

of the systems of philosophy, which refer to a number of emotions as the root causes prompting us to action. Thus the Vaiśeṣika regards attraction to pleasure and aversion to pain as the cause of all our actions. Pleasure is defined as being a sort of feeling which is approved and welcomed and towards which an attraction is naturally felt. Pleasures, therefore, when they arise, must always be felt, and there cannot be anything like unfelt pleasures. Apart from sensory pleasures, Śrīdhara in his *Nyāya-kandali* discusses the existence of other kinds of pleasure, due to the remembering of past things, or to calmness and contentedness of mind or self-knowledge. Pleasures are, however, regarded as the fruits of meritorious deeds (*dharma*) performed before. Pain, the reverse of pleasure, may be defined as an experience from which we are repelled and which is the result of past misdeeds. Desire, as the wish to have what is unattained (*aprāpta-prārthanā*), may be either for the self (*svārtha*) or for others (*parārtha*). Such desires may be prompted by any of the following: longing for happiness in heaven or on earth (*kāma*), appetites (*abhilāṣa*), longing for the continuation and recurrence of the enjoyment of pleasurable objects, compassion for others (*karuṇā*), disinclination to worldly enjoyment (*vairāgya*), intention of deceiving others (*upadhā*), subconscious motives (*bhāva*). Praśastapāda, however, distinguishes between desires for enjoyment and desires for work. But he does not include the positive Buddhist virtues of friendship (*maitrī*) and a feeling of happiness in the happiness of others (*muditā*), and he is content with only the negative virtue of compassion (*karuṇā*). He also counts anger, malice, suppressed revengefulness (*manyu*), jealousy of the good qualities of others (*akṣamā*), and envy arising from a sense of one's inferiority (*amarṣa*). But, in spite of this elaborate classification, Praśastapāda makes in reality two broad divisions, namely, desires arising from attachment to pleasures, and those from aversion to pain. Pain is as much a positive feeling as pleasure and cannot be regarded as mere negation of pleasure. Though Praśastapāda knows that there is such a thing as desire for work, yet he does not give it any prominent consideration, and the net result of his classification of the springs of action is that he thinks that all desires are prompted by attachment to feelings of pleasure and antipathy to pain. Feelings, therefore, are to be regarded here as fundamentally determining all desires and through them all actions.

The Naiyāyikas think that attachment and antipathy can be



traced to a more fundamental root, viz. ignorance or delusion (*moha*). Thus Vātsyāyana, by tracing attachment or antipathy to ignorance, tends to intellectualize the psychological basis of Praśastapāda. For *moha* would mean want of knowledge, and, if attachment and antipathy be due to want of knowledge, then one can no longer say that feelings ultimately determine our actions, as it is the absence of right knowledge that is found to be ultimately the determinant of the rise of all feelings and emotions. Jayanta, however, in his *Nyāya-mañjarī*, counts ignorance (*moha*), attachment (*rāga*) and antipathy (*dveṣa*) as being three parallel defects (*doṣa*) which prompt our efforts<sup>1</sup>. Under attachment he counts sex-inclination (*kāma*), disinclination to part with that which would not diminish by sharing with others (*matsara*), jealousy (*spṛhā*), inclination towards birth again and again (*trṣṇā*) and inclination towards taking forbidden things (*lobha*). Under *dveṣa* he counts emotional outbursts of anger with burning bodily conditions, envy (*īrṣyā*), jealousy at the good qualities of others (*asūyā*), injuring others (*droha*) and concealed malice (*manyu*). Under ignorance he counts false knowledge (*mithyā-jñāna*), perplexity due to indecision (*vicikitsā*), sense of false superiority (*māda*) and mistakes of judgment (*pramāda*). But he adds that of the three defects, *rāga*, *dveṣa* and *moha*, *moha* is the worst, since the other two arise through it. For it is only the ignorant who are under the sway of attachment and antipathy. To the objection that in that case *moha* ought not to be counted as a defect in itself, but as the source of the other two defects, Jayanta replies that, though it is a source of the other two defects, it of itself also leads people to action and should therefore be counted as a defect in itself. It is no doubt true that all defects are due to false knowledge and are removed by right knowledge; yet it would be wrong to count the defects as being of only one kind of false knowledge (*mithyā-jñāna*); for the three defects are psychologically felt to have three distinctive characteristics. Jayanta, while admitting that the feelings of attachment or antipathy are due to ignorance, considers them to be psychologically so important as to be regarded as independent springs of action. Thus, while he was in nominal agreement with Vātsyāyana in regarding attachment and antipathy as being due to *moha*, he felt their independent

<sup>1</sup> *Teṣāṃ doṣāṇāṃ trayo rāśayo bhavanti rāgo dveṣo moha iti. Nyāya-mañjarī*, p. 500.



psychological importance and counted them as parallel defects prompting our efforts.

Patañjali divides all our actions into two classes, vicious (*kliṣṭa*) and virtuous (*akliṣṭa*). The virtuous actions are prompted by our natural propensity towards emancipation, while the vicious ones are prompted by ignorance (*avidyā*), egoism (*asmitā*), attachment (*rāga*), antipathy (*dveṣa*) and the will to live (*abhiniveśa*). The latter four, though of the nature of feeling, are yet regarded as being only manifestations of the growth and development of ignorance (*avidyā*). It is a characteristic peculiarity of the Sāṃkhya philosophy that thoughts and feelings are not regarded there as being intrinsically different; for the *guṇas* form the materials of both thoughts and feelings. What is thought in one aspect is feeling in another. It was on this account that false knowledge could be considered to have developed into the feelings of egoism, attachment and antipathy, and could be regarded as being of the same stuff as false knowledge. In the Nyāya psychology, thought and feelings being considered intrinsically different, a difficulty was felt in reconciling the fact that, while ignorance could be regarded as being the cause of the feelings of attachment and antipathy, the latter could not be regarded as being identical with ignorance (*moha*). Jayanta, therefore, while he traced *rāga* and *dveṣa* to *moha*, ontologically considered them as parallel factors determining our actions psychologically. In the Sāṃkhya-Yoga metaphysics this difficulty could be obviated; for that school did not consider feelings to be different from thoughts, since the thoughts are themselves made up of feeling-stuff; hence even false knowledge (*avidyā*) need not be regarded as being wholly an intellectual element, since it is itself the product of the feeling-stuff—the *guṇas*.

It is needless to refer in detail to the theories of the springs of action in other systems of Indian thought. From what has already been said it would appear that most systems of Indian Philosophy consider false knowledge to be at the root of all our worldly activities through the mediation of feelings of attachment, antipathy and self-love. There is an inherent pessimism in most systems of Indian thought, which consider that normally we are all under the evil influence of false knowledge and are all gliding on the downward path of sins and afflictions. They also consider that all attachments lead to bondage and slavery to passions, and thereby lead us away from the path of liberation. Actions are



judged as good or bad according as they lead to liberation or bondage; their efficacy is in securing the transcendental realization of the highest truth and the cessation of rebirth, or obscuration of the nature of reality and exposure to the miseries of rebirth.

But Caraka gives us a scheme of life in which he traces the springs of all our actions to the three fundamental motives or biological instincts of life-preservation, worldly desire of acquiring riches for enjoyment, and other worldly aspirations of self-realization. According to him these three fundamental desires sum up all springs of action. On this view will appears to be more fundamental than feeling or knowledge. Caraka does not seem to begin from the old and stereotyped idea that false knowledge is the starting-point of the world. His is a scheme of a well-balanced life which is guided by the harmonious play of these three fundamental desires and directed by perfect wisdom and unerring judgment. Evil and mischief creep in through errors of judgment, by which the harmony of these desires is broken. All kinds of misdeeds are traced, not to feelings of attachment or antipathy, but to errors of judgment or foolishness (*prajñāparādha*). This *prajñāparādha* may be compared to the *moha* or *avidyā* of the Nyāya and Yoga. But, while the Nyāya and Yoga seem to refer to this *moha* or *avidyā* as a fundamental defect inherent in our mental constitution and determining its activities as a formative element, Caraka's *prajñāparādha* is not made to occupy any metaphysical status, but expresses itself only in the individual lapses of judgment.

