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BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

GITA SANDESH
MESSAGE OF THE GITA

Swami Ramdas

GENERAL EDITORS

K. M. MUNSHI

R. R. DIWAKAR

5924



भारतीय विद्या भवन, बम्बई

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What

Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

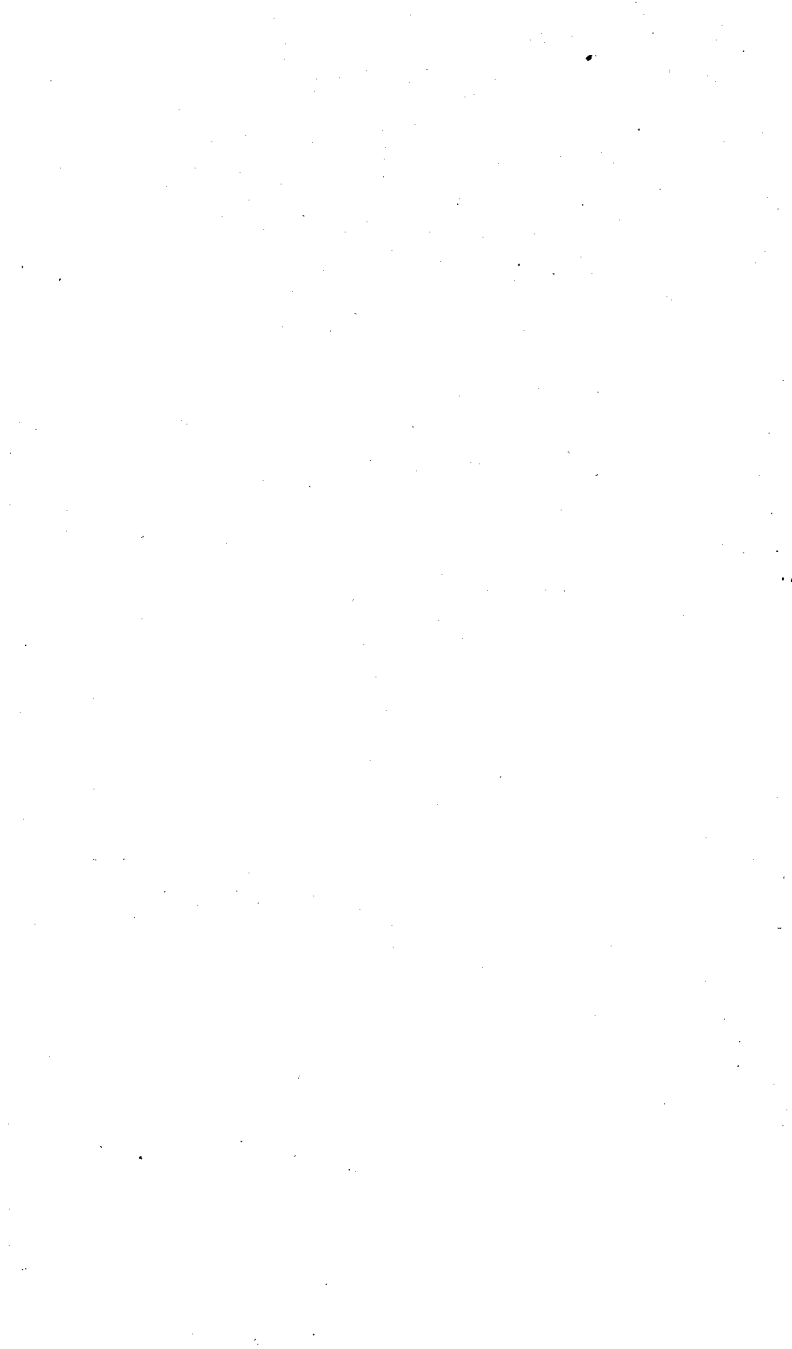
(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

