

## CHAPTER SIX

# Indian Culture

### In the light of the Gita

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It is a general feeling that the message of the *Vedas* (more precisely of the *Brāhmaṇas*), is so complicated that it surpasses the comprehension of an average man.

In the first place we have to appreciate the complicated nature of the universe (and of man also) of which the modern scientists have been speaking repeatedly. In such a situation if the World-view of the *Brāhmaṇas* presents a difficulty, it is an unavoidable corollary of the subject matter (i.e. the nature of universe and man) with which we have to deal.

This difficulty was felt by none other than by the one who is traditionally believed to have edited the *Vedas* in the form in which they are available to us, viz., *Mahaṛṣi Veda Vyāsa*, who was feeling the pinch of the fact that the *Vedas* are beyond the comprehension of the common man - स्त्रीशूद्रद्विजबन्धूनां त्रयी न श्रुतिगोचरा. Even the *Veda* itself has spoken of the common man, who, in spite of listening to the *Vedas* could not understand their real meaning- उत त्व शृण्वन्न शृणोत्येनाम् । *Mahaṛṣi Veda Vyāsa*, therefore, out of compassion for the common man composed eighteen *Purāṇas*, and the *Mahābhārata* in which the essence of the *Vedas* was simplified mainly through the help of stories. Out of this vast literature, the *Mahābhārata*, especially came to be recognised as the fifth *Veda* - भारतं पञ्चमो वेद. Even in the *Mahābhārata* the most important part is the *Gītā*, which, because of being spoken by Lord *Kṛṣṇa* himself- या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्य मुखपद्माद्विनिःसृता- has been treated not as *smṛti* but as *śruti* by *Pandit Madhusadan Ojha*, who, wrote four volumes on the *Gītā* itself and whose direct pupil, *Pandit Motilal Shastri*, wrote nine volumes only on the *Gītā*, so as, to show that the *Gītā* presents to us the essence of the Vedic World-view in such a way that a common man can not only understand it but can put it into practice also *Pandit Madhusudan Ojha* has classified the teachings of the *Gītā* into 160 gospels. The salient features of his commentary, or rather exposition, is that he took a holistic approach following the path of the *Vedas*.

### THE HOLISTIC APPROACH

The *Gītā* is an attempt to apply the theoretical part of the Vedic philosophy in day to day life. It is therefore, easily comprehensible by a common man. As regards the holistic approach, the *Gītā* itself says *Jnañā* and *Vijñāna* both are to be followed; *Jnañā* is necessary for knowing the Self and *Vijñāna* is necessary for knowing the world as well as for meeting the necessities of day to day life. The knowledge of Self leads to liberation from the bondage and the knowledge of the world leads to prosperity. In other words we can meet the necessities of life by action and by knowledge we can know the self. The *Gītā* teaches art of action combined with knowledge.

The *Gītā* emphasizes a harmony between action, devotion and knowledge. Action without devotion and knowledge becomes mechanical and makes the life as dry as dust. Knowledge, on the other hand, without action is like a lame man who lags behind in the race of prosperity.

### THE HOLISTIC MODEL

This is an age of fast life. All nations appear to be eager to follow the development model of America but the bad effect of that model are appearing in the form of pollution of environment. Also there is blind race for armaments. In such a situation the glory of auster way of life is to be realized. On the other hand we have to emphasize that honesty, efficiency and hardwork are the core qualities for proper development. Money is the means and not the goal. It is also to be realized that though man is at the top of the creation but that does not give him the right to exploit other creatures and nature. The art of action is represented by *yajñā* which is based on cooperation and not on struggle.

It is true that the fruit of an action is transient, whereas knowledge leads to immortality but as transitoriness and immortality go together, action and knowledge must also go together.

### Harmony

Man is a combination of body and soul. Body requires material objects which can be obtained only by hard labour and efficiency. Also one should not lose his balance of mind in adverse circumstances. If we lose our balance we cannot take right judgement and suffer. Besides mental peace is also disturbed.

Speaking philosophically it is the '*rajas*' which creates fickleness of mind, with the result that we always go on changing our mind and are never satisfied. We should think of money as a means so that we can spend it and donot become miser. A miserly man cannot enjoy. All his enjoyments are spoiled because of his tendency to stick fast to the money. One has to be liberal.

Our first necessity is food. It is food which makes our mind. If the food is impure, mind also gets polluted. The *Gītā*, therefore, emphasizes the purity of food. Food and other necessities of life

are to be procured by activity. But activity becomes a burden if it is against our nature. The ascence of 'Varna' system is that one should choose a profession according to his taste so that he procures his material necessities as well as has job satisfaction.

It is sometimes said that the theory of *karma* holds an individual responsible for his sad plight, but it is not the whole truth. A just system is also necessary. In the *Gītā*, *Arjuna* wanted to run away from his responsibility of fighting against injustice. It was not because of his love for peace but it was because of his attachment towards his relatives. *Arjuna* poses as a pacifist. He is afraid of incurring the sin of violence. Herein comes the contribution of the *Gītā*.

The nature of things is such that stability and activity go together. We have to be stable inwardly but to be active outwardly. Many of us are inclined towards a contemplative life. *Saṅkarācārya*, for example emphasizes the path of withdrawal. *Lokamanya Tilaka*, on the other hand, was a man of action and he could also find support for action from the *Gītā*, *Lord Kṛṣṇa* expected *Arjuna* to be an ascetic at heart and a warrior from without. This is the essence of the teaching of the *Veda* which was forgotten and was reminded by *Lord Kṛṣṇa* in the *Gītā*.

#### THE MEANING OF THE TITLE OF THE *Gītā*

The colophons at the end of every chapter of the *Gītā* read as follows:-

ओम् तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूक्तिसु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अमुकयोगो नामामुकोऽध्यायः ।

In this colophon, the full name of the *Gītā* is given as *Bhagavad Gītā Upaniṣad* which has three constituents æ *Bhagavad*, *Gītā* and *Upaniṣad*. All the constituents have significance of their own. Let us take them one by one.

#### WHAT IS THE MEANING OF *BHAGAVĀN*

The word *bhaga* is to be analysed as भं गमयतीति भगः । भं means light which symbolises knowledge, *bhagavān* is one who has obtained the light of knowledge. There are six elements which lead to the light of knowledge : (1.) *Dharma* (2.) Knowledge (3.) Detachment (4.) *Aiśvarya* (Abundance) (5.) Fame and (6.) Glory:

ऐश्वर्यस्य समग्रस्य धर्मस्य यशसः श्रियः ।

ज्ञानवैराग्ययोश्चैव षण्णां भग इतीरणा ॥

These six together present before us a complete picture of a model Vedic personality. *Lord Kṛṣṇa* was possessed of all of these six and is, therefore, recognised as *bhagavān* himself- कृष्णस्तु भगवान् स्वयम्. We are also intrinsically possessed of all these but they are overpowered by our ignorance. To be more elaborate, our detachment is subdued by attachment and aversion, knowledge

by ignorance, *aiśvarya* by ego and *dharma* by prejudices. Let us consider a few of them in some detail.

(1) **DETACHMENT**

What is detachment? If a penniless person gets two rupees, he is happy; when a millionaire gets two rupees he is indifferent. In other words, he is detached to two rupees because he has millions of rupees. Similarly a person with spiritual bliss is indifferent to worldly pleasures which are insignificant before that bliss. This is detachment.

(2) **KNOWLEDGE**

Coming to knowledge, real knowledge is the direct perception of the ultimate reality. This direct perception is beyond logic :

अतीन्द्रियानसंवेद्यान् पश्यन्त्यार्षेण चक्षुषा ।

ये भावान् वचनं तेषां नानुमानेन बाध्यते ॥

(3) **AŚVARYA**

*Aiśvarya* is the name for super-natural powers which can be attained by *yoga* only. We are proud of our wealth, health, beauty, fame, high position etc. All these are nothing before the super-natural powers, which when attained, remove our egoistic tendency.

(4) **DHARMA**

*Dharma* is the essential nature which is necessary for sustaining the object .

**WHAT IS UPANIṢAD**

All these constituents were present in Lord *Kṛṣṇa* who delivered the gospel of the *Gītā*. Here, *Gītā* is an adjective of the *Upaniṣads*. The colophon quoted above implies that there are many *Upaniṣads* in the *Gītā*, because, the word has been used in plural in the locative case.

The word *Upaniṣad* is famous for the texts like *Īśa*, *Kena* and *Kaṭha* etc. Which *Upaniṣads* are there in the *Gītā*? *Īśa* etc. are obviously not there.

The word *Upaniṣad* has been used in some other sense also. Take for example, the statement of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* that *vāk* is the *Upaniṣad* of *agni* एतस्याग्नेर्वागोपनिषद्. Also, that the action performed with *Upaniṣad* becomes more powerful– स यदेव विद्यया करोति, श्रद्धया, उपनिषदा, तदेव वीर्यवत्तरं भवति । Also, the following statement of the *Mahābhārata* deserves our notice:

वेदस्योपनिषत्सत्यं सत्यस्योपनिषद्दमः ।

दमस्योपनिषद्दानं दानस्योपनिषत्तपः ॥

What is that *Upaniṣad* which according to *Chāndogyaopaniṣad* quoted above makes our actions more powerful? It is the knowledge of the know-how of an action.

The *Gītā* gives us the knowledge, the know-how, of performing an action. It is, therefore, said to contain *Upaniṣads*.

Let us have a brief view of what kind of know-how of action is provided by the *Gītā*. First of all, *karma* is as much the nature of *brahman* as *jñāna* – स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबलक्रिया च. *Jīva*, who is a part of *brahman*, cannot avoid *karma* – कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः। What makes a *karma* reprehensible is the desire of its fruit: *karma* in itself is not reprehensible.

#### WHAT MAKES A KARMA KĀMYA

It is sometimes said that *Nitya naimittika kārmas* are all right, but *kāmya karmas* should be avoided. Now the division of *karmas* as *nitya* and *kāmya* is subjective and not objective. *Sandhyā*, for example, is a *nitya karma*. But, if one performs *Sandhyā* with an eye over the good name that he may earn by performing it, even his action of performing *Sandhyā* becomes *kāmya*. The reverse of it is equally true, i.e., if *Arjuna* fights without desiring anything as a result but for performing duty for the sake of duty; even an act of war does not remain *kāmya*. Any action, without any desire for its fruit, is not the cause of bondage. One should perform actions prescribed by the scriptures for his *varṇa* an *āśrama*, but should not have any desire for fruit thereof. This is the know how or *Upaniṣad* of a *Karma*.

#### GĪTĀ: THE APPLICATION

There are many such *Upaniṣads* in the *Gītā*. *Gītā* is an extension of *Veda-vijñāna*. *Brahma vidyā* is the theory, *Yoga* is its extension in practice. In *Brahma vidyā*, it is explained that *brahma* is the origin of the universe. In *yoga* we know how this knowledge of *brahma* is to be put into practice and join us (make us one) with *brahman*. For example, if we know that in spite of creating, sustaining and dissolving the universe, *brahma* is not bound, why cannot the *Jīva*, who is *brahman* in micro form, not perform actions without being bound by them? And if he feels bound by *karmas*, he must rectify his mistake by imitating the *Devas* in his activities – यद्देवा अकुर्वन्स्तत्करवणि.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF THE CONTENTS OF THE GĪTĀ

*Upaniṣad* in the context of the *Gītā* means 'know-how' of the action. We can have 24 such *Upaniṣads* in the *Gītā*, which have been classified into six categories as under:

1. The first category deals with *Brahman* which lies at the root of all the four *Vidyās-rājaṛṣi vidyā*, *siddha vidyā*, *rāja vidyā* and *ārṣa vidyā*. This category has only one *Upaniṣad*.

