship Me, their minds fixed in loving contemplation.

We have tried to see in the course of our study of the true nature of God, as expounded in the *Gītā*, that a knowledge thereof leads to the development alike of devotion and right conduct. In this and two or three verses following, the ideal devotion is described. From a knowledge of the true nature of God there arises genuine devotion, sincere and spontaneous. Notice the expression *bhāva-samanvita*, which I have translated: "with their minds fixed in loving contemplation". The word *bhāva* here indicates in my opinion a state of mind characterised by true and sincere attachment. The devotion is not compelled by fear or any external cause. It is not formal, or intended for show. Please forgive me if I try to illustrate the point by a trivial example. Suppose there are two clerks working side by side in an office, between whom some misunderstanding has arisen. Their relation will be friendly only so long as their superior officer is present. Such a kind of make-believe attachment is possible under certain circumstances. But the wise man's devotion is of a different type altogether. It is described in some detail in the next stanza.

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥ ॥ ९ ॥

9. With their minds concentrated on Me, with their whole lives placed in Me, instructing one another and ever speaking of Me, they feel at all times satisfaction and delight.

Let us think of a band of *bhaktas*. What they would be thinking and doing are described in this verse. They would always be thinking of God. Their whole lives would be in God: that is, according to a great commentator, they would find it difficult to live without their God. When they speak to one another, their only topic would be God. By relating their various experiences, they would be instructing one another.

One *bhakta's* apprehension of God is naturally different from that of another. God is one, but men are different and

the same God is apprehended differently by different men. For instance, the sun is the same, but appears differently to different observers, when looked at through windows of variously coloured glasses. So while God in His essential nature is unchangeable, He appears differently to different *bhaktas*, whose powers of apprehension vary from individual to individual. When they meet, each will place before the others his own view of God. They will pool together their experiences, and will be able in the end to realise more or less correctly the true nature of God, just as the various observers of the sun, by discussing their differing views on the colour of the sun, may finally understand that, while the sun is the same, the windows alone are responsible for the observed differences.

Speaking of God, the devotees are always said to feel satisfaction and delight. This emphasises the spontaneous nature of their devotion. Devotion which is the result of compulsion or fear will not be enduring: nor will it dower happiness on those who go through its forms. It will vanish when the compelling force is taken away.

We may note here an interesting feature of the wise men's devotion. Their attachment to a common object brings them together, so that each may communicate to an eager and appreciative audience his own experience of God.

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते । ॥ १० ॥

10. To them, who are constantly devoted to Me and who worship Me with love, I give that particular mental condition, by which they attain to Me.

This verse must be read along with the third and the seventh, wherein we are told that a knowledge of the true nature of God leads to freedom from sins. How this is brought about is explained now. Those who are *bhaktas* in the manner described above, are characterised as *satata-yuktas* or persons constantly devoted to God. You may remember the account given of the wise man's devotion in VII. *16-17*, above. Four types of devotees are mentioned there, the victim of misfortune, the seeker after wisdom, the hunter after wealth

and the wise man. The devotion to God in the first three cases is only a means to an end. The afflicted man will cease to think of God as soon as his affliction ceases. Similarly the devotion of the other two has, as the motive force behind it, the acquisition either of wealth or of wisdom. There is thus the danger in these cases of the means being forgotten after the end is reached: the first three types may kick the ladder by which they get up. But in the case of the wise man, the devotion is both a means and an end in itself. He has no object to gain by his devotion. He feels it to be his duty to be a *bhakta*. He finds it to be in keeping with his nature, the nature of God, and his own apprehension of the relations that exist between the two, to be constantly devoted to God. His devotion is therefore unvarying and ever-existing.

The nature of this devotion is further explained by the phrase *bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam*. The worship should be with love, spontaneous and uncompelled. Love, as you know, can never be compelled. True *bhakti* arises in the heart naturally and spontaneously, and not through any kind of external compulsion. If a *bhakta* becomes devoted to God in this manner, then God undertakes to give him that kind of *buddhi-yoga*, that peculiar mental state, by means of which it is possible for him to go to the Lord whom he loves. We must note here that an eminent commentator interprets the *śloka* in a slightly different manner. He takes *prīti-pūrvakam* along with *dadāmi*. Then we have to understand the sense of the stanza to be thus— "To those who are devoted to Me in this manner, I give with love the *buddhi-yoga* by means of which they may attain to Me!" Notice the shifting of the emphasis on love from the *bhakta* to God. The point to be grasped is that God responds readily to the love of the worshipper, and is ever anxious to reciprocate it.

Love, as you know, tends to bring together people, who love one another. If for instance a father loves his son, would he wish to go away from his son? So for such people as love one another, to be in the company of one another is a source of satisfaction and delight. The pleasure and the satisfaction which the *bhaktas* derive by constantly thinking and speaking of God resemble in many respects those felt by persons, who are in the company of the objects of their love. We can therefore easily understand how the sincere *bhakta* would seek

the company of God. So Śrī Kṛishṇa gives the assurance that to such He gives the state of mind by which God would be attained.

The *yoga* or rule of conduct, which a man adopts who knows the true nature of God, is taken to be the *bhakti-yoga* or the *yoga* of devotion. To one who adopts this rule of conduct, Śrī Kṛishṇa undertakes to give that particular mental condition by which he can reach God, freed from all sins. In this manner we have to see the connection between *ślokas 3, 7* and *10*. It is not merely a knowledge derived through study that saves man : it is not enough to read a book on philosophy and understand that God is both transcendent and immanent. Through the exercise of will, you must force into your life that realisation regarding the nature of God, and live a life which is in every respect in keeping with the conviction you have gained. It is by living such a life that you become free from sins. Your intellect enables you to know the nature of God and of your soul, the relation between these two, and the proper course of conduct which is in keeping with this known relation. Only when we succeed in living that life, freedom from sins is guaranteed to us, and the assurance is given of certain God-attainment.

We may stop here for the present.

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Last time we saw that a knowledge of God as He is in Himself is capable of giving us freedom from all sins. It must not, however, be a knowledge, such as the philosopher derives from discussion and from the study of books. I endeavoured to impress on your minds that it is really by changing one's inner nature that one can free oneself from the effects of sin. We saw how this is possible in the light of *ślokas 3, 7* and *10*. A knowledge of the true nature of God leads to devotion; and this in turn induces God to endow the devotee with that particular type of mental constitution, which would enable him to get over his sins. Note that it is not that God cannot free him at once from sins, but He merely gives him the requisite *buddhi-yoga*. Although it is ultimately God who enables the sinner to become free from his sins, yet it is distinctly pointed

out here that, without the effort of the individual himself, the freedom sought for will not be obtained.

In the next *śloka* Śri Krishṇa explains how this peculiar *buddhi-yoga*, the mental constitution which enables one to change one's inner nature and secure freedom from sins, and which one derives by becoming devoted unto God through a knowledge of His nature—how this *buddhi-yoga* is given.

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता॥ ॥ ११ ॥

11. Out of mercy to those (very persons), I, who am seated within their mental structure, destroy the the darkness born out of ignorance by means of the shining light of knowledge.

How is the darkness destroyed? Out of mercy to those *bhaktas*, who, having realised the true nature of God and thus become firmly devoted to Him, are anxious to become free from sins, the Lord, seated within their mental structure, within the home of their minds, endows them with the *buddhi-yoga*, which is likely to procure for them the coveted freedom. In the phrase *ātma-bhāva-stha*, the word *ātma* is a reflexive pronoun, meaning 'their own'. I take *bhāva* to mean mental condition. We must note here that the phrase has also been understood to mean "becoming the object of their meditations."

However we interpret this, the point of interest here is clear. In our endeavours to obtain salvation for ourselves, we are told that God's *anukampā* or mercy is essential for our success. This, it is unnecessary for me to emphasise again, does not in any way lessen our responsibility for our virtues and vices. The effort must be ours, although the grace of God is ultimately necessary to make the effort fructify. Neither the grace of God without individual effort, nor inadequate individual effort such as does not win God's grace, can alone lead us to salvation. Both are taught here to be absolutely necessary. Thus knowledge of the true nature of God gives rise to devotion: and devotion wins the grace of God, and induces Him to endow the devotee with the *buddhi-yoga* which leads to freedom from sin.

The obstacle that prevents us from following that kind of life which would secure for us this freedom is the obstacle of ignorance, which mistakes what is perishable to be valuable, what is unreal to be real, and what is transiently blessed to be eternally blessed. This ignorance has to be removed before the proper mental constitution can be obtained. Now the moral perfection of an individual is largely dependent on what he holds to be the highest object of attainment. Some, for instance, assign that honour to money: others hold the pleasures of the senses to be the highest ideal: yet others seek salvation. According as a man holds one or the other of these opinions, you can easily understand how the moral tone of his nature will be different. It is out of ignorance that man is not in a position to realise for himself what is the worthiest object of attainment. When he knows this, then the moral tone of his nature becomes in keeping with his ideal. Thus it is that the promised *buddhi-yoga* comes. Then through the removal of ignorance and the operation of the *buddhi-yoga*, we can attain the highest wisdom, and acting in accordance with that wisdom, become free from sins.

The special manifestation of the power of God, which is noticeable in certain beings, is His *vibhūti*: and the intimate relation of God to the universe is His *yoga*. We must understand both, if we are to realise God as He is, however inadequately. Both are described in this chapter. Up to this point we have had the description of the intimate relation of God to the universe. He does not work Himself: He is neither a miracle-worker, nor a magician. To those who are workers in the universe, He gives the means whereby they may work ill or well, as the case may be. If they choose the good path, they attain salvation. If they take to the evil path, they do not. In order to be able to choose the good path, the *māyā* or *prakṛiti*, acting as a blind, must be made so to operate as to lead to the realisation of the God, who is above and beyond Nature. If the realisation is genuine, men will naturally be prone to serve that God with true and undeviating devotion, and this tendency will make them seek the highest wisdom. It is thus that God operates indirectly in the universe, without making the individual lose his responsibility and without making him a mere passive instrument in His hands.

Śrī Kṛishṇa is further questioned by Arjuna here. The spirit in which the questions are put, as well as the change in his attitude, is worth noticing.

अर्जुन उवाच—

परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् ।
पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम् ॥ ॥ १२ ॥
आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिर्नारदस्तथा ।
असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥ ॥ १३ ॥
सर्वमेतदृतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव ।

ARJUNA SAID:

12 & 13. You (are) the supreme *Brahman*, the supreme abode, the holiest (of the holy). All the sages, Nārada the divine sage, Asita, Devala and Vyāsa say that you are the eternal, indestructible *Purusha*, unborn and all-pervading. You also say (the same).

14. I consider all this to be true, O Kṛishṇa, which You tell me.....

have translated *dhāman* as "abode". It has also been taken to mean light: and you all know that God is often referred to as the Supreme Light in the religious literature of more than one nation.

Of the various sages mentioned above, the names of Nārada and Vyāsa are already familiar to us. To Devala, the hymns of the ninth *maṇḍala* of the *Rig Veda* are attributed. According to some authorities, Asita is the father of Devala. The general intention appears to be to mention the names of sages, celebrated in the *śruti*.

Notice the striking change in the attitude of Arjuna here. Till now, his position was that of a sceptic—a reverent sceptic if you will—storm-tossed on the waves of doubt. Śrī Kṛishṇa does not lay the law down for Arjuna like an infallible authority, whose words must be obeyed without discussion. Responding to Arjuna's difficulties, Śrī Kṛishṇa has been explaining and arguing, trying to convince him more by force of reasoning than by claim of special authority. By this stage, Arjuna's faith in his Master is almost complete. Originally, when he threw down the divine bow, Gāṇḍiva, his attitude was one of utter independence: but now it has changed to one of complete humility. Notice further that Arjuna cannot be said to have had anything like a direct personal conviction of the truth of what he has been taught, until he sees the *Viśva-rūpa* and realises for himself his place in the divine scheme of

things. So this marked change in Arjuna's attitude is to be traced to the rational and enlightened teaching of Śrī Kṛishṇa, which he has been led to adopt on account of its power to convince. The enquiring mind of Arjuna has become humble before the greatness of the truth it has learnt, and is anxious to bow down before the authority of the Teacher.

न हि ते भगवन्व्यक्तिं विदुर्देवा न दानवाः ॥ ॥ १४ ॥

.....Indeed, neither the gods, nor the demons, O Lord, understand Your manifestation.

It is made clear here that all those who have realised God have done so in an indirect manner. The direct perceptual realisation of God, in the way in which we realise the objects of the world, has not been possible for any one. For instance, I am manifest to you, and you are manifest to me. In that way, God cannot be said to be manifest to any one. So Arjuna says here in effect: "To realise You directly and perceptually, in the fullness of Your manifestation, it has not been possible for any one, not even the gods, whose knowledge, though greater than human, is still limited. I feel that I have understood Your teaching. I have also tried to understand the teaching of Nārada, Vyāsa and others as regards the nature of God. From all this my conclusion is that the fullness of Your manifestation cannot be realised by any one." This is, as it were, the *pīṭikā* for the coming *Viśva-rūpa*.

Some of you may wonder why the demons are also mentioned here along with the gods. It is because they are also regarded, in our mythology, as possessing superhuman skill and knowledge, though unlike the gods, they use these for selfish and wicked purposes.

स्वयमेवात्मनात्मानं वेत्थ त्वं पुरुषोत्तम ।
भूतभावन भूतेश देवदेव जगत्पते ॥ ॥ १५ ॥
वक्तुमर्हस्यशेषेण दिव्या ह्यात्मविभूतयः ।
याभिर्विभूतिभिर्लोकानिमांस्त्वं व्याप्य तिष्ठसि ॥ ॥ १६ ॥

15 & 16. You only know Yourself by Yourself. O Best of beings! Creator of all things! Lord of all things! God of gods! Lord of the universe! be pleased to declare to me fully Your divine, special manifestations, by which You stand, pervading these worlds.

The epithets with which Arjuna addresses Śrī Kṛishṇa in these stanzas seem to me to be significant. As you can see, the thought of the previous stanza is continued here. Having said that it is not possible for even the gods to understand fully the manifestation of God as He is in Himself, Arjuna goes on to point out that He alone can know Himself through unaided self-knowledge. We, however, can arrive at a partial knowledge of His nature by looking on Him as *bhūta-bhāvana, bhūteśa, deva-deva jagat-pati* and *purushottama*. Let us bestow a little thought on each of these epithets. Our logic and our observation must make us realise that God is the source of all beings; He is therefore *bhūta-bhāvana*. In addition, He is the controller of them all. God is not like a magician, who calls up serpents that He is unable to control: or to vary the figure, He has not brought into existence a Frankinstein monster of a universe which persists in going its own way. So God brings beings into existence, and at the same time keeps them under control; for this universe is an orderly universe, a cosmos and not a chaos. Hence He is both *bhūta-bhāvana* and *bhūteśa*.

Then, He is *deva-deva*, God of gods. Let us remember that Śrī Kṛishṇa has already told us that there is only one true God, who is both immanent and transcendent at the same time, and from whom all the gods of all the religions derive their power to bestow on their several devotees whatever they are in a position to bestow. If you realise that all the religions in the world and all the gods worshipped therein constitute, as it were, the various parts of one grand, divine edifice—then you can well understand that this transcendent and immanent God is the source as well as the synthesis of whatever gods may be. Next, we have to consider the significance of *jagat-pati*, which may be translated as 'Lord of the universe'. This enables us to realise that God transcends the universe as a whole. For, He may well be *bhūta-bhāvana* and *bhūteśa*, and yet not transcend the universe. As He is *jagat-pati*, His power is seen to be higher than that of the universe. As an immanent God, He makes the various forces and beings in the universe evolve in the way they do. But He is not under the control of the universe: He is also above and beyond it. Lastly, He is *purushottama*, the best of beings, because He is all these and more.

Thus these epithets show the way in which any one can realise God in a partial manner: but, even when put together,

they cannot reveal to us the fullness of His manifestation. So Arjuna puts forward a fresh request here for more light. "Since we can know You only partially and since You alone know the fullness of Your manifestation," he says, "please describe to me without exception Your *vibhūtis* or special manifestaions by means of which You pervade this universe. For by a knowledge of these, it may be possible for us to realise in a way the fact that You pervade this universe and yet control it."

Now what are these *vibhūtis* or special manifestations of God? When dealing with the theory of the *avatāras*, as expounded in the *Gītā*, we had to take note of the conception of *vibhūti* also: and I am sure you will allow me to go over the same ground again in order to bring out the special significance of the doctrine we are considering now. It is an old *Vedic* idea that the whole universe is an incarnation of God: in the famous *Purusha-sūkta*, the Supreme Being is conceived as having sacrificed Himself, and evolved the world out of a portion of Himself. This act of self-incarnation, however, imposes no limitations of any kind on the supremacy and transcendence of God. Thus it is God Himself, who has somehow become the world, though He does not cease to be God on this account. Hence this universe is a proof alike of His reality and power.

Yet to the average man this fact is far from clear. But even he can grasp in a way the method of God's working in the universe by considering men and things, which the world regards with admiration and respect, as above the average in strength or power or beauty. Although not even a blade of grass can move without the power of God, yet the unequal distribution of various kinds of excellence that we find in this world can only be explained by looking on specially endowed things as being specially favoured by God. In other words, we must consider that such things, as are possessed of any special excellence or beauty or power, have in them more than that usual fraction of the power of God, which is at the very root of the existence of every one of the innumerable beings in the universe. Thus the *Vedānta* holds that God is the ground and cause of all values: and a refined sense of values is an instrument for revealing the glory of God. Every one of our intuitions of value is due to our dim apprehension

of the presence of God. The hero is a hero because of the divinity at work within him: and when we admire him, we are really admiring the power of God. The higher the value and measure of his heroism, the greater must be the natural inflow of the life of God into him.

In all the fields of universal life, it is possible for us to have these special manifestations of the power of God. A great warrior or statesman, a profound philosopher or an artist of genius, all reveal to us, each in his own way, the glory and greatness of God. If every such manifestation is indicative of the power of God: if in every age and country these manifestations are present: and if in every aspect of the working of the universe we can see the effect of these *vibhūtis*—then we can get hold of a method by means of which we can apprehend in a way the manner in which God works in the universe. Of course we must not forget that these *vibhūtis* alone cannot indicate to us the *vyāpti* of God in the universe. He is everywhere, and operates in the dunce as well as in the genius. Still only specially endowed things and beings direct our thoughts to God. By a study of the *vibhūtis* of God, we realise His immanency more easily. Arjuna is therefore specially anxious to know the *vibhūtis*, by whose study he can understand the finger of God to be at work everywhere.

कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन् ।
केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ॥ ॥ १७ ॥

17. Tell me, O Yogin, how shall I, who am always meditating on You, know You? In relation to what kinds of existence, O Lord, are You to be meditated on by me?

Here the reason for Arjuna's request is made clear. Since it is impossible to know God fully, Arjuna wants to know His various special manifestations on which he can meditate. God is spoken of as *yogin* in this stanza in the special sense in which the term *yoga* is used in this chapter. It means the God who is intimately related to the universe in the manner described above. If we read *yogi* instead of *yogin*, we will have to make the term qualify Arjuna: then it would mean 'one who has adopted the rule of conduct mentioned above, namely, the *bhakti-yoga*',

विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दन ।
भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम् ॥ ॥ १७ ॥

18. Tell me once again, O Kṛishṇa, your *yoga* and *vibhūti* in (greater) detail. Hearing this (teaching, which is like) nectar, I feel no satiety.

Please observe that I have retained the terms *yoga* and *vibhūti* in the translation. As I have explained to you their significance, I am sure you will have no difficulty in following the meaning of the stanza.

In what respect can the teaching of Śrī Kṛishṇa be said to resemble nectar? One of the most noteworthy characteristics of the divine drink of the gods is, as you know, that it never cloys nor satiates. The more you have it, the more you wish to have of it. It is this quality of nectar that is stressed in the comparison used here. Arjuna says in effect: "You have taught me a great deal: still, I do not feel satisfied. The more You teach me, the more I wish to learn. I am anxious to hear more." Not that Arjuna has been inattentive, nor that Śrī Kṛishṇa has been wanting in clearness. On the contrary, Arjuna is so fascinated with the lucidity and reasonableness of the teaching that he wants to hear more of it.

श्री भगवानुवाच

हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि विभूतीरात्मनश्शुभाः ।
प्राधान्यतः कुरुश्रेष्ठ नास्त्यन्तो विस्तरस्य मे ॥ ॥ १९ ॥

ŚRĪ KṚISHṆA SAID:

19. Gladly shall I tell you, Arjuna, my auspicious special manifestations, but (only) the chief (ones among them). For there is no end to the extent of Mv (special manifestations).

It is obvious that Śrī Kṛishṇa can hardly find it convenient to explain in detail all His *vibhūtis* to Arjuna, for these are countless and to be found everywhere. So, just to illustrate the nature of these *vibhūtis*, to bring home vividly to the mind of Arjuna the all-pervasive nature of the God whom he

has been taught to worship, Śri Kṛishṇa proceeds to refer to some of the principal manifestations of the power and glory of God, as the world of Arjuna knew them.

We may note here that there is another reading, *divyāhyātmavibhūtayaḥ*, for the phrase *vibhūtirātmanaśśubhāḥ* in this *śloka*. It may be translated as "My divine special manifestations" and means the same thing.

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।
अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥ ॥ २० ॥

20. I am the *ātman*, O Arjuna, seated within the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of (all) beings.

Before beginning to speak about His *vibhūtis*, Śri Kṛishṇa deals briefly in this verse with His *yoga*. The first line can be interpreted in various ways, according to the points of view of the different schools of Indian thought. But every sect believes in the *antaryāmitva* of God. So, if the line is understood to mean that God is the internal controller of all the beings in the universe, we interpret the *śloka* accurately enough and avoid sectarian controversies.

Sṛishṭi, creation, *sthiti*, maintenance, and *laya*, destruction, are the three aspects of the evolution of the universe. Since Śri Kṛishṇa declares here that He is responsible for all the three, this *śloka* can be regarded as summarising the whole of the *yoga* of God in relation to the universe. He says in effect: "I am so intimately related to the universe and I so interpenetrate it that I am everywhere immanent in it. The whole universe works and operates under the impulse I give to it. Without Me, not even a blade of grass can move." So the creation of beings, their maintenance and destruction are all the results of the power of God working in the universe. Thus the Sāṅkhya view that the material universe is in itself responsible for all its evolutionary modifications is rejected. The material *prakṛiti* evolves, but not through any power possessed by it. It does so only under the power and impulse given to it by God. He is in the *prakṛiti* and the power it has is His.

From the next *śloka* onwards Śrī Kṛishṇa describes His *vibhūtis*.

आदित्यानामहं विष्णु र्ज्योतिषां रविरंशुमान् ।
मरीचि र्मरुतामस्मि नक्षत्राणामहं शशी ॥ ॥ २१ ॥

21. Among the Ādityas, I am Vishṇu. Among things possessed of light, (I am) the brilliant sun. Among the Maruts, I am Marīchi. Among the luminous bodies (which become visible in the sky during the night), I (am) the moon.

Commencing from this *śloka*, till almost the end of this chapter, we have a series of statements of identity, in which Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with various persons and objects. These 'grammatical equations' can be roughly divided into two classes—those in which identity is established with an outstanding member of a class, and those in which some special excellence of an individual is declared to be God Himself. In no case, however, can the 'equation' prove anything like absolute identity between its component terms. Every *vibhūti* is an aid to meditation, a special revelation of the power of God. As such, we may regard it as possessing an unusual amount of the divine afflatus: we can, if we are so minded, say that it reminds us most vividly of God of all the members of its class. This then is the basis on which these statements of identity rest: they do not negative the conception of God being omnipenetrative: they merely emphasise that He is present in some things in a special and particular sense. Bearing this in mind, we may proceed to the study of the particular *vibhūtis* mentioned in this stanza.

In a sense all the gods can be called Ādityas, as they are all the sons of Aditi. However, we must note that the thirty-three gods of the *Vedic* pantheon are sometimes classified into twelve Ādityas, eleven Rudras, eight Vasus and the two Aśvins. The twelve Ādityas are called Dhātṛi, Aryaman, Mitra, Varuṇa Indra, Vivasvat, Pūshan, Parjanya, Aṁśa, Bhaga, Tvashṭṛi and Vishṇu. The *Purāṇas* make them the twelve suns shining during the twelve months of the year, one for each month. In the *Rig-Veda*, however, the Ādityas are usually referred to as seven, and occasionally as eight in number. There is no need,

however, to enter into a discussion on the Ādityas now: suffice it to know that in the *Mahābhārata* and in a wide range of our sacred literature, Vishṇu is regarded as the chief among the Ādityas. Hence Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with Vishṇu among the Ādityas.

The Maruts in Vedic mythology are the friends and allies of Indra in his fight against Vṛitra. They are storm-gods and are supposed to represent the power in the storm. Of these Marīchi is the chief.

There is yet another point to be noted in reference to this verse. The original for what has been translated as "among the luminous bodies, which become visible during the night in the sky" is the genitive plural of the word *nakshatra*. This generally means a star and more particularly a lunar asterism. The moon cannot be included in either of these categories. Hence the translation here given appears to me to convey the sense intended.

वेदानां सामवेदोऽस्मि देवानामस्मि वासवः।
इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि भूतानामस्मि चेतना ॥ ॥ २२ ॥

22. Among the *Vedas*, I am the *Sāma-Veda*. I am Indra among the gods. Among the *indriyas*, I am *manas*. I am consciousness in all beings.

Why the *Sāma-Veda* is here considered the most important among the *Vedas* is a question on which there is considerable difference of opinion. In the *Purāṇas* it is often declared that both Śiva and Vishṇu are fond of listening to the music of the *Sāma-Veda*. You must all be aware of the story of Rāvaṇa pleasing Śiva by chanting the *Sāman*-verses. Perhaps, this *Veda* is considered important as it combines music with meaning.

Indra, as you know, is the chief among the *Vedic* gods. It would be more correct to say that, in the course of the history of the *Vedic* religion, Indra became the chief among them. We are not here concerned with the history of Indra's rise to popularity. He had become the ruler of the gods by the time the *Gītā* was taught: and very naturally he is looked on as one of the *vibhūtis* of Śrī Kṛishṇa.

The word *indriya* is usually translated as 'sense' or 'organ of perception'. This, however, does not convey the exact force of the Sanskrit original. I have therefore deemed it best to allow the word to remain as such in the translation, and make its meaning clear by explanation. In Sanskrit psychology eleven *indriyas* are enumerated. We have first the five organs of perception, *jñānendriyas*,—eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin. Then there are the five *karmendriyas* or organs of action, the larynx, hands, legs, etc. Besides these, there is the *manas* or *antaḥ-karaṇa*, the faculty of attention. The *karmendriyas* are regarded as working under the influence of the *jñānendriyas*, that in turn are controlled by the *manas*.

Let us try to understand what is implied in this by analysing any one of our acts. To do anything our will must be effective, and for this, we must see, perceive and feel. I believe I have once before explained how the presence of sugar induces us to act. We see it, examine it and put a little in our mouths. It tastes sweet, whence we want more. So, first of all, we see and perceive a thing: then find out that it is pleasant or unpleasant in relation to us: finally, desiring more and more of the agreeable things and less and less of the disagreeable things, we direct our actions so as to fulfil this object. In order that our *karmendriyas* may work, our *jñānendriyas* must have produced beforehand their effect. Our organs work in relation to various things, and the way in which they work is determined by the agreeableness or the disagreeableness of the things. Now, the capacity of the *jñānendriyas* to feel this is determined by *manas* or the faculty of attention. Place before an absent-minded man the most delicious food. How much of the sweetness of the food will he relish ? Unless the faculty of attention is directed to the particular organ of sense, which is in operation for the time being, the sensation produced cannot be well realised And unless you feel the agreeableness or disagreeableness of the thing that you perceive, the organs of action will not work. Thus the *karmendriyas* are dependent on the *jñānendriyas*, and these in turn are dependent on the *manas*. From all this, it is obvious that *manas* is the most important *indriya*, and Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with it accordingly.

We have had occasion to analyse the concept of consciousness as known to the *Vedānta* (under II. *17*). Without

covering the same ground again, we can briefly note here that it is the principle of consciousness that makes us conscious of our own existence and of the things around us. Obviously therefore it is the best element in the constitution of beings.

रुद्राणां शङ्करश्चास्मि वित्तेशो यक्षरक्षसां ।
वसूनां पावकश्चास्मि मेरुश्शिखरिणामहम् ॥ ॥ २३ ॥

23. I am Śaṅkara among the Rudras, Kubera among the Yakshas and the Rākshasas. I am the holy Fire among the Vasus, and the Meru among mountains having beautiful peaks.

When dealing with the Ádityas, I spoke to you about a classification of the *Vedic* gods, which is sometimes adopted, according to which we have twelve Ádityas, eleven Rudras, eight Vasus and two Aśvins. Śrī Kṛishṇa appears to identify Himself here with the chief among these Rudras. We may note in passing that, originally in the *Rig Veda*, the Rudras appear to be synonymous with the Maruts, though later they were considered as a separate group of gods.

The Yakshas are certain superhuman beings, inferior to the gods, and regarded traditionally as the attendants of Kubera, the god of wealth. It is worthy of note that Kubera is spoken of here as the Lord both of the Yakshas and the Rākshasas. In the *Mahābhārata* itself we find mention of a Rākshasa retinue to Kubera; and we may remember that Rāvaṇa was the brother of Kubera.

The Vasus were a group of *Vedic* deities, whose names are differently given by later authorities. Of these gods, Agni or the god of fire is the chief.

In the cosmogony of the *Purāṇas*, the Meru is a golden mountain, which is the abode of the gods. Round it, the sun, the moon and all the other celestial bodies move. It is not necessary that we should consider this to be true. But if such a mountain did exist, it would obviously be the most beautiful. If we want to realise for ourselves the power and glory of God, we have merely to call to mind the beautiful description of the Meru, as given in the *Purāṇas*. Will not

such a grand, magnificent mountain lead us to think of God and meditate upon Him? Please note here that the Meru is referred to as the chief among *śikharins* in the original. The word, *śikharin*, generally refers to a mountain, and literally means 'one having a peak'. I have the authority of an eminent commentator for regarding the class to which the Meru is assigned as consisting of mountains having beautiful peaks: for soon you will find a reference to the Himalayas as the best among the mountains.

Kindly allow me to finish here our work for to-day.

xlvii

Last time we were studying Śrī Kṛishṇa's description of His special and peculiar manifestations, through which it would be possible for us, common men, to realise how God operates in the universe. The same discussion is continued till almost the end of this chapter.

पुरोधसां च मुख्यं मां विद्धि पार्थ बृहस्पतिं ।
सेनानीनामहं स्कन्दस्सरसामस्मि सागरः ॥ ॥ २४ ॥

24. And know Me, O Arjuna, to be Brihaspati, the chief among priests. Among leaders of armies, I am Skanda. I am the ocean among reservoirs of water.

The *purodhas* is the priest whom the king is expected to consult on all matters of importance and have before him always. This gives us an idea of the relations that ought to exist between religion and state policy. The king rules, having the authority of religion placed before him. Among the priests, Bṛihaspati is considered to be the best, as he is the priest of the gods and famous for his learning and wisdom.

Skanda, as you know, is Subrahmaṇya, famous for his victory over Tārakāsura. The story of this fight is related in many of the *Purāṇas*, and forms also the subject of the later part of Kālidāsa's *Kumāra-sambhava*.

A *saras* is a lake or some big sheet of standing water. The sea is obviously the greatest among all the reservoirs of water.

महर्षीणां भृगुरहं गिरामस्म्येकमक्षरम् ।
यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालयः ॥ ॥ २५ ॥

25. Among the great sages, I am Bhṛigu. Among words, I am the single syllable (om). I am *japa-yajña* among acts of worship, and the Himalayas among immovable objects.

Bhṛigu is mythologically conceived as light, and light is regarded as the first among created things in the universe. This is one possible interpretation. He is also one of the famous seven sages. Please note that Bhṛigu is spoken of here as the chief among the great sages (*maharshis*), and that soon you will come across a mention of Nārada as the chief among the divine sages.

The value and meaning of the *Oṁkāra* have already been referred to, when we were dealing with a verse in the seventh chapter (VII. 8), wherein Śrī Kṛishṇa declares that He is the *praṇava* in the *Vedas*. I then tried to explain why it is made to signify the highest harmonisation and unity, which are predicable about God.

The word, *yajña*, is generally used in the *Gītā* in the sense of an act of worship. It does not mean any particular form of sacrifice. Most of you know what *japa* is and how difficult it is to practise it. Briefly, *japa* is silent meditation: we perform a *japa* when, muttering inaudibly, we go through a formula known as a *mantra*. In this process the mind is concentrated on the object of meditation, as the *mantra* always has a meaning in connection with the object of meditation. Now, the *japa-yajña* is considered the most efficacious as well as the most difficult of all forms of worship—efficacious, because it develops our powers of concentration, and difficult, because it requires us to rise above temptation and distraction. Consequently Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with the *japa-yajña*.

Of the greatness and the glory of the Himalayas, it is not necessary for me to speak. It is the biggest range of mountains in the world: its vast length inspired a great poet to describe it as the measuring rod of the world, as he knew it. So, if in this world anything may be deemed to be firmly fixed, and difficult to move, it is the Himalayan range. No wonder that Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with it.

अश्वत्थस्सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।
गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथस्सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥ ॥ २६ ॥

26. I am the Aśvattha among trees of all kinds and Nārada among the divine sages. (I am) Chitraratha among the Gandharvas and the silently meditativa Kapila among the Siddhas.

The Asvattha, or the *Ficus Religiosa*, as the botanists call it, is a tree, which is important only from a purely religious standpoint. It is not famous for flower or fruit or even for its leaves. In the *Purāṇas*, it is regarded as the home of the *Trimūrtis*—Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva. Its importance dates, perhaps, from the *Vedic* times, when it was used to produce fire by friction along with the Śamī tree. Soon, you will see from the *Gītā* itself that it is used as a simile in connection great truths of philosophy and religion.

You have all heard of Nārada, and it is surely unnecessary for me to speak to you about his great fame. His devotion to God is celebrated throughout the *bhakti* literature of our country. Please observe that Nārada is here looked on as the greatest of the sages known among the gods, in contradistinction to Bhṛigu, the chief among the *maharshis*.

It is rather difficult to understand who the Gandharvas were. The *Vedic* conception of a Gandharva differs considerably from the later views. In the *Purāṇas* and the epics we read that they are demi-gods with a flair for music. In all probability, they might have been people living outside the frontiers of ancient Indian civilisation. There is some evidence in the *Mahābhārata* to suggest that Chitraratha was a contemporary of Śrī Kṛishṇa and Arjuna.

The Siddhas are those who have practised *yoga* and attained success therein, by reason of their natural endowment, acquired through meritorious deeds in past births. A *muni* is one who has practised *japa-yajña*. Kapila is the famous founder of the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy, whose analysis of the universe has been adopted in the *Vedānta* with some significant modifications. He is also believed to be an incarnation of Vishṇu.

उच्चैश्श्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम् ।
ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ॥ ॥ २७ ॥

27. Know Me among horses to be Ucchaiśravas, brought forth through (the churning of the milky ocean for the production of) nectar, Airāvata among the great elephants and the king among men.

I daresay you all know the story of the churning of the milky ocean by the gods and the demons for the sake of nectar, the divine drink that would confer immortality. During the churning, various objects came out of the ocean, many of them being of great beauty and excellence. Ucchaiśravas, the milk-white horse, which Indra took, was one of them, and Airāvata, his white elephant, was another.

Please note that the importance attached to a king here is no conventional one. In modern days the constitution of law and authority makes it easy even for unworthy people to rule. In olden times, kings were kings, not through convention, but through the possession of actual merit: and they had real power in their hands.

आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामस्मि कामधुक् ।
प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पस्सर्पाणामस्मि वासुकिः ॥ ॥ २८ ॥

28. Among weapons used in war, I am the Vajra, I am the Kāmadhenu among cows. I am Kandarpa the progenitor, and I am Vāsuki among *sarpas*.

The Vajra, as you know, is the weapon of Indra. In the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas*, Indra is praised for killing Vṛitra with

this weapon. It is generally identified with the thunderbolt. We can easily see how a weapon, which is used by the chief of the gods, in killing his most powerful enemy, must be a most striking one. Commentators point out that the divine weapons of Vishṇu and Śiva, like the discus and the trident, are by implication excluded from the class of weapons, of which the Vajra is here declared to be the chief.

In declaring that He is Kandarpa the progenitor, Śrī Kṛishṇa must be understood to point out that the god of love is the most important among the various forces that lead to the reincarnation of souls. What power love wields in this matter, we all know. If there is no love, there can be no reincarnation. Another possible interpretation is that Śrī Kṛishṇa here identifies Himself with the love which leads to the founding of a family, the love which generates, as opposed to lust or mere carnal passion.

The Kâma-dhenu or Kāma-dhuk, as its name indicates, is the wish-yielding cow of Indra. It is also said to have come out of the sea of milk during the churning referred to in dealing with the last *śloka*. It yields not merely milk, but every wish of its worshippers.