Caraka, however, did not dare to come into conflict with the prevailing ethical and philosophical opinions of his time, and we find that in *Śārīra*, he largely accepts the traditional views. He says there that it is the phenomenal self (*bhūtātman* or *saṃyoga-puruṣa*) that feels pleasure and pain, and in connection with the duty of a physician to remove all physical sufferings produced by diseases he says that the ultimate healing of all pain consists in the permanent *naiṣṭhiki* (removal) of pain by the removal of grasping (*upadhā*)<sup>1</sup>. He says there that grasping (*upadhā*) is itself sorrowful and the cause of all sorrows. All sorrows can be removed by the removal of all grasping tendencies. Just as a silk-worm draws out its cocoon thread to its own destruction, so does

<sup>1</sup> Cakrapāṇi interprets *upadhā* as desire (*tṛṣṇā*); but it seems to me that it would have been more correct to interpret it as the Buddhist *upādāna*, or grasping. Cakrapāṇi on Caraka, IV. 1. 93.



the miserable man of ignorance draw desires and longings from the objects of sense. He is wise indeed who considers all objects as fire and withdraws himself from them. With the cessation of all actions (*anārambha*) and dissociation from sense-objects there is no more fear of being afflicted with sorrows. Sorrows, again, are said to proceed from four causes, namely, the wrong notion of non-eternal things (e.g. sense-objects) as eternal (*buddhi-vibhramśa*), the want of the power of controlling the mind from undesirable courses (*dhṛti-vibhramśa*), forgetfulness of the nature of right knowledge (*smṛti-vibhramśa*) and the adoption of unhygienic courses (*asātmya-arthāgama*). *Prajñāparādha* is defined here as a wrong action that is done through the confusion of intelligence and want of self-control and right knowledge (*dhī-dhṛti-smṛti-vibhramśa*), and this is supposed to rouse up all maladies and defects (*sarva-doṣa-prakopana*). Some of the offences that may be counted under *prajñāparādha* are as follows: to set things in motion, to try to stop moving objects, to let the proper time for doing things pass by, to begin an action in the wrong manner, not to behave in the accustomed manner, not to behave modestly and politely, to insult respected persons, to go about in wrong places or at wrong times, to take objects which are known to be harmful, not to abide by the proper course of conduct described in the *Caraka-saṃhitā*, I. 1. 6; the passions of jealousy, vanity, fear, anger, greed, ignorance, egoism, errors, all actions prompted by these and whatever else that is prompted by ignorance (*moha*) and self-ostentation (*rajas*). *Prajñāparādha* is further defined as error of judgment (*viśama-vijñāna*) and as wrong enterprise (*viśama-pravartanā*), proceeding out of wrong knowledge or erroneous judgment. It will thus appear that it is wise to take *prajñāparādha* in the wider sense of error of judgment or misapplied intelligence, regarding it as the cause of all kinds of moral depravity, unhealthy and unhygienic habits and accidental injuries of all kinds. As Caraka admitted the existence of the self and of rebirth and regarded moral merit (*dharma*) and demerit (*adharma*) as the causes of all human enjoyment and sufferings, and of the productivity or unproductivity of the ground, and the hygienic or unhygienic conditions of water, air and the seasons, he had to include within *prajñāparādha* the causes that led to vices and sins. The causes of all sorrows are, firstly, wrong consideration of the non-eternal as eternal and of the injurious as good; secondly, want of self-control; and, thirdly, the defect of



memory (*smṛti-bhramśa*), through which the right knowledge and right experience of the past cannot be brought into effect. Thus, though in a sense Caraka compromises with the traditional schools of philosophy in including philosophical ignorance or misconception within *prajñāparādha*, and though he thinks that philosophical ignorance produces sins, yet he takes *prajñāparādha* in the very wide sense of error of judgment, leading to all kinds of transgression of laws of health and laws of society and custom, risky adventures, and all other indiscreet and improper actions. *Prajñāparādha*, therefore, though it includes the philosophical *moha* of the traditional school of philosophy, is yet something very much more, and is to be taken in the wider sense of error of judgment. Caraka, no doubt, admits jealousy, vanity, anger, greed, ignorance (*moha*), etc., as producing improper action, but he admits many other causes as well. But the one supreme cause of all these subsidiary causes is *prajñāparādha*, or error of judgment, taken in its wide sense. It will not, therefore, be wrong to suppose that, according to Caraka, all proper actions are undertaken through the prompting of three fundamental desires, the desire for life, the desire for wealth and enjoyment, and the desire for spiritual good. And all improper actions are due to improper understanding, confusion of thought, and misdirected intelligence (*prajñāparādha*). The three fundamental desires, unassociated with any error of judgment or lack of understanding, may thus be regarded as the root cause of all proper actions. There is, therefore, nothing wrong in giving full play to the functioning of the three fundamental desires, so long as there is no misdirected understanding and confusion to turn them into the wrong path. Caraka does not seem to agree with other systems of philosophy in holding the feelings of attachment and antipathy to be the springs of all actions. Actions are prompted by the normal active tendencies of the three fundamental desires, and they become sinful when our energies are wrongly directed through lack of understanding. Though Caraka had to compromise with the acknowledged view of the systems of Indian Philosophy that the cessation of all sorrows can be only through the cessation of all actions, yet it seems clear that the course of conduct that he approves consists in the normal exercise of the three fundamental desires, free from the commission of any errors of judgment (*prajñāparādha*). Thus Caraka does not preach the ideal of leaving off desires,



attachments, feelings and actions of all kinds, nor does he advocate the *Gītā* ideal of the performance of duties without attachment. His is the ideal of living one's life in a manner that is most conducive to health, long life, and proper enjoyment. Our only care should be that we do not commit any mistake in eating, drinking and other actions of life which may directly or indirectly (through the production of sins) produce diseases and sufferings or jeopardize our life and enjoyment in any way. This unique character of Caraka's ethical position is very clearly proved by the code of conduct, virtues and methods of leading a good life elaborated by Caraka. He no doubt shows a lip-sympathy with the ideal of giving up all actions (*sannyāsa*); but his real sympathies seem to be with the normal scheme of life, involving normal enjoyments and fruition of desires. A normal life, according to Caraka, ought also to be a virtuous life, as vices and sins are the sources of all sorrows, sufferings and diseases in this life and the next.

### Good Life in Caraka.

It is well worth pointing out at the outset that "good life" in Caraka means not only an ethically virtuous life, but a life which is free from diseases, and which is so led that it attains its normal length. Moral life thus means a life that is free from the defect of *prajñāparādha*. It means wise and prudent life; for it is only the want of wisdom and prudence that is the cause of all physical, social, physiological, moral and spiritual mischiefs. To be a good man, it is not enough that one should practise the ethical virtues: a man should practise the physical, physiological and social virtues as well. He must try to live a healthy and long life, free from diseases and sufferings and free from reproaches of any kind. It is important to note that Caraka does not believe in the forced separation of the physical life from the mental and the moral. Physical diseases are to be cured by medicines, while mental diseases are to be cured by right and proper knowledge of things, self-control and self-concentration. The close interconnection between body and mind was well known from early times, and even the *Mahā-bhārata* (XII. 16) says that out of the body arise the mental diseases and out of the mind arise the bodily diseases. Caraka also thinks that a physician should try to cure not only the bodily diseases but also the mental diseases.



The *Mahā-bhārata* further says in the same chapter that there are three elements in the body, viz. heat, cold and air; when they are in a state of equipoise, the body is healthy, and when any one of them predominates, there is disease. The mind is constituted of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*; when these are in a state of equipoise, the mind is in proper order, and when any one of them predominates, it becomes diseased. Caraka, however, thinks that it is only when *rajas* and *tamas* predominate that the mind gets diseased. But, whatever these differences may be, it is evident that, when Caraka speaks of life, he includes both mind and body, and it is the welfare of both that is the chief concern of the physician. Caraka's prohibitions and injunctions are therefore based on this twofold good of body and mind that ought to be aimed at.

After speaking of the harmfulness of attempting to control some of the bodily excretory movements, he recommends the necessity of attempting to control certain other mental and bodily tendencies. Thus he forbids all persons to indulge rashly in their unthinking tendencies to commit mistakes of mind, speech and action. A man should also control his passion of greed, and his feelings of grief, fear, anger, vanity, shamelessness, envy, attachment and solicitude. He should not speak harshly or talk too much or use stinging words or lie or speak irrelevantly or untimely. He should not injure others by his body, indulge in unrestricted sex-gratifications, or steal. Injury to living beings (*himsā*) is supposed to produce sins and thereby affects one's longevity. Non-injury is thus described as being the best way of increasing life (*ahimsā prāṇa-vardhanānām*). The man who follows the above right course of life is called virtuous, and he enjoys wealth, satisfies his desires, abides by the laws (*dharma*) of a good life, and is happy. Along with the proper and well-controlled exercise of the moral functions Caraka advises people to take to well-controlled bodily exercises (*vyāyāma*). When moderately performed, they give lightness, power of doing work, steadiness (*sthairya*) and fortitude (*duḥkha-sahīṣṇatā*). Avoidance of unwise courses and non-commission of errors of judgment (*tyāgaḥ prajñāparādhānām*), sense-control, remembrance of past experiences (*smṛti*), due knowledge of one's own powers, due regard to proper time and place and good conduct prevent the inrush of mental and bodily diseases; for it is these which are the essentials of a good life, and a wise man always does what is good for himself. Caraka further advises



that one should not keep company with those who are sinful in character, speech and mind, or with those who are quarrelsome, greedy, jealous, crooked, light-minded or fond of speaking ill of others or cruel or vicious, or with those who associate with one's enemies. But one should always associate with those who are wise, learned, aged, with men of character, firmness, self-concentration, ready experience, with those who know the nature of things and are full of equanimity, and those who direct us in the right path, are good to all beings, possess a settled character and are peaceful and self-contented. In these ways a man should try, on the one hand, to secure himself against the inrush of mental troubles which upset one's moral life and, on the other hand, properly to attend to his bodily welfare by taking the proper kind of food at the proper time and attending to other details of physical well-being<sup>1</sup>.