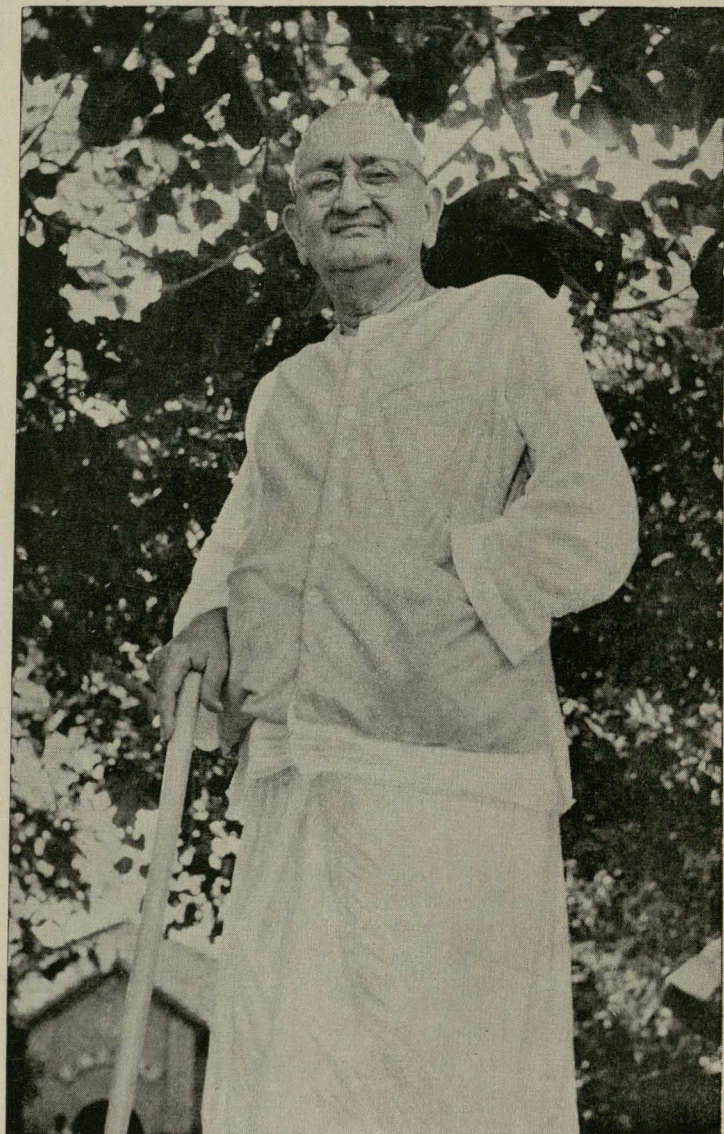
(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.







SWAMI RAMDAS

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, 1-89-i

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BY

SWAMI RAMDAS

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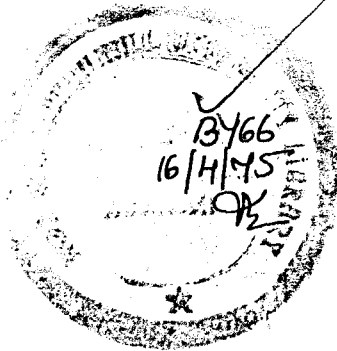
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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages and was to be priced at Rs. 2.50.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit:

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarised by one of

the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is now-here." After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita*, which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD,

NEW DELHI

K. M. MUNSHI

3rd October 1951

PREFACE

Based upon the universal vision granted by the Lord and fully conscious of the truth that the Lord and the devotee, the divine Parent and the child are one, this child—writer—composed this little work and takes leave to place it before the indulgent readers who are for him the very forms of his most beloved supreme Lord and divine Mother.

The teaching of the Gita, in its very construction, is so built up that it might offer a progressive path for the sadhaka, aspiring for liberation and the attainment of the highest spiritual eminence, of perfect union with and absorption in the all-comprehensive being of the Godhead. So this presentation of the Gita reveals the gradual ascending steps in the evolutionary process of the human soul* in his march towards this ultimate goal.

Gita's message is primarily to the man of the world who, according to it, need not renounce the active life and its relations with the world, but can divinise all his actions by a complete dedication of himself in his entire being, both as the immortal soul and as the active worker in the field of Prakriti, to the Lord of the universe.

* The "Soul" has been referred to as "he" in all places in this book, which perhaps some readers may take exception to, as it is sexless. At the same time, "he" could not be replaced by "it" without altering the sense to a considerable degree.

Sri Krishna holds yogic action as superior to renunciation of action. While the latter signifies a partial denial of life, the former denotes a transformation of the whole life into the very expression of the Godhead, by raising the ignorant soul from the human to his illumined, divine and eternal nature.

All glory be to the Lord—the saviour of mankind—the protector of the weak and helpless—the joy of His devotees—and the guide and friend of the aspiring souls—all glory be to the Lord!

