

insight. The universal spirit possesses the acme of this power or quality as one of his powers. He only is good,—all other beings are evil,—and that which is manifested as good in us is really this power of the Deity, the fruits of the Spirit of God (Gal. v. 22 *et seq.*).

Through *sattva* the Ego appears to be happy and wise. To be happy is an experience; therefore happiness is an object, and consequently its relation to consciousness is not essential, but is produced by false knowledge. Similarly, when wisdom is attributed to the Ego it is through false knowledge. The true Ego is absolute. "I am that I am."

7. Know *rajas* to be the embodiment of desire, and the producer of thirst and relish; that, O Kuntī's son, ties the ego through attachment to action.¹

Rajas seems, as it were, to lay the colors on the transparent *sattva*. "I am happy, I know," is the expression of the pure, calm state of the heart. On this ground, like patches of color, arise such thoughts as, "I want this, I have it, I like it, and want to keep it." Thus it manifests itself in thirst for absent things and relish in possession of them.

8. Know *tamas* as born of insensibility,² the deluder³ of all embodied creatures, O Bharata's son; it ties through heedlessness,⁴ laziness,⁵ and sleep.⁶

9. *Sattva* attaches to happiness, *rajas* to actions, while *tamas*, veiling⁷ the power of discrimination, attaches to heedlessness.

The mode of operation of the three qualities is next shown.

¹ "Attachment to action," both present and future

² "Insensibility," that power in *Prakṛiti* which does not reflect consciousness.

³ "Deluder," the cause of the acceptance of falsehood for truth

⁴ "Heedlessness," the non-performance of what is intended to be done, on account of attachment to some other things

⁵ "Laziness," lack of energy and enthusiasm to complete what is begun.

⁶ "Sleep" includes stupor

⁷ "Veiling," etc., that is, obscuring the clearness of perception due to *sattva*, causes non-performance of right action. The power to perceive spiritual truths belongs to *sattva*, but *tamas* causes their oblivion at time of action.

10. Overcoming rajas and tamas, sattva asserts itself, O Bharata's son; similarly, rajas, sattva and tamas, and tamas, sattva and rajas.

Those who desire the cultivation of sattva must overcome the other two qualities. In order to impress this upon the mind, the mode of the operation of the qualities is given. The effect of one of the three is perceived when the other two are overborne.

11. When at every gate¹ of the body there is the illumination of knowledge, then know that sattva is dominant.

12. Greed,² initiation of action,³ energy in great worldly achievements, unrest, and thirst, these are born on rajas becoming dominant

13. Non-illumination,⁴ non-initiation, heedlessness, and delusion,⁵ — these, O son of Kuru, are born on tamas becoming dominant.

The future condition of creatures is due to attachment and desire, and is therefore dependent on the power of the qualities.

14. If the embodied self experience death when sattva is dominant, he obtains the stainless⁶ spheres of the knowers of good.⁷

15. Experiencing death when rajas is dominant, he is born in spheres of attachment to action.⁸ And so,

¹ "At every gate," that is, all the senses and faculties attain the fullest manifestation of power, and thereby remove all sense of effort or inability.

² "Greed," desire of that which is possessed by others

³ "Initiation of action," striving for objects in general without any special end in view.

⁴ "Non-illumination," want of discriminating power, external and internal.

⁵ "Delusion," stupidity and gross folly.

⁶ "Stainless," free from rajas and tamas

⁷ "Knowers of good," those who know the nature of buddhi, or are worshipers of the cause of the physical universe.

⁸ "Spheres of . . . action," as a human being.

one dead when *tamas* is dominant is born in deluded wombs.¹

The varieties of disposition due to the qualities, and the consequences of such dispositions, have been enumerated in the three preceding verses. The influence of the qualities on actions is next declared.

16. They² call the fruit of righteous acts as pure and pertaining to *sattva*: of *rajas* the fruit is pain³: and the fruit of *tamas* is insensibility.⁴

17. From *sattva* arises knowledge,⁵ from *rajas* greed, from *tamas* heedlessness and delusion, as also spiritual blindness.

18. Those established in *sattva*⁶ go upwards;⁷ those belonging to *rajas* remain in the middle,⁸ and those established in the functions of the lowest quality — those belonging to *tamas* — go below⁹

The preceding chapter briefly says (v 21). "The cause of his birth in good and evil wombs is self-identification with qualities."

The foregoing verses of the present chapter explain the nature of false knowledge and the qualities which cause bondage. Liberation from attachment to the qualities comes from right knowledge, as is shown in the following verses.

¹ "Deluded wombs," as creatures in whom the power of consciousness is very limited

² "They," that is, the wise. One authority says Kapila, the founder of Sāṅkhya philosophy, and his disciples

³ "Pain" is the consequence of action in which right is mixed with wrong; pain predominates, while there is still some pleasure

⁴ "Insensibility." The consequence of vice is pain varied by insensibility to pain.

⁵ "Knowledge," right perception by all the senses and faculties.

⁶ "Established in *sattva*," acquiring spiritual knowledge and acting under the influence of *sattva*

⁷ "Go upwards," are born in celestial spheres.

⁸ "Middle;" the human sphere

⁹ "Go below," born as irrational beings, or as some say, in hell.

19. While the wise man who does not perceive the actor as different from the qualities,¹ and also perceives what is different² from the qualities, attains to my state.³

20. The ego in the body transcending these three qualities from which the body is produced, and being liberated from birth, death, decay, and sorrow, attains immortality.

Whenever the three qualities, or Prakriti and Purusha, are discriminately known, liberation is reached.

The question naturally arises as to what characteristics are found in one who has attained such liberation, because characteristics natural to him are to be acquired by the aspirants as means for the accomplishment of the desired end.

ARJUNA said:

21. By what characteristics does a man become known, O Lord, as having transcended these three qualities? What is such an one's behavior, and how does such an one transcend these three qualities?

THE BLESSED LORD spoke:

22. Illumination, engaging in action, as also delusion, O Pāṇdu's son, when in activity he does not hate,⁴ not wish for when ended,⁵

¹ "Different from the qualities;" that is, the qualities are being modified into cause and effect, and under their influence it appears as if the ego were the actor.

² "What is different," that is, consciousness, by relation to which through false knowledge the qualities exist at all.

³ "My state," Nirvāṇa. Realizes that all this is really the ego

⁴ "He does not hate," that is, when any one of the three qualities asserts itself he does not wish to check it.

⁵ "Wish for when ended," that is, one established in sattva wishes for the domination by sattva of the other two qualities when they assert themselves. This answers the question as to the characteristics of one who transcends the qualities.

23. Who, remaining as disinterested,¹ is not perturbed by the qualities;² "the qualities prevail, overcoming one another;" who, thus fixed, is not moved;

24. Equal towards enjoyment and suffering, seated in Self;³ equal towards a clod of earth, stone, and gold; equal towards the desirable and the undesirable,⁴ wise, equal towards blame and adulation;

25. Equal towards honor and disgrace; equal towards friendly and hostile sides,⁵ abandoner⁶ of all initiation, is called beyond the qualities.

26. And also Me⁷ whose worships in unwavering union of love,⁸ he, completely transcending the qualities, is able to become the Supreme God.⁹

This answers as to how the qualities are transcended. The path of love is mentioned because the condition of sages illuminated by knowledge is comprehended in the two previous answers.

27. Even of the Supreme Ruler, immortal and unmodifying; of the eternal law of righteousness; of the acme of bliss, — I am the support.

¹ "As disinterested;" that is, unattached to the qualities and their actions.

² "The qualities," etc. In consequence of the realization of the distinctness of the Purusha from the qualities, it is perceived that all that is cause and all that is effect are but the three qualities and their modifications. This answers the question as to behavior.

³ "Seated in Self," that is, independent of all objects.

⁴ "Desirable and the undesirable," from the point of view of others.

⁵ "Equal towards friendly sides," not only disinterested as regards his own apparent interest, but also for that of others, the true object of spiritual interest of the human race is one and the same, — the Deity, who is the true and only Self.

⁶ "Abandoner," engaging in no action not indispensable for the maintenance of the body.

⁷ "Me;" the Spirit, which though one yet dwells in every heart.

⁸ "Unwavering union of love," an all-exclusive, changeless love, never thinking of the condition of bondage.

⁹ "Able to become . . . God," that is, attains Nirvāna through the grace of God, even before the dissolution of the body. "To become God" in scriptural language means "to be in the form of God."

Here ends chapter the fourteenth, called "RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF THE DIVISION OF THE THREE QUALITIES," in the blessed BHAGAVAD GÎTÂ, the sacred lore, the divine wisdom, the book of divine union, the colloquy between the blessed KRISHNA and ARJUNA, and contained in the Bhîshma Parvan of the blessed MAHÂBHÂRATA, which is a collection of one hundred thousand verses by VYÂSA.

The Blessed Lord as the Spirit is the spirit of the Supreme Ruler whose nature is immortality and eternity ; perfect spiritual illumination reveals the truth that the Spirit of God is the only true Spirit in Being. The " eternal law of righteousness " is the power or ability to attain Nirvâna ; the knowledge by which the identity with the Deity is manifested to the devotee is also the Deity ; the power and the powerful being the same. In this sense the Blessed Lord is the support of the Supreme God. God is, because the true Ego is the Spirit of God

In this chapter has been explained how the union between Kshetra and Kshetrajna causes the universe ; the extinction of conditioned existence by perfect knowledge is declared. The natural characteristics of one who has transcended the qualities are also explained, for the purpose of indicating the proper means to the aspirant for liberation ; and finally, it is said that all-exclusive love of the Deity is the easiest road to salvation

Salutation to Krishna, whose devotee easily crosses over the ocean of existence produced by attachment to the three qualities.

CHAPTER XV.

RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUPREME SPIRIT.

It has been said that by right knowledge the bondage of conditioned existence is cut asunder (Chap XIV v 19). It has also been said that this knowledge can be acquired only through the grace of God, who grants it to the aspirant either through another human form, called his preceptor, or in some inscrutable way (Chap. IV. v. 34). The truth that the fruit of all action and the realization of identity with God in real essence, or as consciousness, are dependent finally upon God's will, and not upon human will, is declared as supreme. In the last verse but one of the foregoing chapter the Blessed Lord says that He grants liberation to His devotee

As knowledge of God is the only road to salvation, the Blessed Lord proceeds to declare the right knowledge of the Self, by the bestowal of which He rescues His devotee from death. This knowledge which saves is not a mere intellectual form, but real consciousness, — a new life, in fact.

THE BLESSED LORD *spoke*:

1. Exhaustless they call the *Açvattha*,¹ with roots above² and branches below,³ the leaves whereof are the Vedas;⁴ who knows this knows the Vedas.⁵

¹ *Açvattha* — literally, fleeting, evanescent — here means the sacred fig-tree, *Ficus religiosa*. It symbolizes the universe, which is called exhaustless because it is without beginning, and ends only by spiritual knowledge and not in time.

² "Roots above," that is, the Supreme Spirit, through the power called the first cause, is the root of the universe. Above, because the subtlety, permanence, and comprehensiveness of the cause transcends the effect.

³ "Branches below;" the branches are the product of the first cause, which is Prakṛti, under the oversight of the Spirit. These products are buddhi, ahaṁkāra, and the five subtle elements.

⁴ "The leaves whereof are the Vedas," because as leaves protect a tree, so the Vedas protect the universe by revealing the law of righteousness.

⁵ "Knows the Vedas," that is, whoever knows the Truth knows the Vedas, as they are but the embodiment of the Truth.

The endless stream of evolution is represented as a tree for the purpose of teaching that without complete purification through dispassion no one can ever know the mystery of God's being. At the same time it is not true that every pure and dispassionate man necessarily attains that knowledge of God which gives salvation. Besides purity of heart it is necessary to have the aspiration to know God; and this aspiration may be called love of God, love of liberation, love of Nirvāna, or love of truth.