Sarpa generally means a serpent: so also does the term *nāga*. But a distinction is made between the two in this and the following verses. Śrī Kṛishṇa says that He is Vāsuki among the *sarpas* and Ananta among the *nāgas*. I find a good deal of difficulty in understanding the point of this distinction. One way of looking at the matter would be to consider both the *sarpas* and the *nāgas* to represent two tribes with whom the ancient Aryans came into contact. Even now, to the east of the Himalayas, round about Manipur, we have a people known as the Nāgas. The orthodox commentators have also felt this difficulty and given us some ingenious solutions. A *sarpa*, it has been said, is a poisonous snake, while a *nāga* is a snake without poison. Another explanation is that a *sarpa* is a single-headed snake, while a *nāga* is a many-headed reptile. You know, of course, that Indian mythology teems with hydra-headed serpents. The point about this fine distinction is certainly of interest, but it is of no essential importance in understanding the teaching of this chapter. You may look upon Vāsuki and Ananta, names already familiar to you, either as

chiefs of two primitive tribes, or as rulers of two species of mythological snakes.

अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम्।
पितॄणामर्यमा चास्मि यमस्संयमतामहम्॥ ॥ २९ ॥

29. Among *nāgas*, I am Ananta. I am Varuṇa among aquatic beings. Among the manes, I am Aryaman. I am Yama among those who restrain and control.

Varuṇa is one of the most important gods in the *Vedic* pantheon. He is regarded in many hymns as the chief among the gods, the fashioner of earth and heaven, the ever-wakeful watcher of men, the punisher of the wicked, and most notable of all, the forgiver of sins. For reasons which we need not discuss now, the worship of Indra superseded that of Varuṇa, and in a verse, which we studied some time back, Indra was regarded as the chief of the gods. Consequent on this supersession, Varuṇa was relegated to a subordinate position, as the god of waters and of aquatic beings. Even for this idea, the source is found in some *Vedic* hymns, which associate Varuṇa definitely with the waters, though, as I said, he was also given at the same time other and more important attributes.

Not much, I am afraid, is known concerning Aryaman, the chief of the manes. Yama is here referred to as the best among those who bestow punishments and subject people to discipline and restraint. You know, as the god of death, he is generally believed to have the function of finding out the kind of life that men lived here on earth, to judge them, to send them to heaven or punish them in hell. He is the great jailer of souls. Please notice that one of the most significant names of Yama is *Dharma-rāja*, the righteous ruler: his judgments are inevitably and always just. That is why *Śrī* Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with Yama.

प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम्।
मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम्॥ ॥ ३० ॥

30. Among the descendants of Diti, I am Prahlāda. Among reckoners, I am Time. I am the lion among beasts, and the son of Vinatā among birds.

The descendants of Diti, or the *daityas*, are of course the demons or the fallen angels of Hindu mythology. According to the *Purāṇas*, Diti is the daughter of Daksha and wife of Kaśyapa. She is the mother of the enemies of gods. Prahlāda, as you all doubtless know, is the son of Hiranyakaśipu, and it was for his sake that Vishṇu incanated as Narasimha. His *bhakti* is beautifully described in many of the *Purānas*, and his devotion saved the world of Asuras from the destruction that awaited it. Please notice that, among the evil brood of Asuras, Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with a great saint.

Time may be regarded as the best among reckoners, as it can be conceived figuratively as keeping count of the process of the universe with flawless accuracy. I think, however, that something more is implied here: there is perhaps a reference to a doctrine, which was later developed by the Naiyāyikas, but which is likely to have existed in a germinal condition much earlier. Time, according to this view, is the cause of all things. The cause is that which precedes the effect, and as Time is believed to precede all effect, it is regarded as the cause of all things. Time is not merely something which determines the sequence of the past, the present and the future, but it is also responsible for bringing things into existence and making them what they are. It holds the essence of reality. Such a view has been opposed by philosophers of some schools, but we are not concerned with those questions here. There is yet another interpretation of the phrase, *kālaḥ kalayatām aham* which I want to place before you, before proceeding further. The world *kāla* means time as well as death in Sanskrit, and an authoritative commentator suggests that the phrase under consideration means: "I am Death to those who wish evil to others". The root *kal* refers to counting, urging and doing.

The son of Vinatā is the mythological bird, Garuḍa, popularly regarded as the vehicle of Vishṇu. It is said to have overcome even the army of Indra, in seeking to win freedom for its mother by bringing nectar from the custody of Indra to

Kadrū, the co-wife who held Vinatā in bondage. Its importance is due both to its extraordinary strength and its close association with Vishṇu.

Literally, the word which has been translated as "lion" must be rendered "the lord of beasts". It is hardly necessary for me to tell you that the lion has been considered the king of the forest from time immemorial in all tropical countries generally, and particularly in India.

पवनः पवतामस्मि रामश्शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।
झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ॥ ३१ ॥

31. Among things that blow, I am the purifying breeze. I am Rāma among those that wield weapons. Among fishes, I am the *makara*, and among flowing streams, I am the Ganges.

Those who live in the dusty and over-crowded cities of today rarely have the privilege of breathing pure and refreshing air. We know that in Madras, for instance, other things blow more than the purifying breeze, whose excellence we are thus specially qualified to appraise.

It is a question of some interest to decide who is the Rāma referred to here. Commentators generally take the view that the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is mentioned here. Personally, I incline to the opinion that the reference is in all probability to Jāmadagni Rāma, whose fame as a warrior is widely spoken of in ancient Sanskrit literature. It may even be said that his fame was at one time perhaps even greater than that of the son of Daśarata, though the latter vanquished the former. One point in favour of this view is that, according to the *Mahābhārata*, he was a contemporary of Śrī Kṛishṇa, and contemporary celebrities are frequently mentioned in this chapter.

Makara appears to be the name of some kind of aquatic monster, variously regarded as the shark, the dolphin, the crocodile or even the whale. It is said to be extraordinarily powerful: and on this account, no doubt Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with it. Of course, if it is either the whale or the crocodile, biology will not call it a fish. But this point need not be pressed.

The Ganges has been considered a holy river from very early times. Note that the river is here called Jāhnavī The allusion is to a well-known story, which relates that the Ganges, after having been brought down to earth by the austerities of Bhagīrata, inundated the sacrificial grounds of the sage Jahnu, who in anger drank the river up. The prayers of Bhagīrata finally induced him to discharge the river through his ears; hence the name Jāhnavī, the daughter of Jahnu.

सर्गाणामादिरन्तश्च मध्यं चैवाहमर्जुन।
अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां वादः प्रवदतामहम् ॥ ३२ ॥

32. Of created things, I am the beginning and the end, and also the middle, O Arjuna. Among sciences, I am the science relating to the soul, and among those who argue and discuss, the (very) discussion (they indulge in).

Please observe that Śrī Kṛishṇa here declares that He is responsible for every phase in the process of the universe. *Sṛishṭi*, *sthiti* and *laya* are going on side by side. Creation is not an act finished long ago, and destruction the event of an unforeseeable future. I take the word *sarga* to refer here to the whole process. In the working of the universe, *sṛishṭi* and *sthiti* and *laya* take place side by side: and all are the manifestations of the power of God.

Of the value of the *adhyātma-vidyā*, the science of the soul, I need hardly speak. We know that the destiny of the soul is more important than the art of getting on in the world. However much the world may prize the science of making money or leading a life of pleasures, the *Gītā* sets before us a different scale of values altogether; and if we did not agree with the latter, I am sure we will not be studying today the sacred scripture. The science of the soul leads the way to self-realisation, the peace which passeth understanding, and the bliss the like of which is nowhere to be found.

The special importance which is attached in this verse to *vāda*, discussion, may be due to the idea that truth comes out only in the course of discussion. Commentators explain that *vāda* has a technical significance, and must be differentiated

from *jalpa* and *vitaṇḍa*, two other modes of discussion. In *jalpa*, the primary object is not so much to arrive at the truth as to establish one's position: with this end in view, the opponent is criticised unfairly and unscrupulously. *Vitaṇḍa* descends to a still lower level: it does not aim even at establishing one's position, much less at truth: the primary aim here is to browbeat the opponent by idly carping at his arguments. *Vāda* excels both, as it is that method of discussion, whose sole object is to arrive at truth, and which is conducted in a truly scientific and dispassionate manner.

अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वस्सामासिकस्य च।
अहमेवाक्षयः कालो धाताहं विश्वतोमुखः॥ ॥ ३३ ॥

33. I am the letter *a* among the letters of the alphabet, and the copulative compound among the group of compounds. I am Myself endless Time, and I am the supporter, whose faces are in all directions.

The importance of the letter *a* is believed to be due to its being, as it were, the phonetic basis, out of which all the other alphabetic sounds have been derived. The letter is also said to be capable of signifying by itself Brahmā, Vishṇu, Śiva, etc.

Sanskrit, as you know, is a language, which is full of compound words. These are divided into various classes by grammarians, of which the *avyayī-bhāva*, the *tat-purusha*, the *bahu-vrīhi* and the *dvandva* are the most important. If the first element in a compound word is more important, then we have the *avyayī-bhāva*. If the second is more important, then we have the *tat-purusha* compound. If both the elements are unimportant, and derive their meaning from a word which is not in the compound, then we have the *bahu-vrīhi*. Finally, in the *dvandva*, each word is equally important. It is for this reason that it is considered the most worthy among the compounds.

Time appears to our minds to be infinite in either direction, as it is impossible for us to conceive a timeless universe. God is here identified with the endless process of time, the eternity which includes and rises above our notation of seconds and

minutes, days and months, each of which very definitely has a beginning and an end. It is interesting to note in this connection that at least one school of Indian thought holds that there is an eternal time, apart from the countless succession of moments.

The word, *dhātṛi*, which I have translated as 'the supporter', has been understood in various ways by different commentators. Śaṅkarāchārya takes it in the sense of the giver or the ordainer of *karma-phala*, while Rāmānujāchārya interprets it as Brahmā the creator. The epithet, *sarvatho-mukha*, is understood by the former to refer to the variety of the fruits which God is to distribute, while in the other case it is taken to allude to the four faces of Brahmā. My translation gives a more general meaning, which may be regarded as emphasising the immanence of God in the universe. He is the supporter of all, being present everywhere.

मृत्युस्सर्वहरश्चाहमुद्भवश्च भविष्यताम् ।
कीर्तिश्श्रीर्वाक्च नारीणां स्मृतिर्मेधा धृतिः क्षमा ॥ ॥ ३४ ॥

34. I am Death who seizes all, and am also the source of things that are to be. Among women, (I am) good reputation, beauty, speech, memory, intelligence, firmness of mind and forgiveness.

We are already familiar with idea that God is the creator as well as the destroyer of the universe. Some commentators interpret the phrase *udbhavaścha bhavishyatām* to mean the prosperity of those who are to be prosperous. The interpretation appears to me to be slightly forced.

Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with good reputation, beauty, etc., among women, because these alone give excellence to them. Such seems to me to be the obvious meaning. But the second line of the stanza has also been understood to mean that among the personified qualities like beauty, etc, which are all feminine in gender, Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with those enumerated above: or in the alternative, that the the goddesses, Beauty, Fame, etc. are the best among goddesses. Here again, I prefer the view that I have put forward in the translation as more natural.

बृहत्साम तथा साम्नां गायत्री छन्दसामहम्।
मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहमृतूनां कुसुमाकरः॥ ॥ ३५ ॥

35. I am the *Bṛihat-sāman* among the *Sāman* hymns, and the *Gāyatrī* among *Vedic* metres. I am *Mārgaśīrsha* among months and spring among the seasons.

The *Bṛihat-sāman* is the great song sung in the *Sāma Veda*. In a very interesting description of Creation in the *Taittirīya Samhitā*, (*VII. 1. 1. 4*) its importance is said to be due to its having been created out of the vigour (*vīrya*) of Prajāpati. *Chhandas* generally means a *Vedic* metre. But at times it also refers to the whole of the *Vedas*. Thus we may take Śrī Kṛishṇa's statement to mean either that He is the *Gāyatrī* hymn in the whole of the *Vedas*, or as we have translated, that he is the *Gāyatrī* metre among the *Vedic* metres. In the latter case we may consider the importance of the metre to be due to the famous *ṛik*, which is composed in that measure. Of course it is quite unnecessary for me to deal at length with the importance of the well-known *Vedic* hymn, whose prayer for the light of wisdom is repeated to this day throughout the length and breadth of India.

Mārgaśīrsha is the month (December-January) in which the moon is in conjunction with the *Mṛigaśīrsha* or the Orion constellation on the full moon day. It is a question of some interest to determine why this month is here considered to be the best. The suggestion that it is the month of harvest does not seem to carry much weight. In *Vedic* literature the *Mṛigaśīrsha* asterism is also called *Āgrahāyaṇī*, which may be translated as the beginner of the year. A long time ago, in a pamphlet on the *Yugas*, I called attention to this as possibly indicating a time when the vernal equinox took place with the sun in this constellation. Mr. Tilak, in his remarkable book, *Orion*, has dealt at length with this question. He has brought forward a great deal of evidence to show that there are definite indications in *Vedic* literature, pointing to a time when the vernal equinox took place with the sun in Orion. Thus he thinks that at one time *Mṛigaśīrsha* must have been the first among the lunar asterisms, as *Aśvinī* is now. The importance of the month in that case would naturally arise from the star, after which it has been named. Such a tradition may well have

been enshrined in the verse. For a similar reason, it is a month of sacred vows.

You must all know why the spring is the best among seasons. Perhaps the differences in the appearance of Nature during the various seasons of the year are not so conspicuously seen in our part of the world, as in higher latitudes. The Aryans, who came to India from places of that sort, must have been familiar with these striking changes. During winter, Nature seems asleep, but with the approach of spring, new life blooms out, and Nature begins to smile. We have a change, as it were, from dead stupor to life.

द्यूतञ्छलयतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ।
जयोऽस्मि व्यवसायोऽस्मि सत्त्वं सत्त्ववतामहम् ॥ ॥ ३६ ॥

36. I am gambling among all transactions which are the grounds of deceit. I am the splendour of the splendid. I am (the) victory, (the) industry and (the) strength of the strong.

The statement, *dyūtañchhalayatāmasmi*, with which this verse begins, sets up before us a problem of some interest and great difficulty. It is usually rendered: "I am the gambling of cheats." That would mean that Śrī Kṛishṇa deliberately identifies Himself with evil. Please note that we are not here creating artificially any difficulty, which, but for our microscopic outlook, can be held to be non-existent. The usual interpretation would regard gambling as the best form of cheating, which it undoubtedly is: but is God specially present in intense evil, as He is in intense good? That is the question we have to answer here, and I am certain that, if you have followed the teachings of the Gītā so far carefully, you can have no hesitation in returning a negative reply to the question.

In the seventh chapter, where some of the *vibhūtis* are mentioned, Śrī Kṛishṇa very clearly and emphatically dissociates Himself from moral evil. Consider the eleventh stanza of that chapter: "In relation to those who are possessed of strength, I am their strength, as dissociated from desire and love of enjoyment. And O Arjuna, I am in (all) beings

that kind of desire, which is unopposed to righteousness." Consider too the statement made in this chapter, *Prahlādaśchāsmi daityānām* (X. 30), where Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with a great saint amidst the evil brood of Asuras. He did not there declare that He was Hiraṇyakaśipu or Hiraṇyāksha among the descendants of Diti, which He might well have done, if it was His intention to teach that He was intense evil as well as intense good.

It seems to me therefore absolutely necessary so to interpret the *śloka* as not to clash with the whole trend of thought in the Gītā, regarding the problem of evil. As *antaryāmin*, God is present everywhere, in the sinner as well as in the saint, in the virtuous as well as in the vicious. Nevertheless, the sinner sins out of his free will, and suffers therefor according to the just law of *karma*. God has given us power to do good or evil: but the choice is ours. He is ultimately responsible for the evil in the universe, just as a great and impartial ruler is responsible for felons and law-breakers being in jail. Such appears to me to be the teaching of the Gītā in regard to this great philosophical question, and I have more than once drawn your attention to the fact that we must not confound the immanence of God to mean that He is responsible for all the evil in the world. That being so, we cannot simply say that Śrī Kṛishṇa here identifies Himself with the best method of cheating, namely, gambling. Nor is it here a question of the omnipresence of God, a statement that He is present in the sinner as well as in the saint. In this chapter Śrī Kṛishṇa tells us of those in whom He is present in a more than common measure. His *vibhūtis* are aids to meditation and revelations of His infinite power. Are we to meditate on the gambling of cheats with the hope of understanding the glory of God?

This difficulty has been felt by some serious students of the Gītā, and various explanations have been suggested. For instance, it is said that we must interpret the *śloka* to mean that He is the gambling of cheats, wherewith their ill-gotten wealth is lost. He cheats the cheats of their wealth. Even this view appears to me to be fraught with difficulties. It enunciates the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The Gītā, it is hardly necessary for me to say, rises far above this naive view of moral obligations. Of course, even in our sacred literature, you

may find this view put forward here and there, but it is not the highest tenet of Hinduism and the *Gītā* gives us nothing short of the highest. In a *śloka* in the *Udyogaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, for instance, it is declared that to do unto others as they do unto you is *dharma*. It is a view which is distinctly below the sublime teachings of the *Gītā*, and we have ill understood them if we are to attribute cheating to the Fountain of all Righteousness, the *Apahatapāpman* of the *Upanishads*.

It is however possible to take the word, *chhalayatām*, to mean "among the grounds of deceit". Let us see the implications of this view. In this world there are various transactions between man and man: in these men may deal righteously or deceitfully. Buying, selling, partnership, lending, borrowing, in all these one may cheat or deal righteously: they are all grounds of deceit. Among these gambling is one: that is to say, it is considered to be a legitimate transaction, in which you can either cheat or not. In other words, there is a right type of gambling as well as a wrong one. This merely brings us to the fact that in ancient India gambling was a favourite pastime; and it was considered perfectly legitimate, so long as no cheating was practised. Yudhishṭhira, who was considered Righteousness incarnate, accepted the challenge of Śakuni to a game of dice twice, because it would be dishonourable to refuse! You might say, if you like, that this code has as many faults as that which regarded it as cowardly to refuse an invitation to a duel. Nevertheless, the historical fact was that such a code was prevalent during the time of the *Mahābhārata*. Even today, some types of gambling are legal, while others are not. Betting at the races is a favourite pastime in England; the law takes no action against those who play certain card-games for money.

Once we accept the position that there is a legitimate method of gambling, in which the participants strictly abide by the rules and conventions of the game, then the interpretation of the *śloka* becomes comparatively easy. Among all the grounds of deceit gambling is the most dangerous. For cheating here is easy, and the stakes are always high. It is not because of the ease with which one can cheat, but because of what may be regarded as the power lodged in the game that

Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with it. A movement of the dice, and a fortune may be gone! It is true that it is our convention which gives power to the game, but it is the same with every other transaction. Then again, gambling calls into play some qualities, which may be regarded as moral, courage, patience and the power to face losses bravely. For these reasons, gambling may be regarded as the most "powerful" among the grounds of deceit, being in fact the most "powerful" among all transactions. Please observe that Śrī Kṛishṇa does not identify Himself with deceit, but with only its impersonal instrument, which is in itself amoral. Transactions as such cannot be immoral. It is the way in which they are manipulated that is moral or immoral.

Again *dyūta* may be understood to mean the prize won in gambling. The Lord may be said to be the prize won by cheats in gambling. This does not mean that He blesses cheats with success, out of love of fraud. A man cheats, only with the hope of obtaining a prize. The prize that is won may be a good thing, though the methods employed were wrong, and certain to lead to the bondage of the soul. It may also be considered possible even to regard the acquisition of wealth as due to one's past *karma*, to a certain extent. If the cheat, who kept to evil ways and gained wealth thereby, had dealt righteously, even then, if he was so fated, he might have made his pile. God is the ordainer and distributor of *karma-phala*. As such He may be identified with the prize won by gamblers. Lastly, *dyūta* may also mean that by which the score is reckoned in gambling, in which case Śrī Kṛishṇa only identifies Himself with the instruments that relate to the reckoning of scores. It is interesting to note that Sir Edwin Arnold translates this passage as 'I am the double-eight in the gambler's throw," though on what authority this is based we do not know. This would mean that God is the winning score in dice. Please think over the views that I have set forth and accept whatever seems best to you. I have perhaps spoken too long on this subject, but it seemed to me essential to point out that it would be wrong to identify God in any direct sense with evil.

I must tell you, before we proceed to the next stanza, that the last line is usually interpreted as "I am the victory (of the victorious), I am the industry (of the industrious), and I am the

goodness of the good." *Sattva* here is taken to mean goodness, and not strength. Secondly, victory and industry are not taken along with strength or goodness to relate to *sattva-vats*, but are construed separately. For this, the repetition of "I am" before the words 'victory' and 'industry' seems to lend support.

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनञ्जयः।
मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः॥ ॥ ३७॥

37. Among the descendants of Vṛishṇi, I am Vāsudeva, and (I am) Arjuna among the Pāṇḍavas. I am also Vyāsa among those who have learnt the Truth through meditation, and the sage Śukra among wise seers.

Vṛishṇi is the name of a famous ancestor of Śrī Kṛishṇa. The question has been raised by a commentator why Śrī Kṛishṇa does not declare that He is the chief among the descendants of Vṛishṇi, instead of putting it in a slightly roundabout way, as in the text. The answer given is that Śrī Kṛishṇa desires to draw attention to His miraculous birth by referring to Himself as the son of Vasudeva. Similarly, it has been suggested that Arjuna is referred to as Dhanañjaya in order that pointed attention might be drawn to his military exploits, by which he became famous as the 'wealth-conqueror'.

The word *kavi* is used in Vedic literature in the sense of a wise seer. It is only later usage that has confined its meaning to that of a poet. Śukra is of course the famous preceptor of the Asuras, of whom even the gods were afraid. In the *Ādi-Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* there is an interesting story, which relates that Śukra, with the help of his *mṛita-sañjivani vidyā* (the science of resurrecting the dead) brought back to life all the *Asuras* killed by the gods in war. Bṛihaspati, the divine preceptor, sent his son, Kacha, to serve as a disciple under Śukra, in order that he might learn this secret. Ultimately, Kacha did manage to learn this potent art in a very curious manner. This story shows the greatness of Śukra's wisdom; no wonder that Śrī Kṛishṇa identifies Himself with Śukra among wise seers.

दण्डो दमयतामस्मि नीतिरस्मि जिगीषताम्।
मौनं चैवास्मि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम् ॥ ॥ ३८ ॥

38. I am the punishment of those that punish. I am the policy of those that seek victory. I am silence respecting secrets. I am the wisdom (relating to the ends of life) of those who are wise.

Sometime back we studied a verse in which we were told that Śrī Kṛishṇa was Yama among those who inflicted punishment. Now He says that He is the very punishment itself. If a punishment satisfies the demands of equity and justice, it signifies the authority of the good over the evil. By identifying Himself with punishment—which of course must be just and be meted out only to the transgressors of the moral law—God ranges Himself on the side of the good in its long-drawn-out war against evil.

Sanskrit writers on politics believe that four types of policy can be pursued by a state in respect of another, to achieve any particular object. They are known as *sāman*, *dāna*, *bheda* and *daṇḍa*. *Sāman* is the soft word that turneth away wrath: *dāna* is the gift of a proper *quid pro quo* for the advantage obtained: *bheda* is the subtle division of forces allied against oneself: and *daṇḍa*, the last resort of all, is war. Success, as understood properly, is God-given: and He becomes the instrument of victory of those who do not stray from the path of *dharma*.

I need not tell you that silence is the best preserver of secrets. The wisdom that is referred to in this verse is not mere worldly wisdom, but one that relates to the supreme ends of life.

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन।
न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥ ॥ ३९ ॥

39. And, too, O Arjuna, I am also that which is the seed of all things. There is nothing, movable or immovable, which can exist without Me.

In dealing with a verse in the seventh chapter, I took some trouble to explain fully the significance of the idea that God

is the seed of all things (VII. *10*). It is hardly necessary for me to go over the same ground again. Let me however draw your attention to the significance of the context. Till now, Śrī Kṛishṇa has been explaining His *vibhūtis* or special manifestations. As we saw, Śrī Kṛishṇa declares that He is present in these *vibhūtis* in a more than common measure. In order to impress on Arjuna His power and glory as well as His omnipresence, Śrī Kṛishṇa has been identifying Himself with various kinds of excellence. But this might well lead to a grave misconception. Arjuna might take all this to mean that God is present only in His *vibhūtis*. Take for instance the statement that He is the Ganges among rivers (X. *32*). Clearly this does not mean that He is present only in the Ganges, and that the other rivers of the world exist independently of God. It is as a warning against such a mistaken view that Śrī Kṛishṇa emphasises in this stanza His omnipresence. In the succeeding verses the teaching of this chapter is summed up.

नान्तोऽस्ति मम दिव्यानां विभूतीनां परन्तप ।
एष तूद्देशतः प्रोक्तो विभूते र्विस्तरो मया ॥ ॥ ४० ॥

40. There is no end, O Arjuna, to My divine manifestations. Here the extent of (My) manifestations has been only declared in part by Me.

You may recall that Śrī Kṛishṇa prefaced his description of the *vibhūtis* by the remark that He would speak only of the more important among them (X. *19*). He reiterates the same idea here to guard against the possibility of limiting the *vyāpti* of God. What has been enumerated above does not constitute an exhaustive catalogue of His special manifestations. These are to be found everywhere, and touch every aspect of universal life.

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंशसम्भवम् ॥ ॥ ४१ ॥

41. Whatever thing (there is), possessed of splendour, power or glory, understand that to have sprung out of a part of My radiant power.

Here we have a generalisation, based on the particular instances which we have been considering so far. In every one

of the *vibhūtis* there resides, as we have seen, more than that necessary fraction of the power of God, which is at the root of all existence. They overflow with the life of God: each of them embodies a divine spark which is bigger than that which is found in the common run of things. We must look on every instance of beauty or power or splendour as a revelation of the glory of God. But they are not complete revelations: they do not exhaust the divine glory. God is the Fountain of all power and beauty and excellence: but He is also something more. All the wealth of excellence of this world springs out of only a part of His inexhaustible power. In the next stanza the transcendence of God is emphasised, lest we should suppose Him to be confined in His *vibhūtis*.

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन।
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥ ॥ ४२ ॥

42. But, O Arjuna, what is the use of this vast knowledge (of the various *vibhūtis*)? I stand supporting all this world with but a part (of Myself).

The central idea of the famous *Purusha-sūkta*, which we tried to understand in our study of the theory of the *avatāras* (under IV.5—6), is briefly summed up here. You may recall that the *Sūkta* says that all the beings in the universe make up a quarter of God, who is immanent in the universe: the other three-fourths remain in the heaven above. The *Purusha* has enveloped the earth all around, and has risen beyond by ten inches. That is, God is both transcendent and immanent. He interpenetrates the universe, but He is also something other than and beyond it. We see here only a part of His power.

The immanence of God can be understood from a knowledge of His *vibhūtis* and *yoga*. Everything possessing any special excellence is, as it were, specially representative of God. That is what we learn from a study of His *vibhūtis*. God is ultimately responsible for all that goes on in the universe—such is the nature of the *yoga* of God, His intimate relation with the universe.

The whole of the tenth chapter is the basis of the generalisation we find in the last two stanzas. In brief,

Śrī Kṛishṇa declares that He is the whole of this universe and something more. It is with the object of bringing out these two characteristics of God that one school of Indian thought holds that He might be conceived in five different fashions—as *para*, *vyūha*, *vibhava*, *antaryāmin* and *archā*. The *para rūpa* refers to God transcending the universe. We have the conception of *vyūha*, when we realise that God makes Himself manifest in the universe and encompasses it with a part of Himself. *Vibhavas* are His special manifestations; such as are given in this chapter. To realise God within oneself and within every being in the universe is to know Him as *antaryāmin*. The *archā* is the image, which we conceive to be our God and worship. Now, in the *para* or transcendental condition, God is really difficult to be conceived. But it is possible to get some idea of Him in the other four conditions.

The Christian doctrine of Trinity, I venture to think, has a close bearing on these five ways of conceiving God. Only the Christian has given up the *vyūha* and the *archā*. The former is pantheism to him and the latter is idolatry. *Para*, *vibhava* and *antaryāmin* correspond roughly to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. To us, there is no pantheism in looking upon the universe as the manifestation of the glory, greatness and power of God. Nor do we object to have images as objects of worship. To us who believe that God infills the universe and is present in every atom of matter, the worship of images cannot certainly mean anything which tends to lift the creature to the level of the Creator, or degrade the Creator to the level of the creature. In the creature we see the Creator. The great value of this five-fold way of conceiving God consists in the fact that it is useful to all kinds of people. Those who cannot understand God in His higher aspects, can certainly understand Him in the *archā* condition; this will make them religious and give them the strength of moral power by means of which they can rise to something higher. In whatever way we conceive of God, we do Him homage.

So, we learn from a study of the tenth chapter that God infills the universe and is immanent in it: that He is responsible for every manifestation of vigour, power and strength in the universe: and that to us, who cannot easily make out from commonplace things the special character of His immanence, it is of great value to know those special manifestations of God,

endowed with power and glory and any other excellence. Towards the end of the chapter, Śrī Kṛishṇa also lays stress on the transcendental character of God: in the last *śloka*, He says that He pervades the universe with a part of Himself. This means that God is not merely confined to this material universe, but is also above and beyond it. We must hence try to realise in our minds the idea of the dual character of God as being both immanent and transcendent at the same time, if we are to understand Him as He is in His real nature.

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CHAPTER XI

xlviii

Last time we concluded our study of the tenth chapter. You may remember that in the ninth chapter Śrī Kṛishṇa has taken care to impress on the mind of Arjuna that God is transcendental, that He is other than the physical universe and above *prakṛiti*—that God is, in short, the superior *avyakta*. While teaching this, Śrī Kṛishṇa also points out distinctly that the physical universe is completely penetrated and pervaded by God, that there is nothing in the universe, which either lives or moves without the power which comes from Him. To realise that God infills the universe and is at the same time beyond it, is far from easy. I have pointed out more than once that the idea of immanency tends to impose a kind of material limitation upon God, while the idea of transcendency tends to make Him a far-away God. To reconcile these two ideas is very difficult indeed. But we must have learnt by now that, unless we succeed in reconciling these two ideas in relation to God, we cannot have anything like an adequate conception of Him.

Now, how are we to know that God pervades and penetrates everything in the universe? This is the question with which the tenth chapter is mainly concerned. We can understand that God is immanent in the universe from our knowledge of His *yoga* and *vibhūti*, as manifested in the universe. I believe I drew your attention to the fact that the *yoga* of God is described briefly in the twentieth *śloka* of

the tenth chapter; and this, read along with verses 41 and 42 at the end, must enable us to realise how God infills the universe and works from within every object as its *antaryāmin*. He is also responsible for the *sṛishṭi*, *sthiti* and *laya* of all beings. The whole of the universe works under the impulse that He gives to it. Without Him not even the end of a blade of grass can move. Yet only a part of His power is used in the process of the universe. Such is the nature of His *yoga*.

To say that God penetrates everything in the universe means that everything which lives or moves, or merely exists, does so through Him only. This is a general statement about the immanency of God. How can we realise this fact in a more concrete and definite manner? To argue that God is the fountain of all excellence, power and glory, does not bring home vividly to our minds the way in which God pervades the universe. It is with the object of accomplishing this that the *vibhūtis* of God have been described in Chapter Ten. The *vibhūtis* of God, as we saw, are those beings, who on account of their power, excellence and glory constitute, as it were, the special manifestations of the power of God. Having pointed out a number of such *vibhūtis*, Śrī Kṛishṇa finally says: "These *vibhūtis* do not reveal the whole of My power and glory. I am far above all these. And if you begin to make an exhaustive list of My special manifestations, you will never reach the end. So let me put it before you in a general way thus: whatever thing there is, possessed of any special excellence, or power, or splendour, consider it as having sprung out of a part of My luminous splendour." Śrī Kṛishṇa then proceeds to warn Arjuna against a possible error. All this display of power and excellence taken as a whole does not constitute the whole of the power of God. He pervades and infills the universe, supports and sustains it, and is responsible for all the manifestations of power and glory therein: but He does all this only by a part of His power. Otherwise, if God is no more than the power and glory that is found manifest, we cannot regard Him as transcendent, as the superior *avyakta*, beyond and above *prakṛiti*.

Yāmunāchārya summarises this chapter in the following noteworthy *śloka* in his *Gītārtha-saṅgraha*.

स्वकल्याणगुणानन्त्यकृत्स्नस्वाधीनतादितिः ।
भक्त्युत्पत्तिविवृध्यर्था विस्तीर्णा दशनोदिता ॥

The tenth chapter is thus stated to deal extensively with the infinite number of the auspicious qualities of the Lord as well as with the knowledge relating to the dominion exercised by Him over the whole of the universe with the object of instilling and developing *bhakti*. Let me now try to make these points clear. You may all know that anything devoid of attributes cannot enter into any relations. Logically, it will have to stand, so to say, outside the sphere of all relations. If God stands in such intimate relationship with the universe as we have been told, He must possess qualities. If all are but parts of one stupendous whole, of which Nature is the body and God the soul; if the whole process of the universe is to be traced ultimately to a divine impulse; it is easy to see how God must be regarded as possessing an infinite number of auspicious qualities. The universe, which is thus seen to be a consequence of His auspicious qualities, has to be necessarily under His control. But this does not mean that the evils in the universe are due to Him.

This point has been discussed more than once in the course of our study of the *Gītā* : and I would particularly invite your attention to what I have said when dealing with VII. *12*. A true knowledge of these facts is certain to lead us to devotion. Such seems to me the course of thought underlying this verse. Let me note here that some hold that this chapter teaches us that one, whose mind has turned away from all objects of sense, however striking or wonderful they may be, and is solely concentrated on God, will attain the vision of *viśva-rūpa* and ultimately become God-like or one with God. Now please allow me to commence the study of the eleventh chapter.

When Arjuna is told that all the *vibhūtis* spring only out of a fraction of the radiant energy of God, who encompasses the whole of the universe by a part of Himself, Arjuna feels curious and says: "I should like to know You in Your fullness. I am eager to see what the whole of Your power would be like." It is with this question of Arjuna that the eleventh chapter begins.

अर्जुन उवाच

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् ।
यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥ ॥ १ ॥

ARJUNA SAID :

1. By that speech, which You have delivered for my benefit—(teaching) the great secret, known as *adhyātman*—this illusion of mine has been removed completely.

What is the illusion referred to here? Recall to mind what Arjuna said at the beginning—"I will not kill my preceptors and friends and relatives, lest I should be subjected to the effects of sin." He thought that he was the killer, that *he* did the act of killing and that *his* was the title to reap the consequences. He felt a sense of agency in relation to his acts, he felt that he was the doer and that he had a claim on the fruits of his work. Now, after listening to the teaching of Śrī Kṛishṇa—(Chapters 7 to 10)—he says that his delusion is gone. If Arjuna has been induced to believe in the great declaration of the *Upanishads*, that not even a blade of grass can move without the power of God, how can he regard himself as the doer in relation to what he does? The power of action is not his: the glory of the result is not his. They belong to Some One Else.

If you will permit me, I shall try to make the position clear by means of a simile. Consider the case of the driver of a steam locomotive, who has simply to move a lever in order to make the whole railway train start. He might well feel that the train moves on account of him. But analyse for a moment the real cause of the motion. That which drags the engine and the carriages is the power of compressed steam. The driver is only responsible to the extent that he manipulates this power, and no more. He can claim no credit for the work which the engine does. If God is the centre of all power and we are mere instruments in His hands, each of us intended to be the expression in a particular way of a certain amount of divine power—then how can we claim that we are independent doers of deeds? Nor can we have any title to enjoy the fruits of our work. We must get rid of ideas of agency and ownership, but this must not lead us to the mistaken belief that we must give up all work, and do nothing altogether.

Now you can see easily how the illusion of Arjuna must have disappeared before Śrī Krishna's teaching as regards the true nature of the soul and of God. If God infills and pervades the universe; if He is the source of all power and beauty and glory; if nothing lives and moves without Him—then surely we are not the agents of our acts and can have no title to enjoy the fruits thereof. Arjuna was under the delusion that he was the agent of his own action; hence he felt that its fruits, whether good or evil, would cling to him. If we derive all our power to act from God, the source of all power, the foundations of egoism are undermined. Believing thus, we consider ourselves to be merely instruments in the hands of God, to whom is due the credit for whatever has been achieved through us.

Such a view, however, gives us no right to regard God as responsible for the evil in the world. It may be asked: "Since God is the source of all power, the power to do evil also comes from Him. How can the evil doer be held responsible for the evil that he works?" To answer this question, let us go back to the illustration of the railway train. Why have not the railway authorities made me an engine-driver? Because, in the first place, I do not possess the necessary qualifications. If I am put in charge of a steam locomotive, in spite of my lack of training, the train will be in serious danger. So, the difference between a qualified driver and a mere layman like myself relates to our respective fitness to handle the job. In a similar way we are all instruments in the hands of God: but some are worthy instruments and others are not. Now, this difference between individuals is not due to any partiality on the part of God. He chooses His instruments in accordance with their fitness: and this fitness, Indian thought holds, is determined by the individual's *karma*. If you have followed me so far, you can see easily that to hold God as the ultimate source of all power in the universe does not in any way lessen our responsibility for our deeds. I believe I have mentioned to you that *karma* is often compared in *Vedāntic* literature to the axe in the hands of a wood-cutter. The axe is incapable of acting unless the wood-cutter wields it. It is thus that the individual *karma* determines whether one is or is not a worthy instrument in the hands of God.