The rules of good conduct (*sad-vṛtta*) are described in detail by Caraka as follows<sup>2</sup>:

A man should respect gods, cows, Brāhmaṇas, preceptors (*guru*), elderly persons, saints and teachers (*ācārya*), hold auspicious amulets, bathe twice and clean all the pores of the body and feet and cut his hair, beard and nails three times in a fortnight. He should be well-dressed, should always oil his head, ears, nose and feet, comb his hair, scent himself and smoke (*dhūma-pā*). He should recognize others with a pleasant face, help others in difficulties, perform sacrifices, make gifts, talk delightfully, nicely and for the good of others, be self-controlled (*vaśyātman*) and of a virtuous temperament. He should envy the cause of another's prosperity in the form of his good character and other causes of his personal efficiency (*hetāv īrṣyu*), but should not be jealous of the fruits of these in the form of a man's prosperity or wealth (*phale nersyu*). He should be of firm decision, fearless, susceptible to the feeling of shame, intelligent, energetic, skilful, of a forgiving nature, virtuous and a believer (*āstika*). He should use umbrellas, sticks, turbans and shoes, and should at the time of walking look four cubits of ground in front of him; he should avoid going to impure, unclean and dirty places; he should try to appease those who are angry, soothe the fears of those who have become afraid, help the poor, keep his promises, bear harsh words, be self-controlled, remove the causes of attachments and antipathy (*rāga-dveṣa*) and behave as the friend of all living beings. Again,

<sup>1</sup> See Caraka-saṃhitā, I. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. I. 8.



one should not tell lies, or take that which belongs to others, should not commit adultery, or be jealous at other people's wealth, should not be given to creating enemies, should not commit sins, or do wrong even to a sinner, or speak about the defects or secrets of others; should not keep company with the sinful or with those who are the king's enemies or with madmen, the mean, wicked, out-cast, or those who make abortions. One should not climb into bad vehicles, lie on hard beds, or beds without sheets or pillows, should not climb steep mountain sides or trees or bathe in fast flowing rivers with strong currents; one should not go about places where there are great fires raging, or laugh loudly or yawn or laugh without covering the face, or pick one's teeth. Again, one should not break the laws ordained by a large number of persons, or other laws in general; should not go about at night in improper places, or make friends with youngsters, old or greedy people, fools, sinners or eunuchs; one should not be fond of wines, gambling, prostitutes, divulge secrets, insult others, be proud or boastful or speak ill of old people, teachers, kings or assemblages of persons, or talk too much; one should not turn out relations, friends or those who know one's secrets. One should attend at the proper time to every action, should not undertake to do anything without properly examining it, or be too procrastinating, or be under the influence of anger and pleasure; one should not be very down-hearted in afflictions, or too elated in success, or too disappointed in failures; should practice sex-continence, try to be wise, make gifts, be friendly and compassionate to all and always contented. It is needless to continue to enumerate all the qualities, which would commonly be included within the requisites of a good life. In this Caraka seems to cut an absolutely new way, and in no other branch of Indian thought can we note such an assemblage of good qualities of all the different kinds necessary not only for a virtuous life, but for the healthy and successful life of a good citizen.

It has already been pointed out that error of judgment or delusion, in whichever sphere it may be exercised, is the root of all mischiefs and all troubles. And Caraka demonstrates this by enumerating in his schedule of good conduct proper behaviour in all the different concerns and spheres of life. To Caraka the conception of life is not as moral or immoral, but as good (*hita*) and bad (*ahita*). It is true, no doubt, that here and there stray statements are



found in the *Caraka-saṃhitā* which regard the cessation of all sorrows as the ultimate end of life; but it is obvious that Caraka's main approach to the subject shows very clearly that, though moral virtues are always very highly appreciated, yet the non-moral virtues, such as the proper taking care of the well-being of one's own body and the observance of social rules and forms of etiquette or normal prudent behaviour, are regarded as being equally necessary for the maintenance of a good life. Transgressions and sins are the causes of mental worries, troubles and also of many mental and physical diseases, and one ought therefore to take proper care that they may not enter into one's life; and it is said that the diseases produced by strong sinful acts cannot be cured by the ordinary means of the application of medicines and the like, until with the proper period of their sufferings they subside of themselves. But sins and transgressions are not the only causes of our desires, accidents and other domestic, social and political troubles. It is through our imprudent behaviour and conduct, which are due to error of judgment (*prajñāparādha*), as our other sins and immoral acts are, that all our bodily and mental troubles happen to us. A good life, which is the ideal of every person, is a life of peace, contentment and happiness, free from desires and troubles of all kinds. It is a life of prudence and well-balanced judgment, where every action is done with due consideration to its future consequences and where all that may lead to troubles and difficulties is carefully avoided. It is only such a life that can claim to be good and can be regarded as ideal. A merely moral or virtuous life is not our ideal, which must be good in every respect. Any transgression, be it of the rules of hygiene, rules of polite society, rules of good citizenship, or any deviation from the path which prudence or good judgment would recommend to be wise, may disturb the peace of life. A scheme of good life thus means a wise life, and observance of morality is but one of the many ways in which wisdom can be shown.

Āyur-veda, or the Science of Life, deals primarily with the ways in which a life may be good (*hita*), bad (*ahita*), happy (*sukha*) or unhappy (*asukha*). A happy life is described as a life undisturbed by bodily and mental diseases, full of youth and proper strength, vitality, energy, power of launching new efforts, endowed with wisdom, knowledge and efficient sense-organs—a life which is full of all kinds of desirable enjoyments and in which the ventures that



are undertaken are all successful. The opposite of this is what may be called an unhappy life. The happy life thus represents a life so far as it is happy and enjoyable and so far as it satisfies us. The good life is the life as it is moulded and developed by our right conduct. In a way it is the good life that makes a happy life. They who seek a good life should desist from the sins of taking other people's possessions and be truthful and self-controlled. They should perform every action with proper observation, care and judgment, and should not be hasty or make mistakes by their carelessness; they should attend to the attainment of virtue, wealth and the enjoyments of life without giving undue emphasis to any of them; they should respect those who are revered, should be learned, wise and of a peaceful mind and control their tendencies to attachment, anger, jealousy and false pride; they should always make gifts; they should lead a life of rigour (*tapas*) and attain wisdom, self-knowledge or philosophy (*adhyātma-vidya*), and behave in such a way that the interests of both the present life on earth and the life hereafter may be attended to with care and judgment, always remembering the lessons of past experience<sup>1</sup>. It is now clear that the ideal of good life in Caraka is not the same as that of the different systems of philosophy which are technically called the Science of Liberation (*mokṣa-sāstra*). The fundamental idea of a good life is that a life should be so regulated that the body and mind may be free from diseases, that it should not run into unnecessary risks of danger through carelessness, that it should be virtuous, pure and moral; that it should be a prudent and wise life which abides by the laws of polite society and of good and loyal citizens, manifesting keen alertness in thought and execution and tending constantly to its own good—good for all interests of life, body, mind and spirit.