This symbolism occurs in the Vedas: "This Aṣvattha, with roots above and branches below, is eternal." Elsewhere it is said: —

"Prakṛiti is the root, and supported by it this tree is raised, and buddhi is its trunk, and the crevices in it are the senses and organs; the subtle elements are its branches, and it is leafy with gross objects; good and evil are its flower, and pleasure and pain are its fruit, suited to the life of all creatures is this tree of Brahmā. This is also the abode of Brahmā, perpetually Brahmā dwells here; with the great sword of knowledge piercing and cutting it asunder, and thence obtaining the enjoyment of being the true Self, one does not revolve."

The idea is that nothing exists but God, and His nature has two aspects, as inseparable as sunshine and shadow. The first aspect is all that appears to be, and the other is His own independence of it, — otherwise called bondage and liberation. To realize this opposition of the two aspects of the Divine power — in other words, to see that what appears to be is not — is to know God. That which supports the existence of two mutually destructive things is beyond both and is the real nature of God, — Himself. This is the absolute majesty of God which is untouched by the universe that seems to be its negation, as also by the disclosure of the true character of the universe as seeming. He to whom this truth is as real as the pen is to the writer who holds it in his hand is in Nirvāna; he knows even as he is known.

2. Its branches,¹ having objects of sense for shoots and invigorated by the qualities,² spread above and

¹ "Branches;" that is, various creatures who are distinguished from one another by the difference of surroundings proceed to regions above or below according to their merits.

² "Qualities," meaning the three qualities, — goodness, passion, and ignorance.

below; and the roots,¹ having actions for their consequences in the world of men,² also penetrate down below.

3. Its form in this world is not perceived as such;³ it has not end⁴ nor beginning⁵ nor middle,⁶—this Aṣvattha with roots⁷ struck deep, having cut asunder with the firm sword of dispassion,⁸

4 Then⁹ that seat, from which those who attain it fall back¹⁰ no more, is to be sought by taking refuge in that Primeval Spirit, from whom is the beginningless flow of conditioned existence.

5. Without egotism and indiscrimination, having subdued the fault of attachment,¹¹ devoted to the thought of the nature of the Spirit,¹² with desires at rest,¹³ free from the pairs of opposites called pleasure and pain, the undeluded go to that exhaustless seat

6. That is not manifested by Sun or Moon or Fire, and having gone there they fall not back;
 Rev xxi. 23 ; that is my Supreme abode.
 xxii. 5

¹ "Roots," that is, secondary causes, such as attachment and hatred, which produce the inexorable chain of causation, which by the will of God governs the experiences of conditioned beings.

² "World of men," because in other worlds creatures are more contented and less changeable than men.

³ "Is not perceived as such," because if the true character of worldly existence is once perceived it vanishes like mist before the sun.

⁴ "It has not end," no man knows when it will end, because it can only end by illumination which comes according to no law (Cf Matt. xiii 32)

⁵ "Nor beginning," no man can say when the universe began

⁶ "Nor middle," even its present condition cannot be understood.

⁷ "Roots" etc, that is, the stream of worldly existence will not end if left to itself

⁸ "Firm sword of dispassion," that is, with the face resolutely turned towards the Supreme God, perpetually practising dispassion with right discrimination.

⁹ "Then," after renunciation the supreme seat is to be sought.

¹⁰ "Fall back," that is, into migratory existence

¹¹ "Having subdued . . attachment," that is, being equal to friends and enemies.

¹² "Nature of the Spirit," the mystery of the connection between the Absolute and the conditioned Self.

¹³ "Desires at rest," as in sages who have perfected renunciation.

The sacred text says: "Not there shines the sun, nor moon, nor stars, nor shine these lightnings; where is there this fire? That light reflecting, these all shine; by the light of that all this is manifested."

Every union in nature is followed by disunion. Even then how there is no falling back from that seat is now explained.

7. Even a portion¹ of Me becoming the beginningless apparently conditioned ego in the world of such egos, draws in the six senses (together with the manas), existing in their proper relation of harmony.

The word "portion" might suggest the thought of the division of the Supreme, but in reality this division can appear through delusion alone. The usual illustration is that the light within an earthen pot which is pierced with holes issues from each opening as a distinct line of light, but if the pot is broken, the lines of light are merged in *the* light and do not again appear in those individual lines. For clearness other illustrations are given. By reflection on a number of surfaces the sun appears as many suns, but on the destruction of the reflectors the sun-images are lost in *the* sun forever. When the space occupied by an object merges into infinite space on the destruction of the object, it remains a part of *the* space. Immortality consists in the knowledge that the sun-image and the sun are one. The ego is the same as the Supreme Spirit, but immortality is an object called by some recognition, — of the oneness, of the want of change in the quality of consciousness, despite the infinitude of objects that exist by dependence on it.

The portioning of the Supreme Spirit into personal egos is due to false knowledge or creative power, and these illusive entities circulate in the wheel of evolution by causing a coherence of the various powers of sensation and reflection in a definite way, the whole system of evolution being as real or as imaginary as those egos. The immediate agency which causes this aggregation may be called pre-existing desires; this naturally gives rise to the inquiry as to what gives this power to desires. Philosophers solve this problem in two ways, according to their respective schools.

¹ "Even a portion," etc. The truth is that the conditioned ego, which never falls back after attaining the Supreme, is at no time really different from the Supreme.

By some it is called *Svabhavat*, or *natura rerum*, while others call it the will of God. Whichever term is used, the explanation is the same; the mysterious, ultimate cause is beyond comprehension, like the yellowness of gold. Both schools will admit that from our present point of view the Cause is conscious, and both will agree that by spiritual illumination the cause is seen to be separate from consciousness, and therefore non-existent except as the power of consciousness, and therefore *really* identical with it.

8. The Lord,¹ carrying these, proceeds to the body he receives, from the body he leaves, as the wind bears fragrance from the source thereof.

As the subtle perfume of flowers is borne away by the wind, so the conditioned ego carries with it the six powers before mentioned. The metaphor goes further. The ego is really all-pervading, like air; but as currents of wind circulate in reference to objects different from the air, so in reference to the body the ego appears to migrate; and this appearance is due to the operations of the mind and senses.

The individual ego—in other words, the conditioned ego considered at the lowest limit of conditions—is unfettered by human conceptions of time and space; mind and senses are necessary to relate it to these two classes of conditions. The individual and the universal spirit are coeval, the former not knowing the latter. Because, in order that the universal should be known by the individual it is necessary that their identity as *the* Spirit should be manifested, as knowledge is nothing more than the manifestation of the knower's relation to the object known.

The manifestation of this identity is but another way of saying that the co-related attributes of the Spirit which form the individual and universal spirit are rejected from consciousness, and the Absolute is itself. Ignorance of the universal Spirit is the essential condition for the existence of the individual spirit. It may be urged in opposition that the relation between the two is not identity, but some other which would enable the two to exist, and yet the individual know the universal; this is self-contradictory. The idea of individuality does not admit of the existence of things similar to itself. That is not individual which is unrelated to the universal, and it is

¹ "The Lord" of this assemblage of body and faculties.

obvious that that which is related to many can have no relation to the universal, which to be must absorb every variety within itself.

All being thus reduced to duality, it is clear that the universal Spirit must know the individual spirit. Otherwise where would the consciousness be to support the latter's existence by knowing it? It cannot know itself as the individual spirit except it also knows the universal Spirit, in relation to whom alone the individual is the individual, as has been said before.

The individual spirit can, therefore, exist only as "I do not know myself;" this is the meaning of individuality. The universal Spirit is "I know myself;" the "myself" in both cases being the same, and identical with the real nature of God.

This "I do not know myself" considered apart from consciousness is the primeval darkness over which the spirit of God or consciousness broods, and contains within itself the whole warp and woof of all that has been, is, or can be. The Son of God or universal Spirit knows this darkness is not I, and in this way is omniscient. Thus divested of self-identity with all objectivity, the self-existent consciousness is perceived not as an object but as the Self; while the individual knows that there is an I which he does not know, and is also contented with the want of knowledge. In other words, the individual believes himself to be an object; the stuff of this false belief about the Ego or Spirit is false knowledge (*avidyā*), because the Ego is not an object. This seeming or false knowledge by its own nature counterfeits the I. The knowledge that the Ego is not an object is the only true knowledge of the Ego, which does not require to be known in order to be. Spiritual knowledge is not an intellectual acquirement, it is dispassion, universal love, and the faith that I am pure consciousness and nothing that can be the object of any operation, its consummation is *Nirvāna*.

9. Dominating ear, eye, skin, tongue, and nose, as well as the *manas*, he enjoys objects.

"He" is the personal ego, the being who feels in connection with the body that "I am the actor" and "I am the enjoyer." *Ahankāra*, apparently impregnated by consciousness, or, as it is technically called, receiving on it the reflection of consciousness, is the personal ego.

10. The deluded¹ do not see him, migrating, stationary, or experiencing qualities; but the wisdom-eyed² do perceive.

11. Men of tranquil hearts,³ striving for it,⁴ perceive him, seated in the buddhi;⁵ but those of impure hearts,⁶ and devoid of discrimination,⁷ though striving for it, do not perceive him.

12. The splendor in the sun which illuminates the whole world, that which is also in the moon, that also in the fire, — know that splendor as mine.

The various luminous powers are but reflections of the same light, and that light is the Deity. It is to be understood that the Divine influence pervades everything, but all things do not manifest it equally, through the influence of the quality called *tamas*. This is an enlargement of the idea as to the illusive manifestation of the Deity as conditioned egos.

13. Also entering into the earth,⁸ I uphold these creatures by my power,⁹ and I nourish all vegetables by becoming Soma,¹⁰ the embodiment of sapor.

Heb 1. 3.
Gen 1. 29.

¹ "Deluded," that is, engrossed in material life.

² "Wisdom-eyed," that is, those whose minds have been purified by spiritual knowledge.

³ "Men of tranquil hearts," those who are carnally dead, and alive in spirit.

⁴ "Striving for it," that is, through meditation and Scriptural study.

⁵ "Seated in the buddhi," that is, though connected with the body, yet separate from it.

⁶ "Impure hearts;" those who have no control over their senses, and cannot concentrate their minds on one thing except for a short time, who have not abandoned evil habits, and whose egotism and vanity are not subjugated.

⁷ "Devoid of discrimination," turbulence of the senses causes defective perception.

⁸ "Entering into the earth;" as its soul the divine power makes the earth what it is.

⁹ "By my power;" that is, the fitness of the earth to be the dwelling-place of all creatures really comes from the Deity.

¹⁰ *Soma* is the sacred plant said to embody all the sapor of the entire vegetable kingdom. If this sapor (or essence of taste) did not exist, no vegetable would have been eatable, and creatures could not have lived. The fitness of vegetables for food to sustain life is here indicated.

14. I, becoming Vaiçvânara,¹ and entering into the bodies of living creatures, digest the four kinds² of food, being joined with the upward and downward life-breaths.

15. I am also seated in the hearts of all;³ from Me is recollection⁴ and knowledge, as well as their removal; by all the Vedas I am to be known,⁵ and I am also the author of the Vedânta,⁶ as well as the knower of the Vedas.⁷

The remaining verses of this chapter contain an epitome of the whole book.

16. Two spirits⁸ are there in the world,—the destructible⁹ and the indestructible.¹⁰ The destructible is all creatures, and the kūtastha¹¹ is called the indestructible.

17. But different is the Supreme Spirit,¹² called the Paramâtmâ,¹³ who, the exhaustless God, having entered into the three spheres, supports¹⁴ them.