OM

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CHAPTER I

MOHA OR ATTACHMENT

THE Bhagavad Gita holds forth before mankind the highest and the loftiest ideal by attaining which the soul is liberated from all limitations and enjoys the peace and bliss of his inherent state of immortality. The first discourse of the Gita speaks of the one great obstacle that confronts the struggling soul in his effort to realize this blessed state of supreme freedom. Now what is the malady that has possessed the soul which has made his life cramped, narrow and limited, bringing to it a sense of helplessness and often-times utter despair? It is Moha or attachment arising from the individual sense of 'I' in relation to the body and therefrom to the bodies of those near and dear to him by the ties of blood or friendship or material obligations. This Moha causes the mind of man, as a result of its narrow vision, to move in a limited circle identifying itself with the interests of this circle. In this condition the vision of man, starting from his individual centre, radiates only within this circle and gets so much absorbed in it that the humanity and the world outside it are considered entirely separate and foreign to it. It is within the experience of every human being,

CHAPTER II

JNANA OR ILLUMINATION OF
THE INTELLECT

WHEN thus Moha or attachment weakens the will of Arjuna for the great action to which he is called, in keeping with the duty of a warrior that he is, the supreme Godhead dwelling in the hearts of all creatures and present before him as Sri Krishna, the incarnation, rouses him by words that condemn his faint-heartedness and cowardly impotence. Usually, in the progress of the soul, in his march towards a lofty ideal involving an action prompted by a generous impulse created by an outlook of an expanded vision, the egoistic and selfish instinct in him subdues that noble impulse rendering him inactive and helpless. At this juncture, the one thought of his own body and the interest of those dear and near to him shuts out the higher vision and the greater action made possible by that magnificent impulse. Here the aspirant meets with a check which makes him turn his back upon the new adventure. Moha taking hold of the intellect distorts its workings and saps the power of the will. Now, God, within the heart of the human being from within or in the form of a teacher outside, sets out first to awaken the intellect and then illumines it with a keen sense of discrimination. Moha, starting

CHAPTER III

KARMA YOGA — STANDARD OF
FREE ACTION

IN the first chapter Moha has been pointed out as the sole cause of Arjuna's despondency and the consequent spirit of inaction that overtook him. The second chapter deals with the first step which the despondent soul should take for freeing himself from the clutches of Moha. Through Moha man holds that his body and the visible manifestation are the only reality and that his earth-bound spirit is justified in attaching itself to these external objects. To remove this misconception the deluded mind is made aware of the changeless, static, infinite and omnipresent Atman, beyond the three Gunas, and the resulting dynamics of nature, as its real being. So the intellect of man is awakened to its hitherto dormant sense of discrimination between the mutable and the immutable, the perishable and the imperishable, the individual and the universal, the seen and the unseen, the form and the formless, the non-eternal and the eternal. Arjuna is told that the Atman, who is free from the Gunas and their works, is immovable and actionless, and perfect oneness with the Atman will grant him the freedom of the Eternal. Arjuna accepts this part of the yoga, which is attained through discrimina-

CHAPTER IV

KNOWLEDGE OF THE ATMAN

SRI KRISHNA, the Jagadguru seated in the hearts of all beings and things, first subdued the Moha that had possessed the heart of Arjuna by taking his mind from the perishable object to the immortal Atman pervading through all life and form. Next, the divine Teacher goes to prove that even after the realization of the actionless Atman, the external play of action through the various organs of Prakriti is possible and necessary and is perfectly in consonance with the Atmic realization. God is not merely a silent and immovable spirit but is also the active Master and Ruler of His universal manifestation. To be in tune with God in the infinite silence and immobility of His existence and still be working in the world for its welfare and uplift through His Shakti, which animates and activates His Prakriti, is the real condition of a perfected yogi.

This exalted yoga, which was neglected and forgotten for some length of time before the Lord chose again to incarnate as Sri Krishna, is now presented to the world making Arjuna a fit disciple and its first recipient. This yoga is now open to all who are the devotees and friends of

CHAPTER V

KARMA YOGA — THE SUPERIOR WAY

ARJUNA, even after the full glory of the light of wisdom thrown on his bewildered mind in the previous discourse, does not find the way out of his difficulty. He wants to know conclusively which would be the better course for him, whether the path of action or the path of renunciation of action. To remove this perplexity of the mind Arjuna asks for a decisive word of advice as to which of the two paths is better for him to follow.

