

THE GITA  
AND ITS  
SYNTHESIS OF YOGA

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KIREET JOSHI



The Gita  
and Its  
Synthesis of Yoga



*This book is addressed to all young people who, I urge, will study and respond to the following message of Sri Aurobindo:*

***“It is the young who must be the builders of the new world, — not those who accept the competitive individualism, the capitalism or the materialistic communism of the West as India’s future ideal, nor those who are enslaved to old religious formulas and cannot believe in the acceptance and transformation of life by the spirit, but all those who are free in mind and heart to accept a completer truth and labour for a greater ideal. They must be men who will dedicate themselves not to the past or the present but to the future. They will need to consecrate their lives to an acceding of their lower self, to the realisation of God in themselves and in all human beings and to a whole-minded and indefatigable labour for the nation and for humanity.”***

*(Sri Aurobindo, ‘The Supramental Manifestation Upon Earth’ Vol. 16, SABCL, p.331)*



*Dedicated to*

*Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*





# THE GITA AND ITS SYNTHESIS OF YOGA

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First edition, 2009

ISBN: 978-81-89490-07-2

Cover-design :

Macro Graphics Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi-110019

Printed by :

Popular Printers, Jhilmil Industrial Area, Delhi-110095

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## Preface

In his immortal book '*Essays on the Gita*', Sri Aurobindo has explained the fundamental value of the yoga of the Gita and the contribution it can make to the new age of development in the following words:

“We of the coming day stand at the head of a new age of development which must lead to such a new and larger synthesis. We are not called upon to be orthodox Vedantins of any of the three schools or Tantrics or to adhere to one of the theistic religions of the past or to entrench ourselves within the four corners of the teaching of the Gita. That would be to limit ourselves and to attempt to create our spiritual life out of the being, knowledge and nature of others, of the men of the past, instead of building it out of our own being and potentialities. We do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of the future. A mass of new material is flowing into us; we have not only to assimilate the influences of the great theistic religions of India and of the world and a recovered sense of the meaning of Buddhism, but to take full account of the potent though limited revelations of modern knowledge and seeking; and, beyond that, the remote and dateless past which seemed to be dead is returning upon us with an effulgence of many luminous secrets long lost to the consciousness of mankind but now breaking out again from behind the veil. All this points to a new, a very rich, a very vast synthesis; a fresh and widely embracing harmonisation of our gains is both an intellectual and a spiritual necessity of the future. But just as the past syntheses have taken those which preceded them for

their starting-point, so also must that of the future, to be on firm ground, proceed from what the great bodies of realised spiritual thought and experience in the past have given. Among them the Gita takes a most important place.” (*Essays on the Gita* Vol. 13, SABCL, p8)

Sri Aurobindo has also summed up the argument of the Gita in the following two paragraphs:

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

The first step is Karmayoga, the selfless sacrifice of works, and here the Gita’s insistence is on action. The second is Jnanayoga, the self-realisation and knowledge of



the true nature of the self and the world; and here the insistence is on knowledge; but the sacrifice of works continues and the path of Works becomes one with but does not disappear into the path of Knowledge. The last step is Bhaktiyoga, adoration and seeking of the supreme Self as the Divine Being, and here the insistence is on devotion; but the knowledge is not subordinated, only raised, vitalised and fulfilled, and still the sacrifice of works continues; the double path becomes the triune way of knowledge, works and devotion. And the fruit of the sacrifice, the one fruit still placed before the seeker, is attained, union with the divine Being and oneness with the supreme divine Nature.” (*Essays on the Gita* Vol. 13, SABCL, pp 34, 35)

The modern epistemology has come to be confined to the problems of the knowledge of the world as it seems to us, — in all its divided forms and atomistic formulations, and it forbids the seeker to venture into the realm of the knowledge of God and Soul and their relationship with the world. And yet, the contemporary world demands from humanity a vast and unprecedented effort to transcend the barriers of all denials, including denials of materialism as also denials of asceticism and world-negating philosophies and spiritual disciplines. We are in a need of a new epistemology, a new philosophy of a denial of denials and a new synthesis of yoga in which spiritual disciplines of the past can all be reconciled and in which a path is opened up for an actual and living synthesis of Spirit and Matter. It is in the context of this great need that we need to turn to the great synthetic spirit that we find in the Gita and also to the message of union with Para Prakriti, which is one of the master-concepts of the Gita.

Yoga is both a science and a technology, and yoga is,

therefore, capable of answering the disabling hesitations of scepticism as also the facile comforts of agnosticism, — not only in terms of the affirmative knowledge it can provide but also in terms of the methodologies by which that knowledge can be confirmed and verified. It is important that yoga is studied as a methodised effort, and therefore, we should ask the question as to what are the affirmations of the yogic knowledge and what have been the methods by which the yogic knowledge can be confirmed, modified and expanded, as we do in respect of every discipline of science.

In this book a special effort has been made to show how the knowledge of the Vedas and the Upanishads is confirmed by the processes of yogic methods, and how that knowledge has been expounded in the Gita as also by the discovery of a new method of yoga, — the method of all-embracing self-surrender to the Divine. This method has been expounded in the last chapter of the Gita, and it is significant that it is this method, as applied *fully*, has been instrumental in the development of the new knowledge that we find in the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and in the development of the new synthesis of yoga, which has come to be called Integral Yoga.

This book does not dwell on philosophical issues, but its interest is in the descriptions of the yogic experiences that we find in the Gita as also in the description of the methods by the application of which the yogic knowledge contained in the Gita can be arrived at and can also be confirmed by process of verification by any seeker who wishes to have the proof, — experiential proof — of the synthesis of yoga that we find in the Gita.

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## Introduction

The Age of the Vedas and the principal Upanishads was the Age of Intuition,<sup>1</sup> but this Age was followed by the Age of Reason. Inspired texts of the Veda and the Upanishads made room for metaphysical philosophy, even as afterwards metaphysical philosophy had to give place to experimental Science. The study of the history of the metaphysical philosophy of India demonstrates the great heights to which the pure reason developed, and the study of the experimental Science that developed in India demonstrates multised development of the mixed action of the reason in minute subtlety and complexity; this mixed action of the reason explored the domains of experimental and pragmatic knowledge, and this afforded extreme possibilities of the development of the experiences of the physical mind and senses. This process can be seen as a circle of progress, since the results of the Age of Intuition came to be critically examined and assimilated by the Age of Pure Reason, and similarly the results of metaphysical philosophy came to be critically tested by the experiences and experiments that were meant to meet the demands of the mixed action of Reason and the physical mind and senses. In retrospect, it can be said that this succession and this attempt to separate assimilation enlarged the scope of inquiry and prevented the exclusive domination of any particular part of human consciousness and nature. A more complete harmony of different parts of knowledge was prepared.

In the development of philosophy that we see in the post-

Upanishadic period, two distinctive stages can be discerned. In the first stage, Indian philosophers recognized the earlier results of Intuition as an authority superior to Reason. But at the same time, they started from Reason and tested the results it gave them, holding only those conclusions to be valid which were supported by the supreme authority of intuitive experience. They proceeded with the united consent of the two great authorities, Reason and Intuition. But in the second stage, the natural trend of Reason to assert its own supremacy triumphed. This explains the rise of conflicting schools even among those which founded themselves in theory on the Veda but used its text as a weapon against each other. This only illustrates how Reason functions; it proceeds by analysis and division and assembles its facts to form a whole; but in the assemblage so formed there are opposite anomalies, logical incompatibilities. In order to form a flawlessly logical system, Reason tends to affirm some aspects and to negate others which conflict with its chosen conclusions. The synthesis of intuitional knowledge that was present in the Veda and the early Vedanta was thus broken up, and devices, methods and standards of varying value were employed by which entire freedom was acquired for metaphysical speculations conducted by Reason.

Nevertheless, efforts were made from time to time to recombine philosophical systems into some image of the old catholicity and unity. Three great declarations of the Upanishads have constantly remained prominent during the course of the development of Indian philosophy, namely, "I am He", "Thou art That, O Shvetaketu," "All this is the Brahman; this Self is the Brahman." The conceptions of Brahman, Purusha and Ishwara have remained alive, and they still carry something of the old burden of the

inexpressible Reality. The questions which have always occupied the thought of India were concerning the relationship of the movement of becoming to any discoverable or realizable absolute Unity, and how the ego, whether generated by the movement or cause of the movement, can return to the true Self, Divinity, or Reality that was declared by the Vedanta.

## PART ONE

### 1. Gita as a Yoga-Shastra

Against this background of the general trend of the development of Indian philosophy, we may notice that four systems of philosophy, Vedavāda, Sankhya, Yoga and Vedanta, were prominent at the time when the war of the Mahabharata was fought and the perplexities arising from the conflict between Sankhya and Yoga bewildered and disabled Arjuna at the crucial moment of the commencement of the war to such an acute point of crisis that Sri Krishna, the charioteer of Arjuna in the war, had to enter into those perplexities and related confusions during the course of the dialogue that ensued between him and Arjuna. It is this dialogue that constitutes the entire text of the Gita.

It is in the course of this dialogue that we find a great reconciliation between Sankhya and Yoga by means of the Vedanta. And it is this reconciliation which we find as a philosophical support of the great synthesis of the yoga of the Gita. Our primary aim here is to study records of yogic experiences and to avoid scholastic debates of interpretation of these records. This is not to deny the importance of philosophical enquiry and importance of the question of the justification and value of yogic knowledge and yogic methods. What role philosophy should play in a realm of knowledge which claims the arrival of that knowledge by surpassing the methods of philosophy or methods of intellectual reasoning can itself be a philosophical question

and an enquiry into this question, if it is to be denied at all, has still to be defended philosophically and to the satisfaction of the demands that can legitimately be made by the intellect in its pure search for truth and truth alone. But the scope of our study here is limited to a primary effort to study the data of yogic experience as they are available to us in their original purity, and to underline those crucial data of yogic experiences which are related centrally to the synthesis of yoga. The synthesis of yoga that is contained in the Gita, however, falls in a period when the Age of Reason in the history of India had already begun and advanced considerably and certain philosophical systems were in a fairly advanced stage of development; philosophical climate had become so prominent that the leaders and increasing number of people representing the common mind had begun to share philosophical climate so dynamically that in every field of knowledge and action, ultimate questions of rational justification were being raised and sought to be answered. In that climate, we find the living-force of the Gita.

As a result, we find two distinguishing features of the text. First of all, the Gita deals with philosophical systems of thought which were at that time influencing the modes of the pursuit of knowledge and action, and while dealing with them, we find in the Gita, not only the spirit of philosophical enquiry but even the sharpness, clarity and subtlety in the development of the argument and in the method of the argument, even though it cannot be said that the Gita is a philosophical treatise. The very nature of the occasion in which the dialogue of the Gita is set does not permit any full or adequate philosophical enquiry. Secondly, the exposition of the yoga, which is the central subject of the Gita, follows critical, philosophical and scientific rigour of system-

building. As a result, the Gita has been rightly regarded as yoga-shastra, a systematic exposition of the principles and methods of yoga, an assured knowledge that can be stated on the basis of detailed scrutiny, constant questioning and repeated verification over a long period of the history of yoga starting from the Veda and Upanishads and subsequent periods during which there was decline and loss of the Yogic knowledge, which was, however, restudied in the light of yogic experiences and realizations of the Teacher, who is himself reputed to be the Master of Yoga (*yogeshwara*). Considering this rich background, the value of the Gita for the enquiry in which we are engaged is enormous.

The Gita is primarily a book of a practical system of yoga, and it brings in metaphysical ideas only as explanatory of its practical system; it does not merely declare Vedantic Knowledge, but it founds knowledge and devotion upon works even as it uplifts works to knowledge, their culmination, and informs them with devotion as the very heart and kernel of their spirit. Again, it founds its yoga upon the analytical philosophy of the Sankhya, takes that as a starting-point and always keeps it as a large element of its method and doctrine; but still it proceeds far beyond it, negatives even some of its characteristic tendencies; it manifests a radical spirit, both philosophical and spiritual, and it does not hesitate to question Vedavada that was being advocated in that age as a Vedic path of sacrifice and ritualistic worship of the Vedic gods for fulfillment of human desires; it questions even Brahmapada, which was being advocated in that age as the Vedanta, in order to reestablish the authentic truths of the yoga of the Veda and the Upanishads in a clear and systematic manner. The Gita finds the means of reconciling the lower analytical knowledge of



Sankhya with the higher synthetic truth, which underlines and reaffirms all that is to be known through the Veda (as distinguished from Vedavada), and all that represents the truths of Vedanta expounded in the Principal Upanishads. It is on account of these elements that the Gita is recognized as one of the three authorities for the Vedantic teaching, the other two being the Upanishads and Brahmasutra. And the Gita is so highly esteemed that it is ranked as almost the thirteenth Upanishad.

## **2. A Most Difficult Dilemma of Human Life and Gita's Solution**

The greatest significance of the Gita lies in the fact that it proposes a solution to a central typical problem of human life that presents itself at a certain critical stage of development. We may say that Arjuna to whom the teaching is addressed is a representative man, and the problem that he faced arose at a certain height of ethical concern in the midst of an actual and symbolic battlefield (Kurukshetra, which is also Dharmakshetra). He had come to the battlefield motivated by the ideal of a fight for justice. But as he gazed at the armies and looked in the face of the myriads of the champions of unrighteousness whom he had to meet and conquer and slay, the revelation of the meaning of a civil and domestic war came to him. He was then overcome suddenly by a violent, sensational, physical and moral crisis. "What after all," he asked himself in effect, "is this fight for justice when reduced to its practical terms, but just a fight for the interest of oneself, one's brothers and one's party for possession and enjoyment and rule?"

The entire train of argument that Arjuna presents to Sri

Krishna is very instructive, and the premises and the conclusions of the argument lead to such a dilemma that the search for its solution necessitated a revolutionary change of perception and establishment in a new status of yogic knowledge in the widest and integral sweep.

Yoga has many gates of entry, and moral experience at an acute point of development throws up such a dilemma that the standards of conduct erected by human consciousness collide with each other so critically that one is obliged to enter into the gates of yoga in search of a true solution. When we examine the argument of Arjuna, we shall find that the crisis that confronted Arjuna was no ordinary crisis; it arose at a point where Arjuna had striven his very best to fulfill the demands of the standards of conduct or standards of dharma with his utmost sincerity, and even at that point of crisis, he was prepared for a quest which promised the possibility of fullness of action which was to be totally free from blemish. It is in that quest that Sri Krishna found it indispensable to provide that vast and integral knowledge of the workings of universe, of the deepest roots of those workings and of the relations of the divine consciousness with human will and human action; Sri Krishna went farther and showed the integral method of combining that integral knowledge with motivation of complete surrender to the divine consciousness, the surrender of human will and human action so that they may be uplifted, transformed and so divinized that the resultant would be fullness of spiritual action.

### **3. Arjuna's Argument**

Let us state the argument of Arjuna: "I do not see any

good by slaying my own people in the fight. O Krishna! I do not long for victory, nor kingdom, nor pleasures. O Govinda! Of what use is kingdom to us, or enjoyments, or even life? Those for whose sake we desire to gain kingdom, enjoyments and pleasures, they are arrayed in battle, not caring for their lives and riches...; even if they kill me, I do not want to kill them, even for the kingdom of the three worlds, — what then to speak of gaining this earth? What pleasures can be ours after we have killed the sons of Dhritarashtra? Sin will only accrue to us if we kill these evil ones. Even if they, whose minds are overpowered by greed, see no wrong in destruction of families and no crime in treachery to friends, why should we not have wisdom to refrain from this sin, — we who see the wrong in the destruction of the family? With the destruction of the families, the eternal family tradition of dharma is destroyed: with the destruction of dharma, the entire society is overcome by adharma, unrighteousness. When society is overcome by unrighteousness, the women of our entire tradition become impure. And as a result, perverse progeny is produced.... Those who destroy the dharma of the tradition will be responsible for the ruin of the race, the collapse of its high traditions and ethical degradation; hell for the authors of such a crime. Therefore, it is more for my welfare that the sons of Dhritarashtra armed should slay me unarmed and unresisting. I will not fight.”<sup>2</sup>

If we analyze this argument, we shall find the following steps:

In the first place, Arjuna argued that he would like to reject that aim of life which seeks enjoyment and happiness, or, in other words, the hedonistic aim.

Secondly, he declared that he would reject the aim which seeks to attain victory and rule and power and government of men, — the aim that was prescribed in Indian dharma for the kshatriya, the man of power and action.

Thirdly, he rejected the ethical element that was the main spring of the entire preparation for the war. The arguments in this connection could be summarized as follows:

- (a) What exactly is “justice” involved in fighting the war that was about to commence? Was it not, he asked, interest of himself, his brothers, and his party for possession, enjoyment and rule? And even if it be granted that these aims were justified, he raised the question as to what would be the means of securing that justice. Would it not mean, he asked, the sacrifice of right maintenance of social and national life which in person of the kin of race stood before him opposing him in the battlefield?
- (b) Turning to another line of argument, Arjuna felt that even if happiness and life were desirable, they were so only if they were shared with all others, particularly with “our own people”. But here Arjuna argued, “Our own people” are to be slain, and who would consent to slay them for the sake of all the earth and even for the kingdom of the three worlds?
- (c) At this stage, Arjuna formulated even a more fundamental objection. He declared that slaughter is a heinous crime, in which there is no right and no justice. And further, the sin became graver when those who were to be slain were objects of love and reverence.
- (d) Formulating this ethical argument, Arjuna conceded that

the sons of Dhritarashtra were guilty of great offences, of sins of greed, and selfish passion, but he argued that they were overpowered by ignorance and they had no sense of guilt. On the other hand, would it be right, he asked in effect, to enter into sinful act voluntarily with a clear knowledge that sin was to be committed?

- (e) Once again, Arjuna brought in another ethical consideration. Even if a sin was to be committed and even if that could be justified because that was inevitable in the performance of the dharma of the kshatriya, how could it be justified if that leads to the destruction of family morality, social law, law of the nation? Arjuna declared that family itself could be corrupted, race would be sullied, law of race, morality, and family would be destroyed. And who would be responsible for these crimes? Indeed, those, in particular, who would enter into the war with a knowledge and sense of guilt and sin.

These arguments led Arjuna to declare that he would not fight.<sup>3</sup>

But even though he was categorical in his declaration, he betrayed, in response to a remark of disapproval from Sri Krishna, not only his indecisiveness but a complete bankruptcy of all his views and all the notions of the right and the good and the duty and dharma which were till that time the foundations of the guidelines of his life. He asked Sri Krishna: "Tell me, how I shall attack with arrows the most venerable Bhishma, the grandfathers, and guru Dronacharya in the battlefield? It is better to live in this world by begging rather than killing the most venerable elders. Even if I kill these elders for worldly gains, all my enjoyments would be smeared with their blood. We are not

sure who is stronger amongst us and who will win the war. Moreover, the sons of Dhritarashtra are arrayed against us, after killing whom we ourselves would not like to live any longer. I am confused about my dharma owing to the lapse of the grain of my nature. Therefore, I ask you to tell me what is certainly the best for me. I am your disciple, I have taken refuge in you. Do instruct me. Even if I were to attain undisputed sovereignty over the whole world and conquer even the gods, I do not see how I could remedy this grief which is consuming my senses.”

Once again, Arjuna said, “O Krishna! I shall not fight.” And he became silent.

The current standards of conduct were found by Arjuna in a hideous chaos where they were in violent conflict with each other and with themselves. No moral standing ground was left, nothing to lay hold of and walk by any dharma, — the law, the norm, the rule of nature, action and life. And for a moral agent like Arjuna, whose very soul was that of action, this can be regarded as a worst possible crisis, failure and overthrow.

#### **4. Sri Krishna's Answer**

The answer that Sri Krishna gives can be received and understood only if one realises that even at the summit of the ordinary mental level of consciousness, there is no solution to the problem of the kind that Arjuna was confronted with. The mental consciousness is limited and remains confined perpetually in the state of egoism and duality, and even at its highest level, the strain and stress of the stains of ego and dualities do not get diminished; on the contrary, the

acuteness of the strains is felt to be so drenched in grief that the only way in which one can cure that grief is to discover a higher level of consciousness, if such exists, and if in that state, a perfectly pure action devoid of any blemish can be possible. Sri Krishna, the Master of Yoga, has the key to that higher level of consciousness in the light of which a positive solution and a fully affirmative answer can be obtained. The entire statement of the answer that is expounded in the Gita is a gradual exposition in an ascending manner, even in a winding manner and often in a perplexing manner, which culminates in a living vision and experience of the Supreme Reality in action in the world, in every strand of which there is purity and divinity, and in attaining identity with which, one can share and one can be filled totally with that purity and divinity in every fiber of action that is demanded of human agency.

### **Gita is not a book of Practical Ethics but of the Spiritual life**

But before we analyze Sri Krishna's answer in detail, it may be remarked that the upshot of this answer is that the Gita is not a book of practical ethics, but of the spiritual life which permits us to transcend the clash of all dharmas that the human mind can conceive, and to discover a new dharma, the law of divine action, *divyam karma*, by the attainment of divine freedom in which the nature of the individual transcends its limitations, the limitations of the nature subject to three gunas, — *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattva*, — and attains to the divine nature (*sādharmyam*).

### **Gita's view of Duty for Duty's sake**

Often this high pitch of the Gita is not grasped, and often the Gita is so interpreted as to teach us the disinterested performance of duty as the highest and all-sufficient law. It

has been argued that the crisis of Arjuna arose because he happened to forget his duty, and the whole teaching of Sri Krishna was to remind him of that duty. It is true that in the winding development of the argument, Sri Krishna does point out to Arjuna to follow the duty of the kshatriya in the war, but Sri Krishna knew that Arjuna was quite aware of his duty, and the latter's argument showed quite clearly his awareness of the duty of the kshyatriya. In the course of his argument, Arjuna had conceded the value of that duty, but he had become aware of an equally imperative duty, namely, to ensure the tradition of dharma of the family and of the society and of the nation, and he had become aware, too, that both the duties violently clashed with each other ending in the collapse of the whole useful intellectual and moral edifice erected by the human mind. Indeed, it was Arjuna's duty to fight. But that duty had now become to his mind a terrible sin. How does it help him or solve his difficulty to tell him that he must do his duty disinterestedly, dispassionately? For knowing the clash of duties, he would want to know which was his duty. Could it be his duty to destroy in a sanguinary massacre his kin, his race and the tradition of dharma that held the country in some kind of solidarity? Indeed, he was told that he had right on his side, but that does not and cannot satisfy him, because, as he argues, the justice of his legal claim does not justify him in supporting it by a pitiless massacre destructive of the future of his nation. Was it a solution for him to act dispassionately in the sense of not caring whether it is a sin and whether that sinful action will multiply sinfulness in the society?

We also need to take into account a very important element that was present but not explicitly stated in the course of the argument of Arjuna. That element referred to a



view which had become quite prominent, namely, the view of the Sankhya philosophy, which advocated that no action can be pure and devoid of the stain of the three gunas of nature, and that the highest good of the individual lay in sannyasa, in the renunciation of all motives of life and action and to seek liberation alone by renouncing action altogether. That this view had begun to guide him can be seen in his somewhat decisive declaration, "I shall not fight", and in the arguments that he advanced when Sri Krishna brought out in fullness the Sanmkhyan view of life and action and contrasted it with the view of yoga which, at that time, meant the Yoga of Action. In fact, the debate between Sankhya and Yoga occupies a prominent place in Sri Krishna's answer, and this prominence is due to the fact that the Sanmkhyan view, which aimed at lifting human consciousness from the ordinary mental consciousness to a spiritual level of consciousness, advocated the gospel of renunciation or sannyasa and advocated, therefore, the inferiority and dispensability of the concepts of human duties and human responsibilities, which were supposed to be the results of the operations of ignorance. It was against this background that the final answer of the Gita goes beyond the higher level of consciousness indicated by Sankhya. The call of the Gita is not to subordinate the higher plane to the lower, but it calls us to rise higher and even to higher than the higher and to ascend to a supreme poise above the mainly practical, above the purely ethical, and even above the inactive Brahmic consciousness. In ultimate terms, it is in the integral static and dynamic Brahmic consciousness that the soul becomes free from works and is yet able to determine works by the intervention of the supreme divine consciousness and the Divine Lord within and above us; — it is by reference to that integral Brahmic Consciousness that Sri Krishna provides

the final answer to Arjuna's question and demand for arriving at that action in which there is no stain of the ego, duality and conflict of the three gunas of our ordinary nature.

It is true that if one lays an almost exclusive stress on the first three or four chapters and on the idea of equality, and on the expression, *Kartavyam Karma*, the work that is to be done, and if one ignores the graduality of the exposition of the teaching, where the Teacher has to lead the disciple from one psychological level of understanding to a higher one — a process in which subtleties and complexities of the ultimate richness of the teaching are to be developed, keeping also in view the psychological resonances which arise in the mind when words like *dharma*, *karma*, *Sankhya*, *sannyasa* and *yoga* have to be used, — if all that is ignored, then one would feel justified to think that the Gita is a book of the Gospel of Duty, and one would read in it also the gospel of Kant's doctrine of duty for duty's sake.<sup>4</sup> This sense is heightened when one refers to the phrase: "Thou hast a right to action, but none to the fruits of action", which is now popularly quoted as a great word, *mahāvākya*, of the Gita. One feels that one has grasped in this dictum in substance the entire teaching of the Gita. But when we read the Gita in all its complexity, one finds that the great gospel of Karma Yoga that we find in the Gita goes much farther than Kant. One has also to remember that Sri Krishna accepts the truth that lies behind the Samkhyan gospel of renunciation according to which all works have to be renounced, even though Sri Krishna's final answer transcends the Samkhyan solution. But both in Samkhyan doctrine and in the vision that Sri Krishna presents in which the Samkhyan doctrine is transcended, there is no place for Kant's doctrine or other doctrines which assign supreme importance to the idea of duty. Indeed, the idea of duty has

some relevance and appeal, and Sri Krishna himself refers to it, with justification, at the level at which that relevance has to be emphasized. But, then, we shall find also the counsel of Sri Krishna for hedonistic utilitarianism at a given stage of the development of the argument that Arjuna should fight for victory and for the enjoyment of the fruits of victory.

As Sri Krishna points out in II.37:

“If you are killed, you will attain heaven, or if you attain victory, you will enjoy kingship over the earth. Therefore, get up with determination to fight, O son of Kunti!”

Thus, utilitarianism has also a place and justification and relevance at a certain stage of consciousness which rules man in his lower stages of ascent from the life of impulses to the life of reason, and from there to the life of higher and higher levels of consciousness. While evaluating the teaching of the Gita and, particularly, the doctrines of duty and utilitarianism, we have to note that Indian ethics respects gradations of consciousness and does not prescribe one law of conduct for all in any uniform manner. As one ascends from level to level, Indian ethics provides guidance appropriate to each level, so that one can securely advance towards higher steps of ascent. In Indian ethics, therefore, there is place for kama and artha, provided they are restrained within limits by dharma that is prescribed for a regulated balance between indulgence and restraint. At a still higher level, it prescribes dharma for its own sake, but even there the idea of dharma is not limited to one rigid concept of duty. If Buddha renounces the duties of a prince, of a husband and of a father, he is not to be judged as having done something that is not prescribed. For the idea of dharma takes into account the ideal of response that one should give

to a call, when that call issues from a level which is regarded as higher than what is restricted in a narrow scope of life and its activities. We can thus see towards the close of the teaching of the Gita a highest command that demands abandonment of all Dharmas, *sarvadharmān parityajya*, in order to take refuge in the Supreme alone. The teaching of the Gita is based upon a vision of the Supreme and of a law of the Action of the Supreme in obedience to which alone the secret of freedom of the right action is discovered and in which, again, the secret of freedom from all action is also discovered.

### Equality (*samatvam*) in the Gita

We also need to note that the equality which the Gita preaches is not disinterestedness; it is a state of inner poise and wideness which is the foundation of spiritual freedom, which is not only freedom of action but also freedom from action, a state in which the Supreme Himself acts in the world in such a way that He is at once non-doer and all-doer. All work is volition applied to a result, and karma yoga does not teach neglect in the performance of work that aims at the results of work. Sri Krishna defines Karma Yoga as skill in works (*yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*),<sup>5</sup> and thus he lays down a principle that a karmayogin does every work with every due care and with such efficiency that the work shoots like an arrow so as to reach the precise point of the target. What the Gita teaches, however, is that even when the action is performed well, *one has no right to the fruits of action*, which is quite a different matter. In fact, Gita's teaching is that of inner renunciation of desire in which not only the desire for the enjoyment of fruits of action is to be renounced, but it goes farther. For Sri Krishna explains that

even the sense of doership of action is a sign of ignorance of the entire machinery of action in the world and how ultimately action originates in the world. The aim of the teaching is to show that the real origin of action is in the Supreme Consciousness, which is at once immobile and mobile, as described often in the Upanishads (e.g. "It moves and It moves not"),<sup>6</sup> and that all action originates from that state of consciousness which is entirely free from any necessity of action and which is for ever free from action even when from one ray of its consciousness the entire universe can be manifested. It is to lead the disciple to that state of consciousness by following a gradual and methodical process that Sri Krishna follows a tangled and difficult way.