¹ *Vaiçvânara* is the internal fire or energy which causes digestion in connection with respiration

² "Four kinds," according as the food is chewed, sucked, lapped, or drunk

³ "Seated in the hearts of all;" all creatures, from the ant to the highest god, are conscious because of the same Ego, each taking it as himself, through false knowledge.

⁴ "Recollection," that is, the righteous remember the law under all circumstances, which the unrighteous cannot do.

⁵ "By all the Vedas I am to be known" The Lord is no other than the Supreme Spirit revealed by the Vedas

⁶ "The author of the Vedânta," that is, the Primeval Teacher who was the first expounder of the true meaning of the Vedas

⁷ "The knower of the Vedas," he who realizes the truth embodied in the Vedas is identical with the Supreme Spirit

⁸ "Two spirits," the Supreme Spirit is seen through two different veils

⁹ "Destructible," the material of all things, from the body of the most exalted creature to the fibre of wood. It is called spirit in accordance with popular usage, and for the purpose of indicating the Supreme Spirit by the process of elimination.

¹⁰ "Indestructible," the power of the Deity which causes the destructible.

¹¹ *Kūtastha*; the indestructible spirit is thus named because it is unaffected by all differentiation. These two are really the Supreme Spirit manifested to man's conception through two correlated forms

¹² "Different," that is, unrelated to the conditions which form the other two.

¹³ *Paramâtmâ*, of all things called âtmâ from any point of view, this is the supreme, the innermost reality, the Most High.

¹⁴ "Supports," that is, without effort, by His mere being. The Absolute does not lose its character in supporting the universe.

18. Because I¹ am beyond the destructible,² and superior even to the indestructible;³ therefore in the Vedas as well as in the world I am called the Supreme Spirit.

19. Thus whoever, undeluded, knows Me as the Supreme Spirit, he, the knower of all, worships Me in all forms.

20. Thus this most secret instruction has been declared by me, O sinless one; knowing this, a man becomes, O Bharata's son, the doer of all that is to be done.

Thus ends chapter the fifteenth, called the "RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUPREME SPIRIT," in the blessed BHAGAVAD GÎTÂ, the sacred lore, the divine wisdom, the book of divine union, the colloquy between the blessed KRISHNA and ARJUNA, and contained in the Bhîshma Parvan of the blessed MAHÂBHÂRATA, which is a collection of one hundred thousand verses by VYÂSA.

Salutation to Krishna, who has revealed the right knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, which is realizable only by cutting down the tree of conditioned existence.

¹ "I;" not the human being called by the world Krishna, but the Spirit which he knows to be the true Ego, — the real Himself

² "Destructible," the perpetually changing universe

³ "Indestructible," the divine omnipotence which is the basis of the universe.

CHAPTER XVI.

RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF THE DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN GODLIKE AND DEMONIAIC ATTRIBUTES.

IN Chapter IX, verses 12, 13, it has been said that human nature is divisible into three classes, — godlike, demoniac, and impish. This subject is now further explained, in order to teach that those who aspire for salvation must cultivate the godlike attributes and abandon the others. This chapter is also intended to elucidate the last verse of the preceding chapter by showing how "the knowledge of the being of the Deity" is to be obtained which makes a man the "doer of all that is to be done."

THE BLESSED LORD *spoke*:

1. Want of fear,¹ sincerity of behavior,² assiduity in regard to knowledge³ and its realization,⁴ gifts,⁵ external restfulness,⁶ sacrifices,⁷ study,⁸ austerities,⁹ rectitude.

¹ "Want of fear," acting fearlessly, without doubt or misgiving, in accordance with scriptural instruction

² "Sincerity of behavior," not influencing others artfully or by falsehood, sophistry, or by causing perplexity.

³ "Knowledge," instruction about the real nature of the ego and non-ego given in the Scriptures and by preceptors

⁴ "Realization," constant effort to verify these truths by personal experience. These three are the most important of the attributes called godlike. The nature of a man in whom these attributes exist is said to pertain to the quality of *sattva*.

⁵ "Gifts," sharing one's possessions with others

⁶ "External restfulness," repose of manner; absence of nervousness.

⁷ "Sacrifices," according to the Scriptural injunctions.

⁸ "Study," that is, of the Scriptures other than those which deal directly with liberation.

⁹ "Austerities," as explained further on.

2. Inoffensiveness, truth, want of anger, renunciation, internal restfulness, not speaking of the faults of others, compassion towards creatures, superiority over temptations,¹ gentleness, shame,² freedom from gesticulation.

3. Power,³ forgiveness,⁴ patience, purity, want of desire to cause harm, want of over-esteem of self, are the godlike attributes wherewith a mortal is born,⁵ O son of Bharata.

"Purity" means both mental and bodily cleanliness. External impurity can be removed by water and other purifiers. The mind also requires purification whenever anger is felt, or a falsehood is told, or the faults of another needlessly disclosed; whenever anything is said or done for the purpose of flattery, or any one is deceived by the insincerity of a speech or an act. Habits of internal cleanliness should be cultivated with even greater care than those of outward purity. The agent of internal purification is shame and repentance. Entertaining anger or hatred is more loathsome than falling into a sewer; and self-gratulation and self-praise are as offensive as foul sores.

Godlike attributes are spoken of as "the fruit of the Spirit" by Saint Paul (Gal. v 22, 23). Against such, as the apostle says, "there is no law," because they lead to liberation, as is expressed here in verse 5.

4. Ostentation religious and worldly, egotism, anger, sarcasm, false knowledge,⁶ are, O Prithā's son, the demoniac attributes wherewith a mortal is born.

5. Godlike attributes are for liberation, and demoniac⁷

¹ "Superiority over temptations," freedom from agitation in the presence of temptation.

² "Shame," all genuine repentance must be preceded by shame.

³ "Power," to overcome opposition.

⁴ "Forgiveness," absence of anger, even when injured, this distinguishes it from "want of anger."

⁵ "Mortal is born;" these attributes are godlike as indicating the future well-being of the soul.

⁶ "False knowledge," perverted ideas of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, spirit and matter.

⁷ "Demoniac," pertaining to the quality of *rajas*, and here includes impish attributes pertaining to the quality of *tamas*.

for continued bondage, — this is meant by Me, O Pāndu's son;¹ grieve not: thou art born with godlike attributes.

6. In this world the creation of creatures is twofold,
 Gal v. 17. godlike and demoniac. The godlike has been
 fully declared; hear from Me, O Prithā's son,
 as to the demoniac.

For facility of detection and avoidance the rest of this chapter describes demoniac attributes in a concrete form

7. Demoniac creatures do not know what to do and what not to do, neither purity nor right behavior; there is no truth in them.

8. They call the creatures truthless² and lawless³ and Godless,⁴ produced by the union of the sexes, having lust only for cause.

Among the various systems of Indian philosophy this view is not unrepresented. Chārvaka, said to be a demon in the form of a Brāhman, is the leader of Indian materialists. The main feature of his doctrine is the rejection of both Scriptures and reasoning by inference, as legitimate organons of right knowledge. His ground for discarding inference is noteworthy as being in anticipation of many modern thinkers. A general proposition is inferred from observed instances, and again instances are employed to prove the validity of the conclusion drawn by inference, hence all universal and general propositions are inadmissible and illegitimate. Such is the reasoning of Chārvaka and his modern successors. It is to be noted, however, that the assertion of the validity of perception by the senses and exclusion of inference and revelation involves the universal proposition — all revelation and inference are inadmissible. The whole fabric of materialist philosophy is thus based upon a contradiction.

¹ "O Pāndu's son;" the Blessed Lord, knowing the thought of Arjuna, now proceeds to remove his anxiety as to his own attributes.

² "Truthless;" that is, as they are deceptive, so is the whole race, they think.

³ "Lawless," there is neither good nor evil, and all Scriptures are produced by fools and knaves.

⁴ "Godless." There is no conscious cause or righteous judge in the universe.

9. Relying upon this view,¹ those of cruel deeds, perverted natures,² and of little reason,³ enemies of the world, are born in order to destroy.

10. Full of ostentation, self-glorification, and pride, fixed firm in insatiable desire, steadfast in false faiths⁴ through blindness, and impure of conduct,⁵ they prevail on earth.

11. Also holding fast to measureless anxiety terminated only by death, and convinced of this that the enjoyment of objects of desire is the supreme end.⁶

12. Bound by hundreds of bonds of desire, taking supreme resort in lust and anger, and for the enjoyment of objects of desire working unrighteously⁷ for many possessions

13. This has been gained by me to-day, and that desired object I will gain; this treasure is, and that also will become mine.

14. This enemy by me has been slain, others I shall also slay; I am lord, I am enjoyer, I have gained my end, I am powerful, I am happy.

15. I am rich and high-born; who else is there equal to me? I shall perform sacrifices, I shall give alms, I shall rejoice. By such blindness deluded,

16. With hearts confused by many desires and covered by the net of delusions, and engrossed in the enjoyments of objects and lusts, they fall into impure hells.

¹ "This view," that is, the view of Chārvaka.

² "Perverted natures," having no means of working for their own well-being hereafter.

³ "Little reason," because confined to that which can now be perceived.

⁴ "False faiths," perverted view of the destiny of man, or worship of false gods, as one authority says.

⁵ "Impure of conduct," because their religious rites involve the taking of life, drinking intoxicating drugs and liquors, and other similar impure practices.

⁶ "The supreme end," according to Chārvaka the supreme end of existence is to enjoy all possible pleasures.

⁷ "Working unrighteously," by committing thefts, frauds, etc.

17. Honored in their own eyes, arrogant, full of pride and delusion of riches, they perform sacrifices in name,¹ irregularly,² and for the purpose of ostentation,

18. Embracing egotism,³ tyrannical power, self-conceit,⁴ lust and anger, the enemies of the righteous hate Me in their own⁵ bodies and in the bodies of others.

19. Them, the haters,⁶ cruel and worst among men, I cast endlessly⁷ into impure, demoniac wombs, in this sphere of migratory existence.

20. Falling into demoniac wombs, deluded from birth to birth, and not finding Me, O son of Kuntī, thence they go to even worse⁸ conditions.

The demoniac attributes are the "lusts of the flesh" against which Saint Paul warns (Gal v 19-21) "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

21. Threefold is this the gate of hell, causing perdition of the soul,⁹ lust, anger, and also greed; therefore abandon these three.¹⁰

¹ "Sacrifices in name," this teaches that even Vedic ceremonies are valueless when performed in such a spirit

² "Irregularly," that is, in violation of established rules.

³ "Embracing egotism," ascribing real and imaginary qualities to one's self through false knowledge

⁴ "Self-conceit," which makes it intolerable for them to be thought of as obeying any authority except their own or set up by themselves.

⁵ "In their own," etc.; that is, violate the scriptural commands of the Deity. The Supreme Spirit, as consciousness, witnesses all that a man does.

⁶ "Haters" of God and righteous men

⁷ "I cast endlessly," etc., by reason of their perverted nature they go from bad to worse. God does not treat them thus from a personal feeling of anger, but their evil deeds, violating divine commands given for their welfare, draw them into evil births, in which they work evil and are again born in evil wombs.

⁸ "Even worse," it is not to be imagined that left to themselves they ever turn to God, but eternally go from bad to worse.

⁹ "Causing perdition of the soul;" that is, preventing the soul or conscious creature from gaining the supreme end, Nirvāṇa. It does not mean annihilation

¹⁰ "These three," the chief among the demoniac attributes; if these three the root of all evils, are abandoned, the rest will soon disappear.

22. O Kuntî's son, the man secure from these three, the gates of hell, works for his well-being and then proceeds to the supreme goal.¹

23. Whoso, abandoning scriptural injunctions, remains in self-wilful conduct,² attains no heavenly sphere,³ nor happiness,⁴ nor the supreme goal.