Here the rejoinder evoked from the Lord is direct and determinative. The Lord declares that Sannyasa and Karmayoga both take the soul to the realization of the supreme bliss, but Karma-yoga is by far superior to Sannyasa. In truth, there is hardly any difference between the two paths. In both cases it is essential that the aspirant should be liberated from the thraldom of desire, hate and the Dwandwas. In both cases, again, the realization of the Atman is the common experience. The states of both the Karma-yogi and the Sannyasi in their supreme attainment of immortality are exactly the same, for the result of the one is the result of the other. So, the realized soul does not make any difference

CHAPTER VI

THE DISCIPLINE OF YOGA

IN the foregoing chapters, Sri Krishna points out the cause of man's bondage and how the ignorance, which is responsible for this bondage, can be removed by realizing the omnipresent, blissful and ever free Atman. As a preparation for the attainment of this immortal state He repeatedly asserts that the aspirant, by means of the destruction of desire and the consequent attachment to objects of sense, should lose his individual body-idea and then get absorbed in the all-pervading spirit of God. The question has arisen as to whether a man, living and working in the world performing all actions, can raise himself to the summit of Self-realization. The answer Sri Krishna gives is a definite affirmative. He holds out a path with the double aspect—one of identification through meditation with the inner deathless Atman and the other, running simultaneously, of surrender of all actions to the divine Shakti, active in Prakriti. Here we have an indication of the full and complete Swarup of God—that He is at once these two existences—Purusha or Atman and Prakriti, and also the transcendent Lord, the absolute Master and

CHAPTER VII

KNOWLEDGE OF THE LOWER AND HIGHER PRAKRITI

IN the previous chapters Sri Krishna, gradually bringing up the lower conceptions of the soul to the highest climax in the realization of the Atman, proceeds to bring still further out in its fulness the ideal of the supreme Godhead who is the Master and Lord of all the forces that work in the outer and inner worlds. He declares that yoga becomes easy when you strive for it by taking complete refuge in the supreme Reality. From this it is clear that realization of the Atman is not everything. A full knowledge and attainment of God in His all-inclusive and all-comprehensive totality is the goal. When the yogi, who has scaled the lower heights, reaches the utmost summit of this supreme, immanent and transcendent God, he has nothing higher to aspire for and nothing more to be known.

This grand yoga is not easy to obtain. Among thousands of people there would be hardly one who would strive for this yoga and, of these rare ones who have successfully fought through the barriers, there would be scarcely

CHAPTER VIII

THE SUPREME AND ETERNAL GODHEAD

THE present chapter seeks to elucidate the true significance of the terms employed in explaining the comprehensive knowledge which the devotee attains.

The Eternal is the Brahman, the indestructible spirit who, by His very nature being self-illuminated, is ever awakened and all-knowing. Through the power proceeding from this supreme knowledge are born all beings by universal movement in the consciousness of the exalted Godhead. Karma starts from this first uprising wave of movement.

From this primeval source of Karma evolve out all the manifestations of Prakriti, the divine energy producing all changes and movements within it. Here each individual body is to be taken as the very expression of the complete Divinity, who is its root and basis. A man, who at the time of his shuffling off the mortal coil meditates on God as the all-inclusive and the greatest reality, merges into His existence.

CHAPTER IX

THE ULTIMATE KNOWLEDGE AND SECRET

THE ninth chapter deals with devotion based upon knowledge. Knowledge by itself is not the highest goal. But devotion and love combined with knowledge takes the soul to the highest perfection and consummation of life. Now devotion enables the enlightened soul to go up straight and easily to the seat of immortality. Here the Lord distinctly says that there is no perfect liberation for the soul if he does not become the Bhakta of the Lord. Without knowing this people come down again to the world of change and destruction.

Now the Lord describes the all-comprehensive personality of His. As the invisible and unmanifest spirit He pervades all the worlds. Being the first Great Cause, all things have emanated from Him. The universal manifestations evolve out of Him. So His manifestations are not His entire existence. He dwells in them but, at the same time, He is not in them in entirety. He is the sustainer and support of all beings whom He bears on His infinite bosom, nourishing and protecting them. He is the supreme Master over

CHAPTER X

THE POWER OF SUZERAINTY

THE tenth chapter begins with the idea of the highest supremacy and sovereignty of the Lord over all the lesser gods and Rishis. Even these highly evolved souls cannot comprehend the mysterious way by which the Lord projects Himself out as the universe and all its creatures and things. Because the Lord is the infinite originator of even the gods and Rishis.

Here the Lord enumerates the various natures dominating the beings whom He has evolved out of Himself. The quality of pure reason, right knowledge, illumined wisdom, forgiveness, rectitude, self-control, tranquillity, joy, pain, worldliness and unworldliness, fear and courage; and also non-violence, harmony, contentment, piety, charity, honour and dishonour are the different kinds of nature in which all creatures appear in the world according to their respective Karma originated from the Lord.