## **5. Gita's Karma Yoga : Elimination of Desire from Action**

The secret of Karma Yoga lies in the right dealing with the relationship between desire and action, and in eliminating from the psychological complex by pursuing a sustained method the operation of desire so that one can discover the real origin of all dynamism of action in that supreme will which is omnipotently free, and which is not only free to act or not to act but which at its origin remains permanently poised in the Inactive Brahman, even when, if it so wills, can constantly be engaged in full manifestation of action. Moreover, the seeker is enabled to discover and apply the methods by which the entire psychological complex can remain permanently united with that omnipotent will that is forever reposed in freedom from action.

In our ordinary psychological operation, all action appears to be tied up with desire, and if desire is eliminated,

action also ceases to operate. According to the yoga of the Gita, there is no such inevitable connection between desire and action, and action can be united with that omnipotent will which has in it no want or lacuna to fulfill which the machinery of desire would be required. If that Will acts, it is because it is free to act or not to act and to act without losing that status and poise in which there is no vibration of action. It is the discovery of that free will and of the method by which that will can be made operative through our individual consciousness that constitutes the methodology of Karma Yoga. It is because that operation is inconsistent with the vibration of desire that Karma Yoga proposes those steps by which desire can be eliminated from the human instrument which aspires to be free from the dualities and dilemmas of action and from the afflictions and disabilities for which there is no ordinary solution.

## **6. Significance of the Gita as a Synthesis of Yoga**

The supreme significance of the Gita lies in the fact that in no text of yoga-shastra or the science of yoga do we find such a perfect system of karma yoga known to man in the past, and that it is the greatest gospel of spiritual works ever yet given to the race. The great basics of karma yoga are laid down in this text with an incomparable mastery and the infallible eye of an assured experience. It is true that at its close, we do find the possibilities of further development.

The yoga of the Gita is a synthesis of yoga, and although it aims at utilizing action as a constant method, and even though it leads to highest status of consciousness in which the perfection of action and fullness of spiritual action is attained, it synthesizes both in its methods and in its results

a progressive synthesis of action, knowledge and devotion; and this synthesis is so wide and flexible that although it works out the full course of yoga by establishing the path of works as the starting-point, it admits that even the path of knowledge or the path of devotion can also be an equally effective starting-point. In fact, as Sri Krishna points out in course of his teaching, every path of yoga which has been developed is His path, and that the old or new path, depending upon how the seeker seeks the highest union with the divine consciousness, the divine consciousness in response answers suitably and provides the right method of progression.

## 7. Relationship between Knowledge, Action and Devotion

At the root of the synthesis of the yoga of the Gita is a clear and indispensable relationship that exists between cognition, conation and affection. Knowledge, which is the fruit of cognition is always superior to mere action, since knowledge aims at the discovery of the ultimate foundation of all that is and all that becomes, and the attainment of knowledge is always foundational and nothing that vibrates in cognition, conation and affection can attain to perfection without the attainment of the foundation that can be seized by the processes of knowledge, *jñāna*. One of the basic truths of the karma yoga is, as Sri Krishna declares, that knowledge is far superior to works, and that all works culminate in knowledge:

*“jyāyasī karmanah buddhiḥ”*<sup>7</sup>

*“sarvaṁ karmākhilam jñāne parisamāpyate”*<sup>8</sup>

However, since all yoga is an endeavour and a mighty

effort, there has to be in the human consciousness that need, that all-conscious imperative need, which provides perennial force of seeking, which is indispensable as a motive force at all stages of development. And this need must have its root not in mere desire, which is required to be eliminated in due course from the psychological complex of the seeker, or curiosity or quest which can at one stage or the other is satisfied and therefore gets arrested, but in the unveiling of that urge of love which can continue to operate not up to the point of union with the object of love but even after that object is attained, since there is no end of the intensity and permanence that love unabatedly seeks. Indeed, considering the urge of love and its place in the totality of human psychology, that urge is the unfailing and perennially fresh motive force of yoga as also its crown, the sovereignty of which is immortal in its constant flow. This is the reason why in the synthesis of the yoga of the Gita, the motive force of self-surrender and love has been assigned that indispensable place with such an emphasis that the yoga of divine love and the yoga of self-surrender is woven in the synthesis right from the beginning in some degree or the other, but gradually increases and ultimately ends in the crowning achievements of this great, vast and synthetic yoga.

It is true that the first step in the Gita's yoga is karma yoga, and yet in the first six chapters where karma yoga is particularly worked out in its main stages, the foundations of jnana yoga are also laid down in these chapters, and a preliminary synthesis of karma yoga and jnana yoga is underlined. Even though the yoga of divine love is not distinctly marked out, still in these six chapters, there is sufficient hint that emphasizes not only the discovery of the immobile Self but also of the Lord of works, and even of



Him, who even being Impersonal is yet described in terms of Supreme Personality (*mām*),<sup>9</sup> to whom one can approach with love and increasing surrender, culminating in intenser and completer self-surrender. In the next six chapters there is insistence on knowledge, and the states and contents of self-realization, and knowledge of the true nature of the self and the world are described, not only in terms of essence but also in terms of fullness of essential details (*jñānam* and *vijñānam*).<sup>10</sup> But the sacrifice of the works continues and the path of Works becomes one with but does not disappear into the path of Knowledge. In these six chapters (VII – XII), the yoga of divine love becomes more and more pronounced and the steps of Bhakti yoga are expounded with insistence on devotion, on adoration and seeking of the supreme Self as the Divine Lord. But the emphasis on the path of knowledge and the attainment of knowledge is not subordinated; only it is raised, vitalized and fulfilled; and still, the sacrifice of works continues; the path becomes the triune way of knowledge, works and devotion. The bhakta who is loved most is the bhakta who has true self-knowledge, God-knowledge and world-knowledge and who is engaged in works as an offering to the Master of self-energising and all-giving sacrifice. That is the path that leads to the state of immortality, the state of union with the divine Being, identity with the Self and oneness with the supreme dynamic divine Nature, and the state of transcendence of the three gunas of lower nature, — the state of *triguṇātīta*, and the state of *sādharmyam*.

In the last six chapters (XIII – XVIII), the entire synthesis of yoga of the Gita is reviewed from a special standpoint, — the standpoint of the relationship between Purusha and Prakriti, and the precise relations between the supreme

Purusha (Purushottama),<sup>11</sup> the immutable Self (Akshara Purusha),<sup>12</sup> and the mobile Self (Kshara Purusha), as also the intimate relations between Purushottama and the higher nature, Para Prakriti, which manifests multiplicity of individual souls (*parāprakṛtir jīvabhūtā*).<sup>13</sup> This standpoint also clarifies the relationship between the Jiva (individual Soul) and lower Prakriti, *aparā prakriti*, and her Gunas. Finally, these chapters show action of gunas of the lower Prakriti, and how they can be transcended into the state of *triguṇātīta* or state beyond the three gunas. These chapters delineate the culminating method of the Gita's integral yoga, which is contained in the real *mahāvākya* of the Gita: "Become My-minded, My lover and adorer, a sacrificer to Me, bow thyself to Me, to Me thou shalt come, this is My pledge and promise to thee, for dear art thou to Me. Abandon all Dharmas and take refuge in Me alone. I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve."<sup>14</sup> In other words, the constant and culminating method of the synthesis of this Yoga is to progressively take refuge in the indwelling Lord of all Nature and turn to Him with one's whole being, — with the life and body and sense and mind and heart and understanding, — with one's whole dedicated knowledge and will and action, *sarvabhāvena*, in every way of conscious self and instrumental nature. For all other Dharmas or norms of action are only a preparation for that highest Dharma which is the law of divine nature and divine action, and all processes of Yoga are only a means by which we can come first to some kind of union, and finally, to an integral union with the Master and supreme Soul and Self of our existence and with the Supreme Nature of the Supreme Lord.

## 8. Primacy of Knowledge in the Synthesis

It is significant for the synthetic character of the teaching of the Gita that even though at the very outset when Arjuna declares, "I will not fight", and even though Sri Krishna begins his answer by appealing to him to act and to fight, the very first note that is sounded by Sri Krishna in his refutation of the argument of Arjuna is a note concerning the supremacy of knowledge. Sri Krishna points out that although Arjuna's argument had the appearance of a learned man and possessor of knowledge, the very first premise of knowledge was missing from his argument. Those who have knowledge, says Sri Krishna in effect, have at the root of their argument the knowledge of the self and of the immortality of the self, while in Arjuna's argument there was a constant refrain of death and of the consequences of killing those who had assembled in the battlefield. The entire argument of Arjuna, both in its root and in its development, was flawed and that the argument would take a completely different turn if it was to be based on true knowledge, knowledge of immortality of the self, and the knowledge of the right place of death in the cycle of development of man and his society, as also the knowledge of the place of work and highest law of work that would follow from the first premise of the stability and permanence of the self and its relationship with the world and with work. The very first part of Sri Krishna's answer consists of the distinction between that which is permanent and that which is phenomenal. In fact, Sri Krishna points out: "The soul, not the body is the reality. All these kings of men for whose approaching death thou hast the sorrow, have lived before, they will live again in the human body; for as a soul passes physically through childhood, youth and old age, so it passes on to the changing of the body. The wise man

looks beyond the apparent facts of the lives of the body and senses to the real fact of his being and rises beyond the emotional and physical desires of the ignorant nature to the true and only aim of the human existence. The occasion of the war which has been presented to Arjuna can be understood only when that highest aim of human life, individual and collective, can be known." It is towards that knowledge that Sri Krishna's answer leads Arjuna from step to step.

Sri Krishna reiterates the affirmations of the Upanishads in regard to immortality, which is not merely the survival of death, but the transcendence of life and death. Finite bodies have an end, but the soul is and cannot cease to be. It is not born nor does it die; it is not slain with the slaying of the body; who can slay the immortal spirit? Weapons cannot cleave it, nor the fire burn nor do the waters drench it nor the wind dry. All are that Self, that One, that Divine, whom we look on and speak and hear of as wonderful beyond our comprehension. One thing only is the truth in which we have to live, namely, the Eternal manifesting itself as the soul of man in the great cycle of its pilgrimage, where all the circumstances of life, happy or unhappy, are to be seen or used as a means of progress, and with immortality as a constant underlying fact and as the home to which the soul travels as it gradually unfolds and recovers from ignorance its knowledge of its true being, nature and aim.<sup>15</sup>

But should then one live by constant killing? How does this knowledge of the immortal Spirit justify the action demanded of Arjuna and the slaughter at Kurukshetra? The war is a result of the way and degree to which human life has progressed so far and is struggling to attain the aim that is placed before human life. The way in which the world has

progressed so far has been continuously a struggle between right and wrong, justice and injustice, the force that protects and the force that violates and oppresses. This process has been brought to the issue of physical strife, and the present stage of human society has not yet discovered a better arrangement than the instrumentality of war for the champion and standard bearer of the Right to ensure that the standard of Right and Justice is not allowed to trail in the dust and be trampled into mire by the blood-stained feat of the oppressor. A day may come, must surely come, Sri Krishna has already declared it by his unceasing effort to avoid the physical strife, when humanity will be ready, — spiritually, morally, socially for the reign of universal peace. But at the present stage, where Arjuna stands in the battlefield, that day has not yet come and the method of physical strife cannot yet be avoided. If humanity has to move forward for the eventual fulfillment of the highest aim of life in which the immortal Spirit will manifest fully, the present stage of physical strife has to be unavoidably accepted for the present, and Arjuna, given his background, his upbringing and his own path towards his own higher development and for the development of the human kind, has to stand out in battle and not permit the sliding back of the human civilization and allow the oppressor to trample upon the standards of Right and Justice. For the highest good, in that state of human progress, Arjuna must not abstain from battle.

But this is only a preliminary statement.

## **9. Sankhya and Yoga**

In the meantime, the questions emerging from the gospel

of the path of knowledge, the path of Sankhya as was understood generally at that time, which excluded the path of yoga, the path of action and a larger path that was more intuitive, have to be answered, and it is to those questions that Sri Krishna turns. First, Sri Krishna shows how in reality Sankhya and Yoga are not exclusive of each other, and although the path of Sankhya can lead to a state of liberation from the clutches of perplexities connected with works, the path of Yoga, the path of works, is preferable. The path of Karma Yoga, which Sri Krishna was going to expound, regards Sankhya as of foundational importance, since in that path works culminate in knowledge, and only on the foundation of that knowledge, one can remain liberated even while performing works, which, again on that foundation, can grow and culminate in divine works (*divyam karma*).<sup>16</sup>

### **Sankhyan Philosophy and Yoga**

Hence, Sri Krishna expounds the Sankhyan path of buddhi yoga, the yoga by which buddhi, intelligent will, becomes fixed in that status of Purusha which is forever free from Prakriti and its activities. But what is buddhi, what is Purusha and what is Prakriti? What is their interrelationship? How was it understood and how was the gospel of renunciation valid, and yet why, from a larger point of view of the path of Yoga, was it to be expanded? This is a vast subject, and whatever is stated in the Gita in regard to Sankhya needs to be brought out in fuller detail, even though the exposition of the fuller detail has to be extremely brief.

In the fourth chapter, Sri Krishna declares that the yoga that he was expounding to Arjuna was that imperishable yoga which was extremely ancient, and although it was handed to successive generations, that yoga had been lost

since a long time. Reference to that ancient yoga was evidently to the yoga that was developed in the Veda and later recovered and restated in the Upanishads, the early Vedanta. That had once again been lost, but Sri Krishna was once again to expound it to Arjuna. It is for this reason that the yoga of the Gita is basically a restatement of the yoga of the Veda and of the Upanishads, although in that restatement the method of exposition has been largely philosophical, — a method which was not present in the Veda and the Upanishads, — and in many respects the statement is richer and more systematic, since systematic study of all disciplines of knowledge had become quite common in the Age of Reason at the head of which the dialogue of Sri Krishna and Arjuna had taken place.

By way of comment, we may say that there is no doubt that both in the Veda and in the Upanishads, the spiritual experiences on which the Sankhya philosophy was based was stated in symbolic language. We may refer to an important verse in this connection which occurs in Rig Veda,<sup>17</sup> and this verse is repeated in the Mundaka Upanishad with two more verses.<sup>18</sup> These verses are also to be found in Svetasvatara Upanishad to some extent. The three verses of the Mundaka Upanishad are as follows:

“Two birds, beautiful of wing, close companions, cling to one common tree: of the two one eats the sweet fruit of the tree, the other eats not but watches its fellow.”

“The soul is the bird that sits immersed on the one common tree; but because he is not lord he is bewildered and has sorrow. But when he sees the other who is Lord and beloved, he knows that all is His greatness and his sorrow passes away from him.”

“When, a seer, he sees the Golden-hued, the maker, the Lord, the Spirit who is the source of Brahman, (or whose source is Brahman), then he becomes the knower and shakes from his wings sin and virtue; pure of all stain he reaches the supreme identity.”

In Svetasvatara Upanishad the above mentioned two verses are the same,<sup>19</sup> but the last one is not repeated. But the two verses which are repeated are preceded by the following:

“There is one Unborn Mother; she is white, she is black, she is blood-red of hue; having taken shape, lo, how she giveth birth to many kinds of creatures; for One of the two Unborn taketh delight in her and lieth with her, but Other hath exhausted all her sweets and casteth her from him.”<sup>20</sup>

The following verse of Svetasvatara Upanishad is also relevant: “Know Nature for the Illusion and Maheshwara, the almighty, for the lord of the Illusion: this whole moving world is filled in with created things as with His members.”<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, the following verse from Mundaka Upanishad is also relevant:

“He, the divine, the formless Purusha, even He is the outward and the inward and He the Unborn; He is beyond life, beyond mind, luminous, Supreme beyond the immutable.”<sup>22</sup>

It appears that the Sankhya philosophy was derived from the authority of the yogic realizations which were expressed in a symbolical language in the above mentioned verses; but, appropriate to the method of Reason, which normally tends to follow the principle of parsimony, it omitted the integral richness of the nature of Purusha and Prakriti that one can



find in the above verses, and it retained only two principles to be ultimate and unborn, namely, Purusha and Prakriti.

The intellectual exposition of the Sankhya begins with the statement of two ultimate principles of existence, — Purusha, the inactive being, and Prakriti, the active force of action. Purusha is a pure conscious Being, immobile, immutable and self-luminous. Prakriti is Energy and its process. Purusha does nothing, but it reflects the action of Energy and its processes; Prakriti is mechanical, but by being reflected in Purusha, it assumes the appearance of consciousness in its activities. When Purusha glances at Prakriti, Prakriti which, to begin with, is in a state of the equilibrium of its three gunas (sattwa, rajas and tamas) is triggered from its *avyakta* (unmanifested) condition into the condition of *vyakta* (manifestation). Purusha under the influence of Prakriti attributes to itself the activities of Prakriti, although they belong not at all to itself but to the actions or movements of Prakriti alone.

In its true nature, Purusha is witness of Prakriti by virtue of reflection, and he is the giver of the sanction, even though his giving of sanction is passive, and later on, when he withdraws the sanction, his withdrawing of sanction is also another passivity. It is the interrelationship between Purusha and Prakriti which is the cause of the universe, — the relationship between the passive Consciousness and the active Energy.

According to Sankhya, when Prakriti begins to manifest, there is first the unequal vibration of her three gunas, — sattwa, the seed of intelligence, which conserves the workings of energy, rajas, the seed of force and action which creates the workings of energy, and tamas, the seed of inertia

and non-intelligence, the denial of sattwa and rajas, which dissolves what they create and conserve. Because of the disequilibrium of the three gunas, and because of the preponderance of rajas, activity is generated under the heavy limitations imposed on it by sattwa and tamas. Out of the activity of Prakriti are evolved successively five elemental conditions of Energy, — ether, air, fire, water and earth. All objects are created by the combinations of these five elements which are originally in subtle conditions. Again, each of these is the base of one of the five subtle properties of Energy or Matter, — sound, touch, form, taste and smell which constitute the ways in which the mind-sense perceives objects. The five elements and the five sense-relations through which Matter is known constitute the objective aspect of cosmic existence. Thirteen other principles constitute the subjective aspect of the cosmic Energy, — Buddhi or Mahat, Ahankara, Manas and its ten sense functions, — five of knowledge and five of action. Manas, mind, is the original sense which perceives all objects and reacts upon them. Buddhi is the principle of discrimination, and it is that power in Nature which discriminates and coordinates, and it is that which is seen in human consciousness as at once intelligence and will, that which understands through discrimination and which wills one thing or the other. Ahankara, the ego-sense is the subjective principle in Buddhi by which the Purusha is induced to identify himself with Prakriti and her activities. But these subjective principles are themselves as mechanical and as much a part of the inconscient energy as those which constitute her objective operations. Thus even in the mechanical action of the atom, one can perceive the operations of discrimination and coordination, and therefore the operations of order and obedience of law, which seem

mysterious. According to the Sankhya, this mystery can be explained as the reflection of Prakriti in Purusha; the light of consciousness of the Purusha is attributed to the workings of the mechanical energy, and it is this reflection of Prakriti in Purusha that explains how Purusha, which is only a witness comes to be induced to forget himself and to be identified with ego-sense, generated by Prakriti, and thus the Purusha is deluded that it is he who thinks, feels, wills, acts, while all the time the operations of thinking, feeling, willing, acting are conducted really by Prakriti and her three modes or gunas and not by himself at all. To get rid of this delusion is the first step towards liberation of the soul from Nature or Prakriti and her works.

It is evident that there are plenty of things which the Sankhya does not explain at all or does not explain satisfactorily. But the yogic method which has been developed by the Sankhya on the basis of its scheme, is effective, and both the method and the result of the yoga of Sankhya, or the yoga of knowledge as it has been called, can be verified and can be affirmed as a valid method and a valid result in which the complete silence of the state of Purusha is attained. One experiences abiding realization of the Purusha as liberated from the perplexities and complexities of the dualities of happiness and sorrow and of the pride and humiliation of the ego-sense, which are all operations of Prakriti and which, again, on account of the proximity of the liberated Purusha, fall quiet in a state of equilibrium. The prescriptions of Sankhya in regard to yoga are effective and can be methodically and systematically employed to attain a sure state of the liberation of Purusha from Prakriti.

The instrument on which the yoga of Sankhya lays stress

is *Buddhi*, the principle of discrimination. The method is that of concentration on the intellectual knowledge that *Purusha* and *Prakriti* are distinct from each other, and yet *Purusha*, in a state of forgetfulness is deluded to link himself with ego-sense, the product of *Prakriti*, and to become identified with the operations of *Prakriti*, which in true truth are not his. By the constant pressure of this knowledge, *buddhi* becomes stabilized (*sthita*), and the stabilized *buddhi* distinguishes clearly between *Purusha* and *Prakriti*; and by the aid of this discrimination, the *Purusha* who had given consent to the operations of *Prakriti* is now able to withdraw that consent, and with that withdrawal, *Purusha* comes back to his original condition of complete immobility and ever-free witness of *Prakriti* and therefore liberated from *Prakriti*.

This effective method of *Sankhya* is accepted by *Sri Krishna*; this method is the method of *Buddhi yoga*, the yoga of Intelligent-will. It acknowledges the process of arriving at the stabilized *buddhi* and the process by which all activities of *Prakriti* can be effectively renounced. *Sri Krishna* acknowledges that renunciation advocated by the *Sankhya* results in the state of liberated *Purusha* and complete immobility and freedom from any obligation and connection with works.

## 10. *Buddhi Yoga*

The *buddhi yoga* as described in the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* can be stated in terms of two possibilities of the action of the *buddhi*, intelligent-will. The *buddhi* may take a downward and outward orientation in which it becomes subject to the triple play of *Prakriti*; or it may take its upward and inward orientation towards a settled peace and equality in the calm and immutable purity of the

conscious silent Purusha no longer subject to the distractions of Nature. (The psychological account which is given here in the Gita can be compared to that given in the Katha Upanishad.)<sup>23</sup>

In the former alternative, buddhi and the psychological complex of the being is at the mercy of the objects of sense, and it lives in the outward contacts of things. The resultant life is a life of desire. In that state of the life of desire,

- (a) Senses can normally get excited by their objects;
- (b) A restless or often violent disturbance is created;
- (c) A strong or even headlong outward movement takes place towards the seizure of objects and their enjoyment;
- (d) These objects carry away the sense-mind, as the winds carry away a ship upon the sea;
- (e) The mind subjected to the emotions, passions, longings, and impulsions awakened by these outward movements of the senses carry away similarly the intelligent-will;
- (f) The intelligent-will loses therefore its power of calm discrimination and mastery. The result of this movement is enslavement to grief, wrath, attachment and passion.

But if the buddhi is oriented upward and inward, one can be led to a state of self-delight independent of objects and of the high and wide poise of peace and liberation. But for this to happen, one can and one must resolutely choose, with a settled concentration and perseverance, *vyavasaya*, to fix the intelligent-will firmly in the calm self-knowledge of the Purusha. Here, too, the following stages can be observed:

- (a) One must draw senses back when they are inclined to rush out, draw them away from their objects; just as the

tortoise draws its limbs into the shell, even so these senses are drawn into their source; the result is increasing quiescence in the mind, increasing quiescence in intelligence, and increasing quiescence in the soul and its self-knowledge.

- (b) Thus the cause of desire, the rushing out of the senses to seize and enjoy their objects is controlled, and by repeated practice, one can control the movement of desire to enjoy anything which the objective life can give;
- (c) It is not the physical renunciation of the objects of senses, and it is not external ascetism that is meant; that kind of renunciation, the Sankhyan renunciation, is not meant;
- (d) The key to the real control and conquest does not lie merely in abstinence from food and sleep and from the right use of objects of senses;
- (e) The removal of physical contact with the objects of sense can be effected by abstinence, but this does not get rid of the relation which makes that contact hurtful; one must, therefore, be capable of enduring the physical contact without suffering inwardly the results of sensuous reactions;
- (f) The secret of control and mastery requires a more difficult and more psychological self-discipline, — it consists of inner withdrawal, inner renunciation of desire;
- (g) Even this is not sufficient; the effort of the renunciation of desire should be accompanied by fixing the intelligent-will on the Purusha, which is there behind one's psychological vibrations.

Purusha has, by its very nature and in its very being, no desire, since the Purusha has complete immobility on account of potency in its absoluteness to manifest in complete freedom from the need to manifest, and a potency that is not diminished in any way even when illimitable energy is put forth in manifestation. That immobile Purusha remains always as a base of all movement, and in his transcendence of all movement, he remains undivided indivisibly and can be experienced as such, if the buddhi is fixed on that immobile poise of the Purusha. As a result, Purusha realizes his distinction from Prakriti as that distinction is clearly visioned in the transparency of the buddhi. That transparency is affected when buddhi is fixed and stabilized in the Purusha. As a consequence of this realization, the Purusha, who never needs to work and is immovably above all work, becomes free from all works. This is the truth of Sankhya and the truth of the method of Sankhya, and both this truth and the method of Sankhya are verifiable and valid.

But the yoga of the Gita, while recognizing and utilizing the yoga of Sankhya, takes its stand on a larger and a more synthetic possibility of yogic realization in which the immobility of the Purusha and mobility of Prakriti are not antagonistic to each other, but in which the mobility of Prakriti is reconciled with the immobility of Purusha. Since Arjuna's quest was connected with the demand for that knowledge by the application of which the highest good can be accomplished, Sri Krishna provides that wider knowledge and leads Arjuna towards the portals of that wider knowledge and even to the highest knowledge of the Ultimate Reality as also the knowledge of the methods by which that knowledge can be attained as a basis for the highest Good.

In the meantime, however, Sri Krishna explains to Arjuna the difficulties that one encounters in the attainment of the realization of the immobile Purusha by following the path of fixing the intelligent-will, buddhi, in the poise of the immobile. The yoga of Sankhya requires complete renunciation of desire, and although outward movements of desire can be more visibly renounced, one cannot succeed without an inner withdrawal, and renunciation of the inmost roots of desire. A great deal of self-discipline and self-control has to be achieved. Ordinarily, self-control is practised imperfectly in the most limited and insufficient fashion. The reason is that the mind naturally lends itself to the senses; and there is a psychological chain of tendencies that arise when the mind is carried away by senses. Sri Krishna analyses the chain of these tendencies as follows:

1. The mind, which is attached to the senses, becomes separated from buddhi, the power of discrimination;
2. The mind observes the objects of sense with an inner interest;
3. It settles upon objects of senses and makes them the object of absorbing thought;
4. This creates in the intelligence a strong interest for the will;
5. This results in attachment to the objects of desire (*āśakti*);
6. Attachment generates desire;
7. Desire aims at enjoyment of the objects on which desire is fixed and all effort is directed towards the satisfaction of desire;



8. This effort, goaded by desire, leads to distress, passion and anger when the desire is not satisfied or is thwarted or opposed;
9. By passion, the entire being is obscured, the intelligence and will forget to see and to be seated in the calm observing and immobile Purusha;
10. There is then a fall from the memory of one's true self;
11. And by that lapse the intelligent-will is also obscured and even destroyed;
12. One becomes so identified with that outward movement that one becomes passion, wrath, and grief;
13. One ceases to be self and intelligence and will.<sup>24</sup>

Hence, this entire movement must be prevented and all the senses must be brought utterly under control. The difficulty of this task is so great that even the sage, the man of clear, wise and discerning soul, who really labours to acquire complete self-mastery, finds himself hurried and carried away by the senses.

This difficulty can be overcome to a great extent by repeated effort and by a great inner renunciation, not by any outer renunciation, *sannyasa*, but by *tyaga*, inner renunciation; for a mere mental self-discipline or merely by the act of intelligence itself self-control cannot be made perfect. The immobile Purusha, if he can come forward, a stable basis for self-control can be created. But there is also another way, a surer and better way, and it is that way, which Sri Krishna now declares to be a preferable way. This way is the way of Yoga.

## **11. The Way of Yoga (Karma Yoga synthesized with Buddhi Yoga)**

The word Yoga is used in the Gita so as to distinguish it from Sankhya. Although the Sankhyan way is described as buddhi yoga, the word Yoga is primarily used for indicating the Yoga of works, karma yoga. At the same time, in the new exposition of karma yoga, buddhi yoga is also synthesized with it. Sri Krishna even explains that there is basically no opposition between the yoga of Sankhya and karma yoga, and that the path of knowledge and the path of action both need to be synthesized for the attainment of the highest Good. In other words, buddhi yoga is seen to be the foundation of karma yoga and the path of knowledge and the path of works are both synthesized in a synthetic framework, which is, according to Sri Krishna, the preferable way, since by the pursuit of buddhi yoga or the path of knowledge, although one can attain to the status of Purusha and freedom from action, one cannot yet attain the highest good and freedom of action. The synthesis of the path of knowledge and the path of works is achievable because there is inherent compatibility between knowledge and action, and that compatibility consists in recognizing that knowledge is always the foundation of action and that action attains its perfection only when it culminates in knowledge. At the same time, knowledge being the source and foundation of action, the highest good and the perfectly right action takes place when action proceeds from knowledge. The yoga which combines knowledge and action in this relationship is the synthesis by which one can attain to the realization of the immobile Purusha, even while one is enabled to perform perfectly right actions for the attainment of the highest good. In this path, there is no need to renounce works, even though

renunciation of desire is indispensable. It is to that synthesis of yoga where knowledge and action are synthesized that Sri Krishna now leads Arjuna.