Realising this great truth, we have to destroy within ourselves *ahaṅkāra* (I-ness) and *mamakāra* (*mine-ness*), egoistic

feelings of pride and ownership. When we do this, we do not destroy our sense of responsibility for our *karma*. Although we have no title for any *ahaṅkāra* or *mamakāra*, we are still what we make ourselves. Whether we are worthy instruments in the hands of God or not is determined by our *karma*. In this manner, the *Vedānta* derives all power from God as the ultimate source, and yet through the great doctrine of *karma*, does not in any way lessen the responsibility of the individual for making or marring himself. We can see now that the delusion of Arjuna was based on the twin feelings, that he was the doer of deeds, and that he had a claim on the fruits of his work. Śrī Kṛishṇa's teaching concerning the true nature of the soul and its relations with God—the great secret known as *adhyātman*—destroyed these feelings, and removed the bases of his illusion.

भवाप्ययौ हि भूतानां श्रुतौ विस्तरशो मया ।
त्वत्तः कमलपत्राक्ष माहात्म्यमपि चाव्ययम् ॥ ॥ २ ॥

2. I have heard from You in detail, O Kṛishṇa, the origin and dissolution of (all) things, as well as Your indestructible greatness.

From the teaching of Śrī Kṛishṇa in Chapters *7* to *10*, Arjuna has learnt that all things begin in God and eventually return to Him. He is the beginning as well as the end of things. When dealing with Śrī Kṛishṇa's statement that He is the ever lasting seed of all things (VII. *10*), I tried to explain in the light of fundamental ideas of the *Vedānta* how God is the source, from which the creative forces that evolve the universe take their rise, as well as the centre to which the forces of dissolution direct it in the end. The imperishable glory of the Lord, which is mentioned in this verse, refers, I think, to His being immanent and transcendent at the same time. Perhaps Arjuna is still reflecting on the concluding statement of Śrī Kṛishṇa that He pervades and supports the universe with a part of Himself. The epithet, *avyayam*, which I have translated as 'indestructible', means 'unexhausted' as well as 'undecaying'. In either case, it may be understood easily to refer to the great truth that the power of God, as manifested in the universe, is but a fraction of His illimitable might.

एवमेतद्यथात्थ त्वमात्मानं परमेश्वर ।
द्रष्टुमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरं पुरुषोत्तम ॥ ॥ ३ ॥

3. O Highest Lord, as You have spoken about Yourself, so it is. I wish, O Best of Beings, to see Your lordly form.

Arjuna now speaks as a man of faith, a devout disciple of Śrī Kṛishṇa. He no longer looks upon his charioteer as a mere man among men. Yet, having been told that the fullness of the glory of the Lord is not manifested in the universe, he expresses a desire to see the *aiśvara* form of God. *Aiśvara* is the adjectival form of *Īśvara*, meaning 'master', 'Lord' or 'God'. The Lordship of God of course means that there is none superior to Him, and that no limitations can be imposed on Him. Arjuna wants to see that unlimited form of the Lord, wherein He figures as the Supreme Creator, Controller and Destroyer, present in every atom, yet transcending the universe.

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।
योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥ ॥ ४ ॥

4. If You think, O Lord, that it can be seen by me, then (please) show Your inexhaustible form to me.

To have the desire to see the glorious lordly from of God is one thing, and to have the requisite fitness for realising such a desire is another. A young man, having learnt a few propositions of the first book of Euclid, might ardently desire to become a Newton: but he has hardly the fitness to aspire for that honour. Arjuna is conscious of his weakness: hence he prays: "I am anxious to see Your lordly form. Please show it to me, if You think I can see it."

The question may well be asked here: why should Arjuna qualify his request with the condition of fitness? What is this special qualification for seeing the form of the Lord? Now, as regards our normal vision, we all know that all eyes do not see equally well. Not only that. Modern science has told us that there may be vibrations of the ether around

us, which are beyond our range of vision. Only certain vibrations are able to affect the retina of the eye. It is not the absence of the cause, but the lack of the necessary sensitiveness on the part of our eyes, that makes us blind to a wide range of phenomena. The stimulus is there, but the power to respond is absent. Even in ordinary matters, within the limits of our visual power, we know that our power to see things is circumscribed in a thousand and one ways. Some people see more than others. A trained eye will find a whole world to which the untrained eye is dead. An artist will see more in a landscape, and a mechanic will see more in a factory than one who is not an artist or a mechanic. This idea, that all eyes do not see equally well, becomes very interesting indeed, when applied to God, who is beyond and above Nature.

I wish in this connection to read to you a few lines from the writings of Blaise Pascal, the famous French scientist, mathematician and theologian. Speaking of the necessity of faith, he observes: "Nature presents to me nothing which is not matter of doubt and concern. If I saw nothing there which revealed a divinity, I would come to a negative conclusion. If I saw everywhere the signs of a Creator, I would remain peacefully in faith. But seeing too much to deny and too little to be sure, I am in a state to be pitied. . ." Again, "all appearance indicates neither a total exclusion, nor a manifest presence of divinity, but the presence of a God who hides Himself. Everything bears this character." How and by whom can He be seen? "He has willed to make Himself recognisable by those (who sincerely seek him), and thus willing to appear openly to those who seek Him with all their heart, and to be hidden from those who flee from Him with all their heart, He so regulates the knowledge of Himself that He has given signs of Himself visible to those who seek Him and not to those who seek Him not. There is enough light for those who only desire to see and enough obscurity to those who are of a contrary disposition." That is, all things hide a mystery. All are veils which conceal God.

Curiously enough the results of modern science seem to support Pascal's thesis about a hidden God who reveals Himself to those who seek Him. Only recently I read in a periodical Sir Oliver Lodge's criticism of Haeckel's materialistic conception of the universe. Sir Oliver distinctly says that

the scientific investigation of the phenomena of the physical universe leads us to the belief that mind and not matter is the ultimate basis of the universe. The peculiarity of mind consists in the existence of order and purpose. In the universe both these are found, for it is cosmic in character, not chaotic. Having thus pointed out that mind is the basis of the universe, Sir Oliver Lodge goes on to note that the relations between mind and matter may be described best by saying that mind becomes incarnate in matter. This idea of incarnation, as outlined by Sir Oliver, appears to me to be the same as the concept of *anupraveśa* in our *Upanishads*.

Now this incarnation may be visible more completely and manifestly in some cases than in others, though it has always to be partial, for the whole universe, conceived as an incarnation of God, represents simply a part of His power. When these ideas are borne in mind, it is easy to see that we can have only a purely intellectual conception of a God, who encompasses the universe and goes beyond it and within whom are seen to take place all the movements and activities of the universe. But Arjuna wants something more than this. He wishes to have a direct perception of God, as He is in Himself. Whether such a wish can at all be gratified, is a question to which I cannot give a definite answer. But in the *Gītā* it is stated that it is possible for those, who are blessed with the divine vision, to have such a direct perception of God. If in small matters of daily experience we find that all eyes do not see equally well, that where one pair of healthy eyes sees light another does not—then I do not see why those who are blessed with divine vision should not see what other eyes do not and cannot see.

श्रीभगवानुवाच :

पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।
नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च ॥ ५ ॥

ŚRI KṚISHṆA SAID :

5. See My forms in their hundreds and thousands, O Arjuna, various, divine and of different colours and shapes.

Śrī Krishṇa complies with Arjuna's request. In verses 5 to 7, He briefly explains what Arjuna is going to see. The imperative 'see' in this and the following verses must be construed as mere future indicative: for Arjuna cannot be regarded as seeing the *viśva-rūpa*, until the gift of divine sight is conferred in verse 8.

पश्यादित्यान्वसून्रुद्रानश्विनौ मरुतस्तथा ।
बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत ॥ ६ ॥

6. See the Ādityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Aśvins and also the Maruts. See, O Arjuna, many marvels unseen before.

We have seen already in the course of our study of the tenth chapter who the Ādityas and the other gods referred to in this stanza are. They were there considered as some of the *vibhūtis* of the Lord. Śrī Krishṇa here points out that to add up these *vibhūtis* and equate the arithmetical sum thereof with God is not the right way of understanding Him. Not that such an idea has no measure of truth in it: it is correct as far as it goes: but it does not go very far and is therefore inadequate. There is nothing wrong in our putting together all the *vibhūtis* of God in the hope of learning something more thereby than from a single *vibhūti*. But we must realise also that God is more than His *vibhūtis*: in Him can be seen many wonders unseen before.

Commentators have sought to explain the significance of the phrase "unseen before". It has been interpreted to mean "never before seen by Arjuna, or by any one else in this world, not even by the sages to whom the *Upanishads* are said to have been revealed", for no one can understand the fullness of divine glory.

इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् ।
मम देहे गुडाकेश यच्चान्यद्द्रष्टुमिच्छसि ॥ ७ ॥

7. See now, O Arjuna, the whole of the universe, with all that lives and moves and the things that do not live and move, brought together as one in one place within My body: (see) also whatever else you wish to see.

Śrī Krishṇa says in effect: "If you succeed in getting a vision of My lordly form, you will not only see the whole universe. You will get a direct perception of Me as I am, an immanent and transcendent God" I may mention here that the issue of the *Mahābhārata* war has been considered sometimes to be specially referred to in the expression, "whatever else you may wish to see".

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥ ॥ ८ ॥

8. But you will not be able to see Me (in My *aiśvara* form) with this eye of yours. I (therefore) give you the divine vision See (with its aid) My lordly *yoga*.

Yoga must be understood here in the special sense to which I drew your attention in the course of our study of the last chapter. It means the peculiar relation of God to the universe: and 'lordly yoga' can be freely translated as 'the relation of God to the universe as its Lord'.

सञ्जय उवाच :

एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।
दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥ ॥ ९ ॥

SAÑJAYA SAID:

9. O King, having spoken thus, the great Lord Krishṇa showed to Arjuna His supreme lordly form.

I want you to take the word '*Mahā-yogeśvara*' to mean 'the great Lord, who, more than any one else, is related effectively and intimately to the universe, in the manner outlined in chapters 7 to 10'. It has also been rendered as 'the Lord, possessing wonderful powers'.

In the *Māhābhārata*, we find a description of the *viśva-rūpa* or the universal form of God in more than one place, though perhaps it is only in the *Gītā* that it is described most

effectively. Śrī Kṛishṇa Himself shows this form on two other occasions, once in the court of Duryodhana, and again to Uḍaṅka, when He is returning to Dvāraka after the conclusion of the great war. You may all remember the well-known episode in the *Udyogaparvan* in which Śrī Kṛishṇa shows His *viśva-rūpa*, to confound Duryodhana, who was attempting to seize Him, defying all diplomatic etiquette, when He went to Hastināpura as an envoy to plead the cause of the Pāṇḍavas. Secondly, after the conclusion of the great war, Śrī Kṛishṇa sets out to return to His capital, Dvāraka. On the way He meets Uḍaṅka, a *ṛishi*, who was unaware of the sanguinary issue to the negotiations which Śrī Kṛishṇa had been conducting on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas. On learning from Śrī Kṛishṇa the story of the war and the complete destruction of the Kauravas, the *ṛishi's* wrath is roused against Śrī Kṛishṇa. To appease him, Śrī Kṛishṇa explains the fall of the Kauravas as due to their sins, and finally shows the sage, as a favour, His all-encompassing form. Thirdly, in the *Śāntiparvan*, a vision of the universal form, which the Lord Nārāyaṇa showed to the sage, Nārada, is described. Lastly, in the *Vanaparvan*, Lomaśa, in relating the well-known story of Paraśu-Rāma's discomfiture at the hands of Dāśarathi Rāma, specifically states that the latter showed Himself in His universal form.

All these descriptions largely resemble one another. They portray the Lord as having the whole universe for His body, with a reserve of unmanifested power. Only in each case, the vision is related particularly to the context. Here, in the Gītā, you will see that the vision is full of the battlefield: for instance, those whom Arjuna is to kill are shown as dead therein. As I told you, we may consider the *viśva-rūpa* as a symbolic representation of an intellectual concept, the idea that God is both transcendent and immanent. Or, we may hold that a direct perception of this *rūpa* is possible to one gifted with divine vision.

It is stated in the *Mahābhārata* that the chief object of the teaching of the Gītā is gained immediately after the *viśva-rūpa* is shown. The manifestation here to Arjuna of the *aiśvara* form by the Lord really brings us to the culmination point. Till now the teaching was being built up, step by step: hereafter, Śrī Kṛishṇa is merely concerned with the application of this teaching to various details. The vision convinces Arjuna of

the truth of Śrī Kṛishṇa's utterances: he only requires some little guidance in realising the principles he has been taught. Chapters *13* to *18* are mainly concerned with this question of the application of Śrī Kṛishṇa's philosophy of conduct to various matters of detail.

Sañjaya further describes the vision thus:—

अनेकवक्त्रनयनमनेकाद्भुतदर्शनम् ।
अनेकदिव्याभरणं दिव्यानेकोद्यतायुधम् ॥ ॥ १० ॥
दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ।
सर्वाश्चर्यमयं देवमनन्तं विश्वतोमुखम् ॥ ॥ ११ ॥

10. Having many mouths and eyes, many wonderful manifestations, many divine ornaments, and many weapons held erect:

11. Wearing divine garlands and apparel, anointed with celestial perfumes, full of every wonder, resplendent, boundless, with faces in all directions.

This description of the *viśva-rūpa* has not escaped much adverse criticism. Those who are not disposed sympathetically, nor anxious to understand the truth, say that this is the description, not of God, but of a monster. Let us see how far this criticism is just by trying to make out what this description sets out to do. We have been taught to look upon God as the source and support of all the power, possessed by all the beings in the universe. At the same time, we have to conceive Him as transcending the universe. To do this in the most effective manner possible with the help of our feeble mind and feeble language is far from easy. We may perhaps try to describe God in three ways, each of them inadequate, but each going as far as it can in its own manner. First, we have the method of negation. You may all know that the *Upanishads* describe God by the phrase *neti*—He is not this, He is not that, etc. Secondly we have the method of contradictions, by means of which we describe God as both far and near, the greatest of the great and smallest of the small, and so

forth. Thirdly we have the method of piling up positive attributes *ad infinitum*.

None of these methods is entirely satisfactory, but in the nature of the case we cannot hope for anything better. Here and in the *Purusha-sūkta*, an attempt is made to adopt the third method. If we realise that the object of this description is to reveal the infinite glory of the Lord by piling up positive attributes, then we may get a glimpse of the grandeur of the conception, which is dealt with here. The thousand heads and hands will no longer suggest to us a monster, but rather the ineffable, infinite, all-pervasive, omnipotent character of God. It is a reduction to human terms of the difficult philosophic concept of the omni-present God.

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता ।
यदिभास्सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥ ॥ १२ ॥

12. If in the heavens the splendour of a thousand suns were to rise up, all at once, it would be (somewhat) like the splendour of that Mighty One.

A commentator points out this stanza expands the epithet *deva* (shining) of the last verse. I have told you already that the Supreme *Brahman* is often described in the *Upanishads* as light. The whole of the universe, it is stated, is illuminated through the light that comes from Him. Not merely in the *Upanishads*, but in the religious literature of other countries also we find this conception of God as light. We may try to understand the exact force of the comparison here by remembering the fact that the weaker light always fades away in the presence of the stronger. As the flame of a tiny oil-lamp cannot outshine the sun, even so countless suns were obscured in the inexhaustible and immeasurable splendour of the lordly form of God.

There are one or two small points that I want you to note in connection with the translation of this *śloka*. The 'thousand suns' mentioned do not indicate a definite number: 'thousand' is merely used in the sense of 'numerous'. Again, though the original uses the word *sadṛśī*, implying likeness between the glory of the thousand suns and that of the *viśva-rūpa*, we must hold that the former merely gives us an idea of the infinite glory of the Lord.

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा ।
अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥ ॥ १३ ॥

13. Arjuna saw there in the body of the God of gods the whole universe in one, divided in various ways.

Arjuna saw in the *viśva-rūpa* the entire universe in one as the body of God: but this does not mean that it was inorganic and undifferentiated, a jelly-like mass. The whole of the universe with all its differentiations, the universe as it is evolving from hour to hour, with all its law, order and evolutionary processes and manifestations, was there. He saw a living cosmos, a unity in variety.

ततः स विस्मयाविष्टो हृष्टरोमा धनंजयः ।
प्रणम्य शिरसा देवं कृताञ्जलिरभाषत ॥ ॥ १४ ॥

14. Then Arjuna, overcome by wonder, with hair standing on end, bowed his head before the Lord, and with folded hands, spoke.

We shall consider Arjuna's speech next time.

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Last week we saw how, at the request of Arjuna, Śrī Kṛishṇa bestowed on him the power of divine vision whereby he might see the *aiśvara* form of God, and realise that He is the lord and master of all, and the soul of the universe, which is His body. Now, let us follow Arjuna's description of what he sees before him.

पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे सर्वांस्तथा भूतविशेषसंघान् ।
ब्रह्माणमीशं कमलासनस्थमृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान् ॥ १५ ॥

15. O God, I see in Your body all the gods, as well as all the groups of various beings, the lord Brahmā on (his) lotus-seat, all the sages and the celestial snakes.

Perhaps the most interesting point about this verse is the allusion to celestial snakes. What these are is a question about which nothing very definite can be said. In the last chapter we came across *nāgas* and *sarpas*: here we have *uragas*. All the three words mean snakes: but whether anything special is further meant by each or any of the three words is doubtful. Both Rāmānujāchārya and Śaṅkarāchārya consider that Vāsuki and other mythological snakes are referred to here. I venture to put forward a suggestion, to which you may attach whatever value you please. Snakes have played more than one prominent part in the ancient literature of Hinduism as well as of other religions. The snake in *Vedic* mythology is symbolic of the *Asuras*, the powers of darkness who warred against the gods of light Even some Christian critics grant that the representation of Satan in the Bible as a snake might be traced ultimately to the snake being regarded as symbolic of the powers of darkness in *Vedic* and Persian mythology. In addition to this, we must note the fact that the snake has been an object of worship in many countries: and it is worshipped in India even now. So you can see easily that snakes have played a very prominent part in more than one religion of antiquity.

The *uragas* mentioned here may be, most probably, the powers of darkness, commonly called *Asuras*, who are worshipped, lest they should do harm. If this is so, then in the *aiśvara* form of God, both the *Devas* and the *Asuras* are seen. In view of Śrī Kṛishṇa's teaching concerning the relations between the *deva-vrata*, the *pitṛi-vrata*, and such worshippers of minor deities on the one hand, and the *Kṛishṇa-vrata* on the other, this is what we should expect. Śrī Kṛishṇa is the synthesis of all the gods, and the receiver of all worships and offerings ultimately. Arjuna sees before him all the gods and the demons in the *viśva-rūpa*.

Along with these he sees the various groups of beings in the universe. For Śrī Kṛishṇa is not merely a synthesis of all the gods, but also a transcendent and immanent deity, who pervades and penetrates every atom in the universe.

अनेकबाहूदरवक्त्रनेत्रं पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम् ।
नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादिं पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप ॥ १६ ॥

16. I see You, of boundless form, on all sides, with many stomachs, mouths and eyes. O Lord of the universe, O God with the universe as Your body, I do not see Your end, nor Your middle, nor yet Your beginning.

The word, *viśva-rūpa*, usually means that form in which God appears with the universe as His body : here, as the word is put in the vocative case, it obviously means one who has the universe for His body.

As I pointed out to you last week, the innumerable mouths and faces that are mentioned here must be understood to refer symbolically to the all-pervasive character of God and His great power of performance. This form of God, as seen by Arjuna, is infinite in every direction, so that no beginning nor middle nor end can be predicated of it.

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रिणं च तेजोराशिं सर्वतो दीप्तिमन्तम् ।
पश्यामि त्वां दुर्निरीक्ष्यं समन्ताद्दीप्तानलार्कद्युतिमप्रमेयम् ॥ १७ ॥

17. I see You with a crown, a club and a discus, a mass of light, resplendent in every direction, very difficult to look at, all around effulgent like a blazing fire or the sun, and indefinable.

Arjuna sees before him a blazing, dazzling light, with no beginning or end that can be perceived. It is a strange and wonderful spectacle, something which Arjuna has never seen before : yet he recognises the figure before him, for in association therewith Arjuna sees the familiar symbols of Vishnu, the crown and mace and discus. Pleasenote that the word, *aprameya*, which I have translated as 'indefinable', means 'immeasurable' as well. The form was *durnirīksha*, difficult to look at, on account of the intensity of its brilliance.

त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ॥ १८ ॥

18. You are the indestructible, the Supreme One to be known. You are the high home of the universe. You are inexhaustible, the protector of everlasting *dharma*. I believe You are the Eternal Being.

The word, *akshara*, in this verse may be interpreted either s the *oṅkāra*, standing for God, or as that which is indestruc- ble. In either case, God is the supreme thing to be known : or, as you know, the *Vedānta* holds God to be the one object f knowledge, by knowing which everything else becomes nown. God is the abode of the universe, for in Him the hole cosmos finds its rest and support. Again, He is *avyaya*, nexhaustible and imperishable: for, in relation to Him, there an be no loss or depletion of any kind. He is also the rotector of everlasting *dharma*, those laws of life and ommands of religion, which will endure for ever. Finally, le is the Eternal *Purusha*, to whom the universe owes all its fe and activity.

It is obvious that Arjuna is not describing here something hich he is seeing before him : on the other hand, some im- ortant characteristics of God are here described in highly ostract terms In actual point of fact, a similar description, almost the same terms, may be found in IX. *17-18*. The only ifference between the two is that the former is given by *Śrī* rishṇa and the latter by Arjuna. But this difference is signifi- nt. For it means that Arjuna very naturally and almost nconsciously makes *Śrī* Kṛishṇa's teaching a part of his ental and spiritual life. Though Arjuna is describing here ese characteristics of God with all the freshness and wonder f a new discovery, he is only recapitulating what *Śrī* Kṛishṇa as been teaching him. A great commentator points out that e must take these statements to be the inference which rjuna draws from the wonderful display of divine power hich he looks at. And the inference gains added value that it testifies, with all the conviction which a direct erception brings in its wake, to the truth of those meta- hysical concepts about God, that *Śrī* Kṛishṇa has been develop- g in Chapters *7* to *10*. Arjuna's progress now from sceptī- ism to faith is complete.

अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तवीर्यमनन्तबाहुं शशिसूर्यनेत्रम् ।
पश्यामि त्वां दीप्तहुताशवक्त्रं स्वतेजसा विश्वमिदं तपन्तम् ॥१९॥

19. I see You, void of beginning, middle or end, f infinite power, having countless arms, with the sun nd the moon as Your eyes, and blazing fire as Your nouth, heating the whole of the universe with Your adiance.

It may seem as though this verse repeats ideas already mentioned. One commentator has tried to overcome the difficulty by suggesting that such ideas, as are repeated, are mentioned in a different way : for instance, formerly it was stated that the Lord has many arms : now it is declared that the Lord has countless arms. The former is a positive affirmation : the latter is a negative description. Even if we do not agree with this, and concede that there has been repetition, it is easy to find a justification for it in the state of mind of Arjuna at that time. If we were to see the *viśva-rūpa* before us and attempt to describe it, I doubt whether we too would not indulge in similar repetition. For none can feel anything like unnecessary tautology in describing that strange and wonderful form of God, however frequently one may repeat one's ideas.

One or two points in this verse deserve some attention. It has been suggested that the phrase *śaśi-sūrya-netraṁ* means " having eyes that are like the moon and the sun at the same time", the underlying thought apparently being that the *viśva-rūpa* appeared pleasing like the moon to the devotees of God and unpleasantly dazzling like the sun to His enemies. The mouth of God is here associated with kindled fire, for very soon you will learn that Arjuna has specially to see in this *rūpa* God as Destroyer.

द्यावापृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि व्याप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्च सर्वाः ।
दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं रूपमुग्रं तवेदं लोकत्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन् ॥ २० ॥

20. For, this inter-space between the earth and heaven and all the quarters are pervaded by You alone. O High-souled One, seeing this wonderful and terrible form of Yours, the three worlds are in a state of agitation and fear.

Seeing this fierce and wonderful form of the Lord, in which He pervaded the whole universe visibly, Arjuna was struck with awe. And I think it is reasonable to hold that he transferred this awe, which he felt, to the whole world. The intensity of his fear must have made him think that the three worlds dreaded to see this form. However, some commentators explain this statement differently. One view is that all were

gifted with divine vision for a brief while in order to enable Arjuna to realise the fearfulness of the form by making him see the dread of the three worlds on looking at the *viśva-rūpa*. Another view is that the devotees alone were able to see this *rūpa* in their meditations, and felt agitated thereat. According to a well-known commentator, God is here addressed as *Mahātman* for the reason that His mind cannot be fathomed.

अमी हि त्वां सुरसंघा विशन्ति केचिद्भीताः प्राञ्जलयो गृणन्ति ।
स्वस्तीत्युक्त्वा महर्षिसिद्धसंघाः स्तुवन्ति त्वां स्तुतिभिः पुष्कलाभिः ॥

21. For here these groups of gods are entering into You. Some in fear praise You with folded hands. And the hosts of sages and *Siddhas* are saying, "May it be well", and are extolling You with abundant hymns of praise.

The fact, that even some gods were struck with awe at this remarkable form of the Lord, shows the extent of its fierceness. It has been suggested by an eminent commentator that the gods mentioned in this *śloka* are those, who are believed to have incarnated in human form to take part in the battle at Kurukshetra and relieve the earth of her burden. According to another view, we are to take *tvā sura-saṅghāḥ* as *tvā asura-saṅghāḥ*, in which case the reference is to the hosts of demons, who have incarnated as Duryodhana and his henchmen. A *dvaitist* writer says that the gods mentioned in this stanza are *anukta-devas*, while those referred to in verse 15 are *mukta-devas*. I think it is enough, if we take the first line to mean that even some gods were struck with awe on looking at this display of God's destructive energy. Who the great *ṛishis* and *Siddhas* referred to here are, I do not know. The word *Siddha* ordinarily means one who has attained success in the practice of *yoga*: it also refers to a class of superhuman beings, akin, but slightly inferior, to the gods. Now, as the *Siddhas* are mentioned along with the *ṛishis* in this verse, we may hold that the reference here is to successful *yogins*. In the next *śloka*, the *Siddhas* are mentioned along with Rudras, Vasus, Aśvins, Sādhyas and other gods. Hence we may interpret the word there in the other sense of a class of superhuman beings.

Svasti is a term alike of benediction and praise. Interpreted in the former sense, it would mean that the great sages were saying, 'May it be well with the universe!' seeing that God was in His universal form emphasising His destructive aspect: otherwise, it would mean that they greeted Him with 'Hail! Prosperity be to Thee!'—the greeting which the devotees would naturally use on gazing at their beloved Lord.

रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्या विश्वेऽश्विनौ मरुतश्चोष्मपाश्च ।
गन्धर्वयक्षासुरसिद्धसंघा वीक्षन्ते त्वां विस्मिताश्चैव सर्वे ॥ २२ ॥

22. The Rudras and Ādityas, the Vasus, the Sādhyas, the Viśvas, the two Aśvins, the Maruts and the Ūshmapas, and the groups of Gandharvas, Yakshas, demons and Siddhas, are all looking at You amazed.

We came across most of the gods mentioned here, when we were studying the last chapter. The *viśve-devāḥ* may have originally meant nothing more than 'all the gods collectively', though very early they were considered a separate group of gods. According to the *Purāṇas*, they are said to be the children of Viśvā, daughter of Daksha, and are usually considered to be ten and occasionally as twelve in number. They are specially worshipped during funerals and ceremonies in honour of dead ancestors. The term *Ūshma-pa* literally means 'heat-drinker' and is here applied to a certain type of manes, who are believed to enjoy the hot offerings given to them by their descendants. Sādhyas are a class of celestial attendants, whose place in the hierarchy of gods is not clearly known. They are usually considered to be 12 in number, and their names are said to be Mana, Mantha, Prāṇa, Nara, Apāna, Vīryavān, Vinirbhaya, Naya, Damśa, Nārāyaṇa, Vṛisha and Prabhu.

रूपं महत्ते बहुवक्त्रनेत्रं महाबाहो बहुबाहूरुपादम् ।
बहूदरं बहुदंष्ट्राकरालं दृष्ट्वा लोकाः प्रव्यथितास्तथाहम् ॥ २३ ॥

23. Seeing Your mighty form, with many mouths and eyes, with many arms, thighs and feet, with many stomachs, and fierce with many teeth, all the worlds, O Mighty-armed! are afraid, and so am I.

It was at the special request of Arjuna that the *viśva-rūpa* was shown to him. On seeing it, he began to quake with fear. And he finds an excuse for his fear in saying that all the worlds are also alarmed at the vision: he is weak as others are, and no special blame, he pleads, attaches to him on account of his fear. Of the symbolism of the countless arms and feet and faces, I have already spoken.

नभस्स्पृशं दीप्तमनेकवर्णं व्यात्ताननं दीप्तविशालनेत्रम् ।
दृष्ट्वा हि त्वा प्रव्यथितान्तरात्मा धृतिं न विन्दामि शमं च विष्णो ॥ २४ ॥

दंष्ट्राकरालानि च ते मुखानि दृष्ट्वैव कालानलसन्निभानि ।
दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ २५ ॥

24. Seeing You, O Vishṇu, touching the skies, shining, many-coloured, with gaping mouths, and large, blazing eyes, I am terrified in my inmost self: and I can command neither courage, nor peace.

25. Seeing Your mouths, fierce with (their) teeth, and resembling the fire of destruction, I cannot recognise the (various) directions, and I feel no comfort. Be gracious, O Lord of the gods, having the whole universe for Your home.

Kālānala, as you may know, is the great fire of destruction, which is said to reduce the universe to ashes at the time of *pralaya*. Every one of His mouths blazed like an all-destroying fire, a cosmic conflagration. Looking at the fierce and awful form before him, Arjuna feels alarmed. Though he requested Śrī Kṛishṇa to show him His lordly form, he finds the vision too fearful. Now it is just like this in regard to all the great problems of religion and philosophy. Students who venture with boldness at first, feel baffled, when they

begin to realise the grandeur of the truth they are trying to understand. The desire to know the truth impels one continually to go on: but when one gets a glimpse of the immense magnitude of the problem that is being tackled, one feels unequal to the task undertaken. Arjuna is given a wonderful opportunity of realising the great truth underlying all phenomena, of solving the riddle of the universe, in fact, with an ease and facility never to be attained by others. But the problem is too great for him. He feels stunned, and his surprise and fear rob him of all self-control. He begs therefore piteously that the great Lord, who pervades the universe should cease to frighten him.

अमी च त्वां धृतराष्ट्रस्य पुत्राः सर्वे सहैवावनिपालसंघैः ।
भीष्मो द्रोणः सूतपुत्रस्तथासौ सहास्मदीयैरपि योधमुख्यैः ॥ २६ ॥

वक्त्राणि ते त्वरमाणा विशन्ति दंष्ट्राकरालानि भयानकानि ।
केचिद्विलग्ना दशनान्तरेषु संदृश्यन्ते चूर्णितैरुत्तमाङ्गैः ॥ २७ ॥

26—27. These sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra, together with all the bands of kings, Bhīshma, Droṇa and also Karṇa, along with the principal warriors on our side, are swiftly entering Your mouths, fierce with fangs. And some, with their heads ground to powder, are seen sticking in the interspaces between the teeth.

In these two *ślokas* the vision which Arjuna sees is related to the context He sees before him the soldiers and generals on both sides rushing into those terrible blazing mouths. He catches a glimpse of the future through divine grace, and learns the will of God. Causes beyond his control have brought the opposing armies into the field, and Arjuna's abstention from the martial duties cannot stop the inevitable carnage. With him or without him, the war will take place: but he may perhaps bring irreparable ruin to his soul by flying from the field of battle, overcome by sentiment. Such is the central teaching of the Gītā. And here we find that the divine will about the war is being made manifest to Arjuna. He sees the destined death of all those whom he hesitated to kill.

यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति ।
तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्ति ॥ २८ ॥

यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतङ्गा विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः ।
तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोकास्तवापि वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः ॥ २९ ॥

28. As the many swift currents of rivers run towards the sea alone, even so these heroes of the world of men enter Your blazing mouths.

29. As moths with accelerated velocity enter a blazing fire to their destruction, so too do these men enter Your mouths with accelerated velocity, (only) to their destruction.

In these two similes, the impending destruction is vividly described. The war is inevitable: and wittingly or not, the warriors on both sides are to kill one another. It has been suggested that the figure of the rivers rushing to the ocean portrays involuntary, unconscious destruction, and that the simile of the moths entering fire suggests a voluntary entry into the portals of death. Be that as it may, we must see here the work of God as destroyer. Though it is the individual *karma* which keeps the world going and makes history, we must trace all activities ultimately to God, who is at the same time the Creator, the Sustainer and the Destroyer of the universe. It is as Destroyer that He figures in the *viśva-rūpa*, and in the next *śloka*, we have a striking portrait of this aspect of His work.

लेलिह्यसे ग्रसमानः समन्ताल्लोकान्समग्रान्वदनैर्ज्वलद्भिः ।
तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत्समग्रं भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो ॥ ३० ॥

30. Swallowing these worlds, You are licking them over and over again with Your burning mouths. Your fierce rays, O Vishṇu, filling the whole universe with their splendour, are heating it.

With this *śloka*, Arjuna finishes his description of the *viśvara* form of the Lord. It is so strange and unexpectedly fierce that he is stunned and proceeds to ask its significance.

आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपो नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद।
विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ॥ ३१ ॥

31. Tell me who You are, who are possessed of this fierce form. Salutations to You, O Best of gods! Be kind. I wish to know You, the primeval one. I do not understand Your manifestation.

It was at Arjuna's request that this *viśva-rūpa* was shown to him. Yet he asks the form before him: "Who are you?" Why does he put that question? Because what he saw was not what he expected to see. For, let us imagine ourselves in the situation of Arjuna, and try to think of a form of God, which will be in keeping with the teaching of Chapters *7* to *10*. It seems to me that such a form of God would be quite unlike the one that Arjuna saw, something considerably less fierce and not so much given to the work of destruction. The teaching of the *Gītā* has emphasised for us that God is the support of the universe and the helper of devotees. But here there is a change in the emphasis because Arjuna has to engage in the work of destruction very soon. Śrī Kṛishṇa's object from the beginning is to convince Arjuna that, in doing his duty, even though it may involve destruction, he will be doing nothing wrong. Hence it is necessary to make Arjuna feel that he is merely an instrument in the hands of God. Śrī Kṛishṇa says further on that, even if Arjuna fails to do his duty, the work of destruction will go on unhindered: only Arjuna will incur the sin of not doing his duty. God appears as the Great Destroyer in this vision in order to make Arjuna feel that he is merely a *nimitta* in the hands of God for the work of destruction. This, however, startles Arjuna, who has been expecting to realise other aspects of God.

श्रीभगवानुवाच :

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः।
ऋतेऽपि त्वा न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥

ŚRĪ KṚISHṆA SAID:

32. I am Death, the destroyer of the world fully developed. I am here engaged in destroying the worlds. Even without you, these warriors, who are in the opposing armies, shall all cease to be.

Kāla, as you may remember, means time as well as death in Sanskrit. We often speak of Time the Destroyer, and it is probably as a personification of time that the word *kāla* acquired the meaning of 'Destroyer'. Śrī Kṛishṇa here answers Arjuna's puzzled question and explains the significance and purpose of the *viśva-rūpa*. It was terrible and awe-inspiring because, for the moment, the Lord was engaged in the work of destruction. To Arjuna was given the choice of carrying out the divine purpose to the extent of his power, or retiring from the battle to the detriment of his soul. But it was not in his power to stop the war or prolong the lives of those whose death was inevitable. Even without Arjuna the war would go on, and death and destruction stalk the land.

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व जित्वा शत्रून्भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम्।
मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥ ३३ ॥

33. Therefore do you get up. Win fame Vanquishing your enemies, enjoy a prosperous kingdom. All these have already been killed (by Me). Be only an instrument, O Arjuna (for their destruction).

It is noteworthy that Arjuna is here addressed as *savya-sāchin*, one who can shoot arrows with his left hand also. In spite of this uncommon talent, Arjuna is not essential for carrying out the divine purpose. His efficiency here is even less than that of the axe in the hands of the wood-cutter. The axe at least is an instrument without which the wood-cutter cannot cut the tree. Arjuna, however, is less even than an instrument. He is merely an excuse in the hands of God. Śrī Kṛishṇa declares: "Whether you do your duty or not, what has been determined will take place."

As a matter of fact, a study of history is apt to disillusion us as regards the importance of individuals. No one has anywhere or at any time been found to be indispensable and absolutely essential for the work of the world. Even the very greatest men, whose lives have been a source of inspiration to countless generations, had to die. When they die, we feel for a time that there is a gap, which cannot be filled. But all such gaps are filled in due course. The machinery of the universe goes on moving as before without any hindrance or deficiency whatsoever. So, in the course of history, none is indispensable, none is irreplaceable, however great his work. It is thus, because the process of history is determined. God is leading mankind towards an appointed goal. Whether we will or not, we all have to move with the current of history. If in our brief life we try to help the aims of God, we harmonise ourselves with the work of the machinery of the universe. If we do not, the machinery remains unhurt: it is we who suffer.