24. Therefore, in the decision as to what ought and what ought not to be done, the Scriptures are to be thy authority; thou oughtest to perform action on earth, knowing what is enjoined by the Scriptures.

Thus ends chapter the sixteenth, called "RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF THE DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN GODLIKE AND DEMONIC ATTRIBUTES," in the blessed BHAGAVAD GÎTÂ, the sacred lore, the divine wisdom, the book of divine union, the colloquy between the blessed KRISHNA and ARJUNA, and contained in the Bhîshma Parvan of the blessed MAHÂBHÂRATA, which is a collection of one hundred thousand verses by VYÂSA.

The supreme authority of the Scriptures is emphatically declared by Jesus Christ by fulfilling the Scriptures himself, and also by explicit words, — "The Scriptures cannot be broken" (John x. 35).

In all spiritual difficulties the best course is to follow the Scriptures when there are any express declarations pertaining thereto; if not, the practice and opinion of sincere men of religion is a good precedent; failing even in that, the conscience trained by the study of the Scriptures is a safe guide to follow.

According to the influence of the three qualities, the attributes forming men's characters are divisible into two classes; namely,

¹ "Proceeds to the supreme goal;" avoiding the trinity of evils, the man not only attains the supreme goal, or Nirvâna, but also lives a happy, peaceful life on earth.

² "Self-wilful conduct;" following the corrupt impulses of carnal nature.

³ "Heavenly sphere," that is, imperfect vision of God, in lower celestial spheres.

⁴ "Happiness;" that is, on earth.

godlike and demoniac. Those who wish for salvation ought to avoid lust, anger, and greed, -- the chief among the demoniac attributes, -- and cultivate the godlike attributes of courageous obedience to the Scriptures, study of spiritual philosophy, and perseverance in its practical realization.

Salutation to Krishna, who by describing the godlike and demoniac attributes has shown what is to be followed and what avoided in order that the truth which is liberation may be received.

CHAPTER XVII.

RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF THE THREEFOLD DIVISION
OF FAITH.

IN the preceding chapter the Scriptures are said to be men's eyes in regard to spiritual matters. Those who have no faith in any revealed Scriptures are liable to be the victims of their own fancies, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. ii. 14).

Yet at the same time it is to be borne in mind that the Scriptures are not the truth, although they point out the path to truth. "The Vedas have for their object only the assemblage of the three qualities, be free from the three qualities, O Arjuna. . . . As much benefit as there is in a limited expanse of water, so much is there in water stretching free on all sides; similarly, as much benefit as there is in all the Vedic rites, so much is there for the truth-realizing Brâhman (Chap. II. vv. 45, 46). When the forest of delusion thy heart shall cross over, then shalt thou attain dispassion both as to what is heard and what is yet to hear" (Chap. II. v. 52). These and many similar passages in the Gîtâ condemn an idolatrous veneration of the letter of the Scriptures. In brief, the Scriptures are invaluable as means for the attainment of truth, but only as the means; if accepted as the end they are not only not good, but evil. The letter killeth.

The faith which manifests itself in the godlike attributes described in the last chapter is the best and highest faith, being faith in the only true God; but it is not easily attainable, and is rarely seen. The Blessed Lord uses this occasion, offered by Arjuna's question, to explain the nature of the inferior faith, which has three forms

ARJUNA said:

1. How, O Krishna, is the devotion of those who, leaving scriptural injunction, worship in faith,— is it sattva, rajas, or tamas?

This does not refer to those who, knowing the scriptural injunctions, abandon them in favor of human innovations; such cannot be said to worship in faith. If the God whom they worship is the true God, they can find no knowledge of Him outside the Scriptures; and external worship is not necessary to one who finds God within himself. Consequently, when a man who is acquainted with the Scriptures renounces them and is not yet holy enough to worship God in the form which transcends all Scriptures, namely, "in truth and in spirit," he cannot be said to have faith, and is included in the demoniac class (Chap XVI v. 23). The worshippers here spoken of are those who, through incapacity and want of development, rest contented with traditions and the opinions of authority.

The question is answered by showing the nature of this inferior faith, which can belong to any one of the three qualities. Faith in the true God of the Scriptures is of the purest sattva quality.

THE BLESSED LORD spoke:

2. The faith of embodied creatures is born of their innate nature; it is of three kinds, namely, belonging to the qualities of sattva, of rajas, and of tamas; hear about that now.

The "innate nature" here means the tendencies of the beginningless past, not purified by any spiritual influences; it is here used to distinguish it from a nature which has been produced by obedience to the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures.

The only way to change the character of man as produced by past evolution is to study the Scriptures and have faith in them. This study of the Scriptures is a sacred duty, incumbent upon all capable of it, and no study is perfected unless the knowledge acquired from it is conveyed to at least one other person. Those unable to study fulfil their duty completely by simple obedience to the lawful authority.

3. The faith of all, O son of Bharata, proceeds from the quality of *sattva*; this being¹ is made of faith;² whatever is one's faith, the same he is.

True faith comes only from the Scriptures directly, or indirectly through the instructions of holy men.

4. Those of the *sattva* quality worship gods;³ those of the quality of *rajas* worship *Yakshas*⁴ and *Rakshas*⁵; other men of the quality of *tamas* worship ghosts⁶ and spirits.⁷

From the time that faith germinates the external appearances become of secondary importance, for they are but fading echoes thenceforward. The doctrine of justification by faith as given in Chapter IX. verse 37 is a practical application of this great spiritual truth.

5. Those men who perform terrible austerities unenjoined by scriptural authority, and are full of vanity and egotism,⁸ and full of the strength of desire⁹ and attachment, —

6. Those deluded creatures, — torture the powers and faculties that inhere in the body, and also Me,¹⁰ presiding over his innermost heart, know them to be possessed of demoniac purpose.

¹ "This being;" the embodied ego, the ordinary creature.

² "Made of faith," a man can have genuine faith in that alone which he really is. Faith comes of the quality of *sattva* and varies according to its power over the other two.

³ "Gods," that is, the powers of the true God, as manifested in the quality of *sattva*.

⁴ *Yakshas*, spirits who preside over treasures.

⁵ *Rakshas*, malignant spirits, enemies of piety.

⁶ "Ghosts," disembodied human beings inhabiting the world of shadows.

⁷ "Spirits," the powers of the elements.

⁸ "Vanity and egotism" are the causes of their being addicted to cruel austerities.

⁹ "Desire" refers to absent, and "attachment" to present objects. These characterize the quality of *rajas*.

¹⁰ "And also Me." The Deity is said to be tortured by the violation of his commands. The "deluded creatures" here described are those overpowered by the quality of *tamas*.

These two verses treat of those unscriptural worshippers who are demoniac; the other class is left out on account of its infrequency. Those described must be avoided.

7. Food, sacrifices, austerities, gifts attractive to creatures, are also of three kinds; hear of their differences now.

All that are mentioned here are threefold according to their relation to the qualities. Those desirous of spiritual well-being must adopt that which cultivates the quality of *sattva* and avoid the others.

8. Foods which promote longevity, mental tranquillity, industry, harmony of bodily functions, cheerfulness, and sympathy with those of like temperament, and are succulent, oleaginous, producing permanent benefit to the body, and the composition of which is ascertainable at sight, are attractive to those in whom the quality of *sattva* is dominant.

9. Foods excessively bitter, sour, salt, hot, pungent, dry, and ardent are attractive to those in whom *rajas* prevails, and are productive of unpleasantness,¹ suffering,² and disease.

10. Foods insufficiently cooked, deprived of savor, offensive in odor, not fresh, and unfit for sacrificial offering,³ are attractive to those in whom *tamas* prevails.

11. That sacrificial ceremony belongs to *sattva* quality which is enjoined by scriptural authority, and performed by men who expect no benefit,⁴ and fix the mind in this, that "it is to be done."

12. O best of Bharata's sons, know that sacrifice which

¹ "Unpleasantness" while being eaten

² "Suffering," that is, after-effects, such as depression of spirits.

³ "Unfit for sacrificial offering," that is, food which has been irregularly tasted by any one before it is blessed by sacrifice, which corresponds to the saying of grace among Christians.

⁴ "Benefit;" outside of the desire to perform it.

is performed, looking to the result,¹ and also for a purpose of pride,² as belonging to the quality of *rajas*.

13. That sacrifice is said to pertain to *tamas* which is unfounded on sacred authority, in which food is not given to *Brāhmans*, nor holy texts recited, concluded without making gifts, and performed without faith.

Sacrifices and offerings, and indeed all kinds of religious works, are good because prescribed by scriptural authority, and not in themselves; consequently no good comes from their performance according to personal pleasure, or without faith in the Scriptures.

Having condemned all violent and unscriptural mortifications, the Blessed Lord declares the nature of proper austerities.

14. Doing reverence to Gods,³ *Brāhmans*, superiors,⁴ and wise persons, purity and straightness,⁵ chastity,⁶ and uninjuriousness⁷ are called bodily austerities.

15. Words that cause no anxiety, that are truthful, soothing, and beneficial,⁸ and also repeated readings of the Scriptures, are called verbal austerities.

16. Transparency of the mind,⁹ cheerfulness manifested in the countenance,¹⁰ restraint of speech,¹¹ self-

¹ "Looking to the result," that is, for the purpose of specific rewards in heaven, or for acquiring reputation for righteousness

² "Purpose of pride," that is, for self-gratulation

³ "Gods," that is, the Deity under all names and in all aspects.

⁴ "Superiors," that is, parents and others worthy of honor

⁵ "Straightness," this is a technical term which implies not using the limbs in prohibited acts, and keeping them engaged in the opposite.

⁶ "Chastity," here meant in the absolute sense

⁷ "Uninjuriousness," that is inflicting personal harm on no one

⁸ "Words that cause . . . beneficial" Righteous speech must have all these elements 1 It shall cause no anxiety, 2 It shall be in harmony with the real experience of the speaker, 3 It shall be soothing or pleasant in relation to apparent objects; 4 Also beneficial in relation to spiritual things. For example, "Be collected, my son, study the Scriptures or perform religious works; that will promote your well-being"

⁹ "Transparency of the mind," from absence of anxiety

¹⁰ "Cheerfulness," etc., the function of the mind which suppresses all thoughts injurious to others and entertains only such as are for their well-being. This faculty is the source of saintly calmness depicted on the countenance of holy men.

¹¹ "Restraint of speech," the determination of the mind which causes it is here meant.

restraint,¹ and sincerity of conduct² are called mental austerities.

17. By men not desiring benefit, and tranquil in heart, austerities practised in excellent faith are said to belong to sattva. Thus³ is austerity of three kinds.

18. Austerities that are practised for obtaining fame, honor, and favor, that are uncertain, transitory,⁴ and confined to this world, are said to belong to rajās.

19. Austerities that are practised in consequence of a conviction founded upon folly, for the torturing of one's self, or for the destruction of another, are said to belong to tamās.

20. "Gifts have to be made;" thinking thus, gifts that are made to those who make no return, in proper place⁵ and time⁶ to a recipient,⁷ also otherwise proper, are considered as belonging to sattva.

21. But that gift which is given for the purpose of a return of benefit, or expecting some definite spiritual benefit, or given unwillingly, is considered as belonging to rajās.

22. The gift that is made in improper time and place, and to improper recipients, who are not honored but treated with contempt, is said to belong to tamās.

¹ "Self-restraint;" withdrawing the mind from worldly objects. This is meant to include all things which are not specifically mentioned as fit objects for the exercise of self-control.

² "Sincerity of conduct;" absence of desire to influence others by any deviation from straightforwardness.

³ "Thus," as is about to be described.

⁴ "Uncertain and transitory;" their effect is entirely confined to this life, even when they do not disappoint the performer.

⁵ "Proper place," according to Brāhmanical custom holy places, such as Benares, are proper places in which to make gifts.

⁶ "Time;" by the same authority the last day of the month is a proper time for making gifts.