### *Āyur-veda Literature.*

The systematic development of Indian medicine proceeded primarily on two principal lines, viz. one that of Suśruta and the other that of Caraka. It is said in Suśruta's great work, *Suśruta-saṃhitā*, that Brahmā originally composed the Āyur-veda in one hundred verses, divided into one thousand chapters, even before he had created human beings, and that later on, having regard to the shortness of human life and the poverty of the human intellect,

<sup>1</sup> *Caraka-saṃhitā*, I. 30. 22.



he divided it into the eight parts, *Śalya*, *Śālākya*, etc., alluded to in a previous section. But this seems to be largely mythical. It is further said in the same connection in the *Suśruta-saṃhitā*, I. 1 that the sages Aupadhenava, Vaitaraṇa, Aurabhra, Pauṣkalāvata, Karavīrya, Gopurarakṣita, Suśruta and others approached Dhanvantari or Divodāsa, king of Kāśī, for medical instruction. Suśruta's work is therefore called a work of the Dhanvantari school. Though it was revised at a later date by Nāgārjuna, yet Suśruta himself is an old writer. A study of the Jātakas shows that the great physician Ātreya, a teacher of Jīvaka, lived in Taxila shortly before Buddha<sup>1</sup>. It has been said in a preceding section that in the enumeration of bones Suśruta shows a knowledge of Ātreya's system of osteology. Hoernle has further shown in sections 42, 56, 60 and 61 of his "Osteology," that the *Śatapatha-Bṛāhmaṇa*, which is at least as old as the sixth century B.C., shows an acquaintance with Suśruta's views concerning the counting of bones. But, since Ātreya could not have lived earlier than the sixth century B.C., and since the *Śatapatha-Bṛāhmaṇa* of about the sixth century B.C. shows an acquaintance with Suśruta's views, Hoernle conjectures that Suśruta must have been contemporary with Ātreya's pupil, Agniveśa<sup>2</sup>. But, admitting Hoernle's main contentions to be true, it may be pointed out that by the term *veda-vādinah* in *Suśruta-saṃhitā*, III. 5. 18 Suśruta may have referred to authorities earlier than Ātreya, from whom Ātreya also may have drawn his materials. On this view, then, the lower limit of Suśruta's death is fixed as the sixth or seventh century B.C., this being the date of the *Śatapatha-Bṛāhmaṇa*, while practically nothing can be said about the upper limit.

But it is almost certain that the work which now passes by the name of *Suśruta-saṃhitā* is not identically the same work that was composed by this elder Suśruta (*vrddha Suśruta*). Dalhaṇa, who lived probably in the eleventh or the twelfth century, says in his *Nibandha-saṃgraha* that Nāgārjuna was the reviser of the *Suśruta-saṃhitā*<sup>3</sup>; and the *Suśruta-saṃhitā* itself contains a supplementary part after the *Kalpa-sthāna*, called the *Uttara-tantra* (later work). In the edition of Suśruta by P. Muralidhar, of Pharuknagar, there is a verse at the beginning, which says that that which was

<sup>1</sup> Rockhill's *Life of Buddha*, pp. 65 and 96.

<sup>2</sup> Hoernle's *Medicine of Ancient India*, Part I, "Osteology," pp. 7 and 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Pratisaṃskartāpīha Nāgārjuna eva*. Dalhaṇa's *Nibandha-saṃgraha*, I. 1. 1.



so well taught for the good of the people by the great sage Dhanvantari to the good pupil Suśruta became famous all over the world as *Suśruta-saṃhitā*, and is regarded as the best and the chief of the threefold Āyur-veda literature, and that it was strung together in the form of a book by no other person than Nāgārjuna<sup>1</sup>. Cakrapāṇi also in his *Bhānumatī* refers to a reviser (*pratisaṃskartṛ*); but he does not mention his name. Gayadāsa's *pañjikā* on Suśruta, *Suśruta-candrikā* or *Nyāya-candrikā*, has an observation on the eighth verse of the third chapter of the *Nidāna-sthāna*, in which he gives a different reading by Nāgārjuna, which is the same as the present reading of Suśruta in the corresponding passage<sup>2</sup>. Again, Bhaṭṭa Narahari in his *Ṭippaṇī* on the *Astāṅga-hṛdaya-saṃhitā*, called *Vāgbhaṭa-khaṇḍana-maṇḍana*, in discussing *mūḍha-garbha-nidāna*, annotates on the reading *vasti-dvāre vipannāyāh*, which Vāgbhaṭa changes in borrowing from Suśruta's *vastimāra-vipannāyāh* (II. 8. 14), and says that *vasti-dvāre* is the reading of Nāgārjuna<sup>3</sup>. That Nāgārjuna had the habit of making supplements to his revisions of works is further testified by the fact that a work called *Yoga-śataka*, attributed to Nāgārjuna, had also a supplementary chapter, called *Uttara-tantra*, in addition to its other chapters, *Kāya-cikitsā*, *Śālākya-tantra*, *Śalya-tantra*, *Viśa-tantra*, *Bhūtavidyā*, *Kaumāra-tantra*, *Rasāyana-tantra* and *Vājikaṛaṇa-tantra*. This makes it abundantly clear that what passes as the *Suśruta-saṃhitā* was either entirely strung together from the traditional teachings of Suśruta or entirely revised and enlarged by Nāgārjuna on the basis of a nuclear work of Suśruta which was available to Nāgārjuna. But was Nāgārjuna the only person who revised the *Suśruta-saṃhitā*? Dalhaṇa's statement that it was Nāgārjuna who was the reviser of the work (*pratisaṃskartāpiha Nāgārjuna eva*) is attested by the verse of the Muralidhar edition (*Nāgārjunenaiva grathitā*); but the use of the emphatic word *eva* in both suggests that there may have been other editions or revisions of Suśruta by other writers as well. The hopelessly muddled condition of the readings,

<sup>1</sup> *Upadiṣṭā tu yā samyag Dhanvantari-maharṣiṇā  
 Suśrutāya suśiṣyāya lokānāṃ hita-vāñchayā  
 sarvatra bhuvi vikhyātā nāmnā Suśruta-saṃhitā  
 Āyur-vedat-rayimadhye sreṣṭhā mānyā tathottamā  
 sā ca Nāgārjunenaiva grathitā grantha-rūpataḥ.*

<sup>2</sup> *Nāgārjunas tu paṭhati; śarkarā sikatā meho bhasmākhyo 'śmari-vaikṛtam iti.*  
 In the Nirṇaya-Sāgara edition of 1915 this is II. 3. 13, whereas in Jivānanda's edition it is II. 3. 8. See also Dr Cordier's *Récents Découvertes de MSS. Médicaux Sanscrits dans l'Inde*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *ata eva Nāgārjunair vasti-dvāra iti paṭhyate.*



chapter-divisions and textual arrangements in the chapters in different editions of the *Suśruta-saṃhitā* is such that there can be no doubt that from time to time many hands were in operation on this great work. Nor is it proper to think that the work of revising *Suśruta* was limited to a pre-Cakrapāṇi period. It is possible to point out at least one case in which it can be almost definitely proved that a new addition was made to the *Suśruta-saṃhitā* after Cakrapāṇi, or the text of *Suśruta* known to Ḍalhaṇa was not known to Cakrapāṇi. Thus, in dealing with the use of catheters and the processes of introducing medicine through the anus (*vasti-kriyā*) in iv. 38, the texts of the *Suśruta-saṃhitā* commented on by Ḍalhaṇa reveal many interesting details which are untouched in the chapter on *Vasti* in the *Caraka-saṃhitā* (*Uttara-vasti, Siddhi-sthāna*, XII). This chapter of the *Caraka-saṃhitā* was an addition by Dṛḍhabala, who flourished in Kāśmīra or the Punjab, probably in the eighth or the ninth century. When Cakrapāṇi wrote his commentary in the eleventh century, he did not make any reference to the materials found in the *Suśruta-saṃhitā*, nor did he introduce them into his own medical compendium, which passes by the name of *Cakradatta*. Cakrapāṇi knew his *Suśruta-saṃhitā* well, as he had commented on it himself, and it is extremely unlikely that, if he had found any interesting particulars concerning *vasti-kriyā* in his text, he should not have utilized them in his commentary or in his own medical work. The inference, therefore, is almost irresistible that many interesting particulars regarding *vasti-kriyā*, absent in the texts of the *Suśruta-saṃhitā* in the ninth and eleventh centuries, were introduced into it in the twelfth century. It is difficult, however, to guess which Nāgārjuna was the reviser or editor of the *Suśruta-saṃhitā*; it is very unlikely that he was the famous Nāgārjuna of the *Mādhyamika-kārikā*, the great teacher of Śūnyavāda; for the accounts of the life of this Nāgārjuna, as known from Chinese and Tibetan sources, nowhere suggest that he revised or edited the *Suśruta-saṃhitā*. Alberuni speaks of a Nāgārjuna who was born in Dihaka, near Somanātha (Gujarat), about one hundred years before himself, i.e. about the middle of the ninth century, and who had written an excellent work on alchemy, containing the substance of the whole literature of the subject, which by Alberuni's time had become very rare. It is not improbable that this Nāgārjuna was the author of the *Kakṣapuṭa-tantra*, which is



avowedly written with materials collected from the alchemical works of various religious communities and which deals with the eightfold miraculous acquirements (*aṣṭa-siddhi*). But Vṛnda in his *Siddha-yoga* refers to a formula by Nāgārjuna which was said to have been written on a pillar in Pāṭaliputra<sup>1</sup>. This formula is reproduced by Cakrapāṇi Datta, Vaṅgasena and by Nityanātha Siddha in his *Rasa-ratnākara*. But since Vṛnda, the earliest of these writers, flourished about the eighth or the ninth century, and since his formula was taken from an inscription, it is not improbable that this Nāgārjuna flourished a few centuries before him.