Imagine a mighty engine working. Try to obstruct its work by putting your arm in one of its wheels. What is the result? The arm will be seriously injured, but the machine goes on. If however you coordinate yourself with the machine, then you can make it help you. Otherwise, so much the worse for you. You have here a simile, which very roughly indicates to you the place of individual responsibility in the process of history. The great machinery of the universe is so ordered under the supervision of God, that it is given to us to help ourselves by placing ourselves in harmonious relations with it. It may be that, by so doing, we are at the same time helping the machine in a small way. With our co-operation, the goal is reached perhaps a moment earlier. If we adopt a hostile attitude, we do not hinder seriously the progress of the world, but we get into grief.

Such is the lesson we have to learn from a study of history. Let us not however mistake it to mean that everything is pre-ordained. Then it will not matter what we do. If the fate of the heroes of war is already pre-determined, why should Arjuna fight at all? What is the good of killing the killed? If the machinery of the universe moves on to its appointed goal, irrespective of what we do or refrain from doing; if none, however great, is essential for this purpose;

why should any one do anything at all? If everything i pre-ordained, the sense of individual responsibility is chimer ical. It is not, however, the intention of Śrī Kṛishṇa that w should hold such a view. The necessity of work has bee emphasised, as well as the need for relating ourselve harmoniously to the divine plan. To some extent it lies in u to help the progress of the world. We ought not to suppos we help much. Otherwise we may get unduly vain. We hav a certain amount of choice left to us: we can cause more o less friction in the movements of the wheels.

As a matter of fact, this problem of individual freedom i a very difficult one. If the individual is endowed with perfec freedom, he is fully responsible for what he does. If ful freedom is given to Arjuna, then the men in the opposite arm cannot die unless he fights. If even without him their death is determined, then Arjuna is responsible for nothing that he does. Pre-determination of itself will negative all persona responsibility and initiative in the life of man. If on the othe hand we endow the individual with perfect freedom, then we can believe in no plan and purpose in history, no divine even to which the whole creation moves. Yet all that we can observe of Nature and all that we know of history leads us to the belief that there is a plan and a purpose in the working of the universe. Though this plan is not completely shown to us, nor the purpose laid bare distinctly before our vision, there is enough evidence to make us realise that we have to adjust ourselves to a plan and a purpose that are not of our creation.

While thus we have to believe in pre-determination, we have at the same time a sense of responsibility, an intuition of freedom. At every moment of our life we are conscious of volition, of making a choice between two or more alternatives. Now, what is this freedom, and what is this pre-determination? How far does the latter impose limitations on our freedom? How far does our freedom affect this pre determination? These are difficult questions in philosophy and religion. Our view is that, within a limited sphere, man is free. This freedom, however, does not enable him to tamper with the plan and purpose of the universe in any way. He has the choice of adjusting himself thereto either harmoniously or not. The position is as if there was a big engine to which you were called upon to

relate yourself in some way. Its motive power and working are not within your control. Whatever you may do, it will go on working in its own way. But you may choose the relation in which there is co-ordination, or the reverse of it. In the latter case, the engine remains unaffected, but you are ruined. In the former case, you do not modify the working of the machine, but utilise it for your own good. In no case can you be said to help the machine materially. So, then, the engine can be used by you through harmonious co-ordination to secure your own good, or through opposition, it may be made to work your ruin. You are free to choose the one course or the other. But so far as the motive power of the mighty engine is concerned, you are nothing: you are like the fly on the wheel which thought it was raising the dust.

It is in this manner that we have to reconcile the two contrary ideas of freedom and pre-determination. Not otherwise can we realise the moral meanning of the great lesson taught to Arjuna here. In becoming a *nimitta* or not, Arjuna works for his own salvation or is ruined. The choice is his. But the killing or the saving of the enemy host is not in his hands. Looking at the problem in this way, we can see that it destroys the feelings of *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*, and impels us to do our duty, regardless of consequences. These are the concern, not of ourselves, but of God. He arranges the goal. We have to work and do our duty unselfishly, paying no heed to the fruits of our action.

I

We studied last week Arjuna's description of the *viśva-rūpa* We also tried to understand what Śrī Kṛishṇa wanted Arjuna to learn from the vision. It is one thing to see and quite another to learn: yet Śrī Kṛishṇa contrived that Arjuna not only saw, but also learnt. He was made to realise that in doing his duty in the world he was not achieving anything at all of real value in the economy of the universe. In God's government no one is indispensable. We here do our duties, not for carrying out the objects of God, but in order that we may adjust ourselves to those objects. If the right adjustments are not

effected, it is we who suffer. Under a strong and powerful government, not easily upset, there may be liars and deceivers, decoits and thieves and murderers. But these rebels against the law succeed only in achieving their own ruin: the government is not weakened by their activities. When a citizen puts himself in agreement with the aims of the government, his life becomes smoother, and of some service to himself and others. Similarly, under the divine government, if any one places himself in harmonious relations with the order of the universe, as arranged by God, then he really acquires the proud privilege of being a co-worker with God. If he antagonises that order, he becomes weak and loses the purpose of his life: the government goes on. You can now see that, in a scheme pre-ordained by God, man has still his duties to perform. Whether he makes his life of value to himself and others depends on how he performs those duties.

Having asked Arjuna to become merely an instrument for bringing about the death of the enemy host, Śrī Kṛishṇa says further:

द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान्।
मया हतांस्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठाः युद्ध्यस्व जेताऽसि रणे सपत्नान्॥

34. Droṇa and Bhishma and Jayadratha and Karṇa, and likewise other heroic warriors also, whom I have killed—do you slay. Grieve not. Fight. And in the war, you will overcome (your) enemies.

In the previous *śloka*, Śrī Kṛishṇa said generally that He had already killed Arjuna's enemies. Here He specifically mentions Droṇa, Bhīshma and others. Why does Śrī Kṛishṇa lay special emphasis on these? The reason is not far to seek. Ārjuna's sentimental objection to war rose on account of the possibility of killing most of them. His objection was based mainly on the respect he owed to his elders and preceptors, the affection he felt for his kinsmen, and the regard he had for the prowess of some of his foes. Droṇa was his beloved preceptor, his teacher in the art of war. Bhīshma was the patriarch of the family, the grandfather to whom every one was attached. Jayadratha was the husband of Duśchalā, Duryodhana's only sister. Arjuna had declared in the first

chapter I. 36) that he would incur sin even by killing death-worthy foes. And some of these could hardly be regarded as *ātatāyins*.

In reply Śrī Kṛishṇa points out that the divine will has condemned them. Even the conduct of Bhīshma and Droṇa, noble as they were and opposed to the policy of Duryodhana, did not escape Śrī Kṛishṇa's censure. Speaking at the court of Duryodhana, as the envoy of the Pāṇḍavas, Śrī Kṛishṇa declared that the elders of the Kuru family committed a great transgression of the moral law in that they failed to curb their Prince, who was sinning through excess of prosperity. (*Udyoga-parvan*, cxxviii 35). Engaged in a just war, Arjuna could not turn back and flee from the field in a moment of weak emotion. The forces of history had brought about the crisis of war, and as a warrior and a man of conscience, Arjuna must fight on the side of right, cost what it might. Moreover, he could not stop the inevitable carnage by donning the ochre-robe and retiring to the forest. Hence Śrī Kṛishṇa drew pointed attention to the fact that those whom he particularly objected to kill were already dead according to the will of God. They would die in the ensuing battle, whether Arjuna fought or not. But if he fought, he would have the satisfaction of doing his duty, and would in addition achieve a temporal victory.

Notice the significance of Śrī Kṛishṇa's exhortation to Arjuna. He seems to say: "Kill those whom I have killed." We must not understand this literally. To kill the killed is not heroism, nor is victory achieved thus. But this is not the point. As we saw, Arjuna is asked to consider himself an agent only up to a certain limit. Beyond that God is the agent.

सञ्जय उवाच :

एतच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं केशवस्य कृताञ्जलिर्वेपमानः किरीटी।
नमस्कृत्वा भूय एवाह कृष्णं सगद्गदं भीतभीतः प्रणम्य ॥ ३५ ॥

अर्जुन उवाच :

स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या जगत्प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यते च।
रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्घाः ॥ ३६ ॥

SAÑJAYA SAID :

35. Hearing this speech of Śrī Kṛishṇa, trembling and with folded hands, Arjuna bowed down : and

again addressed Śrī Kṛishṇa, prostrating himself, in a faltering voice, overcome with fear.

ARJUNA SAID :

36. It is but meet, O Hṛishīkesa, that the whole world becomes pleased and charmed by Your praise, that the demons flee in terror in all directions, and that all the hosts of the Siddhas bow down (to You).

According to Arjuna, it was quite in the order of things that the world should be delighted with the praise of the Lord and that the demons should run away in all directions at the same time. The appropriateness of the situation is due to the fact that Śrī Kṛishṇa was capable of manifesting Himself in the way He did. He who can show Himself in the form of *viśva-rūpa* and thereby at least convince the person who is fortunate enough to see the vision that He guides and controls the universe as the soul does the body, is certainly worthy of all honour; and all those inclined to do evil would naturally run away from Him. As I have told you before, there is nothing like a permanent place or scope for evil in the government of the universe by God. There may be men intent on doing evil. But these cannot in the slightest degree affect the progress of the universe. The destiny which God has appointed for the universe is sure to be won in spite of the evil that weak men indulge in. All the evil in the world is intended to be finally brushed aside. That the evil, when it knows its situation in the universe, would be terribly afraid of itself and run away—such seems to be the meaning of the statement that the demons flee in terror in all directions. Let us note in passing, before taking up the study of the next *śloka*, that the epithet 'Hṛishikeśa', here applied to Śrī Kṛishṇa, is generally understood to mean "Lord of the senses".

कस्माच्च ते न नमेरन्महात्मन् गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे।
अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत्परं यत् ॥ ३७ ॥

37. Why should they not bow down to You, O High-souled One, who are the great and first cause of even Brahmā, the Creator. O Boundless One, Lord

of the gods, and Abode of the universe! You are the indestructible, that which is, that which does not exist, and also what is beyond them.

According to the *purāṇas*, God first of all creates Brahmā, the Creator, who manipulates *prakṛiti* during cycles of evolution and dissolution, and thereby causes the *sarga* or creation that we observe to be going on in the universe. Apart from this *purāṇic* idea, the statement that Śrī Kṛishṇa is the primal cause of even Brahmā means that He was before all creation began. He is infinite and boundless. He is the Lord of gods. But He is not for this reason away from the universe, but has it for His home.

Commentators differ as regards the interpretation of the last line of the *śloka*. It has been understood to refer to the sole reality of idealistic monism, which is limited by the human concepts of existence and non existence. We can also understand it in the following way. Arjuna, after referring to the Lord as the Indestructible One, who manifested the *viśva-rūpa*, describes Him as both what is and what is not, and also what is beyond them. I have already spoken to you in detail about the *Vedāntic* idea of the process of the universe proceeding in cycles of evolution and involution. 'That which is' refers to what we see here before us as created, organised beings in the universe. 'That which does not exist' means that which forms the basis of created and organised beings in the universe in a state, where it has not undergone the process of creation and organisation. It may be thus taken to denote the undifferentiated primordial matter, which has evolved into the universe. We cannot say that this does not really exist : only, it does not exist in a differentiated condition. God is both the differentiated universe and the undifferentiated material basis thereof. He is *prakṛiti* both in its manifested and unmanifested forms. To say that He is *prakṛiti* does not mean that He is matter alone. You may recall that Śrī Kṛishṇa spoke of Himself as above and beyond *prakṛiti* as well. He referred to two *avyaktas*, a lower and a higher one, and declared the superior *avyakta* to be the very life of the inferior one. Here by stating that He is beyond *prakṛiti* in its differentiated as well as undifferentiated condition, Śrī Kṛishṇa is drawing attention to the fact that He is the superior *avyakta*. Thus God is both *prakṛiti* and *purusha*, matter and

spirit. To say that He is matter does not negative His *jñāna-svarūpa :* to say that He is beyond *prakṛiti* does not make Him remote. We can make this clear by a simple analogy. One may say : "I am suffering from fever." Here the 'I' refers to the body. The same person may say : "I am uneasy at heart." Here the 'I' refers to the mind. The 'I' thus stands for a composite ego, a mind and a body. In a like manner God is both matter and spirit. We may say that He has the entire universe for His body.

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराणस्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥ ३८ ॥

38. You are the first of the gods, the ancient *purusha*. You are the highest support of this universe. You are the knower, the object of knowledge, and the supreme Goal. O Lord of infinite forms, this universe is pervaded by You.

The ideas stated in the latter half of the previous *śloka* have to be expanded in order that we may not mistake for God the primordial matter, which forms the basis of the universe. Arjuna in this verse enables us to see that the vision of the *viśva-rūpa* made him understand not that all matter was God in essence, but that God, while being within matter, was also above and beyond it.

He is *ādi-deva*, the first of the gods, first not merely in rank, but also in point of time. We do not know when the gods came into existence : we usually say they have been from eternity. If we can look upon creation as having taken place at any particular point of time, then the *ādi-deva* must have been in existence even before that. In either case, He is *anādi*, beginningless and eternal.

The term, *purusha*, is ordinarily intepreted to mean one who sleeps within the citadel of the body. Throughout almost the whole of the *Mahābhārata*, there runs the idea that God is, as it were, sleeping in the heart of every person, whether that person is conscious of it or not. In the story of Śakuntala, as told in that epic, there occurs a very interesting discussion. Years after her *gāndharva* marriage with Dushyanta, she goes,

to him with her son and says: "I am your wife, and here is your son. Receive me back as your queen, and make him the Crown Prince as you promised." Dushyanta, though he recognises Śakuntala, pretends not to know her: he is afraid of public opinion about his moral standards. Śakuntala then gets angry and makes a speech, which is well worth reading by every one. She declares:

(*Ādi-parvan* xcviii)

एकोऽहमस्मीति च मन्यसे त्वं न ह्रच्छयं वेत्सि मुनिं पुराणम् ।
यो वेदिता कर्मणः पापकस्य तस्यान्तिके त्वं वृजिनं करोषि ॥

And you think that you are alone. You do not know the Ancient *Muni*, who is sleeping within your heart. He knows the deeds of the evil-doer. In His presence, you are committing sin.

In the technical language of the Sāṅkhya philosophy, the term *purusha* is used to denote the *jīvātman*, the soul. It is so called because it is conceived to sleep within the body. But this school of thought also holds, as you may be aware, that all the activities of man are due, not to the *purusha* within, but to the potential energy of the *prakṛiti*. Here, of course, the *Vedānta* thinks differently. So the term *purusha* may mean either the *jīvātman* or the *Parama Purusha*, the old *Muni* who sleeps within the body, or the comparatively recent individual soul. Let us note here that the question as to when the individual souls came into existence is one of those to which Hindu philosophy refuses to give any answer. It is on a par with problems like the beginning of *karma* or the commencement of creation. All these are said to be *anādi*, without beginning, for the reason that it is futile to try to solve these questions. We see the stream of *karma* flowing, the process of creation going on, and the souls getting in and out of embodiments. But we cannot conceive a point of time when these things were not, as they are now: though, as I have pointed out to you once before, ignorance about the source of a river does not make it any the less real. Questions like these are the residual problems of all philosophy. Nevertheless the distinction between the *jīvātman* and the *Parama Purusha* must be noted. The former is a *purusha* sleeping

within the citadel of the body. God is often spoken of as *Parama* or *Purāṇa Purusha* to distinguish Him from the individual soul. If it becomes possible for us to realise in our imagination a point of time at which the souls were not in existence, but the universe was—even then God must have been in existence. So in this way we may think of God as the oldest and most ancient inhabitant of the citadel of the body.

Arjuna further characterises God as the knower as well as the object of all knowledge After having read of this vision and thought about it in real earnestness, let us ask ourselves how much we really know. In modern days the field of knowledge is becoming so wide and varied that no o n can try to know all. What one gathers in one corner of the world is different from what another gathers in another corner: and neither is frequently known to the other. Even apart from all this, there are definite limits set to our knowledge by the very structure of our body and mind. Some of these diffculties we have tried to overcome by the invention of marvellous instruments; we have discovered through their aid a telescopic and a microscopic universe. Still there remains much that we do not and cannot expect to know. If therefore there is any knower who knows all that has to be known, it must be God. He alone can be omniscient. Again all knowledge has its culmination in a knowledge of God; every effort of human cognition is directed ultimately towards Him alone. He is the one thing by knowing which everything else becomes known. Let us note here that nothing in the field of modern thought contradicts the idea that the synthesis of all knowledge leads us finally to God.

Lastly Arjuna declares God to be the supreme goal of human endeavour : for He alone can bless us with the salvation of *moksha*. Please observe the striking manner in which Arjuna concludes this *śloka*. After speaking of God as the knower, the object of all knowledge, the home of the universe and the supreme goal of life, he harks back to the idea that God pervades the entire universe. All the attributes of God mentioned first lead us to think of His transcendent greatness; so Arjuna suddenly changes the line of his thought and lays emphasis on divine immanence as well.

वायुर्यमोऽग्निर्वरुणश्शशाङ्कः प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च ।
नमो नमस्तेऽस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ॥ ३९ ॥

39. You are Vāyu, Yama, Agni, Varuṇa, the Moon, Prajāpati, and the great-grandfather. I bow to You a thousand times. Salutation to You again and again.

We have seen already that Śrī Kṛishṇa is the synthesis of all the gods who are worshipped and the receiver of all offerings ultimately. In that sense we may say whoever worships Yama or Vāyu or Agni, worships Him only, though indirectly. We may also understand the stanza to mean that God is present as the soul in all these divinities. As He is *sarvāntaryāmin*, He is in all the deities who are worshipped.

The term, *prajāpatī*, is applied, as we saw, to a number of persons, whom Brahmā, the creator, brought into existence first, for the sake of undertaking the detailed work of creation and differentiation. If we regard the *prajāpatis* as the fathers of mankind, Brahmā becomes their grandfather : and God, who created Brahmā, is naturally the great-grandfather of humanity. The genealogical relation that we have traced must not however be understood in any material sense, as God is above all that is material.

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।
अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥ ४० ॥

40. In front and from behind, salutation to You. O You, who are all, salutation to You from all sides. You are of infinite power, of unmeasured heroism. You pervade all, and therefore You are all in all.

I drew your attention once before to what appeared to be a kind of repetition in the description of the *viśva-rūpa*. I tried to explain that it was quite natural for one seeing such a strange and awe-inspiring spectacle to indulge in such repetition. Here, again, you will notice a similar repetition. In the previous *śloka*, Arjuna said that he would bow to Śrī Kṛishṇa a thousand times, and again and again. Now he says

"I bow to You in front and from behind. I bow to You from all directions." The significance of this statement will be clear, if we remember the nature of the vision that Arjuna sees before him. Therein the Lord pervades the entire universe visibly. If one is to bow down wherever one sees the face of God, and if everywhere one sees countless divine faces, one has to keep on bowing, howsoever one may turn.

Arjuna here says that God is all in all, after referring to His infinite power and measureless heroism. We may understand this to mean that both the capacity and the courage to achieve are found in an infinite degree in God. He attains to all that He wishes to attain. He is *pūrṇa-kāmin, sarva-saṅkalpa-kāmin*. He alone is capable of being the governor of the universe. I must mention here that the statement that God is all has been interpreted by the three important schools of *Vedāntic* thought according to their several tenets. The *advaitins* hold that the statement means that there is no reality except the Absolute. The followers of Rāmānujāchārya interpret it to mean that the universe of mind and matter is a mode of God. And according to the *dvaitins*, the statement refers to the fact that the universe is subject to the dominion of the Lord.

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं हे कृष्ण माधव हे सखेति ।
अजानता महिमानं तवेदं मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वापि ॥ ४१ ॥
यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु ।
एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥ ४२ ॥

41-42. Whatever I have said without restraint, such as (addressing You as) 'O Kṛishṇa', 'O Yādava" or 'O Friend', looking upon You as a friend, and not realising this greatness of Yours, either through love or want of consideration: and whatever disrespect I have shown to You in fun, while playing, sleeping, sitting together, or dining, whether alone or in the presence (of friends)—for all these, O Achyuta, I ask pardon of You who are immeasurable.

The first thing that Arjuna does as soon as he sees the vision and realises his insignificance in the presence of the

Lord, is to bow down in reverence to the Great Being, who could thus manifest Himself. This is an instinctive emotional reaction to the situation. Then he begins to think. "Have I not commited a grave offence," he asks himself, 'in treating Śrī Kṛishṇa as a mere man among men, as a familiar friend who could be treated with the candid lack of ceremony that subsists among those who are drawn together in friendship?" So he hastens to beg forgiveness for the offence that he may have committed out of love as a friend or out of sheer thoughtlessness. For, he must have felt there were incidents in the life of Śrī Kṛishṇa, such as the slaying of Śiśupāla or the saving of the honour of Draupadī at the court of Duryodhana, which ought to have given him a clue regarding His superhuman character. Yet he thought little of these things, and treated Śrī Kṛishṇa as the cousin he had known from boyhood, cracking jokes at His expense on all sorts of occasions, and behaving towards Him with the disrespectful familiarity of a friendly equal.

This feeling of Arjuna is quite natural: but he has not offended Śrī Kṛishṇa in reality. When God becomes incarnate as a human being, He expects to be treated as a man among men. If He thinks that those who deal with Him thus are guilty of a grievous sin, He will cease to incarnate at all. Śrī Kṛishṇa makes all this quite clear soon. But the revelation of Śrī Kṛishṇa's true nature came to Arjuna with a sudden shock. The contrast between what Arjuna mistook Śrī Kṛishṇa to be and what He was really, was so striking that Arjuna could not but ask forgiveness for his blind and headless conduct in the past.

Arjuna particularly mentions the disrespect he has shown to Śrī Kṛishṇa for purposes of merriment. Let me here draw your attention to some interesting results that one may derive by making a psychological analysis of laughter. A ludicrous situation would at least be mildly distressing to us, if we were at the centre of the picture. It always involves some maladjustment with the environment on the part of the person laughed at. Our laughter is ever directed against some victim. It gives a feeling of superiority to the laugher and a feeling of inferiority to the one laughed at. An English thinker has stated that laughter is due to our feeling 'a sudden glory' on perceiving 'some eminency in ourselves by comparison with the

infirmity of others'. This, of course, does not mean that laughter is an expression of cruelty. We may love or admire the victim of our fun, but the feeling of superiority always exists. That is why minor mishaps are perhaps the most fruitful sources of laughter. Thus it can be shown that laughter is always due to the distress of some one else, occasionally of one's own self : though normally the distress is so mild as not to excite our active sympathy. Byron wrote: "If I laugh at any mortal thing, it is that I may not weep." So a joke is no joke, if it is not at some one's expense. Awe-struck at the sight of the mighty vision, Arjuna recalls with fear and trembling, the many occassions when he made fun of Śrī Kṛishṇa. Not merely was he ignorant of the true greatness of Śrī Kṛishṇa, but he had actually mistaken Him for a social equal with whom he could move freely and without formality. Every joke at Śrī Kṛishṇa's expense was an offence against divine majesty, and Arjuna could do nothing better than pray humbly for forgiveness.

We shall postpone further consideration of Arjuna's request to Śrī Kṛishṇa till next week. Before, however, concluding our work today, let me draw your attention to the fact that I have left the word *Achyuta* in this *śloka* untranslated. Though a well-known name of Vishṇu, we cannot easily find an English equivalent for it, which conveys quite the same suggestion. It is what may be called the negative participle of a root which means 'to slide or slip or fall'. Roughly, it may be rendered as 'not fallen, firm, imperishable'. The significance of the name is usually explained in two ways. Firstly, we may understand the word to mean that God is transcendent, in spite of being immanent in the universe. Secondly, it may convey the suggestion that God is a refuge whence there can be no fall for those who seek Him. Let us stop here now.

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Last time we saw how Arjuna was stunned by the greatness, immensity and infiniteness of the vision that he saw. In the presence of the mighty and wonderful *viśva-rūpa*, he felt how insignificant he was. At the same time he realised that

he had committed a great blunder in dealing with the Person who could manifest Himself thus. He had looked upon Śrī Kṛishṇa as a mere man among men, had addressed Him in familiar terms and had even made fun of Him. Arjuna therefore begged that he should be forgiven for the wrongs that he had unwittingly wrought. Today you will observe that Arjuna prays that Śrī Kṛishṇa should once again resume His agreeable from. He has no wish to see the *viśva-rūpa* longer than can be helped.

Let us now continue our study of the prayer which Arjuna submitted.

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान्।
न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥

43. You are the father of this world, consisting of moving and unmoving things. You are its great and worshipful teacher. There is none equal to You. Whence can there be one superior to You in the three worlds, O You of unsurpassed power!

There are some, who say that the religion of the Hindus is not cognisant of the idea of the fatherhood of God. This verse is one of the many instances that prove that the truth is quite the contrary. And please observe that our conception of the fatherhood of God is more comprehensive than that of some other religions. To them the fatherhood of God implies the brotherhood of men and nothing more. But Arjuna here points out that God is the father not merely of men, but of the whole world of life and matter. This implies not alone the brotherhood of men, but also the kinship of all beings, animate or inanimate. Everything that exists is born out of God and ultimately dependent on Him for its very existence.

God is here further described as the great teacher, worthy of worship. We have already been told that all worship, to whomsoever offered, is bound ultimately to reach God. In other words, God alone is worthy of being worshipped. There is nothing to prevent our worshipping others, father or mother, teachers or great men. Hero-worship of all kinds is admissible, provided we realise in our heart of hearts that all such

worship is ultimately intended to be the worship of the only Ruler of the Universe. Thus it is full of significance to speak of God as *pūjya*. Śrī Kṛishṇa is described as the great teacher, because He alone can know the whole truth. Sometime back we saw that He was called the knower as well as the known. He is the Knower, par excellence, because no one else knows the truth quite so well and completely. Omniscience belongs only to Him. Now between the fitness to teach and the possession of knowledge there is a close relationship. To succeed as a teacher, one must know one's subject well. Perfect knowledge and perfect capacity to teach are closely inter-related. A perfect teacher is one, whose knowledge of the thing he teaches is perfect. Thus God, who is the Great Knower, is also the Great Teacher.

Many of the qualities that we have predicated of God make it essential that the nature of God should be unique. For instance, there cannot be two omniscient beings, or again two beings, to know either of whom is equal to knowing the whole. This is a logical impossibility. In this way it can be shown that it is not possible to conceive of a being equal to God. We can think of many as subordinate to Him, but none as equal to Him. And if He has no equal, obviously He has no superior. His glory must be unparalleled in all the three worlds.

तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीड्यम् ।
पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम् ॥ ४४ ॥

44. Therefore, bowing down, prostrating my body, I would beg Your forgiveness, praiseworthy Lord. It is meet, O Lord, that You who are dear (to me), should bear with me, who am dear (to You), as a father with (his) son or a friend with (his) friend.

The latter half of this stanza is usually translated thus : Be pleased to pardon me, as a father does his son, or a friend does his friend, or a lover his beloved lady. For this, however, it is necessary to split up *priyāyārhasi* into *priyāyāḥ* and *arhasi*. As it stands, it can only be split up into *priyāya arhasi*. Though the former construction is defended on the score that it

is *ārsha*, the usage of *ṛishis* of revered memory, there seems to be no need to invoke special rules, when the text yields good sense as it stands. To the translation here adopted, the objection has been raised that, while *putrasya* and *sakhyuḥ* are in the genitive case, *priyāyā* is in the dative. As against this, the counter-objection may be raised that there is a change of gender in *priyāyāḥ*. Finally, it may be noted that the use of the dative case may be justified on the ground that it is in accordance with the *Vārtika* rule, *Tādarthye chaturthī*, which may be freely translated to mean that the dative is to be used to denote relations between two, when one's existence is dependent on the other, or when one exists solely for another. Also it may be observed that the simile is fully completed in the translation I have adopted. On the merits of this controversy, you are, of course, free to have your own opinion.

Notice the peculiar importance attached to the statement here that Arjuna is dear to Śrī Kṛishṇa and Śrī Kṛishṇa to Arjuna. The love between them is made the basis on which forgiveness is prayed for. But for this mutual love, there appears to be no reason why this request should be granted. There are cases in which relations between two persons are not characterised by reciprocal love, the son, for instance, being dear to the father, but the father not being dear to the son. In such cases the friendly relation of mutual forbearance cannot last long. It is only where love is mutual forbearance is also mutual.

If you want forbearance, if you feel that you are weak and that your weaknesses should be pardoned, then you must treat every one with kindness and love. If you show yourself as a kindly person and make youself agreeable to all, then naturally others will also be kind to you. If, however, you behave differently and show that you are incapable of manifesting kindness towards others, then there is no reason why the world should not look askance at you, be hypercritical towards you, and deal out to you a greater amount of harshness than you deserve.

So Arjuna's request for pardon was based on the existence of mutual love between himself and Śrī Kṛishṇa : and it enables us to see how all of us, who stand in need of forgiveness, have to conduct ourselves in relation to other men and to God.

अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे ।
तदेव मे दर्शय देव रूपं प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ ४५ ॥

45. Having seen what was not seen before, I feel delighted; (at the same time) my mind is troubled with fear. (Hence) O Lord of the gods, having the universe as Your habitation, be pleased to show me that (other) form (of Yours, which is free from the power to excite fear in my mind).

It is noteworthy that Arjuna does not ask Śrī Kṛishṇa here to show Himself again in human form. In the next *śloka*, he submits a prayer that Śrī Kṛishṇa should appear to him as crowned and four-armed, with a discus and a mace, and not that He should appear as human. Such a request it was apparently impossible for Arjuna to submit. After having seen Śrī Kṛishṇa in the *viśva rūpa*, for Arjuna to ask Him to become human, is somewhat like asking a great man to become comparatively insignificant. Arjuna could not command the courage to do this. Therefore he prays :

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्तमिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव ।
तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते ॥ ४६ ॥

46. I wish to see You even thus, O You having the universe as Your form,—wearing the crown and holding the mace, with the discus in hand. O Thousand-armed, assume that four-handed form.

The form of Vishṇu referred to in this *śloka* is one of those intended for carrying out meditation or *dhyāna*. In the literature in Sanskrit bearing on this question, it is recognised that meditation becomes impossible without a definite conception of the object of *dhyāna*. In order to enable people to go through meditation as part of the practice of *yoga*, they are taught to meditate on God conceived in various forms. These conceptions of God are embodied in small verses which go by the name of *dhyāna-ślokas*. The form here described is traditionally ascribed to Vishṇu, and is rich in suggestive meaning. He is conceived as a four-armed figure wearing a crown, holding a discus, and wielding

a club Now four arms are given to God in order to enable the man, who meditates, to realise that the form he is thinking of is something superhuman, which he has never seen before. To think of a human form and meditate upon it is easy. But the meditation of the *yogin* ought to be something different and must serve a different purpose. Yet at the same time the object of meditation cannot cease to be human completely. Howsoever we may try to modify our conceptions of God and differentiate them from what is normally human, still they can be nothing other than anthropomorphic, when analysed ultimately. We all think humanly, and therefore have to conceive of God also humanly. Matthew Arnold quotes an epigram of Heine: "God made man in His own image, and man made haste to return the compliment." What is above and beyond the mind of man cannot really be conceived as it is in itself. All our conceptions of such a reality can only be mere emblems. Man can at best only realise God symbolically. We are incapable of perceiving the truth as it is in itself.

If this is understood, we can easily see why the image here is given four arms. We give it arms, because we cannot help doing so. The form of man is for us the best conceivable form. All others are, from our standpoint at any rate, inferior in point of intelligence, the capacity to know the truth and to act in accordance with the realisation of the truth. We often say it is most difficult to be born human. At the same time our image must also try to differentiate the human from the superhuman. The latter, while it can be conceived as only human, has yet to be differentiated and separated from the purely human. This object is attained by thinking of God as having a human form, but as possessing some characteristics which ordinary human forms do not possess. We give Him four arms to indicate His great power of performance. And how great this must be, we ought to know, after having studied all that He had taught about His *yoga* in the tenth chapter. If we are to appreciate it to the fullest extent possible, we ought to conceive of Him as having not four arms merely, but thousands of arms, arms here, arms there, arms everywhere. But to think of Him as having countless arms is once again to make it impossible for our weak mind to have a clear picture of Him. The *viśva-rūpa*, as described in this chapter, is astounding. It stuns the mind

more than it enables us to conceive of our God. How can we meditate on the *viśva-rūpa* with its thousands of heads and arms, in front, behind and everywhere? Yet the *viśva-rūpa* is perhaps the least inadequate symbol for the infinite power of God. But it cannot serve as the basis of meditation. It has to be simplified, and it is this simplified form which is described here.

We think of Him as wearing a crown, because He is the Lord of all, the sovereign ruler of the universe. He is imagined as wielding a mace, because whoever is king is also the wielder of the staff by which the evil-doers are punished and the law of righteousness upheld. *Chakra* is a weapon intended not so much to punish the wicked as to protect the good. The difference between the *gada* and the *chakra* is that, while the former inflicts punishment on those near by, the latter travels far. This, to my mind, indicates that the mace represents the power of punishment which God has as the sovereign ruler of the universe, while the discus symbolises His power to protect the good, however distant they may be. The good man may sometimes feel sorely tried by his surroundings and imagine that God has abandoned Him. Jesus Christ asked on the cross : O God, why have you forsaken me? There was a moment when the Buddha, before Enlightenment came to him, felt a similar despair. In the life of every earnest *bhakta* such occasions arise. Mystics have to pass through 'the night of the soul', suffer an intense spiritual weariness, a sense of estrangement from God, before the assurance of continued bliss is obtained. But after the hour of trial is over, all the *bhaktas* have realised that God, who had seemed far away, did at last come to their rescue. It is, I believe, this power, which God possesses to save the *bhakta*, who thinks that the Lord is too far from him and cannot give him support in his hour of need—it is this power which is represented by the *chakra*.

श्रीभगवानुवाच :

मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।
तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम् ॥ ४७ ॥

ŚRĪ KṚĪSHṆA SAID:

47. By Me pleased with you, this supreme form, full of glory, universal, infinite, which has been (Mine)

from the beginning of time and which has never before been seen by anyone other than you, has been shown to you through My wonderful power.

The term *yoga* in this *śloka* refers to the intimate relation that exists between the Lord and the universe. Śrī Kṛishṇa says in effect: "My power is so great that I can exhibit Myself to you as a being who has the whole of the universe for My body. And this is made possible only by My intimate relations with the universe." Please observe that Śrī Kṛishṇa says that this form has never before been seen by any one else. We have already seen that in the *Mahābhārata* at least four other demonstrations of the *viśva-rūpa* are described. So we must understand Śrī Kṛishṇa to mean that the form shown to Arjuna was unique. No one else had seen quite the same kind of *viśva-rūpa*.

न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानैर्न च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः ।
एवंरूपश्शक्य अहं नृलोके द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥ ४८ ॥

48. O Arjuna, I cannot be seen in this form by any one else other than you in this world of men (even) by the study of the *Vedas* and of the sacrifices, or by gifts, or by actions, or by fierce austerities.

If the study of the *Vedas*, the performance of sacrifices, or the practice of austerities cannot get any one the privilege of seeing the *viśva-rūpa*, by what special qualification was Arjuna able to look at that wonderful vision? The answer to this question has already been given more than once, and it is that the kindness and favour of God are responsible for this. God blesses those whom He likes.

That the grace of God is needed by every one is a point which comes out very clearly from this verse. We have a tendency to stand on our own legs, and fight for what we think to be our deserts. Yet, judged from the standpoint of merit, can any one be said to deserve salvation or to know the truth? But judged from the standpoint of the grace of God, there is none so low and so mean as not to deserve the highest that is at His disposal. We cannot seek our

salvation by standing on our own merits or fighting for our dues. And, if God bestows on us just as much favour as we deserve and no more, none of us would deserve salvation. Our weakness is so great and the burden of conducting ourselves aright in relation to God so heavy, that it is simply not possible to acquit ourselves creditably of this responsibility. If we still desire salvation, we must understand that it canbe attained, not through our merits, but through the grace of God. I do not say that it is entirely through the grace of God that we can obtain *moksha*. To take up that position would mean that one can lead any kind of life and yet rely on the grace of God. I do not deny that even such a thing may be possible. How and why God bestows His grace on man is a question beyond our grasp. The guiding motives of God can be understood only by one who is greater than God. But surely this much we know. When we consider the great weight of responsibility that rests on our shoulders and the littleness of the power that we possess to bear it aright, when we realise how often we know the right and do the wrong and how frequently we flounder in the presence of moral difficulties, can we not see that it is only the limitless grace of God that alone makes salvation possible, I will not say, to all of us, but to any among us?

All that can be said is that every one of us should try, as far as possible, conscientiously and earnestly to bear the burden of our responsibility in life aright. But if in spite of this endeavour we fail, as it frequently happens, let us see that it is due not so much to want of will as to want of power. Where the failure is of this kind, we may feel sure that God will come to our rescue. Relying upon His graciousness, one may pray: "O God, I have miserably failed: but my failure is not due to want of will. I have struggled earnestly to do my duty, but I have failed on account of my weakness. Be kind to me who am weak. You are the source of all strength and power. Give me strength enough to overcome my difficulties." If we appeal to God in this manner, then every one of us might feel that salvation is at hand. But if at any time you feel that you have lived your life aright, and say, in a glow of self-righteousness: "I have performed all the rituals correctly. I have bathed in the morning, and said my prayers regularly. I have not thought ill at heart of any one. I have kept all the moral commandments. Therefore I am entitled as of right to salvation," then, I am afraid, you are undone.