### **Yoga in the Gita to be distinguished from Yoga of Patanjali's Sutras**

The word Yoga as used in the Gita has to be distinguished from the same word that is used to describe the system of yoga attributed to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. Patanjali's Yoga Sutras do not contain karma yoga, and they largely concentrate on the methods of concentration which lead to the realization of the immobile Purusha and the state of Samadhi in which one can attain to the state of absorption in identity with the immobile Purusha. In that sense, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras constitute very largely the path of knowledge. On the other hand, the word yoga in the Gita is primarily used to mean karma yoga, although this word is used throughout the Gita to indicate a larger synthesis of yoga in which karma yoga, jnana yoga and bhakti yoga become united and reconciled with each other in perfect harmony. In the attainment of this harmony, the Gita affirms not only the truth of the immobile Purusha but also the truth of Ishwara and still larger concept of Purushottama which unites the immobile Purusha and Ishwara. It is true that in the yoga of Patanjali, the concept of Ishwara is admitted, but while in the yoga of the Gita the concept of Ishwara connotes the inalienability of Ishwara from Purushottama, who unites both the immobile Purusha and the mobile Purusha, in the yoga sutras of Patanjali, Ishwara does not occupy that position, and, again, while in the Gita surrender to Purushottama is indispensable for the perfection of yoga, in the yoga sutras of Patanjali, surrender to Ishwara (*Iśwara*-

*pranidhāna*) is only an optional method. Still again, while both the yoga of the Gita and the yoga of the yoga sutras of Patanjali speak of Samadhi, the latter connotes a state of complete immobility, and the former conceives of Samadhi as a status in which one can live and dynamically act even while completely fixed in the consciousness of Purushottama, who synthesizes both the immobile Purusha and the mobile Purusha.

### **Yoga is Preferable to Sankhya**

It is this path of yoga as understood in its large and synthetic sense which Sri Krishna regards to be preferable to the path of Sankhya or the path of knowledge; for in this yoga, one can attain to self-discipline and self-control with complete mastery, since in this yoga, the path leads not only to the fixing of buddhi in the immobile Purusha, but the entire being is fixed by devotion and consecration to the supreme Divine, the Purushottama. It is true that the full exposition of the concept of the supreme Divine is developed gradually through several stages of exposition and finally and explicitly stated in the fifteenth chapter, but it is that concept that we find pervading the entire teaching of the Gita. This is the sense of the phrase that is used by Sri Krishna which is stated at an early stage when he refers to the highest state of yogic realization where the seeker “must sit firm in Yoga, wholly given up to Me” (*yukta āsīta mat parah*).<sup>25</sup>

In that state, it becomes possible for the seeker to move among the objects of sense, in contact with them, acting on them, but with the senses entirely under one's control. In that state, one is free from reactions, and even the senses are delivered from the afflictions of liking and disliking, and one

escapes the duality of positive and negative desire. In that state, calm, peace, clearness, happy tranquility, (*ātmaprāsāda*) will settle upon the seeker. And yet the seeker does not cease from work and action.

## 12. State of Sthitaprajna

That state is described by the Gita as a state of *sthitaprajñā*, the state of fixed stability of the intelligent-will, or the state of *samādhista*, the state of one who is constantly settled in the state of Samadhi.

In answer to a question by Arjuna as to what are the signs of the one who is settled in Samadhi or one whose intelligent-will is fixed, Sri Krishna gives the following description, which is extremely important as a statement of the highest state of yogic realization as conceived in the synthetic yoga of the Gita:

“When a man thoroughly renounces all the desires of mental origination and is content in the self by the self, he is called sthitaprajna, one who has steady wisdom. He who is not perturbed in mind in the midst of sorrowful conditions and who is devoid of any craving in the midst of happiness, who is free from attachment, fear and anger, such a one is called a sage of steady wisdom. He who is without attachment and who neither rejoices nor hates in whatever good and evil that may come upon him; his wisdom is firm. When one is able to withdraw his senses from the sense-objects as a tortoise withdraws its limbs from all sides, his wisdom is firm. When the embodied self abstains from sense-enjoyment, the objects turn away from him but the flavour for sense-objects continues to linger on; but even this flavour turns away from him when the Supreme Self is

realized. The strong turbulent senses forcibly carry away even the mind of a man of discrimination who is endeavouring to control it, but having controlled his senses, when one fixes the entire being in devotion and consecration upon Me (Purushottama) then his senses are under his mastery, and his wisdom or intelligent-will becomes steady...When the self-controlled man, although moving among the sensory objects, is able to restrain his senses and becomes free from likes and dislikes, then he obtains that delight of the self that results from self-mastery. In that state of delight, all sorrows end, and the intelligent-will imbued with delight is soon established and remains permanently steady. .... Therefore, one whose senses are completely detached from their objects, his intelligent-will is firmly established....Just as waters from different rivers enter into the ocean from all sides, yet the ocean continues to be stable, in the same way, a person who is not perturbed by the incessant flow of desire, he alone attains peace and not the desirer of sense-objects. One who gives up all desires and one who acts without any craving, and one who is devoid of attachment and of ego, he attains the supreme peace. Such is the state of Brahmic consciousness, having attained which one is not deluded..."<sup>26</sup>

### **13. Karma Yoga: Inner Renunciation of Desire: The Kernel of the Path**

But despite all these statements and these explanations, the path of works is not yet sufficiently clear and precise. Sri Krishna has insisted on renunciation, but in the path of knowledge, there is overwhelming emphasis on renunciation, including renunciation of all works, — if not of all works at the beginning of the path but maximum possible renunciation of works at every stage of ascent, and ultimately

of all works; — for then alone can there be identity with immobile Purusha which is forever devoid of any desire, will or works. In the path of yoga or in the path of works, where it is identical with Sankhya, the path of knowledge, the emphasis is upon renunciation of that essential element, which renders all works unfit for the attainment of the highest Good, namely, the root of desire. The secret of karma yoga lies in the assertion that the element of desire can be eliminated from works, — a statement which has been repeatedly emphasized in Sri Krishna's exposition of karma yoga. It is this statement which perplexes Arjuna, and in reply to that perplexity, Sri Krishna explains and analyses action, inaction and wrong action.

### **Action, Inaction, Wrong Action**

What is normally called inaction is merely a state of cessation from action; but what is called action is a state that is subject to the workings of Nature and her qualities; the mind that takes refuge in physical inactivity is still under the delusion that it can decide not to work and that by refraining from work, works will stop. But that is not what really happens. For all activities as we see them in the world are activities of Nature, of Prakriti. And by refraining from work, Nature does not stop functioning, since the very nature of Nature is to be an engine of works; even its quality of tamas, inertia, is an activity of obstruction, an activity that is the engagement of energy in arresting the action of energy. This is the reason why the Gita states that he who sees action in inaction is the man of true reason and discernment among men. On the other hand, there is a status of consciousness where, on account of cessation by inner renunciation of desire, one attains the true immobility of Purusha, which is

truly inactive because there is no impulsion and no necessity of action, even though there is still fullness of consciousness and potency of such a nature that it is not obliged or necessitated to remain devoid of work; and in that status there is no desire to act, but there is a free will,— not obliged to work but capable of working and therefore expressive of work. Work that proceeds from that plane, — work that is not necessitated as in Prakriti, but work that proceeds from fullness of potency of the Purusha, and therefore, above all necessity of action and necessity of any disturbance in the immobility, — that work or action has behind it the status of the inactivity. The discerning sage discerns inactivity even when there is activity in the outer consciousness. It is that action behind which one sees inaction that has to be discovered and allowed to be carried out. Action that is not in consonance with the highest state of consciousness and which is not conducive to that highest state of consciousness is action that is coloured with blemish. That action is wrong action. That there is a status of consciousness from which action proceeds, not from desire and from the tribulations of Prakriti of three Gunas, is a capital affirmation of Yoga of the Gita, and this affirmation runs constantly throughout the eighteen chapters of the Gita. The Ultimate Reality is, according to the Gita, Purushottama, the Purusha who is at once immobile, akshara, and mobile, kshara, and who is simultaneously both and beyond them. The real work, according to the Gita, is the work that proceeds from the will of the Purushottama, the will that is not obliged to act, the will that does not seek fulfillment which it does not possess, but a will that proceeds from fullness and therefore in no need of anything, but also in no need to remain without a free expression of that fullness. Again, it is that consciousness, which is so potent that even when it issues from



fullness and expresses that fullness, it is so free that it retains constantly the status of immobility. That such is the ultimate reality is the yogic realization that one meets also in the statements of the Veda and the Upanishads, and this is also confirmed by the yogic realization of Sri Krishna, the teacher of the Gita.

### **Inner Renunciation of Desire: Method of Sacrifice**

Normally, human beings are activated by desire, and when desire is absent, activity too, appears to cease. Hence, the practical question is as to how one should continue to work even when desire is renounced. It is in answer to this question that the method of Karma yoga is expounded by Sri Krishna, particularly in the first six chapters of the Gita. What is that method?

In one word, the method is that of sacrifice.

### **Sacrifice and Vedavāda**

But the moment the word 'sacrifice' is used, the meaning that comes up in the mind in regard to that word, is connected with Vedic karmakanda or the ritualistic sacrifice contained in the Vedavāda. The great psychological sense of sacrifice that was emphasized in the yoga of the Veda and the Upanishads was greatly lost in course of time, and the word sacrifice had come to mean, at the time of the Mahabharata, the practice of ritual sacrifices which was propagated as the effective means for securing the fulfillment of desires. Hence, Sri Krishna, as a revolutionary teacher opposed the current sway of Vedavāda, and sharply criticized that Vedavāda in the Gita. He distinguished the idea of the sacrifice that he intended in the Gita from the ritualistic interpretation of sacrifice. Sri Krishna, while repudiating

Vedavada states: “Unwise men speak flowery words and declare themselves followers of the Vedas but they are devoted to various activities of desire for the sake of enjoyment of their fruits. There is, according to them, nothing else than ritualistic sacrifices inspired by desires and directed towards the fruits of the sacrifices. Indulging in desires, considering heaven to be the highest goal, they engage themselves in works only for the sake of prosperity and enjoyment. Thus, they create a basis for bondage in future embodiments.”<sup>27</sup>

The ritualistic teaching of the Vedavada did not represent the deeper and yogic view of progression towards the highest possible realization of the God-knowledge, world-knowledge and soul-knowledge; the esoteric method of the yoga of the Veda as also of the Upanishad was that of progressive sacrifice of desire leading up to complete elimination of desire so as to allow by methodical process of surrender (*nama uktim vidhema*, Īśā Upanishad.18) the direct operation of the Divine Will for its unhindered manifestation. It was that teaching that was lost in due course of time, as Sri Krishna explains in the very first three verses of the fourth chapter, and it was that secret that was now expounded to Arjuna. “Slay thy desire”, — these are the unambiguous words of the method of Karma Yoga. The image of the cosmic horse or of the life-force that we find in the very beginning of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is the image of life-force that arises from the ocean of the Inconscience which is driven by desire or Hunger; it is that Hunger that is subsequently in the same Upanishad described as Death; the Horse of Sacrifice is the horse of desire that is to be sacrificed into the higher ocean of superconscience. It is that sacrifice, *ashwamedha*, the renunciation of desire that

removes obstruction to the ascending flow leading up to superconscience. As that passage in the Upanishad makes it clear, the immortal waters of the ocean of superconscience rejuvenate the life-force and make it also immortal, amritam, or madhu, sweet and immortal honey. Sri Krishna, therefore, rejected Vedavada and expounded once again the true old teaching of Karma Yoga, the yoga of works. The path of sacrifice that is central to karma yoga has these steps: (i) Renunciation of Desire for the enjoyment of fruits of action; (ii) Renunciation of the Egoistic sense of Doership by offering of Works as Sacrifice; (iii) Complete surrender to the Supreme Divine, Lord of Sacrifice, Purushottama.

#### **14. First Step of Karma Yoga: Renunciation of Desire for the enjoyment of Fruits of Action**

The first step of Karma Yoga of the Gīta is to indicate where exactly the element of desire is strongest and how at its root the hold of desire can be loosened. It is here that the distinction is made between two elements which are always present in every work. There is, first, a process of activity which is applied towards a result or fruit, and secondly, there is a fruit that is produced as a result of the application of effort. Thus the two elements are: Karma, process of action, and Phala, fruit of action. In the ordinary human psychology, the individual aims at possessing and enjoying the fruit of action, and desire is most acute in regard to the possession and enjoyment of the fruit of action. In this movement of striving for the possession and enjoyment of the fruit, there is a secret operation which betrays the ignorance of the nature of work, process of work and the aim of work, which are truly the operations of universal Prakriti, which is working through various instruments of which the human

instrument is only one. That universal Prakriti has its own aim of action, and Prakriti goes on with its operations utilizing its own processes of action for the production and attainment of fruits which are intended by Prakriti. When this process is understood properly, one gains the knowledge that one has no right over the fruits of action. Hence, the first operation of Karma Yoga is directed towards the gaining of the knowledge of Prakriti and to apply the knowledge that the individual agent of work has no right to the fruits of action. The application of this knowledge will imply that one should not strive to possess and enjoy the fruits of action. At this stage of Karma Yoga, therefore, Sri Krishna provides the first injunction of Karma Yoga in the following words:

“Thou hast right only in regard to action, but never to the fruits of action. Never consider thyself to be the cause of the results of thy action, nor shouldst thou be attached to inaction.”<sup>28</sup>

When this injunction is persistently practised, deeper knowledge of the operation of work arises, and one is able to perform actions in a status of stability of consciousness in which one attains the renunciation of the desire to possess and enjoy the fruits of action, and the fruits, whether they are successful or unsuccessful or indifferent, do not affect the stability of consciousness. One is then enabled to perceive more and more accurately the results of action in a state of impartiality, detachment and equality. That state of equality will reflect the silence and immobility of Purusha, which by its very nature, is above all action and all fruits of action. In that state, one will be able to do actions in a greater stability and with due application of skill and dexterity in action.

## Equality and Dexterity in Action

At this stage, Sri Krishna underlines two important characteristics of Karma Yoga:

- (i) *samatvam yoga uchyate*, Yoga is verily the status or state of equality, and
- (ii) *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*, Yoga is indeed dexterity in works.<sup>29</sup> But this is only the first step, although a very great step. During this stage, when the desire for the possession and enjoyment of the fruit of action is removed, there is normally a danger of loss of interest in action itself, as also loss of dexterity in action. There is also increasing perplexity as to whether any action is at all to be performed, and if so, what action is to be performed. There is also the danger of enjoying more and more the state of equality which is not yet matured, and there is, therefore, rationalization in thought which promotes a false idea that any involvement in action is ultimately not justifiable. It is to prevent these dangers that Sri Krishna explains once again the process of Prakriti and shows that while, on the one hand, the poise of equality is to be constantly nourished and even stabilization of consciousness in the immobility of Purusha is to be strengthened, yet, on the other hand, one's hold on the movement of Prakriti and mastery over that movement as also on the fruits produced by that movement are also equally to be strengthened for the attainment of higher and higher states of knowledge and consciousness and for the discovery of the highest Good and the consequential perfection that is attainable.

Sri Krishna explains that none can remain, even for a moment, without doing any deed. The gunas born of Prakriti

impel a person to perform action constantly. One, who has restrained the organs of action outwardly, is not thereby free from desire, and he, therefore, broods over the objects of senses. Even if he abstains from action and thinks that he is free from any necessity of action, his inactivity remains only in appearance to be inactivity; it is actually a false appearance.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, if one has attained inner restraint by the process of renunciation of the desire to possess and enjoy fruits of action, he experiences increasing equality, even though the organs of action are active externally. Sri Krishna, therefore, does not favour renunciation of work or decline in the dexterity in performance of work.

## 15. Second Step of Karma Yoga:

### **Renunciation of the Egoistic Sense of Doership by offering Works as Sacrifice to the Lord of Sacrifice**

As seen above, Sri Krishna had announced the first step of Karma yoga,<sup>31</sup> namely, "Thou hast the right to perform action, but thou hast no right to the fruits thereof. Never consider thyself the cause of the results of thy action, nor shouldst thou be attached to inaction". But now, while expounding the second step of Karma Yoga, the method that is proposed is to offer every action (and not merely the fruits of action), as sacrifice. Sri Krishna, in this connection, proceeds forward and suggests modification to the agent's right to action. He points out in III.27: "All actions are performed by the gunas of Prakriti, but he who is bewildered by the false ego, feels: 'I am the doer'."

When it was said that Arjuna had the right to action but not to its fruits, the question of doership of action and the

right of the doer in regard to action was not yet analyzed as it is now analyzed at this stage. It is now explained that the very sense of doership contradicts the working of Prakriti, considering that the ego-sense is a part of Prakriti's movement, and that the ego-sense is only a cog in the machine of universal workings of Prakriti; therefore, when the agent feels that action proceeds from him, he is really misled by a mistaken sense.

Who then is really the agent of action, if all action is determined by the universal Prakriti? What is the role of Purusha who is seen in the Sankhya as immobile witness, and what is his contribution in the movement of action if Prakriti is the doer of action? According to the Sankhya, it is the Purusha, on account of his identification with the ego-sense which belongs to Prakriti, who senses identification as a result of ignorance, and mistakenly thinks that he is the agent of action. But according to Sankhya, Purusha is by its very nature immobile and luminous; how does he fall into delusion? Prakriti, according to Sankhya, is entirely alien to Purusha and independent of Purusha. How then does Purusha have the possibility of getting entangled into Prakriti? These questions are not satisfactorily answered in the Sankhya, and whatever is stated by way of the answer is evidently inconsistent with the ontological positions of Purusha as conscious and inactive and Prakriti as the engine of action but entirely unconscious. There must be, therefore, a better answer to this question, and it is that better answer which is implied in the ontological position that we find in the vast and synthetic teaching of the Gita. Immobile Purusha and active Prakriti of Sankhya, even though both of them correspond to a certain level of experience, are not enough to explain the totality of the highest foundations of

knowledge and the totality of elements which are to be found in the operations of the universe and relationships of the individual with those operations and with the highest foundations. Let us, therefore, see how the teaching of the Gita and the methods of Karma Yoga include the teaching of the Sankhya but go beyond by restating in clearer terms the truths of yogic realizations that are to be found in the Veda and the Upanishads.

## **16. Ontological Foundations of Gita's Karma Yoga and Synthesis of Yoga:**

### **Ultimate Reality of Purushottama and His Power, Para Prakriti**

Both the Veda and the Upanishads speak of the ultimate reality as one without the second. Both have described that One as describable in many ways (*bahudhā vadanti*); both affirm that One as both immobile and mobile, and yet beyond even the immobile which is itself superior to the mobile. The Gita formulates these basic ontological positions as follows:

“There are two Purushas as far as this world is concerned: kshara (mobile) and akshara (immobile). All these existences of the world are called kshara; and kutastha (immobile) is called akshara. The Highest Purusha is different from these two. He is called the Supreme Being, who though immutable, permeates the three worlds, and is the Lord and controls and sustains them. I (Sri Krishna, the avatar of the Supreme) transcend the mobile and am superior to the immobile. I am proclaimed as the Supreme Self, Purushottama, in this world as well as in the Veda.”<sup>32</sup>

In chapter seven, Sri Krishna expands the Sankhyan view



of Prakriti as he has already expanded the Sankhyan view of Purusha in chapter fifteen. This expansion of the idea of Prakriti is stated in the following words:

“Earth, water, fire, ether, mind, intellect and ego — this is the eight-fold Prakriti, which is My nature. That is My lower nature, O Mighty-armed Arjuna! Other than this, know my higher Nature which has manifested as the individual souls, and it is that higher nature by which this entire world is sustained ....O Arjuna, there exists nothing else that is higher than Me. All this is woven upon Me like rows of gems upon a string.”<sup>33</sup>

In chapter eight, the following description of Purushottama is to be found, and in describing Purushottama, the goal of Divine Love or Bhakti is underlined:

“This is the supreme Person, O Arjuna, in whom all existence and by whom all this is pervaded, is attainable by unwavering single-minded devotion.”<sup>34</sup>

The ninth chapter, which affirms the deeper secrets of the Gita's Yoga, which, in turn, is described as the yoga of supreme secret (*rājavidyā rājaguhya yoga*), the supreme transcendence of the Purushottama is described as follows:

“This entire world is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest form. All beings abide in Me, but I am not confined in them. And yet these beings do not exist in Me; behold my divine mystery. Although My spirit is the source of all beings and sustainer of the beings, yet I am not confined in them. Realize that as the mighty wind that moves everywhere abides always in the sky, in the same way all becomings abide in Me. ....Holding down My own Nature I manifest myself again and again. This entire multitude of beings who

are rendered helpless when they are caught by Prakriti .... O Arjuna, it is Prakriti that generates the whole world of all that is mobile and immobile under My rulership, and it is for this reason that this living world keeps on variously transforming itself .... Endowed with futile desires, futile actions, false knowledge, devoid of wisdom and intelligence, they continue to be deluded and attracted by that layer of Nature (Prakriti) which is delusive and which characterizes violent hunger and domineering tyranny. O Arjuna, the great souls, however, who abide in my Higher Nature, Divine Nature, worship Me with an undistracted mind knowing Me to be the imperishable source of all beings. Always absorbed in adoring Me, endeavoring with great determination bowing down to Me, these great souls, endowed with devotion worship Me. There are others who worship Me with the sacrifice of knowledge both in my Oneness and in diversity, possessed in my universal form of multifarious faces. I am the Will, I am Sacrifice, I am offering, I am the medicinal herb, I am the sacred mantra, I am the clarity and I am the fire and I am the offering. .... I am the recipient as well as the Lord of all sacrifices. .... Whoever sacrifices to Me with devotion even a leaf, or a flower, or a fruit or water, I accept that offering of love from My pure hearted devotee. Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation, whatever you give, and whatever austerities you may practise, — do that as an offering and as a sacrifice to Me.”<sup>35</sup>

## **17. Two Master-conceptions of the Gita: Purushottama and Para Prakriti**

Two master conceptions of the Gita are those of Purushottama and of Para Prakriti, the supreme Lord and his

supreme power; these two concepts are not new, and they are not arrived at by any philosophical speculative process. They are based on yogic experiences to repeat which and to verify which yogic methods of the synthesis of yoga in which works, knowledge and divine love are harmoniously blended have been laid down. They also confirm the yogic experiences which have been recorded in the Veda and the Upanishads, although the words used in the Gita are novel. Some of the corresponding words used in the Veda for the Gita's Purushottama are: "*tad ekam*" (That One),<sup>36</sup> "*tad adbhutam*" (That wonderful),<sup>37</sup> "One, who is neither today nor tomorrow but has motion in the consciousness in another",<sup>38</sup> "*catvāri śrṅga*" "*trayoasya pāda*" (the four-horned bull with three feet),<sup>39</sup> and Purusha described in the Purusha Sukta.<sup>40</sup> The words used in the Upanishads are: "*tad ejati tad na ejati*" (That moves and That which does not move),<sup>41</sup> "*avyaktāt parah purṣah*" (the highest Purusha above the Unmanifest).<sup>42</sup> "*akśrāt parātaḥparah*" (Supreme beyond the Immutable).<sup>43</sup> The words in the Veda, which correspond to Gita's *parā prakṛti*, are mainly: "*dhenu*" (the Cow), "*Aditi*" (Original Indivisible Mother); those in the Upanishads are mainly: "*Aditi*", as also "*stree*", "*Uma*", (the Woman, Uma, who guides Indra to discover the Supreme Lord).<sup>44</sup> These two concepts resolve the difficulties which are found in the Sankhya in regard to the relationship of the Immobile and luminous Purusha with the Mobile but unconscious Prakriti. These concepts also resolve the difficulties in relating the Immobile Brahman with dynamic manifested world within the framework of the Vedantic Monism. They also enable the transcendence of Vedavada and its ritualism. They bring into the forefront the esoteric teaching of the Vedic yoga and show how Karmakanda can be uplifted into Karma Yoga in which

work and knowledge can be united and where the concept of sacrifice is enlarged into the concept of offering of all actions (*sarva karmāṇi*) as sacrifice through which desire can be eliminated and where the motivation of desire is replaced by that of sacrifice and surrender to the Divine.

The concept of *parā prakṛti*, as the higher nature of Purushottama, establishes the Vedic and the Upanishadic experience of oneness both in diversity and above diversity. The concept of *parā prakṛti*, as the one Supreme Power, which manifests not only in all as the One, but in each as the Jiva, the individual spiritual presence, and which also manifests the essence of all qualities of Nature, brings out in sharp focus the complexity of the Ultimate Reality as at once transcendental, universal and the individual. The mystery of the individual soul, Jiva, which is quite veiled elsewhere, finds in the Gita its explicit position and its relationship with the Immobile Purusha along with its relationship with all that is mobile and also with the transcendental Purushottama as His eternal portion (*mama eva amśaḥ sanātanaḥ*).<sup>45</sup> Prakriti is conceived in Sankhya as one of the two independent and ultimate realities, even though that Prakriti consists of three dissimilar qualities; but in the Gita this Prakriti finds a subordinate position, as a derivative of higher Prakriti in which all qualities are properly harmonized. How Purusha which is self-luminous gets entangled and eclipsed in its consciousness by mere association with unconscious Prakriti, remains enigmatic in the Sankhya; but this enigma gets a proper reply and explanation in the Gita. The Immobile Purusha in the Gita remains ever-luminous and inactive; but it is the Jiva, the individual soul, which in its dynamic poise, *kṣara*, that gets entangled by its descent from the Para Prakriti into Apra Prakriti.<sup>46</sup> The status of the

immobility of Immutable Purusha can always be recovered by the Jiva by an active will in its dynamic aspect by the process of Yoga; the Jiva can also ascend back into Para Prakriti and rise also into relationship with the Supreme Lord as its eternal portion.

One great difficulty in reconciling the Sankhya with the Vedanta is that although the Purusha in the Sankhya and the Brahman in the Vedanta are both luminous and immobile, the Purusha in Sankhya is plural, while the Brahman in the Vedanta is One without the Second. The Sankhya was obliged to posit in its intellectual philosophy the plurality of the Purushas because of two important facts which needed to be explained satisfactorily in any metaphysical system. The first is the fact that each individual in the world, despite many common characteristics with other individuals, has such a distinctive outlook of its experience in the world that its uniqueness can be explained only if each individual is ontologically different from the others. The second fact that had to be explained by the Sankhya was that when one individual gets liberated, all others do not thereby get liberated; this can happen only if each individual is separate from all the others and if each individual is individually bound to Prakriti and gets individually liberated. The Vedanta of the Gita resolves this problem by affirming, first, that the Purusha or the Brahman is always non-dual or non-plural in its immobile status; on the other hand, the Gita affirms that it is only in the kshara aspect of the reality, the One Supreme Reality, Purushottama, that multiplicity of individual souls or Jivas is put forth<sup>47</sup> without abrogating their oneness in the Brahmic consciousness. The Gita accepts the multiplicity of the individual souls but not their plurality, since plurality would amount to the independent

existence of each individual without any kind of dependence on one Source.

Under the premises of the pure Sankhya alone, the combining of works and liberation is impossible. Under the premises of the immobile Brahmic monism in Vedanta, the permanent continuation of works as a part of yoga and the indulgence of devotion after perfect knowledge and liberation and union are attained, become impossible or at least rationally unsustainable. But the Gita transcends both the Sankhyan dualism and pure Vedantic Monism by discovering, by a higher yogic knowledge which is also in conformity with the synthesis of the yogic realizations of the Veda and the Upanishad, the vision and experience of Purushottama. We have in the Gita the Vedantic yoga of works, which is rooted in the complex and integral Monism; as a result, action is not in the Gita merely a preparation but itself the means of liberation, and action continues even after liberation, since action thereafter becomes a part of divine action itself. Similarly, Gita's Vedantic yoga of devotion and divine love is not only a preparation but itself the means of liberation, and devotion continues even after liberation, since the Jiva, as distinguished from ego, who is an eternal portion of the Purushottama, can continue to subsist as that portion in a state of divine love with all its intensity and permanence in the state of liberation. The integral knowledge continues to be the immortal foundation of works and devotion, and as Sri Krishna points out, the divine lover who is also the divine knower is dearer to the Divine than all other categories of devotees. The Vedavada, which emphasized ritualistic work of sacrifice as an exclusive and as the only path (*na anyad asti iti vādinah*)<sup>48</sup> is also transcended by the Gita, and while it admits the justification for works, it provides a sure

foundation for all works (*sarvakarmāni*), and it also uplifts the meaning of works as sacrifice by insisting on the renunciation of desires which are normally to be found to be inescapably associated with works and even with ritualistic works in the framework of Vedavada. In transcending the Vedavada, the Gita admits the utility of the Veda as a Scripture but it appeals to a deeper source of knowledge by pointing out that the Supreme Lord is in the heart of every man and from Him is the knowledge. In that context, the Gita points out: "When thy intelligence shall cross beyond the world of delusion, then shalt thou become indifferent to Scripture heard or that which thou hast yet to hear, '*tadā gantāsi nirvedaṁ śrotavyasya śrutasya ca*'. When thy intelligence which is bewildered by the shruti, '*śrutivipratipannā*', shall stand unmoving and stable in Samadhi, then shalt thou attain to Yoga."<sup>49</sup> This is how the Gita places Yoga as superior to religious ritualism and to the authority of the Scripture, and this justifies the description of the Gita as yogashastra, systematic science of yoga. In other words, the Gita provides a sound basis for the untrammelled truth-seeking of the free and illumined mind and God-experienced soul, and in this way the Gita rings with the message with the all-liberating quest that irrespective of what is heard or unheard before, one must always seek the truth in the illumined depths of the heart where knowledge can be unfolded in a yogic process, not only from Ignorance to Knowledge, but even of Knowledge proceeding to a still higher, profounder and wider Knowledge, the intimations of which can always be heard directly from the Supreme Lord, who is the inmost Guide and Master of all knowledge.