The Lord's Daivi Prakriti or the creative Shakti first brought into existence the seven great Rishis who are the progenitors of mankind and the four Kumaras or protectors of the earth and the Manus who enacted the laws of Dharma for

CHAPTER XI

THE VISION — UNIVERSAL

NOW the mind of Arjuna is fully illumined with the knowledge of the Atman and prepared for the world vision. Hence, Arjuna prays to the supreme Lord of the universe to grant him the vision of the Lord as the omnipotent cosmic spirit. The vision that is demanded is of the highest import and sublimity. For this supreme vision the Lord, through His infinite grace, endows Arjuna with the divine sight. The description that follows this vision relates to all creatures, beings, gods, things, objects and existences in the entire universe. For Arjuna now, the whole manifestation stands transformed as one gigantic body of the Lord. He beholds everywhere and in everything the Lord Himself manifest. Every form appears as an emanation from Him, the divine source of all forms. The one Lord is seen revealed as the multitudinous creatures and things in the universe. By a clear perception, the one divine Energy is observed having taken shapes and causing all movements and changes therein. One eternal life principle has brought forth the countless lives. In the infinite unmanifest, the worlds and their creatures appear and dissolve—having a period of evolution and a period of dissolution.

CHAPTER XII

THE PATH OF DEVOTION

THE present chapter goes to prove that the path of devotion is easier than the path of pure knowledge. The path of devotion means the adoration of God in His supreme personality in which the aspirant forms a near and dear relationship with the supreme Lord and, through constant remembrance of Him, and with prayers and singing and speaking of His glories, rises himself to the divine consciousness. Through this devotion the devotee effects his union with and absorption in the Lord, and thus not only attains the knowledge of the Atman or the Nirguna aspect of God, but also gets the highest vision of God manifested as the universe. The peace and joy which a devotee experiences is maintained in all conditions of life and activity. The devotee becomes totally divine, both internally and externally, i.e. in the knowledge of the Atman and in all the actions of Prakriti. The path of knowledge leads the aspirant only to the knowledge of the Atman and that, through a rigorous discipline for the subdual of all the passions and desires of the heart and mind. Of course, the aspirant realizes the indestructible, the infinite and eternal Truth, but he misses the supreme

CHAPTER XIII

FIELD AND KNOWER OF FIELD

IN this chapter are explained the distinctive qualities of Purusha or Atman and Prakriti or the manifestation, and also the knowledge of difference between these two aspects of existence. Sri Krishna has at various stages of his previous discourses spoken of these two aspects as having no similarity although they lose distinction in the ultimate Reality—Purushottama who is at once these aspects and beyond them. The Atman or Purusha is pure divine knowledge because He, as the silent, omniscient and all-pervading principle of existence, witnesses and, through the will of Purushottama, illumines and inspires Prakriti in all Her movements and activities. Arjuna now wishes to know in detail the basis of difference between Purusha and Prakriti and of the mutual relationship between them—Purusha as the knower of the field and Prakriti as the field.

Sri Krishna expounds that the body is the field and he who knows the body is the knower of the field, and this is in accordance with the teachings of the sages. The Lord is Himself the knower of the body, who dwells in all bodies. He who has possessed a knowledge of the field as body and the dweller within as the Lord has

CHAPTER XIV

THE NATURE OF THE THREE GUNAS

IN the fourteenth chapter the Lord further expounds in detail the highest knowledge by the attainment of which all the saints and sages have reached perfection. This knowledge causes the absorption of the soul so completely into the being of the Godhead that he assumes the exalted divine nature and is once for all liberated from the occasion of rebirth at the time of the manifestation of the universe, and does not undergo destruction at the time of the dissolution of the universe. From the womb of the Eternal all creatures and beings take birth and the supreme Purusha, as the father, is the generator. Wherever a mortal is born, in whatever womb, God's eternal existence is the real womb from which he is brought into being. This eternal aspect of God is the Mahashakti—the Mother of the universe who is the cause of creation, preservation and destruction. She is the Mula-Prakriti spoken of in the earlier discourses. This divine Prakriti or Adi-Maya possesses two aspects, the higher and the lower Prakriti. When the soul is entangled in the meshes of the lower Prakriti, he falls into ignorance and becomes subject to births and deaths. The lower Prakriti is made