मा ते व्यथा मा च विमूढभावो दृष्ट्वा रूपं घोरमीदङ्ममेदम् ।
व्यपेतभीः प्रीतमनाः पुनस्त्वं तदेव मे रूपमिदं प्रपश्य ॥ ४९ ॥

सञ्जय उवाच :

इत्यर्जुनं वासुदेवस्तथोक्त्वा स्वकं रूपं दर्शयामास भूयः ।
आश्वासयामास च भीतमेनं भूत्वा पुनस्सौम्यवपुर्महात्मा ॥ ५० ॥

49. Be not uneasy, nor stupefied, seeing this form of Mine, fierce like this. Free from fear and pleased in mind, see again that same form of Mine (which I had before).

SAÑJAYA SAID:

50. Having spoken thus to Arjuna, Śrī Kṛishṇa once again showed His own form: and resuming again (an) agreeable form, the Great Soul comforted him, who was terrified.

Śrī Kṛishṇa is here stated to have shown His own form to Arjuna. Commentators take this to be the four-armed supernatural form in which Arjuna prayed Śrī Kṛishṇa to appear. According to the *Purāṇas*, Śrī Kṛishna was born with four hands, wielding the discus and the conch: at the request of His parents, He became a normal human child, but after the death of Kamsa, he is believed once again to have assumed the form in which He was born. So they explain that Śrī Kṛishṇa was usually of this form, and Arjuna wanted Him to appear in the form he was accustomed to. But I prefer to think, as I pointed out to you a few minutes back, that Arjuna could not command the courage to ask Śrī Kṛishṇa to transform Himself back to a human figure from the *viśva-rūpa*. It might well have seemed to him an irreverent, if not a blasphemous request. Yet, in response to this request, Śrī Kṛishṇa shows Himself to Arjuna only in His own human form. This means indeed a great deal more kindness than Arjuna had asked for. If we know how to submit our prayers to God in the right spirit, we will find God kinder than we expect. Such a view seems perfectly consistent with the context, but you may attach to it whatever value you please.

Let us also note here that it is easy for the invincible will of God to effect the transformation from the human form to

the *viśva-rūpa* and back again to the human form. As we saw, therefore, the transcendent greatness of God does not negative the possibility of incarnation.

अर्जुन उवाच :

दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन ।
इदानीमस्मि संवृत्तस्सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ॥ ५१ ॥

ARJUNA SAID:

51. O Janārdana, seeing this human form of Yours, agreeable (to look upon), I have, as it were, got back my mind and have come to my normal state.

Arjuna's delighted greetings induce Śrī Kṛishṇa to point out that it was not with any intention to frighten him that the *viśva-rūpa* was shown. *Janārdana* is generally understood to mean 'the destroyer of the wicked'. It can be easily seen that the epithet is quite appropriate here.

श्रीभगवानुवाच :

सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम ।
देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः ॥ ५२ ॥

ŚRĪ KṚISHṆA SAID:

52. Even the gods are always anxious to see this form of Mine, which is difficult to look at and which you have seen.

Seeing the *viśva-rūpa*, Arjuna was frightened and bewildered. Yet it was as a special favour that this form was shown to Arjuna. It is a form which even the gods do not easily see. They are always anxious to have a vision of it, but God has not blessed them with His grace. But as soon as Arjuna prayed for the vision, he had it. Let him therefore look upon his experience as a mark of divine favour.

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।
शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥ ५३ ॥

53. Not by the (study of the) *Vedas*, nor through penance, nor through (generous) gifts, nor yet by sacrifice, can I be seen, as you have seen Me.

The question arises: if none of the means outlined above can secure this divine favour, what can? I daresay you remember the statement of Pascal that God manifests Himself to those who love Him. The key by means of which the mystery of this universal form of the Lord can be unlocked is loving devotion. The sincere *bhakta* will find out, see and realise his God as Arjuna did.

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परन्तप ॥ ५४ ॥

54. By exclusive devotion (to Me alone), O Arjuna, can I be truly known, seen and entered into.

Arjuna is here addressed as *parantapa*, the terror (lit. burner) of his foes. And in *śloka 48*, he was called *Kuru-pravīra*, the great hero in the Kuru family. Perhaps it is no mere fancy to think that Śrī Kṛishṇa intended to address Arjuna in these contexts not so much as a person of martial heroism, but as one, who is capable of the heroism of *bhakti*.

We have learnt already that devotion may be divided between God and something else. In VII. *16* four types of devotees are mentioned, and of them, as you may recall, Śrī Kṛishṇa declares that the wise man, who is *nitya-yukta* or constantly absorbed in the worship of God, is the best. The devotees are there classified according to their motives. The afflicted man, the seeker after knowledge, and the man anxious to obtain wealth—all these become devoted to God. But their devotion is a means towards an end. In the case of the wise man, the end as well as the means is devotion. Śrī Kṛishṇa wants us to understand that any one, who is anxious to realise this vision, ought to become *eka-bhakta*, wholly and entirely devoted to God and God alone.

The three expressions, *jñātum*, *drashṭum* and *praveshṭum*, are full of significance in this context. To know is a mental process, conceptual rather than perceptual. However logically we may have arrived at a conclusion, we do not feel that it rests upon a basis of reality, until we verify it with the test of direct perception. What is derectly perceived through the senses seems more real than what is merely conceived in the mind. If what is conceived in the mind contradicts sense-data, we rely on the latter in preference to the former. Suppose you see in a dream a vision of a man with wings. You wake up and look around you and find no one of the sort. Will you not then feel that the vision you saw in the dream was unreal? That is, you place greater weight on your direct perception than on your mental conception. Therefore, what is known in the mind becomes better realised as true, when it is possible to subject it to the test of direct perception As a matter of fact, Arjuna wanted a direct perception of God. He said to Śrī Kṛishṇa: "You have taught me the royal secret that You are the one God, both immanent and transcendent at the same time. You have also described to me your *yoga* and your *vibhūtis*. I realise, as far as the mind can, the truth of it all. Still, for further verification, I want to see directly that lordly form of Yours." The teaching of Śrī Kṛishṇa in Chapters 7 to 10 enabled Arjuna to have a mental realisation of the nature of God and the relations of God to the universe. But he was not satisfied with this. He wanted to confirm his mental realisation by direct perception.

When Arjuna actually saw Śrī Kṛishṇa in His *viśva-rūpa*, what did he feel? He saw himself as a necessary, though infinitesimally small part of the mighty and wonderful vision before him. He realised how insignificant he was before that great vision, but at the same time he felt he was a part of that vision and not something separate and apart from it. He saw the armies of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas already in those terrible mouths, and he must have also seen himself somewhere there, perhaps sticking in the interspaces among those all-devouring fangs. What I want you to realise is that he did not feel himself separate from the object that he saw in front of him. In all our ordinary perceptions, we notice that the object perceived is different from the subject that perceives. Now suppose

I see a watch before me. I do not realise that the watch is a part of myself, nor that I am a part of the watch. I feel that the watch is different from me and that I am distinct from the watch. The perceiving agent is not a part of the perceived object. But consider the case of Arjuna seeing the *viśva-rūpa*. He related himself to the vision as a part of it. Imagine the watch that I spoke of becoming infinitely large. And suppose that, when I see it, I realise myself to be a tooth in one of its wheels. Then I might be feeling something like Arjuna. Arjuna not only saw the vision, but *entered into* it: he realised that he was a part of what he saw.

So, the meaning of the *viśva-rūpa* cannot be fully understood, if we do not understand that Arjuna first conceived, then saw and, in seeing, entered into God. It became possible for Arjuna to do this on account of his *bhakti*. Those who love God and are solely devoted to Him, can know Him, see Him, and become, as it were, part and parcel of Him. In the next *śloka*, Arjuna is given the commandment which he has to obey, if he, like a rational and intelligent being, is to put into practice what he has learned from the great vision. We shall take it into consideration in our next class.

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The eleventh chapter of the Gītā deals, as you know, almost wholly with the *viśvarūpa-darśana*, the vision in which the Lord manifested Himself to Arjuna as having the whole universe for His body. The nature of the vision was determined by the needs of Arjuna: he was shown what it was particularly important for him to see at that juncture. It was to resolve a conflict of duties that had arisen in the mind of Arjuna at the commencement of the war that the Gītā was taught to him. Śrī Kṛishṇa's main object was to induce Arjuna to fight. And the great vision was granted to Arjuna in order to convince him that it was his duty to fight. Accordingly, it is different in some details from similar visions

described in the *Mahābhārata*: it is unique because it is the outcome of a particular situation. The Lord manifests Himself in a fierce form as the Destroyer here in order to make Arjuna see that the warriors, who have assembled on the battlefield, are all destined to die, whether Arjuna fights or not. Śrī Kṛishṇa asks Arjuna to become merely an instrument in His hands for the work of destruction.

In dealing with this question, I drew your attention to the apparent contradiction that one might notice between the two ideas of pre-ordination by God and individual responsibility. We may ask: if an individual fails to do his duty, is it not because this has been pre-ordained? In answer to this, I tried to point out to you that the contradiction noticed is only apparent. You may remember the simile of the mighty engine to which we are called upon to relate ourselves. Its motive power is beyond our control. Still we have some freedom left to us in relating ourselves to the engine. We may relate ourselves harmoniously or in opposition to the machine The engine is mighty, and we are weak. If we oppose the machine, we cannot obstruct its working, but we may do infinite harm to ourselves. But if we relate ourselves harmoniously to it, we may be able to get some work out of it for our benefit. Irrespective of our relation to it, the machine goes on working. But the nature of this relation is of immense importance to us. Let us now think of the universe as a mighty engine, the engineer whereof is God and the motive power for which issues from the Creator of all things. And we in this world are compelled to adjust ourselves to it. Roughly, that is the situation.

We may not be able to say definitely what the purpose of the government of this universe is. God governs it, and none of us can claim to contribute anything of value to it. I have already told you that no single man, however great, is indispensable in the history of this world. When one such dies, the machinery of the universe is not seriously inconvenienced: it keeps on moving towards its appointed goal. This must enable us to see how insignificant we are all in relation to the great machinery of the universe. It is our own fate and destiny that depends on the nature of our adjustment to it. The goal of the universe is not of our planning.

We are free only in determining our salvation. The far-off divine event is solely determined by God.

It is with the purpose of enabling Arjuna to realise that he is nothing at all in the administrative machinery of the universe, and that the enemy host will die, whether he wields his Gāṇḍīva or not—it is for this that Śrī Kṛishṇa showed Himself to Arjuna in the fierce *viśva-rūpa*. Arjuna is asked to realise from the vision that the work undertaken and ordained by God cannot by hindered by him: he has no influence whatever on the policy and purpose of God. If he does his duty, he will derive good here and hereafter: and if he fails, he will suffer and not the universe Having in this manner undermined the basis of pride and selfishness through the vision of the *viśva-rūpa*, Śrī Kṛishṇa summarises in the last *śloka* of the chapter the lessons that Arjuna has to learn therefrom.

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तस्सङ्गवर्जितः ।
निर्वैरस्सर्वभूतेषु यस्य मामेति पाण्डव ॥ ५५ ॥

55. He who does My work, holds Me to be Supreme, is devoted to Me, is free from all (selfish) attachments, and is devoid of hatred in relation to all beings--he comes to Me, O Arjuna.

This verse is considered by almost all the commentators to be a very important one for the reason that they see herein the essence of the teaching given in the whole of the *Gītā*. Śaṅkarāchārya distinctly says so. First let us see how the teaching of this stanza can be derived naturally from the vision and then proceed to investigate how it contains in itself the essence of the whole of the *Gītā*.

Let us go back to the analogy of the engine. When Arjuna does his duty and relates himself harmoniously to the engine, he helps on its work. It may be that he does not help it to any great extent. For if an infinitesimal amount of energy is added to a store of infinite energy, the total quantity is not appreciably increased. Likewise, a similar amount of energy, when taken away from a store of infinite energy, does not appreciably lessen it. Put mathematically,

infinity plus an infinitesimal quantity is equal to infinity minus an infinitesimal quantity. But it is not the increase or decrease in the store of the energy that we have to notice here so much as the direction of the change. When a man does his duty, the infinite power is operated on by a process of addition: when he fails to do his duty, it is operated on by a process of subtraction. Now we can see in what way a person, who does his duty, can be looked upon as a fellow-worker with God. He is a fellow-worker with God, not because he achieves as much as God, but because the direction of his work is the same as that of God. It is in this sense that, in doing our duties, we become the doers of His work.

Secondly, we have to hold Him as the Supreme. After seeing the vision in which the whole of the universe is beheld as the body of a great and powerful being, who controls the creation, the sustentation and the destruction of all the beings therein, is it possible for one to think of a greater being? Really the most supreme conception of God that we have as men, who think with the aid of the knowledge that we acquire through the senses, is to think of Him as constituting the soul of the great universe in which we live. Even this does not of course enable us to know Him as He is. That is a task beyond human power. Language is inadequate for the purpose, and the mind comes away from Him feeling its own weakness. There must of necessity be some concretisation of our conception of God. It is impossible to conceive Him without some kind of necessary psychological anthropomorphism. Metaphor, analogy and all similar devices of expression are at our disposal only to enable us to realise the God, who otherwise is unrealisable. So, once we have seen the vision in which the whole universe appears as the body of the Great Lord, who is the enlivening soul within, looking after every one of its movements and being responsible for its very life,—it is quite self-evident that we cannot think of God in any other manner more complete or more comprehensive. Thus to think of God as the Supreme becomes inevitable to one, who has realised this vision.

Next, Śrī Kṛishṇa says that we must be lovingly devoted to Him, if we are to attain salvation. This also follows from the nature and meaning of the vision. If only we adjust

ourselves harmoniously to God's purpose, then He takes care of our progress and welfare, and makes our long pilgrimage to perfection easy and comfortable. So if we understand how exceedingly God is worthy of all the love and devotion that we can bestow on Him, we naturally become devoted unto God. Thus this devotion also is a necessary consequence of the realisation of God as the soul of the universe.

Another essential qualification for the seeker after salvation is here declared to be freedom from all selfish attachments. If we seek to understand the basis of selfishness, we will find that it is always due to the feelings of *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*, *I-ness* and *mine-ness*. It is the dual feeling that one is the agent and that one is entitled to enjoy the fruits of one's achievement which gives rise to selfishness. If we get rid of these two feelings and do our duty, thinking that we are not the agents in relation to what we do and have no right to the fruits of our labour, we will be free from selfish attachment. It is with the object of enabling Arjuna to understand that no man really achieves anything of his own accord, and that therefore no one is entitled to the fruits of his labour, that Śrī Kṛishṇa showed His *viśva-rūpa*. Every one has to feel that he is a mere property owned by God. There is only one Proprietor in the universe. We cannot own property, being ourselves the property of God. So, if we realise that all the power and energy manifested in the universe through whatsoever agency and for whatsoever purpose comes from Him, who is the Fountain of all power and the Source and Destiny of the universe, then none of us can have any title to feel proud that we have achieved this or that. Still less are we entitled to claim as our own the results of any particular action that may have been achieved through us. Śrī Kṛishṇa in His universal form tells Arjuna: "Whether you take up your bow and kill your enemies or not, they are dead already. You have realised this in the vision. Can you not see that you are not any thing like an efficient factor in the administrative machinery of the universe? You are not the agent of what you do. Your work in relation to the machinery of the universe is calculated to tell effectively on you and not on the turn-out of work by the machine. Your work is of some value only in relation to yourself. It can make or mar you, secure you salvation or plunge you still deeper in the ocean of *saṃsāra*, the recurring cycle of birth and death. An infinitesimal

power may be effective in relation to an infinitely weak being, but not in relation to an infinitely strong engine. Looking at your work from the standpoint of the destiny of the universe and the aim of God, you will see that it is practically of no value. If you do your duty, you save yourself. Otherwise you are undone. But whether you do your duty or not, the destiny of the universe is safe in My hands." When this lesson is learnt, there is no room for the slightest selfishness. Thus freedom from attachment is also a direct consequence of understanding the meaning of the vision.

Lastly, freedom from hatred to all beings is insisted upon. Freedom from attachment is itself sufficient to kill all hatred. Men hate one another because they are selfish, Each feels that his interests would be endangered, if others are allowed to progress as they like. In the absence of this feeling, can there be any room for hatred? It is not merely you, who are called upon to relate yourself harmoniously to the government of the universe. There are thousands and thousands in the same position. God is governing the universe not considering you alone, but also every being therein. He is the father of all things, animate as well as inanimate. He is the source and protector of all. Our own estimate of our greatness and effectiveness is not to be taken seriously into consideration in the government of the universe. Hence Śrī Kṛishṇa tells Arjuna: "You are to become merely a *nimitta* for the realisation of what has already been ordained."

Thus Arjuna is made to realise that he is not the only being called upon to adjust himself to the administrative machinery of the universe. There are innumerable others called upon to do likewise. Hence there is room for struggle and competition, and in the strenuousness of the struggle, the means is elevated and the end forgotten. Herein lies the reason for all the hatred in the world. Doing what I think to be in my interests clashes with what another thinks to be in his interests. We forget that it is in our true interests to perform our duties without attachment. Even between those who are not selfish in the ordinary sense of the term, there may arise rivalry in the performance of individual duties. The end is forgotten, and each wants to excel the other This feeling must therefore be carefully avoided. Every man in the universe ought to feel that every other man in the

universe is entitled to relate himself to the government of God quite as harmoniously and freely and comfortably as he wishes to relate himself there to. If Arjuna, for instance, realises that he is entitled to relate himself harmoniously with the divine plan quite as much as the common soldier in the ranks and no more, he will no longer feel a sense of competitive rivalry between himself and any other person. It may even be that the common soldier is more successful in his purpose than the great general: even then the latter ought to feel no disappointment and no jealousy, but proceed further in the performance of *nishkāmya-karma*. Therefore let us all realise that our title to work in the universe is neither more nor less than that of others Let us not therefore hate our fellow beings in the universe. We are all children of the same Father. He is not a partial Father. In His eyes all the children are alike and deserve the same kindliness and the same favour. Let us therefore banish all rivalry and work out our lives in peace and harmony with others. And in working for our salvation, let us also help others to achieve theirs. "Whoever is like this," says Śrī Kṛishṇa, "comes unto Me." He obtains his heritage at the hands of the Father of all.

We have now seen that the qualifications enumerated for the aspirant after salvation are all implied in the vision. Let us now try to understand how this *śloka* gives the essence of the teaching contained in the Gītā. As you all know, Arjuna is particularly taught in the Gītā to do his duty irrespective of consequences. His desire to adopt the life of renunciation, while called upon as a soldier to fight in a just war, is condemned as unnatural, unmanly and improper. To convince Arjuna of this, Śrī Kṛishna adopts a course of reasoning somewhat as follows.

The soul is immortal. What is mortal about man is his body, which is mutable, and which grows, decays and dies. The first great lesson that one has to learn from the immortality of the soul is not to make much of death. For after all, death, like birth, is a natural process. In birth the soul gets into a material embodiment. Wherefrom and how it enters therein are problems that we need not discuss now. In death, the soul gets out of it. If getting into a body is natural for the soul, getting out of it is equally so. So death in itself is not a serious thing. Then Arjuna is told why this immorta

soul is imprisoned within a decaying and dying body. It is the influence of *karma* which makes the soul subject to incarnation. When the soul, which is by itself free and of the nature of pure intelligence, becomes involved in the recurring cycle of birth and death through *karma*, the material embodiment, into which it gets, acts really as a prison an places limitations on its freedom and power. Those of us who know how often our animal propensities overpower the promptings of our higher nature, can realise the extent of these limitations. The ape and the tiger in man, they say, often show themselves to be even more powerful than the man in man. Then Śrī Kṛishṇa points out to Arjuna that the *summum bonum* which he has to work for is the achievement of his self-realisation. If the soul is pure, free and of the nature of perfect intelligence, and if by entering into a body its purity and freedom and intelligence are impaired, then our duty is clearly to work for the realisation of our own selves. The obstacle standing in our way is the influence of *karma*. If we can get over this, we can enfranchise our souls.

How are we to be rid of this burden of *karma*? Following the *Upaṇishads*, which declare that work of itself does not cling to man and cause bondage, Śrī Kṛishṇa teaches that it is not work, but the spirit with which it is done, that settles one's *karma*. Work done without selfish attachment of any kind is incapable of creating bondage for the soul. Arjuna is therefore told: "Seeing that work, done dispassionately and without desire of any kind, cannot create the compelling force of *karma*, it does not become you to run away from the battlefield, saying that work is responsible for the bondage of the soul. This is a wrong view. Take care of the motive of your work, and you take care of the freedom of your soul."

What ought to be the motive? It must be freedom from the ideas of *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*. You are never entitled to give up your work. When you fail to do your duty, you create an undesirable *karma*, which will tend to imprison your soul. You are not to run away from the battle-field, and retire into solitude trying to keep on doing nothing. As long as the soul is in a material embodiment, subject to physiological and psychological laws, so long it is impossible for any one to be doing absolutely nothing. Passive inaction is impossible in the very nature of things. If that were possible, the manufacture

of *karma* through the performance of work, can be stopped by doing nothing. But as that is impossible, the only alternative is to do the work that falls to our lot in life and see that it does not create the force of *karma*. And this, we have been told, can be achieved, if we free our mind from *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*, while doing our work.

Having taught Arjuna how *karma* may be circumvented, Śrī Kṛishṇa next explains the ways in which men might lead their lives without the feeling of selfish attachment. It is one thing to teach a rational and consistent doctrine : it is a far different thing to demonstrate its practicability. Hence Śrī Kṛishṇa takes pains to show how His teaching might be applied in practice by all sorts of men. If we argue philosophically about God and our position in the universe, we cannot help realising that we are all the property of God, who is the only Proprietor in the universe. What am I ? What is this universe ? Is there a God at all ? Work out these questions as a philosopher. Then you will realise that you are not entitled to property of any kind ; and in view of the relations that exist between you and God, you will not forget to continue doing the work of your life. Now let such a philosopher be asked to apply to his life the principles which he has thought out. Even the very greatest thinker may fail, when the temptations are strong. It is certainly not wrong to seek the support of philosophy to enable us to lead the proper kind of life, but it is not always safe. The *jñāna-mārga* is really the best from one standpoint, for it is based on a complete realisation of the truth : but to depend entirely on philosophy for the conduct of our lives is to depend on a support, which may leave us in the lurch, when we need it most. It is therefore unsuitable for most people.

Śrī Kṛishṇa says that the *karma-mārga* is perhaps likely to suit a greater number of men. According to it, we are asked to do our duty because it is our duty. Men with no faith in God, but with an abiding faith in duty are known in history. They have found it hard to realise that God exists, but the responsibility of duty they have felt. Now such men have lived, are living and will continue to spring up. It is the idea of duty that makes their lives worthy and valuable. The *karma* itself becomes their sole end. The adoption of such a plan of life is well calculated to circumvent *karma*. But even this path,

Śrī Kṛishṇa points out, is not easy of adoption. Only a few people of a peculiar temperament can carry it out. Therefore Śrī Kṛishṇa teaches: "Do all that you have to do as your duty without the idea that your soul impels you to it. Try to attribute all that you do as an embodied being to the impulses of your material nature." Can we not guess how much the nature of man's work in the universe would have changed, if the physiology of the body had been different and if, for instance, man had no hunger? Much of what we do is easily seen to be determined by our physical needs. We have to hold that the soul in itself is not the actual agent in the performance of our duties, but that our physical nature is responsible for them. But this plan makes our work in life assume a somewhat undignified character: it enables us, however, to get rid of selfishness.

More than all these, there is another *mārga* which will help us to attain the salvation of *moksha*. And that is, to realise that in doing our duty we are becoming fellow-workers with God He is the governor of the universe, and its destiny is controlled by Him. As individual factors in the working of the mighty administrative machinery of the universe, we are in ourselves nothing. Nevertheless, as we are placed within that universe, we are compiled to relate ourselves thereto: and upon the nature of the kind of relation that we choose depends our salvation or ruin. It is this path which is described as the *bhakti-mārga*. Yet another way to salvation will be pointed out later on, the *prapatti-mārga* or the way of self-surrender. It is sometimes considered an extremely modified form of *bhakti*. It teaches us to surrender ourselves completely to the will of God and to pray that God alone should be the sole means of salvation. Some hold that it is a kind of attitude receptive of God's grace. To the followers of *prapatti*, all work becomes service unto God and all knowledge becomes related to self-realisation and God-attainment. The loving fervour with which they seek God is *bhakti*. God alone being the Supreme unto whose will they have resigned themselves, they will think that all is for God and nothing is for themselves. Very naturally they will strive to see that everything appertaining to the individual soul operates in the direction in which God has ordained that it should operate, so as to harmonise with the plan and purpose of the divine government of the universe. Later on, we will have to consider these points in greater

detail. I have made a brief resume of the central teachings of the way of self-surrender here in order to suggest that not merely *bhakti*, but *prapatti* as well, may be implied by the *śloka* which we have been studying so far.

We are now in a position to sum up the teachings of the eleventh chapter. In Chapters 7 to 10, Śrī Kṛishṇa has dealt exhaustively with the nature and attributes of God. Therein we are taught how a free and unprejudiced examination of the universe, when combined with the felt need of humanity for religion and the authority that is required to make duty obligatory, enables us to rise from Nature to Nature's God. Some details relating to this are discussed in the chapter that follows, and in the ninth, the nature of God as both transcendent and immanent at the same time is explained. Thereafter, Śrī Kṛishṇa seeks to bring home to our minds His omnipresence by a description of His *yoga* and *vibhūtis*. Finally, He declares that He stands supporting these worlds by only a part of Himself.

With this the teaching relating to the nature and attributes of God may be said to have been completed. Arjuna is duly impressed by what he has been taught. He says: "You have taught me that You are the source of all power in the universe. Everything proceeds from You and everything returns to You. You have also explained to me that You are so great as not merely to pervade the universe, but to transcend it. I am no longer a sceptic. I have full faith in Your words." Yet he has one last desire to verify the teachings he has learnt. Like the scientist, who wants to subject to the test of experiment a theory that he has arrived at by reasoning from known premises, Arjuna wants, if possible, to *realise* directly the greatest and most inclusive of all theories. He is not content with conceiving God as the Soul and Lord of the universe. He is anxious to see God directly as the omnipresent In-dweller, who transcends at the same time the universe which He sustains.

In response to this prayer of his, Śrī Kṛishna is pleased to give a gracious reply. Suddenly Arjuna is granted divine vision, the power to pierce the veil of *māyā* and see into the heart of things. For a brief while, he sees the *viśva-rūpa*, the universal form of the Lord, all-pervasive and infinite,

resplendent and glorious, a reservoir of measureless power. In short, it was ineffable, incapable of being described. One point, however, strikes him with special force. The *rūpa* is terrible and fierce, of a fearful grandeur, which he did not expect to see. It appeared to be swallowing up all the belligerent armies on the field through innumerable mouths. A cosmic conflagration appeared to be going on. And in this strange and awe-inspiring form, the Lord addressed Arjuna and said: "I am the all-destroying Death, engaged in the work of destruction. I have decreed that this war shall take place, and that countless warriors shall die on both sides. With you or without you, the war shall be. It is left to you only to choose whether you will do your duty and play your part in this just war, by becoming a mere instrument in My hands for the work of destruction, or whether you will betray your trust and fly from your post of duty in a moment of weak emotion thereby forging fresh fetters for your soul."

This brought us to a consideration of the place of individual responsibility in the divine scheme of things. We then saw that man is free only in a limited sphere. Over the plan and purpose of God in the government of the universe, he has no authority. He cannot alter them nearer his heart's desire. But he can discern, however dimly, the direction in which God is guiding the stream of history, and he is free either to relate himself harmoniously thereto or to oppose it. in the former case, he sets himself on the path to salvation. In the latter case, he involves himself more securely than before in the entangling net of *karma*. Arjuna therefore has the choice of doing his allotted duty in the war, or of forsaking that duty in a moment of false sentiment and weak emotion.

Stunned at the sight of the mighty vision, Arjuna begs Śrī Kṛishṇa to resume once again His agreeable form. Responding to Arjuna's prayer, Śrī Kṛishṇa points out that it was not His intention to strike terror into his heart. He had in fact bestowed a great favour on Arjuna, which few else had obtained. Not the gods, nor the ascetics with their fierce austerities, nor yet the performers of sacrifices and the donors of priceless gifts in charity had seen this great vision. Only those, who are devoted to God exclusively and continually,

can win the grace of God in so signal a manner. Only thus can any one know, see and enter into God.

You can now easily observe how the following *śloka* from Yāmunāchārya's *Gītārtha-saṅgraha* brings out clearly the main points of the foregoing discussion.

एकादशे स्वेयाथात्म्यसाक्षात्कारावलोकनम् ।
दत्तमुक्तं विदिप्राप्त्योर्भक्त्येकोपायता तथा ॥

In the eleventh (chapter) a direct vision of the true nature of God, as He is in Himself, is granted (to Arjuna and) it is taught that the one and only means of knowing and realising God is *bhakti*.

Special stress is here laid on the *viśva-rūpa* as revealing the true nature of God. This, we may note in passing, is not in consonance with the views of the *advaita* philosophy, which holds that the Absolute without attributes is the one and only reality. According to this point of view, the *viśva-rūpa* represents only the most adequate conception of *Īśvara*, the personal God, who is only as real as the phenomenal universe and our sense of individuality. Secondly, Yāmunāchārya points out that Arjuna saw the vision: it was no hallucination. Then the importance of *bhakti* is brought out as the sole means for knowing and realising God. The special value of *bhakti* arises out of the fact that it is the easiest path to *moksha*. In the twelfth chapter, whose study we shall begin next week, Śrī Kṛishṇa teaches that, though God can be attained in many ways, yet of them all, the way of devotion is the best for the reason that it is the easiest.

CHAPTER XII

liii

You may remember that we concluded the study of the eleventh chapter last time. I then tried to explain to you how the last *śloka* of the chapter teaches the central lesson of the *Gītā*. In the twelfth chapter, which we shall proceed to study now, you will find detailed instructions for leading a life in accordance with the teaching given in that verse (XI.55).

अर्जुन उवाच :

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ १ ॥

ARJUNA SAID :

1. Of the devotees, who worship You, constantly devoted in this manner, and those who (worship) the Unmanifested and the Indestructible—who are the best knowers of *yoga*?

In this stanza, Arjuna refers to two types of worshippers and asks Śrī Kṛishṇa to inform Him, as to who are the better knowers of *yoga*. (Of course, it is the *yoga* of devotion, which is referred to here.) There is practical unanimity of opinion among all students of the *Gītā* as regards one class of worshippers referred to herein. Those who are described as worshipping Śrī Kṛishṇa, "constantly devoted in this manner,"—are generally understood to be the followers of the plan of life outlined in the last verse of the previous chapter. In regard to the other class, however, there is considerable difference of opinion among the authoritative commentators. You will notice that my translation describes these as the worshippers of the Unmanifested and Indestructible God. This is one view and has behind it the authority of Śaṅkarāchārya. Rāmānujāchārya holds that the second line of this verse refers to those who merely seek self-realisation as opposed to God-realisation: *akshara* and *avyakta* are thus descriptive of the individual soul, which is not perceived by the senses, and which is, of course, eternal. Madhvāchārya thinks that the reference is to Lakshmī, the consort of Vishṇu, and quotes some passages from the *śruti* to justify his position. It appears to me, however, that the context lends support to the view that two types of worshippers of the one and only God are mentioned here.

Let us now seek to understand the full significance of Arjuna's question. We saw how the commandments of XI.55 follow naturally from a right understanding of the meaning of the *viśva-rūpa*, wherein the Lord manifested Himself as having the whole universe for His body. Being the enlivening soul

within, He is immanent in the universe: and He is therefore realisable and lovable To look upon God as the Unmanifested and Indestructible is, however, different. That means that we have to regard Him as wholly transcendental and outside the range of phenomena. He being thus unmanifested, ever unchangeable and indestructible, it is impossible to realise Him. All that we can know of this non-phenomenal God is that we cannot know Him.

Now the object of all philosophy is to endeavour to realise God as He is in Himself and formulate the principles on which we ought to relate ourselves to Him. If God in His transcendental and non phenomenal aspect is inconceivable by the mind of man and incapable of being described by any of the languages of this world, the question naturally rises whether the worship of this aspect of God is the true one, or whether the worship of God conducted in any other manner, in which we look upon Him as manifest, try to realise Him in some way and attempt to describe Him in some manner, is the true one. Judged from the standpoint of absolute truth, there can be no two opinions on the subject. Absolute truth really rests on the side of the indescribable and indestructible God, with this qualification, however, that the realisable God is no figment of our imagination. The unrealisable God cannot serve as a help to weak men, and we have already been told that it is no mere fancy to look upon God as both realisable and lovable. If the *viśva-rūpa* of God is based on truth: if we may consider the whole of the universe to be the body of God, who constitutes its soul: and if from a study of the *yoga* and *vibhūti* of God as described in the tenth chapter, we realise that everything that is full of power, glory or any other kind of excellence whatsoever, springs from a part of the power and glory and excellence of God :—then surely we cannot say that the worthip of the realisable and lovable God is based on anything but the truth.

Even the worship of God as unrealisable and inconceivable cannot be said to be perfectly true. For we have been told over and over again that God is not merely transcendent, but immanent as well. If God, who transcends the universe, also infills it at the same time, we cannot look upon Him merely as unmanifested, transcendental and unrealisable. In short, however we endeavour to realise God, we find our realisation imperfect. Whether we magnify the transcendental nature or

the realisable aspect of God, in either case, there is only the realisation of a partial truth. And man is capable of only this the complete realisation of God as He is being beyond his powers.

Therefore Arjuna asks: which is the better form of worship to adopt?

श्रीभगवानुवाच :

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ २ ॥

ŚRĪ KṚISHṆA SAID:

2. Those are considered by Me to be the best of devotees, who, being constantly devoted and endowed with supreme faith, worship Me with a mind fixed on Me.

Of all the teachers known to the history of religion, Śrī Kṛishṇa is perhaps the most charitable. He never speaks lightly of even partial realisations of the truth. In this and the succeeding verses, He awards praise with an equal hand to both classes of worshippers. Only He takes care to explain that those who follow the advice given in XI.55 tread an easier path than others. The praise that is bestowed on the devotees described in this stanza does not imply that other types of worshippers are pursuing a vain and impossible ideal. Śrī Kṛishṇa expressly guards us against the possibility of this error in the next *śloka*.

Let us now proceed to understand the characteristics of the devotion described herein. It is directed to God conceived as realisable and lovable, to Śrī Kṛishṇa Himself as a *vibhūti* of God. By showing Himself in the *viśva-rūpa*, Śrī Kṛishṇa demonstrated His extraordinary powers, and this must have enabled us to see how He is in a special manner a *vibhūti* of God. In other words He is an *avatāra*, an incarnation of the indescribable, indestructible God as one who is realisable and lovable. So those who worship Him in this manner as manifesting the *vibhūti* of God in a more than common measure, as the *avyakta* and the *akshara* rendered

intelligible to the human understanding, are *yukta-tama*, most devoted to Him. Of the other class of worshippers, Śrī Kṛishṇa now proceeds to speak.

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।
सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥ ३ ॥
सन्नियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ ४ ॥

3-4. Those, however, who worship the indestructible, indescribable, unmanifested (God), who is present everywhere, unthinkable, transcendent, immovable and eternal,—having subdued all their senses and looking alike on all things—they, intent on the welfare of all beings, reach Me alone.

To worship God, looking upon Him as transcendental and unrealisable, it is necessary to control the activities of the senses. When dealing with the practice of *yoga* as described in the Gītā, I remember to have drawn your attention to a statement in the *Upanishads* to the effect that the tendency of our senses is always to function outwards. The practice of *yoga* is intended to turn this outward tendency inside so that we might realise our own selves. I may quote again the famous passage from the *Kaṭhopanishad* (iv. *1*), which says: "The Self-born One so made the senses that they might work from within outwards. Therefore man sees the external objects and not the internal self. However a certain heroic person, wishing to attain immortality, turned his eye inwards and saw the internal self." Though all those who adopt the practice of *rāja-yoga* do not succeed in seeing their internal selves, none fails to be benefited to some extent or other. There is no such thing as complete failure here. For the discipline of *rāja-yoga* is primarily devised to enable men to make the will stronger than the misleading senses. Now whatever plan of unselfish performance of duty you adopt and whatever type of worship you choose to follow, it is necessary to have this will-power strengthened. Even the followers of the *bhakti-mārga*, the worshippers of the realisable, manifest *avatāra*, stand in need of this. You can easily see how indispensable it is for the worship of God in

His transcendental aspect to conquer the distraction of the senses.

Let us note that the worshippers of the *avyakta* regard God not merely as indescribable, unthinkable and transcendental, but also as *sarvatra-ga*, all-pervading. Thus they cannot help realising that God is in every being in the universe and that every being in the universe is in God. Feeling thus, they cannot make any distinction between one being and another. To them all must be alike: they must see their God in the dog and the *chaṇḍāla* quite as readily as they see Him in the elephant and the wise man. They must feel that every being has God for its support, even as each of them has. Now it is one thing to know theoretically that all are equal to one another, as all are in God and God is in all. It is quite a different thing to realise that truth in practical life. A mere conviction that you ought not to make any distinction between the dog and the elephant or the Brahmin and the *chaṇḍālā* is of no use; it must transform conduct. If a belief in the equality of all beings, arising out of the interpenetration of every atom in the universe by God, does not tell upon conduct, it is futile. Reason does not save man so much as conduct.