The discovery of the Para Prakriti, the higher nature that

we find in the Gita, — or rather the rediscovery, since this higher nature was already discovered in the Veda and also in the Upanishads and formulated in the concept of Aditi, the infinite Mother, — is central to the solution that Sri Krishna provides to Arjuna. Arjuna had come to the battlefield with the confident sense of the Right in regard to the role that he wanted to play in the battle of the Kurukshetra; he was acting according to the dharma of kshatriya, the dharma of the warrior that was recognized in his Age to fight and even to massacre, if need be, his enemies, who were judged in the highest light available to him to be a source of adharma, — of injustice and uncivilized passions, which were leading the society towards degradation. He knew that he was acting according to dharma and his action was right and just. But when confronted physically with the situation, he found that what he had thought was dharma was actually adharma, since he was to massacre his own grandfather and his teachers in whose service it was his dharma to give up his own life; even if he thought that it was his dharma to seek his own happiness or the happiness of all to whom he owed so much, his brethren and his relatives and friends and others, in whose company alone and sharing happiness with whom alone, happiness had to be sought and enjoyed, were the very people whom he was to massacre; to avoid the massacre was his dharma in preference to what he had thought was dharma; in other words, his dharma to fight was, he now thought, was adharma; but even if that adharma had some justification, what about the adharma that was to arise in the entire society as a result of massive massacre of enemies whose wives would be rendered into the state of widowhood and would be obliged by the force of the human nature to take recourse to immoral ways of life that would



generate generations of people who would be born through immorality? That would be a total collapse of dharma. Which dharma, he had asked, that he had to follow? And is it not true that, after all, sannyasa, renunciation of all works was the right thing to do, as was advocated by Sankhyan philosophy and seers? He had felt that that was his dharma, —to renounce the entire field of work, to renounce the desire for happiness, the desire for kingdom, and even to allow himself to be killed unarmed and without resistance by his own enemies. But even this renunciation, even if it was seen for a moment to be the right solution — was it truly the right solution? Arjuna was not sure. He confessed his confusion and his bewilderment and turned to Sri Krishna for light and for a true solution so as to be able to do what was perfectly right and to which no blemish could apply. Arjuna was in complete bewilderment, where dharma collided with dharma, and where standards of conduct erected within the circle of human consciousness stood in sharp conflict with each other. This confusion and bewilderment was also the cause of all-consuming sorrow, and Arjuna found no way of relief from that sorrow. In that hour of terrible crisis, Sri Krishna assured him to show the way by which he could act and fight in the battle with such a new consciousness that there would be in his action such purity that it would be devoid of any blemish.

If ultimate reality consisted of only two independent principles of Purusha and Prakriti, and if all movement of energy and action were to be only in the realm of Prakriti, there could be no action which would be free from the obscurity of Prakriti, free from desire and free from the operations of ego. Within the circle of the nature of Prakriti, the very operations of which are a disequilibrium of three

gunas, one can never arrive in that circle any possibility of harmonious action, an action where dharma and adharma and dharma and dharma could ever cease to collide with each other, since all dharmas and adharmas are the unavoidable parts of the disequilibrium of inertia, *tamas*, impulsion to act, *rajas* and striving for light and harmony, *sattwa*. Prakriti is a constant field of disequilibrium; how can one find in that field anything that can be judged to be entirely right or entirely wrong? And how can any decisive action follow in which there is true and justifiable and totally right action? It is only if the action of energy of Prakriti that is described in Sankhya is not all, if it is only a derivative, incomplete and imperfect movement flowing from a higher source of energy in which all is totally harmonious with all that is released from its source, then it is only by renouncing the workings of lower Prakriti, the Sankhyan Prakriti, and only by embracing the higher Prakriti that there is a possibility of action that would be totally good. The Gita affirms that the Sankhyan account of Prakriti is an account of lower Prakriti, but there is a higher Prakriti of which the lower Prakriti is a subordinate derivative, and that the higher Prakriti, Para Prakriti, is the luminous and conscious will and power of the supreme Purusha, in every movement of whom there is inherent harmony and fullness of spiritual purity.<sup>50</sup> The entire drift of Sri Krishna's argument in answer to the questions of Arjuna is directed towards the affirmation of Para Prakriti and towards the way and the method by which Arjuna can perceive that will and unite himself with that will so that that will can spontaneously flow through Arjuna as that Para Prakriti's will, which is always the totally luminous will of the Purushottama.

## 18. Two Descriptions of Para Prakriti:

(i) Higher Nature, the Power of Purushottama

(ii) Higher Nature manifest in Jiva

As a part of that perception, there are two important descriptions of Para Prakriti which are extremely significant. The first is that the higher nature is the original nature of Purushottama and that the *aṣṭadhā prakriti*, the Prakriti that is described in Samkhyan philosophy, is lower energy and derived from Purushottama but through a higher source of the higher Prakriti, Para Prakriti. That higher nature is higher because it is the direct will of the Purushottama himself, and it is as universal and luminously universal as the Purushottama, even though Purushottama is still transcendental in a state where both immobility of Purusha or Brahman is synthesized with the mobility of higher nature. That higher nature is luminously comprehensive, constantly unifying, constantly harmonizing; it is the consciousness that corresponds to the description in the Veda of the synthesis of the vastness of Varuna and the harmony of Mitra. In that consciousness, there is no conflict and no possibility of conflict. The second important point refers to the description of the higher nature as *parā prakṛitir jīvabhūtā*, the higher nature that has become or manifested in the Jiva, which, in turn, is described as an eternal portion of the Purushottama, *mama eva aṁśaḥ sanātanaḥ*.<sup>51</sup> It is here that we are introduced to the idea of the eternal indivisibility of the indivisible portion of Purushottama, the individual soul, which is in reality one with the Purushottama, even though a portion, in the same way as a wave is indivisible from the ocean. These two important points make all the difference between the pluralism of Sankhya and integralism of Gita's

Vedanta with its emphasis on eternal oneness of Reality in all manifestation and beyond manifestation.

## 19. Complexity of Self-Knowledge

In the complexity of the individual human consciousness, there is, apart from the mute presence of the immutable Purusha or Brahman, on the one hand, and the overt operations at the physical, vital and mental levels of the obscure disequilibrium of the workings of the Apra Prakriti of the three gunas, on the other, there are also secret operations of superconscient levels, there are hidden operations of Para Prakriti, the higher nature. And, seated in the inmost depths and profundities of our heart, there is seated that individual soul, which has the same nature as that of Para Prakriti. It is that individual soul, which has been described in the Kathopanishad as the eater of sweetness (*madhvadah*) and as the Dwarf or the being no bigger than the thumb.<sup>52</sup> All action in the human complex being is not merely the action of lower nature, there is also a mixed result of the operations of the individual soul or Jiva and Para Prakriti. In our ordinary understanding of the human complex, what we call 'I' is the ego, which is only the product of the lower nature; the ego is only a cog in the machine of Prakriti, although because of the obscurity which is inherent in the movements of Prakriti, it is constantly engaged in unifying the limited flow of the energies which are flowing around it; it sees nothing else vividly than that surrounding flow of energy, and it feels itself that it is the center of all that is and all that is becoming of that self, and is itself independent in its unifying action of anything other than itself. In reality, all that is flowing around ego and all that is unifying and even its own impulsion that is engaged

in unifying action is a part of a vast and universal movement of Prakriti. This egoistic consciousness is ignorant of all, — of itself and of the vast universal energy of which it has no clear conception. The jiva, on the other hand, is the individual consciousness having its luminous source in the workings of higher nature, and even then it is not a mere construction; it is a manifest portion of the Purushottama, eternal and immortal, *sanatanaḥ*, and even though in its workings, it manifests only a partial consciousness of the Purushottama and the Para Prakriti, its boundaries are transparent and can constantly expand into its luminous awareness of itself as essentially the Universal Lord, Ishwara, but individualized in the play of the totality; it is, therefore, capable of constantly universalizing itself and living in the transcendental. It is this individual consciousness, the Jiva, is found to be hooked to Apra Prakriti through the instrumentality of that cog of the machinery of Prakriti, which is called ego. But even in that condition, this Jiva is in his dynamic relationships with the ego and the universal workings of Apra Prakriti, superior to all of them, and, if it so wills, it can always act and manifest sovereignly and control the impulsions of the gunas and of the inducements of the ego. This Jiva is constantly capable of acting, and the more it wills to act, the more will it manifest its superiority and its freedom from the clutches of the movements of Apra Prakriti and of the ego. This is the reason why Sri Krishna speaks of the Jiva's right of action, but this right belongs to jiva, not to ego. As far as the ego is concerned, it has right neither to the fruits of action nor to the action itself. The ego is constantly impelled by the universal movements of Prakriti. But the Jiva, when pressed by the unacceptable position of bondage to the ego, it can, if

it so wills, rise above its bondage to Prakriti and affirm its superiority; it can even lift itself from the lower self of the ego constituted by the lower Prakriti. This is what Sri Krishna suggests in the sixth chapter<sup>53</sup> when he says that one should lift his self by his own self, *uddharet ātmanā ātmānam*. In fact, if there were no individual soul, and if there were only the ego and workings of Apra Prakriti, on the one hand, and the immobile Purusha, on the other, there would be complete determinism of Prakriti, and there would be no possibility of higher action that can surmount the loads and weights of the machinery of Prakriti. Normally, when jiva remains hooked to the ego and does not exercise his will to rise above the ego, then the resultant condition is what Sri Krishna describes when he says, “*prakṛtim yānti bhūtāni, nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati*”, all creatures follow the drive of Prakriti, of what avail is the restraint?<sup>54</sup> It is true that the power of universal Prakriti is so irresistible that the movement of restraint that emerges from the very workings of Prakriti itself, is of no avail. But it is possible for the impulsion of restraint to emerge from the jiva, and it can uplift itself from the workings of the three gunas and can even impart the impact of its upward will on the movements of the lower Prakriti and can eventually effect the transformation of that Prakriti. In fact, the very justification of yoga, which depends upon the effort of the upward will, rests upon the presence of the jiva and the operations of this jiva as also on various possibilities of these operations within the psychological complex of the human consciousness. It is on the basis of the possibility of this movement that Sri Krishna promises Arjuna to lift him up from his crisis and show him how by that upliftment he can perceive the movements of higher Prakriti and make those movements operative in that

very field of action in which he finds himself entangled and from which he wants to be delivered. There is, according to Sri Krishna, a way superior to that way which is available to him within the framework of the Sankhya. That superior way is the way of Karma Yoga, which is the way of works, — not the way of renunciation of works, but yet that way of works involves (i) the renunciation of desire which is operation of lower Prakriti, and (ii) the willingness on the part of the jiva to allow the higher Prakriti to manifest itself through the instrumentality of the jiva. This is the way of works, but it is the way in which the knowledge of comprehensive consciousness of the Divine, both in its essence and its manifestation, (*jñānam savijñānam*)<sup>55</sup> is indispensable. This is the way where the willingness of jiva is motivated, not by desire any more, but by its progressive self-giving and surrender (bhakti) to the operations of Para Prakriti, to the will of Purushottama and the being of Purushottama himself. This is the synthesis of the yoga of the Gita.

The concept and experience of the jiva as formulated in the Gita is a reaffirmation of the concept and experience that is to be found both in the Veda and the Upanishad, although expressed in language and symbolism that were appropriate to their own Age. In the Veda, the entire yoga is centered on the esoteric sense of the sacrifice; sacrifice was conceived as sacrifice of works combined with renunciation of desire, and combined also with attainment of the knowledge of the cosmic forces, cosmic beings, gods and goddesses, as also the knowledge of Aditi, Divine Mother, and of the Supreme Purusha that was conceived and experienced as Transcendental Originator of the universe. At the deeper level, the truth of sacrifice can best be seen in the Purusha Sukta of the Veda,<sup>56</sup> where the Purusha sacrifices himself into the abyss

of darkness or inconscient in order to dynamically participate in the growth and the evolution of the world from the state of the Inconscience and lead it to the highest ocean of consciousness of bliss and to the waters of honey and sweetness. This sacrifice of Purusha implied also the sacrifice of Aditi or Para Prakriti, the power of Purusha, as also the sacrifice of the Jiva, the eternal portion of the Supreme Purusha. The process of evolution from the Inconscience towards higher levels of consciousness repeats the process of sacrifice, and the jiva rises from Inconscience, the realm of Apra Prakriti, by the sacrifice of desire and all the other elements that have arisen and are arising from the Apra Prakriti. This process of sacrifice is the Yoga that was proposed in the Veda for the seeker, the *yajamāna*, the individual who performs the yoga of sacrifice for the attainment of immortality and immortal bliss of imperishable life. It was this Yoga that was exemplified in the Veda in the experiences and realizations of the Ribhus. The individual is the Son of the Father, the Supreme Lord, of whom Vishwamitra speaks in Rigveda;<sup>57</sup> many other hymns also speak of that son. The individual is conceived in the Veda in the image of Shunahshepa, who was bound as a victim to the sacrificial post with three ropes of limited mind, inefficient life, and obscure physical animality, the three cords corresponding to the later philosophical formulation of sattwa, rajas and tamas of Apra Prakriti. The yoga of Shunahshepa is the yoga of the individual soul, jiva, in which a connection is built between the upward will of Shunahshepa, and the higher ocean of immortal waters and supreme felicity. That upward will arises, according to Veda, from the inner agni, the individual soul, who is the Son of the Father. The inner agni is the mystic fire that burns always



in the inmost altar of the mystic heart in the form of aspiration and prayer which always rises upwards. That prayer is a call to Indra and Varuna and others who manifest the waters and the law of the flow of waters which are inherent in the divine nature of bliss, the essential character of Aditi (or Para Prakriti, to use the term of the Gita). According to the Vedic parable of Shunahshepa, Varuna, the mighty lord of divine law and harmony, comes down in the aid of Shunahshepa, the symbolic individual soul, aspiring for liberation from three cords of Prakriti. Varuna sunders the threefold restraint, and the individual soul is freed towards divine riches and immortality. Thus uplifted, the individual soul, jiva, the real man, rises to his true kingship in the undivided being of the Supreme Purusha of whom he is the eternal portion.

In the Upanishads, the individual soul is specifically described as jiva in the Kathopnishad, where it is stated: "He that has known from the very close this Eater of sweetness (*madhwadah*) the jiva (*ātmānam jīvam*), the self within that is lord of what was and what shall be, shrinks not thereafter from aught nor abhors any."<sup>58</sup> It is again that jiva which is described as Purusha, as one who is the Lord, Isha, and as one who is seated in the midst of our Self, no larger than the thumb of man. In the following two verses of Kathopnishad, it is stated: "The Purusha who is seated in the midst of one's self is no larger than the thumb of a man; He is the Lord of what was and what shall be. Him having seen one shrinks not from aught, nor abhors any. ....The Purusha that is within us is no larger than the thumb of a man (*anguşṭamātrah*): He is like a blazing fire that is without smoke, He is lord of His past and His future. He alone is today and He alone shall be tomorrow."<sup>59</sup> Indeed, there is much more in the Veda and the

Upanishad which is confirmed and reaffirmed in the Gita's concept and experience of Purushottama who is the immobile Purusha and Brahman as also mobile, kshara manifest as Para Prakriti that becomes jiva and also jiva, that is the eternal portion of the Purushottama.

## **20. Sacrifice and the Jiva**

The entire exposition of the Gita in respect of sacrifice, yajna, which is the second step in the Karma Yoga of the Gita can be seen as that of a gradual ascent of the jiva by the affirmation of the dynamic will, which is distinct from the status of the immobile Purusha, on the one hand, and also distinct from the movements of the Prakriti of the three gunas. Psychologically, desire can be conquered, and action can take place without the impulsion of desire, because there is in the individual soul a Will, independent of desire and ego, the products of Apra Prakriti; that Will can blow away desire by sacrificing it by means of its fire that is inherent in it. Without giving up works, but by lifting the works on the fire of the upward will, the jiva, progressively burns away all the fibres of desire and threads of the ego, and one can attain to liberation from Apra Prakriti. In that state of liberation, the Jiva realizes the immobility of the Purusha and at the same time, it unites the sacrificing will with the dynamic divine will that manifests through Para Prakriti. Work itself thus becomes a means of liberation, and work itself acts as a liberating force enabling the realization of both the immobile Purusha and the mobile Purusha and of the Purushottama. This is the central secret of the Gita's Karma Yoga. But since this Yoga has to be worked out progressively, the path of sacrifice is conceived as a gradual path of Ascent, and each step of this ascent is a step towards

swarajya and samarajya, the free rule of the true self over one's own self and free rule of the self over all that comes within the empire of the self.

## 21. Ascent of the Sacrifice

Sacrifice is, indeed, the king-idea of the Gita's Karma Yoga and Gita's synthesis of yoga. At the stage where one detaches oneself from the right of enjoyment of the fruits of action, one still continues with the idea of oneself as the doer of action. "I am the doer, I am the doer".<sup>60</sup> This sense persists. Secondly, when desire for the fruits of action is renounced, a perilous possibility arises, namely, the possibility of renunciation of all works, since normally all action proceeds from a motive, and normally the motive is associated with the desire for the enjoyment of the fruits of action. The engine of action therefore becomes weaker if that motive of desire is gradually withdrawn. But it is here that the motive of desire gets replaced by the motive to perform action as sacrifice, as self-offering, as a movement in which all desires are offered in the sacrificial fire of *tapasya* in which they can all be burnt up. The motive of sacrifice, when practised more and more persistently, reveals that that motive does not essentially emerge from the network of the movements of *Apara Prakriti*, although for sometime the ego-consciousness is involved in that motive and action of sacrifice. At a deeper level, however, it will be found that the motive of the sacrifice has its essential root in the consciousness of the *jiva*, whose spontaneous breathing and life is a constant and spontaneous offering to the *Para Prakriti* and to the *Purushottama*. That spontaneous state of offering of the *jiva* is not desire; for it is not a movement to possess something that is not within itself nor is it for the

sustenance of any construction that the ego at its highest can construct. The jiva breathes spontaneously its offering to its source in an action that unites it constantly, — not with something that is outside itself, — but with that which is its deepest self and its own deepest source of existence. This motive, even though it may begin with the taints of egoism and lower motivation of desire, becomes free from those taints and limitations; actually, even these also are offered in the fire of the sacrifice. Every work done as sacrifice becomes then a liberating work; every work is a means by which sacrifice of desires and of ego is effected; and every work becomes the revealer of one's true soul and also the revealer of the knowledge that there is ultimately only one source of action, only one doer, the Para Prakriti, the higher nature, the executrix of the ultimate Doer, namely, Purushottama. The false idea that one is a doer of action, that ego is a doer, is clearly seen to be false. One begins to perceive that even activities of Prakriti, even the formation of ego and all operations of Prakriti, with all their limitations, have to be traced back to Para Prakriti and Purushottama. Indeed; this tracing is very difficult; for how from Para Prakriti, Apra Prakriti has emerged with all its ignorance and limitation is a great mystery. But with the constant practice of sacrifice, all the threads of Apra Prakriti can be seen to be connected with the operations of Para Prakriti and thence with Purushottama. The jiva can thus return to a very high status of knowledge, status of integral knowledge, *samagram jñānam, jñānam savijñānam*,<sup>61</sup> in which all terms of existence, all terms of reality stand in perfect relationship, and one can then attain to the vision of Purushottama.

## 22. Self-Surrender, the Third Step of Karma Yoga

And having seen that Purushottama, the individual cannot but be filled with that supreme bhakti, which is the crown of the profoundest joy and immortality. From that joy, there can proceed perfect desireless action, free from any taint of ego or desire, from any taint of blemish. In that vision and, in that experience, the third step of Karma Yoga, Self-surrender to the Supreme, the culminating point of Karma Yoga, which is disclosed in the last chapter of the Gita, is attained. The statement of that culminating point can really be regarded as the *mahāvākya* of the Gita. It lays down the method of complete self-surrender, — spontaneous, simple and yet full, — in which all laws of action which are necessary for climbing the staircase of the ascent of the sacrifice, can also be sacrificed; and it is by renunciation of those standards that the highest standard, the highest law, the highest law of divine action, *divyam karma*, is discovered and becomes practicable.

## 23. Intermediate Stages of the Synthesis of Yoga

The ascent of sacrifice necessitates the synthesis of increasing knowledge of oneness and increasing practice of equality. In fact, this synthesis is the governing principle of all the steps of Karma Yoga. Development of the largest and highest states of powers of consciousness of oneness and equality constitutes the peak attainment. The kernel of the method is unreserved acceptance of the Divine, of the Purushottama, of the Lord of Sacrifice, to whom sacrifice is offered and by whom sacrifice is received. This acceptance of the divine in our life as in our inner-self and spirit facilitates the inner renunciation of personal desire. With this

the consciousness of equality increases and greater and greater surrender to the divine becomes more and more spontaneous, and it gets filled with that love, that devotion, which cannot be sufficiently hymned in human terms. The jiva becomes increasingly free from the lower Prakriti and becomes more and more united with the Para Prakriti, and one attains to oneness with Purushottama in dynamic force and not only in static peace or inactive beatitude. It is in that increasing state of self-surrender that the promise that Sri Krishna had made to Arjuna can be fulfilled: Freedom for the spirit even in the midst of work and in the midst of full energies at work. An integral dynamic activity gets founded on a still passivity, a largest possible action gets irrevocably based on an immobile calm. There arises free and full expression of a supreme inward silence.

There are many ways by which the synthesis of yoga can grow and develop in different individuals, and all these ways can be seen ultimately as His ways, and the divine consciousness deals with each individual in the way that is appropriate to him and guides him and leads him up to the highest possible levels of perfection on the lines of development suitable to him. A full treatise on synthesis of yoga would be much more extensive in which several ways and manners in which the higher stages of synthesis can be developed. But the Gita, although a yogashastra, is not that extensive theoretical exposition. The yoga and the gradual development of the synthesis of yoga that is presented in the Gita is circumscribed within an episode of a huge cauldron of an intensest movement of war at a historical development, and it is centered on answering a dynamic bewilderment of a man of action. Therefore, the Gita is an exposition of the process, the starting-point of which was Karma Yoga. If that

Yoga were addressed to a man of knowledge or to a man of emotional aesthesis or emotional fervour of love, the expositional development of the Yoga would have been quite different. In actuality, therefore, the Gita's Yoga weaves Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga with Karma Yoga, and this weaving is extraordinarily subtle and complex. The processes of Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga can be all discerned. The descriptions that we find of buddhi yoga, brahma nirvana yoga, of the rajyogic practices of concentration and further expansion by which jnana is woven with vijnana — all these are clearly parts of the path of Knowledge. It is shown that the path of knowledge is indispensable for the development of Karma Yoga. For in both, the delusion of the dualities, which arise from likes and dislikes, has to be destroyed. In both the processes of yoga, there is a necessity of utter purification from the clutches of the vital ego, the fire of passion, the tumult of desire of the rajasic nature, and one has to cultivate the steadiness of sattwic impulse of the ethical being. When that is done or as it is being done, there is the growth of the sattwic nature that nourishes the increasing capacity for a high quietude, equality and transcendence. Both in Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga, it is necessary to rise above the dualities and become impersonal, equal, one with the Immutable — one with all-existence. As this process develops, self-knowledge, world-knowledge and God-knowledge are enlarged. And with this enlargement, a new element grows more spontaneously and begins to occupy a central position.

This new element is the increase in devotion, Bhakti. That is the reason why it becomes easier to synthesize the method of Karma Yoga in which the sacrifice to the Supreme Lord gets increasing preeminence, and with the increase of

sacrifice, the knowledge of immutable is ripened and even attained; but there is also an expansion into world-knowledge so as to gain the knowledge of the two natures of the divine being, the higher nature and the lower nature as also a more perfect and integral knowledge of oneness of existence even in diversity and various degrees of the developments that are constantly evolving in Apra Prakriti by their constant expansion in which Para Prakriti can burst out and manifest. But as the synthesis begins to grow, one has not only to act in a large spirit of equality, but also to do sacrifice to the Supreme Lord, who becomes known more and integrally, *samagram mām*.<sup>62</sup> One has then the vision of the One Self everywhere in all existences. But with increase of equality and vision of unity, devotion from the heart of the seeker for the Lord of Sacrifice to whom works are being offered begins to grow, and with the greater knowledge of the jiva and his relationship with the immutable spirit as its own inmost Self, and its relationship with Para Prakriti and Purushottama, the inmost love which constitutes the very being of the jiva becomes more and more manifest. The seeker becomes firm in bhakti, and along with the process of self-consecration of all being, — of all activities of knowledge, and of all activities of varieties of works, bhakti gains the base of the knowledge. With that firm base, the movements of bhakti become intenser, and the lower forms of bhakti are transcended, — *bhajante mām dṛḍha vratāḥ*.<sup>63</sup>

The Gita recognizes distinctions between different kinds of seekers who are moved by devotion. There are, according to the Gita, four kinds of Bhaktas, devotees. There are those who are *ārta*,<sup>64</sup> who are in the state of deep sorrow and suffering in the world, and therefore they turn to a higher help and take refuge in whomever they regard as Divine or



capable of providing refuge. There are those who are *arthārthī*,<sup>65</sup> who are seekers of welfare, prosperity, and the good, and who seek the help of the divine in the form of anyone, any superior source who can serve as a giver of the good. Then there are those who are desirous of knowledge, *jijñāsu*,<sup>66</sup> and they also approach the Divine or any higher source from where knowledge is obtainable. And lastly, there are those who have come to know the Divine, not in the form in which he can be approached or known through inferior formations, human powers, angelic powers or godly powers, but of the Divine directly who is behind all inferior formations but who transcends them all, the divine in Himself, both in his essence and in his divine manifestations; they are *jñānī*; they are knowers and who adore the Divine. The Gita recognizes all the lower forms of bhakti and accepts them also in their own place, *udārāḥ sarva evaite*,<sup>67</sup> but points out that the Bhakti that is coupled with knowledge excels them all, *viśiṣyate*. For the knowledge of the Divine is difficult to attain, and rare on earth is the great soul, *mahātmā*, who is capable of fully seeing him and entering into him with his whole being, in every way of his nature, by the wide power of this all-embracing knowledge, *sarvavit sarvabhāvena*.<sup>68</sup>

## PART TWO

### 1. Four Major Experiences and Realisations of the Gita's Yoga

The Gita expounds the working of the synthetic method of its yoga and provides us authentic descriptions of the relevant experiences and realizations in great detail. The peaks of these experiences include: (i) the knowledge of divine birth, (divyam janma) and divine work, (divyam karma);<sup>69</sup> (ii) the attainment of Brahma-nirvana,<sup>70</sup> the total nirvana in the state of immobile Brahman in the freedom of which divine work can take place; (iii) the great perception of the birth and development of divine qualities in the cosmic movement and, the vision of the vibhuti in the cosmos;<sup>71</sup> and (iv) the great vision of Sri Krishna in action,<sup>72</sup> the great time-vision, specially granted to Arjuna by Sri Krishna.

#### **Divine Birth and Divine Work (*Divyam Janma, Divyam Karma*)**

Divyam janma, divine birth, can be regarded as the crucial means of Karma Yoga, and divyam karma, divine work, may be regarded, as the culmination of Karma Yoga. These two constitute the centrality of the answer that Sri Krishna gives to the bewildering questions which arose from the unbearable intensity of the crisis which was not prepared to accept any compromising acquiescence. These, divine birth and divine work arise, according to the yoga that Sri Krishna expounds, from the operation of the law of sacrifice,

which essentially vibrates with Para Prakriti, and which, therefore, constantly uplifts all that is in the world of the operations of the three gunas of Apra Prakriti and their products, including desire and ego. When the individual offers the sacrifice, the will that is inherently at work in the individual is essentially divine, and it can be understood in terms of the operations of Para Prakriti, even though it may be in the beginning and for a long time mixed up with the operations of Apra Prakriti. In any case, according to the law of sacrifice, every act of offering evokes a response of the higher Prakriti, even though it may be greatly mixed up in the beginning and for a long time with the operations of Apra Prakriti.