⁷ "Recipient;" a Brāhman versed in the Vedas is the proper recipient of a gift when he makes no return.

It being extremely difficult to preserve perfect purity of gifts and other works, here follow the directions for the removal of unavoidable shortcomings.

23. OM, TAT, SAT, these are considered as the three designations of Brahṃā.¹ By these, in the beginning, the Brāhmanas,² the Vedas, and sacrifices were sanctified.

24. Therefore, uttering the syllable OM, the Scripture-enjoined acts — pertaining to sacrifice, gift, and austerity — of those who declare the Supreme Spirit³ become always blameless.

25. By those desirous of salvation, uttering the syllable TAT, are performed various acts of sacrifice and austerity as well as acts of giving alms.

26. On birth of sons, on adopting righteousness of conduct, the syllable SAT is to be employed, and also on occasion of marriage, O son of Prithā, the word SAT is suitable.

27. In sacrifice, austerity, and almsgiving, the permanent good result is called SAT, and also works for the sake of the Deity are called SAT.

The repetition of these syllables, or any of them, has the efficacy of purifying works from rajas and tamās qualities.

28. Whatever offering is made into the fire, whatever is given, whatever austerity is practised, and whatever is done, without faith, O son of Prithā, that is called Asat,⁴ and that is not for well-being here or hereafter.

¹ Brahṃā is the Supreme Spirit.

² "Brāhmanas," that is, knowers of Brahṃā. No special reference to caste is here meant.

³ "Declare the Supreme Spirit," that is, those who, having attained identity of nature with the Deity, afterwards lead others to that goal according to the instructions contained in the Vedas.

⁴ Asat, that is, unrighteous, and not bringing the actor to God; the opposite of SAT, which literally signifies Truth or Beingness.

Thus ends chapter the seventeenth, called "RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF THE THREEFOLD DIVISION OF FAITH," in the blessed BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ, the sacred lore, the divine wisdom, the book of divine union, the colloquy between the blessed KRISHNA and ARJUNA, and contained in the Bhīshma Parvan of the blessed MAHĀBHĀRATA, which is a collection of one hundred thousand verses by VYĀSA.

Abandoning rajas and tamas, the sattva quality is always to be aspired for in austerities, sacrifices, and almsgiving. Faith being present, all imperfections in such works are removed by pronouncing the name of the Deity.

Salutation to Krishna, who has shown the path to knowledge by purification of heart through the cultivation of faith pertaining to the pure sattva quality.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF LIBERATION.

IN this final chapter is given the summary of the other seventeen, and all that is to be found in the Vedas is also to be found here in a concise form. The immediate occasion for the discourse of the Blessed Lord is the uncertainty of Arjuna as to the distinction between the renunciation of all works and giving up the expectation of personal benefit in the fruit of works by dedicating them to the Deity, since it is said that the same result, liberation, comes from both these courses.

ARJUNA *said*:

1. I wish to know, O Thou of mighty arms, the essential truth as to renunciation and as to the giving up of results; and also their difference, O Slayer of Keçi.

THE BLESSED LORD *spoke*:

2. The renunciation of all works for specific purposes is known by the wise as renunciation; the sages call the abandonment of the fruit of all actions the giving up of results.

"Works" here means the sacrificial and other ceremonies as prescribed by the Vedas. Renunciation consists in not performing all works, to which the Scriptures attach some specific gain. Renunciation, then, is the performance of the prescribed every-day duties, and such as are enjoined for special occasions; as, for example, on the birth of a son. Some among the wise also consider the giving up of this class of duties as renunciation.

The "giving up of results" is not expecting any personal benefit from the performance of such every-day and special duties. Although the sacred authority promises no specific reward for the performance of such duties, yet in a general manner they are said to "lead to the sphere of the righteous," and to "diminish sinfulness."

If all desire for benefit from action is to be given up, what reason can there be for acting at all?

First of all it should be impressed upon the mind that no man can be saved by acts, because salvation is not an act, but a new life or consciousness. Suppose a prince to be stolen at birth and brought up among swineherds, with no knowledge whatever of his royal descent. Can he by any act change his consciousness of being a swineherd's son? It can only be changed when the statement of some other person as to that fact proves to be true.

In a similar manner no conditioned creature can cease to be conditioned by any act. It can only be changed by a new consciousness arising from a source different from the conditions which seem to limit the ego. It is also true that this new consciousness cannot be given unless its recipient has faith in the source from whence it comes. From the moment that this is realized, it will be clearly seen that there is but one thing to be done, and that is to acquire this faith. Every one knows that what is unfamiliar is not believed; no great confidence is felt in a stranger, however friendly his professions may be. Suppose it to be shown that if the stranger can be trusted great good will come to those who believe in him, which cannot come in any other way. It would be reasonable then to give a trial to the stranger's words, and to feel confidence in him after a time if nothing occurs to disprove his veracity.

Works are nothing more nor less than this trial. "Faith without works is dead." In other words, works are of value only as accessories, faith being the principal. Therefore, in order to attain supreme faith which is not merely the assent of the intellect, — the approbation of the stranger which influences one to test him, — but a new consciousness or life, works also are needed. At the same time, if the works are done with some other purpose than to prove the stranger's veracity, no good comes from them; the real end for which works are prescribed is defeated. The true purpose of religion is not to direct and facilitate the self-improvement of the faithful, but to lead them to the life hidden in God, ethical improvement

being one of the preliminary requisites. For this cause let him, who aspires for salvation, do whatever he has to do with the sole object of gaining God by faith ; and when perfect faith comes, action will cease because its purpose is fulfilled.

Therefore it is said that "actions or works purifying the heart turn it towards the Spirit, and then, their purpose being consummated, they disappear like clouds at the end of the rainy season ;" "the Yogi does not leave action, but action leaves him ;" and many other texts to the same effect. The liberty of the Spirit is the consummation of spiritual culture. Therefore the right course for those who aspire to salvation is to perform their duties in life, as well as such good works as their conditions permit, believing them to be commands of God, and desiring only to strengthen the faith which by grace will save them.

The distinction between renunciation and the giving up of results is here made for a definite reason, otherwise the two might be included in the resignation of the personal will. Absolute resignation characterizes the state of those who have reached the supreme condition of spirituality described in the concluding verses of the second chapter, and in the fifth verse of the twelfth chapter. But here the Blessed Lord is not speaking of those ; He speaks of such as are devoid of wisdom and in bondage to action, but are desirous of escaping from bondage by realizing identity with the Deity in the manner described in Chapter XIII.

It is necessary for these seekers for spiritual life to know that after a time the road is divided into two paths. It is absolutely necessary to give up all special works, such as would secure a livelihood, longevity, and other kinds of worldly prosperity. Let no one who desires salvation strive for these things himself, or by deputy, or advise any one to do so. Other works are not to be necessarily given up, but the expectation of personal advantage therefrom must be resigned, absolutely and forever.

3. Some sages say that all works should be given up as impure ; while others say that sacrifices, gifts, and austerities must not be given up.

Those who renounce all works are the followers of Kapila, the founder of the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy ; the others are the orthodox Brāhmanical ritualists, who form the Mīmāṃsaka school.

The "works" especially referred to here are the Vedic ceremonials; and the chief objection against them, made by Kapila and afterwards by Buddha, is that they involve the taking of life. Attachment and aversion are also to be given up as impurities.

It is clear from the nature of the objection against works that it does not contemplate the illuminated sage. For to him nothing is impure, since he knows that all objects are included in the Kshetra, from which the Kshetrajna or Ego is distinct. Further reasons in support of this view will be stated presently.

4. It being so,¹ hear my words, which leave no uncertainty, O best of Bharata's sons, in regard to giving up;² giving up is perfectly declared to be of three kinds.

5. Sacrifices, gifts, austerities, are works that must not be given up; they must indeed be performed. Sacrifices, gifts, and austerities are purifying for the wise.

This teaches that for those who renounce the thought of personal benefit these works are purifying, and should not be given up. Here also we perceive that the spiritually illuminated are not spoken of, for they can need no purification. "There is nothing more sanctifying than knowledge" (Chap. IV. v 38).

6. Even these works are to be done renouncing all personal interest in them or in their fruit, this is, O son of Prithâ, my indubitable and supreme declaration.

Whenever any act leaves in the mind any feeling other than that the command of God has been fulfilled, that feeling is produced by egotism.

7. The abandonment of obligatory works is not proper; the abandonment thereof through delusion is the result of the quality of *tamas*.

These works are not obligatory on those who seek for liberation, according to the doctrine of the Sâṅkhya philosophers. Upon

¹ "It being so," there being this difference of opinion.

² "Giving up" does not include the supreme resignation of the spiritually illuminated, but as practised by those not illuminated is here "perfectly declared."

all men under it the Brāhmanical law imposes certain duties without reference to any such special occasions as the birth of a son, etc.

8. Whoso gives up these works through fear of bodily trouble, thinking they are painful, the giver-up, impelled by the quality of rajas, does not gain the fruit of renunciation.¹

No man does right who gives up the unmistakable duties of life, resting on divine command, excepting when, through realization of identity with the Deity, these duties naturally become impossible of fulfilment.

9. O Arjuna, when obligatory works are performed with the thought "They ought to be done," and abandoning attachment and result,—that giving up is considered to be of the quality of sattva.

He who performs duties thinking that if they are not performed some evil will come to him, or that their performance will remove difficulties from his path, works for result. Duties should simply be done because commanded by God, who may at any moment command their abandonment.

10. The true giver-up, full of sattva quality,² spiritually wise,³ and with doubts cut asunder,⁴ hates not unfavorable works,⁵ nor is attached to favorable works.⁶

11. It is not possible for an embodied creature completely to abandon action. He who gives up the fruit of action is called a giver-up.⁷

¹ "Fruit of renunciation," which is salvation. On the contrary, this kind of giving up brings on suffering, owing to domination by passions.

² "Sattva quality" fits one for spiritual illumination.

³ "Spiritually wise," and therefore at rest in the realization of identity with the Deity.

⁴ "Doubts cut asunder," that is, false knowledge extinguished by true knowledge.

⁵ "Unfavorable works," that is, unfavorable to the attainment of liberation, such as forbidden works, or those which only lead to personal benefit.

⁶ "Nor is . . . works," that is, has no special pleasure in them; performs them involuntarily, without thought, in the same way as he breathes.

⁷ "A giver-up," that is, in a secondary manner, so far as a man in that condition can be.

He who, by leading the life of works, renouncing egotism and expectation of personal benefit, becomes sufficiently pure to abolish from his mind every impulse towards activity through the realization of the absolute independence of the Ego, rests in the "city of nine gates, neither working nor causing work to be done" (Chap. V. v. 22). But to an "embodied creature," in whom the false idea that the body is the ego is still entertained, this is not possible. He is therefore commanded to perform his scriptural duties, moral and religious, as an "unprofitable servant," in order to attain the salvation described in Chapter V. v. 22.

The connection of the illuminated sage with the body which is called his is of no personal use to him. It is entirely for the good of the world.

12. The three kinds of result of action,¹ desirable, undesirable and mixed, come after death to those who do not practise renunciation; but never to those who practise supreme renunciation.²

In the next five verses the reasons are given which makes complete renunciation possible for the illuminated only. The sage has realized that the Ego never acts, and knows that all acts are done by the five agents now to be enumerated, which are brought into existence by the illusive identification of the Ego with objects. Those who accept these agents as the Ego are naturally unable to free the mind from all impulse to action.

13. Learn from me, O thou of mighty arms, these five, the agents for the performance of all actions and declared in the Vedānta,³ which extinguishes all action.⁴

¹ "Action;" mental, verbal, and bodily.

² "Supreme renunciation," as described in Chapter V. verse 22. He who simply renounces fruit of action gradually attains this condition.