2. The second category deals with *rājaṅgi vidyā* which emphasizes the importance of detachment which is necessary for all the three *yogas-karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna yogas*. It has eight *Upaniṣads*.
3. The third category deals with *siddha vidyā* which emphasises *viveka-khyāti* or discrimination between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. It has two *Upaniṣads*.
4. The fourth category deals with *rājavidyā* associated with *īśvara* which is at the root of all *aiśvarya*. It has three *Upaniṣads*.
5. The fifth category deals with *dharma* under *ṛna vidyā*. *Dharma* sustains all æ conscious being and material objects. It has seven *Upaniṣads*.
6. The sixth category has three *Upaniṣads* which emphasize the necessity of harmonizing action with knowledge.

**Twenty-four Upaniṣads of the Gītā:** The whole subject matter of the *Gītā* can be summarised under the above mentioned 24 *Upaniṣads*. It would be useful to have a brief survey of these 24 *Upaniṣads*.

1. The first pre-requisite, is to realize, the intensity of suffering in our worldly existence. Ignorance is at the root of this suffering. *Arjuna*, under the influence of ignorance, feels absolutely frustrated and confused.
2. Lord *Kṛṣṇa* tells him that *ātmā* is immutable, only the body is perishable. With our eyes at body, we are afraid of death. Fearlessness comes only with the realisation that we are not the body.
3. It is attachment that causes bondage and not the *karma*. Prohibited *karmas* are to be avoided at any cost but even the *karmas* which are allowed by the scripture are to be performed with complete detachment. We should not be carried away by the allurements of the objects of senses, so that we can remain steadfast on the right track.
4. One should not abstain from *karma*. Even otherwise, it is not possible to remain without doing *karma*. There is a process of give-and-take which is going on in the universe, which we are a part of. In fact, all activities pertain to *prakṛti* and not to *puruṣa*, who is only a witness to those activities.
5. It is the attachment and aversion because of which one deviates from the right path. One should, therefore, have control over senses, mind and intellect.
6. The knowledge of the *Gītā* is not new. It was initially delivered to *Vivsvān*. This knowledge in fact, is eternal (*sanātana*).

7. One can realize the self either through *jñāna* or *karma* or *bhakti*. Out of these one should choose according to his natural inclination which is indicated by ones *Varṇa*. *Jñāna* is suitable for *brāhmaṇa* who is predominated by *sattva*, *karma* is suitable for *kṣatriya* who is pre-dominated by *rajas*, and *bhakti* is suitable for *vaiśya* and *sūdra* who are predominated by *rajas* mixed with *tamas*.

*Varṇa* is an order that is natural and not designed by men. (*Apauruṣeya*)

8. In spite of the broad division laid down above, *karma* and *jñāna* are to be inter-woven. This can be done by *buddhiyoga* which means performing actions without any desire for the result. No action can influence the real self.
9. *Yoga* is a perfect life-style. *Āsanās* etc. are a part of it. The aim of *yoga* is two-fold—(i) to have a balanced life-style and (ii) to remain unperturbed under any circumstance.

Fickleness of mind is the anti-thesis of *yoga*. Detachment and constant practice can make the mind steadfast. No practice of *yoga* goes for naught. In case the practice is not completed in present life, the incomplete practice of this life helps him in another life.

Here end the first six chapters of the *Gītā*. The message in short, is that with an eye at *avyaya*, we are not lost while performing actions by our mind, speech and body. This part of the *Gītā* is mainly concerned with *vairāgya*, the anti-dote of attachment and aversion.

10. Self-realization is possible through a combination of *jñāna* and *vijñāna*. *Vijñāna* is concerned with *akṁara* and *kṁara*. *Prakṛti* is the material cause of the universe, *puruṣa* is the substratum. *Māyā* could be overcome by taking recourse to *puruṣa*.

A devotee with knowledge is the best though people worship God, also because they are in trouble, or curious to know or eager to get wealth.

11. *Karmas*, with pre-requisite of the knowledge of the *Vedas*, lead to heaven and *karmas* of public welfare lead to *pitṛ-loka*. A worshipper of *avyaya* attains liberation.

This is *siddha vidyā* explained in the Seventh and Eighth chapters of the *Gītā*.

12. Ninth chapter of the *Gītā* tells us that *īśvara* is the resort, sustainer, witness, container, shelter, friend, cause of origin, sustenance, and destruction, seed and indestructible. We can worship him in any way we like; but the fruits of our actions in all cases should be offered to God.

13. The tenth and eleventh chapter describe the glory of *īśvara*. This glory can only be seen through divine eyes.

14. The twelfth chapter deals with the *upāsanā* of *saguṇa* (God with form) and *nirguṇa* (God without form). An ordinary man cannot concentrate on *nirguṇa*. For him devotion of *saguṇa* is better.

Thus up to the twelfth chapter, we have the delineation of *rāja vidyā*.

15. *Dharma* means two things—detachment and freedom from ego. *Prakṛti* consists of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.
16. Equanimity is possible by transcending the three *guṇas* of *prakṛti*.
17. The universe is like a tree with its roots upward in the un-manifest.
18. Sexuality, anger, greed, ego, rashness, etc., lead to hell.
19. Faith, food, *yajña*, *tapa* and *dāna* can be classified into three categories. *sāttvika*, *rājasi* and *tāmasika*.
20. One should never forsake his social duty prescribed by the *varṇa-dharma*.
21. Actions are to be performed without any desire so as to remain free from bondage.

Here ends *ārṣa vidyā*.

22. *Siddha vidyā* is meant for the man of highest quality, *rāja vidyā* for the mediocre and *ārṣa vidyā* for the lowest. *Rājasi vidyā* is meant for the extra-ordinary.
23. One should not be selfish. Knowledge should be imparted only to the deserving.
24. In the end we find the importance of knowledge contained in the *Gītā*.

This, in short, is the subject matter of the *Gītā* classified under six headings and 24 sub-headings as shown above. Let us concentrate on a few main teachings of these *upanīads* of the *Gītā*.

In fact *Gītā* means elaboration. *Sāma* which is an extended form of *Ṛk*, is known as *Gīti*. Similarly when the knowledge of the *Veda* was represented in the applied form in the *Gītā*, the Vedic knowledge became extended.

### **The Path of Karma**

There are two elements of the Vedic knowledge which have been extended in an applied form in the *Gītā*. (1) The one is the concept of *avyaya puruṣa*. The *avyaya puruṣa* is the unmodifiable part of our personality. This part of our personality is identical with others. It is regarding this part that we are spoken of as immortal. (2) It is with consciousness of this *avyaya* part that we are to perform actions. This is called *budhi yoga* which is the second feature of the teaching of the *Gītā*.



Just as a distinction is to be made between *prajñā* and *prajñā vāda*, the former is praise-worthy and the latter is condemnable, similarly there is a difference between *Veda* and *Vedavāda*. *Veda* teaches us a life of activity whereas *Vedavāda* leads us to attachment. *Gītā* teaches life of activity without attachment to fruit thereof.

Man has been made on the model of *Brahman*. *Brahman* creates this universe and regulates it but is not disturbed. Similarly a person can remain unperturbed while performing his duties. A man should not be afraid of incurring sin in performing his duty. *Arjuna* may kill the bodies of his opponents but not their souls. One does not perform a sin in punishing the culprit; he rather purifies those who have committed crime by punishing them.

Whether one lives in the forest or in the house, he cannot abandon action. Action therefore, are not to be abandoned but only the desire behind the actions is to be overcome.

### **Truth**

To act upon the above mentioned preaching's of the *Gītā* one has to undergo the process of refinement. The word for refinement is *samskāra*. *Samskāra* literally means to be integrated. The cause of miseries is disintegration of personality. When we behave in a way different from we think to be right, our personality splits into two. This is the role of falsehood. In falsehood we know something else and speak out something else. Thus we cut ourselves into pieces. The same thing we do in violence, when we inflict misery on others. We have to realize that we are so closely related to each other that any harm done to anybody harms everybody. This is true not only of individuals but nations also. If nations could realize it, there would be world peace.

### **Social duties**

The *Gītā* speaks not only of individual liberation but of social welfare also. The process of refinement has two aspects æ positive and negative. Negatively we have to free ourselves from blemishes and positively we have to earn good qualities. Thirdly if some thing is lacking, it has to be compensated. The body is to be cleaned, the dirt from the house is to be removed and one has to balance his mind if it is disturbed on account of birth or death. In our daily routine we kill so many innocent insects. For removing this defect, one should perform five *maha yajñās* follows :

(1) In the first place a part of income should be devoted to the welfare of birds and animals. (2) Secondly, guests should be honoured. (3) Thirdly, elderly people should be looked after. (4) Fourthly, nature should be respected and (5) Fifthly one should devote himself to the pursuit of knowledge. By performing these duties one gets rid of the sin of violence. Then one has to earn

positive qualities of steadfastness forgiveness, mercy, purity, relaxation, freedom from envy, desire and greed.

We are equal at the level of *ātman* but our physical, mental and intellectual capacities differ. Therefore we may have equal respect for all but we cannot assign all works to every body. This means distributions of works according to one's nature and capability. The *Gītā*, therefore, supports the system of *varṇa*.

Here we have to remove a misgiving regarding the fourth *varṇa* which consists of the labour class. It is said to be like the foot of the society. It means that it supports the whole body of the society. It is clearly mentioned that this fourth *varṇa* belongs to *pūṣā* because it nourishes all. It may also be mentioned that *varṇa* system is relevant only in the field of action. In the field of knowledge and devotion everybody is equally entitled. There are examples of *Śabarī* and *niṣāda* who are great devotees and *Raidāsa* and *Kabīra* who are highly illuminated.

#### Four stages of life

As the society has been divided into four categories, similarly the life of an individual is also divided into four stages. We have two capabilities of knowing and acting. In the first half of the life the capability of acting predominates. In the second half of life knowledge becomes mature, even though the capability to act decreases. The other important fact is that knowledge and action are interdependent. Therefore in the first part of the first half of life is to be devoted to acquire the knowledge which is useful for action and the second part of the first half of life is devoted mainly to action.

In the first part of life i.e. student life, one is required to lead a hard life so that his body becomes strong and capable of action. Along with this he has to acquire knowledge.

Armed with this knowledge, he enters the life of a house-holder. This life is predominated by action which leads to prosperity and enjoyment if motivated by desire, but to purification of mind, if performed for the sake of duty without any desire.

We have to discriminate between four types of actions – (1) Actions which are prohibited by the scriptures like drinking of wine or violence. They result from ignorance. (2) A second category of actions belongs to social welfare which are prescribed by the scriptures. (3) The third category of actions are those where knowledge of scriptures is necessary. For example a Vedic ritual cannot be performed without the knowledge of the Vedas. (4) The *Gītā* teaches that even the last two types of actions are to be performed without any attachment to fruit thereof. It is the attachment of the fruit that imprints those passionate impressions on the self which lead to

rebirth. Thus the actions in the second part of second half of life can lead to prosperity as well as emancipation.

(3) In the third part of life activities which strengthen knowledge are to be performed. Such activities are called penance or *tapa*. Study, for example, is such activity.

(4) In the last fourth stage, one is to devote himself to self realization. Thus a life of a person according to the *Gītā* should be such that action and knowledge strengthen each other. The necessities of life are fulfilled by action and the truth is realized by knowledge.

### Seven Necessities of life

The *Gītā* deals with philosophy of action in detail. Some of the actions like taking food are necessary for survival. Some actions are performed with a special aim in view. In any case we cannot survive without action. We need (i) knowledge, (ii) activity, (iii) speech, (iv) air, (v) fire, (vi) water and (vii) earth. Knowledge is required for mind and activity for vital air. The space provides speech, air provides breath, fire provides heat, water provides liquids and earth provides solid part of the body.

It is mind which controls the vital air and it is the vital air which controls the body. Effort is required to maintain the existence at all of the above mentioned seven levels.

### Process of purification

For maintenance of the gross body, there should be a balance between *Vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha*. For maintenance of subtle body one has to free himself from (i) desire, (ii) anger and (iii) greed which belong to *rajas* and from (iv) ego, (v) infatuation and (vi) envy which are the products of *tamas*. If these six are removed the subtle body becomes purified. In the causal body there should be a balance between knowledge and action.