In the beginning, the act of offering is largely ignorant, and it is mixed up with motives that are filled with desire and ego, and the object of sacrifice is ignorantly conceived and experienced or else, the object of sacrifice to whom sacrifice is offered is related to larger and wider forces working in the world, partly in the realms or planes of the Apra Prakriti, or in the planes which are higher but not highest in the Para Prakriti. These cosmic powers are recognized to be dynamically present and operative as varieties of gods and goddesses; but one needs to rise still higher; therefore, the Gita speaks of the need to purify the offering in the fire of knowledge, since there is nothing as pure as knowledge (IV.38); it is that sacrifice which becomes so imbued with knowledge that ultimately it becomes free from taints of desire and ego, and therefore acceptable directly by the Supreme Lord, who presides over Para Prakriti and who is free from all the limitations of the gods and goddesses. As a result, in accordance with the law of sacrifice, there is to every pure offering a pure divine

response, the response of the highest will of Purushottama operative in the highest planes of Para Prakriti.

This divine response is the divine birth that descends into the movements of upward will of the offering. It is by the junction of the two that the divine will is injected into the aspiring individual; it is then in the purity of the individual's consciousness that the divine will begins to operate. That will is the transcendental will, the will that constantly unifies all the workings of Para Prakriti and Apra Prakriti, and the resultant action is the divine work, *divyam karma*, which by its very nature unifies and promotes the highest good of all towards increasing and constant harmony, *lokasaṅgraha*. This is the reason why Sri Krishna speaks of the object of *lokasaṅgraha* as the distinguishing characteristic of the divine work. The consequence of this entire working of the sacrifice is to remove the barrier between the human will and the divine will by the constant movement of sacrifice in the fire of which the barrier is burnt and the human instrument is so purified that it becomes the vehicle of the operations of the higher Prakriti and the divine will, and the individual not only becomes but realizes in direct knowledge that he is a mere instrument (*nimitta*) of the Divine Will. That divine will, if followed or allowed to be operated in complete purity, manifests the kind of action that Arjuna had asked for, namely, the action devoid of any blemish whatsoever, the action in the performance of which there is no sorrow whatsoever. That divine will automatically ensures *lokasaṅgraha*,<sup>73</sup> as it was often illustrated by king Janaka and others who had attained perfection.

### **Divine Birth, Divine Work, and the Secret of the Divine Incarnation**

The path of sacrifice is all-inclusive. It is the path of

offering, and the offering is multisided, and it develops into all-sided offering. The Gita's phrase of this total offering is *sarvabhāvena*, — offering in every mode of being, in every state of being, in every sentiment, in every emotion, in every thought and in every act of will. And the union of the jiva with the Purushottama to which this all-inclusive offering leads is three-fold; (i) the integral knowledge of the Purushottama, in all states of being of the Purushottama, — the immobile and the mobile and the supreme; (ii) the most intimate power of the will of the divine that culminates in Divine Action, *divyam karma*; and (iii) the most momentous influx of the supreme Lord Himself in the bud of the growing lotus of the jiva that opens itself up in a total state of receptivity and surrender to that influx. This union contains the supreme experience of the divine birth and divine action, the importance of which is explicitly stated in the following words of Sri Krishna: "O Arjuna! He who knows thus in true nature the secret in its essential truth of My birth and action transcends the movement of rebirth when he leaves his body, and by his surpassing movement, he arrives in Me. Free from all desire, fear and anger, having surrendered himself to Me and having become thoroughly united with Me, many, purified by the concentration of knowledge, have attained to My Nature (*parā prakṛiti*)."<sup>74</sup>

The divine birth of which Sri Krishna speaks has significance not only for the individual in whom that birth takes place, but since that birth arises from the universal and transcendental supreme divine, it has also universal significance and universal consequence, a wider and higher significance, and it is in that context that the Gita's meaning of divine incarnation in the human body is contained. This is the yogic knowledge and yogic confirmation of the doctrine

of divine incarnation that we find in many traditions and in regard to which Buddha, Christ, Krishna and others have been described as divine incarnations.

All union with the divine, all knowledge by identity with the divine, all the manifestation of the divine in human being, is essentially an influx of the divine from its transcendence and universality, and each individual who receives in his being this influx is a recipient of the descent of the divine consciousness and therefore of divine incarnation, divine *avatarhood*. But Sri Krishna goes farther and describes certain conditions under which the world-situation offers itself to the supreme divine in an ardent prayer with such intensity that that prayer becomes prayer of universal significance, and in reply to that prayer and that intense need of the world, the Supreme Lord, by means of a special process of descent, incarnates in a human body, right from its birth, and that Divine Birth has even a greater universal significance and consequence. The divine incarnation, the avatar, is thus not a sporadic or accidental or a miraculous manifestation for the display of the divine powers for human wonder. The avatarhood of which Sri Krishna speaks is a part of the process of evolution on the earth, which follows a rhythm of the law of sacrifice and of evolution, the secret of which is not easy to discern, but which is described in a few pregnant and meaningful words by Sri Krishna in the following words:

*“yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata  
abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmyaham  
paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām  
dharma samsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge”*

“O Arjuna! Whenever there is decline of dharma, and

whenever there is the uprising tide of adharma, then I assume My own birth. To extend all-sided protection and upliftment of all those engaged in the pursuit of the Good, and in order to exterminate those engaged in actions that are perverse and resistant to the Good, and in order to establish dharma, I incarnate Myself at every epochal movement of the world-movement."<sup>75</sup>

The word dharma that has been used in these verses has a special meaning; it means neither a religious creed nor good human conduct. The highest meaning which is understood by the word dharma is contained in reference to that state of law of manifestation and action that is involved in what the Gita calls the state of *sādharmyam*. *Sādharmyam* is a state that is attained when the state of consciousness manifests *parā prakṛti*, the higher nature of the Divine Himself, which transcends the lower Prakṛiti of the three gunas, and it is the state of *triguṇātita*, which is also described as *madbhāvam*, the divine's own becoming. The divine movement of becoming has also a law, but that law is the law of action that manifests the universality and the transcendence of the Supreme Divine. It is the law, which has been described in the Veda as the law of Vastness and Harmony, and which is symbolically described as the law of Varuna and Mitra. In the evolutionary movement, that law is the supervening law, much beyond the laws conceived and formulated in terms of standards that are erected from time to time under various needs of the human growth and evolution. Those laws are required to be transcended, so that that transcendence becomes a gate of the attainment of the divine law of action of the higher nature of the Supreme. The knowledge of that divine dharma, the divine law, opens the gate of attainment of that liberation, that moksha, by

living in which every fibre of action that deviates from the supreme law is eliminated. It is then that the state of *sādharmyam* is attained.<sup>76</sup> That supreme law, that dharma is an active law, and it is that law which constantly operates in the world like uplifting magnet by the attraction of which evolution is led upwards at every stage of its development. It is when that dharma and the operation of that dharma becomes dimmed, and when there is uprising tide of the operations that resist the divine law of action, that at that critical point, the divine incarnation occurs as a part of the divine operation of the evolutionary process. It is by the assumption by the Supreme Lord of the human birth that provides all-round protection to those who are pursuing the Good, and the Law of divine action; it also causes elimination of all those who are engaged in works that are resistant to the Good. It is again that divine birth, or divine Incarnation, that establishes the divine law of action which is needed at that historical moment for lifting up humanity to a higher stage of evolution. The dharma that is established by every divine incarnation, which occurs at every epochal moment of human history, *yuge yuge*, is an explicit expression of the supreme divine law of action, but that expression is specifically related to the guidance that is required to humanity so that the humanity at that stage can be uplifted towards the next higher stage of evolution.

The divine incarnation is thus an important feature of the law of evolution. For that reason, every avatar is an example that serves as a manifest embodiment of the divine descent and human ascent, so that human evolution is facilitated by the example of the life and work of the divine avatar. In this connection, therefore, it is significant that Sri Krishna in the following verse lays down the role of the best, the role of



*śreṣṭha*, that is played in the generalization of the law of action by which humanity can be uplifted at a given epochal stage of evolution: “Whatever is the mode of the action of the best leader, that very mode characterizes people in general. Whatever ideals he puts forth, that ideal is followed by the people.”<sup>77</sup>

And in the next three verses, Sri Krishna explains his own mode of action as an example of the divine incarnation in the following words:

“There is nothing that I need to do in all the three worlds; there is nothing that I require to add to Myself, and yet I am engaged in action. If ever I did not engage Myself in action unwearied, O Arjuna, human beings would follow My path in every way. Should I cease to work, these worlds would be destroyed. I would cause confusion in the maintenance of the order of the society, and thus destroy all the people. O Arjuna! While the ignorant perform actions out of desire, the wise perform actions without any desire and solely for the operation of the law of harmony of universal unity (*lokasaṅgraha*)”.

### **Divine Worker**

Following the example of the divine avatar, the Gita provides in the third, fourth and fifth chapters the signs of the human worker, who has attained by Karma Yoga the highest status of the divine worker. First of all, the divine worker is a liberated man; he is a large and universal doer of all works, *kṛtsna karma kṛt*.<sup>78</sup> By the flaming intensity and purity of the knowledge, all his actions are devoid of desire and human intentionality, and they are all burnt up as in a fire. His mind remains without any stain or disfiguring mark; he is calm, silent, seated in brahma-nirvana, unperturbed,

white and clean and pure. All works proceeding from the divine will are executed through him as the arrow is shot through a bow, and there is therefore no personal egoism of the doer. He has renounced all enjoyment of the fruits of action, and even though he is engaged always in works, he remains non-doer of works. He has no personal hopes; he does not seize on things as his personal possessions. His action is indeed a purely physical action, *śārīraṁ kevalaṁ karma*; he commits no sin in any of his actions.<sup>79</sup> Impersonality is the next sign of the divine worker. The result of this impersonality is perfect equality in the soul and the nature. He has passed beyond the dualities; he is *dvandvātīta*. He is equal in his state in success or failure. In all he sees two things, the Divine inhabiting every being equally, and every manifestation unequal only in its temporary circumstances. For animal and man, for dog, for unclean outcast and for the learned and virtuous Brahmin, for saint and sinner, for indifferent and friendly and the hostile, for those who love him and benefit and those who hate him and afflict, he has in his heart all the same equal kindliness, the same divine affection.<sup>80</sup> Circumstances may determine the outward clasp or the outward conflict, but can never affect his equal eye, his open heart, his inner embrace of God. A still further sign of the divine worker is a perfect inner joy and peace which depend upon nothing in the world for their source and for their continuance; they are innate, they are the very stuff of the soul's consciousness, they are the very nature of the divine being. In all things, the divine worker has the same imperishable ananda, *sukham akṣayam aśnute*.<sup>81</sup>

The Gita insists on the difference between the inward and the outward renunciation, *tyāga* and *sannyāsa*. *Sann-*

*yāsa* is valueless without *tyāga*, hardly possible to attain without it, unnecessary when there is the inward freedom. In fact, *tyaga* itself is real and sufficient *sannyasa*. The divine worker is a *sannyasin*, because he has renounced all desires inwardly. "He should be known as the eternal *Sannyasin*, who neither hates nor desires; free from dualities, he is happily and easily released from all bondage."<sup>82</sup> It is further said of him as follows: "He who, having abandoned attachment, acts reposing his works on the Brahman, is not stained by sin even as water clings not to the lotus-leaf," *padma patram iva ambhasā*.<sup>83</sup>

The divine worker rises above the action of the three *gunas*, and even when the *gunas* are active, and he sees, hears, tastes, smells, eats, moves, sleeps, breathes, speaks, takes, ejects, opens his eyes or closes them, he holds that it is only the senses acting upon the objects of the senses.<sup>84</sup> The divine worker is *triguṇātīta*. This *traiguṇātītya* is also a high sign of the divine worker. But seated high in that state, the will of the Supreme works in him, and that work also does not belong to him but belongs to the higher nature — *parā prakṛti*. The divine worker is identified with the *akshara Purusha*, the immobile Self, and has renounced his actions into Him, the *Purushottama*, and he works out His will. Such are the works of the divine worker, of the liberated soul, *muktasya karma*, and the more the action of the supreme is transmitted through the divine worker, the higher and higher are the operations in him of *Para Prakriti*. His actions rise from a free spirit and disappear without modifying it, like waves that rise and disappear on the surface of the ocean.

*Gatasasaṅgasya muktasya jñānāvasthita-cetasah  
yajñāyācarataḥ karma samagraṁ pravilīyate*.<sup>85</sup>

But this is not the last word on the divine work.

Fullness of the Divine Work or of spiritual action, which Sri Krishna affirms as the highest possibility that can be attained by the synthesis of yoga of works, knowledge and devotion, needs still to be affirmed fully, and a deeper understanding of the nature of the fullness of spiritual action needs still to be further elucidated. "He who knows the supreme as transcendental of the Gunas, it is he who attains My own nature." (XIV.19) This is what Sri Krishna affirms, and he thus makes a distinction between His own nature from the nature of the three gunas, the distinction that was already expounded in principle in the seventh chapter where a distinction was made between *Apara Prakriti* and *Para Prakriti*, the *Prakriti* of three gunas and the higher *Prakriti* by which the entire world is upheld.<sup>86</sup> But in the last six chapters this subject is expounded in greater detail and by means of a more comprehensive analysis of some of the major elements which arise from higher nature but which are distinguishably embedded in the workings of *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas* of the lower nature and therefore more easily capable of being disentangled from the lower workings of the gunas or brought back or transformed into the movements of higher nature, the divine's own nature, *madbhāva*.

### **Attainment of Brahma-nirvana**

Perfection that is sought to be attained by the divine birth and divine action cannot be unassailable, unless at an appropriate stage of development, the experience and realization of Brahma-nirvana are attained. Towards the close of the fifth chapter and much of the sixth chapter is, therefore, devoted in the Gita to the experience and

realization of Brahma-nirvana. Mark of the status of Brahma-nirvana is the supreme peace of a calm self-extinction, *sāntim nirvāṇa paramām* (VI.15). The Brahman, it is to be noted, connotes in the Upanishads primarily at least the inner timeless Self withdrawn from active participation even though immanent in the externality of Nature. The Brahman consciousness is keynote and cornerstone of integral knowledge; it is by rising into that consciousness and by stabilizing oneself into it (*brahmavid brahmaṇi sthitah*)<sup>87</sup> that one becomes the knower of the Brahman. The idea of the brahma-yoga and of the nirvana or self-extinction in the Brahman is expounded in the Gita in the following verses:

“When the soul is no longer attached to the touches of outward things, one finds happiness that exists in the self; such a one enjoys an imperishable happiness, because his self is in yoga, *yukta*, united by yoga with the Brahman. The enjoyments obtained by the contact of the senses with their objects are the sources of sorrow; they have a beginning and an end; therefore, the wise man does not delight himself in them. He, who is able to resist and endure without being deflected by the impulse of desire and anger even before departing from the body, is verily a yogin and a happy person. He, who has the inner happiness and the inner ease and repose and the inner light, that Yogin becomes the Brahman and reaches self-extinction in the Brahman, *brahma-nirvāṇam*.”

“The sages attain to Nirvana in the Brahman, they in whom the stains of sin are effaced and the knot of doubt is cut asunder; they are masters of their selves, and they are occupied in doing good to all creatures, *yatātmānaḥ*

*sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ*; those who practise self-mastery by yoga and austerity, and who are delivered from desire and wrath and for them nirvana in the Brahman exists all above them, encompasses them, they already live here in it because they have knowledge of the Self. Having put outside of himself all outward touches and concentrated the will between the eyebrow and made equal the *prāṇa* and the *apāna* moving within the nostrils, having controlled the senses, the mind and the understanding, the sage devoted to liberation, from whom desire and wrath and fear have passed away is ever free. When a man has known Me as the Enjoyer of sacrifice and Tapasya, the mighty lord of all the worlds, the friend of all creatures, he comes by the peace.”<sup>88</sup>

There are three important characteristics of the Brahman consciousness. First of all, it is emphasized that this consciousness is to be attained, while one is still in the body. This emphasis is identical with that which is to be found explicitly and emphatically in the Kena Upanishad, where also the Brahman consciousness is expounded. It states: “If here one comes to that knowledge, then one truly is; if, however, one comes not to the knowledge, then great is the perdition.”<sup>89</sup> Secondly, the state of brahma-nirvana does not imply continuous withdrawal into some deep sleep of Samadhi away from all world consciousness, nor is it the preparatory movement for a dissolution of the natural being and the individual soul into some absolute Self, since that state of brahma-nirvana can exist simultaneously with world-consciousness and it is even in its own way included. For it is stated that the sages who have won nirvana in the Brahman are occupied in doing good to all creatures and for them nirvana in the Brahman exists all about them, encompasses them, and they already live in it because they

have knowledge of the Self. Once again, this is a reaffirmation of the statement in the Kena Upanishad<sup>90</sup> where the Brahman consciousness is described as “*tad vanam*”, the transcendent Delight the all-blissful ananda of which the Taittiriya Upanishad speaks as the highest Brahman from which all existences are born, by which all existences arrive in their passing out of death and birth. It is this beatitude which has been meant by the immortality in the Upanishads, and by knowing and possessing Brahman as the supreme ananda, Kena Upanishad affirms, one becomes the knower and possessor of the Brahman and towards Him the desire of all creatures is directed. In other words, he becomes a centre of the Divine delight shedding it on all the world and attracting all to it as to a fountain of joy and love and self-fulfillment in the universe. Thirdly, one who lives in Brahman consciousness is led to a further climax, namely, the knowledge of the mighty lord of all the worlds, the friend of all creatures and the knowledge of Him as the Enjoyer of sacrifice and Tapasya.

The sixth chapter of the Gita is a large comment on and a full development of the idea of the brahma-nirvana, the state of brahma-consciousness which firmly synthesizes peace of *akarma* (non-action), of *sannyasa* (complete renunciation), and peace that is supreme and that passeth understanding, on the one hand, with the world-consciousness, which is realized as a constant sacrifice, and which is presided over by the supreme Purushottama to whom all sacrifice is offered and who enjoys the sacrifice and manifests that Delight in divine action, *divyam karma*.

The sixth chapter begins by the statement of the real sense and essence of sannyasa and points out that it is an

inward and not an outward renunciation. "Whoever does the work to be done without resort to its fruits, he is a sannyasin and the Yogin, not the man who ceases to ignite the fire of the work of sacrifice and one who ceases from the performance of the works. What they have called renunciation (sannyasa), know to be in truth yoga of works; for none becomes a yogin or the Divine Worker, who has not renounced the desire-will in the mind."<sup>91</sup> Sri Krishna explains, in effect, that works are first to be done by ascending on the path of yoga, for then the works are the cause of self-perfection and nirvana in the Brahman; but once that state is obtained, the calm of self-mastery and self-possession becomes the cause of fixity in the Self or in the Brahman consciousness, and also of perfect equality in which the divine works of the liberated man are done. "For when one does not get attached to the objects of sense or to works and has renounced all will of desire in the mind, then is he said to have ascended to the top of yoga of works."<sup>92</sup> One who has conquered his very self by his own self and has attained tranquility, one who remains balanced and one who has reached the perfect calm in which his highest self is manifest to him, for him that highest self is always concentrated in its own being, *samāhita*, in Samadhi, not only in the trance of the inward-drawn consciousness, but always in the waking state of the mind as well, even when exposed to the causes of desire and of disturbance, to grief and pleasure, heat and cold, honour and disgrace.<sup>93</sup>

It is, of course, admitted that yoga is not an easy thing to acquire, since the restless mind is always liable to be pulled down from these heights by the attacks of outward things and to fall back into the strong control of grief and passion and inequality. Mere buddhi yoga of which Sri Krishna had



spoken earlier is not always sufficient, and one needs to undertake a special process of rajayogic meditation also, a powerful method of practice ‘*abhyāsa*’, a strong way to the complete control of the mind and all its workings. Sri Krishna elucidates: “The seeker should set in a pure spot his firm seat neither too high, nor yet too low, covered with a cloth, with a deer-skin, with sacred grass, and there seated with a concentrated mind and with the workings of the mental consciousness and the senses under control, and he should practise Yoga for self-purification”. The process of concentration, self-control and freedom from fear are then underlined. As a result, the supreme peace of nirvana is attained, and one also attains to the knowledge that the supreme peace of nirvana has its foundation “in Me”, in the Purushottama, *śāntim nirvāṇaparamām mat saṁsthām*.<sup>94</sup>

Once again, Sri Krishna describes the nature of the self-realization and the result of the yoga which comes by nirvana or self-extinction of the separative ego-mind and its motives of thought and feeling and action into the Brahman consciousness, which includes the cosmic sense, though lifted into a new kind of vision. Sri Krishna explains: “The man, whose self is in Yoga, sees the self in all beings and all beings in the self he sees all with an equal vision. He who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me, to him I do not get lost, nor does he get lost to Me.”<sup>95</sup> The supreme yogin is then described in the following words: “The yogin who has taken his stand upon oneness and loves Me in all beings, however in all ways lives and acts, lives and acts in Me, he, O Arjuna, who sees with equality everything in the image of the Self, whether it be grief or it be happiness, him I hold to be the supreme Yogin.”<sup>96</sup> Once again, these descriptions underline the synthesis of knowledge and works, but they

also bring here as always Bhakti as the climax of the yoga, *sarvabhūta-sthitam yo mām bhajati ekatvam āsthitaḥ*.<sup>97</sup> In the climactic words of this chapter, Sri Krishna underlines this synthesis once again and speaks of the bhakta, the one who realizes the Supreme and one who performs actions with love for the Supreme and as an expression of that love as the greatest of all the yogins: “The yogin who has attained the highest status of yoga by Karma Yoga is greater than the doers of askesis, greater than the men of knowledge, greater than the men of works; become then the Yogin of Works, O Arjuna. Of all the Karmayogins, one who has with all his inner self given up to Me, one who has for Me love and faith, him I hold to be the most united with Me in yoga.”<sup>98</sup>

### Vision of the Vibhūtis

While the synthesis of knowledge, action and devotion grows and develops, there arises in the movement of the lower nature of the seeker increasing operation of the Para Prakriti; there comes about the birth of higher nature and of divine qualities. In a sense, all yoga is a yoga of Apra Prakriti, since it is in Apra Prakriti that ignorance manifests as the operation of three gunas, and it is by the attachment of the jiva to these operations that the jiva becomes bound to the ignorant movements of nature and forgets his own true nature and his true source in the Purushottama and Para Prakriti. It is only by the increase of the growth of the sattwa in Apra Prakriti that the higher will of the jiva begins to manifest and it is by that gradual manifestation that the jiva becomes able to uplift itself from the lower self to which it is bound by attachment and by the strong clutch of the ego, *ātmanātmānam uddharet*.<sup>99</sup> The greater the operation of the jiva on Apra Prakriti, the greater is the flow into Apra

Prakriti of the Para Prakriti which constitutes the nature of the jiva. And, with the increasing force of the sacrifice of the jiva, there comes about greater response of the Divine and of the divine nature in the Apra Prakriti. A stage can be reached where the seeker, by force of some extraordinary development of the powers of emotion, feeling, thought and will, the boundaries of Apra Prakriti are broken; this is accompanied by the constant infiltration of the divine qualities of Para Prakriti, the higher nature which is higher than sattwa; some of these divine qualities get more and more stabilized and become more and more effectively operative. That stabilization and effective operation of one or two or more divine qualities can rightly be termed as the operations of Vibhuti, or special becomings, — special, wider, intenser and supernatural and super-human. Indeed, with the upward movement of the synthesis of yoga, one also begins to gain the knowledge of the operations of Vibhutis in the entire world, since during the long period of evolution from Matter to Mind, a large number of Vibhutis have manifested in the domains of Matter, Life and Mind.

Of these vibhutis, there is no end, *nāsti anto vistarasya me*.<sup>100</sup> Vibhuti is manifestation of extraordinary qualities and even incarnation of divine qualities proceeding from the operations of Para Prakriti. Again, since there is no unbridgeable division between Purushottama and Para Prakriti, there is always some manifest operation of Purushottama in vibhutis. But the manifestation of vibhutis during the long process of evolution from Matter to Mind is distinguished in the Gita from the manifestation that occurs by the descent of the Purushottama Himself on the earth. In both these phenomena, the Purushottama and Para Prakriti descend in the operations of Apra Prakriti, but the purpose and the

manner in which this descent takes place is special in each case.

First of all, a distinction is to be made between the manner and purpose of the descent of Jivatmans and those of the descent of the Purushottama Himself in the workings of the Apara Prakriti. The jivatmans are the multiple self-representations of the Purushottama in His power of Becoming, Para Prakriti. They have been released into Para Prakriti by the Purushottama, and the process by which they are cast into the evolutionary process of Apara Prakriti is indicated in the Gita in the eighth verse of ninth chapter where it is stated: “Leaning My own Nature downwards, *prakṛtiṁ svām avaṣṭabhya*, I loose forth variously, *visṛjāmi*, this multitude of creatures helplessly where they are subjected to the control of Prakriti.” The purpose of evolution can be effected by the multitude of creatures (*bhūta grāmam*)<sup>101</sup> entering into Apara Prakriti. The jivas, on account of the process of intense activity involved in the uplifting of Apara Prakriti from the inconscience and ignorance, become identified with that intense activity; they therefore become forgetful of themselves. That forgetfulness can be overcome with the increasing evolution of consciousness in the field of Apara Prakriti, and at the human level, more consciously and more rapidly by the process of yoga. On the other hand, the purpose of the avatar is to support the endeavour of the jivatmans who, at critical conditions in the evolutionary process, find it impossible to cross over the crisis; it is in response to the imperative need to overcome the crisis that a decisive descent of the Purushottama Himself becomes inevitable. This is the purpose which has been described in the fourth chapter to which reference is already made earlier above. In regard to

the process of this avatarhood, Sri Krishna states as follows: "I am unborn, imperishable, and am the lord of all beings, and standing upon My own nature, I am born by My self-Maya, *prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmi ātmamāyā*."<sup>102</sup> In the next verse, Sri Krishna adds, "I loose forth Myself, *ātmānam sṛjāmi*."<sup>103</sup> In regard to the birth of the jivatmans in the world, the word that has been used is *avaṣṭabhya*. The action implied in that word is a forceful downward pressure by which the jivatmans are overcome, oppressed, blocked or limited in their movement and they become, for the purpose for which they have been pressed down, helplessly subject to the powers of Apra Prakriti, *avaśaṁ vaśāt*.<sup>104</sup> Apra Prakriti is unconscious and ignorant; it is mechanical and multitude of creatures is held helpless in the mechanism, not lords of their own action. But the action implied in the word *adhiṣṭāya* means not only dwelling in, but also standing upon and over the Nature, a conscious control and government by the in-dwelling Godhead in which the Purushottama is not helplessly driven into Apra Prakriti; but his own Para Prakriti remains full of the light of the Purushottama. In the phenomenon of the avatar, therefore, the divine birth is that of the conscious Godhead in our humanity and essentially, the process is opposite of the ordinary birth of the jivas. The avatar is the divine born into the body as Lord of Nature, standing above and operating in her freely by His will, not entangled and helplessly driven round and round in the mechanism. The avatar, therefore, is a direct manifestation in humanity of the Purushottama. The descent of the avatar aims at providing a special help to the evolutionary movement at a critical point of development, so that the crisis is overcome, and the path of the human ascent is hewn and made ready for facilitating

general ascension of human consciousness to the new height that comes to be established by the avatar.

We may now come to the phenomenon of the manifestation of vibhuti. This phenomenon is distinguishable from that of the avatar; vibhuti is a special and distinguished becoming, a becoming which is exceptional. When the powers of the Apra Prakriti grow into some kind of critical maturity, they open up and become receptacles of some of the movements and qualities of Para Prakriti, and if the divine qualities of Para Prakriti are received and nourished by means of constant exercise, they become fixed in the Apra Prakriti. As a result, vibhutis are to be found on all major levels of evolution, in Matter, in Life, in Mind, and one who sees the Divine in all can see in these vibhutis a direct proof of the omnipresence of the divine consciousness. It can be seen that at a certain point of intensity, each force in us, force of knowledge, force of will, force of love, force of delight, can result in an explosion; it can break the shell of the lower formulation and liberate the energy and manifest some kind of a special becoming, vibhuti. The truth of this process can be seen in all exceptional individuals and even in certain special developments of material existence and organic existence.

It is true that every avatar is a manifestation of the higher powers of Para Prakriti in the operations of Apra Prakriti, and therefore every avatar is also a vibhuti, but every vibhuti is not an avatar. The purpose of the phenomenon of vibhuti is to effect gradual infusion of the qualities of Para Prakriti at those points where, by the process of evolution, such tensions are produced that they result in the explosions that bring down the downpour of this or that quality or some of the qualities of the Para Prakriti. In that process, there is no

involvement of the process that is involved either of the downward forcing down of jivatmans into the Apra Prakriti; nor is there that process of the descent by which the avatar descends into Apra Prakriti.

In order to expound the integrality of knowledge of the total working of the world and its evolution, Sri Krishna provides the knowledge relating not only to the nature of Apra Prakriti and Para Prakriti, and to the respective roles which are played by the immutable Purusha and the mutable Purusha and of the Purushottama, but also to some of the unending vibhutis that can be recognized at different levels of existence.