Of the commentaries on the *Suśruta-saṃhitā* the most important now current is Ḍalhaṇa's *Nibandha-saṃgraha*. Ḍalhaṇa quotes Cakrapāṇi, of A.D. 1060, and is himself quoted by Hemādri, of A.D. 1260. He therefore flourished between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries. It has been pointed out that sufficient textual changes in the *Suśruta-saṃhitā* had occurred between Cakrapāṇi and Ḍalhaṇa's time to have taken at least about one hundred years. I am therefore inclined to think that Ḍalhaṇa lived late in the twelfth, or early in the thirteenth, century at the court of King Sahapāla Deva. Cakrapāṇi had also written a commentary on the *Suśruta-saṃhitā*, called *Bhānumatī*, the first book of which has been published by Kaviraj Gangaprasad Sen. Dr Cordier notes that there is a complete manuscript of this at Benares. Niścala Kara and Śrīkaṇṭha Datta sometimes quote from Cakrapāṇi's commentary on the *Suśruta-saṃhitā*. Ḍalhaṇa's commentary is called *Nibandha-saṃgraha*, which means that the book is collected from a number of commentaries, and he himself says in a colophon at the end of the *Uttara-tantra* that the physician Ḍalhaṇa, son of Bharata, had written the work after consulting many other commentaries<sup>2</sup>. At the beginning of his *Nibandha-saṃgraha* he refers to Jaiyyaṭa, Gayadāsa, Bhāskara's *pañjikā*, Śrīmādhava and Brahmadeva. In his work he further mentions Caraka, Hārīta, Jatukarṇa, Kāśyapa, Kṛṣṇātreya, Bhadrāśaunaka, Nāgārjuna, the two Vāgbhaṭas, Videha, Hariścandra, Bhoja, Kārttika Kuṇḍa and others. Hariścandra was a commentator on the *Caraka-saṃhitā*. It is curious, however, that, though Ḍalhaṇa refers to Bhāskara and Śrīmādhava

<sup>1</sup> Nāgārjunena likhitā stambhe Pāṭaliputrake, v. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Nibandhān bahuśo vākṣya vaidyaḥ Śrībhāratātmapajā  
 uttara-sthānam akarot suspaṣṭam Ḍalhaṇo bhīṣak.



at the beginning of his commentary, he does not refer to them in the body of it. Hoernle, however, is disposed to identify Bhāskara and Kārttika Kuṇḍa as one person. Vijayarakṣita and Śrīkaṇṭha Datta, commentators on Mādhava's *Nidāna*, refer to Kārttika Kuṇḍa in connection with their allusions to the *Suśruta-saṃhitā*, but not to Bhāskara. A Patna inscription (E.I.I. 340, 345) says that King Bhoja had given the title of Vidyāpati to Bhāskara Bhaṭṭa. Hoernle thinks that this Bhāskara was the same as Bhāskara Bhaṭṭa. Hoernle also suggests that Vṛnda Mādhava was the same as Śrīmādhava referred to by Ḍalhaṇa. Mādhava in his *Siddha-yoga* often modifies Suśruta's statements. It may be that these modifications passed as Mādhava's *Tippaṇa*. Since Gayadāsa and Cakrapāṇi both refer to Bhoja and do not refer to one another, it may be that Gayadāsa was a contemporary of Cakrapāṇi. Hoernle thinks that the Brahmadeva referred to by Ḍalhaṇa was Śrībrahma, the father of Maheśvara, who wrote his *Sāhasāṅka-carita* in A.D. 1111. Maheśvara refers to Hariścandra as an early ancestor of his. It is not improbable that this Hariścandra was a commentator on Caraka. The poet Maheśvara was himself also a Kavirāja, and Heramba Sena's *Gūḍha-bodhaka-saṃgraha* was largely based on Maheśvara's work. Jejjāta's commentary passed by the name of *Brhal-laghu-pañjikā*; Gayadāsa's commentary was called the *Suśruta-candrikā* or *Nyāya-candrikā* and Śrīmādhava or Mādhava-Kara's *Tippaṇa* was called *Śloka-vārttika*. Gayadāsa mentions the names of Bhoja, Suranandī and Svāmidāsa. Gayadāsa's *pañjikā* has been discovered only up to the *Nidāna-sthāna*, containing 3000 *granthas*. Among other commentators of Suśruta we hear the names of Gomin, Āṣādhavarman, Jinadāsa, Naradanta, Gadādhara, Bāṣpacandra, Soma, Govardhana and Praśnanidhāna.

It may not be out of place here to mention the fact that the Sāṃkhya philosophy summed up in the *Śārīra-sthāna* of Suśruta is decidedly the Sāṃkhya philosophy of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, which, as I have elsewhere pointed out, is later than the Sāṃkhya philosophy so elaborately treated in the *Caraka-saṃhitā*<sup>1</sup>. This fact also suggests that the revision of Suśruta was executed after the composition of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's work (about A.D. 200), which agrees with the view expressed above that the revision of Suśruta was the work of Nāgārjuna, who flourished about the fourth or the fifth century A.D. But it is extremely improbable that the elaborate medical doctrines

<sup>1</sup> *History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1, pp. 313-322.



of an author who lived at so early a date as the sixth century B.C. could have remained in a dispersed condition until seven, eight or nine hundred years later. It is therefore very probable that the main basis of Suśruta's work existed in a codified and well-arranged form from very early times. The work of the editor or reviser seems to have consisted in introducing supplements, such as the *Uttara-tantra*, and other chapters on relevant occasions. It does not seem impossible that close critical and comparative study of a number of published texts of the *Suśruta-saṃhitā* and of unpublished manuscripts may enable a future student to separate the original from the supplementary parts. The task, however, is rendered difficult by the fact that additions to the *Suśruta-saṃhitā* were probably not limited to one period, as has already been pointed out above.

It is well known that Atri's medical teachings, as collected by Agniveśa in his *Agniveśa-tantra*, which existed at least as late as Cakrapāṇi, form the basis of a revised work by Caraka, who is said to have flourished during the time of Kaṇiṣka, passing by the name of *Caraka-saṃhitā*<sup>1</sup>. It is now also well known that Caraka did not complete his task, but left it half-finished at a point in the *Cikitsā-sthāna*, seventeen chapters of which, together with the books called *Siddhi-sthāna* and *Kalpa-sthāna*, were added by Kapilabala's son, Drḍhabala, of the city of Pañcanada, about the ninth century A.D. The statement that Drḍhabala supplemented the work in the above way is found in the current texts of the *Caraka-saṃhitā*<sup>2</sup>. Niścala Kara in his *Ratna-prabhā* describes him as author of the *Caraka-pariśiṣṭa*, and Cakrapāṇi, Vijayarakṣita and Aruṇadatta (A.D. 1240), whenever they have occasion to quote passages from his supplementary parts, all refer to Drḍhabala as the author. The city of Pañcanada was identified as the Punjab by Dr U. C. Dutt in his *Materia Medica*, which identification was accepted by Dr Cordier and referred to a supposed modern Panjpur, north of Attock in the Punjab. There are several Pañcanadas in different parts of India, and one of them is mentioned in the fifty-ninth chapter of the *Kāśi-khaṇḍa*; Gaṅgādhara in his commentary identifies this with Benares, assigning no reason for such identification. Hoernle, however, thinks that this Pañcanada is the modern village of

<sup>1</sup> On Caraka's being the court-physician of Kaṇiṣka see S. Levi, *Notes sur les Indo-Scythes*, in *Journal Asiatique*, pp. 444 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Caraka-saṃhitā*, vi. 30 and *Siddhi-sthāna*, vii. 8.



Pantzinor ("five channels" in Kashmir) and holds that Dr̥ḍhabala was an inhabitant of this place. There are many passages in Caraka which the commentators believe to be additions of the Kāśmīra recension (*Kāśmīra-pāṭha*). Mādhava quotes a number of verses from the third chapter of the sixth section, on fevers, which verses are given with the omission of about twenty-four lines. Vijaya-rakṣita, in his commentary on Mādhava's *Nidāna*, says that these lines belong to the Kāśmīra recension. Existing manuscripts vary very much with regard to these lines; for, while some have the lines, in others they are not found. In the same chapter there are other passages which are expressly noted by Cakrapāṇidatta as belonging to Kāśmīra recensions, and are not commented upon by him. There are also other examples. Hoernle points out that Jīvānanda's edition of 1877 gives the Kāśmīra version, while his edition of 1896, as well as the editions of Gaṅgādhara, the two Sens and Abinas, have Caraka's original version. Mādhava never quotes readings belonging to the Kāśmīra recension. Hoernle puts together four points, viz. that Caraka's work was revised and completed by Dr̥ḍhabala, that there existed a Kāśmīra recension of the *Caraka-saṃhitā*, that Dr̥ḍhabala calls himself a native of Pañcanada city, and that there existed a holy place of that name in Kāśmīra; and he argues that the so-called Kāśmīra recension represents the revision of the *Caraka-saṃhitā* by Dr̥ḍhabala. Judging from the fact that Mādhava takes no notice of the readings of the Kāśmīra recension, he argues that the latter did not exist in Mādhava's time and that therefore Mādhava's date must be anterior to that of Dr̥ḍhabala.