The protection of gross, subtle and causal body is the concern of medical science, religious scriptures and philosophy respectively. Whatever is done for preservation of these three bodies is necessary for survival, but actions which are performed for the sake of attaining something superfluous, which is not necessary, are the result of attachment.

It is also to be noted that gross body is not to be pampered at the cost of subtle body or causal body. Taking of wine for example may give strength to the gross body but it is at the cost of subtle body. Similarly one may earn money by dishonesty but this is at the cost of causal body. Discrimination safeguard us against moral turpitude. Above all, what is necessary is to offer all activities to the Almighty.

## Desires

The *Gītā* analyse the phenomenon of desire. The world is the result of the desire of the God. We cannot have, therefore, absolute desirelessness. What is required is a distinction between the natural desire and artificial desire. The body requires food, therefore desire to take food is natural but if we are attached to the sense of taste, we may be inclined to take some delicious food even if we have no real hunger. Similarly, we have such artificial desires for smoking and drinking wine. It is such desires which are to be curbed.

A question arises as to how to distinguish between natural and artificial desire. For this we have to look to the working of nature. There are certain rules in the nature which sustain the cosmos. If we follow those rules it could be said that we are following the natural law. If we follow the natural law our activities become effortless.

This creation is the work of the creator but he does not exert himself for this work. The creation comes out of him spontaneously as poetry comes out of a great poet. Scriptures help us in identifying natural desires.

## Mind

When there is no effort motivated by attachment the intellect becomes steadfast. On the contrary the fickleness of mind does not allow us to discriminate between right and wrong. Without concentration it is not possible to enjoy even worldly objects, not to speak of spiritual bliss.

The *Gītā* speaks of mind as a rein and the intellect as the driver; the mind gets attached to the objects of senses, the intellect controls it.

What makes the mind fickle is the allurements of the worldly objects. It makes the aspirant extrovert whereas one has to be introvert for spiritual success. This introversion ultimately leads to freedom from desire. Where there is no desire there is no sense of possessiveness and ego. This is the state where one is liberated even while he is alive (*jīvanmukta*).

## **Vijñāna : The science of Yajñā**

The *Gītā* speaks of *vijñāna* along with *jñāna*. *Vijñāna* is not to be confused with modern physical science. It is the science of *Yajñā*. As explained in the *puruṣa sūkta*. *Yajñā* is at the root of creations.

The cause of the creation is *Brahman*. He creates the universe out of himself. He is therefore, the substantial cause as well as the instrumental cause of the universe which is the modification of *brahman* just as wave is the modification of ocean. There could be difference of name and form in the waves but fundamentally all of them are ocean. This is the basis of non-duality which is the result of *Jñāna*. This is the subject matter of *uttar-mīmāṃsā* or *Vedānta*.

*Pūrva mīmāṃsā* on the other hand explains how unity transforms itself into diversity. This becomes possible through the process of *Yajñā*. *Brahman* is one and infinite. When the *Karmas* of individuals become ripe for fructification, the creator has the desire to create so that the *Jīvas* can enjoy the fruits of their actions. This desire limits the infinite *Brahman*. Now *Brahman* becomes *puruṣa*. He mentally plans the universe as *avyaya*, acts as *akṣara* and physically creates it as *kṣara*.

As soon as the infinite becomes finite it has a center. The center is a point which has no dimension but the point creates the line which has length but no breadth and the line creates all figures which have all the three dimensions. When the infinite becomes finite it is a sort of a sacrifice on the part of the infinite.

For understanding this phenomenon we have to understand that *Brahman* is not only blissful but it is possessed of a delimiting power also. It is this power which is known as *māyā*. This *māyā* does not disturb the peace of *Brahman*. This creation comes out of *yajñā* where, as explained above, the *pūruṣa* sacrifices himself.

There is a hunger at the heart of every object which demands something from outside so that it can survive. This act of bringing something from outside is performed by *Viṣṇu* who is said to be the protector. But it is only one part of *yajñā*, which is not one way traffic. The object also throws out something. This is the work of *maheśa*. *Brahmā* keeps a balance between this give-and-take of *viṣṇu* and *maheśa*. This means that the sustainability of the universe depends upon keeping a balance between give-and-take relationship between man and man in the family and society and between man and nature in the universe. Cooperation - and not exploitation is -- the message of *Vijñāna* or *Yajñā* of the *Gītā*.

*Yajñā* is said to be the best of all the *karmas*. When we want to accumulate more and more, even if it is not necessary for us and do not share our surplus with others, we develop a tendency against the spirit of *Yajñā*. This is meant by the statement that the *rākṣasas* disturb the *Yajñā*.

### **Ethics**

The science of ethics deals with the right and wrong actions. The Vedic literature and the *Gītā* speak of light and darkness which represents the right and the wrong. The right actions lead to rise and wrong actions lead to fall. When we perform an action, it leaves an impression which is either good or bad leading to happiness and misery respectively.

It may be pointed out that man is not omnipotent and many deviate from the path of righteousness. In such a situation, expiation is prescribed. The *Sanskrit* word for expiation is *prāyascitta* which means regaining the spiritual power which has been lost by performing a sinful action.

All actions which lead to enlightened prosperity are good, as against those actions which lead to a fall and are an obstacle in the way to prosperity. There is a constant struggle between the right and the wrong. The *Gītā* shows us the way to be victorious in this struggle.

The *Gītā* adopts a holistic approach which consists in accepting that both prosperity and peace are to be aimed at. This approach has a metaphysical background which accepts both permanence and transitoriness as real. All prosperity is transitory whereas peace is rooted in permanence. Prosperity comes by action, peace comes through knowledge. The matter of the fact is the transitoriness and permanence go together; we cannot think of ocean without waves, just as we cannot think of waves without water. The ideal of the *Veda* according to *Gītā* is a prosperous life externally and a peaceful life internally. As we have said above, it is only action that brings about prosperity but normally action disturbs our peace also. Ordinary people engage themselves in activity at the cost of mental peace. A few of them renounce activity so that they can attain mental peace. Both of them according to the *Gītā* lead an imputed life. One who can remain undisturbed while performing activities leads a full life.

The ascetics condemn the worldly prosperity on the basis that it is transitory but transitory things have their own beauty and utility. Lord *Kṛṣṇa* lived a life of action full of colours, but inwardly he was completely detached.

Lord *kṛṣṇa* showed to *Arjuna* his cosmic form in which everything was included as a part of the Divine Being. It means that whatever exists is divine. Similarly all happiness is a part of divine bliss but when this happiness depends on others it assumes worldliness. The happiness that we derive from food or sex is the happiness of mundane nature. In the state of deep sleep, of course, the happiness does not depend on others, but it is a state of semi-consciousness. The pure spiritual bliss on the other hand does not depend on others but is at the same time a state of full consciousness. This state of spiritual bliss is all pervading and eternal.

The art of action requires that we act with full concentration whereas attachment to the fruit of action does not allow us to concentrate on the action itself. An action should be the means of self-expression, so that it becomes a source of happiness.

We have wrongly started evaluating an action by the yardstick of status, name, fame and money whereas the true yardstick should be as to whether a particular action suits the nature of the person who acts so that he gets the satisfaction of self-expression through action.

In the *Varna* system a *brāhmaṇa* was supposed to devote himself to the pursuit of knowledge. This type of life does not lead to richness but the *Brāhmaṇa* appreciates the glory of austerity. If he starts hankering after worldly objects, the cause of learning suffers. The question before *Arjuna* was

to fight against injustice. Ordinarily a person would have fought for attaining the kingdom. Lord *kṛṣṇa* says that *Arjuna* should perform the duty of fighting for the right, for the sake of duty and not for the sake of any ulterior motive. It is just possible that ascetic life may suit the nature of some people but if somebody takes to asceticism because of some ulterior motive like fame or prestige, he becomes a pseudo-ascetic which is worse than a genuine householder. In fact detachment should come through an excellence of life and not through escape from life. The world, if it is *Brahman* incarnate, is not only true but beautiful and blissful also. The matter of the fact is that we make the worldly life miserable by our short-comings and announce that the nature of the world is horrible. The *Gītā* says that the nature is a source of pleasure. It is attachment and aversion that makes life miserable.

### Different systems of Indian Philosophy

Pandit Madhusudan Ojha tried to show through the concept of *puruṣa* of the *Gītā* as to how different systems of Indian philosophy speak differently because they look at the world at different levels. The most visible level is that of the matter represented by the *kṣara puruṣa*. At this level *Vaiśeṣika* system of philosophy looks at the world as something, which can be known and expressed in words. Therefore, *Vaiśeṣika* system asserts that everything can be known and can be expressed through words.

Next comes *Sāṅkhya* system which believes that this world is made up of three *guṇas* which are far more subtler than the atom. This is the level of *akṣara puruṣa*.

The subtlest is the consciousness which is *avyaya puruṣa*. This is the subject matter of *Vedānta*. *Kṣara* is the substantial cause, *akṣara* is the instrumental cause and *avyaya* is the substratum. Thus all the philosophical systems are complimentary to each other and not contradictory.

### Process of creation

As we look into the process of creation, we find that there is an evolution from the subtle to the gross. As we proceed from the subtle to the gross, the solidarity of the elements increases. Thus air is more solid than space, fire is more solid than air, water is more solid than fire and Earth is more solid than water. As elements become solid they become more limited. Thus space is the most vast whereas the earth is the least vast.

The body is an object created by *brahman* into which *brahman* himself has entered as *jīvātman*. Similarly the world is the body in which *brahman* has entered as *īśvara*. All the objects of knowledge represent existence, knowledge represents consciousness and the knower represent bliss. Thus all is *brahman*.

### **Being and Becoming : Its implications**

The objects of knowledge are to be treated with action but they are transitory. Immortality comes from knowledge but transitoriness and immortality go together. We have not only organs of knowledge but organ of action also. It means that nature wants us not only to know but to act also. In fact non-duality does not consist in denying the duality but in realizing non-duality underlying duality. The duality consists not of opposites but of complimentaries. This complementarity is to be seen between the micro and the macro, man and woman, consciousness and nature and Being and Becoming.

Everybody is in search of happiness. The worldly happiness is conditional. If the circumstances are not favourable and the body and the mind are not healthy, we do not get happiness but the spiritual bliss has no condition. What is conditional is limited; only the unconditional is unlimited. We are never satisfied with worldly achievement because they are always limited.

It doesn't mean that we are not to peruse wealth or worldly enjoyments. Wealth should be used as a means of enjoying the life but enjoyment of life should serve as a preparation for performance of one's duty and duty should not be performed in a way that it creates tension. Performance of duty should become a source of such self-satisfaction that it leads to peace and calmness and not to frustration and disharmony with others. As regards social service, the *Gītā* propounds that social service should be done without any sense of ego or superiority or any other selfish motive.

### **Gradation of Happiness**

As regards the gradation of happiness the physical happiness is superseded by mental happiness which is again superseded by the happiness of intellectual pursuits. Greater than the happiness of intellectual pursuits is the happiness of sub-consciousness mind which is again superseded by the happiness of unconscious mind. All these types of happiness are limited and dwindle into insignificance before the bliss of the self which is the source of all other types of happiness. The rule is that the nearer the soul, the greater the happiness. Since the unconscious mind is nearest to the soul it is the greatest source of pleasure. Similarly as space is nearest to soul, open space is the greatest source of happiness; we deprive a criminal of this source of happiness by putting him in the prison. When we depend on others, we depend on nature; when we depend on ourselves we depend on *jīva* but when we depend on nothing we depend on God. When we realize the identity of nature, *jīva* and God, we become truly independent.



### The Sāṅkhya system

The Sāṅkhya system describes the evolution of the creation from *prakṛti*, which is *akṣara* in its subtle form and becomes *kṣara* in its gross form. The *Gītā* also accepts that the origin of the world is unmanifest and *akṛmāra* is only the instrumental cause whereas *kṛmāra* is the substantial cause of the world. The *Gītā* makes full use of the Sāṅkhya theory of three *guṇas*. It also accepts that *puruṣa* is beyond *guṇas*. The ethical discussion of the *Gītā* is based on the Sāṅkhya theory of *guṇas*.