³ *Vedānta*, some take this to mean Sāṅkhya philosophical treatises. The Vedānta consists of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gītā, and the Brahmā Sūtras. No teaching, not founded on these, can be authoritative for the followers of this school.

⁴ "Extinguishes all action;" because spiritual knowledge comprehends all action (Chap. IV. v. 33).

14. The body,¹ the actor,² the different instruments,³ the various and separate efforts,⁴ and fifth, the supporting divinities.⁵

15. Whatever act a man performs with the body, speech, or mind,⁶ whether lawful or the opposite,⁷ these five are the causes thereof.

16. This being so, whoso perceives the Self, which is unique, as the agent, he, of perverted heart,⁸ does not perceive by reason of unpurified understanding.⁹

17. He, in whom there is no consciousness of egotism,¹⁰ and in whom buddhi does not adhere¹¹ to anything, — he, even though slaying all these worlds, does not slay, nor is bound.

The Blessed Lord in the beginning says, "This neither slays nor is slain" (Chap II v. 19), for the reason that "it never is

¹ "The body" is the location of desire, liking, and aversion.

² "The actor," egotism, or the ahankāra.

³ "The different instruments," twelve in number, namely, five powers of sensation, five of action, and the powers of reflection and determination.

⁴ "Various and separate efforts," which are the vital powers, usually called life-breaths. They are divided into five, according to the difference of their functions, — digesting, circulating vitality through the body, inspiring and expiring, and causing upward currents to the head.

⁵ "Supporting divinities," that is, the internal and external instruments considered as conscious beings.

⁶ "Body, speech or mind," the classification here refers to the different ways in which the results of action are experienced, and does not contradict the above enumeration of the five agents.

⁷ "Lawful or the opposite," these include the functions of the body because good or bad health is caused by prior deeds, good or bad.

⁸ "Perverved heart," that is, a nature which binds one to the wheel of repeated births and deaths.

⁹ "Unpurified understanding," not refined by the instructions of the Scriptures, religious teachers, and philosophers. Those who believe in doctrines that imply the actorship of the true Ego are included in this class, because such doctrines are not meant for those of purified understanding.

¹⁰ "Consciousness of egotism," that is, realizes that essentially the Ego is independent of the powers of action, will, and cognition.

¹¹ "In whom buddhi does not adhere," realizing the true character of the Ego, does not feel "I have done this, and in consequence will have to go to hell or suffer in some other way." Those who have realized identity with the Deity in the sense in which it is understood in the Vedānta, namely, identity of will and design with God, in consequence of participation in Divine nature, are beyond all rules, and the responsibility of their acts belongs to the Deity, who is absolute.

born," etc. (Chap. II. v. 20). Therefore how can he "kill or cause to be killed"?

This has been repeated again and again, and is here finally summed up. Every one is liable to be visited by the three classes of the results of action, except the man of true renunciation, from whom all actions have fallen off. This, the revered commentator says, is also the truth taught in all the Vedas.

18. Knowledge,¹ the object known, and the knower² are the three varieties of causes exciting action;³ the actor, the object, and the instrument are the threefold basis of action.⁴

19. From differences in respect to the qualities,⁵ knowledge, action, and also actor are said to be of three kinds in the philosophy of Kapila;⁶ listen to them, properly⁷ expounded.

The three kinds of knowledge are next declared.

20. Know that knowledge⁸ as belonging to *sattva*, by which is perceived the one exhaustless essence, undistributed,⁹ though in distributed bodies.

¹ "Knowledge" is that by which an act of cognition takes place; the broadest instrument of cognition.

² "The knower," that is, the Ego appearing as such by the mysterious power of false knowledge.

³ "Causes exciting action," that is, a cognition of loss or gain is followed by the operation of the five causes and not of the Ego (Chap. V v. 14). Then the acts produced are of three kinds, according to whether they inhere in the body, speech, or mind.

⁴ "Basis of action," that is, that which contains an action. For instance, no action can exist except as a certain relation between the actor and the object and the instrument used by the actor. In grammar, the basis of action is formed by the nominative, accusative, and instrumental cases, the other cases are not directly related to the action.

⁵ "Qualities," the three qualities.

⁶ *Kapila*, the author of the Sāṅkhya philosophy.

⁷ "Properly," that is, in accord with reason and authority. Although the Sāṅkhya philosophy is not to be followed in regard to the being of God, it is authoritative in regard to the present subject.

⁸ "That knowledge" whereby the identity between the Ego and the Deity is attained.

⁹ "Undistributed;" that is, though bodies are different, there is but one Ego reflected in them all.

21. Know that knowledge to belong to rajas whereby different egos of different descriptions are perceived in all the various creatures.

22. But that worthless knowledge which, unreasonably, without spiritual insight, perceives¹ the totality as attached to some one form, is of *tamas*.

The three kinds of action are next defined

23. That action is said to belong to *sattva* which is obligatory,² not done with attachment³ or from liking or aversion, by one who desires not its fruit.

24. That action is said to be of *rajas* which is done by one desiring its fruit, or again, in pride, and which involves great trouble in its performance.

25. Without regard to consequences, loss, injury, and one's own capacity, whatever action is begun in delusion is of *tamas*.

The three kinds of agents are next described.

26. An agent who is devoid of personal interest, not self-assertive,⁴ possessed of zeal and perseverance, undisturbed by success or failure, is said to be of *sattva*.

27. The agent who is attached, desirous of fruit of action, covetous, harmful to others, unclean, full of rejoicing and grieving, is declared to be of *rajas*.

28. The agent who is heedless, dull, unbending, deceptive, preventing others from gaining a livelihood,

¹ "Perceives," etc., that is, vainly imagines God to dwell in any one form, in the way He dwells in the whole universe. This is the view of all idolaters who select some special object as God. Such beliefs are wanting alike in reason and spiritual insight

² "Obligatory," that is, such actions as are not prescribed for any special purpose, — gifts, penance, and sacrifice (v. 3)

³ "Attachment," that is, self-identification with it through the feeling of being the actor; the power to do it is really of God, who can remove it whenever He chooses.

⁴ "Self-assertive;" that is, does not speak about his own share in the work. Charity "seeketh not her own"

lazy, desponding, and procrastinating, is said to be of *tamas*.

The three kinds of agent include the three kinds of knower; action includes what is to be known, and *buddhi* similarly includes the instruments.

29. Listen to the differences of *buddhi*, as well as of the recuperative powers,¹ which are of three kinds by reason of the qualities, and which are being exhaustively and discriminatively declared, O *Dhananjaya*.

30. The *buddhi*,² that knows initiation and renunciation, also what ought and what ought not to be done, and what is to be feared and what not, also bondage and liberation, is of *sattva*.

31. That *buddhi*, O son of *Prithā*, is of *rajas*, whereby are imperfectly known what is righteous and what unrighteous, and also what is to be done and what not to be done.

32. That *buddhi* which, wrapped up in gloom, makes unrighteousness appear as righteous, and all things the opposite of what they are, is of *tamas*, O son of *Prithā*.

33. That recuperative power which through fixity of mind becomes unwavering, and by which the action of the mind, vital powers, and senses are kept in control, is, O son of *Prithā*, of *sattva*.

34. That recuperative power whereby moral excellence, enjoyment, and desires are upheld³ in a man desiring fruit of action, is of *rajas*, O son of *Prithā*.

35. That recuperative power by reason of which a man of impure understanding does not give up drowsi-

¹ "Recuperative powers" includes perseverance, patience, and endurance.

² *Buddhi* The functions of this faculty are to give knowledge and recuperative power.

³ "Upheld;" by being always perceived as desirable.

ness, fear, grief, internal and external lassitude, and vanity, is determined to be of *tamas*.

The agent and instrument have been described; the result is now declared

36. Now hear from me, O best of Bharata's sons, the three kinds of happiness, in which enjoyment comes through repetition and in which pain comes to an end.

37. That happiness which is like poison in the beginning, and in the end is like nectar, and is produced by the transparency of the understanding¹ directed towards the Spirit, is said to be of *sattva*.

38. The happiness that is consequent upon the contact of sense with objects, is in the beginning like nectar and in the end is like poison,² and is known as of *rajas*.

39. That happiness which in the beginning and end is delusive to the embodied ego, arising from sleep, indolence, and heedlessness, is said to be of *tamas*.

40. No such creature³ is there on earth, or among the gods in heaven, who is free from these three nature-born qualities.

By the descriptions of the agent, action, and instrument, and the results gained, as influenced by the three qualities, it has been shown that the real enemy is the illusive power embodying the three qualities. Since this power is the stuff of which the entire universe is the varied manifestation, nothing in the universe — agent, action, instrument, or result — can destroy it, any more than fire can extinguish fire.

Therefore it is said that salvation is not obtained by much learning nor many acts, but by a new consciousness unlimited by the

¹ "Transparency of the understanding," that is, the purified understanding, or heart, becomes transparent to the light of the Spirit.

² "Is like poison," by causing loss of strength, reputation, health and vigor, discernment, memory, and energy. Sensuous pleasures are undesirable for this reason.

³ "Creature" includes plants, and is, in fact, equivalent to "object."

power of illusion, and showing illusion to be illusion. This is the destruction of illusion, for to show an error to be an error is to destroy it. Everything in the universe is error, and knowledge is that which reveals the true nature of the universe to be a gigantic error. No one attains eternal life except through this knowledge, faith, or new consciousness, and this knowledge never dawns until the tree of false knowledge, described in the opening of Chapter XV., is cut down by the firm sword of dispassion. This, says the revered commentator, is the teaching of all the Vedas and other Scriptures, and, it may be added, of all religions.

Dispassion is extremely difficult of attainment. It does not consist in simply suppressing the outward activity of the body, but in complete unconsciousness of any impulse of the mind or body colored by the feeling that these impulses are from within, or that they should or should not be suppressed. It is foolishness for a man to imagine that by a particular course of action he can be freed from personality. Such a thought is the most powerful manure for a luxuriant growth of the upas-tree. A personal man can only become impersonal through what is very rightly called a supernatural means, or an act of grace generating a faith in that which is absolute and beyond the reach of mind and sense.

To escape from personality, and consequently from suffering, a man must look for an expedient which is beyond experience. In fact, he must accept a mystery. So long as this faith is wanting there is no hope for salvation. But when this faith is obtained, one of two equally good results will follow; either a complete abandonment of the world, or else remaining in it and working as an unprofitable servant carrying out the commands of a master whose will is not subject to question or full comprehension.

Let no one think under these circumstances to enlarge one's duties and responsibilities in life by one's own initiation, but simply to keep the divine commandments; not even attempting to do something not commanded, thinking that it would be acceptable to the Master. For nothing is acceptable to Him but perfect resignation to His will, under the conviction that he is the Master, even of those who do not consciously submit to His will.

This resignation cannot be an act which brings about a new relation between the Master and His servant, but is the recognition of a fact which always exists. With this in view the divine commandments to the Brāhmanical people are next declared. The

duties pertaining to their system of castes are divine commands; in other words, a declaration of the latent possibilities of the soul which could not have been otherwise discovered. These commands must be obeyed without questioning, always recognizing the fact that the power for performing these duties does not belong to the performer who gains no special merit, because they are intended for his own spiritual well-being and for no other purpose.

41. The duties of Brāhmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and also¹ of Çûdras are divided into classes by the qualities arising from nature.²

42. Internal and external self-control, purity, forgiveness, rectitude, learning, spiritual perception, and faith are the nature-born duties of Brāhmanas

43. Heroism, vigor, patient endurance, presence of mind, not turning back in battle, liberality, lordliness, are the nature-born duties of Kshatriyas.

44. Agriculture, breeding of cattle, and commerce are the nature-born duties of Vaisyas; and of Çûdras the nature-born duty is that of which the essence is to serve.