But which portions were added to the *Caraka-saṃhitā* by Dr̥ḍhabala? The obvious assumption is that he added the last seventeen chapters of the sixth book (*Cikitsā*) and the seventh and eighth books<sup>1</sup>. But such an assumption cannot hold good, since there is a great divergence in the counting of the number of the chapters in different manuscripts. Thus, while Jīvānanda's text marks Arśas, Atisāra, Visarpa, Madātyaya and Dvivraṇīya as the ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth chapters of *Cikitsā* and therefore belonging to the original Caraka, Gaṅgādhara's text

1

*asmin saptādaśādhyā kalpāḥ siddhaya eva ca  
nāsādyante 'gniveśasya tantre Carakasamskṛte  
tān etān Kāpilabalaḥ śeṣān Dr̥ḍhabalo 'karot  
tantrasyāśya mahārthasya pūraṇārthaṃ yathāyatham.*



calls the ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth chapters Unmāda, Apasmāra, Kṣataksīṇa, Śvayathu and Udara. The seventeen chapters attributed to Dṛḍhabala have consequently different titles in the Gaṅgādhara and Jīvānanda editions. Hoernle has discussed very critically these textual problems and achieved notable results in attributing chapters to Caraka or Dṛḍhabala<sup>1</sup>. But it is needless for us to enter into these discussions.

Mahāmahopādhyāya Kaviraj Gaṇanātha Sen, merely on the strength of the fact that the *Rāja-taraṅgiṇī* is silent on the matter<sup>2</sup>, disputes the traditional Chinese statement that Caraka was the court-physician of Kaṇiṣka. There is no ground to believe as gospel truth a tradition, which cannot be traced to any earlier authority than Bhoja (eleventh century), that Patañjali was the author of a medical work, and that therefore Patañjali and Caraka could be identified. His comparisons of some passages from Caraka (iv. 1) with some *sūtras* of Patañjali are hardly relevant and he finally has to rest for support of this identification on the evidence of Rāmabhadra Dikṣita, a man of the seventeenth or the eighteenth century, who holds that Patañjali had written a work on medicine. He should have known that there were more Patañjalis than one, and that the alchemist and medical Patañjali was an entirely different person from Patañjali, the grammarian.

The most important commentary now completely available to us is the *Āyur-veda-dīpikā*, or *Caraka-tātparya-ṭīkā*, of Cakrapāṇidatta. Another important commentary is the *Caraka-pañjikā* by Svāmikumāra. He was a Buddhist in faith, and he refers to the commentator Hariścandra. The *Caraka-tattva-pradīpikā* was written in later times by Śivadāśasena, who also wrote the *Tattva-candrikā*, a commentary on Cakradatta. We hear also of other commentaries on Caraka by Bāṣpacandra or Vāpyacandra, Īśānadeva, Īśvarasena, Vakulakara, Jinadāsa, Munidāsa, Govardhana, Sandhyākara, Jaya nandī and the *Caraka-candrikā* of Gayadāsa.

Among other ancient treatises we may mention the *Kāśyapa-saṃhitā*, discovered in Kaṭhmāṇḍū, a medical dialogue between Kāśyapa, the teacher and Bhārgava, the student. It is interesting to note that it has some verses (MS., pp. 105-110) which are identical with part of the fifth chapter of the first book of Caraka. There is another important manuscript, called *Bhāradvāja-*

<sup>1</sup> *J.R.A.S.*, 1908 and 1909.

<sup>2</sup> *Pratyakṣa-śāstram*, introduction.



*saṃhitā*, which contains within it a small work called *Bhesaja-kalpa*, a commentary by Venkaṭeśa<sup>1</sup>. Agniveśa's original work, the *Agniveśa-saṃhitā*, which was the basis of Caraka's revision, was available at least up to the time of Cakrapāṇi; Vijayarakṣita and Śrīkaṇṭhadatta also quote from it<sup>2</sup>. Jātūkarṇa's work also existed till the time of the same writers, as they occasionally quote from *Jātūkarṇa-saṃhitā*<sup>3</sup>. The *Parāśara-saṃhitā* and *Kṣārapāṇi-saṃhitā* were also available down to Śrīkaṇṭhadatta's, or even down to Śivadāsa's, time. The *Hārīta-saṃhitā* (different from the printed and more modern text) was also available from the time of Cakrapāṇi and Vijayarakṣita, as is evident from the quotations from it in their works. Bhēla's work, called *Bhēla-saṃhitā*, has already been published by the University of Calcutta. It may be remembered that Agniveśa, Bhēla, Jātūkarṇa, Parāśara, Hārīta and Kṣārapāṇi were all fellow-students in medicine, reading with the same teacher, Ātreya-Punarvasu; Agniveśa, being the most intelligent of them all, wrote his work first, but Bhēla and his other fellow-students also wrote independent treatises, which were read before the assembly of medical scholars and approved by them. Another work of the same school, called *Kharanāda-saṃhitā*, and also a *Viśvāmitra-saṃhitā*, both of which are not now available, are utilized by Cakrapāṇi and other writers in their commentaries. The name *saṃhitā*, however, is no guarantee of the antiquity of these texts, for the junior Vāgbhaṭa's work is also called *Aṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya-saṃhitā*. We have further a manuscript called *Vararuci-saṃhitā*, by Vararuci, and a *Siddha-sāra-saṃhitā* by Ravigupta, son of Durgāgupta, which are of comparatively recent date. The *Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa* refers to a number of early medical works, such as the *Cikitsā-tattva-vijñāna* of Dhanvantari, *Cikitsā-darśana* of Divodāsa, *Cikitsā-kaumudī* of Kāśīrāja, *Cikitsā-sāra-tantra* and *Bhrama-ghna* of Āśvinī, *Vaidyaka-sarvasva* of Nakula, *Vyādhi-sindhu-vimardana* of Sahadeva, *Jñānārṇava* of Yama, *Jīvādāna* of Cyavana, *Vaidya-sandeha-bhañjana* of Janaka, *Sarva-sāra* of Candrasuta, *Tantra-sāra* of Jābāla, *Vedāṅga-sāra* of Jājali, *Nidāna* of Paila, *Sarva-dhara* of Karāṭha and *Dvaidha-nirṇaya-tantra* of

<sup>1</sup> See Dr Cordier's *Récentes Découvertes de MSS. Médicaux Sanscrits dans l'Inde* (1898-1902).

<sup>2</sup> See Cakrapāṇi's commentary on *Caraka-saṃhitā*, II. 2, also Śrīkaṇṭha on the *Siddha-yoga*, *Jvarādhikāra*.

<sup>3</sup> Cakrapāṇi's commentary, II. 2 and II. 5, also Śrīkaṇṭha on the *Nidāna* (*Kṣudra-roga*).



Agastya<sup>1</sup>. But nothing is known of these works, and it is difficult to say if they actually existed.

It is well known that there were two Vāgbhaṭas (sometimes spelt Vāhaṭa). The earlier Vāgbhaṭa knew Caraka and Suśruta. It is conjectured by Hoernle and others that the statement of I-tsing (A.D. 675-685), that the eight arts formerly existed in eight books, and that a man had lately epitomized them and made them into one bundle, and that all physicians in the five parts of India practised according to that book, alludes to the *Aṣṭāṅga-saṃgraha* of Vāgbhaṭa the elder. In that case Vāgbhaṭa I must have flourished either late in the sixth century or early in the seventh century; for I-tsing speaks of him as having epitomized the work "lately," and on the other hand time must be allowed for the circulation of such a work in the five parts of India. A comparison of Suśruta and Vāgbhaṭa I shows that the study of anatomy had almost ceased to exist in the latter's time. It is very probable that Vāgbhaṭa was a Buddhist. The *Aṣṭāṅga-saṃgraha* has a commentary by Indu; but before Indu there had been other commentators, whose bad expositions were refuted by him<sup>2</sup>.