When the mind is clear and calm, free from excitement and anxiety, we can realise the truth in its bare condition. But it is a different matter altogether to put this principle into practice day by day and hour by hour in our lives. Śrī Kṛishṇa requires us not merely to realise as a matter of intellectual conviction that all beings in the universe are equal, but also to see that this conviction actuates our conduct. And if we ask how this may best be done, the answer is that we must be constantly devoted to secure the welfare of all. Śrī Kṛishṇa has already told us that once we realise that God is in all and all are in Him, it becomes a matter of duty on our part to look upon the sorrows and miseries of others as our own. It is only when we work to remove the sufferings of others as earnestly as our own, that we can be regarded as having put this great truth into practice. The idea of equality is realised in practice only by doing good to all.

Notice that Śrī Kṛishṇa lays particular stress on the conduct that is befitting a man, who worships the *akshara* and the *avyakta*. Whether you worship God in this manner or as

a more readily conceivable *vibhūti* does not matter, so long as your worship tells upon your conduct. The philosopher, who thinks in his closet and does not care to work out his philosophy in practical life, may add to the store of the intellectual wisdom of the world, but he certainly does not add much to the chances of his own salvation. If he is to save himself, he must guide his conduct on the principles of his thought. Philosophers, with their minds directed towards the transcendental God, are apt to consider the intellectual realisation of truth as all in all. This intellectual realisation is certainly good as far as it goes, but it does not go very far: the philosopher must leave his comfortable armchair, and work as a man among men, devoted to the good of all, rich and poor, high and low.

The epithets 'indescribable', 'indestructible' and others that I have here explained as referring to God in His transcendental aspect, are understood by Rāmānujāchārya and Madhvāchārya to describe the individual self and Lakshmī respectively. While the general sense of most of these epithets is retained by all commentators and only their application is differently explained, there is considerable difference of opinion over even the interpretation of the word *kūṭastha*. Śaṅkarāchārya gives two alternative meanings. *Kūṭa*, he observes, may mean a thing which is good to all appearance, but is evil within. Thus it may refer to *māyā*, the great illusion, which is the seed of *samsāra* and full of evil at the core. *Kūṭastha* is the Lord who is seated within the *māyā* as its witness. Or it may mean 'remaining like a heap'. A later writer explains this as referring to a mountain, which is a heap of stones, and which for all practical purposes may be regarded as immutable and eternal. According to Rāmānujāchārya *kūṭastha* is that which is common to all beings—the individual soul which is found in gods, men, etc. Madhvāchārya understands it to mean 'seated in the skies'. Now, *kūṭa* is generally understood in the sense of an eminence, especially a mountain-peak. *Kūṭastha* may therefore mean 'standing on a peak', that is, high above *prakṛiti*, transcendental, away and apart from the universe. Or it may mean 'standing like a peak', firm, unshakable, immovable. When applied to God, the term is sometimes understood as referring to the *Pūrva Purusha*, the Ancient Soul, who forms, as it were, the common foundation of all the individual souls. As you

may have noticed, I have translated *kūṭastha* as 'transcendental', a sense which seems to be well supported by the context.

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥ ५ ॥

5. There is greater difficulty for those, whose minds are attached to the Unmanifested. For the path of the Unmanifested is reached with difficulty by those who are embodied.

In answer to Arjuna's question, Śrī Kṛishṇa replies that the worship of God in any of His *vibhūtis* as well as the worship of God in His trancendental aspect, leads to the same goal. In either case, the worshippers attain unto God. There is no difference so far as the goal is concerned: but the two paths differ in respect of their difficulty for the worshipper. The path of the Unmanifested, it is here stated, can only be adopted with difficulty by those who are embodied. We must pay particular attention to the phrase, 'by those who are embodied'. As long as the soul of man is within a material body and is subject to the influence of *prakṛiti*, it cannot realise any thing which is *a-prākṛita*, other than phenomenal. All that we can say of such a thing is that it is not this, not that and so on. What else it is, we are unable to say. If we try to describe it, we bring it within the field of phenomena: for all that we can think of and describe must fall necessarily within the *prākṛita-prapañcha*, the phenomenal universe. Hence, as long as the soul is confined within a body, it cannot rise above the limitations of matter.

The question may well be asked: is not the attempt to worship the unrealisable God trying to do something which is in the nature of things impossible? I cannot say that Indian teachers grant that it is absolutely impossible. They say that, if we succeed in the practice of *rāja-yoga* and get into the state of *samādhi*, we can realise our own selves and the God within us. Then and then only may we rise above the limitations of matter. It is only those who can get into the state of *samādhi* that can adopt the worship of the transcendental God. Others cannot. If a man develops his will-power through the practice of *yoga* to such an extent as to make his

body nothing at all in relation to his soul, then he can break the fetters which confine his soul. Ordinary men, therefore, cannot practise this religion. For let us remember that Śrī Kṛishṇa has told us that, out of the many who practise *yoga* for the sake of self-realisation, only a few succeed. And even among those who have realised their own selves, only a small minority attain to the next higher stage of God-realisation (VII. 3). So, for the majority of mankind, the *avyaktā gati* is full of difficulties. Śrī Kṛishṇa proceeds therefore to describe the easier way.

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि सन्न्यस्य मत्पराः ।
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥ ६ ॥
तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।
भवामि न चिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥ ७ ॥

6-7. As regards those, however, O Arjuna, who, dedicating all their actions to Me and holding Me as supreme, worship Me with a devotion directed to nothing else, and whose minds are fixed on Me—I lift them up before long from the fatal ocean of recurring births and deaths.

In these two verses, Śrī Kṛishṇa describes the worship of God in one of His *vibhūtis*. This is more easily accomplished than the meditation on the *avyakta*. The worshipper is asked first of all to dedicate all his acts to God. He must consider that every act which he does, secular or religious, is done for the sake of God. Please mark the facility with which this precept can be carried out in practice as contrasted with the subjugation of senses, that is required of the follower of the *avyaktā gati*. If you are asked to do certain specified acts and to refrain from doing certain other specified acts as a part of your religious discipline, you become conscious of severe limitations upon your thought and conduct. But the task of regulating your life in the faith that you are carrying out the work of God in all that you do from moment to moment, is comparatively easier. Slowly but steadily this will make you self-restrained; and your progress to a life of purity and selflessness will be accomplished gradually and imperceptibly. We have already seen that in the *bhakti-mārga*, the devotee is

said to acquire *vairāgya* or detachment through love or *anurāga*. It is thus that detachment springs from attachment, when the latter is directed to God. In fact, the way of *bhakti* is said to be easier than any other path for the reason that herein all human impulses and tendencies are not checked or curbed, but given free scope to act. Only a Godward direction is given to them gradually.

Sometimes this process is compared to the taming of a wild horse. When it is first broken in, sheer restraint will not succeed. As soon as you jump on its back, it will begin to stamp and kick. The wisest course now for you will be to allow it to do its worst, while keeping your seat on its back. It will rage and stamp and kick and run wildly about in its attempts to dislodge you, but after a time it will get tired and submit to your control. Likewise, it is pointed out, love and attachment are not easily restrained. Let us therefore make God the object of all our attachment and love. When we are attached to a worthy object, unworthy objects cease to attract us. Even in the realm of human relationships we frequently see how love for a worthy person weans us from unworthy attachments. When therefore our love is directed to God, who is the fountain-head of all excellence and the treasure-house of all auspicious qualities, how much more effective it must be in regulating our conduct aright! And it is not even necessary for you to love God: you may hate Him or curse Him. Any strong and intense emotional tie between you and God, whatever its nature, will soon free you from selfish attachment to all other objects. In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, even Kamsa is said to have seen the whole world as pervaded by Śrī Kṛishṇa in the intensity of his fear and hate. There have been *bhaktas*, who have grown angry with God and cursed Him, in addition to those who have loved God and praised Him. So make God the object of whatever feeling may be predominant in your mind, anger or hatred, love or friendship. You will then find that all the feelings which ordinarily forge bondage for you will help you to become free from all selfish attachment: and this in turn will enable you to attain the salvation of *moksha*.

Notice the expression, *mayyāveśitachetasām*. It means "those whose thoughts are entirely concentrated on Me". But the word *āveśa* conveys a suggestion which may be pointed out here. You have surely heard of possession by evil spirits, of

men and women doing things utterly incongruous with their normal character under the supposed bidding of a diabolical agency. Well, you must be 'possessed' by God in this sense. You must become, as it were, God-intoxicated and transform your personality under the influence of your devotional fervour. To those who live their lives in God in this manner, Śrī Kṛishṇa gives the promise of swift succour. Thus the way of devotion is seen to be easy to follow: in addition to this, it leads its followers to the goal sooner than any other path.

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥ ८ ॥

8. Fix your attention on Me alone. Direct your discriminatory intelligence towards Me. Thereafter you will live in Me alone. (Of this, there need be) no doubt.

If we direct our attention and intelligence to God in this manner, and become, as it were, possessed by Him, then our salvation is near at hand. For no matter what we do, we will not be creating any *karma*. All our actions will be done at His prompting. And while working, we will be feeling that we are doing His work and not our own. We will in fact be living in God, having risen over the bondage of matter.

The worship of God in one of His *vibhūtis* is the way of love. It is easy to adopt and leads us to the goal sooner than any other way can. We need not repress deep-seated human impulses in following this path. We can be human and indulge in human feelings and emotions. Only we have to make God the object of all our feelings. When this is done, we will be weaned from attachment to all other things, and become unselfish, almost without knowing it. And this achievement of selflessness sets us on the royal road to salvation. However we achieve this, whether by the worship of God in one of His *vibhūtis* or by looking upon God as trancendental, we will reach the goal of all human endeavour. But the worship of God in one of His *vibhūtis* through the path of devotion is easier to follow. And because of the weakness of humanity, it is really the best path for us. In the verses that follow,

Śrī Kṛishṇa gives us a series of graded instructions, taking into consideration all the weaknesses that flesh is heir to. He tries to make our Godward journey as easy as possible. As it is already late, please allow me to take these up for study next week.

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In our last class, we tried to understand Śrī Kṛishṇa's explanation in regard to the ease and facility with which the path of devotion may be followed, as contrasted with the *jñāna-mārga*. Worship, you were told, is largely dependent on the power of realisation that men possess, and we can realise only what lies within the phenomenal universe. What transcends this is beyond our power of realisation. Thus it may be seen that the kind of worship which has something realisable for its object is more easily accomplished than that which concerns itself with God in His transcendental, unrealisable aspect. Now, because God in His transcendental aspect is unrealisable, we must not rush to the conclusion—as I pointed out to you—that the more easily accomplished manner of realisation involves any kind of compromise with truth. We have been taught that God is both transcendent and immanent. If one aspect of God can be realised by us and the other cannot, it does not follow that the aspect we can realise is any the less real.

It is the same old story of the shield, one side of which is visible and the other not. But that it has a side, which is invisible, is positively certain. Although we do not see this side, we are satisfied that it exists. In the circumstances, how are we justified in saying that the invisible side of the shield is truer or more real than the side which we see? So I venture to think that we have no means whatever to determine whether any one of the two aspects of God is nearer the truth than the other. The transcendence and immanence of God are like the two sides of the shield. Both are parts of His essential nature. But one of these aspects is readily realisable. Though, as we have seen, it is irrelevant to ask which aspect of God is truer, the question, however, may well be raised: which of these two aspects of God should we have as the object of our

worship? Śrī Kṛishṇa recommends to us the worship of God in one of His *vibhūtis* on the ground that it is easier for us to follow. Thus we have no authority to hold that the worship of the transcendental God is nearer the truth than that of the immanent God. You may adopt the former, if you can conduct the worship successfully. But of course the latter is easy to follow and more adapted to the limited powers of the majority of men. The choice is left to you.

Today you will find that Śrī Kṛishṇa proceeds further in pointing out the greatness of the *bhakti-mārga*. Being easier than any other way of approach to God, it is the worthier means for the attainment of *moksha* by weak humanity. Our teachers often say that, in judging the worthiness of a path to salvation, we have to attach great importance to the difficulties involved in the discipline. Our criterion must be: the easier the path, the better it is for us. Accordingly Śrī Kṛishṇa takes note of every difficulty in the practice of devotion and suggests alternatives or remedies. You may recollect that the last verse which we studied stated that we must direct our attention and intelligence ceaselessly to God, become in fact so much God-absorbed and God-engrossed as to become a part of God. Now even this discipline can be seen to be full of difficulties. To have God as the object of all our mental activities is no easy matter. It requires a very strong will, that cannot be easily swerved from its purpose. Not many of us are so gifted as to achieve an one-pointed attention, continually directed to God. The mind always tends to wander from object to object. So we may easily fail in our attempt to make God the object of an unswerving attention. If this happens, we need not despair. For Śrī Kṛishṇa foresees this difficulty and suggests a remedy in the *śloka* with which we have to begin our work today. It runs thus:

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनंजय ॥ ९ ॥

9. But if you are unable to fix your mind firmly on Me, O Arjuna, then try (lit. wish) to reach Me through the practice of repetition.

It is not easy to restrain the movements of the mind, but continual practice may aid us in the effort. 'Practice makes

perfect' is an English adage with which you ought to be familiar. Every action tends to leave its own impress on us, and a study of the formation of habits can reveal to us the great value of persistent practice. So if we find our attention wandering away from God, flitting from object to object, let us not despair. Let us try again and again to fix it on God. Failures must not dishearten us. Our motto must be: try, try and try again. By repeated practice we will acquire the necessary will-power to direct our intelligence and attention to God and God alone. Please observe that I have translated the expression *abhyāsa-yoga* here also in exactly the same way as in VIII. 8, understanding *abhyāsa* to denote repetition, and *yoga* to denote practice.

Now even practice requires a certain strength of will. If once you try and fail, it requires a great effort of the will to compel you to overcome your diffidence and try again. For many, failures are not the stepping stones to success, but the harbingers of despair. Indeed, most of the failures in this wotld are due not so much to lack of fitness or want of capacity on the part of the individuals who fail, as to their overwhelming diffidence. Few persist in spite of failures: so many are discouraged and give up their work in the middle. The maxim 'Try, try and try again' is a counsel of perfection, more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Well aware of this weakness of men, Śrī Kṛishṇa is not content to advise continued practice in the face of failures. He proceeds to set forth an easier alternative in the next *śloka*.

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ १० ॥

10. If you are unequal even to repetition, then let work for My sake be your highest aim. Even doing action for My sake, you will attain success.

To succeed in the practice of *bhakti-yoga*, we must adopt the omni-penetrative God, who is the soul of the universe, as the object of our worship. Everything that we think and feel must be directly related to Him. He must be made the object of all our mental activities. But this is no easy matter. The wandering mind flits from object to object, and cannot be

readily compelled to direct its attention exclusively to God. So, we were asked to achieve this by repeated endeavours, not losing courage when we failed. Some may persist in their attempts in this manner, and yet find after a number of trials that the requisite control of the mind is as far away as ever. What should they do? Are they to go on trying and trying to do something, which, they feel, they can never succeed in accomplishing? At one stage or another, it is only human to lose all hope and fall into despair. And they will be worse in the end than they were in the beginning. But Śrī Kṛishṇa here points out, such a state of things need never come to pass. For all the time we live, we have to work. We can never remain in a state of passive inaction. Now, certain activities are essential for the very maintenance of our life. These may be related to God.

It must be within the experience of every one of you, that to obey the dictates of our physical nature is much easier than to control the mind and compel it to operate in the direction in which the enlightened will and conscience desire it to operate. When we feel hungry, how readily do we take to eating! But suppose you feel dissatisfied with the moral conditions of men around you. Is your impulse to improve their lot quite so strong as your desire to satisfy your hunger? Certainly not. The reason for this is that we are the slaves of our physical impulses: they are already there exercising their dominion over us, whereas a moral impulse has to be brought into existence by our will. So you can easily appreciate the difference between satisfying our physical needs and following the dictates of our conscience.

Śrī Kṛishṇa may be understood to say in effect: "Whether you succeed in bringing your attention to bear on God constantly or not, you have to live and labour and work according to the impulses of your physical nature. Try to relate these to God. If you cannot compel your mind to direct its attention always to God, you may at least relate your physical activities to His worship. Do all that you have to do, as if you were doing them for God. Follow your physical impulses, but consider all your work as worship." Of an evening, for example, you may feel like taking a walk. Your physical nature demands exercise. Make this an act of worship. Instead of going to the beach, stroll round the temple. Thus you may satisfy at the same time a physical and a

spiritual need. Transform in this manner every act into worship. If you have over-abundant physical energy, you can spend it in various ways in relation to God. This is easier than to fix your mind on God. For here you are merely giving a Godward direction to activities, which you will perform; even if you give no thought to God. By relating all your acts to God, you will be thinking of God every time you do anything—and you will be doing something or other every moment of your life. In this manner, your mind will get into the habit of thinking of God at all times: and very soon you will become a successful *bhakti-yogin*.

But there may be some to whom even this may be difficult. What ought they to do? Śrī Kṛishṇa answers:

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥ ११ ॥

11. If you are unable to do even this, then, depending on My *yoga*, give up the fruit of all actions, self-controlled.

It may be easier to look upon all our physical activities as acts of worship than to make God the object of all our mental life. Still, this method has its own difficulties. For what is pleasure, when done out of our own free will, ceases to be pleasure when done as duty. To read a play of Kalidasa is pleasure: but to read it for an examination is duty and therefore irksome. Merely to stroll about is pleasure: but to circumambulate the temple is duty, and hence ceases to be pleasure The fact that a thing is done in the way of duty is itself sufficient to destroy all the pleasure that we would have derived from its performance otherwise. So, many may find it difficult even to control their physical activities in the manner outlined above. What are they to do then? "If you cannot direct your mental or even your physical activities to God," says Śrī Kṛishṇa, "then do this at least. Do not be selfishly attached to the results of your work. Be satisfied with what comes to you. Give up the idea that you have any title to the products of your own labour. Work out your life in this manner, and you will come unto Me. Depending on My *yoga*, give up the results of all your work, and the title to the fruits of your labour."

The term *yoga* is used in this stanza in the same sense as in the tenth chapter, where we sought to understand its meaning along with that of the expression *vibhūti*. It stands for the close and intimate relation of God, who is all-pervading and transcendental, to the universe, which He has created and of which He is the life. If you learn through a knowledge of the *yoga* of God that not even a blade of grass moves without His cognisance, then you must be in a position to realise that everything you do, accomplish or achieve is all done, accomlished and achieved, not through any special power of your own, but through His power. Any one who understands this may be said to be dependent on the *yoga* of God (*mad-yogam-āśrita*).

This, of course, presupposes a *yatātman*, a controlled self. Is this in any way easier than any of the graded disciplines, which Śrī Kṛishṇa has been teaching us so far? First we were asked to direct our attention and intelligence, exclusivly and continually to God. In case this was found too difficult, we were told that persverance and practice might help us in the effort. Finally, to those who might fail, in spite of repeated efforts, the control of physical activities was prescribed. If even this is hard to practise, Śrī Kṛishṇa says, give up the fruits of all work. Now, this raises a very interesting question. Srī Kṛishṇa has been teaching us from the beginning various methods of circumventing *karma*. He has told us that a life of passive inaction is impossible and that action of some kind or other is unavoidable. He has further taught us that it is not action which creates *karma*, but the motive behind the action. If we take care of the motive and see that it is selfless, the bondage of *karma* ceases. Various methods of achieving this selflessness have been described—the *karma-yoga*, the *jñāna-yoga*, etc. These are the means for the attainment of the great end of the acquisition of the power to do our duty without attachment to the results of our work. Such being the case, it is surely obvious that we cannot acquire easily the capacity to perform our duties dispassionately. It is one of the most difficult tasks set before humanity. Yet, Śrī Kṛishṇa seems to say here that *sarva-karma-phala-tyāga*, the abandonment of the fruit of all actions, is very easy, easier in fact than the control of our mental or even our physical activities. Is that really the case?

I think that we are justified in inferring from the context that some simpler and easier type of renouncement is referred

to here than that, to achieve which the *karma-yoga*, the *jñāna-yoga* and the *bhakti-yoga* were recommended. A commentator suggests that Śrī Kṛishṇa recommends here the giving up of the fruits of such rituals as *agni-hotra* etc. In a somewhat free translation of the Gītā, the substance of this stanza is expressed thus: Bring Me your failure. The underlying idea is easily discerned. Let us try to worship God as well as we can. If we fail, let us not be disheartened. The effort must be ours, although it rests with God to reward us or not. Let us pray for strength to help us in our weakness. Success or failure, let us dedicate the fruits of our actions to God. Without doing any special actions to please God, and without even consciously guiding our activities in a Godward direction, we might live and labour, devout and content. We may thus understand the *tyāga* spoken of here to be that of the novice, rather than that of the perfected saint. A religious life, of whatever kind, presupposes a desire for salvation and a readiness to undergo hardships for the attainment of that exalted end. The practice of renunciation must begin somewhere and at some time. It is that beginning which appears to be indicated in this verse.

Rāmānujāchārya, in his commentary on the Gītā, solves the difficulty that we have noticed in a different manner. In his opinion, those who are unequal to the practice of *bhakti-yoga*, must follow the *karma-mārga* and seek self-realisation. He construes the stanza as follows: If, resorting to the practice of *bhakti-yoga*, you are unable to do even this—then, give up the fruits of all actions with a controlled mind. Such a view naturally raises the question of suitable *adhikārins* for the path of devotion. I remember to have placed before you the view that *bhakti-yoga* does not require any particular *adhikārins* or specially fitted persons to adopt it. But surely faith in and love of God is a necessary pre-requisite. The very meaning of devotion postulates this. And *bhakti-yoga* is easy, because it is based on faith, which, as the common experience of mankind will readily testify, is the foundation of all activities. As we saw, both the *karma-yogin* and the *jñāna-yogin* may be agnostics or atheists: but the *bhakti-yogin* must necessarily be a theist. All the three lead lives of unselfish devotion to duty and they are all freed from the bondage of *karma*. But this need not prevent us from thinking, as I suggested to you some time back, that it seems to be meant in the Gītā that it is a

progressive advancement in the line of ethical improvement to pass on from the discipline of *karma* to that of *jñāna*, and from this again to the discipline of *bhakti* and *prapatti*. Śrī Rāmānuja appears to think that the acquisition of the power to perform one's duties dispassionately and the realisation of the self precede the birth of devotion. In his commentary on the next verse, he suggests that constant meditation on God may be difficult (*karkaśa-rūpa*) to those who are devoid of spontaneous love for God (*atyanta-prīti-virahita*). Thus, though the path of devotion is easy and leads to quick results, still there may be many who cannot adopt it. Such persons must try to abandon the fruits of their work as a means to self-realisation. Thereafter, they will realise the dependence of their souls on God and inevitably become *bhaktas*. And he maintains the view that verses *13* to *19*, portraying an ideal ethics, teach us the manner in which those who are precluded temperamentally from the practice of devotion, might attain salvation. We shall have to study this point of view in greater detail by and by. For the present it is enough to note that we may interpret this stanza to prescribe the discipline of the abandonment of the fruits of all actions to those who might feel unequal (for the reasons suggested above) to the practice of *bhakti-yoga*.

Now, the most essential thing for the seeker after salvation is the power to perform his duties dispassionately. It does not matter through what method we acquire this power. Whether we do our duties without selfish attachment, because of our devotion to God, or because of our faith in duty itself, or as a consequence of self-realisation, is immaterial, so long as we lead our lives thus. Hence this ethical maxim is the most important result of what we have been taught so far. You will recollect that once before I likened the seekers after salvation to the modern army of telegraph signallers, who make use of some important electro-magnetic phenomena, discovered by Faraday, without knowing the methods and theories of that distinguished scientist. Similarly we may all make use of this great maxim, without undergoing any experience resembling that of those great teachers and *yogins*, who formulated it. So what is important is this ethical imperative. This fact is well brought out in the next verse. (If we understand some easier type of renouncement to have been taught, then this is, as it were, the door that opens to the selfless performance of duty. So, the latter is in any case important).

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. For knowledge is better than repeated endeavour (to acquire knowledge). Meditation is esteemed higher than knowledge, and the abandonment of the fruit of all actions than meditation. From (that) abandonment, peace soon (results).

Knowledge is something more than an attempt to know : it is a victory over ignorance and all the obstacles against knowledge. But even knowledge may be of two kinds. It may be a mere intellectual raalisation, or it may be a realisation which forms part and parcel of one's essential nature. It is, for instance, easy to demonstrate to a young man, rather wanting in straightforwardness, that dishonesty is wrong and will serve him ill in the long run, whatever temporary security it may offer him from immediate troubles. I may argue thus and convince the youth for the time being that dishonesty is wrong. He leaves me satisfied that my arguments are true and convincing. Now, suppose the young man gets into another fix. He sees before him an easy way out of pressing embarrassments by freely lying. He may not be able to overcome this temptation merely because he can recall my demonstration of the utter worthlessness of dishonesty.

But now, suppose that he has not only listened to my arguments, but also thought about them himself closely and earnestly. As a result of his serious consideration of the question, the conviction that dishonesty is wrong becomes, as it were, a part and parcel of his essential nature : it sinks deep into his soul. After this has happened, if he is tempted again, he may be able to resist his evil genius, and declare : "I would rather suffer than try to get out of my present difficulties through dishonest means." Notice the difference between these two states of mind. In the one case, the young man acquires the knowledge that dishonesty is wrong. He may not have known it before, but it does not become a part of his inner nature, nor does it acquire the power of serving as a motive or a centre of energy from within as in the other case. An intellectual conviction can be transformed into a part of one's personality only through concentrated meditation.

If you contemplate seriously any truth placed before you and make it your own, it may soon become potent enough to guide all our activities.

All the teaching of religion and all the knowledge that we derive from a study of philosophy must be reflected in the life that we lead. Knowledge must become essential realisation, and thereafter actuate conduct. The final fruit of all knowledge and meditation on knowledge is the acquisition of that attitude of mind, which enables one to give up the fruit of one's labour and feel that one is neither the agent nor the owner in relation to anything that one may achieve The giving up of results is the highest thing to be accomplished. We need not come to it through the difficult discipline of *jñāna-yoga*, nor through the control of the uncontrollable mind. Without trying to rediscover for ourselves the value of the selfless performance of duty, we may well take the ethical imperative on trust and follow it as best as we can. It will serve us as well as it served the great teachers who first taught it. The end is better than the means.

Mere wisdom is futile. You must meditate on it and make it a part of your inner self. The acquisition of wisdom should not be like the acquisition of wealth by a miser. Money can be used to do good to us and to help others. But the miser, who merely goes on hoarding it, uses it for the benefit neither of himself nor of others. Similarly the wisdom of a great philosopher who acquires much knowledge, solves many difficult problems through his remarkable intelligence, and becomes, as it were, a walking encyclopaedia of all philosophic wisdom, is of no value whatever, if it does not tell upon his conduct. Philosophy is valuable only as it culminates in conduct. Meditation, which enables us to transform an external philosophic precept into a centre of spiritual energy within us, is more valuable than philosophy itself. And the fruit of all philosophy, the complete annihilation of selfishness, is more valuable than the meditation which makes philosophy fruitful. When this is achieved, we acquire the peace which passeth understanding, and salvation is within sight.

So far we have been taught in general terms the path of devotion. Now, think of a genuine devotee, who is free from *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra* and is leading a selfless life in the faith that God is the agent of all action and the owner of all

property. What will he be like? Śrī Kṛishṇa gives the answer to this question in the succeeding verses, wherein a fine picture of the ideal *bhakta* is delineated.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारस्समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ १३ ॥
संतुष्टस्सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तस्स मे प्रियः ॥ १४ ॥

13-14. That devotee of Mine, who is devoid of hatred in relation to all beings, who is friendly and merciful, who is free from egoism and the idea that he owns anything, to whom pain and pleasure are alike, who is patient, contented, constantly devoted, self-controlled and steadfast in his convictions, and whose attention and intelligence are dedicated to Me—he is dear to Me.

When dealing with the great question of the determination of conduct by means of self-realisation—(as taught in the first six chapters of the Gītā)—Śrī Kṛishṇa has told us that it is not necessary for all to go through the discipline of *yoga*. It is intended only for the chosen few. For the vast majority of men, the adoption of the ethics, which follows necessarily from self-realisation, is sufficient. By resorting to the *yogin's* code of commands and prohibitions, one may be saved. Now, in the second six chapters of the Gītā, Śrī Kṛishṇa, as you well know, deals with the important question of God-realisation. He has taught us how God may be realised, and explained how, on realising Him, our lives would assume a certain shape. But, for those who cannot realise God in the manner of the seer or the devotee, the adoption of the life which follows from God-realisation is enough. Like the wireless operator, who flashes messages from one end of the world to another without understanding any of the physical laws that underlie the working of his apparatus, the ordinary seeker after salvation may attain *moksha* b, merely practising the ethics of the devotee, without undergoing the rare experience of God-realisation. Not every one can realise the truth of things. From this it certainly does not follow that we are not obliged

to adjust ourselves in regard to the truths ascertained by others. You may not know many things in this phenomenal universe. You may not know the theory of lightning conductors or the medical properties of quinine. But you are certainly not prevented from utilising these truths for such purposes as you think fit. There is an old Sanskrit saying, *na hi sarvassarvam jānāti*, which declares that it is not possible for every man to know every thing. But we may utilise to our own advantage the knowledge gained by others. So long as others have real knowledge, we are expected to utilise it for our own good.

Similarly, if you cannot become a *yogin* and realise the nature of your soul, or realise God in the manner of the devotee, you may at least utilise for your benefit the truths that the *yogins* and the devotees have discovered. You may regulate your life in the manner in which self-realisation and God-realisation impel them to regulate theirs. The position is exactly similar to what we know from experience to exist in relation to quinine. We must adjust ourselves to the truth of things, whether we know it ourselves, or whether it has been ascertained for us by somebody else. Śrī Kṛishṇa's teaching in regard to those who cannot by their own efforts realise their selves or God is well worth bearing in mind. Many an individual often feels inclined to say: "I have not come upon such a realisation. I have not made out the theory of lightning conductors or the therapeutics of quinine. Therefore I do not care for them." This is an illogical attitude for the reason that every man cannot know every thing. So in regard to self-realisation also, we have to conduct ourselves in exactly the same manner as we conduct ourselves in relation to quinine. If others say that they have arrived at such a realisation, we must believe in the possibility thereof, and adjust ourselves in accordance with the truth, which, though not realised by us, can yet be realised by others.

The question may be asked: how is the man, who has not realised God in the manner of the *bhakta* or the philosopher, to lead his life? The answer to this query may be made plain by an analogy. We go to the doctor and ask him to tell us all about quinine, because we do not know anything about it. He tells us that the drug is good in certain specified conditions. We accept his word, carry out his

instructions in regard to the use of the medicine and benefit by his knowledge. Now, if God-realisation is not possible for me, what am I to do? I must go and seek the advice of a religious doctor. He will say: "Look here. Live a life of this kind. Do not be selfish. Do good to all. . ." He will explain to me the external signs of God-realisation, the kind of life by leading which I can put into practice the truth realised by the devotee. Leading this kind of life, we may be said to have realised God for all practical purposes. Our life will be as perfect as that of the devotee. Those who have not realised the truth will always do well to place themselves at the disposal of those who have. The regulation of our conduct is the most important thing. Whether we are actuated by our own realisation of the truth or by our faith in the realisation of truth by others, it is immaterial. What is important is the nature of our conduct. In these and the succeeding *ślokas*, the kind of life which is in harmony with the realisation of God is pointed out and its external marks are described.

Let us now proceed to study the substance of these two verses. The devotee must be free from hatred in relation to all beings, be friendly towards all and compassionate. Mark the order in which these three characteristics are mentioned. First freedom from hatred, then friendliness, lastly mercy or *karuṇā*. Freedom from hatred implies merely the absence of harmful feelings towards others. Friendliness implies something more, the presence of a positive, helpful feeling in relation to others. Mercy means even more than friendliness, which is generally based on reciprocity. We are friendly only towards those who are friendly towards us, But mercy is a friendliness, which has ripened to such an extent as to make us forgive a good deal of weakness and viciousness in those towards whom we are merciful. Mercy and justice are often contrasted. If you try to be just in your dealings with men, you have often to be harsh. The sense of justice makes us deal out to the bad the punishment which their conduct richly deserves. But mercy impels us to be kind even here. It tries to overcome the evil of the wicked by forgiveness, it returns good for evil. Mercy is thus three stages away from hatred. The devotee must hate no one, be friendly and merciful towards all. The order in which we may acquire these qualities is pointed out in this verse. When studying XI. 55, we saw

how there can be no room for hatred in the scheme of life of one who has realised the true nature of God. Friendliness and indeed overflowing love for others can alone find a place there.

Then the devotee must feel that nothing is his own. God, as we have been taught, is the only Proprietor in the universe. Again we are not the agents of what we do. It is through His power that every action is performed. Once we understand these, the foundations of *akaṅkāra* and *mamakāra* are destroyed. The *bhakta* must be equally disposed to pleasure and pain. He must rise above the pairs of opposities. He must be patient and content. He must be constantly devoted to God. Self-control is one of his essential characteristics. He must be steadfast in his conviction that nothing in the universe can live or move without God. In short the *bhakta's* attention and intelligence must be constantly directed to God. Such a devotee is here declared to be dear to Śrī Kṛishṇa.

You may remember that sometime back I told you that Rāmānujāchārya interpreted verses *13* to *19* to be descriptive of the *karma-yogin*. According to this view, the term *bhakta*, which occurs in these and succeeding stanzas, must not be understood in any direct sense. The *karma-yogin* is only a *bhakta* indirectly. As all kinds of religious and ethical efforts, whether they seek God consciously or not, can only lead to Him ultimately, the *karma-yogin* is also a *bhakta*. Rāmānujāchārya holds that the last *śloka* of this chapter is alone descriptive of the followers of the path of devotion. We shall try to understand the significance of this view, when we study that verse. Saṅkarāchārya is opinion that all the verses, beginning from the *13*th and ending with the *20*th, deal with the *jñāna-yogin*, the ascetic who has subjugated his senses and worships God in His transcendental aspect. It appears to me reasonable to understand these verses to describe the *bhakti-yogin*, seeing that the word *bhakta* is used there specifically more than once.

Please allow me to conclude here our work for to-day.

Iv

It may be recalled that we dealt last week with the ease of the path of devotion, as contrasted with the path of philosophic realisation. To realise God as a transcendent being, who is other than the universe, above and beyond it, is extremely difficult. Such a realisation is valuable, because it leads us to freedom from selfishness, and thence to salvation. But the path of devotion can accomplish this object equally well. Being easier and more adapted to the weakness of men, it is the better way for us. Those who cannot acquire the vision of the philosopher can at least try to realise God as immanent in the universe, constituting its life and soul, and thereby get over the weakness of *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*.

Then I drew your attention to the fact that neither the one nor the other aspect of God contains the truth exclusively. It is on the side of the transcendental God as much as on the side of the immanent God. These two aspects of God, as I told you, are like the two sides of a shield. It is not right to hold that the shield has only one side, nor that, when we see one side of the shield, the other is non-existent. Therefore the worship of God in either aspect and a concordant adjustment of conduct are certain to lead us to *mokṣa*.

Now, the question may arise: if the path of the transcendental God is more difficult, is the weak man, who follows the comparatively easier path of the immanent God, any way inferior? To this question, Śrī Kṛishṇa gives an explict answer. He judges men, not from the nature of their intellectual or philosophic realisation, but from the conduct of their lives. Conviction has value only as it fructifies in conduct. If those who adopt the easier path of devotion are as free from selfishness and as selfless in conduct, as those who follow the rugged road of philosophic realisation—then there is really no difference between them. Both are equally worthy, and equally well set on the road to salvation. In fact Śrī Kṛishṇa appears to say in so many words that the weaker man, who follows the easier path, is dearer to Him than the stronger man, who follows the harder path. In the last *śloka* of this chapter, He says that the *bhakta*, who is devoted to Him, is exceedingly dear to Him. And you may remember that He has already

pointed out that, of the four classes of devotees, mentioned in VII. *16*, the wise man, whose devotion is a means as well as an end in itself, is particularly dear to Him. This means that wisdom must lead to love. Even the philosopher cannot help becoming devoted to God, once he attains to the vision of the relations between God and the universe. So the seer, whose wisdom is founded on a philosophic réalisation of the truth of things, is loved by God. So also is the *bhakta*, who may not command the wisdom of the philosopher, but whose love has drawn forth a gracious response from the Lord.

We may be able to go a step further. We all know that a mother's attachment to her weaker children is greater than her attachment to her stronger children. Not that the latter are less worthy of the love of the mother, but that the weaker need it more. It is in this wise that love functions in life. The weaker the object of love, the more intense is the love towards it. From the way in which Śrī Kṛishṇa repeatedly declares the *bhakta* to be dear to Him, we are entitled to hold that the love of God also operates in the same manner as the human love that we know of. So we may think that the love of God for those, who, lacking the strength of the philosopher, simply adopt the life of devotion and self-surrender, ought to be even keener than His love for those, who can love Him with the strength of their wisdom.