CHAPTER XV

PURUSHOTTAMA YOGA

IN this chapter Sri Krishna teaches once again the path that leads the soul to his highest, inexpressible and infinite existence and union with the supreme Lord who dwells in that divine Existence. From this imperishable existence has evolved out the entire universal manifestation. The process of this manifestation is compared to the Ashwattha or Peepul tree whose roots are above and branches below. The branches spread out upward and downward. The leaves are compared to the Vedic hymns. This tree of evolution (Samsara Vriksha) is nurtured by the Gunas; the sense-objects are its buds and the roots that grow downward are the bonds of Karma for those who live in the world a life of attachment. So long as the mind of man is involved in ignorance he cannot understand what is the form of this tree, where it will meet its end and where is its inception and root. This Ashwattha that has projected from the infinite has to be cut down with the unfailling axe of non-attachment. Thus bereft of attachment, the soul seeks the path beyond Moha and treads it never to return. He reaches the seat of the Purusha through whom the original divine Shakti radiates. When the

CHAPTER XVI

THE DIVINE QUALITIES DISTINGUISHED FROM DEMONIACAL

IN this chapter the Lord discourses in detail upon the qualities of two opposite natures which are observed in all human beings. The one is divine and the other demoniacal.

The divine qualities are fearlessness, purity, a steady use of the discriminative faculty, charity, self-control, unselfish service, reading of scriptures, discipline, and frankness. Also non-violence, rectitude, freedom from anger, non-attachment, tranquillity, innocence, kindness towards all creatures, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, firmness, enthusiasm, mercy, power of endurance, cleanliness and absence of jealousy and pride.

The demoniacal qualities are ostentation, sense of superiority, presumption, anger, cruelty and ignorance.

The divine qualities stand for the salvation of a being, whereas the opposite qualities operate as his bondage. Arjuna, being of a high Sattwic quality, is assured that he possesses the divine attributes. These dual characteristics apply to all living creatures of the world. Having ex-

CHAPTER XVII

THREE KINDS OF SHRADDHA

THIS chapter deals with the three kinds of people prevalent among the aspirants. Each one of them follows a path according to his inherent nature—either Sattwic, Rajasic or Tamasic. Verily, a man's conduct in life is shaped by the distinctive Guna of his faith; in other words, a man is what his faith has made him.

The man of Sattwa-guna worships the heavenly deities; of Rajo-guna, the spirits that guard wealth and giants gifted with illusive powers; of Tamo-guna, offers adoration to the spirits of the dead and evil spirits in general. The men of Asuric nature perform hard Tapasya, contrary to Shastras, filled with pride and egoism compelled by the power of their base desires. These dull and ignorant souls mortify the body made up of the elements and also the Lord dwelling in the inner sheaths of it, who is the real dweller and enjoyer in the body.

According to the Gunas a man's taste for particular food is determined. So there are three kinds of food as also of sacrifice, Tapas and charity. The food that is dear to the man of Sattwic temperament is such as would increase

CHAPTER XVIII

RENUNCIATION AND YOGA

THE last chapter of the Gita is a compendium or a brief masterly summary of all that is told in the foregoing chapters. It reveals the conclusive word and message of the entire Gita. In fact, it brings the whole teaching to its culmination, settling once for all, in clear and decisive language, the many problems dealt with so far in a more or less straggling and disjointed manner.

At the outset, Arjuna raises the most vital question on the solution of which depends the entire attitude of a human being towards life and action. The question is: wherein lies the difference between Sannyasa and Tyaga? What are the several characteristics of these terms? Sri Krishna replies; Sannyasa or renunciation means abandoning such works as are tainted with the desire for the fruit, i.e. to perform only such work as of self-discipline and Tapas. Tyaga denotes the giving up of the desire for the reward of all kinds of action. While in the former, particular kinds of Karma are entirely renounced, in the latter all Karmas are performed without desire for the fruit. It is held action itself is an evil and it should be abandoned and

CONCLUSION

A brief and concise summary of the whole Gita will now be presented to the readers. At the start the Lord awakens the ignorant soul to the existence of the root evil which has brought about his bondage and the utter oblivion of his divine and immortal nature. This root evil is Moha or attachment which has sprung from the seed called desire—the primal cause of ignorance. The eradication of desire and Moha means liberation. Liberation consists in the identity of the soul with the immortal Atman. This deathless state is realized only when the mind of man, through a burning aspiration for freedom, is withdrawn from its association with the perishable body and the objects of the senses and is directed through concentration towards the eternal Truth of his being. The soul has to pass through various Sadhanas or spiritual practices before he can unveil the glory and magnificence of the Atman dwelling within him. In fact, ignorance consists in the forgetfulness of the soul of his eternal and infinite nature. So all Sadhanas are for keeping up a ceaseless remembrance of the great Truth which the soul has forgotten and which he is in reality. Ceaseless remembrance brings on a divine consciousness in which the soul discovers himself to be the all-

pervading, eternal and changeless Truth. In this attainment the soul rises beyond the notion of the body and enjoys the bliss of immortality by rising superior to the Gunas of Prakriti and the Dwandwas born therefrom.