Whereas *Vaiśeṣika* accepts that desire of God brings atoms together to create the world, Sāṅkhya accepts that the *prakṛti* itself is capable of creating the world. According to *Vedānta* there is no difference between the self and the ultimate reality *brahman*, who himself assumes the form of the world.

### Trinity

There are three steps of creation--desire, internal effort and external effort. Desire belongs to mind, internal effort to vital force and external effort to physical aspect. All these three -- mind, vital force and physical aspect constitute the self. The *Gītā* talks of this self as *avyaya puruṣa* which is the subject of *Vedānta*. This *avyaya puruṣa* is unmanifest and all what we see is but manifestation of *avyaya puruṣa*.

The philosophical systems of India proceed from the gross to the subtle. The *avyaya puruṣa* has to take the help of *akṣara* and *kṣara* for creation. Thus we can establish harmony between different systems of philosophy. Besides the above mentioned systems of philosophy, the *Gītā* deals with the philosophy of action which is the subject matter of *pūrva mīmāṃsā*. It also deals with the practical aspect of Sāṅkhya which is explained in *yoga* system of philosophy. It is thus both *brahm vidyā* and *yoga-sāstra*. As the individual soul transmigrate from one to another body, it exhibits different traits. One always feels imperfection in this journey. The *jīva* does not recognize his identity with God. He cannot get peace unless he realizes his identity with God and, therefore, becomes indifferent to the fruit of his actions.

### Philosophy of karma

Another speciality of the *Gītā* is that it doesn't use the term *karma* in the narrow sense of ritual. This term *karma* in the *Gītā* covers the whole of life. Fighting against injustice is a part of life. Non-violence, of course, is a moral virtue but if the innocent were not to be protected from the indiscriminate behaviour of the criminals, the problem of law and order will lead to greater violence. Of course, fighting against the unscrupulous should not be motivated by any selfish aim. The animals also perform action for fulfilling their basic necessities like that of food but man has the capacity of devotion and knowledge also.

### Devotion

There are people who remain engaged in action. They have the knowledge of how to perform an action. Their knowledge is a means to action. There are others who remain satisfied with whatever they get by minimum of activity. They devote themselves to knowledge and meditation. Their actions are, therefore, means to knowledge. There is a third alternative expounded by the *Gītā*. This is the path of devotion according to which all activities should be dedicated to God. It means elimination of ego.

If we go a little deeper we find that all those desire which are essential for survival are created by God and not by an individual. We cannot create hunger or sleep; if we could create it nobody would have suffered from loss of appetite or sleeplessness. If these desires are created by the law which governs the universe, we only obey that law when we fulfill those desires. Just as a judge decides according to the law we have to behave according to the law which rules our life. Just as the Judge is not responsible for delivering judgment according to the law, similarly an aspirant is not responsible for acting according to the law of nature.

The reality is that we all are part of the same universe just as different limbs are part of the same body. If a person hurts another body, it is an act of ignorance similar to the act of a child who may hurt his left hand by his right hand. All sinful actions result from the ignorance of unity of all.

It may also be noted that many of the activities like breathing, twinkling of eyes, beating of heart and pulsation etc. take place automatically without our effort. Have we ever thought that if the eyes are open, they look at objects even without my desire? This proves that the senses, which are part of nature are the real agent of activities, the consciousness is only a witness.

### Symbols of Worship

We are part of God but God has no form. To establish our relationship with God we give him also a form. It may be said that when God is formless how can we give him a form? The answer is that this is done by using the art of symbol. Symbols like national flag are used all over the world. In the act of worship, the symbol is material but the object which is signified is divine.

The art of symbols is not blind belief. Blind belief is different from faith. Blind belief leads to undesirable results whereas faith always leads to good results.

As there are people with different inclinations, they use different symbols. We use symbolic language for various reasons. For example the script in fact represents sound. Thus the formless sound is represented by script which has form. Similarly the sign of *svasti* indicate auspiciousness.

The other way of using symbol is by imitations. For example, the Earth is represented by globe. Some times a symbol is used to indicate some similarity. For example, a swan is said to separate milk from water. Therefore, it represents the power of discrimination.

Some times we represent the whole by a part, for example — the footsteps of a teacher could represent the teacher himself. Similarly the crown can represent the king.

The aim of worship with devotion is concentration of mind. A visible object helps in concentrating. The stronger the faith, the greater the result of devotion. The genuine effect of worship is purity of mind and not any material object.

*Ramanujācārya* speaks of four kinds of fruits of devotion — 1. Attainment of *brahma* loka 2. Approximity of *brahma* 3. Obtaining the qualities of *brahman* 4. Becoming part of *brahman*. This is *parāmukti* which presupposes duality between the individual and God.

There are three ways of worship. (1) The best way is to worship God as all-pervading. In this we do not require any material for worshipping, only the mental activity is there. In knowledge there is no mental activity either. This is the difference between this first type of worship and knowledge. (2) The second type of worship is that where a part is worshiped as the whole. (3) In the third type of worship we worship something even though we consider it something different from *brahman*.

We can represent a visible object easily. Every object in fact represents God. We can, therefore, select anything for worshipping as representative of God. The another way of worshipping God is through words. Words convey some knowledge and any knowledge is part of the omniscience of God. Any knowledge can, therefore, become the means of worshipping God.

So for we have spoken of symbols which are related to the object of worship in one or the other way. There can, however, be symbols which are not related to the object of worship in any way. For example — National flag has no similarity of any kind with the nation but it is considered a symbol of national prestige. In the field of religion the statue of *Mahākālī* is an example of this type of representation. *Mahākālī* represents the power of time which transforms everything every moment. *Mahākālī* representing this power of time stands on a corpse. Here corpse represents a state of delude where there is no activity. *Mahākālī* holds skull of a man in one of her hands. This skull represents the consciousness. In the second hand she holds sword which represents destruction. The third hand holds a scissor representing two powers negative and positive. The fourth hand has a pot full of wine. It represents the intoxication which does not allow us to see the reality.

This type of representation is found all over the world. For example — wearing black clothes expresses mourning.

All these techniques are meant for focusing our mind. They are useful as long as one is not competent to concentrate his mind without the help of such techniques. The speciality of the *Gītā* is that it allows to worship any person or object in any way. It accepts that the method of worship is only a means, the aim being the realization of the highest truth which has no form. It may be noted that *Manu* has prescribed the use of *Om* before reciting any *mantra* of the *Veda*. It is to remind us that whatever deity is being worshiped, it is a means to realization of the ultimate reality. This is a way to reconcile different ways of worship. The ultimate aim of worship is attainment of knowledge. This knowledge is again of two types. The knowledge which leads to immortality and the knowledge which provides us the means of livelihood.

### Knowledge

As regards the knowledge which makes a man capable of earning his livelihood, we have four types of syllabi for four types of students. Philosophy and literature are to be taught to those who have contemplative minds. Military science is to be taught to people who have a fighting nature. Commerce is to be taught to those who are practical and business minded people. Technical knowledge is to be given to those who have mechanical mind. Contemplative people provide an insight. Administrators maintain law and order in the society. The result is a prosperous nation with good commerce and production. This is how knowledge can help a nation to prosper.

The purpose of a philosophical insight is to remain unperturbed under any circumstances. This is necessary to behave without any fear or greed. This leads to freedom from corruption.

It may also be noted that only money cannot fulfill the demands of mankind. One wants love, justice and freedom also. For this the knowledge of *pāravidyā* is also necessary.

If one looks to what he lacks then one gets frustration. There is a necessity of positive attitude to appreciate as to what we have. It is also necessary that we have the least attachment to what we have. Detachment releases energy, attachment obstructs it. The real prosperity lies in realizing our relation with God. We get a sense of completeness only when, we realize our inseparable relation with God.

The *Vedānta* says that an individual is *brahman*. It means that it remains the same under any circumstance. He has neither the superiority complex nor inferiority complex. When we realize this we become fearless.

We have certain presupposition. The most dangerous of them is that we are body. As the necessities of the body are fulfilled by money, therefore we think that money is the sole means of happiness. Another wrong misconception is that our own view point is correct. It leads to conflict

with others. *Dharma* is the nature of things. It cannot be, therefore, a matter of dispute. The *Gītā* speaks of such *dharma*.

According to *purāṇās*, *dharma* consists of faith, friendship, compassion, peace, satisfaction fulfillment, dynamism, progressiveness, intelligence genius, forgiveness, fear from sin and substance. Violence and falsehood are opposite of *dharma*. Non-Violence does not mean that one should not perform one's duty. In the ultimate analysis if one does not perform one's duty he encourages violence. To fight against injustice is a sacred duty of warrior.

### **The crisis**

A crisis was created in the battle field of *Kurukṣetra* when *Arjuna* realized that he has to fight against his own people. He lost control over his mind and body at the idea that he has to kill his own relatives and those for whom he has the highest respect. He refused to engage himself in such a battle. One struggles in life for his near and dear ones. What is the use of a battle in which one's own relatives are to be killed? This confusion is but natural for *Arjuna* whose knowledge has been overpowered by ignorance. There is a conflict between existant and non-existant. From this arise the conflict of body and mind and from this conflict arise the conflict of knowledge and action. The conflict of desires belongs to causal body whereas the conflict of knowledge and action belong to subtle body. One who can cross over the conflict of desires can cross over the conflict of pain and pleasure also.

Desires are to be overcome but it does not mean that actions are to be abandoned. The individual is a part of God. All works of God are without any selfish motive. Similarly a warrior should fight for right cause and should not have any selfish motive behind that.

### **The Right Attitude**

There is much tension in modern life but action does not create tension though it may create tiredness. Therefore what is to be renounced is attachment and not action. Action is necessary for supporting the life but to avoid frustration and tension, the first thing that one has to realize is that the real Self is beyond all modifications. The temporary phase of pain and pleasure do not have any effect on the real Self. It is the mind which reflects the favourable and the unfavourable situations and makes us unstable. Mind is the representative of moon whereas soul is representative of sun. The objects of senses are like the wind which make water of mind wavering but the sun of soul is not affected by that wind. It is true that it is not easy to keep oneself absorbed in soul all the time. In such a situation one should tolerate pain and pleasure realizing that they are transitory.

Whatever work we do should be useful for the society. In other words, we should act for the happiness of Lord and not for our own enjoyment. Whatever enjoyments we may aim at, disease, old age and death hinder our enjoyment. We have to distinguish between the changeable and the unchangeable. The changeable cannot become unchangeable and the unchangeable cannot change. Being and Becoming both go together and both of them are to be accepted. The changes are brought about in the changeable through our activities. The real Self remains unchanged and is not involved in the activities.

The *Gītā* is not only a book of individual philosophy but a book of social philosophy also. Society is sustained by our spirit of give-and-take. In other words all members of the society must act according to their capacity for the society if they take something from the society they must give also in return. The difference between God and individual is that of adjunct and any difference because of adjunct is not real just as the space in a jar is not different from the space outside it.

### **Punishment**

When the gross body no longer remains fit for the subtle body then the subtle body leaves the gross body and assumes another gross body. This is the process of transmigration of soul. Pure consciousness is one. It has no similar or dissimilar contestant. This pure consciousness is reflected in many bodies. If we punish somebody we purify him for his sin. If somebody himself, punishes him for his sin it is called expiation but if somebody else does it, it is called punishment but the aim of both is the same viz., purification of the self.

### **Fearlessness**

As regards the real self it is above all modification. That the Self is beyond all modification is the philosophical principal of the *Upaniṣads*. The *Gītā* applies it to day-to-day life. It takes a practical view. Even if one is not able to realize the immortality of soul, he can very well perceive the inevitable death of the body. One should not be sorry for what is inevitable. In the history of mankind great people have been facing death fearlessly.

It is, of course, something inexplicable how pure consciousness could create the universe. It is work of *māyā* which by its very nature cannot be subjected to logic.

### **The working of *mahat***

The nearer the pure consciousness, the more systematic is the working. In this connection we have to understand the *mahat* which is nearest to consciousness. Its working is beyond intelligence. Digestion of food, circulation of blood and beating of heart are some of such activities where our intelligence does not play any role. These all are the working of *mahat*.