Men are said to be the body of the Creator, and the various castes are His different limbs. As each member of the body has its peculiar function, so are there appropriate duties for each of the four castes. The conception of the caste system in the Theocratic Brāhmanical Law is paralleled by the Christian idea that the Church is the Body of Christ. It would be very instructive to compare the *dicta* of the Sacred Law of the Brāhmanas on caste with the parable of the vine, and with the utterances of Saint Paul in Romans xii. 4-6, and I Cor. xii.

¹ "And also" is intended to show that only the first three castes are entitled to study the Vedas.

² "Qualities arising from nature," "nature" is the power of the Deity consisting of the three qualities; otherwise it may be taken to mean the tendencies resulting in birth in the different castes. The scriptural commands relating to the different castes are founded upon the difference of inherent tendencies or qualities.

45. Men devoted to their own proper duties attain full perfection. Listen how they attain perfection by devotion to their own duties.

The usual teaching is that those who perform their caste duties properly obtain celestial enjoyment after death and are then born in a country inhabited by religious men, in a worthy caste and family, full of intelligence, knowledge, wealth, etc. But here it is said that by the right performance of caste duties men attain perfection. Not only Brāhmans, but all others, when purified by the right performance of their duties, are fitted for the reception of spiritual knowledge, which is salvation.

46. Worshipping by the performance of one's duties Him¹ from whom is the endeavor of men,² by whom all this is pervaded, a man attains perfection.³

47. Better are one's own proper duties, though devoid of merit, than the duties of another,⁴ even though well performed. Performing acts in obedience to nature, a man does not incur sin.⁵

48. Nature-born duties,⁶ even though stained with faults, must not be abandoned.⁷ All acts are wrapped up in faults as fire is by smoke.

¹ "Worshipping," etc., that is, the interior spirit of devotion and self-surrender to God makes the performance of the ordinary duties of life acts of worship.

² "From whom is the endeavor of men," that is, He who, dwelling in each human heart, engages it in action and regulates its course.

³ "Perfection" does not here mean liberation, but the fitness to become a man of true renunciation and devoted to the acquirement of spiritual knowledge which brings liberation.

⁴ "Duties of another," because a thing is right in the abstract it does not become right for every one to do it.

⁵ "A man does not incur sin;" as an insect born in a mass of poison does not die from that poison, so a man who does his duty does not incur sin, even if those duties involve acts which are hateful to others.

⁶ "Nature-born duties," are the duties to which a man is born in consequence of pre-existing tendencies.

⁷ "Must not be abandoned," it is possible for those, who have realized the Ego, and know that it is immortal and therefore unaffected by time, to be actionless. But those whose impulse to action has not been removed by spiritual knowledge should perform their natural duties; otherwise they infuse new vitality into their tendencies and thus frustrate the desired end, namely, the realization of the true Ego, which is actionless.

49. He whose buddhi is everywhere unattached, who is victorious over his heart and devoid of desire, obtains through renunciation the perfection which is actionlessness.

The greatest result which can come from action is independence of action

50. Hear from me, in brief, the way in which the Supreme Spirit is attained after obtaining freedom from all action. This is the ultimate end of the application to the pursuit of knowledge.

The path to the supreme goal is now described.

51. Possessed of pure¹ buddhi, controlling the self² with patience,³ abandoning all objects, beginning with sound,⁴ and also giving up attachment and aversion,

52. Dwelling in secluded spots, eating little,⁵ regulated in speech, body, and mind, engaged in concentrated contemplation,⁶ and joined to unwavering detachment from all objects.⁷

53. He who, abandoning egotism, strength, vanity,⁸ desire, anger, acceptance,⁹ is in peace and devoid of the

¹ "Pure," that is, free from the idea of within and without; Buddhi as influenced by the quality of sattva (v 30).

² "The self" means the body, senses, and mental faculties.

³ "Patience," as influenced by the quality of sattva (v 33).

⁴ "Beginning with sound," that is, the objects of the senses. Such a discipline abandons everything not absolutely necessary for the support of the body, and even for that has neither attachment nor aversion.

⁵ "Light in food," and therefore free from drowsiness, heedlessness, and idleness, as well as healthful in body, mind, and speech.

⁶ "Concentrated contemplation," that is, the thinking principle at rest after being turned towards the Spirit.

⁷ "Detachment from all objects," including divine worship through body, mind, or speech, which interfere with unbroken contemplation.

⁸ "Vanity;" the emotion which succeeds the feeling of satisfaction with anything, and leads to the violation of the law of righteousness. "From being pleased a man becomes satisfied, and satisfaction leads to the violation of the righteous law governing him," says a sacred authority.

⁹ "Desire, anger, acceptance," through perfect purity of nature the sage does not feel that he accepts anything, even that which is necessary to maintain life; but he does not resist the natural workings of the body.

feeling of possession,¹ is worthy to be the Supreme Spirit.²

54. Attaining the Supreme Spirit, he, having his nature perfectly purified, neither grieves nor desires, but equal towards all creatures³ attains supreme devotion⁴ to Me.

55. By devotion he knows Me, how⁵ and what I am in reality;⁶ then,⁷ having known me in truth, after that he enters into Me.

56. He who is always the performer, even of all actions, depending upon Me,⁸ attains through my favor⁹ the eternal, exhaustless seat.

57. Having placed all action in Me, through power of discrimination, and regarding Me as the supreme goal, and also taking resort in firm faith, be always with heart fixed in Me.¹⁰

58. Having thy heart fixed in me, thou shalt cross over all troubles by my favor; but again, if from pride thou listenest not to Me, thou shalt perish.

¹ "Devoid of the feeling of possession," even in regard to life and person

² "Is worthy to be the Supreme Spirit," meaning that the realization of identity with the Supreme Spirit takes place at this stage.

³ "Equal towards all creatures," that is, perceives the grief and joy of all creatures by comparison with his own

⁴ "Supreme devotion;" that is, true knowledge of the Deity. (See Chap. VII. v. 17)

⁵ "How," that is, appearing as varied by being reflected in different objective bases.

⁶ "What I am in reality," attributeless consciousness

⁷ "Then." This does not show that after the Supreme Spirit is known the final consummation comes; for the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit is Nirvāna. Each one knows the Supreme Spirit as himself, so, although the Supreme Spirit is one, and Nirvāna also one, yet, as each one who attains Nirvāna realizes the Supreme Spirit as himself, each one is absolute

⁸ "Depending upon Me," that is, fully convinced that God is the Ego in him, and therefore not wishing for reward

⁹ "Through my favor;" the knowledge that sets man free is not attained by any acts, it is a gift of divine grace. Salvation, or Nirvāna, cannot be gained through action.

¹⁰ "Heart fixed in Me," do not turn to any other source for help. Put your trust in Him even though He should slay.

59. If resting on egotism thou thinkest "I shall not fight," vain indeed is thy determination; thy nature shall engage thee in it.

All men are under the domination of God; some know this, — others do not

60. Tied to thy natural tendencies¹ by what has gone before,² thou shalt, powerless to resist, do that which thou, through delusion, wishest not to do.

61. The Lord, O white-souled one, seated in the heart of all creatures, by His illusive power revolves all creatures, who are as though mounted on a machine.

62. Take sanctuary with Him, O Bharata's son, with all thy soul;³ by His favor thou shalt find supreme peace,⁴ as well as the eternal abode.

This verse is intended to deny fatalism. Although God is the performer of all action, yet each man feels that he has a free will; and unless the free will is freely resigned to the will of God, the ceaseless assertion of it will continue. Consequently, no peace can come to such a man. All that is necessary for salvation is spoken in the one word "obey."

63. This knowledge,⁵ the most mysterious of mysteries, has by Me been thus declared unto thee, considering this in its entirety, act according to thy will.⁶

For the benefit of those not able carefully to consider the profound doctrines set forth in the Bhagavad Gîtâ, the Blessed Lord Himself sums up its teaching.

¹ "Thy natural tendencies," this refers to the warlike character of Arjuna

² "Gone before," that is, all past Karma, — all causes of every kind leading to the present situation

³ "With all thy soul," in mind, body, and speech.

⁴ "Find supreme peace," this favor lasts until divine knowledge arises.

⁵ "This knowledge" is the Bhagavad Gîtâ

⁶ "According to thy will," that is, adopt the path of knowledge, or that of action, as seems right in thy sight.

64. Listen again to my supreme words which are the most mysterious of all, thou art ever beloved of Me, therefore I am declaring what is thy welfare.¹

65. Be with thy mind fixed in Me, be my devotee, be my worshipper, bow down to Me,² and thou shalt come even to Me; this I verily swear unto thee; thou art beloved of Me.

66. Abandoning all acts, take sanctuary with Me alone. I shall liberate thee³ from all sins; do thou not grieve.

When the heart has been purified by following the precepts in verse 65, then abandon all acts, knowing that there is none else but God. This is the teaching of all Scriptures. So long as the restlessness of our nature is not reduced to tranquillity we must work, consecrating to the Deity all the fruit of our action, and attribute to Him the power to perform works rightly. This is not, however, an injunction, but a restriction.

The true life of man is rest in identity with the Supreme Spirit. This life is not brought into existence by any act of ours; it is a reality, the truth, and is altogether independent of us. The realization of the non-existence of all that seems to be opposed to this truth is a new consciousness, and not an act. Man's liberation is in no way related to his acts. In so far as acts promote the realization of our utter inability to emancipate ourselves from conditioned existence, they are of use, after this is realized acts become obstacles rather than helps. Those who work in obedience to Divine commands, knowing that the power thus to work is a gift of God, and no part of man's self-conscious nature, attain to freedom from the need for action. Then the pure heart is filled by the truth, and identity with the Deity is perceived.

"Knowing Him alone one goes beyond death; there is no other path for going," says the sacred text. Another text completes this declaration. "When men shall fold up space as though it were a piece of skin, then only will suffering end without knowing the

¹ "Thy welfare," that is, the attainment of supreme truth

² "Bow down to Me;" that is, surrender to Me thy goal and the means thou employest for its attainment

³ "I shall liberate thee" by the resplendent lamp of wisdom (Chap. X. vv. 2-5).

Deity." This knowledge is the only immortality; works and action of themselves can in no sense liberate man from his present bondage.

Then follow the rules that must be observed in the study of the Truth declared by the Blessed Lord.

67. This must never be declared by thee to one who does not practise mortifications, has no devotion, and is unwilling to serve the spiritual instructor; and also, not unto one who reviles Me.¹

68. Whoever shall expound this supreme mystery² to those who have love for Me,³ shall without doubt come to Me, having obtained supreme love for Me.⁴

69. Than he, there is among men no better performer of what is dear unto Me, nor shall there ever be on earth any one more beloved of Me.

70. Also, whoso will study this colloquy between us two, which makes for righteousness, by him I shall be worshipped by the sacrifice of knowledge; this is my mind.

71. The man who shall listen to it in faith, and without cavilling, even he, freed from sins, shall obtain the blessed abodes of those who work righteousness.

72. Has this been heard by thee, O Prithâ's son, with thy heart one-pointed? Has thy confusion arising from ignorance been destroyed, O Dhananjaya?

This verse shows the duty of the righteous teacher. If one method fails in its effect on the pupil, some other must be adopted.

¹ "Reviles Me," thinks Me a vainglorious man who has pretended to be one with God.

² "This supreme mystery;" the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.

³ "Those who have love for Me," this shows that the purity of devotion to Krishna, even in the absence of other qualifications, renders the devotee fit to receive these doctrines.

⁴ "Having obtained supreme love for Me," whoever expounds these doctrines as an act of service to the Primeval Teacher, Vāsudeva, will attain liberation through His favor.

An obedient pupil must never be given up simply on account of his dulness. The question is asked here in such a manner as not to discourage the pupil.