The liberated soul freed through the realization of Atman, which is only one aspect of the Lord, still strives to know and merge in the supreme Godhead in all His aspects and existences. Here starts the path of utter self-dedication leading the awakened soul to a vision and status which baffles description. He now beholds the entire universe and all beings, creatures and things in it as the very expression and revelation of the invisible, infinite, immutable, eternal, unthinkable and transcendent supreme Reality. He experiences not only the unchanging calmness and peace of his oneness with God in the universe and beyond but also the bliss of the pure, intimate and loving communion with him in the visible universe and all activities in it. So it is made clear at the end of the Gita that the highest acme of God-realization is to be a perfect devotee of the Lord—a veritable embodiment of divine knowledge, divine action, and divine love. Such a devotee is the very form and expression of God or God Himself in human form. Sri Krishna—the Purushottama has revealed Himself in his heart and has absorbed him into His ineffable and extremely wonderful Being. This is the goal and Gita Sandesh is to take the soul to this goal.



GLOSSARY

A

<i>Abhyasa</i>	..	..	Practice.
<i>Adharma</i>	..	..	Unrighteousness.
<i>Adi-maya</i>	..	..	First principle of creation.
<i>Ahankara</i>	..	..	<i>Ego.</i>
<i>Akasha</i>	..	..	Ether.
<i>Akshara</i>	..	..	The indestructible Spirit.
<i>Amrita</i>	..	..	Immortality.
<i>Ashwattha</i>	..	..	Peepul tree.
<i>Asuras</i>	..	..	Demons.
<i>Asuric</i>	..	..	Demoniac.
<i>Atman</i>	..	..	Supreme Soul.
<i>Atmic</i>	..	..	Pertaining to the Supreme Soul.
<i>Avatar</i>	..	..	Incarnation.

B

<i>Bhakta</i>	..	..	Devotee.
<i>Brahmacharya</i>	..	..	Celibacy, continence.
<i>Brahman</i>	..	..	The Supreme Being.
<i>Brahmana</i>	..	..	The man belonging to the first of the four original castes of the Hindus—knower of the Brahman.
<i>Brahmic</i>	..	..	Relating to Brahman.
<i>Buddhi</i>	..	..	Intellect, understanding.

D

<i>Daivi</i>	..	..	Divine.
<i>Devas</i>	..	..	Celestial beings.
<i>Dharma</i>	..	..	Righteousness, right course of conduct.
<i>Dwandwas</i>	..	..	Pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain.

G

<i>Guna</i>	..	..	Any one of the three properties constituting Nature.
<i>Guru</i>	..	..	Spiritual preceptor.

J

<i>Jagat-guru</i>	..	..	World Teacher.
<i>Jiva</i>	..	..	Individual soul.
<i>Jnana</i>	..	..	Divine Knowledge.

K

<i>Kama</i>	..	..	Desire.
<i>Karma</i>	..	..	Action.
<i>Karmic</i>	..	..	Pertaining to action.
<i>Karmayoga</i>	..	..	The path of selfless action.
<i>Karmayogi</i>	..	..	He who performs selfless action.
<i>Kshara</i>	..	..	The destructible.
<i>Kshatriya</i>	..	..	The man who belongs to the second of the four castes of the Hindus—Warrior.
<i>Kshetra</i>	..	..	Field.
<i>Kumards</i>	..	..	The four sons of Brahma.

L

<i>Lila</i>	..	..	Play.
<i>Loka-Sangraha</i>	..	..	The welfare or uplift of the world.

M

<i>Maha-shakti</i>	..	..	The supreme Power of God.
<i>Manus</i>	..	..	Law givers.
<i>Moha</i>	..	..	Attachment to perishable objects.
<i>Mula-Prakriti</i>	..	..	The primeval matter of three qualities.

N

<i>Nirguna</i>	..	..	Free from the three properties or qualities of Nature.
<i>Nishkama</i>	..	..	Selfless; desireless.
<i>Nishkamata</i>	..	..	The state of desirelessness.

O

- Omkar* The monosyllabled mystic sound OM made up of A. U. M. The first word in creation—signifies Brahman.

P

- Para-bhakti* Supreme devotion attainable after self-knowledge.
- Paramatman* The Supreme Spirit.
- Para-Prakriti* The higher creative principle of manifestation.
- Prakriti* Nature both gross and subtle.
- Pranayama* Breath-control.
- Purusha* The unaffected, witness-aspect of God.