### The position of intelligence

Next comes intelligence whose working is also flawless unless it comes under the influence of mind. The mind through medium of senses runs from one object of sense to another object of sense. It, therefore, becomes fickle and if intelligence gets inclined towards mind, it also appears to be fickle. In fact this fickleness which results from *rajoḡuṇa* is the cause of all misery.

In between the unmanifest and the *mahat* on one side, and the mind and senses on the other lies the intelligence. If the intelligence is inclined towards the unmanifest, it remains only a witness but if it inclines towards the mind and senses, it enjoys the fruit of the activities.

The reality is one. The intelligence, therefore, becomes steadfast if it is devoted to truth. If, on the other hand, it is devoted to objects of enjoyment, it becomes disintegrated into many because objects of enjoyment are many. The aspirant becomes disturbed in such a situation.

Mind and intelligence go together like sun and moon. Sun lies in between *parameṣṭhī* and *svayambhū* on the one side and moon and earth on the other. Just as it is the situation in macro, similarly is the situation in micro. Therefore as already said, the intelligence is like a sun which lies in between the *mahat* and the unmanifest on the one side and mind and body on the other. Knowledge is on the side of *mahat* and *avyakta* whereas mind and body belong to ignorance. Ignorance leads to ego, attachment aversion and prejudices. Knowledge leads to abundance, detachment and objectivity. The teaching of the *Gītā* is that we should avoid ignorance and follow knowledge.

### Desire

That one should act according to scripture is accepted by all, but the *Gītā* goes a step further. It accepts that an action should be performed flawlessly. This yields the desired fruit but even when one gets what one wants, one does not get the peace of mind. It happens because we are more concerned with the result for which we have such an intense desire that it crosses the limits of propriety. Some desires are necessary for our survival. For example, a desire to take food in proper quantity at the fixed time helps us in digesting the food. Indigestion, therefore, is a disease which should be treated according to medical advice, but the desire to accumulate unnecessary things is artificial. Our actions should be motivated by natural desires and not by artificial desires. Secondly, if, we are too much attached to the fruit of the action, our attention is diverted from the performance of the action. This affects the efficiency of the action which is *Yoga* according to the *Gītā*.

### Art of Action

Therefore, what *Gītā* prohibits is not the ritual but it asks us to treat ritual as a means to spiritualism which is the central theme of the *Brāhmaṇa*-Texts also. This can be done if we realize

that the self is the repository of infinite bliss. Then the purpose of action does not remain to accumulate means of enjoyment beyond limitations. One realizes that the real source of all happiness is the natural blissfulness of the self and the real detachment comes when we become indifferent to worldly enjoyments because they dwindle into insignificance before the infinite bliss of the self.

A distinction is to be made between use of material objects and between hankering after them. The *Vedas* establish a relationship between the action and its result on the basis of cause and effect. We have no control over result but we have full control over actions. Therefore, if our actions are performed with efficiency and accuracy, the result is bound to follow. But this is not the real purpose of an action. The real purpose of action is self-expression and self purification. Moreover, the actions enjoined by scriptures indicate the desire of God. When we perform those actions, we only fulfill the desire of God.

Spiritualism never advises idleness. Besides it prohibits the meaningless and harmful actions. Even a spiritual person may have to suffer because of the actions that he may have performed in the past and which may have started yielding their results, but he maintains equanimity in all circumstances.

It is observed that whatever is done with detachment brings peace to us. We breathe without attachment and therefore this action of breathing does not bind us but it rather gives us relief.

One way of remaining undisturbed is to keep a balance and follow the middle path. Nature keeps balance between heat and cold and between activity and passivity. *Gītā* teaches activity outwardly and passivity inwardly.

Skillfulness means performing action without disturbing the mind. Action should be performed with perfection. They should not be motivated by selfishness.

### **Ignorance**

The mind can recognize only the sensual pleasures. We have therefore to go beyond mind to get a glimpse of the soul.

Ignorance is not only absence of knowledge but also a perverted knowledge. Identifying oneself with the body is one form of ignorance. Similarly to think that worldly relations are eternal is another form of ignorance. The idea that we can live without action is also ill-founded.

Infatuation is the worst form of ignorance. Infatuation is the product of *tamguṇa* and the worldly objects are also predominated by *tamguṇa*. It is, therefore, natural that infatuation is inclined towards worldly objects. This leads to attachment and aversion which does not allow us to concentrate. Concentration means paying attention to the present. Another form of infatuation is



attachment towards one's own view-point. This makes us prejudiced and does not allow us to read the real intention of the scripture. We spend our energy in giving pedantic interpretations. This does not lead us anywhere.

The central theme of the *Gītā* is freedom from desire, maintenance of equanimity under all circumstances and detachment from sensual pleasures. This is a universal message without any sectarian bias.

### Seven functions of life

As already stated, our life depends on seven factors — knowledge, action, space, air, heat, water and food. Food is necessary for all. Air and fire are specially required by the *devas*. Knowledge, action and space are essential part of the self. Space is the source of matter, actions originate from vital forces and knowledge is based on mind. Out of these three the matter is based on action and action is based on knowledge. Knowledge belongs to intelligence but if we add desire to it, the knowledge becomes distorted. This distortion of knowledge is the root of all misgivings.

A discrimination is to be made between right effort and wrong effort. Space, air, fire and water are available to us free of cost. Only food is to be purchased but when we adopt unfair means to procure food (i.e., all material objects), the natural gifts of nature like water and air also become rare and polluted. We have therefore to keep our knowledge unpolluted by unnatural desires.

What appears to be favourable, results in unfavourable situation and what appears unfavourable, results in favourable situation. Therefore one has to be far-sighted and choose the right path of performing one's duty without attachment even though it may appear to be unfavourable. For this one has to withdraw himself from worldly pleasures. One way of conquering the lust for objects of senses is fasting. The word *upavāsa* means not only to abandon food but also to remain in the proximity of the pure consciousness. One should avoid situations where there are chances of deviation from the right path. The *Gītā* thus gives in detail the ways of following the right path.

The real source of all happiness lies in the Self. When one realizes this truth, he becomes introvert and becomes indifferent to worldly objects. This leads to desirelessness which makes the intelligence steadfast. If intelligence is steadfast, the mind also becomes free from fickleness.

### Type of People

The *Gītā* speaks of six types of people : 1. Those who are lazy and have no sense of introspection. 2. Those who perform prohibited actions 3. Those who believe only in their own reasoning and not in scriptures. 4. Those who perform prescribed action with an eye on the result thereof. 5. Those who try to abandon all actions considering them to be the cause of bondage. 6. Those who perform

prescribed actions without any desire for the fruit. This is the people of this last type who can attain perfection. They get prosperity through actions but remain calm because they are not disturbed by the desire of the fruit.

As said earlier, attachment creates a disturbance at three levels. At the level of gross body it creates disharmony in *pitta*, *vāta* and *kapha*. At the level of subtle body it creates imbalance in knowledge, action and enjoyment. At the level of causal body, it creates imbalance in knowledge, desire and action. A balance at all of these three levels is necessary. At gross level we have to use our senses but at subtle level we have to be free from attachment and aversion.

At the first stage of life we have to acquire capability. In the second part of life we are allowed to enjoy but without attachment. In the third part of life we have to acquire knowledge of the reality and in the fourth part of life we have to remain completely detached so that there is no rebirth. If we do not perform actions we cannot meet the demands of the body, if we are attached we become disturbed. The *Gītā* suggest that by performing actions without attachment we can have prosperity with peace.

There has been a difference of opinion regarding the interpretation of *Gītā*. Some commentators think that *Gītā* teaches withdrawal from worldly activities. Others think that *Gītā* teaches a life of activity. It is true that there have been two schools of thought, one represented by *sāṅkhya* which advocated renunciation, the other is represented by *pūrvamīmāṃsā* which teaches rituals as symbolic of activity. According to *Sāṅkhya* we are pure consciousness and, therefore, there is no necessity of performing any action. Only knowledge is sufficient for liberation. The *Gītā* accepts this logic but suggests something superior to it. The *Gītā* realizes that in the first place no body can remain without action. Secondly the demands of life can be fulfilled only by action. Thirdly actions belongs to nature and we can remain only a witness to action.

Therefore, one should perform one's duty outwardly but inwardly we have to concentrate on the pure self. In fact in such a situation the action becomes a means of purification of the mind. The *Gītā* holds that knowledge and action go together. Rising above the effect of *karma* is not possible by abandoning *karma*. It is possible by discrimination only. Actions prescribed by scriptures serve two purposes. In the first place, it is helpful in the social process of give-and-take. Secondly it allows one's nature to express itself.

### **Yajña**

The *Gītā* speaks of *yajña* as a means of mutual benefit which is the basis of the sustenance of the society. *Yajña* represents the social aspect of Vedic philosophy. *Yajña* is associated as wish-

fulfilling ritual. Thinkers of *Sāṅkhya* and *Vedānta* school did not think high of *yajña*, because it is motivated by some desire and becomes a cause of bondage. The *Gītā* advocated selfless action. Selfless action leads to service of the society as also to purification of the mind.

The *Gītā* takes *yajña* in the wider sense where every action becomes a *yajna*. As regards the *śrauta yajñas*, they are based on the process of nature. For example, the sun is like the cosmic eye but it is not affected by the disease of eye. It works day and night but is never tired. The secret of this lies in the way in which the sun works. It is second to second punctual. It has the abundance of energy. It is free from ego. It shines over all without any discrimination. Therefore it represents a model before us. An individual is incomplete but the *yajña* makes him complete. Study is the first form of *yajña*. Next comes service to the elders. The third is associated with the environment. The fourth and fifth pertain to appropriate behaviour towards man and animal kingdom. Thus we find that *yajña* covers every sphere of life. *Gītā* speaks of many *yajñas* as self-control, *yoga*, *penance* and *prāṇyāma*. There is going on a constant *yajna* in the nature. If we violate the law of nature, it disturbs the balance. It is only man who does so, and therefore, there is a necessity of scripture for him. When we offer belongings, activities and knowledge to the cause of social welfare they become divine. Whatever we possess belong to nature. The nature is very generous but we do not follow it.

If one performs his duty, he serves the society, but even if one is absorbed in himself, his very presence has a wholesome effect on the society. It is a fact that we depend on each other. One's existence is sustained by the help of many. Even those who are not perfect, serve the society. The root cause of bondage is the ignorance that one thinks himself to be the agent of actions whereas actions are performed by the nature and, therefore, effect only the nature. Secondly, if we perform our duty in accordance with the scripture, we are following the wishes of the God only and, therefore, do not incur any sin. Thirdly, we should surrender ourselves unconditionally to the will of God.

### **Faith**

The working of the nature is so subtle that we cannot know it through logic or inference. One has to get it from the scripture. Rationality, therefore, should be supplemented by faith. It is faith which makes us act. Man has freedom of will. Within a limit, he can change his fate. One has to exert in two ways. In the first place, he has to desist from immoral activities and secondly he has to uproot attachment and aversion. We may not be able to change the circumstances, but we can surely reject evil ideas. The first necessity is to control the senses. Once we allow the senses to go stray, they become strong.

The knowledge of the *Gītā* is eternal. It has to be revived from time to time. Sometimes it is spoken of as belonging to the ruler class. The ruler class has to face great struggle. They are very much in the world still they remain unaffected if they have knowledge. One has to be master of himself. This is possible if one uses the object without attachment.

### **Detachment**

In fact the decision to not to act is also a mental action. One may decide not to act on account of attachment or on account of idleness *Arjuna* decided not to fight because of attachment towards his relatives. The real renunciation is not to have any ulterior motive of an action. In reality the source of blissfulness lies within. The idea of possessiveness is an obstacle in realization of this blissfulness of the self. One should be satisfied with what one gets without effort. In fact we get so much from the nature but do not pay any attention to it.

Whatever we do has effect on us and on others also. We should concentrate on what effect our action will have on others.