ARJUNA said:

73. My delusion is ended, and by me has been attained right recollection¹ through thy favor, O Achyuta,² I am firm,³ free from doubts,⁴ and will perform thy bidding.

SANJAYA said:

74. Thus I have heard this dialogue between Vāsudeva and Prithā's son, of great soul; unheard ever before, and making the hair stand on end.⁵

75. Through the favor of Vyāsa,⁶ this supreme mystery⁷ of yoga⁸ has been heard by me; from the lord of yoga,⁹ Krishna himself speaking

76. O King, again and again remembering this wonderful and sanctifying colloquy between Krishna and Arjuna, I am again and again rejoicing.

77. And also again and again remembering that wonderful form of the Lord, my wonder is great, O King, and I again and again rejoice.

¹ "Right recollection," or the faith that the Ego is truly independent of material conditions

² *Achyuta* is Krishna, "he who never falls" — the eternal Lord, the Primeval Teacher.

³ "I am firm" in my obedience to thee

⁴ "Free from doubts" as to what is right, there is nothing right that is not done in obedience to Divine command

⁵ "Hair stand on end," through spiritual joy.

⁶ "Favor of Vyāsa" In the Mahābhārata it is said that the sage Vyāsa bestowed spiritual perception on Sanjaya, by which he heard this dialogue.

⁷ "Supreme mystery," because relating to the supreme consummation of existence

⁸ *Yoga*, the liberation of the Ego from all conditions with which it is connected through the power of false knowledge

⁹ "Lord of yoga." He by whose favor those striving for isolation of the Ego become successful.

७४. Wherever is Krishna, the lord of yoga, wherever is Prithâ's archer-son, there unwavering are Fortune, Victory, Increase, and Wisdom of action; this is my mind.

Thus ends chapter the eighteenth, called the "RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF LIBERATION," in the blessed BHAGAVAD GÎTÂ, the sacred lore, the divine wisdom, the book of divine union, the colloquy between the blessed KRISHNA and ARJUNA, and contained in the Bhîshma Parvan of the blessed MAHÂBHÂRATA, which is a collection of one hundred thousand verses by VYÂSA.

In reverence and devotion to the teachers of old, and the Primeval Teacher of all, this Scripture is ended.

SYNOPSIS.

By the affliction of sorrow which overcomes Arjuna in the beginning of the Lord's Lay it is shown that the root of all evil is the false self that hides the real spirit within man and asserts itself in the vain conceit of its own sufficiency and the lust of possession. The spirit of falsehood which says "I have done this; these are mine" is the enemy to be overcome to attain the eternal life which is the heritage of all human beings. This is made clear in the second chapter by exposing the deceitfulness of this false self and despoiling it of the pretence of being the real Self, which is immortal and perfectly pure. It is also declared there that to realize the true nature of the Self is the attainment of salvation. But for all but a very few this realization is not at once possible because of the impurities of human nature that tie them to the exterior life of action. Although the highest perfection is only gradually attainable by a life of action, yet the forcible repression of tendencies to action is reprehensible. A life of right action is the means of purifying the heart for the reception of true spiritual consciousness by which the life of darkness and evil, our common human nature, is ended. The third chapter teaches this, and points out that the performance of right action consists in the fulfilment of duties to God and man, accepting duties as the commands given by God for the well-being of man and doing them for the love of God alone, and not for the purpose of any personal gain. The peculiar efficacy of the religious works resting upon scriptural authority is also declared.

The fourth chapter discloses the source of the teacher's authority. He interiorly is the Logos who, for the salvation of mankind, from time to time reveals to the world through human forms selected for the purpose the path of truth and righteousness. It then goes on to teach that when the man of pure heart has seen

God he becomes invested with that liberty of spirit which makes it optional for him to engage in action or abstain from it. As all personal desire becomes extinguished by the sight of God, all the subsequent acts of such an one are really performed by the Divine power for the benefit of the world. The relation of morality to the spiritual life is expounded. The laws of morality are instituted for the purpose of giving man the right appreciation of life by the comprehension of inaction and forbidden and enjoined acts. When in this manner the true nature of the restless human spirit is understood, all obstacles are removed from the attainment of spiritual consciousness by which God is known. This knowledge of God is to be sought after by reverent obedience to those who possess it, and by cultivation of faith in their words and in the words of the Scriptures. The relative position in spiritual culture of right performance of action in the world and adoption of a life of seclusion away from the world is elucidated in the fifth chapter. Without renunciation of personal desire no one can perform action rightly, and without right performance of action no one can attain to thorough detachment from the world. Thus they form together one harmonious whole. It is true that between complete detachment and the rise of spiritual illumination in the heart nothing intervenes; yet it is better not to wrench one's self away from the life of action, but wait patiently for its dropping off in right time. The sixth chapter sets the limit to the life of action by the birth within the devotee of that purity and dispassion which serve as a barrier which the world cannot pass. At this stage the devotee becomes fit for self-effacing contemplation of the Divine Spirit. Contemplation is attainable through dispassion and long-continued loving annihilation of self before God, accepting him as the only Self that is real. The task of reaching this state is beset with great difficulties, but they can be conquered by perseverance and faith. If the final consummation of contemplation, namely, the vision of God, is not attained even at the close of life, the devotee may rest in the confidence that he never shall come to an evil end, but that through perseverance success will be finally his.

With the first six chapters concludes the first topic of the Lord's Lay; namely, the real nature of the individual spirit, — what man really is. The immortal spirit in the breast of man is the witness of all that he does and all that he is, and yet the man cannot know it because he is always going outwards and not inwards. The spirit

is the innermost of all that under any conditions he calls himself. It is his very ownness.

Having thus declared the real nature of the spirit within man to be pure consciousness, incorruptible, attributeless, and perfect, the Blessed Lord begins the declaration of the real nature of the spirit outside of man. What the devotee really is has been shown; the next topic is, Who is the object of devotion? With the seventh chapter begins the revelation of the mystery of the being of God. As there is nothing higher than this in the whole universe, all devotees cannot possibly receive it in the same way, in consequence of the difference in their spiritual states. The seventh chapter declares the mystery so as to enable the most pure and spiritual devotees to feel after God and recognize Him as identical with the true Self within them. The spirit of God is absolute consciousness; this is the Supreme Deity as He is in Himself. By His mysterious will He unites consciousness, without causing any alteration in its nature, with the objective which is His power and no substance in itself. Whoever knows that the Spirit of God as present in the ant is the same as in the highest celestial being and also in Himself, is liberated. The eighth chapter declares Him as the object for the contemplation of those who through impurity of nature are not able to find Him without loving, all-excluding contemplation. He who with all his heart and all his soul and all his mind seeks through contemplation to find God, who, though attributeless, is the Spirit present in the devotee's own heart, in the sun, in the cause, in the effect, and in the mutual relation of cause and effect, and is the superintendent of his acts, attains to Him by progress through various celestial states. The ninth chapter declares the mystery of the Divine Being for the benefit of those who are unable to approach Him in either of the before-mentioned ways. The tenth chapter continues the declaration begun in the ninth of the omnipotence of the Deity as manifested in nature, human and superhuman. This is intended for the contemplation of devotees of immature spirituality. Those who in faith and perseverance contemplate the wonderful evidences of Divine Almightiness given by nature, and in a pre-eminent degree by godlike beings, may hope by the grace of God to know Him as the Soul of which the universe is considered to be the body. In the eleventh chapter Arjuna is favored with the vision of the Deity in that aspect. The twelfth chapter declares the relative position of the different classes of the

devotees. Those who realize that the Deity is in the veriest reality the true Ego are His very Self. Among the rest, those who lose themselves in Him through the power of all-absorbing love are the best devoted. The chapter closes with commandments to those whose spirituality is lower than what has been described, by keeping these they can by degrees attain to perfect devotion and find God.

The second third of the Lord's Lay terminates the declaration of the mystery of God's being. In His real nature God is absolutely unknowable, and nothing more can be said about it than that it is the purest BEINGNESS, the mysterious essence of Being, the Consciousness. Yet God is not entirely incomprehensible when diligently sought after through His works. The whole universe is but a manifestation of His imperial will and can be destroyed by the same will. All laws are really not laws, but the modes in which the imperial will chooses to work. That which is called cause can produce effect because God wills it so, and not through any inherent power of its own. God is not limited by any ethical laws, it is His eternal lordly pleasure to reward virtue and punish sin. He forgives the sins of those who seek after Him, love Him, and work for Him alone. He searches our hearts by dwelling in us, and is our Father, Mother, and Friend.

The last six chapters of the Lord's Lay deal with the relation between man and God, by the realization of which immortality is attained, and man becomes a "partaker of divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). The thirteenth chapter declares that the supremely real nature of man is the Spirit of God and nothing else. The consciousness in man when disconnected with everything else is the same as the consciousness which is the Deity; there is not the least difference in that. The reason why man can be saved is because he is always immortal. But the identity of the real nature of man with the Spirit of God is of no practical use to him unless he knows it; and this knowledge he can never attain except by the grace of God. There is but one Self in the universe, and that is God. The one Self dwells in all creatures, not by a change of nature but merely by His will so to dwell, the true Self is God, and in supreme reality unknowable and attributeless; and the Self as perceived is nothing but the image of that Divine Self which as itself can never be perceived. In an impure heart the image of God is dark and distorted, but in a heart that is pure the image is perfect. The

perception through which God is known in the way explained, and immortality is attained, can never exist in a being devoid of the virtues described in this chapter and called knowledge. The same note is heard in the Lord's Lay as in a Western Scripture, — "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job xxviii. 28). The identity with God, which is the highest spiritual hope contained in the Vedas for the Brāhmans, is nothing more or less than a participation in the real nature of God and identity with Him in will and design. The fourteenth chapter further elucidates the nature of this identity. The power of God works in three characters usually called qualities of nature, named *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, — purity, passion, and darkness. He who attains to identity with God does nothing of himself, but through the Divine power. He is in the perfect form of God. The three qualities of nature and their operations are described in the fourteenth chapter. The state of the devotee who is identical with the Deity is described in the succeeding chapter. He sees all the operations of the Divine power in its fulness; the universe constitutes the apparent bondage of the spirit, and its liberation is achieved by perceiving the Spirit of God which pervades and supports all things. He sees how the Spirit of God enters into us as our spirit and carries on the work of birth, life, and death. In brief, the whole purpose and design of God is manifest unto the glorified spirit. Knowing the Supreme Spirit as above and beyond all things, he makes the most perfect adoration; and all labor and work for him is ended for ever and ever! The Blessed Lord then proceeds to illuminate the path of salvation. There are two paths in the world eternally established by the inscrutable will of God, — the path of salvation and the path of damnation. Those who are on the former road possess godlike attributes, the fruits of the Spirit; and those upon the latter are possessed by demoniac attributes, the fruits of the flesh. Knowing this, the devotee must seek after the first and kill out the latter, which leads to ceaseless mutations in evil and suffering. The Lord casts them into demoniac wombs and they never come to Him. The aspirant for God must implicitly follow the authority of the Scriptures. This is the highest and purest form of faith. Those not following the authority of the Scriptures, the seventeenth chapter goes on to say, can have an inferior kind of faith according to the tendencies of their natures; but that faith cannot bring them to the only true God. According

to the predominance of one of the three qualities in man, faith, austerities, sacrifices are of three kinds. But all things done in faith in the Supreme God can be only of one kind, namely, pure. Faith sanctifies all things. In the final chapter the Blessed Lord gives a summary of His teachings, and firmly establishes the truth that the eternal life is not the outcome of man's acts, but the gift of Himself made by the Father of All when the heart is purified by right performance of duties to God and man, in obedience to the Scriptures and the spiritual experience of those who have followed them and attained to perfection.

Human nature is one, God is but one, and the path of salvation, though many in appearance, is really but one.

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