R

- Rajas* } The quality of action.
- Rajo-guna* }
- Rishis* Sages.

S

- Sadhaka* Spiritual aspirant.
- Sadhana* Spiritual discipline.
- Samadhi* The state of eternal tranquillity attained through abstract meditation.
- Samsara-Vraksha* The tree of life.
- Sandesh* Message.
- Sankalpa* The faculty of making plans.
- Sannyasa* The last of the four stages in a man's life as set down in Hindu shastras; renunciation of worldly life.
- Sannyasi* Ascetic or hermit.
- Sattwa* } The quality of light, harmony and
- Sattwa-guna* } peace.
- Shakti* Divine Power.
- Shastras* Scriptures.
- Shraddha* Firmness of faith.

<i>Shuddha</i>	.. ..	Pure.
<i>Shudras</i>	.. ..	The fourth caste of the Hindu social order—serving class.
<i>Slokas</i>	.. ..	Verses.
<i>Swabhava</i>	.. ..	Natural tendency.
<i>Swadharna</i>	.. ..	Rule of action according to one's nature.
<i>Swarup</i>	.. ..	Being.

T

<i>Tamas</i>	.. ..	The quality of dullness, delusion and darkness.
<i>Tamo-guna</i>	.. ..
<i>Tamasic</i>	.. ..	Pertaining to Tamas.
<i>Tapas</i>	.. ..	Austerity.
<i>Tapaswi</i>	.. ..	Doer of austerities.
<i>Tapasya</i>	.. ..	The course of austerity.
<i>Tri-gunas</i>	.. ..	The three qualities inherent in Nature.
<i>Tyagi</i>	He who has renounced all the desires of the heart.

U

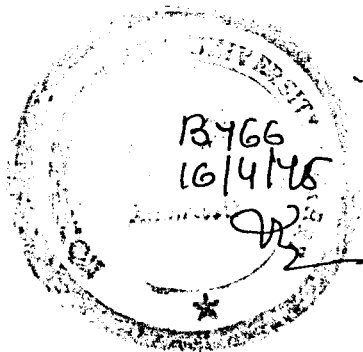
<i>Upadesh</i>	Teaching.
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V

<i>Vairagya</i>	Dispassion.
<i>Vaishyas</i>	The third caste of the Hindu social order—agriculturists and traders.
<i>Vedanta</i>	.. ..	The philosophy of the Upanishads. The end of Vedas.
<i>Vedas</i>	.. ..	The four great original (sacred) books of the Hindus.
<i>Vedic</i>	.. ..	Relating to Vedas.
<i>Vidya</i>	.. ..	Spiritual knowledge.

Y

<i>Yoga</i>	The state of union with God.
<i>Yogi</i>	A God-realized soul.
<i>Yogic</i>	Relating to yoga.
<i>Yugas</i>	Eras or ages.



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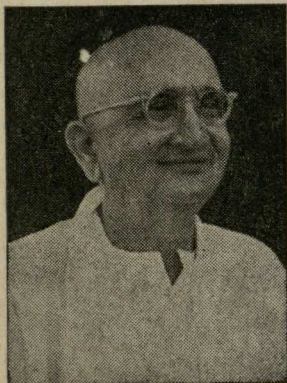
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THE AUTHOR

After receiving initiation of the *Ram Mantra* from his father, Swami Ramdas, who was then known as Vittal Rao, renounced the worldly life in 1922 and wandered as a mendicant Sadhu all over India and in the Himalayas, in a frenzy of God-intoxication, with the holy and all-powerful Ram Mantra ever on his tongue, and with God as his only refuge and guide. His was the completest surrender to the Will of God.

Many years of wandering life brought him finally back to South Kanara. Having attained spiritual liberation and God-vision, he started his mission to guide and serve mankind in order to awaken it to the awareness of God. He founded an Ashram—named Anandashram—near Kanhangad, N. Kerala, which is fostered by love and care by Mother Krishnabai, his foremost disciple and a Self-realized soul. Swami Ramdas' writings come from the deeps of Reality and therefore go straight to the heart. In 1954, he and Mother Krishnabai went on a world tour and hundreds of their devotees, friends, and admirers who had loved and venerated them from a distance, had a chance to come into close contact with them. Since the last three decades Anandashram has been a powerful spiritual beacon, and thousands have been constantly visiting it, carrying home with them the torch of Light, Love and Service lit at the feet of the great Master.

Swami Ramdas attained *mahanirvana* in July 1963.