The tone of *Gītā* is such that a doubt arises as to whether Lord krsna is advocating asceticism or a life of activity. In fact *Lord Kṛṣṇa* accept that the path of renunciation and the path of activity without attachment are both capable of achieving the goal but the path of activity without attachment is superior. The matter of the fact is that knowledge lies in the background of both — renunciation and activity with the knowledge that he is not the agent. A man of activity without attachment does not get attached to the fruit of the action for the same reason. In both the cases the result is detachment.

In spite of this the life of activity with detachment is considered to be superior for several reasons. In the first place, *Arjuna* as well as most of us are predominated by *rajoguna*. Therefore, it suits our nature to act rather than to withdraw. Secondly, by leading an active life we serve others also. Thirdly, it is an age of activity and we should not go against the trends of the age in which we are living. The *Gītā*, therefore, gives a new interpretation to *Sanyāsa* just as it has given a new interpretation to *yajña*.

Even the traditional ascetic cannot renunciate all activities. Activities are therefore essential part of life. Path of activity according to the *Gītā* should be followed retaining complete calmness of an ascetic inwardly. It is not impossible if we understand the nature of things.

### **Ignorance of Nature of things**

The nature of things is such that pain and pleasure belong to nature. If we know this, we are always free from any attachment. The responsibility of our miseries does not lie with the creator but

with our ignorance. This ignorance creates attachment and attachment creates misery. Under the influence of ignorance one considers himself to be the agent as well as the enjoyer of the fruits of actions. In short, ignorance leads to ego.

Ignorance is the absence of knowledge just as the darkness is the absence of light. We can say that ignorance hinders our knowledge. It is a situation of self-hypnotism in which the aspirant considers himself to be the body. We have to de-hypnotise ourselves. Under the influence of ignorance mind covers the reality and projects the unreal. This unreal can never satisfy us with the result that we shift our attention from one object to the other. This causes fickleness and the resultant transmigration from one birth to another birth.

When one realizes godhood in him, he realizes godhood in everything. This leads to real equality. There is equality at the spiritual level and complementality at the natural level; there is no inequality at any level. This is how one gets freedom from inferiority and superiority complex. This is a way of realization of ultimate reality. Without it what ever so-called happiness we get, it is always tinged with misery.

In the first, place all worldly happiness is transitory. Secondly it enslave us. Thirdly it leads to conflict with others. If the desires are not fulfilled they lead to frustration.

The word *Kāma* means the tendency to seek pleasure from without. It is a force if it is turned towards the self. It brings about transformation. When one turns inward, then he feels the real freedom. In this stage one reaches a supramoral plan of life where the immoral activities loose their attraction.

### **The Path of Yoga**

Concentration on the forehead between two eyebrows and on in-breathing and out-breathing is a way of balancing our emotions. This is the path of meditation by which we can pacify ourselves.

The lesser the attachment the lesser the tension. We hanker after objects because we think that happiness lies in them. But the objects are dead and unconscious and happiness is an attribute of consciousness, therefore, happiness cannot be got from objects. Moreover, whatever one achieves by an action is limited.

At the first stage of *yoga* one has to maintain equanimity amidst the life of activity. At the advanced stage of *yoga*, one gets peace and the peace becomes a means of attainment of godhood. Godhood is a positive stage of blissfulness whereas peace is a negative state of absence of misery.

We are free to act as we like, therefore, if we choose the path of righteousness we become our own friend and if we choose the path of immorality we become our own foe. When we consider others to be our friend or foe, we only react to what others do to us. We thus become slaves of others.

We mostly follow the dictates of our senses but the dictates of senses are not always benevolent to us. In fact the senses are only instruments of knowledge. We have to use them but they should not become our master. Body, mind and intellect are also the instruments. They are to be looked after as one looks after his subordinates but one should not forget his self-interest in doing so. The *Gītā* repeatedly speaks of equanimity in cold and heat, pain and pleasure, honor and insult. It is important that in favourable situations also we have to keep equanimity because favourable situation also disturbs our balance of mind just as unfavourable situation perturbs us. Any favourable element to body or mind should not disturb us because we are not body or mind. In fact we only perceive what happens in body and mind but do not enjoy it. Therefore if we can remain detached to pleasure we do not suffer when there is no pleasure. In practical life, equanimity means objective approach. What disturbs us is only the appearance. The reality underlying that appearance is free from disturbance. The desire to acquire more and more possession makes one dependent. In fact an aspirant is not afraid of anything because he wishes to eliminate his ego and remains unconcerned in unfavourable circumstances. The *Gītā* advocates a balanced life which means following the middle path but one should not use artificial means for protecting one's body.

One has to control his mind and remain absorbed in self. Knowledge is very useful in the path of liberation. The speciality of the path shown by the *Gītā* is that it can be followed even while performing one's worldly duties. When one gets the infinite bliss of the self, he doesn't feel the necessity to have any diversion whereas in the field of nature *rajoguna* is always present and therefore there is no escape from misery.

Our thoughts are the result of the impressions that we have gathered during the course of time. In fact all thoughts are motivated by a search for happiness. Therefore these thoughts are to be analyzed. We have to realize that whatever thought we have, we can divert it towards the self. In fact soul is omnipresent and therefore we can conceive it in anything. There are toys of sugar. We can look at them merely as sugar or we can look at them as toys. A child looks at them as toys only whereas a mature person knows that it is only sugar. Similarly a realized soul sees God everywhere whereas an ignorant person thinks of the objects as different from each other.

The fickleness of mind results from attachment. Attachment means desire to acquire something new. The race for the new never ends. Detachment means to understand that the nature of object is such that they cannot satisfy; it is not a case of being dissatisfied with any particular object. The

progress towards spiritualism is a gradual process. At the initial stage one may take the help of something beautiful for concentration. It is just possible that one may not be able to attain the final goal in one life. The *sādhana* of one life does not go waste. It accompanies the soul in another life.

### **Penance**

There are many ways leading to spirituality. One of them is performing penance. The real purpose of penance is to conquer passions. It is just possible that one may become proud of performing severe austerity and he may have the ego rather than humbleness. Similarly the knowledge of scripture may also become a source of egoistic tendency. One may be able to repeat the sentences of scripture one after the other without understanding the purpose thereof. Performance of ritual may also aim at achievement of worldly success.

In order to avoid all this one must have the faith in God. The *Sāṅkhya* and the Buddhists do not believe in God. Therefore they do not speak of any positive result of *sādhana*; they speak of only removal of misery. Having faith in God means that one gets help from the omnipotent. It leads to positive results of blissfulness and also the aspirant doesn't have the ego of doing anything himself. This is the result of faith. God is ever present, we need not wait for Him. All existence is God, we need not search for Him anywhere. He is everywhere. We do not realize this and search for happiness somewhere and not in what is present. This makes us absent-minded towards the present and we never have the feeling of God. The mind always runs after what we do not have. It is therefore always dissatisfied.

The nature is not different from God just as heat is not different from fire. The *jīva* lies in between God and nature but when he can see God in nature also, all doubts are removed. He becomes one with God.

Just as the root and the tree are one the creator and the creation are one. The creation is visible, the creator is invisible. Similarly death and birth are two points on the same circle. All this duality is only a means to understand the non-duality. Duality is the path. Non-duality is the goal.

God is the ultimate cause of all. The purpose of all activities is also self-realisation. At the stage of self-realisation, everything appears to be a form of God. This is the supra-moral plan of life where the distinction between good and bad loses its meaning and yet one follows only the good which does not lead to misery and is prescribed by the scripture.

The path of devotion is such that when one surrenders to the will of God, the nature which is subordinate to God also becomes pure. Then the conflict between the good and the bad is resolved. The conflict between good and bad results in infatuation. Even the good works like social service

are motivated by ego, if the person is not a realized soul. *Arjuna* was also under the influence of such infatuation. Even success under the influence of infatuation is not desirable.

The one purpose of knowledge is that we feel the presence of God everywhere. We, therefore, do not act in a way which we would not like to adopt in the presence of God. This means an integrated personality. A real devotee of God is the same externally as he is from within. Even then the external behaviour of two aspirants could differ from each other because of difference in their nature, even though internally they may be detached from worldly enjoyments. Thus the *Gītā* does not insist on any particular way of life. It only insists on inner detachment coupled with self-realization.

Our desires do not allow us to see the truth. The nature of things does not fit in with our desires. We therefore distort the truth.

### **The Power of Invisible**

Worldly objects are transitory but we wish them to be permanent. If we know their transitory nature we may use them but we do not get attached to them. The second point is regarding the visible and invisible. Vital force is more powerful than the body and consciousness is the most powerful. That is to say that the subtle are more powerful than the gross but at the same time they are invisible also. Invisibility means being beyond name and form. Names and forms change but they can become the source of knowing that which is beyond name and form.

When we concentrate on God the time stops. When we concentrate on the world, the time appears to be moving. The result of getting associated with God is that the sins drop automatically and good actions automatically follow.

### **Grace of God**

A relation between effort and grace of God is to be understood. When we surrender to some divine power there is a release of energy. This becomes the source of empowerment of the self. This is the result of grace of God.

Whatever we know through the senses is all perishable, therefore, it cannot be source of permanent pleasure. Every changeable thing has a permanent basis. The permanent basis is our own nature. Nature is not acquired. Whatever we have acquired from others is changeable. Thoughts for example, are acquired from others and are therefore changeable. In between two thoughts there is a state of thoughtlessness. This state of the thoughtlessness we have not acquired from anybody. All our actions acquire something. They produce results which are perishable. The imperishable is *brahman*. The knower lies in between the perishable and the imperishable.



At the time of death one should-concentrate on God but we can do so only if we have been thinking of God all the time in our life. When one is about to die, he generally loses his control over his thoughts. He is as it were in a dreaming state. He has no control over his thought.

Idea of God should become natural to us just as breathing is natural to us. Just as a greedy person never forgets about money or a lover never forgets his beloved even while performing all activities, similar should be the thought about God.

If we can surrender our mind and intellect to God, every thought will also become His thought. This is how constant remembrance of God becomes possible. The *Gītā* speaks of certain qualities of God on which we can concentrate. The first quality is that he is the creator. He creates the world just as a poet creates poetry. He is also a ruler. Nobody can act against his rules. He is the source of all thoughts. All of these qualities of God have to be felt at the level of heart and not at the level of intellect. At the level of intellect we have anti-thesis for every thesis. There is, therefore, always a duality. There is no anti-thesis of love; hate is the anti-thesis of attachment and not of love. When there is no duality, there is no conflict and when there is no conflict, there is equanimity. With perfect equanimity one becomes identical with *brahman*.

The *Gītā* speaks of the *Vedas* repeatedly. The *Vedas* speak of the creation. God creates the world and sustains it also but he does not get attached to it. If we concentrate on him, our mind becomes stable. When the mind becomes stable, there is no transmigration.

God is our own purest form. It is always available to us. Desire pollutes this purity. When we live at the supra-mental level, there is no desire and everything works systematically, whereas the planning at intellectual level may be disturbed by divine will.

Just as a line has a dimension but the point has no dimension. Similarly, time has dimension but moment has no dimension. If we can stay in a single moment, there is no place for memory or imagination and desire.

We can get anything by action but not God because God is already with us. The path of worldly success passes through actions. Actions do not belong to self. They belong to nature. Therefore, realization that actions do not belong to self automatically releases the self from the illusory bondage of actions. The actions of a person who has not realized this fact leads him to rebirth.

Knowledge is important to reveal the mysteries of nature but the knowledge which leads to liberation comes from faith.

One has not to run away from the world but to look at it as manifestation of the blissful nature of God.

Attitude makes all the difference. Man is a combination of body and soul. If our vision is body-oriented, we look at the soul also as something physical but if our vision is soul-oriented the body also becomes divine. The divine concept is a source of awareness which can continue round the clock. At the initial stage we may set apart a time for meditating on God but finally divinity becomes identical with awareness of the consciousness. This awareness of consciousness is represented by the sound 'aum' as also by the sound produced by in-breathing and out-breathing i.e. 'Soham'.