A summary enumeration of vibhutis begins with a statement of the primal principle that underlies all the power of this manifestation in the universe. All classes, genera, species, individuals manifest their respective vibhutis. Among all the living beings, cosmic godheads, super-human and human and sub-human creatures and amid all their qualities, powers and objects, the chief, the head, the greatest in quality of each class is a special power of the becoming of the Godhead. In living beings, the mind among the senses is the vibhuti; the power of resolution and perseverance and victory are also vibhutis; the power that rules, the silence of things secret, the knowledge of the knower, and many other such powers are also vibhutis. Among the great and well-known personalities, Rama is reckoned as vibhuti among warriors, Bhrigu among the great rishis, Ushanas among the seer poets, Krishna himself among the Vrishnis, Arjuna among the Pandavas and Vyasa among the sages; many more are named as vibhutis in this account given by Sri Krishna to Arjuna.<sup>105</sup> In this way, Sri Krishna answers the question

under which Arjuna wanted to know those divine glories by which the Purushottama abides and pervades all these worlds and by dwelling upon whom one can meditate upon the Purushottama and his omnipresence in the universe.

### **Vision of the Supreme**

A vast panorama of a vast synthesis unfolds itself before the eyes of the mind in images that strive to visualize some living representation of infinitude and eternity. But how can the mind capture it? Even the descriptions of the special becomings (*vibhūtis*) in this universe, of the physical world, vital world, mental world and even of the higher worlds, — do not provide that concreteness that the sensations of vision and audition provide to human consciousness. And nothing proves to the human consciousness the reality of the Real as the images that are captured in direct vision, when the eyes are opened and the panorama of the world gets imprinted on sensations and perceptions.

In this vast physical universe, that is so dumb and insensitive, all sensations that vibrate in the organic life is a marvel, the mystery of which is unfathomable. And the marvel of sensations and subsequently of perceptions gets more and more intensified when we look upon the operations of the sense-mind, which can coordinate sensations and translate them into mental images. And when we begin to analyze how greater or faster processes of ideation are developed and how we can inwardly distinguish between various faculties of the mind and the reason, of cognition, affection and volition, the marvel and mystery, if we do not allow ourselves to be blinded by constant familiarity, seem to us to be still more mysterious and strange and wonderful. But the realm of yoga opens up in our consciousness even



vaster marvels and mysteries when mental consciousness is extended and transcended in its capacities of experience. The psychological development that can take place by the intensities of our capacities opens up vistas of inmost sight and inmost audition and many other correspondences of sensations and perceptions. Yogic life abounds with phenomena of these inmost operations; these have been studied and have been classified, and laws of these phenomena have also been discerned. There are faculties of revelation, inspiration, intuition and discrimination, and the conditions of the development of these faculties have been described, and methods have been developed by which these faculties can be developed and even perfected. The phenomena of *dr̥ṣṭi* and *śruti*, of inner sight or revelation and inner hearing or inspiration have been recognized and developed by the methods of yoga given in the Veda, Upanishads, Gita and many other records of experiences in the East and the West. Indeed, these faculties need right conditions and austere practices of psychological exercises, if they are to yield veridical knowledge, power, right inspiration for action and devotional intensities of feeling. But there are occasions and there are critical states of consciousness in which mystic guides and teachers can by mere touch or will power bestow upon the seeker a sudden opening of inner consciousness, and the inner sight and inner audition begin to operate, and the resultant operations can give to the seeker that kind of proof and that kind of certainty which neither our ordinary sense perceptions nor highest flights of reasoning can provide.

Arjuna was in a critical condition, and the dialogue had opened up in his mind surprising visions of the vastness and wonder of the supracosmic and cosmic reality, and his heart

had begun to feel the delight of the incomprehensible Presence of the divine consciousness; in that state, he was led to ask Sri Krishna if he could see the Form of Sri Krishna, the embodied Lord and the Supreme Purusha. Arjuna revealed his state of mind and his deep aspiration that had arisen in him in the following words:

“Thou hast graciously given to me the secret of secrets concerning the Self, and by this my delusion has been dispelled. But O lotus-eyed One! I have heard from Thee of the vastness of beings, how they appear and how they disappear and also about Thy imperishable Glory. O Lord, O Purushottama, Thou hast spoken of Thyself, but, I aspire now to behold Thy Divine Form. O Lord! Lord of Yoga, if Thou thinkest that I am capable to behold Thy Divine Form, then reveal to me, to my vision that Imperishable Self.”<sup>106</sup>

The answer that Sri Krishna gives is one of the best known and most powerfully poetic passages in the Gita and it is intended for a poetic and revelatory symbol. It is best to present this great yogic vision of the universal Purusha, *viśvarūpa darśana*, as an extremely important record of yogic experience, confirmable and verifiable in yogic life of *yogic sādhanā*.

Sri Krishna replies, first, that what Arjuna was to see cannot be grasped by the human eye. There is, according to Sri Krishna, a divine eye, an inmost seeing, by which the supreme Godhead in His yoga can be beheld and it is that eye that Sri Krishna was to give to him. Sri Krishna told Arjuna that he was to see hundreds and thousands of divine forms of Sri Krishna, the Avatar, that he was to see the Adityas, the Rudras, the Maruts, and the Ashwins, — all the great symbolic figures of the Veda, — and that he was to see

many wonders and the whole world related and unified in the body of Sri Krishna. Indeed, it was to be the vision of the One in the Many and of the Many in the One, — and all as the One.

The supreme Form was then made visible. Arjuna saw the Divine Form possessing many faces and a worldwide Divinity seeing with innumerable eyes. That Divine was decked with divine garlands and divine garments, anointed with divine perfumes; He was full of wonders, effulgent, boundless, with innumerable faces on all sides; the radiance of that Supreme Being was as dazzling as would be if a thousand suns were to shine forth simultaneously in the sky. There Arjuna beheld the entire universe, with its manifold differentiations situated unified within the body of the Supreme Lord. Then, overwhelmed with wonder, with his hairs standing on their end, Dhananjaya, Arjuna, bowed down his head to the Supreme and spoke with folded hands:

“I see all the gods in thy body, O God, and different companies of beings, Brahma the creating Lord seated in the Lotus and the Rishis and the race of the divine Serpents; I see numberless arms and bellies and eyes and faces; I see Thy infinite forms on every side, but I see not Thy end nor Thy middle nor Thy beginning, O Lord of the universe, O Form universal. I see Thee crowned and with thy mace and the discus, hard to discern because thou art a luminous mass of energy on all sides of me, and encompassing blaze, a sun-bright, fire-bright Immeasurable. Thou art the supreme Immutable whom we have to know, Thou art the high foundation and abode of the universe, Thou art the imperishable guardian of the eternal laws, Thou art the semipeternal soul of the existence.”

But in the greatness of this vision, Arjuna also sees the terrific image of the Destroyer. This godhead has a face of blazing fire and is ever burning up the whole universe with a flame of his energy. Arjuna cries out: "All the directions as well as the space between the sky and the earth is pervaded by Thee alone, O Supreme Soul! Beholding this terrible and wonderful form of Thine, the three worlds are agitated. The companies of the gods enter Thee, afraid, adoring; the rishis and the siddhas are crying out: "May there be peace and weal", and they praise Thee with many praises. The eyes of Gods and Titans and Giants are fixed on Thee in amazement. Thou hast enormous burning eyes and many mouths that wait to devour, and thou art terrible with many tusks of destruction. On seeing all this, the worlds are terrified and so also myself. O Vishnu! Having seen Thy form that is touching the sky, radiant with many colours, with wide opened mouths, and large burning eyes, I tremble in my inmost self in fear, and I find neither courage nor tranquility. Seeing Thy mouths with gruesome jaws, resembling the blazing and devouring fires of destruction, I have lost the sense of direction and find not happiness. O Refuge of the World! O God of Gods! Be Thou gracious. All the sons of Dhritarashtra with their companies of kings and also Bhishma, Drona, Karna along with the chief warriors belonging to us are rushing forward and entering into Thy dreadful mouths of gruesome jaws. Some are caught between the teeth with their heads crushed to powder by them. Just as many rushing torrents of the rivers hasten towards the ocean, even so these great warriors of this human world are entering into Thy fierce-flaming mouth. Just as moth with accelerated velocity enters into blazing fire to perish, so too all these people are entering with accelerated

velocity into Thy mouths for their destruction. O Vishnu! Thou art devouring all the worlds by Thy blazing mouths and Thou art licking them up. Their terrible radiance is filling this entire universe and scorching it with their fierce rays with Thy intense light.”

“Declare to me who Thou art that wearest this form of fierceness. Salutation to Thee, O Thou great Godhead, turn Thy heart to grace. I would know who Thou art, the Ultimate Origin, for I know not the will of Thy workings.”<sup>107</sup>

Sri Krishna answered: “Destruction is the Will of my workings with which I stand here; I am Time the destroyer and even without thee, all these warriors shall be naught, who are ranked in the opposing armies. Therefore arise, be thou glorious, conquer thy enemies and enjoy an opulent kingdom. By Me and none other already even are they slain, do thou become the occasion only, O Savyasācin, slay by Me who are slain, Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna and other heroic fighters; be not pained and troubled. Fight, thou shalt conquer the adversary in the battle.”<sup>108</sup>

Arjuna cried out: “Rightly and in good place, O Krishna, does the world rejoice and take pleasure in Thy name, the rakshasas are fleeing from Thee in terror to all the quarters and the company of the siddhas bow down before Thee in adoration. How should they not do Thee homage, O great Spirit? For Thou art the original Creator and Doer of works and greater even than creative Brahma. O Thou Infinite, O Thou Lord of Gods, O Thou abode of universe, Thou art the Immutable and Thou art what is and is not and Thou art that which is the Supreme. Thou art the ancient Soul and the first and original Godhead in the supreme resting-place of this All; Thou art the knower and that which is to be known and

the highest status; O infinite in form, by Thee was extended the universe. Thou art Yama and Vayu and Agni and Soma and Varuna and Prajapati, father of creatures, and the great grandsire. Salutations to Thee a thousand times over and again and yet again salutation, in front and behind and from every side for Thou art each and all that is. Infinite in might and immeasurable in strength of action, Thou pervadest all and art everyone. For whatsoever I have spoken to Thee in rash vehemence, thinking of Thee only as my human friend and companion, 'O Krishna, O Yadava, O Comrade', not knowing this Thy greatness, in negligent error or in love, and for whatsoever disrespect was shown by me to Thee in jest, on the couch and the seat and in the banquet, alone or in Thy presence, I pray forgiveness from Thee the Immeasurable. Thou art the father of all this world of the moving and unmoving; Thou art the One to be worshipped and the most solemn object of veneration. None is equal to Thee, how then another be greater in all the three worlds, O Incomparable in might? Therefore I bow down before Thee and prostrate my body and I demand grace of Thee, the adorable Lord. As a father to his son, as a friend to his friend and comrade, as one dear to him he loves, so shouldst Thou, O Godhead, bear with me. I have seen what never was seen before and I rejoice, but my mind is troubled with fear. O Godhead, show me that other form of Thine. I would see Thee even as before crowned and with Thy mace and discus. Assume Thy four-armed shape, O thousand-armed, O Form universal."<sup>109</sup>

Godhead in answer to Arjuna's prayer reassumed His own normal Narayana image, *svakam rūpam*, the desired form of grace and love and sweetness and beauty. But first he declared the incalculable significance of the other mighty

image which he was about to veil. Sri Krishna spoke to Arjuna:

“This that thou now seest is My supreme shape, My form of luminous energy, the universal, the original, which none but thou amongst men hast yet seen. I have shown it by My self-yoga. For it is an image of my very Self and spirit, it is the very Supreme self-figured in cosmic existence; and the soul in perfect Yoga with Me sees it without any trembling of the nervous parts or any bewilderment and confusion of the mind, because he descries not only what is terrible and overwhelming in its appearance, but also its high and reassuring significance. And thou also shouldst so envisage it without fear, without confusion of mind, without any sinking of the members; but behold once again that same Form of mine, getting rid of fear and with a cheerful state of the mind. The greater Form is only for the rare highest souls. The gods themselves ever desire to look upon it. It cannot be won by Veda or austerities or gifts or sacrifice; it can be seen, known, entered into only by that Bhakti which regards, adores and loves Me alone in all things.”<sup>110</sup>

Sri Krishna revealed to Arjuna again his gracious form, having seen which, Arjuna said:

“Having seen Thy peaceful human form, O Krishna! I am now free and am delighted, and I am restored to my natural state.”

Sri Krishna repeated the significance of the earlier image and said:

“O Arjuna, he who performs My work and one who is free from all attachment and who is free from enmity among all creatures, he is My supreme devotee, and he comes to Me

indeed.”<sup>111</sup>

The message that comes out from this vision is that the very action which Arjuna had rejected is that very action conducted by the supreme Lord who always acts, even when He is free from action, free in action and free in everyway to do this action or that action, and whose every action is an assemblage of harmony which advances always the harmony, solidarity and unity of peoples (*lokasaṅgraha*). But as in the divine consciousness, so also in the consciousness of Arjuna, there has to be a reconciling greater knowledge, a diviner consciousness, a high impersonality, a spiritual standard of oneness with the will of the Divine acting in the world from the fountain light and with the mature power of the spiritual nature. The message for Arjuna is that he has to transform the whole ignorant action so as to make that action follow a new inner principle of works, which is the same principle that is operative in the divine consciousness. Arjuna has been uplifted from the poise of the normal man and from the standards, motives, outlook, egoistic consciousness of his ignorance, away from all that had finally failed him in the hour of his spiritual crisis. Arjuna has now received a direct command from the Supreme Lord and that command is to carry out the divine action as an instrument of the Divine Will which always works for the sake of the world-harmony and in union with the Spirit who dwells in it and all its creatures and in whom all its workings take place. Arjuna has now accepted that command with the knowledge of the divine consciousness and the knowledge of the divine will; his personal will is emptied of egoism and will act now only by the knowledge of the command and as an instrumentation of the sacred Master of works. Arjuna's sacrifice of works is now turned into a state of adoration and



love for the Divine, and he has in that state of this new knowledge, given up all the human standards of action and surrendered himself in a close intimacy with the supreme Soul of all existence. This is a state of Karma Yoga in which a new condition has been created for the perfect union of the perfected powers of knowledge, will and love. A new foundation has been created in Arjuna and from that foundation, he can act in safety; he is now lifted above all cause of stumbling, delivered from egoism and its limitations, rescued from all fear of sin and evil and consequence, exalted out of that bondage to the outward nature and the limited action which is the knot of the ignorance. He can now act in the power of the Light, no longer in twilight or darkness, and a divine sanction upholds every step of his conduct. Arjuna is now in the state of the Karma Yogin, whose works of sacrifice have led him to the knowledge and vision of the Lord and whose adoration and devotion and love for the divine is infused with knowledge.

This is the solution that Sri Krishna gives to the dilemma of Arjuna, and that solution involves the possession of the secret of the union of Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga.

## PART THREE

### 1. Towards Sādharmya Mukti

It is this union and synthesis which is reiterated by Sri Krishna in the twelfth chapter, and while reiterating it, something more is said in order to bring out all the meaning of the great spiritual change. The twelfth chapter leads up to that which is still to be said, and the last six chapters that follow develop that remaining knowledge leading up to a grand final conclusion.

What is that new thing that is said in the twelfth chapter? That new thing is what is repeatedly stated in twelfth to eighteenth chapters by phrases such as *dharmāmṛtam*, immortal law,<sup>112</sup> *paramā bhaktās te tīva me priyāḥ*, my supreme devotees who are exceedingly dear to Me,<sup>113</sup> *mat parāḥ*, entirely devoted to Me,<sup>114</sup> *mad bhāva*, My own becoming or My own nature,<sup>115</sup> *parām gatim*, supreme status,<sup>116</sup> *mokṣam param*, supreme liberation,<sup>117</sup> *sādharmyam āgatāḥ*, those who have attained oneness with My law of action,<sup>118</sup> *amṛtam aśnute*, enjoys immortality,<sup>119</sup> *guṇān etān atītya trīn dehī*, one who is in the body but who transcends all the three gunas,<sup>120</sup> *sāśvatasya dharmasya*, of the imperishable immortal law,<sup>121</sup> *sarvavid bhajati mām sarva-bhāvena*, one who has integral knowledge, and worships Me in all manner of being,<sup>122</sup> *svabhāvaḥ prabhavaiḥ guṇaiḥ*, gunas that are generated from one's own original becoming,<sup>123</sup> *svakarma* action proceeding from one's own original being,<sup>124</sup> *swadharma*, the law of action proceeding from

one's own original being,<sup>125</sup> *sāśvatam padam avyayam*, imperishable and immortal status.<sup>126</sup> These phrases indicate references to workings of higher nature, Para Prakriti of the Purushottama, and they provide a key to the larger and integral concept of liberation and perfection. Liberation or mukti has, in the tradition that developed in the Post-Vedic and Post-Upanishadic period, emphasized either *sāyujya* mukti or *sālokya* mukti. But the Gita speaks also of *sādharmya* mukti, and it thus reiterates the nature of immortality that we find in the Veda and the Upanishads. The immortality to which Parāshara refers in Rig Veda,<sup>127</sup> as also in several other statements, including those relating to Ribhus, the artisans of immortality,<sup>128</sup> can be termed in the language of the Gita as a status of *sādharmya* mukti. In the *sāyujya* mukti, there is the abolition of the soul's personal being by the absorption into the One, and entire unification with supreme Godhead in essence of being and intimacy of consciousness and identity of bliss. In the *sālokya* mukti, there is an eternal dwelling in the highest existence of the Supreme. Both these states of liberation are acknowledged in the Gita, when it speaks of the status of the *brahma bhūta*<sup>129</sup> (*sāyujya mukti*), and when it speaks of that status in which "thou shalt dwell in Me", *nivasiṣyasi mayi eva*.<sup>130</sup> But the Gita speaks also of the status of those who have become One even as in the Divine becoming, *mad bhāvam āgatāḥ*<sup>131</sup> and *sādharmyam āgatāḥ*, those who have become one with the supreme in the law of their being and in the law of their work and nature, *bhāvāyopapadyate*.<sup>132</sup> The Gita thus envelopes all the three states of liberation in its catholic integrality and fuses them all in one greatest and richest Divine freedom and perfection. In that state of perfection, the soul is not only liberated from the workings of Apra

Prakriti, the lower nature of the three gunas, and the soul not only attains to the status of the Immutable, but attains also the status of dwelling in the Purushottama, and of living in the Para Prakriti. That state of perfection goes farther. The soul becomes totally a self-surrendered instrument of the Purushottama through whom the divine action manifests as in Para Prakriti. Thus the soul's own law of action becomes identified with the law of action of the Supreme.

The method of liberation in the Gita is to rise above the inferior nature of existence, to discover its identity with Immutable, *akśara*, which is above the three gunas, but also the method of rising above the lower nature in which the operations of the higher nature are manifested in the form of divine knowledge, divine love, and divine works founded on the spiritual universality. It is this which is emphasized in the twelfth chapter when it speaks of those who are not only dear, but also exceedingly dear to the Supreme.<sup>133</sup>

But what exactly is the difference between the two natures, *Apara Prakriti* and *Para Prakriti*, the lower nature and higher nature? And how are our action and our soul's status affected by the liberation, and what exactly is the secret-most method of attainment of the integral liberation and perfect-ion, namely, the largest, fullest self-giving of the human soul to the Divine Spirit that permits the identity of Soul's law of action with the law of action of the Supreme Will? — these are the questions which receive central and detailed answers in the last six chapters of the Gita.

## 2. Significance of the Last Six Chapters of the Gita

“Dharma” generally means a regulative law relating to the constitution of an object or of a process. In regard to

human actions, dharma would mean the law that regulates different stages of the process of human action, its thrust towards its own maintenance and its growth measured in terms of a goal to be achieved or a standard that is set to be fulfilled. Considering that there are great diversities in humanity and also varieties of stages of development of human beings, there have arisen in the course of history, varieties of standards of conduct in regard to human action. According to the relativist view, this variety of standards and frequent conflicts among these standards shows that it is impossible to arrive at any firm conclusion in regard to the truth and objectivity of any standard of human action. On the other hand, it is maintained that even though there are disagreements in this field, there are also areas of agreement, and therefore it is possible to erect some codes of conduct on which consensus can be obtained. In any case, there have been agreements in every society or even in every country or a group of countries or even in inter-continental groups on the basis of which laws have been framed and implemented, and these laws have served as articles of dharma. In India, laws enacted by the state had to be in conformity with the codes of conduct or systems of dharma which were framed by "wise" leaders of the society, and in all matters, systems of dharma were expected to be implemented. The arguments that Arjuna had advanced were basically rooted in the codes of dharma of his times, and his crisis was a result of the conflict between two major articles of dharma. On the one hand, it was his dharma to fight for a cause which involved the establishment of the rule of justice. On the other hand, he saw that the massive slaughter that would be entailed in the performance of his dharma would inevitably lead to a consequence that would be destructive of social morality and

social dharma. The solution that Sri Krishna presents to Arjuna involves a radical shift in human consciousness and transformation of human consciousness by a synthetic process of Yoga. That transformed consciousness consisted of indubitable self-knowledge, world-knowledge and God-knowledge in the light of which human constructions of Dharma stood out as temporary constructions, which could be useful in the course of the evolution of human consciousness in its long journey, but which can justifiably be transcended. Sri Krishna not only presented a detailed and reasoned argument as also intricate knowledge of the steps of Yoga by which the knowledge of the Divine Will could be obtained in actual experience; but in the course of the dialogue he lifted up Arjuna's consciousness and provided to him a living experience and vision of the Divine Will in regard to the situation in which he (Arjuna) was placed. The argument was thus not merely intellectual but experiential, and in his transformed state of consciousness, Arjuna was able to have the direct experience and therefore vivid certainty of the command that had issued from the Supreme Divine Consciousness that was visioned by him in unmistakable light of the Divine Himself in His universal Action. There is, he perceived, a divine law of action, a divine dharma of universality proceeding from the divine transcendence, which constantly works in a state of universal harmony and for the promotion of world-harmony (*lokasaṅgraha*) at every moment in the world-movement. To be one with that law of action, and to work as an instrument of the Divine Will and Action, would be not only a state of liberation, *mukti* from desire and egoism to which inadequacies and conflicts are inextricably linked, but also *sādharmya mukti*, liberation in which the individual

instrument enjoys the freedom of the Divine's own transcendental and universal action and spontaneous harmony of the law of that action.

It was in that state that Sri Krishna delivered to Arjuna the supreme secret of the method of Karma Yoga in its synthesis with Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga, namely, the method of progressive self-surrender culminating in the discovery of the Divine Will in actual vision and experience.

That state of self-surrender is not only the third step and climax of Karma Yoga; it is also syntheses of Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and also of Bhakti Yoga. Sri Krishna, in the course of an answer to a question put by Arjuna, describes the state of the Bhakta in the twelfth chapter. These are the marks and signs of the state of consciousness and being of the Bhakta who has followed the swiftest, largest and greatest way of the synthesis of yoga, and who has turned to the adoration of the Eternal. The first insistence is on equality, on desirelessness, on freedom of spirit. In that equality, love and adoration of the Purushottama must rear the spirit towards some greatest, highest perfection of which this calm equality will be the wide foundation. Absence of egoism or I-ness and my-ness, *nirmamo nirahamkāraḥ*,<sup>134</sup> — these are to be the first characteristics. The Bhakta hates none, he is friendly and compassionate to all creatures, free from possessiveness and false ego, even-minded in joy and sorrow and forgiving by nature.<sup>135</sup> He is the yogi who is always satisfied, self-controlled and who has fixed his mind and intellect on the Supreme and adores the Supreme. He does not disturb others and is not perturbed by others; he is free from feelings of excitement, anger, fear and anxiety. He has no expectations from anybody; he is pure internally and externally; he is dexterous in action, and passionless, free

from mental distress, renouncer of the feeling of the doership in all undertakings and he adores the Supreme. He neither rejoices nor hates, nor grieves nor desires, he has renounced all that is evil but also all that is considered to be auspicious. He is alike to friend and to foe; he is untouched by honour and dishonour; he is in a state of equilibrium in heat and cold, in pleasure and pain and he is totally free from emotional attachment. To him, praise and censure are similar; he is contemplative, always contented and yet firmly devoted to the Supreme.<sup>136</sup>

Sri Krishna points out that all who are devoted to the Supreme are all dear to Him. But he adds: “Those who are fixed in the imperishable law of divine nature and action (*dharmāmṛtam*), and who are devoted to the Supreme with supreme faith in Me, — they are exceedingly dear to Me.”<sup>137</sup>

Against this vast background, we can now enter into the last six chapters.

### **3. A New Standpoint for the Yoga of the Gita:**

**Relationship between Purusha and Prakriti,  
Purushottama and Para Prakriti,  
State of *Triguṇātita* and *Sādharmya Mukti***

The central problem of yoga is to discover how the soul gets entangled into Prakriti, — into Aparā Prakriti, to be more precise, — how the three Gunas of Aparā Prakriti act on the soul, and why the Gunas happen to be the cause of the bondage of the soul. In the language of the Veda, the quest is as to how Shunahshepa gets tied up in a triple rope. A farther question is to discover various products of Aparā Prakriti, particularly desire and ego, which constitute the central knot



of the bondage of the soul. A still farther point is to discover the role of buddhi, the intelligent-will, which by its power of discrimination, can be utilized in a methodical manner for recognizing the difference between Apra Prakriti and the soul, and how that discrimination can further be utilized by the soul, on the one hand, and by Prakriti concentrated upon buddhi, on the other, to uplift the soul from its bondage to Prakriti.

But the Gita goes farther in its inquiry and its discoveries. The yoga of the Gita discovers that the soul is Jiva, which is a self-representation, an individuation or portion, *amśā*, an eternal portion, of the Supreme Being, Purushottama, and that this jiva is constituted in Puroshottama's manifestation of multiplicity through Para Prakriti, — *mama eva amśāḥ sanātanaḥ*,<sup>138</sup> *parā prakṛtir jīva bhūtā*.<sup>139</sup> The discovery of Purushottama and the analysis of Purushottama that we find in the Gita is central to the yoga of the Gita. Purushottama, according to the Gita, can be discovered by a methodical and persistent process of yoga; Purushottama can be experienced; he can be realized; he can even be seen in a vast and universal form or in different forms, even though, in his complexity, he is also formless, and that formlessness also can be experienced and realized in the immutable state of Brahman, the immutable Purusha. The immutable Purusha is *akśara puruṣa*, the *kūtaśtha*, but there is also the Purusha that is *kśara*, the Mobile that is manifest as all the becomings of the world. Both these Purushas can be transcended in the experience and realization of the *uttama puruṣa*, Purushottama, Supreme Purusha, who is also called *paramātmā*, who, having entered into all the manifestations immutably and imperishably and indivisibly is the Lord, *īśvara*.<sup>140</sup> The jiva, being ontologically a self-representation in the mutabi-

lity of Para Prakriti is Purushottama himself, but individuated, a portion of the Purushottama, partial consciousness of Purushottama, but capable of simultaneous identification, by means of a synthetic process of yoga, with the immutable Purusha, the mutable Purusha and the Purushottama, and yet capable of retaining its jivahood, — its individuality, — as long as the Purushottama continues to be manifested in its multiple manifestation, since it is an eternal portion of the Purushottama.

The upliftment of the jiva from the Apra Prakriti by the utilization of the power of buddhi, is the initial process of Buddhi yoga; by the process of that yoga, jiva is able to distinguish between Apra Prakriti and initial experiences of Purushottama. The jiva then becomes aware that Prakriti in which he is entangled has various strands and mixed strands of unconsciousness and consciousness, and that even in its highest state of consciousness which is marked by Buddhi, it is still largely partial and mixed up with unconsciousness. This entire mixture of unconsciousness and partial consciousness that is to be found in the operations of Prakriti is designated as Ignorance. The radical nature of ignorance becomes more and more evident when the jiva is able to lift itself by distinguishing itself from Apra Prakriti and begins to experience its own true nature, swabhava, which is constituted of Para Prakriti, the qualities of which are quite different from the qualities or Gunas of Apra Prakriti. The minimum experience is that of quietude, and even this quietude can be easily distinguished from the Guna of tamas, of inertia, with which it may seem to have some resemblance. But this quietude can be further intensified by developing the capacity to remain longer and longer in that state of quietude. Quietude becomes tranquility, which, in

turn becomes peace and even complete silence, which has a profound consequence. That profound consequence is often marked by a new understanding and a new knowledge, — knowledge which is quite different from the knowledge that is the characteristic of the Guna of sattwa, which is the highest limit of Apra Prakriti. For while the sattwic knowledge, even when at its highest level becomes wider and wider and develops the concept of unity, it easily falls into detailed activities which are marked by activities of differentiations and divisions. The new knowledge, which the jiva realizes in his state of silence, is that that silence is something quite different from any and every kind of activity that can be discerned in Prakriti, and that in that state of silence it can have a clear knowledge of the distinction between silence, on the one hand, and movements of Prakriti, on the other. In that state of silence, the jiva can experience itself as an impartial observer and witness of all the movements of Prakriti. That silence is known by jiva's identity with that silence and in that state jiva is further experienced as an impartial witness, uplifted, *udāsina* (seated above), and capable of observing any and every movement of Prakriti with equality (*samatvam*). As one intensifies that uplifted state of consciousness, there is a greater self-knowledge, in which the jiva clearly experiences that that witnessing consciousness belongs really to itself, and knowledge at that stage consists of witnessing consciousness as seated above the movements of Apra Prakriti and as a status quite different and capable of sustaining itself, independent of Prakriti, independent of attractions and repulsions, of shocks of pleasure and pain, of honour and dishonour, of desire, ambitions, even of ego, and even of any or every movement. In terms of yoga, this is the

beginning of true knowledge which can further be intensified and stabilized by constancy of the yogic effort, until stabilization becomes perfect and imperishable. During the process of that stabilization, consciousness expands, and consciousness becomes known as truly self-conscious, as self-luminous, a status in which one does not need to exercise discriminating intelligence to produce the spark of consciousness; for it is found to be *swayam-prakāśa* (self-luminous).