Mādhava, Dṛḍhabala and Vāgbhaṭa II all knew Vāgbhaṭa I. Mādhava mentions him by name and occasionally quotes from him both in the *Siddha-yoga* and in the *Nidāna*, and so also does Dṛḍhabala<sup>3</sup>. Hoernle has shown that Dṛḍhabala's 96 diseases of the eye are based on Vāgbhaṭa's 94. Vāgbhaṭa II towards the end of the *Uttara-sthāna* of his *Aṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya-saṃhitā* definitely expresses his debt to Vāgbhaṭa I. But they must all have flourished before Cakrapāṇi, who often refers to Dṛḍhabala and Vāgbhaṭa II. If, as Hoernle has shown, Mādhava was anterior to Dṛḍhabala, he also must necessarily have flourished before Cakrapāṇi. Hoernle's argument that Mādhava flourished before Dṛḍhabala rests upon the fact that Suśruta counts 76 kinds of eye-diseases, while Vāgbhaṭa I has 94. Dṛḍhabala accepts Vāgbhaṭa I's 94 eye-diseases with the addition of two more, added by Mādhava, making his list come to 96. Mādhava had accepted Suśruta's 76 eye-diseases and

<sup>1</sup> It is curious to notice that the *Brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa* makes Dhanvantari, Kāśirāja and Divodāsa different persons, which is contrary to Suśruta's statement noted above.

<sup>2</sup> *Durvyākhyā-viṣa-suptasya Vāhaṭasyāsmad-uktayaḥ santu saṃvitti-dāyinyas sad-āgama-pariṣṛtā*. Indu's commentary, I. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Siddha-yoga*, I. 27, *Aṣṭāṅga-saṃgraha*, II. 1, *Nidāna*, II. 22 and 23, *Samgraha*, I. 266, *Caraka-saṃhitā* (Jivānanda, 1896), *Cikitsita-sthāna*, XVI. 31, *Samgraha*, II. 26. Again, *Cikitsita-sthāna*, XVI. 53, etc., *Samgraha*, II. 27, etc.



added two of his own<sup>1</sup>. The second point in Hoernle's argument is that Mādhava in his quotations from Caraka always omits the passages marked by Vijayarakṣita as Kāśmīra readings, which Hoernle identifies with the revision work of Dṛḍhabala. These arguments of Hoernle appear very inconclusive; for, if the so-called Kāśmīra recension can be identified with Dṛḍhabala's revision, both Dṛḍhabala's Kāśmīra nativity and his posteriority to Mādhava can be proved; but this proposition has not been proved. On the other hand, Cakrapāṇi alludes to a Dṛḍhabala saṃskāra side by side with a Kāśmīra reading, and this seems to indicate that the two are not the same<sup>2</sup>. The suggestion of Mādhava's anteriority on the ground that he counts 78 eye-diseases is rather far-fetched. Mādhava's date, therefore, cannot be definitely settled. Hoernle is probably correct in holding that Dṛḍhabala is anterior to Vāgbhaṭa<sup>3</sup>. However, the relative anteriority or posteriority of these three writers does not actually matter very much; for they lived at more or less short intervals from one another and their dates may roughly be assigned to a period between the eighth and tenth centuries A.D.

Vāgbhaṭa II's *Aṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya-saṃhitā* has at least five commentaries, viz. by Aruṇadatta (*Sarvāṅga-sundarī*), Āśādhara, Candracandana (*Padārtha-candrikā*), Rāmanātha and Hemādri (*Āyur-veda-rasāyana*). Of these Aruṇadatta probably lived in A.D. 1220. Mādhava's *Rug-viniścaya*, a compendium of pathology, is one of the most popular works of Indian Medicine. It has at least seven commentaries, viz. by Vijayarakṣita (*Madhu-kośa*), Vaidya-vācaspati (*Ātaṅka-dīpana*), Rāmanātha Vaidya, Bhavānīśahāya, Nāganātha (*Nidāna-pradīpa*), Gaṇeśa Bhisaj and the commentary known as *Siddhānta-candrikā* or *Vivaraṇa-siddhānta-candrikā*, by Narasiṃha Kavirāja<sup>4</sup>. Vijayarakṣita's commentary, however,

<sup>1</sup> Hoernle thinks that the total number of 76 eye-diseases ordinarily found in the printed editions of Mādhava's *Nidāna* is not correct, as they do not actually tally with the descriptions of the different eye-diseases given by Mādhava and do not include *pakṣma-kopa* and *pakṣma-śātā* varieties. Hoernle's "Osteology," p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Cakra's commentary, I. 7. 46-50.

<sup>3</sup> See Hoernle's "Osteology," pp. 14-16.

<sup>4</sup> Narasiṃha Kavirāja was the son of Nilakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa and the pupil of Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭa. He seems to have written another medical work, called *Madhu-matī*. His *Vivaraṇa-siddhānta-candrikā*, though based on Vijaya's *Madhu-kośa*, is an excellent commentary and contains much that is both instructive and new. The only manuscript available is probably the one that belongs to the family library of the author of the present work, who is preparing an edition of it for publication.



closes with the 33rd chapter, and the rest of the work was accomplished by Śrīkaṇṭhadatta, a pupil of Vijayarakṣita. Vṛnda (who may be the same as Mādhava) wrote a *Siddha-yoga*, a book of medical formulas, well known among medical writers.

In connection with this brief account of Indian medical works the *Nava-nītaka*, and the other mutilated medical treatises which have been discovered in Central Asia and which go by the name of "Bower manuscript," cannot be omitted. This manuscript is written on birch leaves in Gupta characters and is probably as old as the fifth century A.D. It is a Buddhist work, containing many medical formulas taken from Caraka, Suśruta and other unknown writers. It will, however, be understood that an elaborate discussion of chronology or an exhaustive account of Indian medical works would be out of place in a work like the present. The Āyur-veda literature, and particularly that part which deals with medical formulas and recipes, medical lexicons and the like, is vast. Aufrecht's catalogue contains the names of about 1500 manuscript texts, most of which have not yet been published, and there are many other manuscripts not mentioned in Aufrecht's catalogue. Among the books now much in use may be mentioned the works of Śārṅgadharma, of the fourteenth century, Śivadāsa's commentary on Cakrapāṇi, of the fifteenth century, and the *Bhāva-prakāśa* of Bhāvamīśra, of the sixteenth. Vaṅgasena's work is also fairly common. Among anatomical texts Bhoja's work and Bhāskara Bhaṭṭa's *Śārīra-padmīnī* deserve mention. The *Aupadhenava-tantra*, *Pauṣkalāvata-tantra*, *Vaitarāṇa-tantra* and *Bhoja-tantra* are alluded to by Ḍalhaṇa. The *Bhāluki-tantra* and *Kapīla-tantra* are mentioned by Cakrapāṇi in his *Bhānumatī* commentary. So much for the anatomical treatises. *Videha-tantra*, *Nimi-tantra*, *Kāṅkāyana-tantra*, *Sātyaki-tantra*, *Karāla-tantra* and *Kṛṣṇātreyā-tantra* on eye-diseases are alluded to in Śrīkaṇṭha's commentary on Mādhava's *Nidāna*. The *Śaunaka-tantra* on eye-diseases is named in the commentaries of Cakrapāṇi and Ḍalhaṇa. The *Ḍivaka-tantra*, *Parvataka-tantra* and *Bandhaka-tantra* are alluded to by Ḍalhaṇa as works on midwifery. The *Hiraṇyākṣya-tantra* on the same subject is named by Śrīkaṇṭha, whereas the *Kāśyapa-saṃhitā* and *Ālambāyana-saṃhitā* are cited by Śrīkaṇṭha on toxicology. The *Uśanas-saṃhitā*, *Sanaka-saṃhitā*, *Lāṭyāyana-saṃhitā* are also mentioned as works on toxicology.

Among some of the other important Tantras may be mentioned



Nāgārjuna's *Yoga-śataka*, containing the eight regular divisions of Indian Medicine, and Nāgārjuna's *Īva-sūtra* and *Bheṣaja-kalpa*, all of which were translated into Tibetan. Three works on the *Aṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya*, called *Aṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya-nāma-vaidūryaka-bhāṣya*, *Padārtha-candrikā-prabhāsa-nāma*, *Aṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya-vṛtti* and *Vaidyakā-ṣṭāṅga-hṛdaya-vṛtter bheṣaja-nāma-sūci*, were also translated into Tibetan.

The *Āyur-veda-sūtra* is a work by Yogānandanātha, published with a commentary by the same author in the Mysore University Sanskrit series in 1922, with an introduction by Dr Shama Sastry. It is rightly pointed out in the introduction that this is a very modern work, written after the *Bhāva-prakāśa*, probably in the sixteenth century. It contains sixteen chapters and is an attempt to connect Āyur-veda with Patañjali's Yoga system. It endeavours to show how different kinds of food increase the *sattva*, *rajas* and *taṃas* qualities and how *yoga* practices, fasting and the like, influence the conditions of the body. Its contribution, whether as a work of Āyur-veda or as a work of philosophy, is rather slight. It shows a tendency to connect *Yoga* with Āyur-veda, while the *Vira-siṃhāvalokita* is a work which tries to connect astrology with the same.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE *BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ*

#### The *Gītā* Literature.

THE *Gītā* is regarded by almost all sections of the Hindus as one of the most sacred religious works, and a large number of commentaries have been written on it by the adherents of different schools of thought, each of which explained the *Gītā* in its own favour. Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* is probably the earliest commentary now available; but from references and discussions found therein there seems to be little doubt that there were previous commentaries which he wished to refute.