We then studied some of the external signs of the life which follows naturally from God-realisation. Some more characteristics of the conduct of the *bhakta*, who is dear to the Lord, are set forth in the *śloka*, with which we have to begin our work to day :

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यस्स च मे प्रियः ॥ १५ ॥

15. He, through whom the world is not unpleasantly excited, and who is not agitated by the world, who is free from joy, impatience, fear and agitation--he too is dear to Me.

Further characteristics of the life of devotion are here described. The *bhakta* does not make the world tremble before

him, nor is he afraid of the world. Any one who disturbs the world or is disturbed by it, is lacking in mental poise and equilibrium. Suppose you acquire power and influence so as to command men, money and things, and thereafter use them to make the world afraid of you: is it the best use to which you can put your power and influence? Will not the world consider you as a tyrant? The man who is actuated by love cannot make the world tremble before him in any circumstances Equally is it clear that he cannot turn away from the world in fear or disgust. Being free from selfishness, he is not afraid of any one. And being actuated by love towards all, he cannot be disgusted with the world. If the world is not what it ought to be, if it appears to him a sorry scheme of things, then the *bhakta* will not abandon it in a fit of disgust. He will try to remould it nearer his heart's desire. Suppose you are a philosopher living a life of purity and strength. And you see around you all kinds of weaknesses and impurities. If your attitude is really one of love towards the world, you will try to improve it. Thus the man, the mainspring of whose conduct is love towards God and men, cannot make the world afraid of him, nor become terrified of the world himself.

The *bhakta* is further described as one free from joy and impatience, fear and agitation. All these are due to selfishness. *Harsha* or joy is the result of self-satisfaction. Success in life, the acquisition of wealth, power or fame, any of these may exhilarate you. The true *bhakta* however will not be unduly excited by any of these. Being free from *rāga* and *dvesha*, desire and aversion, he will not seek particularly such pleasant types of excitement. It follows that he will be free from *amarsha*. That is, he will bear his disappointments bravely and will not fret and fume at them. And he will not envy the success of others. All this, again, is due to selfishness. Disappointment arises only when we expect a great reward and fail to get it. And envy is another name for the pain that we feel at the sight of the success of others. If we do our duties in the faith that we are not entitled to the fruits of our labour, then neither disappoinment nor envy will ever trouble us. Fear also is a child of selfishness. It is a self-regarding instinct which causes fear. We are afraid because our interests may be endangered. No one, who holds God to the only Proprietor in the universe and is actuated by love towards all, can feel

afraid of any one or any thing. Love overcometh fear. The term *udvega* denotes all kinds of unpleasant mental excitement. The *bhakta*, being free from selfishness, is also free from all mental and emotional disturbances that arise from selfishness—joy and pain, fear and agitation.

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तस्स मे प्रियः ॥ १६ ॥

16. That devotee of Mine, who is free from desires, pure, skilled (in the performance of his duty), indifferent (as regards the fruits of his labour), and free from distress, and who relinquishes all (selfish) endeavour - he is dear to Me.

You may observe that I have sought to incorporate in the translation of this verse a few explanatory phrases. Otherwise the *śloka* will read like a riddle. First of all the *bhakta* is declared to be *anapeksha*, wanting nothing. The man who has realised God can hardly stand in need of anything else. All his wants have been satisfied by the realisation of God. Then he is described to be *śuchi*, pure in thought, word and deed. Then he is *daksha* and *udāsina*, assiduous and indifferent. Here are a pair of seemingly contradictory characteristics. One cannot be assiduous and indifferent at the same time. But if we take the skill to refer to the performance of one's duty and the indifference to relate to the fruits thereof, then the apparent contradiction vanishes. Let me note in passing that *udāsina* has also been understood to mean 'impartial'. The *bhakta* is also characterised by freedom from distress. Being indifferent to the fruits of his work, he can never feel pain or disappointment or fear. Lastly, he is *sarvārambha-parityāgin*, one who has given up all endeavour. Here again the literal translation sets forth an opposition with *daksha*. We have therefore to understand that only selfish endeavours are referred to here.

Rāmānujāchārya interprets the *śloka* in a slightly different manner. He resolves the contradictions that we have noticed by bringing in the concept of scriptural sanction. According to him, the *karma-nishṭa* must not desire anything other than the realisation of his self. He must be pure in the sense that he cares for the needs of the body in strict accordance with the

rules of the *śāstras*; be skilful in the performance of the deeds enjoined by the scriptures and indifferent as regards others; be free from distress in the performance of such actions, not caring for the heat or cold, or the pleasure or pain, that he may encounter: and abandon all actions which are condemned by the *śāstras*.

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यस्स मे प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

17. He, who is full of devotion to Me, who feels no joy and no aversion, who does not feel grief and does not desire, who gives up both good and evil,—he is dear to Me.

Rāmānujāchārya in his commentary on this verse tries to distinguish the absence of joy and grief here described from what has been mentioned in *śloka 15* above. There he understands these feelings to have been directed against other men. The *bhakta*, who was declared to be free from *harsha*, *amarsha bhaya* and *udvega*, was understood to be one free from these feelings in his relations with other men. Here he interprets the absence of joy and aversion in a more general way. The *karma-nishṭa* (in his view) does not rejoice at obtaining anything agreeable to him, and does not feel angry or disappointed, when something disagreeable happens to him. At the loss of wealth, or wife, or children, he feels no grief. He desires not anything whose loss may cause pain.

The term *śubhāśubha-parityāgin* requires some explanation. To translate this as 'one who has abandoned good and evil' does not mean that the reference is to one who makes no distinction between virtue and vice. We may understand it to refer to one who has given up the idea that *lābha* is *śubha* and that *alābha* is *aśubha*, that the acquisition of advantages is good and that the acquisition of disadvantages is bad. *Lābha* and *alābha* of course may be due to either accident or design. Rāmānujāchārya thinks that the term denotes one who has given up performing deeds for the acquisition of either *puṇya* or *pāpa*. When a good deed is performed for the sake of acquiring merit, then a good *karma* is created, which is as effective an ememy of liberation as a bad *karma*, which is the result of ev

deeds. For one, who acquires *puṇya* in this way, must enjoy its good fruits by being reborn, just as one who acquires *pāpa* must suffer for it in a future birth. So the seeker after salvation will be perfectly selfless in his actions, and see that he creates no bonds of *karma*. He will do good deeds, not with any selfish motive, but because it is his duty to do so. Lastly, according to certain schools of thought, the terms 'good' and 'evil' have only a relative significance. In their view, the reference may be to one who has risen above the relativity of good and evil.

समश्शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समस्सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ १८ ॥
तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी संतुष्टो येनकेनचित् ।
अनिकेतस्स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥ १९ ॥

18-19. He, who is alike to friend and foe, as also in honour and dishonour, who is alike in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, who is free from attachments, to whom praise and censure are equal, who is silent, who is contented with anything (that he gets), whatsoever it may be, who has no (attachment towards his) home, who is of a steady mind and full of devotion to Me,--that man is dear to Me.

You may remember that Śrī Kṛishṇa has told us in VI. 29 that a *yogin*, who has attained the realisation of his self, makes no distinction between man and man or even between man and beast. To him the soul is important and the body is a mere nothing. Between soul and soul, he finds no essential difference. The differences that we observe in this world are largely determined by the material embodiments with which the souls are associated. A man is different from a dog on account of the configuration of his material body. His soul, however, is essentially similar to that of the dog. If you, realise this, you will see all beings in yourself and yourself in all beings. And if your conduct is to be based on this realisation, it is obvious that equality must become your rule of life. Thus the realisation of the self, through the practice of *yoga* and the attainment of *yoga-siddhi*, leads us to the ideal of *samatva*.

Immediately afterwards, in the very next *śloka* (VI. 30), Śrī Kṛishṇa declares: "To him, who sees Me in everything and everything in Me, I am not lost, and he is not lost to Me." Now, I want you to note particularly that God-realisation leads us to the same ethical ideal as self-realisation. If we can realise that God is in all beings and all beings are in God, it follows that everything in the universe is worthy of being the abode of God. The meanest creature is as worthy of this honour as the mightiest monarch. How can we then avoid the inference of *samatva*? Once we arrive at God-realisation and learn the truth that nothing lives and moves in the universe except through Him and that there is no object in the universe, howsoever mean, low, weak and impure, which He considers to be unworthy of His habitation, then we are inevitably led to the rule of equality. Hence the *bhakta* is equally disposed to friend and foe. Some of you may ask whether a *bhakta* can have enemies. Yes, he may have. He bears inimical feelings towards none, but this does not necessarily mean that others should not or do not hate him. The miller of the Dee was guilty of fallacious logic, when he said: "I envy nobody, no, not I; and nobody envies me." Of course there is truth in the position that he who does not hate others, is not himself hated by others. Nevertheless it often happens that men are hated, even though they do not hate. The very goodness of the *bhakta* may provoke the rancour of a bad few. But the devotee will not reciprocate this feeling: he will look alike on friend and foe.

Likewise, the *bhakta* will be equally disposed to honour and dishonour. Some may consider him as worthy of all respect, a benefactor of humanity. Others may regard him as a fool or a mad man. Many of you may know that Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa Paramahamsa was honoured by some as a saint and ridiculed by others as a mad man. But the devotee should never mind what others think of him. Praise and blame should seem the same to him. He must not feel flattered by praise, nor depressed by dishonour. If you are sure of your heart and are convinced that you are consciously adjusting your life in accordance with the realisation of God, then you must regard equally friend and foe, honour and dishonour, praise and blame.

The *bhakta* will not be troubled by the pairs of opposites in the life that he leads Neither heat nor cold, neither pain

nor pleasure, will deviate him from the course of conduct which he has chalked out for himself. He will not be attached selfishly to pleasures and be averse to pain. He will not mind what he meets with when performing his duties. He has risen above *rāga* and *dvesha*, the instinctive urge to seek pleasure and avoid pain.

One who leads a life of this kind must be silent. They say that silence is a more effective teacher than speech. This is no paradox. The example of the life of one, who follows the rule of equality and believes that all are equally worthy of being the abode of God, who is utterly selfless, devoted to God and not given to vain speech, may do more good to people than any amount of edifying talk. If you ask a *bhakta* why he is devoted to God, most likely, his answer will be: Become a *bhakta* and see for yourself. He will not enter into controversies or quarrels with other people. His faith is so firm that discussion of its foundations seems utterly superfluous to him. Such a man may teach more by silence than by talk. Commentators have also understood the term *mauni* to mean 'one who governs his tongue properly' and 'one who uses the divine gift of speech only in the service of God and is silent otherwise'.

The *bhakta* is further described as being contented with whatever he gets. Notice that Śrī Kṛishṇa does not say that the devotee stands in no need of the necessities of life. He also has to live and satisfy his physical wants. He must eat, when he feels hungry, and drink, when he feels thirsty. He cannot starve and go without his food. But it is one thing to be avaricious and greedy in our desires and quite another to be satisfied with the bare necessities of life. Śrī Kṛishṇa merely recommends a reasonable contentment and no impossible self mortification.

In a properly organised society, no man, who does his duty, will be left in want. And even in our imperfectly organised society, with its extremes of luxury and want, not often is a man, who does his duty, left to starve. All our quarrels and troubles in society arise, not because so many of us do not have what is absolutely necessary for our lives, but because we do not get all that we want to get. *Saṅkalpa-kāma*, the sophisticated desire born out of our will, is more responsible for this than *sahaja-kāma*, the instinctive urge to satisfy

the primal needs of life. If we are prepared to be contented with getting what is necessary for the daily satisfaction of our hunger and thirst; if our prayer is no more than 'Give us this day our daily bread" then surely, there will be much more of peace and harmony in the world. All the woes of the world are due to the fact that men desire more than what is necessary. After all, it is not very difficult to satisfy the bare needs of our physical nature. Nature compels us to seek food: but surely she does not insist that we should all cultivate fastidious tastes and eat only the choicest delicacies of the culinary art. Water can allay our thirst quite well: it is our *saṅkalpa-kāma* that leads us on to artificial beverages of various kinds. Straying beyond the boundary laid down by Nature, we tend to wander about in the limitless fields of pleasing fancy and sense-allurements. *Saṅkalpa-kāma* can never be satisfied: it grows by what it feeds on. You may remember that I have drawn your attention once before to the lesson that we may derive from the story of Yavāti. (under III. 37). Then I quoted a *śloka*, in which Yayāti sums up his experience. He says; "Desire is never appeased by the enjoyment of the objects of desire, but is made to increase all the more, as fire is by sacrificial offerings." We cannot blame society for the disappointments that we may encounter in our endless quest after ambition and desire. If every man performs the duty that falls to his lot and does it well and unselfishly, then there will be no want in society, and indeed, there may be abundance for all. And if today human society presents a sad picture of disharmony and discord, with millionaires and paupers upsetting the natural balance of things, it is due to the fact that while some of us get more than what we want, others do not get what is their due. You may know that the English poet Shelley stigmatised the industrial system as making the rich richer and the poor poorer. So let me once more emphasise the fact that if we all desire to have no more than what is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of our lives, then no one will be left in want. In point of fact, even society as it is at present organised, admittedly imperfect and faulty as it is, takes care to some extent of even unworthy men, who do not work. Charity and love induce us to be tender even towards idlers and parasites.

Some modern thinkers tell us that without selfishness as the motive for achievement, we can never achieve anything

that is high or worthy. It is generally said that a socialistic society, for instance, will go to ruin because its members have no need to be selfish. I cannot say how far this statement may be accepted. I have pointed out to you more than once that Śrī Kṛishṇa is distinctly of opinion that men can lead their lives worthily and honourably without any thought of self. Absence of selfishness, according to His view, does not necessarily lead to indolence and inaction. Ultimately, I think, it all depends on one's temperament. To some, the helping lever of selfishness may be absolutely essential. But I believe some at least can lead their lives without any selfish motive. And what is possible for a few may be made possible for the many. Achievement and unselfishness are not mutually contradictory. It may be that the unselfish man, living in the midst of a selfish society, does not get all that he would have got, if he had lived in an unselfish society. Still, it may be said that he is never compelled to starve even by a selfish society, though perhaps another unworthy man is allowed to enjoy the fruit of his labour.

At no time and in no community known to history can we find a single individual of whom we can say: "Here is the man, who has lived such a highly selfish life, that nothing, which he has done, has resulted in good to some one else even indirectly." However selfish you may be, you find that your very selfishness compels you at times to be unselfish. As long as man has to live in the midst of society, anything like absolute selfishness is impossible. Everything that he achieves cannot be completely enjoyed by himself. Even the selfish man finds that in part at least the fruits of his labour have to be enjoyed by others. If for a moment we try to distinguish what comes to us through our own labour from what comes to us through the labour of others, we may discover how much of the peace, pleasure and prosperity that we enjoy is due to the unselfish labour of others and how little to our own work. Men who have lived before our time and men who live now, our ancestors and our neighbours, compatriots and foreigners alike, have contributed and are contributing to the well-being of our lives. Human society is a closely-knit organism, in which the welfare of each depends on the welfare of all, and the past lays its hand on the present, even as the present tends to influence the future.

So the doctrine of contentment which is preached here is an imperative moral obligation, which cannot be evaded. I do not see why we should pay undue attention to the view that contentment kills all incentive to effort. It is daily belied by the life of humanity. All religions are united in saying that a selfless life is possible and indeed obligatory. A certain type of contentment, I am willing to grant, results in slothful ease and ignoble self-complacency. The *bhakta* would not have become a *bhakta* but for some divine discontent within him that forced him to seek God. The contentment that is preached here is calculated to destroy selfishness, and not to undermine the noble foundations of individual effort. By looking on selfishness as the one and only motive for effort, we are apt to make life the battle-field of conflicting desires and motives, instead of the pathway to salvation. The *bhakta* is therefore asked to be content with *ena-kena-chit*, anything whatever that comes to him. Let him not be avaricious and greedy. Let him feel no disappointment or envy, when others reap the harvest that he has sown. Let him not grumble that he got less than he expected or deserved. Let him work and achieve, but let him not be selfish. It is the giving up of the fruits of our work that Śrī Kṛishṇa recommends, and not the abandonment of duty. If we give up all attachment, it does not follow that we will get nothing: in fact, we may then get more than enough.

The next epithet that we have to take into consideration is *aniketa*, which may be literally translated as 'homeless'. What does Śrī Kṛishṇa mean by saying that the *bhakta* must be homeless? Does He teach that the devotee must give up his hearth and home and wander about as a *sannyāsin*? I think not. Śaṅkrāchārya, in whose opinion these *ślokas* refer to the *jñāna-yogin*, distinctly says that they describe the wandering ascetic. However, as we have not chosen to follow him in this, we need not think that the term *aniketa* implies that the devotee must don the ochre-robe and forsake his family. We all know that, next to our own selves, we love our family. The narrowest circle that limits our love is the self: the next concentric circle is the family. Let not our love stop there. Let it go beyond. The love of family is better than the love of the self, and is good in itself But it must not prevent us from loving all mankind. We must be homeless in the sense that our love must overstep the boundary of

the home. A well-known passage from the *Āpastamba Smṛiti* (X. 6) denies salvation to one, who, among other things, is *ramyāvasathapriya*, fond of a lovely residence. And to this we many add that selfish attachment to one's family is another obstacle to salvation. The central idea is clear. The love of the *bhakta* must know no limits. He must make no distinction between friend and foe, relative and stranger.

Lastly, the devotee is required to be firm-minded. Not otherwise can he tread the path of devotion. Disappointment and dishonour, troubles and difficulties must not tempt him away from the life of devotion to God and love towards humanity. His faith in God must be unshakeable. The rule of equality, though easily derivable from God-realisation, bristles with innumerable practical difficulties. Strong faith in God is the magic wand which chases these difficulties away.

Please allow me to stop here for to-day. We shall take up for study next week the concluding stanza of the 12th Chapter, and try to see at the same time the course of reasoning that underlies the *dvitīya-shaṭka*, Chapters 7 to 12, as a whole.

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lvi

We were studying in our last class the characteristics of a life of devotion. We saw then that those, who followed the easier path of devotion, were quite as dear to Śrī Kṛishṇa as those, who followed the more difficult path of philosophic reasoning and realisation. While pointing out the difference between the two paths, Śrī Kṛishṇa has taken care to emphasise that those, who follow through weakness the easier path, are in no way inferior to others, who conceive God as transcendental. In effect Śrī Kṛishṇa says: "The wise man, whom I have spoken of as no other than Myself or as equal to Myself, is dear to Me. But the *bhakta* is in no way less dear to me." In fact, I suggested that we might even go further and hold the devotee as dearer to God than the wise man, seeing that love is always partial towards weakness. In the last *śloka* of this chapter, which we will presently take up for study, Śrī Kṛishṇa summarises the whole teaching relating to the worship of God through love.

The second six chapters of the Gita, as I have more than once told you, deal with God-realisation through worship and devotion, while the first six deal with self-realisation and the consequent renunciation of selfishness. We were first taught the essential similarity of all souls. All the differences that we notice around us among various beings are due to the material configuration of the bodies in which the souls reside. It is thus that the lesson of equality is to be derived from the realisation of the self. This lesson becomes strengthened by a knowledge of the nature of God and His relations with the universe. As the whole universe is pervaded by Him and as none is too mean to serve as His habitation, we realise that all distinctions are of no value. And as all our power to do and dare comes from Him, we lose all sense of egoism and vanity, and realise that we are all merely instruments in the hands of God. It is left to us to strive to be worthy instruments in His hands That defines the limits of our freedom.

The doctrine of equality, that a realisation of God enforces on us, has, as it were, two aspects. Firstly, please note that we are all equal in relation to God, there being no higher and no lower, for all beings in the universe are pervaded by the Lord. He lives in the meanest and the most impure as surely as in the mightiest and the purest, in the filthiest dog as certainly as in the sagacious and majestic elephant. All are equally worthy to be the habitations of God. Secondly, before God, we are all utterly insignificant. Among beggars, who have nothing to gain or lose, it cannot be said that one is poorer than another. In so far as our title to own things and our capacity to do deeds are concerned, we are all without exception extremely poor beggars. Therefore, why should there be differences between one beggar and another? Why should one pauper, utterly destitute, look down on another, equally destitute? All the riches in the world are as nothing in the eyes of God. Great as may seem the difference between a millionaire and a person owning no property of any kind, both are equally insignificant before God. Compared to infinity, a hundred or a thousand is insignificant: a million or a trillion is equally so. It is the want of a proper perspective that blinds us to a proper estimate of our powers and makes us think too much of differences that are less than dust in the balance before the glory of God.

Now whether we arrive at a knowledge of the principles, by which we have to guide aright our conduct in life, through

self-realisation or God-realisation, the lesson is the same one of equality. This will enable us to understand all that Śrī Kṛishṇa has told us about the *bhakta*, his attitude to God and his fellow-beings. Towards God, his attitude is one of complete devotion and self-surrender. He has no will apart from that of God, and he is doing always the work of God. Towards his fellows, his attitude is one of absolute equality, and what is more, of unselfish sympathy. Such a life will soon lead the devotee to God. Let us now proceed to the *20*th stanza, in which Śrī Kṛishṇa summarises this teaching: at the same time it also happens to be summary of the second six chapters of the *Gītā*.

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
श्रद्दधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥ २० ॥

20. And those devotees, who, full of faith and regarding Me as their highest goal, adopt this nectar of virtuous conduct—as taught (above) — they are exceedingly dear to Me.

There is some difference of opinion among the commentators as regards the true import of this verse. You may notice that the *śloka* begins with the words *ye tu* Now, *tu* is generally used as a disjunctive particle in Sanskrit somewhat in the sense of 'but', 'on the contrary' and so forth. If we understand it in this sense, then we have to infer that this verse introduces a new subject altogether and deals with a different class of persons from those who have been described so far. Rāmānujāchārya expounds this view. Here, he says, the *bhaktas* are extolled, as distinguished from the *karma-yogins*, who have been dealt with in verses *13–19*. And that is why, he adds, the true devotees are described as exceedingly dear to Him. Those, who are *karma-nishṭas*, are *bhaktas* only indirectly in the sense we have already explained: they are merely dear to the Lord, not exceedingly dear like those who are true *bhaktas*. And a parallelism has been noted between this *śloka* and the second of this chapter, wherein, as you may remember, Śrī Kṛishṇa says: "Those are considered by Me to be the best of devotees, who, being constantly devoted and endowed with supreme faith, worship Me with a mind fixed on Me." Accordingly, in the opinion of this

teacher, the last verse of the *12*th Chapter may be considered to provide a definite answer to the question, which Arjuna asked at the beginning. The Lord is held to have clearly taught Arjuna that the *bhaktas*, being exceedingly dear unto Him, are superior to the worshippers of the *akshara* and *avyakta*.

Śaṅkarāchārya and Madhvāchārya, however, agree in thinking that this verse does not introduce a new subject, though they differ fundamentally as regards the subject-matter of the concluding part of this chapter. The former, as we have seen, holds that all the verses from the *13*th to the end of the chapter deal with the *jñāna-yogin*. He points out that Śrī Kṛishṇa merely emphasises here what He has already stated in VII. *17*— "I am indeed exceedingly dear to the man of wisdom, and he too is dear to Me." Madhvāchārya maintains the view that the *bhaktas* are described in the verses under consideration. In the commentary on verse *16*, he says that the *ślokas* beginning with the *13*th are a mere expansion of stanzas 5 and 7: in other words, they all deal with the *bhakta*. And he considers that the last verse sums up the main characteristics of the *bhakta*. Thus we have some authority for refusing to accord to *tu* the sense of a disjunctive particle here. Indeed it is used in very different senses in Sanskrit. Sometimes it means nothing and serves admirably the purpose of filling up a metrical gap, when the poet or versifier may be in difficulties. At times it stands for 'and' or 'and now': occasionally its function is one of emphasis. As you may have observed, I have translated *tu* as 'and'.

Another point may well be noted now. There is a reading *dharmāmṛitam* for *dharmyāmṛitam* in this *śloka*. The latter, which I have adopted, is the more common one, and it appears to have received the sanction of the three great *āchāryas*, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva. It is an adjective and literally means 'righteous and nectar-like': obviously it qualifies *idam*, 'this', and refers to the particular way to salvation taught here. I have translated it somewhat freely as 'the nectar of virtuous conduct': this would of course be almost the exact literal translation of the other reading. Let us now proceed to the study of the *śloka*.

It is worthy of note that Śrī Kṛishṇa speaks of the conduct, which He has prescribed for the *bhakta*, after a course

of clear reasoning, as nectar-like. *Amṛita* is, as you all know, the drink of the gods: it is sweet beyond description and it bestows immortality on those who drink it. Both these qualities of nectar may be found in the life led by the devotee. The course of his life is sweet and agreeable. The rule of equality, when followed, results in pleasure and satisfaction. If we go on making pharisaical distinctions between man and man, if we think that we are superior and others inferior, we may feel some pleasure in the exercise of our pride. But this can stand no comparison with the serenity and peace of mind which are the fruits of a life of equality. Devotion to God and sympathy towards fellow-men can give us a calm satisfaction which is immensely superior to the transient joys that a superiority-complex occasions now and then. Secondly, like *amṛita*, the life of devotion leads us on to immortality. Where isolation and conceit are encouraged, there selfishness lurks. Hence the bondage of *karma* will be strengthened by a life, which is not led in accordance with the rule of equality. To break the fetters of *karma*, selfishness must be slain. When this is done, the soul is liberated from the necessity of re-incarnation; that is, it attains *moksha*. And this, we may call the attainment of immortality by the soul. It is true that the soul is immortal, whether it is in a state of embodiment or free. But the embodied soul, on account of the embodiment being subject to death, may be conceived to be not quite so immortal as the enfranchised soul. In other words, it has to pass through the transformations of the body. The attainment of *moksha* really means the complete freedom of the soul from all material bondage and the necessity of re-incarnation. Thus the life of devotion taught here is easily seen to resemble nectar in two most important respects: it is sweet and it bestows immortality.

This life of equality must be led in the manner described—*yathoktam*. For equality may be attained in more than one way. We may level down the higher or lift up the lower. Either method leads us to equality. Śrī Kṛishṇa has taught us that the aim of life ought to be to weaken the influence of our material embodiment on the soul. The merit of our work is to be judged by seeing first of all how far it is done unselfishly by us and secondly how far our work is calculated to weaken selfishness in others. If, in spite of our selflessness, our work tends to strengthen selfishness in society

it is certainly not so good as it would have been, if it had weakened selfishness in others. Śrī Kṛishṇa has in view only levelling up. We must lift up the *tāmasa* man to the level of the *sāttvika*. Progress consists in the realisation of right conduct in life. In aiming at equality, we must try to lift up every one to the *sāttvika* level. Equality does not mean that we must give up our strength, break down before temptations and descend to the level of the weak man. That is why Śrī Kṛishṇa lays emphasis on *yathoktam*, 'as stated (above).'

It will not do merely to adopt the life of equality. Self-realisation or mere faith in duty, as we have seen, can lead to this as well as to devotion to God. But a *bhakta* is different from these others in virtue of his *bhakti*. He must have faith in God and consider Him as the supreme object of worship. "There is none higher than God and my *summum bonum* is attaining unto Him"—such ought to be his attitude It must not rest on doubt : it must not be one of negation. A true *bhakta* can be neither an atheist nor an agnostic. *Bhakti* cannot rest on a foundation of doubt or denial. One, who believes in what Carlyle would call the Everlasting Nay, can never become a *bhakta* in the sense in which Śrī Kṛshṇa has defined him. So the devotee must be quite alive to the existence of God and His intimate relations with the universe. Consequently he will look upon God as the highest object of attainment. With faith in God and taking Him as your supreme goal, you must live the life of equality in the manner described and be devoted unto Him. Then, says Śrī Kṛishṇa, you will become very dear to Him. In other words, Śrī Krishṇa will then lift you up from the fatal ocean of recurring birth and death, and grant you the selvation of *moksha*. Now, if we seek to understand the why and wherefore of this commandment, if we ask the reasons for believing in God and holding Him to be the supreme goal, we will be naturally led on to a consideration of the course of thought underlying Chapters *7* to *12*. Such a study will enable us to see how the last *śloka* of Chapter *12* summarises the *dvitīya-shaṭka* as a whole. Before doing this, however let us try, as usual, to survey the teachings of the chapter that we have been studying.

As you are aware, this short chapter of *20* verses has given rise to acute differences of opinion among the principal

commentators. You may have noticed that I have followed no one teacher throughout the chapter. Let me therefore place before you, first of all, a connected acount of the teaching of this chapter, as we have understood them, and then glance at the various other views that have been taken. Towards the end of Chapter *11*, Śrī Kṛishṇa summarises the lesson that we have to learn from the vision of *viśva-rūpa*. Therein He brings out the great importance of *bhakti*, or loving devotion to God. *Bhakti* alone, He tells us, can enable us to know, see and realise God. We have already tried to understand the exact significance of the knowledge, vision and realisation referred to here (Lecture LI). Naturally enough, He tells us more about this *bhakti* in the twelfth chapter.

The discussion begins, as you know, with a question from Arjuna. Of the *bhaktas* and the worshippers of the *avyakta*, who follow the better path? Śrī Kṛishṇa's answer is that both classes of worshippers will attain *mokṣha*. But the path of the wotshipper of the Unmanifested is beset with difficulties. It is easier to be a *bhakta* than to realise the transcendental God. Śrī Kṛishṇa then gives us a series of graded instructions for following the path of devotion. It culminates in *sarva-karma-phala-tyāga* which we have understood to be a simple type of renunciation, that results from making the humble round of daily life a ritual of purification and prayer. We go through our life as usual, but make over to God all the fruits of our actions. Śrī Kṛishṇa then proceeds to sketch for us the outline of a life led in accordance with God-realisation. We learnt the main characteristics of a *bhakta* to be devotion to God and sympathy towards fellow-men. In the last verse, summing up, Śrī Kṛishṇa describes the *bhakta* as one, who has faith in God and leads his life in the manner described above. Such a devotee is exceedingly dear to Him. This chapter is thus, in our view, a glorification of the life of devotion. It recommends to us *bhakti* for the reason that it is more easily practised than *jñāna*.

Śaṅkarāchārya takes an entirely different view of the course of reasoning in this chapter. Fully to understand this, we must bear in mind some of the fundamental tenets of the *advaita* philosophy. This teaches, as you all know, that there is no reality except the *Brahman*. This does not exactly mean that the world is an illusion in the ordinary sense of the term.

Only it implies that the world of our experience, including our own individuality, though real enough for practical purposes, is not so real as the *Brahman* ultimately. Now, *bhakti* implies the dualism of the devotee and the object of devotion. It regards the object of devotion as full of all kinds of auspicious qualities. All this is unreal from the standpoint of the *advaita*. Even a personal God is only as real as the phenomenal universe. So *bhakti*, as ordinarily understood, stands on a lower level than *jñāna*, which enables us to see that we are identical with the *Brahman*. With this preface, let us try to follow the reasoning of Saṅkarāchārya.

The question of Arjuna is understood as referring to the worshippers of God as realisable and those who seek to be one with the *nirguṇa-Brahman*, the Absolute without attributes. The latter are declared to follow a more difficult discipline. In verse 4 they are declared to attain unto God : whereas concerning the worshippers of *Iśvara*, the personal God, the promise is made : " I will lift them up from the fatal ocean of recurring birth and death" (verse 7). This shows that the former, who have risen above all duality, are dependent on their own selves for *mokṣha*, whereas the latter, still feeling themselves separate from God, have to depend on an external power for salvation. Then follows a description of the *bhakta* in 3 or 4 verses. Śaṅkarāchārya takes the concluding part of the chapter to refer to the *jñāna-yogin*, who worships the *akshara* and *avyakta*. The various traits that are mentioned are interpreted in an ascetic sense. And the *bhakti* referred to in the last stanza is understood as characterised by a knowledge of the Supreme Reality ; it is an aspect of *jñāna*. You can now see how the philosophical standpoint of Śaṅkarāchārya determined his interpretation of this chapter.

According to Rāmānujācharya and Madhvāchārya, *bhakti* is real, and indeed the best means for salvation. They reject the concept of a *nirguṇa-Brahman*, on the ground that anything without attributes must stand outside the sphere of all relations. They hold the world of our experience to be fundamentally real. Though they differ in their views about the nature of God and of soul, they agree in attributing to God innumerable auspicious qualities. Hence both of them regard the teaching of this chapter as the praise of *bhakti*, in the ordinary sense of the word. Śrī Rāmānuja understands

Arjuna's question to relate to the worshippers of God and those who merely seek self-realisation. Both reach the same goal, though the latter pursue a difficult and roundabout way. The path of devotion is smoother than any other, and it leads us to God quicker than any other. But it requires faith in God. Those who lack this must travel along the more rugged road. Ultimately they will acquire this faith and become devoted to God: thereafter they will attain salvation. *Ślokas 13–19* are understood to relate to the *karma-nishṭa*, who cannot practise *bhakti*. In the last verse, the true devotees are extolled and are declared to be exceedingly dear to the Lord. Thus Arjuna's question is answered in this wise, namely, that the *bhakta* is superior to the seeker after self-realisation. In taking this view, Śrī Rāmānuja was closely following Yāmunāchārya. According to the following *śloka* from the *Gītārtha saṅgraha*,

भक्तेश्रेष्ठ्यमुपायोक्तिरशक्तस्तत्रनिष्ठता ।
तत्प्रकारास्त्वतिप्रीतिर्भक्ते द्वादश उच्यते ॥

the twelfth chapter teaches the superiority of the path of devotion and the means for its adoption. Further it recommends meditation on the true nature of the self to those who may feel unequal to the practice of *bhakti* and points out the characteristics of a life spent in the search after the self. Finally it declares that the love of God towards His devotees is immense. Madhvāchārya takes a different view of some of the details. He interprets Arjuna's question as relating to the worshippers of God on the one hand and of Lakshmī, on the other. These latter may be called indirect worshippers of God, and they tread a difficult path. Finally he looks upon verses *13* to *20* as describing the *bhaktas*.

These philosophical divergences are doubtless interesting, but I am not disposed, for the purpose of our study to, consider them so important as some think. We have been studying the *Gītā* as teaching a philosophy of conduct, and our study seems to show that it is interested in metaphysics only as it relates to conduct. Accordingly, the *Gītā* lays more stress on the conduct that we adopt than on the nature of the convictions that lead us to adopt it. And though there is some difference of opinion among the commentators on the ultimate value of *bhakti* as taught in this chapter, all agree in

regard to the ethics that may be prescribed for the *bhakta* as well as for the *karma-yogin* and the *jñāna-yogin*. Salvation is impossible without selflessness, whatever path we may adopt.

We may now try to follow the progress of thought in the Gītā from Chapter 7 to Chapter 13. You may remember that the seventh chapter deals with what may be called the external proof of God. This consists in a cosmological analysis of the process of the universe. It must be distinguished from the internal proof, which rests on the experience of the yogin in the state of *samādhi*. A logical examination of the totality of universal phenomena is apt to lead us to the postulation of a power, which is above and beyond what is visible, and which is responsible for all that lives and moves. This argument may be supplemented by the generally felt need for religion in the human heart and the authority that is required to sustain the categorical imperative. This proof, however, is incapable of convincing some atheists and agnostics. A rational examination of the universe leads them to the Everlasting Nay. Thus a careful study of the universe is calculated lead to to the postulation of God on the one hand and the denial of God on the other. It may be that the clear-sighted philpsopher may condemn as myopic the view that all that we see is all that exists. Nevertheless it is easy to note that Nature acts as a revealer of God to some only. In other words, God cannot be proved to exist by mere ratiocination: faith is necessary to enable us to ascend from Nature to Nature's God This does not of course mean that a belief in God is irrational; but that theism may require reason to be supplemented by faith.

But suppose our examination of the universe leads us to faith in a God, of whose power the totality of universal phenomena is a manifestation. Then it naturally follows that the God, whom we have arrived at in our endeavour to solve the great riddle of the universe, must be one, who is intimately related to that universe. He is above and beyond it for the reason that He is the cause of all that exists, while Himself remaining uncaused. But He can hardly be a far-away God. Indeed, His relation to the universe is visible even in matters of detail. It is not sufficient to look upon the whole universe as a machine under the supervision of God. It is necessary at the same time to hold that every being in it is directly under the guidance of God. Not an atom of matter, but is permeated, penetrated and controlled by God. The

destiny of the whole universe is in His hands. At the same time the power which every one has either to subserve that destiny or work against the divine plan comes from Him alone. In other words, the universe as a whole constitutes the body of the Lord. (This is incidentally the meaning of the *viśvarūpa*.) He also controls and guides every one from within. In brief, the relation of God to the universe has two aspects. He is related to the universe as a whole, and also in detail. Once we realise this, we arrive at the lesson taught in the eighth chapter. The relation in totality leads us to the understanding of *karma* or creation, which is the cause of everything that we see. The relation in detail becomes manifest by looking upon Him as the intrinsic essence of all acts of worship and of all deities who are worshipped He is worshipped in every act of worship because all worship goes to Him. He is in every god who is worshipped for the reason that there is no god, who possesses any power, which is not derived from Him. Finally, He is also in every living being. We are now in a position to see that these lessons of the eighth chapter are easily derived from a theistic answer to the riddle of the universe.