God lies at the root of the world but He also pervades it. In God the reality is represented in an integrated form. It is only our desires which bifurcate the reality into favourable and unfavourable. The nature of things is such that pain and pleasure go together. *Gītā* does not deny the polytheism but monotheism should always underlie polytheism. In fact all objects are sustained by divinity and therefore they can become means of worshipping God.

Change is the nature of the world. The objects change every moment. Similarly the enjoyer of the object also changes. One cannot therefore decide as to what is desirable because what is desirable at one moment may not be desirable for all and at all times. The scheme of nature is such that everybody and anybody can achieve the highest goal of life i.e. realization of God.

An aspirant is always in a conflict. He wants to get rid of sin but cannot do so. The path of righteousness is always full of difficulties. To solve this problem we have to surrender to the Almighty and also to eliminate our ego. Love comes only when there is no ego. Love is an extra sensuous experience. If we can get this feeling of love for God which is the ultimate reality, then we get rid of what is temporary and if we can get rid of temporary we can get rid of sin also because we commit the sin for temporary things only.

All temporary things and pleasures are born and sustained by the permanent. As we originate from the permanent, the permanent pre-exist us. We can know the permanent only if we can overcome ego. We have to realize that if death is the end of everything, where is the point in becoming proud of everything; the wealth, prestige or position are bound to vanish in the last.

All feelings whether good or bad arise out of consciousness. It is only at the level of mind that we have the feeling of pain and pleasure. At the level of consciousness there is no such distinction. Even pain is useful because it persuades us to seek the truth but our mind is not after the truth but only after fulfilling its desire. At the level of existence, however, there is nothing which is favourable or unfavourable but the mind can catch hold of only a part of existence. When it catches hold of one part it thinks of the other part also simultaneously. It is therefore, always fickle. It is the intelligence

which is steadfast. When we know the whole, our decisions are correct; then good qualities become spontaneous.

God is to permeate in all our actions. Just as an ordinary man has always a desire for pleasure round the clock, similarly the feeling of God has to be there in whatever situation we are. A realized soul sees God where the ignorant person sees the world although God and world are identical.

### **Knowledge**

We run after petty objects. If we aspire for something where all search ends, then only we reach perfection. This is the result of wisdom. All past and future are imaginary, only the present is real. Past and future belong to the sphere of thought whereas present belongs to experience. Remaining in the present means thoughtlessness with full awareness.

The dualist thinks that he is the body, mind and intellect. All of these are imperfect therefore he thinks that he cannot become perfect. The non-dualist thinks that he is the soul which is always perfect and therefore identical with God. When we know about others we get information but when we know the self we get knowledge. Informations are important for dealing with others but knowledge is important for realising the self.

It is the consciousness which is at the center. The world is only an expansion of consciousness. This is a divine expansion. For knowing this expansion we have to be extrovert but for knowing the self we have to be introvert. As the whole existence is nothing but expansion of the self, there is nothing which is useless, bad or harmful. This understanding leads to a real sense of love.

Grace is another aspect of love. All our efforts are polluted by ignorance. A person under the influence of infatuation cannot eliminate his own infatuation. It therefore requires grace of God to remove ignorance. Another element is a divine insight. Divine insight means a capacity to see the subtle underlying the gross. The gross is limited, the subtle is unlimited. Divine insight is the direct perception of truth without the help of any medium.

Unity is fundamental. Diversity is its extension. An ignorant person look at the diversity whereas the wise can see the unity also. *Arjuna* could see with divine insight the great extension of the universe which has no end. This universe is full of miracles. How the consciousness transforms itself into universe is a great miracle. Structure of an atom is also miraculous. The quantum miraculously changes itself into the atom. When we think of this miracle we lose our ego and only then we are in a praying mood. We see the truth without ego we see it directly then it is not our truth but a truth of all. This truth has no beginning and no end.

Only the truth survives. Truth is infinite. All finite things are mortal. What is mortal is also not to be neglected but we should not lose sight of what is immortal. Only then we can have a proper perspective of the mortal. The struggle of life should not be motivated by attachment or aversion but if one is performing his duty and in the process, some one is hurt then it is not sin. One is killed by his evil deeds alone. Those who kill him are only the instruments and not the agent. The evil of *Kauravas* was responsible for their death but it is considered by the ignorant that the *Pāṇḍavas* killed them. Similarly good deeds lead to happiness. One is responsible for his pain and pleasure through his good or bad deeds.

There are two stages of *Sādhana*. By good deeds we can reach God but for realizing *brahman* one has to rise above himself. This is the limitation of moral activities. The *Gītā* preaches not renunciation of activities but a constant remembrance of the ultimate. One has to transcend both logic and morality. Then we go beyond nature. When we go below logic we enter into foolishness. When we rise above logic we become devotee. When we go below morality, we become animals. When we rise above morality we become divine. Morality is necessary for society, but soul is not a part of society.

In the path of knowledge we decide about right and wrong. In the path of devotion we do not contradict anything. Faith does not depend on logic but on experience. There is no scope for contradiction here. In fact we cannot know the mystery of the existence. It can only be experienced.

God is said to be omnipresent but he is at the same time beyond space just as zero represents perfection as well as absence of all things.

There is a striking similarity between the devotee and the realized soul. Both of them act without selfish motive. Granting that God is unmanifest we have to take the help of manifest.

Life and death are the two sides of the same coin. We get rid of life and death only when we are liberated from both.

By logic we know that every argument has a counter-argument, therefore any argument cannot lead us anywhere. Arguments, therefore, have to be used only for conveying the experience. All our actions can become part of a universal process of evolution. This universal evolution is the result of God's will for benefit of all. All our actions should aim at helping this process of evolution. Then our actions become part of the God's will. An evolution is a conscious process. If we aim at it, then our action become associated with consciousness. Only, then we become happy because happiness is an attribute of the consciousness. On the other hand if we think that our actions are part of the process of attaining something material to be used for our own benefit then we become associated with the matter which is unconscious and, therefore, cannot give us any happiness.

One thing is clear that the fruit of any action is not under my control. The fruit depends on the divine will which is always beneficial even if it appears to us against our interest. The divine will is wiser than our understanding of things. By meditation we can get temporary relief but the ultimate relief comes through the understanding that whatever happens, happens for our benefit. This understanding leads to permanent peace; you do not need any extra time for this. On the other hand if we think, that we will become happy by fulfilling our desires, we must know that desires have no end and, therefore, we can never become happy if fulfillment of our desires becomes our target.

The real purpose of devotion is that our life becomes spontaneously virtuous. We feel that vice is spontaneous and virtue is to be cultivated. This is because of perversion of our mind. Whatever is favourable only strengthens our ego. A devotee does not want to enforce his ego. He therefore becomes free from vice. The path of devotion is different from path of social welfare. Society depends on give-and-take. The path of devotion is free from the sense of give-and-take. A devotee finds divinity in everything. All modifications belong to the body. The soul is free from modifications. This is to be experienced by each one of us individually because one's experience cannot be transferred to the other.

There is a long list of moral virtues. The first of them is freedom from pride. The second is freedom from the tendency to show off. All these qualities come from self-realisation. The realization that all things are changeable makes one indifferent to them. On the other hand one becomes slave of circumstances if he indulges into hankering after worldly pleasures.

Many worldly pleasures can go together but spiritualism does not tolerate any diversion. Just as all alphabets arise out of ink similarly all existence arise out of God. The actual light is that of knowledge which is self-illuminating. All other light are illuminated by knowledge.

The *Gītā* speaks of four types of *Sādhanā*. The first of them is meditation. It means control of all mental activities. The second is knowledge. The third is surrendering all activities to God. The fourth is association of the realized soul.

### **Field and its knower**

The *Gītā* speaks of field and the knower of the field. The former consisting of body, mind and intellect is perishable and the knower of the field is permanent. One who knows the knower of the field gets permanent happiness. In the sphere of the field there is a gradation of happiness and pain. The soul is one. The fields are different. If we know the unity of the soul, we cannot inflict misery on others.

All activities belong to nature. Activities consume energy and therefore, by acting we get exhausted. In fact the soul is not the agent. It means that even the thoughts do not belong to us.

If we identify ourselves with the body, there is no way out to escape death. There is a sort of self-hypnotism by which we have to identify ourselves with the body. The only way out is to realize that we are not the body. This can be done by practice and detachment. As practice requires repetition, the scriptures therefore repeat their statements. This is true of the *Gītā* also. As long as there are desires there is rebirth.

There is a gradual procedure. One has to proceed from dullness to understanding but the ultimate aim is to transcend the intelligence. Even intelligence can produce ego but truth is our nature and it cannot lead to any ego.

Devotion is a sort of sincere commitment. One could be committed to wealth prestige or position. Since we are committed to many things, our commitment becomes divided. Realization of God requires undivided commitment. This is called devotion.

The world is like a tree which is always changing. All our activities, good or bad, are confined to this tree of world. These activities may lead to good or bad results. If we perform good actions we strengthen our good tendencies whereas bad actions strengthen bad tendencies but if actions are performed with detachment we get rid of circle of transmigration. This detachment comes from the realization that all worldly objects are transitory. In the first place there is no end to desire. One desire leads to another desire and whatever we get by fulfillment of our desires stays with us only for sometime. Therefore we never have a feeling of fulfillment. Many times we realize this fatality of worldly enjoyments. We also experience how enjoyments tell upon our mental faculties but soon we forget it and again engage ourselves in the pursuit of worldly enjoyments.

### **Discrimination**

The nature is unconscious. The body is also unconscious. Both of them, are therefore, deprived of happiness. The tragedy is that for most of us attachment comes from within whereas detachment is imposed from without. We have wrongly identified ourselves with nature. Therefore nature appears to us to be attractive. If we identify ourselves with consciousness divinity will have attraction for us. When we have insight into the divinity, the natural objects lose their attraction or else they also become divine. We assume body because we want to enjoy worldly objects. If this attraction of worldly objects goes away there is no necessity to assume body.

The nature is always vibrating. It is only the consciousness which is free from vibrations. When one dies he assumes another body because of continuity of these vibrations but if he can detach himself from these vibrations, he becomes absorbed with the universal consciousness.

The objects of enjoyment belong to nature and the senses which enjoy are also part of nature.

The consciousness remains aloof from nature. We have identified ourselves with our mind. The mind remains busy with senseless thoughts. If we can keep a distance with mind, the mind can become silent. Birth and death also belong to nature and not to soul. Consciousness is beyond time. By cutting ourselves from past and future we can have a feeling of consciousness. If we can have a distance from the body, we can feel at the time of death that we are not dying.

A greedy man has always the sense of love for money at the back of his all activities. Similarly we should have the feeling of divinity even while performing routine duties of life.

The worldly objects have their attractions but these objects are solid forms of consciousness. Therefore, whatever attraction they have is because of consciousness. The natural enjoyments therefore are also coming from consciousness.

What is important is this that the self is identical with *brahman*. The ultimate aim of the *Vedas* is to make one realize this identity.

The scriptures talk of getting rid of *Karmas* but this is possible only if all our desires to know and to act come to an end. This is a stage which is achieved by realization of the self. One can get peace only when he gets fixed in his nature. When we are away from our nature we are in the grip of different complexes of inferiority and superiority.

### **Morality**

It is true that from the point of view of soul there is no difference between good and bad but the path to salvation goes through the morality. We commit immoral actions because of fear and greed. The ultimate fear is that of death.

If we know that we do not die we become fearless. Similarly if we know that the riches do not give us happiness, we become free from greed. We envy the greatness of others whereas we should rather learn to feel happy over others' greatness. Similarly we should have a sense of compassion for the misery of others. What is needed is an integrated personality. An integrated person is the one whose internal intentions do not differ from his outward behaviour. The path of spirituality does not lie in moulding others according to our desires but in remaining un-effected by what others say or do. This leads to real freedom.