At a higher level of silence, even the witnessing consciousness is transcended, or even if there are traces of witnessing consciousness, they are submerged in Silence beyond Silence, and what are called Time and Space disappear in overwhelming infinity, where even the word infinity does not apply; that silence, that infinity, that spacelessness and timelessness is not only indescribable but there can be even no reference to the concept of the indescribable; it is the experience of the One without the Second. That One, *tad ekam*, of the Veda, *ekam eva adwitīyam* of the Upanishad, That, *tat*, is the Brahman, the experience and realization of which is so uplifting, so transcendental that everything else stands extinguished in it; it is the experience of Brahma-nirvana of which the Gita speaks in the sixth chapter. This is akshara Purusha of the Gita and also akshara Brahman, since the two words are used interchangeably, considering that the word Purusha which was used in the Sankhya for the individual witnessing being is taken over in the Gita to be the same as Brahman. (For the individual being, the word that is used is Jiva.)

For the sake of greater clarity, it may be mentioned that each of the words Purusha, Brahman, Ishwara and

Purushottama, has a specific meaning corresponding to a specific yogic experience. Firstly, the experience of immobility is termed the experience of the Brahman; but for the same experience the phrase *akshara purusha* is also used. Secondly, the experience of the same Brahman as the dynamic being is designated by the word *kshara purusha*; the experience of the dynamic Brahman is also designated by the word Ishwara, specific meaning of which is the Lord of Para Prakriti and Apra Prakriti and of jiva which, in manifestation, is constituted by the Para Prakriti but is in itself the eternal portion of Purushottama, who transcends all that is kshara and akshara. The yoga of the Gita addresses itself centrally to the jiva and presents to it various methods by which it can approach and know and live in the Purushottama, who transcends the immobile and the mobile, who is himself the immobile and the mobile, and who yet dwells also in the immobile and the mobile, and thus provides the basis of the knowledge of the Reality in its integrality, *samagram mām*, as also of an integral method by which the jiva, even after being uplifted from the Apra Prakriti, can permanently be one with the immobile Brahman and yet develop relationships with Para Prakriti, with Ishwara and with Purushottama. That integral method also enables the jiva to become itself the pure channel or instrument of the Purushottama for His activities.

To rise into the higher nature and to the Eternal through divine knowledge, love and works founded in a spiritual universality and perfect self-surrender is the key method of arriving at the complete spiritual liberation; that liberation unites *sāyujya mukti*, *sālokya mukti* and *sādharmya mukti*.

## 4. Characteristics of the Trigunātīta

In the first place, Sri Krishna, after describing how the individual soul is bound to the three gunas,<sup>141</sup> affirms that the individual soul has the capacity to transcend the action of the three gunas, and in that state of transcendence, it enjoys the state of immortality. There is then the attainment of *sādharmyam*, identity of the individual law of action with the divine law of action (XIV. 2, 20). Arjuna thereupon asks a question: “O Lord! What are the characteristics of him who has transcended the three gunas, *trigunātīta*? In answer, Sri Krishna enumerates the signs of the trigunatita, the signs of his action and how he is said in action to be above the three gunas as follows:

“O Arjuna! He is not disturbed by the movements of enlightenment that comes from sattwa or the dynamism that is expressed by the rajas and delusion that comes from tamas, nor does he get disturbed when these activities cease, nor does he long for the rise and fall of these movements. He is seated far above all the gunas and he is not distracted by them. Gunas are known as those to be operating while he stands above them, and he is not moved by them. He dwells himself in his own self and regards alike pleasure and pain, and looks upon lump of earth, a stone and a piece of gold with a sense of equality; he remains equal amidst the pleasant and unpleasant things; he is steady and treats praise and blame alike. He is the same towards honour and dishonour and alike to friend and foe. He is steadfast in a wise and imperturbable and immutable inner calm and quietude. He initiates no action; he is verily called *gunātīta*, the one who has transcended all the gunas. At the same time, he loves Me and renders service to Me with an undebating, undeviating

yoga of love and adoration; he passes beyond the three gunas and he too is prepared for becoming the Brahman (*brahmabhūyāya*).<sup>142</sup> And Sri Krishna adds: "I am the abode of Brahman, above the Immutability of the Brahman, and I am the abode of imperishable Ananda and of the imperishable law of action."<sup>143</sup>

In the subsequent chapter, the Gita explains the process by which one can effect the transition from the state in which one perceives impartially that all action of man or creative force is merely the action of the three gunas to a stage where the liberated yogin, whatever he does, he lives, moves and acts in the Divine, in the power of his freedom and immortality, in the law of action of the Supreme Eternal Infinite.

This entire subject has been dealt with tremendous subtlety of analysis and immensity of psychological knowledge which can be expected of the yoga-shastra, science of yoga, which aims at guiding the seeker in varieties of processes and methods of psychological development leading up to that culminating point where the injunction relating to the highest method of the synthesis of yoga is to be enunciated in terms which are radical and which open the doors to highest perfection which uplifts the law of action of the individual and raises it up to the law of action of the Supreme. That final injunction can be applied when the individual has risen far above all the human standards of action and where even the standards of sattwic consciousness are required to be transcended by the help of Purushottama and his Para Prakriti. Then alone, the *mahāvākya* of the Gita can ring out with all the rigour of its truth and force and utter practicability, namely, "Having renounced all dharmas, take refuge in Me alone; become

entirely My-minded (*manmanā*), sacrifice entirely to Me; be entirely devoted to Me; be entirely submitted to Me".<sup>144</sup> It is when the individual is united in Purushottama in all his aspects, in his immobility and mobility, in all the movements of Para Prakriti, that the siddhi, the goal of the yoga, is reached.

Let us now provide a few significant details of the subtle analysis of this siddhi (*sādharmya mukti*) on which special emphasis is laid in the last six chapters of the Gita. What is underlined in this analysis is that the jīva can, by yoga, utilize Deva-nature, Shraddha, Swabhava, Swadharma, Kartavyam Karma, and various elements of mind, and work for transcending the bondage to the three guṇas and for union with higher nature (Para Prakriti). The attainment of that union would, according to the Gita, mean *Sādharmya*, identity with the divine law of action. Hence, the seeker gains here invaluable help in indentifying those elements in his consciousness by developing which up to pure highest sattwic status, he can ultimately be enabled to transcend the rule of Apra Prakriti, enter into Para Prakriti, and affirm the *sādharmya mukti*. It is instructive note that the following elements which have been identified in this connection have intimate relationship with the Jiva and Para Prakriti:

1. Daivi sampatti or Divine qualities
2. Shraddha or faith
3. Karma or work
4. Swabhava and Swadharma or one's true nature and one's right law of action
5. Kartavyam karma or indispensable and obligatory work and
6. Tyaga or renunciation



The origin of daivi sampatti or divine qualities can easily be traced to Para Prakriti; as far as shraddha is concerned, the Gita points out that it resides in Jiva and that whatever is one's shraddha, so oneself is; as far as works are concerned, their origin is in the divine's will, for they are distinguishable from the movements of Apra Prakṛiti which are not works but three-fold reactions which are propelled in Apra Prakriti, which, in turn, is derived from Para Prakriti; Swabhava and Swadharma manifest the inner soul or Jiva of the individual, and since Jiva itself is the becoming of Para Prakriti, Swabhava and Swadharma manifest Para Prakriti; Kartavyam karma, — namely, sacrifice, giving and tapas, — have nothing in them which can be originated from Apra Prakriti, — they have their origin directly in Para Prakriti; and finally, Tyaga or renunciation cannot arise from Apra Prakriti, since Apra Prakriti can only support desire, whereas tyaga consists of renunciation of desire. These six elements do operate in Apra Prakriti, and the Gita does point out the nature of these elements when they operate in Apra Prakriti, but since in their origin, they can be directly related to Para Prakriti, they can serve readily as instruments of uplifting oneself from the Apra Prakriti; when these elements attain their status on the summits of the operations in the highest quality of Apra Prakriti, namely, in the sattwa, they can easily become the path-makers for arriving at the transcendence of the three gunas of Apra Prakriti. Since the aim of the last six chapters is to describe the path and method of the attainment of the status of trigunatita (the status of transcendence of the three gunas of Apra Prakriti) and thus of attainment of *sādharmya mukti* (attainment of liberation and immortality in the imperishable Para Prakriti, which manifests the law of divine action), the analysis of these six elements can be seen to be here directly relevant.

## 5. Attainment of Sādharmya Mukti

### Prakriti, Para Prakriti and Deva-nature (*daivi sampatti*)

We may, first, give a brief statement of the deva-nature (*daivi sampatti*) which consists of an assemblage of the highest sattwic habits and qualities; and it can be seen that this nature sparks out from Para Prakriti when the sattwic nature reaches its climactic height. These qualities include self-control, sacrifice, devotion, cleanness, purity, candour, straightforwardness, truth, calm, self-denial, compassion to all beings, modesty, gentleness, forgiveness, patience, steadfastness, and freedom from all restlessness, levity and inconstancy. There is no place in the composition of deva-nature for the *āsuric* qualities such as wrath, greed, cunning, treachery, willful doing of injury to others, pride and arrogance and excessive self-esteem. The deva-nature has harmless energy of soul-force, and fearlessness of the soul that lives in the right and the truth, *tejah*, *abhayam*, *dhṛtiḥ*, *ahimsā*, *satyam*.<sup>145</sup>

### Injunctions of Shastra and Faith (*Śraddhā*)

To escape from the *āsuric* nature, the Gita counsels that the light of the sattwic quality enables one to live by the right and the truth, and that if one wants to know what is right and what is wrong, one can seek for it in shastra, in the rule of ethics, rule of best social living, rule of one's right relations with man and God and Nature. Shastra is built on a number of preparatory conditions of dharma, human standards of conduct. But the Gita goes farther and admits a freer tendency which is other than the safe governing rule of shastra. In this aspect, Gita is revolutionary and admits the guidance of *śraddhā*, provided that *śraddhā* is neither

tamasic nor rajasic but sattwic, particularly when it expresses something that is beyond even the sattwa, and manifests irresistible perception issuing from the jiva, — the individual Purusha. The Gita recognizes the pressure of the individual who cannot reconcile himself with the injunction of the shastras, even when one has sattwic attitude towards shastra. For that pressure has behind it a truth of the living perception in Purusha, which does not find any corresponding answer in the shastra of the day, such as the pressure that Buddha felt against the Vedic law which had in his days become a ritualistic convention or the pressure that Christ felt in regard to the Mosaic law which led him to abrogate it and yet to fulfill it, — to abrogate the imperfect form and fulfill in a deeper and broader light and power.

*Śraddhā* ordinarily means faith, and faith ordinarily means acceptance of a belief or a doctrine by an unquestioning attitude. But shraddha as described in the Gita is basically a perception that sparks out from the deepest soul of man, from something that is other than the operations of the three gunas; it is the categorical imperative that is unconditionally brought forth from the profoundest recesses of the being, from the Purusha; and yet that perception is not an unquestioning acceptance, but it has deep impulsion of dynamism that strives and ends ultimately in turning the perception into verifiable knowledge. Shraddha may therefore be defined as a perception of the truth issuing from the Purusha which, while affirming itself, ultimately ends in knowledge. The importance of shraddha is so great in the Gita that it permits shastra to be set aside under the pressure of shraddha, provided that shraddha belongs to sattwic nature and it is discovered to be rooted in Purusha itself. Gita goes farther and points out that the Purusha, the soul in

man, is, as it were, made of shraddha, a will to be what one is within oneself truly and irresistibly. The great statement of the Gita is — *Ś'raddhāmayo'yam puruṣo yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ*,<sup>146</sup> Puruṣa is constituted of shraddha and whatever is one's shraddha, so one himself is.

### **Work: (a) Knowledge in which work is done**

According to the Gita, the work is not the sole thing that matters; the knowledge in which we do works also makes an immense spiritual difference. As a result, there is tamasic ignorant knowledge, which is narrow, lazy, obstinate. There is rajasic knowledge which sees multiplicity in their separateness and this knowledge follows the bent of ego and desire, and there is no firm governing higher ideal. The sattwic knowledge sees existence as one indivisible whole, one imperishable being in all becoming. At the highest top of knowledge, this seeing becomes the knowledge of one spirit in the world, even of the one Master of all works. When sattwic knowledge is transmuted into Para Prakriti, the personal will becomes entirely conscious, illumined, spiritually awake, and it lives and works in One, obeys more and more perfectly the supreme mandate of One and grows more and more into an effortless instrument of His light and power in the human person.

### **Work: (b) Instrument, work done and the doer of the work**

The Gita distinguishes between the instrument of the work (mind and will), the work done and the doer of the work. The sattwic mind always seeks right harmony and right knowledge and it tends to govern the sattwic man and to guide all the rest of the machine. This is quite distinguishable from the rajasic instrument and will which

is supported by egoism and desire-soul. The tamasic instrument, the tamasic mind and will, obeys instincts and the crude vital nature. But when the sattwic instrument reaches its acme, it becomes an instrument of greater spiritual light and power, far higher than the highest sattwic intelligence.

Tamasic work is done with confused, deluded and ignorant mind, in mechanical obedience to the instincts, and effort is misapplied, and it is without strength or capacity. Rajasic action or work is undertaken under domain of desire or with an egoistic sense, and it is done with passionate labour and straining of the personal will to get at the object of its desire. Sattwic work is that which man does calmly in the clear light of reason and with an impersonal sense of right or duty or the demand of an ideal; it is work performed without attachment and it is guided by lucid intelligence and the pure disinterested mind and will and spirit. The sattwic work, when transformed by higher Prakriti becomes a highest impersonal action dictated by the spirit within us and no longer by the intellect; it will be an action by the highest law of the nature, free from the lower ego; the work will be illumined by an imperative, intimate sense of an infallible power that acts and of the work to be done for the world and for the world's Master.

The tamasic doer of action does not put himself really into the work, but acts with the mechanical mind and follows the common routine. He has even a stupid insolent contempt for those whom he has to deal, specially for wiser men. The rajasic doer of action is eagerly attached to the work and passionately desirous of fruit; he is greedy and impure, often violent; he cares little whom he injures so long as he gets

what he wants. He is excessively happy in success and bitterly grieves by failure. The sattwic doer is free from all these attachments; he is not elated by success, not depressed by failure; his resolution is firm and his enthusiasm is pure and selfless, and performs his action with needed strength and capacity; but the sattwic doer, as he begins to climb in Para Prakriti, begins to become an instrument of the highest soul-force and of the direct God-Power; his steps of action are guided by the seer-will, *kavi kratu*,<sup>147</sup> and his work carries with it the wide delight of the free spirit in the works of the liberated nature.

### **Work: (c) Intelligent Will (*buddhi*) and Sense of Balance (*dhriti*)**

There are two other components of the psychology of work. The first is the role of reason, intelligent-will, *buddhi*. For every work demands will and decision, and if reason is tamasic, it sees all things in a dull and wrong light, a cloud of misconception, a stupid ignoring of the value of things and people. The action is blind and there is a heavy stress of inertia and impotence. If the reason is rajasic, it is guided by the ego and the will of desire, which misrepresents and distorts the truth and right. It is apt to justify its desire and to uphold as right or legitimate means which best help it to get the coveted fruit of its work and endeavour. It is only when *buddhi* is sattwic that it strives to seek the movement of the world impartially and to discriminate between the law of action and the law of abstention from action. It endeavours to find out the cause of bondage and the cause of freedom from bondage, and it avoids what causes bondage and persists in the endeavour that causes freedom from bondage. The sattwic reason rises to its summit and it ends at the

control of its senses and the life by clear distinction between the self and non-self; it strives and arrives at union by yoga with the highest Self, the universal Divine, the transcendent Spirit. Through the sattwic guna, one can pass beyond the gunas, and having reached the higher Prakriti, Reason happily obeys the action of the infinite, and therefore it obeys no law but the immortal truth and right of the free spirit; there remains no bondage of karma.

Secondly, there is the functioning of *Dhṛti*, that element which aims at harmony and order, balance and steadiness. The sattwic mind has quiet happiness, and clear and calm content and inner ease and peace. The tamasic mind can also remain well-pleased in its indolence and inertia but *dhṛti* of the tamasic mind is founded in inertia and ignorance. The happiness of *dhṛti* of the rajasic mind consists of drinking of a fiery and intoxicating cup. The joy that it seeks is nectar to the lips at the first touch but there is a secret poison in the bottom of the cup, and it ends in bitterness of disappointment, fatigue, revolt, disgust, suffering, loss, and transience. For the sattwic man, happiness does not depend on outward things but it flowers on what is best and most inward within him. But this happiness is not at first a normal possession; it has to be conquered by self-discipline. At first this means much loss of habitual pleasure, much suffering and struggle, a poison born of the churning of our nature, a painful conflict of forces, much revolt and opposition to the change, but in the end the nectar of the immortality rises in the place of this bitterness, and as one climbs to Para Prakriti, one comes to the end of sorrow. Surpassing happiness descends and the sattwic discipline culminates in that spiritual joy, which is no longer the sattwic happiness, *sukham*, but absolute Ananda. The liberated man, who is free

from the sense of doership and whose reason is the channel of the faculties appropriate to Para Prakriti, and who is thus free from ego and its desires, lives at last one with his highest self, one with all beings and one with God in an absolute bliss of the spirit.

### **Swabhava and Swadharma:**

#### **One's true nature and one's right law of action**

There is one more detail connected with the methods of Karma Yoga and which has also connection with the action of Para Prakriti and of the individual, jiva, which, even though entangled in and clogged by the three gunas of Apra Prakriti, can, if recognized and utilized properly, lift the seeker from the bondage of Apra Prakriti to the varied movements of Para Prakriti. In fact, the manifestation of Para Prakriti on account of its movement through the self-becoming of the individual, Swabhava and Swadharma, is one of the central themes of the last six chapters of the Gita.

That element, which is the key of sadharmya mukti, the liberation that comes by the operation of the law of action of Para Prakriti and Purushottama is contained in the concepts of swabhava, swadharma, sahajam karma.<sup>148</sup> Swabhava is normally translated as one's own nature, and, in the ordinary parlance, it refers to one's own nature in Apra Prakriti in which one lives predominantly. Thus one speaks of the sattwic man to designate the individual who dwells predominantly in the nature which is dominated by the sattwa, the principle of light, understanding and predominantly governed by Buddhi and instruments of knowledge. Rajasic man refers to the individual who lives predominantly in rajas, the individual who is dominated by drive, action and reactions of a ruler or a king or a warrior. If



this nature is tempered by sattwa, the concerned individual tends to become guided by ethical norms and inspired by notions of just cause, chivalry and the impulse to protect the weak and the oppressed but the rajasic man is often dominated by desire, creativity and productivity, ordinary impulse to love and to be loved, and it tends to fall into the mechanical routine of life and organizations to which tamas tends to cling. Finally, the tamasic man is totally governed by routine, mechanical repetition of the cycle of life and unintelligent acquiescence to ignorant inertia that does not allow the individual to press beyond the established routine of manual work, unintelligent labour and mechanical service.

Swabhava, in true sense, however, refers to soul's true nature which is inherently related to the expression of the qualities of Para Prakriti. The Gita uses the word swabhava to indicate those essential qualities which are not born from Apra Prakriti but which trace their origin in the jivahood of the individual and to Para Prakriti, which has been described in the expressive phrase, *parā prakṛtir jīva bhūtā*,<sup>149</sup> the higher nature which manifests itself in the jivas, individual souls.

The jiva is an eternal portion of the Purushottama (*mama eva amśaḥ jīvaloke jīvabhūtāḥ sanātanaḥ*), (My own portion which is eternal and which in the realm of jivas is manifested as a jiva).<sup>150</sup> The jiva represents in Nature the power of the Supreme Spirit; he is in his personality that power; he brings out in an individual existence the potentialities of the Soul of the universe. This jiva is to be distinguished from the natural ego, which is a temporary construction arising from the workings of the Apra Prakriti. The jiva is directly

originated from Purushottama and His Para Prakriti; it is not the form of ego. The true force that operates in and through the jiva is derived from higher spiritual Power or Para Prakriti; hence, the mechanical operation of the three Gunas is not the inmost and fundamental truth of its movements. The swabhava of the jiva is the movement of the will of one's own becoming, and the nature of that becoming is the direct manifestation of Para Prakriti. Thus each soul is a force of Supreme Consciousness that formulates a Real-Idea of the Divine, Purushottama; it is guided by the Real-Idea in its action and evolution, its progressive self-finding, its constant varying self-expression, its apparently uncertain but secretly inevitable growth to fullness. That is our swabhava, our own real nature, our own self-becoming. The process of our self-becoming has its own law, which operates in the processes of self-shaping, functioning, and working. That law of action, which is determined by swabhava, is our swadharma. It is to that principle of that swabhava and swadharma to which the Gita refers in order to show to the individual as to how he can surpass the operations of the three gunas of Apra Prakriti, and how by detecting the swabhava and swadharma, he can apply it in performance of actions which are indispensable in the process of Karma Yoga.

### **Swabhava and Four Qualities**

There are four qualities which express swabhava, and they are clearly discernible as the qualities that impel development of (i) self-knowledge and world-knowledge; (ii) strength and power, (iii) mutuality and creation and relation and interchange between creature and creature, and (iv) works that labour in the universe and serve all in each and turn the labour of each to the service of all others. In

each individual, there is the operation of all these four qualities of swabhava as distinguished from the qualities of gunas of Apra Prakriti; but in most individuals, one or the other of these four qualities tends to predominate. In that context, one can speak of four specific swabhavas, those relating to the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the Shudra.<sup>151</sup> These four natures are inherent in the jiva, although in human life which is a great admixture of the operations of Apra Prakriti and Para Prakriti, they are mixed up with the three gunas of Apra Prakriti. As a result, the swabhava of the Brahmin is seen to be predominately manifested through sattwa, the swabhava of the Kshatriya appears to be manifested more predominantly in the rajasic nature which is tempered with Sattwa, the swabhava of the Vaishya is manifested through rajasic character, which is tempered with tamas, and the swabhava of the Shudra manifests more predominantly through the tamasic nature. A special aspect of the method of Karma Yoga consists of discovering the predominant order of swabhava and developing it on the lines of its self-expansion. Ultimately, the Karma Yoga leads to the awareness of the Master of existence expressing Himself forever in his infinite quality, *anantguṇa*. According to the Gita, a stage must be reached where the individual is able to surrender all actions into the hands of Purushottama, *mayi sannyasya karmāṇi*.<sup>152</sup> Just as one gets beyond the limitations of the three gunas, so also can one get beyond the division of the fourfold law determined by the fourfold qualities of swabhava of the jivahood; that state is beyond the limitations of all distinctive Dharmas, *sarvadamān parityajya*.<sup>153</sup>

The Gita enjoins the offering of the works determined by our own law of being and nature (*swabhāvajena*

*karmanā*).<sup>154</sup> From the Divine, all movement of creation and impulse to act originates and by him all this universe is extended, and for the holding together of the worlds He presides over and shapes all action through the swabhava. Our work should be according to the truth of swabhava within us; it should not be an accommodation with outward and artificial standards: it must be a living and sincere expression of the soul and its inborn powers. When, by the process of Karma Yoga, we follow out the living inmost truth of our soul in our present nature, we shall be led eventually to arrive at the immortal truth of our soul in the now superconscious supreme nature. At the end of the journey of Karma Yoga, which synthesizes also the highest integral knowledge and the supreme bhakti, one can live in oneness with Purushottama and our true self in all beings and, perfected, become faultless instrument of divine action in the freedom of the immortal dharma. That immortal dharma becomes manifest when we are liberated from the limitations of all dharmas that we erect in our process of ascent to the attainment of the supreme end of being. We can then manifest the divine birth and divine action, *divyam janma* and *divyam karma*.

### **Kartavyam Karma**

The Gita speaks of kartavyam karma, the action that has to be performed and never to be renounced; that action is that of (i) sacrifice, offering to the supreme Lord, (ii) self-giving, the action, which by interchanges of self-giving promotes the welfare of all (*lokasangraha*); and (iii) the action of austerity, tapas, which purifies the will from all its impurities, which pertain to the operations of Apra Prakriti and its three guṇas.

Sacrifice is sattwic when it is offered with a disinterested devotion, selflessly for humanity or impersonally for the Right or the Truth, and when that sacrifice is necessary for arriving at perfection of nature. The culmination of sattwic sacrifice is reached when it is offered to the Supreme Divine in one's integral being for the good of the world, and for the fulfillment of the divine will in the universe. And that culmination leads to its own transcendence into the state of *sādharmya*, immortal dharma. (ii) Sattwic tapasya is described by the Gita at three levels, at the level of the body, at the level of speech and at the level of mental and moral perfection. The physical tapasya or askesis is sattwic when one offers worship and reverence to those who deserve reverence, when one maintains cleanness of the body, when one is sexually pure, and when one avoids injury to others. Askesis of speech consists of kind, true and beneficent speech and careful avoidance of words that may cause fear, sorrow and trouble to others. Finally, mental and moral askesis consists of purification of the whole temperament, gentleness and a clear and calm gladness of mind, self-control and silence. This sattwic tapasya can rise farther and one attains, in higher Prakriti, spirit's immaculate tapas, a highest will and luminous force in all the members, acting in a wide and solid calm and deep and pure spiritual delight. (iii) The sattwic way of giving consists of giving for the sake of giving without any view to a benefit already done or yet to be done to oneself by the receiver of the benefit and without any personal object in the action. The sattwic way of *dāna* will culminate in the operation of the higher Prakriti consisting of wide self-giving to others and to the world and to the Supreme, *ātmadāna*, *ātma-samarpaṇa*.

By referring to swabhava and swadharma, the Gita refers

to a deeper principle of kartavyam karma and provides a more elaborate guidance to the seeker. The three actions of sacrifice, self-giving and austerity, (*yajna*, *dāna* and *tapas*) are to be performed in the light of swabhava and swadharma, in the light of sahajam karma, the action that is inherent in the very nature of one's own individual being, jiva; sahajam karma is the action that is born from the operations of the Para Prakriti appropriate to the individual's specific work that is determined by Para Prakriti on account of the individuals inner place in the harmony of the totality of the world; it is that action which can become an instrument of the self-finding of one's true place in the world and which can, by its rhythmic development, lead the individual to the fullness and perfection of the instrumentality of the individual in the hands of the Purushottama and Para Prakriti. The effect of the method of Karma Yoga that emerges from the recognition of swabhava and swadharma is that of detecting for each individual which of the four qualities described below of swabhava is more predominant in oneself and of utilizing that quality in developing the path of ascent of Karma Yoga; ultimately, when Karma Yoga's ascent reaches its peak, one arrives at fullness of all the four qualities; that fullness is the attainment of sādharma mukti. In the ultimate analysis, this method does not in the end chain down the soul to any present formulation, but rather it enriches itself most surely by the obedience to the law of development, swadharma; at the end, the swabhava can most powerfully grow and break at its hour beyond present moulds and arrive at higher self-expressions. It is at that point that the Gita speaks of the renunciation of all dharmas, including swadharma, by complete self-surrender to the Supreme Purushottama. At that point, the great and desirable

transformation is effected with rapidity and power in proportion to our progress in self-knowledge.