Having come so far, the enquirer is apt to ask : Can the God, who is in intimate relation with the universe, transcend it? Why should we look upon God as other than the universe? May we not regard as God the energy which fills the universe and makes matter move and work? Why should we hold that God is *aprākṛita*, that He is above and beyond *prakṛiti*, and that He is the superior *avyakta*? The whole of the ninth chapter is devoted to a discussion of these questions. It attempts to reconcile the transcendence of God with His immanence. The need for such reconciliation and the manner in which it may be brought about are explained there. These two aspects of God, as I pointed out to you, are like the two sides of a shield or the obverse and reverse of the same coin. They are complementary and not contradictory. We are thus led on to ask whether we can obtain anything like an approximate conception of the transcendented aspect of God and whether we can realise His transcendence through His immanence. To such questions, the answer is given partially in the tenth chapter and partially in the eleventh. In the former we are atught that a study of His *yoga* and *vibhūti*, as observed in the universe, may enable us to get some idea of God, as He is in Himself. Though everything lives and moves through the power that comes form Him, the unequal distribution of

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various kinds of excellence in this world makes us think of specially endowed objects as being specially representative of God. They enable us to realise in some measure what the power of God is like. They teach us to some extent the intimate relation of God to the universe and His daily intercourse with every being therein. Without Him there can be no power, no glory, no splendour of any kind. From X *41*, we have to learn that a knowledge of the *yoga* and *vibhūti* of God will give us some idea of the manner in which God is responsible for all the power, glory and splendour that are noticeable in the world.

Even then our realisation of God is incomplete. The relation of the whole universe in totality to God still remains to be realised, and it is to enable Arjuna to realise this that the *viśva-rūpa* is shown. He is made to understand that chiefly because of the fact that God is related to the universe as a whole as well as in detail, the destiny of the universe is in His hands. At the same time every living and moving thing is under His control. No one can do anything apart and away from His guidance. Imagine the universe to be a complicated machine, controlled in the main by a spring. The key to wind the spring is in the hands of God. At the same time. He also controls the movement of every tiny wheel. In ordinary machines, run by a spiring, we feel that everything is done once we wind up the key. The spring tends to expand, and the force of expansion compels the various wheels to move at their respective rates. A clock or a watch is perhaps the best known example of such a machine. Now the care-taking of God is of a different kind. Not merely does He hold the key, which winds the spring, but He also guides the movements of every little wheel directly. Such a complex relationship is feasible only, if the care-taking of the wheels is not in conflict with the expanding force of the spring. Suppose, after winding up a clock, you do not allow the pendulum to move, and try to rotate a particular wheel in a direction contrary to the force of the expanding spring. Is it necessary for me to tell you what will become of your clock, if you handle it in this manner? If our care-taking of the clock is to be satisfactory, we must see that all the wheels move in the direction in which the expanding force of the spring causes them to move. So God as *viśvātman*, the soul of the universe, cannot contradict Himself as *antaryāmin*, the internal controller. Otherwise, there would be no harmony or order in the universe.

Incidentally, this raises the question of individual responsibility. In the course of our study of the eleventh chapter I have tried to point out to you that in spite of the fact that God is *antaryāmin* on the one hand and *viśvātman* on the other, the individual is free, though within a limited sphere. As *antaryāmin*, He is responsible for our very existence. All our power to think and feel and do comes from Him. And in the promptings of conscience, we may hear His voice. Nevertheless our freedom of action is in no way hindered. We are free to listen to His voice or not; we are free to use the God-given power of thought and action in any manner we choose. Again, He is *viśvātman*, the soul of the universe. The plan and purpose of the process of the universe are determined by Him. We cannot interfere with these in any way. It is the want of a sense of proportion that makes us think sometimes that we can re-make the world. Still it remains true that we may co-operate with that plan and purpose, or work against them. Our opposition to God will not seriously inconvenience Him, even as our co-operation will not materially help Him. For, before God, we are all utterly insignificant. His power is infinite, ours is infinitesimal. So the world moves on to its appointed destiny, howsoever we may choose to act. But this liberty of choice, which is given to us, is of infinite importance to us. By becoming fellow-workers with God,—by adjusting ourselves harmoniously with His plan and purpose,—we may shake ourselves free from the bonds of *karma*. Any abuse of the freedom that is given to us only forges fresh fetters for us. We may know the right and do the wrong Yet this knowledge of the right imposes on us a grave responsibility. We can ignore it only at our peril.

Apart from this manner of arriving at a conception of God as both transcendent and immanent, there is another way of realisation, which involves the practice of *yoga*. You may remember that we were taught two proofs for the reality of the soul. One is based on a psychological analysis of the operations of the mind; the other rests upon the mystic state of *samādhi*. The religious thought of India holds that in such a state, when the whole external world is dead to the *yogin*, when the consciousness of even his body is absent, there is something in him, which is quite alive and quite conscious. This has been considered to be the best and most undeniable proof in regard to the reality of the soul. For psychological analysis need not necessarily lead us to the postulation of the

soul. My analysis may lead me to this conclusion, while you may be quite convinced that our mental life can be explained without a soul of any kind. Both in the East and in the West many philosophers have held that there is no soul. This proof is therefore an uncertain one, while the experience of the *yogin* is definite and convincing. Those who doubt the possibility of the realisation of the soul by the method of *yoga* must first try the experiment themselves. In a similar way there is a double proof for the existence of God. One is the step by step formulation of a comprehensive concept of God, resting partly on an analysis of the totality of universal phenomena, and partly on the religious and ethical needs of human experience. Such a concept is evolved before us during the course of Chapters *7* to *11*. But the practice of *yoga* is also capable of leading us to the realisation of God. What the *viśva-rūpa* did for Arjuna, that the *yogic* realisation may do for us. It will make real our intellectual concepts. We may thereby see God and enter into God. The *yogin*, who has succeeded in God-realisation, will see the whole universe in God and God in all beings.

In whatever manner we arrive at this God-realisation, it is expected to transform our conduct in a particular way. The ethical corollaries of God-realisation are described in the twelfth chapter. Our attitude in relation to God must be one of devotion and self-surrender : and in relation to our fellow-beings, it must be one of equality and unselfish sympathy. Leading our lives thus, we can slay the foundational vice of selfishness, which has built for us this prison-house of flesh. Drinking the *dharmyāmṛita* of Śrī Kṛishṇa's teaching, our soul is freed from its shackles, and attains immortality, so to say. It can no more be compelled to enter the whirl of *samsāra*

This brings us to the end of our study of the second six chapters of the *Gītā*, which form, according to all the principal commentators, a natural division of that work. The ethics of the *Gītā* is based on the double foundation of self-realisation and God-realisation. And both these have been dealt with in the first and second *shaṭkas*. With the thirteenth chapter, whose study we shall take up in our next class, begins the last *shaṭka*, which is concerned with several problems connected with the application of these realisations to individual and social life in human communities.

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A GLOSSARY OF SANSKRIT WORDS.

OCCURRING IN THE TEXT OF THE LECTURES.

Arranged according to the English Alphabet.

A

Abhāva – non-existence.

Abhyāsa-yoga – the practice of repetition.

Adhi-bhūta – the intrinsic essence of all material beings.

Adhidaiva – the intrinsic essence of all deities.

Adhi-daivata – same as *adhi-daiva*.

Adhikārin – a worthy and qualified aspirant.

Adhi-yajña – the intrinsic essence of all acts of worship.

Adhvaryu – a priest of the *Yajur Veda*.

Adhyaksha – one who presides or supervises; a superintending overlord.

Adhyātma – the intrinsic essence of the soul.

Adhyātman – relating to or concerning the soul.

Adhyātma-vidyā – the knowledge relating to the soul.

Ādi-deva – the original primal god: the first god.

Ādi-parvan – the name of the first of the eighteen books into which the *Mahābhārata* is divided.

Advaita – non-duality: oneness: the monistic school of the *Vedānta*.

Advaitin – one who upholds or follows the principles of the *advaita* philosophy.

Ādya – being at the beginning first; original.

Agni – fire; the god of fire.

Agni-hotra – an oblation to Agni, esp. that kind of oblation, which is required to be offered daily.

Āgra-hāyaṇī – literally, the beginner of the year: the name of a constellation consisting of three stars, (*Orionis*) figured by an antelope's head; hence known familiarly as *Mriga-śīrsha*.

Aham-padārtha–the ego the entity denoted by the pronoun I.

Ahaṅkāra – that modification of the principle known as *mahat*, in which the tendency for individualisation in matter makes its appearance for the first time in the evoluation of Nature, according to the Sāṅkhya philosophy: I-ness: the idea that one is the agent, and therefore, the owner of the fruits of the work done by one: egotism.

Āhavanīyāgni - the fire kept burning on the eastern side at a sacrifice : a consecrated fire taken from the householder's perpetual fire and prepared for receiving oblations.

Aiśvara - supreme : mighty : majestic : lordly.

Aja - unborn.

Ākāśa - the ethereal space : the sky or 'ether' considered as one of the five elements, known to Hindu thought : a subtle and ethereal substance, supposed to pervade the universe and to be the peculiar vehicle of sound.

Akshara - imperishable : immutable ; a syllable, letter or sound : the syllable *oṁ*.

Alābha - non-acquirement, the reverse of profit : loss.

Amarsha - impatience; intolerance; non-endurance; anger.

Amṛita - nectar; the ambrosia of the gods conceived to be capable of bestowing immortality on all those who taste it.

Anādi - beginningless.

Ānanda - bliss; joy.

Ananta - endless; the endless one, the name of a mythical serpent.

Anapeksha - having no desires.

Aniketa - having no home.

Antaḥkaraṇa - the inner organ of perception, generally called *manas*

Antakāla-smaraṇa - remembrance at the time of death.

Antaryāmin - internal controller; God as controlling and guiding everything in the universe from within.

Antaryāmitva - internal controllership.

Anuchintana - continuous thought.

Anukampā - mercy; grace; favour.

Anupravaśa - entrance; penetration; interpenetration.

Anurāga - attachment, affection; passion.

Anusamraṇa - continued remembrance.

Aṇuvāka - a chapter of the *Vedas*; a subdivision or section.

Apahata-pāpman - one who is sinless; an epithet of God.

Aprākṛita - not belonging to or derived from Nature; not phenomenal.

Aprameya - immeasurable; inscrutable, indefinable.

Archā - an image set up for worship.

Archirādi-mārga - the path which is described by epithets beginning with light; *deva-yāna* or the path of gods.

Ārsha - relating or belonging to or derived from *ṛishis*; *Vedic*.

Artha - wealth.

Ashṭāvadhāna - the feat of memory wherein attention is directed to eight things simultaneously.

Asubah - ill luck, misfortune.

Asura - a demon or an evil spirit; an enemy of the gods.

Asura-bhāva - demoniacal condition.

Āsurī - demoniacal.

Aśvinī - the first of the twentyseven *nakshatras* or lunar mansions situated at the head of Aries; (*viz*, Aries).

Aśvinīdevatās - the two physicians of the gods; the names of two *Vedic* gods, who are said to appear in the sky before dawn in a carriage drawn by birds or horses.

Ātatāyin - a felon engaged in a murderous deed.

Ātman - the soul or the self, himself or herself.

Ātma-bhāva-stha - seated within one's mental structure; becoming the object of one's meditations.

Ātyanta-prīti-virahita - devoid of complete love.

Aushada - herb, plant; particularly the *soma* plant.

Avatāra - descent: descent of God: incarnation of God as man.

Āveśa - entrance, taking possession of: devotedness; demoniacal possession or frenzy.

Avyakta - non-manifest.

Avyaktāgati - the path (of the) unmanifested; the worship of God conceived as as transcendent and unmanifested.

Avyaya - not subject to change; indestructible.

Avyayī-bhāva - one of the four important classes of compound words known to Sanskrit grammar, wherein the first word is prominent.

B

Bahuvrīhi - literally, possessing much rice: name of a class of compound words, in which the last member, being a substantive, loses its independence as well as its original grammatical character, and serves only to qualify or define another - the literal meaning of the word itself providing an example; in other words, an attributive compound.

Bhagavadgītā - Divine Song: the famous dialogue in the *Mahābhārata* between Arjuna and ŚrīKṛishṇa, treating of the philosophy of conduct. It consists of eighteen chapters and forms part of the *Bhishma-parvan* which itself is one of the eighteen parvans or books into which the great epic is divided.

Bhakta - a devotee, one who worships God through loving devotion.

Bhakti - loving devotion.

Bhakti-mārga - the way of attaining salvation through loving devotion to God.

Bhakti-yoga - the practice of loving devotion directed towards God.

Bhakti-yogin - one who adopts *bhakti-yoga*, a devotee.

Bhartṛi - supporter.

Bhava – existence; state of mind; contemplation: the mind.

Bhāvanā – the internal mental impression forming the basis of conceptual knowledge.

Bhāvanā-prakarsha – an intensification of the process of mental conception so as to make the concepts contained in the mind become internally converted into percepts.

Bhāva-samanvita – adopting or practising contemplation.

Bhaya – fear.

Bheda – in politics, the seduction or enticement of the forces of the enemy by sowing dissensions within their ranks.

Bhoktṛi – enjoyer.

Bhogopakaraṇa – an associated auxiliary instrument for the enjoyment of experiences.

Bhūloka – the terresterial world.

Bhūrbhuvassuvarom – a religious formula, wherein the Supreme Being is conceived as pervading and controlling the three worlds—the earth-world, the heaven-world and the intermediate world of *antariksha*.

Bhūta – an element; elementary matter: a being: a spirit or ghost.

Bhūta-bhāvana – creator of beings.

Bhūteśa – lord of beings.

Bhūta-vrata – a worshipper of ghosts or goblins.

Bṛihat-sāman – name of a celebrated song in the *Sāma-Veda*.

Brahman – the Great Being the Supreme Being or the Infinitely Big Being: the *Veda*: the universe as the visible infinite: name of a class of priests, whose duty it is to know the three *Vedas* and superintend the performance of sacrifices.

Buddhi – the faculty of intelligence.

Buddhi-yoga – a state of mind conducive to union with God.

C

Chaitanya-svarūpa – the nature of consciousness: a thing which is of the nature of consciousness.

Chhāndogya Upnishad – one of the ten principal *Upanishads*: it is attached to the *Sāma-Veda*.

Chhandas – metre, esp. *Vedic* metre: the sacred text of the *Vedic* hymns.

Chakra – the discus: one of the characteristic weapons of Lord Vishṇu.

Chaṇḍāla – an outcast: a man of horribly wicked life.

Chid-rūpa-bhūta – being of the nature of consciousness.

Chit – consciousness: the principle of consciousness.

D

Dākshiṇātyāgni – the southern fire, one of the three fires of a sacrifice.

Dakshiṇāyana - the sun's progress south of equator: the helf year in which the sun moves from north to south.

Dāna - giving, gift: in politics, bribing the enemy.

Daṇḍa - the power of punishment: in politics, war as a means of securing the objects of a state in respect of another.

Daitya - a demon, an enemy of the gods.

Daivī - divine, godlike.

Daksha - one who is skilful or clever.

Dāśarathi - the son of Daśaratha.

Dehātma - viveka - the knowledge of the essential difference between body and soul.

Deva - a god.

Devavrata - a worshipper of the *Vedic* gods.

Devayāna - the path of gods; in ancient Aryan mythology, one of the two paths by which the departing soul may travel.

Dhāman - light: abode.

Dharma - justice and righteousness; virtue; religion; morality; righteousness and duty; a characteristic quality.

Dharma - patnī - a lawful wife, entitled to take part in the religious observances of her husband.

Dharma - rāja - King of Justice; an epithet of Yama, the god of death, and of Yudhishṭhira, the eldest of the Pāṇḍava Princes.

Dharmātman - a saint, a pious or virtuous person.

Dharmyāmṛita - nectar, which is in accordance with morality; the nectar of righteousness.

Dhātṛi - creator; arranger; supporter, maintainer.

Dhūma - smoke.

Dhumādi - mārga - the path which is described by a group of epithets beginning with smoke; the *pitṛi-yāna* or the path of the means of departed ancestors.

Dhyāna - meditation.

Dhyāna - śloka - a stanza intended to serve as an aid for that fixing of attention, which is required in practising continued meditation.

Dur - nirīksha - difficult to be seen or looked at.

Dush - kṛita - evil deed; the tendency impressed on the reincarnating self by evil *karmas*.

Dush-kṛitin - a doer of evil deeds.

Dvandvas - physical or psychological pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, desire and aversion.

Dvandva-samāsa - the compound, uniting two or more words, which, if uncompounded, would be in the same case and connected by conjunctions like 'and'.

Dvesha - aversion: hatred.

Dvitīya - shaṭka - literally the second group of six, a term generally used for denoting Chapters 7 to 12 of the Gītā, forming the second of the

three great divisions into which the work is divided generally.

Dvāpara-yuga-the third of the four great ages or *yugas* of the world.

Dyūta-gambling: playing with dice: the prize won in gambling.

E

Eka-bhakta-one devoted exclusively to God.

Ena-kena-chit-with anything whatsoever.

Etām-(accusative case) this.

G

Gada-mace: a weapon of Lord Vishṇu.

Gandha-smell.

Gandharva-a class of semi-celestial beings, variously described in Hindu mythology.

Gārhapatyāgni-a sacred fire perpetually maintained by the householder, received from his father and transmitted to his descendants, and from which fires for sacrificial purposes are lighted.

Gāyatrī-an ancient metre of *24* syllables; the famous hymn in the Rig *Veda* (III. *62. 10*), which is composed in this metre.

Gītā-song: the *Bhagavadgitā*.

Guṇas-the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti*, viz., *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

Guru-a teacher or preceptor.

H

Harsha-joy.

Hotṛi-a priest of the *Rig Veda*.

Homa-a fire-offering, a sacrifice

I

Indriyas-organs of sense or action.

Īśāvāsyopanishad-The first of the well-known ten *Upanishads*, it belongs to the *Vājasaneya Samhita* known as the *White Yajur Veda*.

Īśvara-master, lord: God, as distinguished from the *nirguṇa-Brahman*, the Absolute without attributes.

J

Jaḍa-devoid of the power of knowing: inert: unconscious.

Jagat-the world: the universe.

Jagatpati-the Lord of the Universe.

Jalpa-prattle; a mode of discussion which has for its object the establishment of a particular point of view, irrespective of its truth, and which attains the object by destructive criticism of other points of view.

Jāmadagnī-the son of Jamadagni.

Japa-silent meditation accompanied by inaudible muttering of a *mantra*.

Japa-yajña-*japa* as an act of worship.

Jāti-smara-a person who has

acquired the power of knowing the nature of his many previous births or states of reincarnation.

Jīvātman-the individual soul.

Jñāna-knowledge, wisdom, theory.

Jñāna-mārga-the path of knowledge or of wisdom for attaining salvation.

Jñānānanda-svarūpa-of the nature of knowledge and bliss.

Jñāṇa-svarūpa-of the nature of knowledge.

Jñāna-yajña-a moral form sacrifice: mental worship.

Jñāna-yoga-the practice of meditation and mental concentration for the attainment of self-realisation and God-realisation.

Jñāna-yogin-one who practises *jñāna-yoga*.

Jñānendriyas-organs of sense.

Jñānin-the man of knowledge: the man who is possessed of supreme wisdom and has arrived at the realisation derivable from the practice of *yoga*.

Jyotis-light.

Jyotishṭoma-a *soma* sacrifice, considered as typical of a whole class of sacrifices.

K

Kal-a root meaning (i) to count, (ii) to urge, and (iii) to do.

Kāla-time: death: the god of death.

Kālaḥkalayatāmaham-I am Time among those, who do (evil to others).

Kali-yuga-the last of the four great ages or *yugas* of the world.

Kalpa-a period of time consisting of *4,320,000,000* years.

Kāma-desire: object of desire: wishful will.

Kāmadhenu-the cow of plenty, yielding all desires.

Karkaśa-rūpa-hard: harsh, rough.

Karma-work: act: action done in the previous states of the embodied existence of the soul: the impressed tendency generated in relation to the soul in consequence of the acts done in the previous states of its re-incarnation.

Karma-kāṇḍa-that part of the *Vedas*, which deals with sacrifices and the rules and rituals connected therewith.

Karma-mārga-the path of work and duty: the *Vedic* path of ritualism.

Karma-māyā-samāvṛita-surrounded by *prakṛiti*, under the influence of *karma*.

Karma-niṣṭa-one who practises the path of *karma*, *a karma-yogin*.

Karma-phala-the fruits of *karma*.

Karma-yoga-the doctrine of work: the right practice of duty.

Karma-yogin-one who successfully follows the doctrine

of work by the right practice of duty.

Karmendriyas-the organs of action.

Kaṭhopanishad-one of the ten well-known *Upanishads*; it is attached to the *Yajur-Veda*.

Kavi-poet: seer: wise sage.

Kāṇda-a section of a work: part: chapter.

Kratu-a sacrificial rite or ceremony.

Kṛishṇārpaṇa-dedicated to Śrī Kṛishṇa.

Kṛishṇa-vrata-a worshipper of Śrī Kṛishṇa.

Kṛita-yuga-the first of the four great *yugas* or ages of the world.

Kshattriya-the aristocratic military caste in the organisation of Aryan society.

Kshema-the safeguarding of the good that has already been obtained: order as contrasted with progress.

Kshetrajña-the knower of the field: the soul, which is the principle of consciousness.

Kūṭastha-he who is immovably aloft: the spirit which is uninfluenced by the tendencies of the flesh.

L

Lābha-receiving, gaining: gain, advantage, profit.

Loka-brahma-viveka—discrimination of the world from God.

Liṅga-śarīra-the subtile frame or body which is not destroyed at death, and which accompanies the soul in its journey from reincarnation to reincarnation.

Laya-destruction.

M

Mad-bhāva-my state or condition.

Mad-yogamāśrita-dependent on my *yoga*.

Māgha-the month beginning with the winter solstice in which the moon is in conjunction with the constellation, *Magha*, in Leo on the full moon day.

Mahābhārata-the great Indian national epic of eighteen books known to have been composed by Vyāsa.

Maharshi-a great *ṛishi* or sage.

Mahat-one of the principles forming a link in the Sāṅkhyan chain of universal evolution: that evolved condition of *prakṛiti* in which it is first made manifest and able to produce many material things making up the universe.

Mahātman-a great soul.

Mahā-yuga-a great *yuga*, consisting of the period covered by the four *yugas*, the *Kṛita*, the *Treta*, the *Dvāpara* and the *Kali*: a period of 4,320,000 years.

Makara-an acquatic monster.

Makāra-the sound *m*.

Mamakāra - mine-ness : the idea of ownership in regard to the results of one's work ; the idea of owning property.

Manas - the internal organ of sense or the faculty of attention : the mind.

Maṇḍala - a heap, collection : a division of the *Rig Veda*.

Māṇḍūkyopanishad - one of the ten well known *Upanishads* ; it belongs to the *Atharva Veda*.

Mano-vāk-kāya - mind, language and body, making up the three instruments of the soul known as *trikaraṇas*.

Mantras - Vedic hymns : charms, prayer-formulas.

Mārga - way, path.

Mārgaśīrsha - the month, December - January, in which the moon is in conjunction with the *Mṛigaśīrsha* asterism in Orion on the full-moon day.

Maunin - one who is silent.

Māyā - wonderful powers : illusion : the phenomenal world as hiding the ultimate reality.

Moksha - deliverance : the salvation of soul-emancipation : the blissful, beatific freedom arising from perfect self-realisation.

Mṛigaśīrsha - the constellation *Orion*, which is in the shape of an antelope's head.

Mṛita-sañjīvanī-vidyā - the science of giving life to the dead.

Mūla-prakṛiti - the subtle *prakṛiti* conceived as the root-source of all the material things found in the universe.

Muni - a seer, a sage : one blessed with the intuitive vision of inner inspiration.

N

Nāga - a snake.

Naishkarmya - the state of being unaffected by *karma*.

Naiyāyika - a follower of the *Nyāya* system founded by Gautama.

Nakshatra - a star or constellation : a lunar mansion.

Nimitta - sign, token : instrument : the efficient or instrumental cause.

Nirguṇa-brahman - the Absolute without attributes.

Nirīśvara - Godless : atheistic : an epithet applied to the system of Sāṅkhya, founded by Kapila.

Nishkāmya-karma - work free from desire.

Nitya - ever-enduring eternal.

Nityābhiyukta - ever devoted.

Nitya-yukta - same as *nityābhiyukta*.

Nivṛitti - withdrawal : renunciation.

O

Om - the syllable called *praṇava*, understood to denote the Supreme Being : it is usually uttered in association with the recital of *Vedic* hymns and

religious prayers and formulas and is conceived to have a mystic significance of great value.

Oṅkāra – the syllable *Om*.

Omnamo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya – "*Om*, salutation to the Lord Vāsudeva," a formula used by the sect of *Bhāgavatas*.

Oshadīśa – literally, the lord of the herbs: an epithet of the moon.

P

Pāpa–sin: sinful action: the tendency impressed on the minds of people by their evil deeds.

Para–supreme.

Para-brahman–the supremely transcendent and unlimitedly Big Being: God.

Parama Purusha–the Supreme Person: God.

Parama-purushārtha–the supreme purpose of human life: the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment.

Pariṇāma–evolution: the doctrine that the effect is always cause modified.

Pariṇāma-vādin–one who advocates the theory of evolution.

Paurāṇika Sāṅkhya–the theistic *Sāṅkhya* founded by *Vyāsa*.

Pitāmaha–grandfather: Brahmā, the four-faced creator.

Pīṭikā–introduction: preface.

Pitṛis–the manes of departed ancestors.

Pitṛi-vrata–a worshipper of the *pitṛis*.

Pitṛi-loka–the world of the *pitṛis*.

Pitṛi-yāna–the path of the fathers, one of the two paths by which the souls were believed to travel in ancient Aryan mythology.

Prabhā–halo: luminosity.

Prakaraṇa–section: part.

Prajāpati–an epithet of "the lords of created beings," first created by *Brahmā*.

Prāṇa–the vital air.

Praṇava–the mystic syllable *Om*.

Prapatti – self – surrender to God.

Prapatti-mārga–the way of *prapatti*.

Prapatti-yoga–the practice of *prapatti*.

Pratijñā-virodhāt – an aphorism of the *Vedānta Sūtras* (I-i. 9) meaning "Because of the contradiction of the proposition." The proposition referred to is the statement in the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* that by knowing a certain thing all other things become known. (*Chh. U.* VI, I. 3.)

Prīti-pūrvakam–with love literally, preceded by love.

Pravṛitti–activity: the active life of aggressive achivement.

Pūjya–worthy of honour, venerable.

Puṇya-merit: meritorious deed: the tendency impressed on the minds of people by their good deeds.

Puṇyatva-virtuousness: the quality of being *puṇya* or merit.

Purāṇa-ancient.

Purāṇa Purusha-the Ancient Person: an epithet of God.

Purāṇas-a class of Hindu sacred writings, containing the myths and legends and traditional history of the ancient Hindus.

Purodhas-a family priest: the king's domestic chaplain.

Pūrṇa-kāmin-one whose desires are fulfilled.

Purusha-a soul: a person: he who abides within an embodiment; God as the soul of the universe.

Purushārtha-an object of human pursuit: an aim of life.

Purush Sūkta-the famous *Vedic* hymn which describes the creation of the universe from the Supreme Person (*R.V.* X. *90*).

Purushottama-the best of *purushas*; God.

Pūrva Purusha-the Ancient *purusha*; God.

R

Rāga-desire: longing: longing for pleasure and desirable objects.

Rāja-guhya-the 'royal' secret.

Rajas-that 'quality' of *prakṛiti*, which represents its highly active condition, full of enlivening and aggressive energy.

Rāja-yoga-the king of *yogas*: the best of *yogas*: the *yoga* of meditation and mental concentration, aiming at self-realisation and God-realisation.

Rajoguṇa-the 'quality' of *rajas*.

Rāmāyaṇa-the celebrated Sanskrit epic of Vālmīki, dealing with the story of Rāma and his wife Sītā.

Ramyāvasatha-priya-fond of a lovely residence.

Ratha-saptami-the seventh day in the light half of the lunar month of *Māgha*, so called because it is believed to mark a turning point in the progress of the chariot of the sun, which begins its journey from south to north on that day.

Rik-a hymn: a verse of the *Rig Veda*.

Rig Veda-one of the four *Vedas*, the sacred scripture of of the Hindus.

Ritvik-a priest: the four chief *ṛitviks* are the *hotṛi*, the *udgātṛi*, the *adhvaryu* and the *Brahman*.

Rūpa-form: colour.

S

Śabda-sound: the quality of *ākāśa*.

Sacchidānanda-existence-knowledge-bliss, the three

characteristic attributes of the Supreme as well as of the individual soul.

Sādhu-a good or honest man: a saint, a sage: a term now applied to wandering ascetics.

Sadṛiśi-like.

Sahaja-kāma-the natural or inborn desire: the instinctive urge to satisfy the primal needs of life

Samādhi-concentrated attention and mental realisation: the last stage of mental concentration in the practice of *yoga*, the stage in which the person practising it is so fully absorbed in self-awareness as to be altogether unaware of the external world:

Sāman-peaceful negotiation, one of the four kinds of policy known to Hindu politics: a metrical hymn or song of praise: the *Śāma-Veda*.

Samatva-evenness: equality: evenness and impartiality of disposition in relation to pleasure and pain, to success and failure: equality of sympathy and love in relation to all beings.

Samsāra-the course of soul's recurring reincarnation.

Samskāras-the impression left upon the mind by previous acts of experience: internally impressed tendencies: agreeable and disagreeable mental effects, which good and bad deeds respectively produce.

Sanātana-everlasting.

Saṅga-attachment: attachment to the experiences and objects of senses.

Saṅkalpa-kāma-volitional desire: sophisticated desire, as distinguished from the natural or inborn desire, and calculated to pander to the satisfaction of the senses.

Saṅkalpa-prabhava-kāma-same as *saṅkalpa-kāma*.

Sāṅkhya-knowledge: theory: the philosophy of Kapila.

Sāṅkhya-kārikā-name of a work by Īśvarakṛishṇa, which expounds the system of Sāṅkhya in a small number of mnemonic stanzas.

Sannyāsin-one who has renounced all worldly attachments: an ascetic: a mendicant monk.

Saras-a lake: any large sheet of standing water.

Sarga-creation: manifestation.

Sarpa-a snake.

Sarvajña-all-knowing: omniscient.

Sarva-karma-phala-tyāga-the abandonment of the fruits of all actions.

Sarva-loka-maheśvaratva-the lordship of all the (three) worlds.

Sarvāntaryāmin-the internal controller of all, the immanent God.

Sarvārambha-parityāgin-one who relinquishes all endeavour.

Satya-saṅkalpa-kāmin-one whose desires are all fulfilled.

Sarvato-mukha-facing all sides.

Sarvatraga - going everywhere: all-pervading.

Śaśi-sūrya-netram-having the sun and the moon for eyes.

Śāstra - any sacred book or composition of divine or standard authority.

Sat-existence: that which exists.

Satata-yukta-ever-devoted.

Śatāvadhāna-the feat of multiple attention and memory directed to note one hundred things at one and the same time.

Sattva-that 'quality' of *prakṛiti* which is observable in the steady condition of balanced motion and calm conscious life.

Sattva-guṇa-the 'quality' of *sattva*.

Sattva-vats-those possessed of *sattva*.

Sāttvika - pertaining to or characterised by *sattva-guṇa*.

Satya-kāma-one whose desires are true in the sense that they are fulfilled: an epithet of God.

Satya-saṅkalpa - one who has the power of making all that one wills come out true.

Sāvarṇas-an epithet applied to certain *Manus*.

Siddhas - inspired sages or seers: semi-divine beings, said to be of great purity and holiness, and to be specially characterised by the well known eight supernatural faculties.

Siddhi - attainment of end: acquisition of occult powers.

Śikharin-one having a peak: a mountain.

Ślokas - stanzas: esp. stanzas composed in *anushṭub* metre, which is called *śloka*.

Soma-latā-the *soma* plant.

Soma-yāga-a great triennial sacrifice, in which the *soma* juice is drunk.

Śrī Bhāshya-the well-known commentary on the *Vedānta Sūtras* by Rāmānuja, the great South Indian reformer and philosopher.

Śṛishṭi - creation: manifestation.

Śṛishṭi-kalpa-the *kalpa* of creation.

Śubha - auspicious, fortunate, lucky, happy.

Śubhāśubha - parityāgin-one who has given up what is *śubha* as well as what is *aśubha*.

Śuchi-pure.

Śūdras-the fourth class in the ancient Aryan organisation of society.

Sukha-pleasure: happiness.

Sukṛita-good deed: impressed tendency due to good deeds.

Suvar-loka - the world of heaven.

Svadhā-an exclamation used in offering oblations to the gods, or, more frequently, to the spirits of departed ancestors.

Svāhā-an exclamation used in offering oblations to the gods.

Svarga-the celestial world of

Indra and other *Vedic* gods.

Svasti-an exclamation of benediction or praise.

T

Tamas-that 'quality' of matter, which makes it dull, immobile and inert.

Tāmasa-pertaining to or characterised by *tamo guṇa*.

Tamo-guṇa-the 'quality' of *tamas*.

Tanmātras-the subtle bases of the five *bhūtas* ot elements of matter.

Tanmyatva-the being contained in or identical with that.

Tanu-body: limb.

Tapas-the heat felt in consequence of self-restraint and internal effort; the practice of religious austerities.

Tat-purusha-a class of compounds in which the last member continues to be the principal member of the compound and preserves its original character, while being qualified or defined by the first member thereof-the word itself, meaning 'his servant', forming an apposite example.

Tattva-'that-ness', truth: a first principle.

Tejas-brilliance, lustre: spirit, energy; one of the five external elements.

Trayī-the triple (science), i.e., the sacred revelation in its three-fold form of hymn, sacrificial formula and song, afterwards represented by the *Rig*, *Yajur* and *Sāma Vedas*.

Tretāgni-the three sacred fires collectively.

Tretāyuga-the second of the four great ages of the world

Trimūrtis-the three forms or shapes of the Supreme Being—Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva

Tyāga-abandoning, renouncing.

U

Udāsīna-indifferent.

Udgātṛi-a chanter: the priest who chants the hymns of the *Sāma Veda*.

Udvega-agitation, anxiety.

Uraga-a snake.

Ushas-dawn, personified as the daughter of Heaven and the sister of the *Ādityas*.

Uttarāyaṇa-the period of the sun's progress north of the equator.

Upanishads-a class of *Vedic* works, which contain the fundamental thoughts and teachings of the ancient sages of India, as bearing on Hindu religion, philosophy and metaphysics.

V

Vāda-debate, discussion.

Vajra-the thunderbolt, which is the weapon of Indra.

Vairāgya-freedom from desire: dispassionate non-attachment; dispassionate disinterestedness.

Vaiśya - the third class in the Hindu organisation of society; a member of the trading class: the common freeman of the ancient Áryan community.

Vas - a root meaning 'to dwell'.

Veda - the sacred scripture of the Hindus.

Vedānta - the concluding portion of the *Veda*: the *Upanishads*.

Vedānta-Sūtras - literally, aphorisms on the *Vedānta*: specially, the name of a work by *Bādarāyaṇa*, which attempts to expound the teachings of the *Upanishads* systematically in short aphorisms: it is the work on which all the great *āchāryas* have taken their stand.

Vibhava - technically, the special manifestations of God collectively.

Vibhūti - a special manifestation of God.

Viśishṭa-bhajaṇa - distinguished or superior worship.

Vishishtādvaitā - the ame of the school of *Vedānta*, which is expounded by Rāmānuja.

Viśvarūpa - universal form: the universal form of God.

Vitaṇḍa - perverse destructive argument, which does not aim at truth, and which makes no constructive suggestions.

Vyāpti - pervasion.

Vyāsa-mata - the doctrine of Vyāsa: the name of the theistic Sāṅkhya.

Vyūha - a manifestation of God: technically, the universe as a form of God.

Y

Yajña - an act of worship, a sacrifice.

Yajur-Veda - one of the four *Vedas*.

Yatātman - one who has a controlled mind or self.

Yathā-kratu-nyāya - the law or principle which declares that the kind of religion and worship adopted by one here in this life invariably gives rise to an accordant realisation in the course of one's progress in religious thought and spiritual life hereafter.

Yathoktam - as has been said already; to the same effect.

Yoga - practical application: concentration of mind: the system of Hindu philosophy expounded by Patañjali: practice or practical application of a rule of conduct, established by speculation or theoretical reasoning: a reasoned exposition: the acquisition of such things and advantages as have not been obtained: the wonderful power of God: the intimate relation between God and the universe.

Yoga-māyā - the *Prakṛiti* which is evolved out of the wonderful power of God.

Yoga-māyā-samāvṛita - surrounded by *yoga-māyā*, that

is, hidden behind the universe, spontaneously and by reason of wonderful powers.

Yogin – one who has practised *yoga* and attained self-realisation in the state of *samādhi*; a knower of truth.

Yuga – an age or epoch of the world.

Yukta – one who is duly devoted to the performance of duty: the man of accomplished *yoga*.

Yuktatama – he who is the best among accomplished *yogins*.

THE TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION FOR SANSKRÍT AS USED IN THESE LECTURES.

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a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛi	ṛī

ऌ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	ं	ः
ḷi	e	ai	o	au	ṁ	ḥ

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ

च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
ch	chh	j	jh	ñ

ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ

त	थ	द	ध	न
t	th	d	dh	n

प	फ	ब	भ	म
p	ph	b	bh	m

य	र	ल	व
y	r	l	v

श	ष	स	ह
ś	sh	s	h

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