The worst are those who obliterate the distinction between good and bad. They want to fulfill their desires by hook or crook. When they get success they become proud. They do not follow the injunction of the scriptures at all. Ignorance leads to ego. They think that money and sex are the

only aim of life. They feel that they shall prove their strength by hurting others. Their immoral activities weaken the society. They do not realize that they themselves are an inseparable part of the society. They are short-sighted. They do even a good thing to demonstrate to others that they are good. One should conquer, greed by liberality, anger by forgiveness, suspicion by faith and falsehood by truthfulness. We are under the impression that anger is bad. We do not know that desire is also bad. In reality desire lies at the root of anger. We hanker after various enjoyments and are exhausted but we do not find anything worthwhile. We only get disappointment. This is the real hell. Desire is a blind alley. Anger gives heat but no light. Greed is like a closed fist which does not open to give anything to anybody.

### Three *guṇas*

The *Gītā* has paradigm of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Those who are *satva*-oriented are worried about the righteousness. Those who are predominated by *rajas* are worried about the result of their actions. On other hand a person with predominant *tamogūṇa* wants to have everything without doing anything.

All of these persons may quote scriptures for their purpose. The knowledge-oriented man can remain satisfied by reading scriptures without putting them to practice. The action-oriented person may say that work is worship. An idle man may say that he need not do anything because he has surrendered himself to the Almighty. An idle man searches something which can lead him to success without any effort. Action-oriented people are in search of know-how of the actions. Those who are in search of knowledge worship Gods. An idle man gets nothing. An active man gets worldly prosperity. A knowledge oriented man follows the path of righteousness. For liberation, however, one has to get rid of the ego.

Just as the *Gītā* speaks of three kinds of personalities, similarly, it speaks of three types of food also. Our body is formed by the food that we take. Not only this, the subtlest part of our food makes our mind also. The best food is that which is found in the nature like the fruits. The second best is that which has the least processing. The worst is that which undergoes artificial processing. The second thing is that we should earn livelihood by fair means. Thirdly, the food should be taken in a peaceful mood.

The important thing is that we should not lead a mechanical life. For example, if one thinks that by taking a particular type of food alone which is prescribed by the scripture, he can serve the purpose then he is wrong. Purity of purpose is also necessary at every step. *Dharma* does not aim at external change but at inner transformation.



***Yajña, tapa and dāna***

The process of *yajña* is laid down on the basis of the working of the nature which is very subtle and can be known only through scriptures.

Secondly, the *yajña* is to be performed to pay back the debt that we have towards the *devas*. Therefore, it is a part of our duty. Those who perform *yajña* with a view to achieve some results are like beggars. Those who do not follow the method prescribed by the scripture may do a great harm to themselves.

The performance of *Yajña* requires the power of *mantra* for which a *brāhmaṇa* is most suitable. *Tapa* requires vital power which is predominantly found in the *kṣatriyas*. Liberality requires richness for which the business community is more appropriate. We have already spoken of the *yajna* in the previous chapter. *Tapa* consists of paying obeisance to the spiritual personalities. The body language indicates our mental attitude. Therefore discipline of body is also a form of penance. Speech is another instrument of penance. It is a powerful means of doing good to others. Silence is another kind of penance which is mental. In *Vedic* system *tapa* means renouncing so that we can make place for receiving. One who is attached to enjoyments may think that *tapa* consists in torturing the body. Unless we perform an action with full concentration, there is always a danger that we may not succeed. *Vedic* actions are subtle. Unless we have faith we cannot perform them with full concentration.

One must realize that there are some activities which do not yield any material gain but otherwise they are very important. Therefore they must be supported financially. Vedic scholars, philosophers, artists and spiritualist are introvert. The society should look to their physical needs. This is actual liberality or *dana*. Those who are disabled should also be supported. This is second category. The essence of the whole discussion is that if one performs actions without ego and attachment to the result, then one can attain liberation. On the other hand if one has his sight at the fruit he may achieve heaven but not liberation. The worst kind is performance of good actions without having any faith in their goodness and only for the sake of social prestige. Even these actions are useful for the society even if they do not bring any merit to the agent of the action.

We are a part of the whole existence. All actions and their fruits are transitory but the existence is permanent. All actions should be performed with keeping our eyes on the existence and not on the result of the actions. Secondly the action should have some wider aim in view and thirdly the action should be praise-worthy. Such actions purify the internal faculties by which one becomes capable of attaining liberation. The will of God is expressed in the scriptures. If we follow them we follow the will of God and not our own will. This leads to freedom from desires.

**Sannyāsa**

The last *āśrama* is *sannyāsa* and the last end of human life is liberation. The last chapter of the Gita is also devoted to these two — The liberation and *sannyāsa*. The first category of ascetics consists of renunciation of all such actions which yield worldly fruits. The second category consists of those who believe in renouncing the desire for the fruit of the action. The third type of ascetics believe in renouncing all actions. The fourth category believes that *yajña*, penance and liberality should continue for ever. It means that an ascetic should continue with the works of doing good to others. An ascetic becomes *ātmayājī* by which he annihilates his passions. The real renunciation comes from the realization that objects do not belong to us. This realization gets one free from all sins. One should follow professional ethics in all circumstances. Renunciation means renunciation of attachment and not of duties. An animal has no possessions but he has desire for pleasure and is afraid of suffering. Therefore he is not an ascetic. If the citizens of a nation want to enjoy to the maximum but do not want to perform their duty, the nation becomes weak and poor but if they want to perform their duty and enjoy also the nation become strong and rich but it does not get mental peace.

Mental peace comes only when one does not hanker after luxurious life. One has to see through the nature of *karmas*. They do not yield their fruits immediately. Therefore, we cannot decide about our duties on the basis of immediate results. One has to be far-sighted. The difficulties, that one has to face while performing his duties, purify him. The soul cannot perform any action. It is only the ignorant person who thinks that he is the agent of the actions. One who knows that God is always available to him does not run after petty mundane things. Every action has a reaction. The reaction is automatic. We should not care about it.

In nature all the three *guṇas* exist simultaneously. There is, therefore, a mixture of pleasant and unpleasant in the fruit of any action. It is only by keeping ourselves aloof from the result of the actions that we can get unadulterated happiness.

There are two types of aspirations. One can aspire for enjoyments but he may not necessarily succeed. The others may aspire for realization of truth. If one is keen about this second aspiration, he is bound to succeed. Truth is not an object of enjoyment. The two — the desire for enjoyment and the desire for truth — do not go together.

From the point of view of science, we find that there is a constant activity going on in the smallest particles. This activity goes on without break but this activity does not bind the nature. The consciousness on the other hand is passive; it only knows. The body, the senses and the impressions are all part of nature. The essence of *Sāṅkhya* philosophy is that one should know that

he is only a spectator and not the actor. The spectator always remains happy without being affected by what goes on the stage.

The real knowledge sees unity in diversity. The existence is one but in the field of action we have to accept diversity. In diversity we have comparison between one and the other. This makes the mind fickle. In the *sātvika* type of knowledge there is no duality. In *Rājāsika* knowledge there are both the self and the other. In *Tāmasika* knowledge one become self-centered. As the knowledge so the actions. The best actions are those which are free from ego and selfishness. The second best are those which serve selfish purpose doing least harm to the others. The worst are those which aim at selfish ends without caring for others. In other words the best actions are spiritually oriented. The second best are society-oriented and the worst are motivated by ignorance.

In a state of ignorance one does not discriminate between good and bad. This leads him to a state of perpetual misery. A better stage is where one knows the half truth. This is the state of a practical man. The spiritual person knows the transcendental truth.

Even such activities as penance and meditation can be performed with a mundane motivation. Such actions become cause of bondage. Possessing objects makes us their slaves. Freedom lies in non-possessiveness. Because of fickleness of mind, one may deviate from the path of righteousness.

### **Varṇa-system**

One cannot transcend nature without cultivating spirituality. This is called culture. One has to cultivate non-duality, detachment and equanimity. Morality has also to be cultivated. The four-fold order of society is based on the theory that one should adopt a profession where his natural qualities can find full expression. Only then one can get job satisfaction. It also meets the necessities of the society. By mistake the condemnation of *tamoguna* has been identified with the condemnation of *śūdra* whose duty is to serve all, so that they can perform their duties efficiently. It is a noble cause and has been termed as penance. The division of labour by means of different professions has psychological and social basis. At the spiritual level everyone, whatever his profession, has to remain free from attachment and ego. Money is not the main consideration. The richest is the businessman and the poorest is the *brāhmaṇa*. All the four *Varaṇas* can equally earn the merit of *Dharma*, by performing their duty honestly and efficiently. A balance has to be kept between the general ethics and professional ethics. Non-violence, for example means for a warrior not inflicting misery on an innocent living being, but it does not mean to shirk the duty of fighting for the righteousness, even if it involves killing the opponent. By following the general ethics, one attains liberation and by following professional ethics one contributes towards the all round — development of the society.

**Possessiveness**

Detachment is the most prominent sign of purity. When one gets internal bliss, he loses all interest in worldly pleasure.

As long as we aim at worldly pleasures, we always think of achieving them. As we achieve worldly objects, we become proud. We think that we have become independent but in fact we become dependent on worldly objects. We are never satisfied and peaceful. The perturbed mind remains stuck in future whereas God is always in the present. We think that we will get peace when we have achieved God whereas God will be achieved only when we become peaceful. There is a basic difference between the worldly pleasures and the spiritual bliss. Worldly pleasures are the result of attachment that we have towards worldly objects whereas spiritual bliss is the result of detachment. If we have detachment, even the worldly objects add to our glory and do not become cause of bondage. The whole world is a glory unto God and does not bind Him.

When one becomes detached, he becomes free from ego, lust, anger and greed. Then he becomes free from misery. He becomes internally pure. He becomes one with *brahman*. This is the highest point of devotion. Now there is no risk of fall. One who knows *brahman* may deviate from the path under the influence of passion but for one who has become one with *brahman* there is no such risk.

**Conclusion**

There is an inner conflict between good and bad. This conflict continues as long as one considers himself to be the agent but if one has surrendered himself to the Almighty he gets rid of the inner conflict.

Attainment of *brahman* is like going into deep sleep; we cannot go to sleep by any effort but by becoming effortless. Sleep is possible when our mind is peaceful, body is healthy and when we feel tired. Similarly when our mind is peaceful and when we are one with the real self and tired of worldly pursuits, God is achieved. Thus it is not by our effort that we realize God; it is only by His grace. Just as the attraction of worldly objects is natural to a worldly man similarly the attraction of divinity is natural to a spiritual person.

In fact if we cannot act we cannot also renounce acting. How we behave is dependent on nature and not on us. All realized souls do not behave in the same way. It is because of the difference of their nature. When we abandon the discursive tendency, we leave ourselves to the flow of nature. The ultimate point of knowledge lies in surrender. We can get a glimpse of devotion in love which is pure and free from passion. When the father sees his six month old son he gets happiness

without any thought. He does not expect anything from his son, nor does he harbour any hope for the future from him. Similarly in a state of trance, there is no thought or no hope for the future. It is just a state of thoughtless experience. In fact all experience is beyond thought. Our desires give birth to thoughts and these thoughts never allow us to experience the truth. At the level of thought there will always be a conflict. There is harmony only at the level of soul. Our intelligence differs because it belongs to nature, whereas there is no disharmony at the level of soul because it is beyond nature. The truth is realized at the level of soul and not at the level of intellect.

There is no end to intellectual pursuits. It does not mean that intellectual pursuits are meaningless. They are meaningful for solving worldly and social problems but the ultimate solution is self-realization.

The scheme of nature is such that everything is favourable for us but with our limited understanding we cannot realize the divine scheme of things. In reality what appears to be unfavourable to us is an opportunity to correct ourselves. One who wishes to enjoy and wants to survive and therefore cannot surrender to the will of Almighty.

Be the *Veda* or the *Gītā*, the purpose of all the *Vedic* literature is to combine prosperity with peace. Prosperity comes by action. Peace comes by knowledge. Apparently knowledge and action appear to be contradictory. The *Vedic* literature shows the way to reconcile the two æ the knowledge represented by *yogeshvara kṛṣṇa* and the action represented by the warrior *Arjuna*.

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।

तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्धुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