## **Sannyasa and Tyaga**

As the Yoga ascends into greater heights of experience, the paths of works, of knowledge and devotion tend to become synthesized. An important concept in this synthesis is that of tyaga, which Sri Krishna prefers because it does not have that exclusiveness which the word sannyasa indicates. In all yoga, renunciation is the way to perfection; no yoga is possible, if one tends to accept life as it is. The Karma Yoga of the Gita accepts life, but it intends to transform it. Life and action as we find them in the present stage of human evolution is riddled with desire and with the operation of the three gunas of Prakriti which are born from groping movement of ignorance. Hence, while accepting life and action, the Gita lays down the path of renunciation of desire, an inward renunciation; at the same time, it traces out a path by which various elements and forms of Karma are analyzed in their depth so that their origins are discovered in the lower nature, Apra Prakriti and in the higher nature, Para Prakriti, as also in the nature of the true individual, jiva. This task is more difficult and preferable, because in the path of sannyasa, as it was prescribed in the time of the Gita by the path of Sankhya (the exclusive path of knowledge), one was required to renounce almost everything that was concerned with life and action. The path of tyaga, the path of inner renunciation of desire brings Sankhya, the path of knowledge, and Yoga, the path of action, into a close synthesis. What is obtained by tyaga is a radical operation of the inner functionings of the ordinary motives of action; at the same time, the method of tyaga enables the seeker to rise

from tamasic nature to sattwic nature, and then to the state of transmutation into the dynamic operations of Para Prakriti. The ascetic way of sannyasa is not only concerned with the inward renunciation of desire but also with the recoil from all dynamic Nature. According to the Gita, complete renunciation of life and action, even if attempted, is not possible entirely so long as we live in the body. Indeed, it is possible to reduce the movements of life and action to the most minimum level, but such a rigorous diminution of works is not indispensable, since it is neither really nor ordinarily advisable. The one thing that is needed is complete inner quietism and that is all contained the Gita's sense of *naiṣkarmya*, actionlessness. According to the Gita, that *naiṣkarmya* is possible, even when fullness of action and life are allowed to operate, provided that the threads of action and life are disconnected from desire and from the operations of sattwa, rajas and tamas, and provided that they are replaced by the movements of higher nature, Para Prakriti. Indeed, the immobility of the inner self is not disturbed by the movement of higher Prakriti, because the movement of higher Prakriti is a movement of the will of the Purushottama; that will is devoid of desire, since the Purushottama has no need to grasp and to acquire what is not yet inwardly realized and mastered. The will of the Purushottama has nothing to gain or acquire, and it makes no difference to him whether He remains without any movement of manifestation. Moreover, the movement of the will of the Purushottama retains always the state of eternal immobility, so that, as the Gita points out, the Purushottama is always *akartā*, the non-doer, even though he is capable of manifesting all the needed energy of manifestation. The will of the Purushottama is not a desire to acquire something that



he is not; the will of the Purushottama is the will to manifest all that is inherent in him, and even if he does not manifest what is inherent in him, nothing is wanting in him. But just as he is not in need of manifestation, He is not compelled by any need to remain unmanifest. To be therefore as perfect as the Purushottama, and therefore to be akarta, the non-doer, and at the same time to be the manifestor of the divine's will, is the perfection to which the individual jiva can rise by the method of tyaga, which involves inner renunciation of desire, and at the same time, a more difficult task of uniting with the dynamic nature of the Supreme. By inner renunciation of desire, one can assume the status of the self of eternal silence, *brahma bhūyāya*,<sup>155</sup> but also the states of a still greater and more marvellous divine becoming, *madbhāva*.<sup>156</sup> Indeed, to get at that greatest perfection, one has indeed to be immobile in the self, silent in all our members, but also to act in the power, Shakti, Para Prakriti, the true and high force of the Spirit.

## 6. Conclusion: Three Secrets of the Yoga of the Gita

We may, in conclusion, state three secrets which determine the methods and goal of the Synthesis of Yoga of the Gita. There is, first, the secret of the constant relations between Soul and Nature. The *guhyam rahasyam*, the profound secret is that the soul, Purusha, and Nature, Prakriti, are not two realities, but Prakriti is the eternal power of the Purusha and that Power always works itself out the will of the Purusha and offers itself always to the Purusha, whether in quiescence or in action or in the results of action as a fulfillment of the will of the Purusha. In the ordinary experience of the individual, the soul is hardly visible, and in all experiences, what is readily visible is the realm and

power and action of Prakriti; even when the individual fixes himself in his sense of ego, he discovers in it only a centralization of the movements of Prakriti, which are themselves in a state of flux; in that flux, the distinctiveness of the ego is constantly swept away by the rush of forces of Prakriti; apart from all this, nothing else is clearly discernible; only in rare circumstances, the individual feels himself circumscribed by the complex workings of Prakriti which seem to be unacceptable to himself; it is in those rare circumstances that he finds himself as truly distinct from the workings Prakriti. He then finds that he is bound by circumstances and struggles to assert himself against that bondage. The ego-consciousness does give to the individual, from time to time, the impression that it is independent of everything else. But the ego-consciousness is the conscious of the finite which mistakenly thinks itself to be independent in the vast sea of Prakriti; but in that vast sea of Prakriti, all is formation of Prakriti. And yet, there is in the individual's deep self-consciousness, there is some feeling of himself as something other than that of the formations of Prakriti; he feels himself in rare moments as a Presence, Witness, Controller or giver of consent. That Presence, Witness, or Controller is the Purusha, and that Purusha has a will, which is capable of turning the wheels of the movements of Prakriti. At the beginning, precariously and uncertainly, but, in the end, its effect can be enhanced by methods of yoga. It is for this reason that the Gita suggests the method of lifting the self from the clutches of Prakriti by the will of the Purusha, *ātmanātmānam uddhareṭ*.<sup>157</sup> The methods of yoga by which this movement of upliftment is effected include various means of self-discipline by which our unquiet mind and blinded life are stilled and turned towards the Purusha.

The Purusha is experienced gradually as the quiet witness and observer of the movements of Prakriti in which it need not be entangled. Whether that Purusha is only individual or universal or supreme is at first indistinct, but in one of the lofty experiences, one finds oneself as a vast and inalienable stillness, completely separate and independent of all the mental Ignorance, and therefore no longer compelled at all by the mental Ignorance. According to the Sankhya, the Purusha that is experienced in this way is the individual Purusha, although vast and independent of the constructed ego. According to the Yoga, which came to be formulated later on in its distinctness by Patanjali, the Purusha thus experienced is also the individual, as much as in the Sankhya. In the Yoga as understood as Karma Yoga, and as worked out in the Gita, the Purusha that is experienced is many-aspected One and the secret truth of Self (Brahman or Atman) and God (Ishwara). According to the Vedanta, which was current at the time of the Gita, the Purusha that is thus experienced is the one Brahman, not only vast but eternally transcendent One without the second.

The Gita, however, develops a profounder secret, *guhyataram rahasyam* and presents to the seeker the reconciling truths of the Purusha, Brahman and Ishwara in its concept of Purushottama. The Purushottama has two aspects: Being and Power. The Power of the Purushottama is his own higher Nature, Para Prakriti which is at the origin of the lower Nature, Apra Prakriti, — in the operation of Para Prakriti is the mystery of the jiva, the eternal portion of the Supreme that is manifested in and conditioned by the Para Prakriti. The Divine Purushottama is the Transcendent, not only transcendent of all movements of Apra Prakriti and even of Para Prakriti, but also of his own status of the

Brahman, that is for ever still and inactive and of his another status of the Ishwara, who is the Lord and controller of the movements of the universe. That transcendental Purushottama, although beyond the worlds, is at the same time *Vasudevaḥ sarvam iti*, the Supreme who is all things in all worlds; he is the Lord standing in the heart of every creature and the self of all existences and the origin and supernal meaning of everything that he has put forth in manifestation. He is Ishwara, who wills and directs and controls all things, but also Parameshwara, the Supreme Lord that always remains inactive, even while active. He is the Being, the essential Self or the Brahman, but also extended in all that exists in all that moves and manifests, and therefore Parabrahman. But He is also the Purushottama who wills and energizes his own power into action without incurring any loss of being or inactivity or any loss of being and power of energizing the universe. That Transcendent is seen manifested more specially in His vibhūti, and He is the Spirit in Time who compels the action of the world; He is the Sun of all knowledge and the Lover and Beloved of the soul and the Master of all works and sacrifice. On the basis of this profounder secret, the Yoga of the Gita opens out into a synthesis of integral knowledge, integral works and integral bhakti. The assurance of this synthesis is rooted in the simultaneous experiences that one can have of spiritual universality and a free and perfected spiritual individuality, as also of an entire union with the Supreme Reality and entire dwelling in Him as at once the frame of the soul's immortality and the support and power of our liberated action in the world and the body.

Self-finding consists of the discovery that the essence of our true being is the unchanging, permanent, an eternal

silence and Self of all existence and that that is quite distinct and independent of all that is mobile and all that we call to be the ego and its dualities and its identifications with the body, life and mind, with all the movements of the three gunas, of all that is obscure and ignorant or shot through ignorance. According to the Gita, this realization of the self-finding is the indispensable basis on which a more complete self-finding can be securely laid. For one can realize oneself by a supreme identity with the Self that is eternally immobile, indivisible, beyond all limitations of Space and Time in which the finite formations of *Apara Prakriti* that we call ego cannot subsist, and one realizes the Spaceless, Timeless Silence. By this identity, one becomes the Brahman "*brahmabhūyāya*".<sup>158</sup> But the Gita opens up further possibilities of self-realization and self-finding. The individual, since it is an eternal portion of Purushottama,<sup>159</sup> and also a manifestation of the higher nature of the Purushottama, *Para Prakriti*;<sup>160</sup> the individual has the possibility of recovering his true status and nature in *Para Prakriti* and also in arriving at his eternal abode in the Purushottama.<sup>161</sup>

But there is also a farther possibility which opens up to the individual, — the possibility of participating totally in the action and nature of the Purushottama and *Para Prakriti*. In the realization of that possibility, not only the limitations of laws of action (dharma or standards of good and evil) which govern the operations of *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattwa*, but also the limitations of the development of the *swabhava* and *swadharma* are also swept aside. In the rush of the flood of *Para Prakriti* and will of the Purushottama, every door that blocks the invasion of the higher floods is broken, and a state is reached where the seeker pursues that indubitable and immortal law of action (*dharmāmṛtam*), so that one attains

the supreme status of bhakti. That bhakti is inherent in the jiva as an eternal portion of the Supreme, but remains normally veiled in the conditions of the Ignorance; but in the fullness of the conditions of the *trigunātīta* (transcendence of the three gunas) and of the state of *sādharmyam*, (full identity with the nature of Para Prakriti and Purushottama),<sup>162</sup> that supreme bhakti manifests without any limitations.

Here, too, it becomes necessary to indicate the method by which the attainment of sadharmyam is facilitated and fulfilled. The human consciousness, in ascent to the higher and higher levels of Para Prakriti and in securing its constant identity with the laws of divine action, divyam karma,<sup>163</sup> finds that conditioned, as it is, by the past lines of development by the laws of the gunas (dharma) as also of the laws of swabhava and swadharma, resistances of various kinds occur, and they need to be broken; they can be broken effectively by the power of the Para Prakriti which truly knows how the resistances of various dharmas can be broken. Hence, the supreme word and most secret thing of all, *guhyatamam rahasyam*, that is given by the Gita, consists of that secret most method. This method is enunciated by Sri Krishna in the following two verses of the Gita: "Be thoroughly fixed and turned to Me, be devoted to Me, offer your sacrifice to Me, offer adorations to Me, verily you will enter into Me — this I truly promise you, because you are dear to Me. Relinquish all Dharmas (all laws of action pertaining to the gunas or laws of swabhava and swadharma that govern the ascending movement), take refuge in Me alone; I will verily release you from all sins whatsoever. Do not grieve".<sup>164</sup> The Spirit and Godhead, Para Prakriti and Purushottama are infinite and free from all

dharmas, which belong to the realm of the Ignorance; Purushottama transcends all these dharmas, since He lives and acts in the fullness of light and knowledge, in the state of eternal silence and in the state of the fullness of potency of power of the totality of manifestation in which each thread is harmoniously united with all that exists and all that is brought forth in manifestation. The effective method, therefore, by which we can participate in that action of the Purushottama, is to cast away all dependence on dharmas, to surrender ourselves to the Supreme Lord. Our task would be to take care only to keep ourselves absolutely and exclusively open to him, trust to the light and power and delight of the Supreme. That state of self-surrender, where one is unafraid and ungrieving, and where one accepts only His guidance, is the truest method; that brings the absolute and inevitable perfection of ourselves and nature. This method puts the soul of man into its right relation with the Purushottama, His status of immobility and His status of the universal mobility and individual mobility, as also His status of the supreme Lordship over the universe. This method enables us to permit the Supreme Purushottama to act unreservedly through our instrumentality, where our entire being becomes such an efficient bow in the hands of the Purushottama that He can use it according to His will and in the direction that He wills. It is He who knows how to shape our life in the life of the world in order to promote the continuous harmony of the divine self-expression. This is the state that Arjuna was promised by Sri Krishna, when Arjuna had asked for the knowledge and practice of that action which will be entirely free from all limitations and which would be objectively supremely right and beneficial to the highest workings of the world-harmony.

## Notes and References

The age of intuition appears to be too long as compared to the similar age that we find in the history of comparable cultures. This is because the deliverances of intuition that were gained during the Vedic period came to be once again reiterated and retested during the period of the Upanishads, which did not follow immediately after the age of the Vedas; when the Vedic knowledge began to decline, there intervened a period of a good deal of loss of the secret of the Veda, and even during the period of the Brahmanas, those secrets could not be recovered; but the Upanishadic seers developed powers of intuition and they interpreted the Veda, not by intellectual ratiocination but by taking recourse to the yogic methods that had developed during the Vedic period. This implied a period of a great efflorescence of intuitive faculties. This period was again the period of Intuition. It is well-known that in many ancient civilizations, there was the age of mystery such as that of Orphic beliefs and Eleusinian mysteries in ancient Greece. But when that period of mysteries declined, the age of Reason began to develop. There was no parallel movement such as the one that developed in the period of intuition of the Upanishads. To use the terminology of the Greek gods, the reign of Apollo, the God of revelation, was followed by the reign of Athena, the goddess of Reason. The reason why the Indian trend of thought, during the Age of Reason, came to be greatly influenced by knowledge derived from intuition can be traced to the recurrence of the Age of intuition during the period of the Upanishads, even when the Age of Intuition that marked the development of the Vedas had declined. In other words, the Age of Intuition of the Upanishadic times came to determine the overarching characteristic of Indian culture.

<sup>2</sup> Vide., *Bhagawad Gita (BG.)*, I.28-46

<sup>3</sup> Vide., *Ibid.*, II.4-8

<sup>4</sup> Kant's doctrine of the categorical imperative has great similarities with the Indian doctrine of Dharma, the special emphasis of which is on the Gospel of Duty. Kant's doctrine is anti-utilitarian, since it



formulates the ethical awareness of the Right, which points to the intrinsic character of right action on no other ground than the rightness of action perceived directly by the intuitive light of that part of the complex human consciousness which falls outside the framework of Pure Reason, within the realm of which one is obliged to view the universe through Space and Time and through four other categories of consciousness of Quantity: unity, plurality, totality; of Quality: reality, negation, limitations; of Relation: substance and accident, cause and effect, reciprocity; and of Modality: possibility, existence, necessity.

In other words, the realm of pure reason does not provide the ground for freedom, which is exhibited in the ethical urge towards normative action. According to Kant, it is in the field of Practical Reason that the genuine freedom is experienced, since it is in that experience that one finds an ultimate unanalysable idea of "ought or duty". Indeed, Kant's doctrine of duty for duty's sake has been subjected to major criticisms in the western history of Ethics, but we are not concerned here with those criticisms. As a matter of fact, these criticisms are largely applicable to the three formulations that he gave to the idea of the categorical imperative. The idea that there is something like intrinsic Right, which is irrespective of the consideration of consequences, seems to hold for many an unassailable position. In respect of the Indian concept of Dharma, and in the Gita's exposition of Dharma and of its Gospel of Action, when it is said that one has a right to action and not to the consequences or fruits of action, one feels, at first sight, a close resemblance to Kant's doctrine of duty for duty's sake. But when we analyze the two doctrines, Gita's doctrine and Kant's, we find that there are wide differences. Briefly, it can be said that the Indian concept of dharma is much wider than the idea of duty for duty's sake. The idea of dharma, in the first place, recognizes the value of hedonistic (kama) principle and even utilitarian (artha) principle at a certain level of development of the human being. Secondly, dharma carries with it the flexibility in regard to the standards of action that should be applied to different categories of human beings on account of differences of swabhava, the innate tendency of nature determined by the status of the evolution of the given individual in his upward growth. This flexibility is not to be found in the doctrine of Kant. Thirdly, the idea that dharma should be followed simply because it is dharma is only one side of the argument,

but it is not the overarching and ultimate idea of dharma. It is implicit in the Indian idea of dharma that its imperativeness is derivable from a still higher source of imperativeness, namely, the imperativeness that issues from the spiritual element in the individual that seeks or affirms freedom of will but also freedom from will so as to attain a status in which one can experience total liberation from the entire realm of action, even while one may be engaged in actions of will. Moreover, even when one is engaged in actions of will, the Gita's aim is to liberate these actions, not only from the clutches of desires but also from the clutches of the sense of doership of action or from egoism; this idea is absent from Kant's doctrine, where the sense of individual doership of action and individual's obligation to remain within the confinement of the field of action is indispensable. Fourthly, the doctrine of dharma in the Gita is evolutionary in character, and it makes a distinction between swadharma (one's own law of action) and paradharma (another's law of action), and points out that each individual has dharma appropriate to his swabhava, and therefore one should not emulate somebody else's dharma while performing one's own action. The doctrine of duty for duty's sake carries with it the idea of the applicability of one universal ethical law of action to all; the Gita goes deeper into the psychological differences that obtain among different individuals and counsels each one to discover swadharma, one's own law of development in following the evolutionary status and nature that the individual has attained at the given time. This psychological subtlety is absent from Kant's doctrine. Fifthly, the Gita points out that there is a status of consciousness, where alternative ethical deliverances of dharma are bound to collide with each other, and there is, therefore, the necessity of developing a still higher vision of right action. That higher vision, according to the Gita, cannot be obtained except when the individual consciousness expands into cosmic consciousness and even into transcendental consciousness. It is for this reason that the Gita's emphasis on the development of that vision is a part of the search for the right action. The Gita affirms that this search is fulfilled only when one discovers the ultimate source of will; that ultimate source, according to the Gita, is the divine consciousness (which is universal and transcendental) from which the divine will flows out spontaneously for the growth and maintenance of the unity of people, *lokasangraha*. Finally, therefore, the ultimate message of the Gita is to rise to a

higher level of consciousness, to the spiritual consciousness where universal knowledge and universal will are identical; the consciousness of the individual should be so liberated from the deliverances of conflicting standards of actions or dharmas that he can become a willing vehicle of the Divine Will. The great message of the Gita is that one should be freed from the clutches of dharmas and should surrender to the Divine Will. It is for this reason that the Gita is not a book of practical ethics but of the discovery of the necessity to transcend the level of ethics and arrive at the luminous perception of the divine will and equally luminous and even devoted submission to the divine will.

- <sup>5</sup> BG., II.50
- <sup>6</sup> *Isha Upanishad*, 5
- <sup>7</sup> BG., III.1
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., IV.33
- <sup>9</sup> Vide., Ibid., II.61, III.30, IV.10
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., VII.2
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., XV.17
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., XV.16
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., VII.5
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., XVIII.65, 66
- <sup>15</sup> Vide., Ibid., II.16, II.30
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., IV.9
- <sup>17</sup> *Rig Veda (RV)*, I.164.20
- <sup>18</sup> *Mundaka Upanishad*, III.1.1-3
- <sup>19</sup> *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, IV.6, 7
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., IV.5
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., IV.10
- <sup>22</sup> *Mundaka Upanishad*, I.2
- <sup>23</sup> *Katha Upanishad*, I.3.3-13
- <sup>24</sup> BG., II.62-3
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., II.61
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., II. 55-72

- 27 Ibid., II.42, 43
- 28 Ibid., II.47
- 29 Ibid., II.48, 50
- 30 Ibid., III.6
- 31 Ibid., II.47
- 32 Ibid., XV.16-18
- 33 Ibid., VII.4, 5, 7
- 34 Ibid., VIII.23
- 35 Ibid., IX. 4-8, 10, 12-16, 24, 26, 27
- 36 RV., X.129.2
- 37 Ibid., I.170.1
- 38 Ibid
- 39 Ibid., IV.58.3
- 40 Ibid, X.90
- 41 *Isha Upanishad*, 5
- 42 *Katha Upanishad*, II.3.8
- 43 *Mundaka Upanishad*, II.1.2
- 44 *Kena Upanishad*, III.12
- 45 BG., XV.7
- 46 Ibid., IX.8
- 47 Vide., Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, SABCL, 1971, Vol. 18, pp. 146-7, where we find a statement describing the supermind, which is, in the language of the Gita, Para Prakriti, and where the divine consciousness, which is in the language of the Gita, Purushottama, is stated to be standing back in the idea from the movement which it contains, occupying and inhabiting its works, seeming to distribute itself in its forms. Sri Aurobindo states, "This concentration supporting the soul-form would be the individual Divine or Jivatman as distinguished from the universal Divine or one all-constituting self." This statement is important, because in the Gita itself we do not find any philosophical statement explaining or describing as to how multiplicity of individual souls or jivas is put forth without abrogating their oneness in the Brahmic consciousness. What is clear in the Gita is that the individual is the eternal portion of Purushottama or divine

consciousness (XV.7) and that it is the Para Prakriti which manifests itself as individual souls or jivas. (VII.5)

48 *BG.*, II.42

49 *Ibid.*, II.52-3

50 *Vide.*, *Ibid.*, VII.4-14

51 *Vide.*, *Ibid.*, VII.5, XV.7

52 *Vide.*, *Katha Upanishad*, II.1.5, 12,13, II.2.3

53 *BG.*, VII.5

54 *Ibid.*, III.33

55 *Ibid.*, VII.2

56 *RV.*, X.90

57 *Ibid.*, III.1.9-10

58 *Katha Upanishad*, II.1.5

59 *Ibid.*, II.1.12-13

60 *BG.*, III.27

61 *Ibid.*, VII.1-2

62 *Ibid.*

63 *Ibid.*, VII.28

64 *Ibid.*, VII.16

65 *Ibid.*

66 *Ibid.*

67 *Ibid.*, VII.18

68 *Ibid.*, XV.19

69 *Ibid.*, IV.9

70 *Ibid.*, V.25

71 *Ibid.*, X.7

72 *Ibid.*, XI.5

73 *Ibid.*, III.20

74 *Ibid.*, IV.9-10

75 *Ibid.*, IV.7-8

76 *Ibid.*, XIV.2

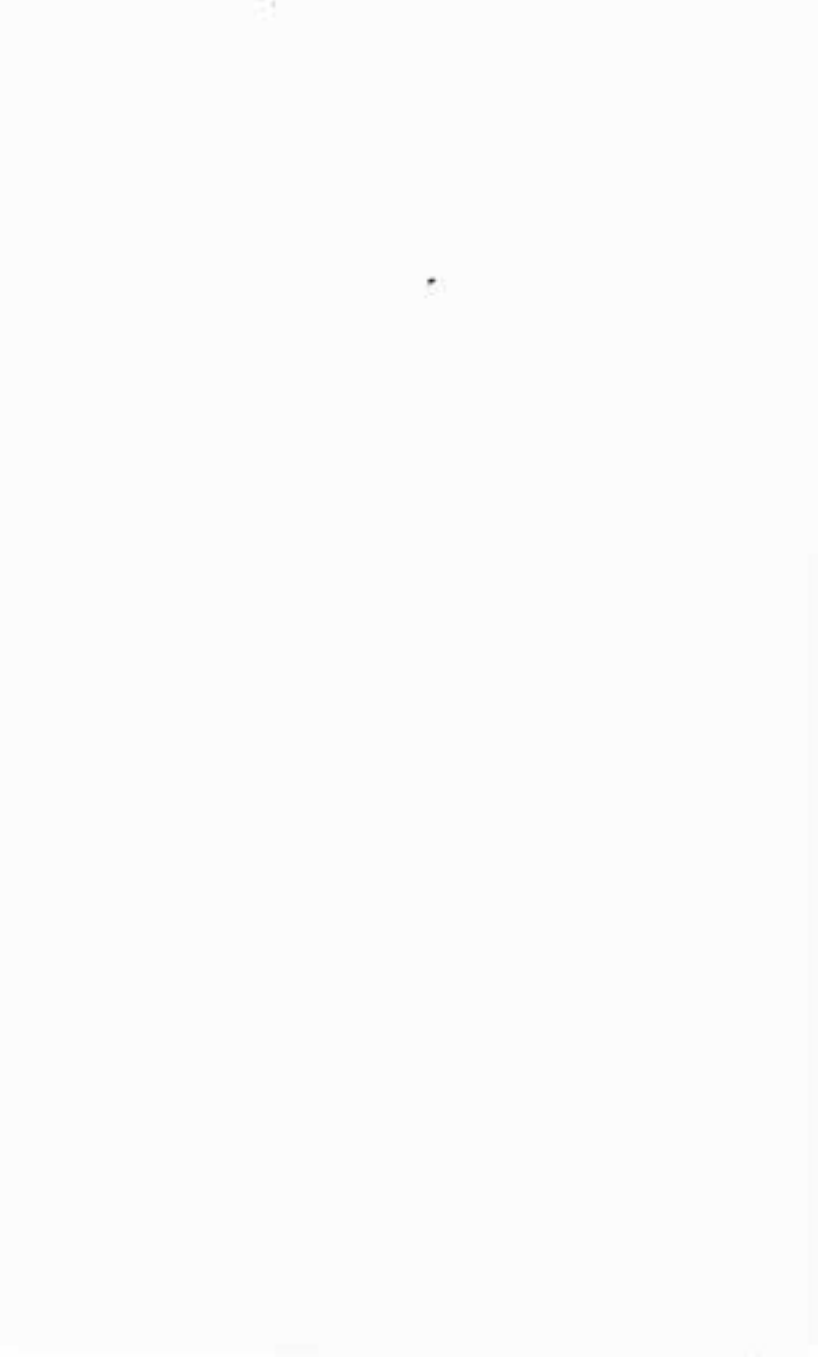
77 *Ibid.*, III.21

- 78 Ibid., IV.18  
79 Ibid., IV.19-21  
80 Ibid., V.18-19  
81 Ibid., V.21  
82 Ibid., V.3  
83 Ibid., V.10  
84 Ibid., V.8-9  
85 Ibid., IV.23  
86 Ibid., VII.4-5  
87 Ibid., V.20  
88 Ibid., V.21-29  
89 *Kena Upanishad*, II.5  
90 Ibid., IV.4  
91 *BG.*, VI.1-2  
92 Ibid., VI.4  
93 Vide., Ibid., VI.5-7  
94 Ibid., VI.15  
95 Ibid., VI. 29-30.  
96 Ibid., VI.31-2.  
97 Ibid., VI.31  
98 Ibid., VI.46-7  
99 Ibid., VI.5  
100 Ibid., X.19  
101 Ibid., IX.8  
102 Ibid., IV.6  
103 Ibid., IV.7  
104 Ibid., IX.8  
105 Ibid., X.19-41  
106 Ibid., XI.1-4  
107 Ibid., XI. 15-31  
108 Ibid., XI.32-4  
109 Ibid., XI.36-48

- 110 Ibid., XI.47-9
- 111 Ibid., XI.55
- 112 Ibid., XII.20
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 Ibid., XII.6
- 115 Ibid., XIII.18, XIV.19
- 116 Ibid., XIII.28, XVI.19
- 117 Ibid., XIII.34
- 118 Ibid., XIV.2
- 119 Ibid., XIV.20
- 120 Ibid., XIV.20-1
- 121 Ibid., XIV.27
- 122 Ibid., XV.19
- 123 Ibid., XVIII.41
- 124 Ibid., XIII.46
- 125 Ibid., XVIII.47
- 126 Ibid., XVIII.56
- 127 *RV.*, I.72.9
- 128 Ibid., I.20
- 129 *BG.*, XVIII.54
- 130 Ibid., XII.8. Vide. also, XVIII.57
- 131 Ibid., XIV.19
- 132 Ibid., XIII.18
- 133 Ibid., XII.20
- 134 Ibid., XII.13
- 135 Ibid.
- 136 Ibid., XII.14-9
- 137 Ibid., XII.20
- 138 Ibid., XV.7
- 139 Ibid., VII.5
- 140 Ibid., XV.16-7
- 141 Ibid., XIV.5-18

- <sup>142</sup> Ibid., XIV.22-6  
<sup>143</sup> Ibid., XIV.27  
<sup>144</sup> Ibid., XVIII.65-6  
<sup>145</sup> Ibid., XVI.1-4  
<sup>146</sup> Ibid., XVII.3  
<sup>147</sup> Vide., RV., I.1.5  
<sup>148</sup> BG., XVIII.48  
<sup>149</sup> Ibid., VII.5  
<sup>150</sup> Ibid., XV.7  
<sup>151</sup> Ibid., XVIII.42-4  
<sup>152</sup> Ibid., XVIII.57  
<sup>153</sup> Ibid., XVIII.66  
<sup>154</sup> Ibid., XVIII.60  
<sup>155</sup> Ibid., XVIII.53  
<sup>156</sup> Ibid., XIV.19  
<sup>157</sup> Ibid., VI.5  
<sup>158</sup> Ibid., XVIII.53  
<sup>159</sup> Ibid., XV.7  
<sup>160</sup> Ibid., VII.5  
<sup>161</sup> Ibid., XII.8, XVIII.56-7, 65, 68  
<sup>162</sup> Ibid., XII.20, XIII.18, XIV.2, 19-21, 26-7  
<sup>163</sup> Ibid., IV.9  
<sup>164</sup> Ibid., XVIII.65-6





**W**e need a new synthesis of yoga in which spiritual disciplines of the past can be reconciled and a path opened up for a living synthesis of Spirit and Matter. It is in the context that we need to turn to the great synthetic spirit of the Gita and the message of union with Para Prakriti, which is one of the master-concepts of the Gita.

In this book a special effort has been made to show how the knowledge of the Vedas and the Upanishads is confirmed by the processes of yogic methods, and how that knowledge has been expounded in the Gita as also by the discovery of a new method of yoga — the method of all-embracing self-surrender to the Divine. This method has been expounded in the last chapter of the Gita, and it is significant that it is this method, as applied *fully*, that has been instrumental in the development of the new knowledge that we find in the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, which has come to be called Integral Yoga.