Śaṅkara in his interpretation of the *Gītā* seeks principally to emphasize the dogma that right knowledge can never be combined with Vedic duties or the duties recommended by the legal scriptures. If through ignorance, or through attachment, a man continues to perform the Vedic duties, and if, as a result of sacrifices, gifts and *tapas* (religious austerities), his mind becomes pure and he acquires the right knowledge regarding the nature of the ultimate reality—that the passive Brahman is the all—and then, when all reasons for the performance of actions have ceased for him, still continues to perform the prescribed duties just like common men and to encourage others to behave in a similar manner, then such actions are inconsistent with right knowledge. When a man performs actions without desire or motive, they cannot be considered as *karma* at all. He alone may be said to be performing *karma*, or duties, who has any interest in them. But the wise man, who has no interest in his *karma*, cannot be said to be performing *karma* in the proper sense of the term, though to all outward appearances he may be acting exactly like an ordinary man. Therefore the main thesis of the *Gītā*, according to Śaṅkara, is that liberation can come only through right knowledge and not through knowledge combined with the performance of duties. Śaṅkara maintains that all duties hold good for us only in the stage of ignorance and not in the stage of wisdom. When once the right knowledge of identity with Brahman dawns and ignorance ceases, all notions of duality, which are presupposed by



the performance of actions and responsibility for them, cease<sup>1</sup>. In interpreting *Gītā*, III. 1, Śaṅkara criticizes the opinions of some previous commentators, who held that obligatory duties cannot be given up even when true wisdom is attained. In reply he alludes to legal scriptures (*smṛti-śāstra*), and asserts that the mere non-performance of any duties, however obligatory, cannot lead to evil results, since non-performance is a mere negation and of mere negation no positive results can come out. The evil effects of the non-performance of obligatory duties can happen only to those who have not given up all their actions (*a-saṁnyāsi-viśayatvāt pratyavāya-prāpteh*). But those who have attained true wisdom and have consequently given up all their actions transcend the sphere of duties and of the obligatory injunctions of the Vedas, and the legal scriptures cannot affect them at all. The performance of duties cannot by itself lead to liberation; but it leads gradually to the attainment of purity of mind (*sattva-śuddhi*) and through this helps the dawning of the right knowledge, with which all duties cease<sup>2</sup>. In a very lengthy discussion on the interpretation of *Gītā*, XVIII. 67, Śaṅkara tries to prove that all duties presuppose the multiplicity of the world of appearance, which is due to ignorance or nescience, and therefore the sage who has attained the right knowledge of Brahman, the only reality, has no duties to perform. Final liberation is thus produced, not by true knowledge along with the performance of duties, but by true knowledge alone. The wise man has no duties of any kind. Śaṅkara's interpretation of the *Gītā* presupposes that the *Gītā* holds the same philosophical doctrine that he does. His method of interpretation is based not so much on a comparison of textual passages, as simply on the strength of the reasonableness of the exposition of a view which can be consistently held according to his Vedānta philosophy, and which he ascribes to the *Gītā*. The view taken in the present exposition of the *Gītā* philosophy is diametrically opposite to that of Śaṅkara. It has been repeatedly pointed out that the *Gītā* asserts that even the wise man should perform his allotted duties, though he may have nothing to gain by the performance of such duties. Even God Himself as Kṛṣṇa, though He had no unsatisfied cravings, passions or desires of any kind,

<sup>1</sup> Śaṅkara's interpretation of the *Gītā*, II. 69. Yogāśrama edition, Benares, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* III. 4.



performed His self-imposed duties in order to set an example to all and to illustrate the fact that even the wise man should perform his prescribed duties<sup>1</sup>.

Ānandajñāna wrote a commentary on Śaṅkara's *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya*, called *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya-vivaraṇa*, and Rāmānanda wrote another commentary on that of Śaṅkara, called *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya-vyākhyā*. He is also said to have written another work on the *Gītā*, called *Gītāsaya*. After Śaṅkara there seems to have been some pause. We have two commentaries, one in prose and one in verse, by two persons of the same name, Yāmūnācārya. The Yāmūnācārya who was the author of a prose commentary is certainly, though a *viśiṣṭādvaita-vādin*, not the celebrated Yāmuna, the teacher of Rāmānuja. His commentary, which has been published by the Sudarśana Press, Conjeeveram, is very simple, consisting mainly of a mere paraphrase of the *Gītā* verses. He thinks that the first six chapters of the *Gītā* deal with the nature of true knowledge of God as a means to devotion, the second six with the nature of God as attainable by devotion and adoration, and the third six repeat the same subjects for a further clearing up of the problems involved.

Yāmuna, the great teacher of Rāmānuja, who is said to have been born in A.D. 906, summarized the subject-matter of the *Gītā* in a few verses called *Gītārtha-saṃgraha*, on which Nigamānta Mahādeśika wrote a commentary known as *Gītārtha-saṃgraha-rakṣā*. This also was commented on by Varavara Muni, of the fourteenth century, in a commentary called *Gītārtha-saṃgraha-dīpikā*, published by the Sudarśana Press, Conjeeveram. Another commentary, called *Bhagavad-gītārtha-saṃgraha-ṭīkā*, by Pratyakṣadevayathācārya, is mentioned by Aufrecht. Yāmuna says that the object of the *Gītā* is to establish the fact that Nārāyaṇa is the highest Brahman, attained only by devotion (*bhakti*), which is achieved through caste duties (*sva-dharma*), right knowledge and disinclination to worldly pleasures (*vairāgya*). It is said that the first six chapters of the *Gītā* describe the process of attaining self-knowledge by self-concentration (*yoga*) through knowledge and action along with self-subordination to God, the performance of all actions for God and detachment from all other things. Nigamānta Mahādeśika notes that *karma* may lead to self-realization either indirectly, through the production of knowledge, or directly by itself.

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, III. 22.



From the seventh to the twelfth chapters the processes of the attainment of devotion (*bhakti-yoga*) by knowledge and by actions are described, and it is held that the true nature of God can be realized only by such devotion. From the thirteenth to the eighteenth chapters, the nature of *pradhāna*, of *puruṣa*, of the manifested world and of the supreme lord are described and distinguished along with the nature of action, of knowledge and of devotion. Yāmuna then goes on to describe the contents of the chapters of the *Gītā* one by one. Thus he says that in the second chapter the nature of the saint of imperturbable wisdom (*sthita-dhi*) is described. Such right knowledge can be achieved only by a knowledge of the self as immortal and the habit of performing one's duties in an unattached manner. In the third chapter it is said that a man should perform his duties for the preservation of the social order (*loka-rakṣā*) without attachment, leaving the fruits of all his actions to God, and considering at the same time that the *guṇas* are the real agents of actions and that it is wrong to pride oneself upon their performance. The fourth chapter describes the nature of God, how one should learn to look upon actions as implying no action (on account of unattachment), the different kinds of duties and the glory of knowledge. The fifth describes the advantages and the diverse modes of the path of duties and also the nature of the state of realization of Brahman. The sixth describes the nature of *yoga* practice, four kinds of *yogins*, the methods of *yoga*, the nature of *yoga* realization and the ultimate superiority of *yoga* as communion with God. The seventh describes the reality of God, how His nature is often veiled from us by *prakṛti* or the *guṇas*, how one should seek protection from God, the nature of the different kinds of devotees, and the superiority of the truly enlightened person. The eighth describes the lordly power of God and the reality of His nature as the unchanged and the unchangeable; it also describes the duties of those who seek protection in God and the nature of the true wisdom. The ninth describes the glory of God and His superiority even when He incarnates Himself as man, and the nature of devotional communion. The tenth describes the infinite number of God's noble qualities and the dependence of all things on Him, for initiating and increasing devotion. The eleventh describes how the true nature of God can be perceived, and demonstrates that it is only through devotion that God can be known or attained. The twelfth



describes the superiority of devotion, methods of attaining devotion, and different kinds of devotion; it is also held that God is highly pleased by the devotion of His devotees. The thirteenth describes the nature of the body, the purification of the self for self-realization, the cause of bondage and right discrimination. The fourteenth describes how the nature of an action is determined by the ties of *guṇa*, how the *guṇas* may be made to cease from influencing us, and how God alone is the root of all the ways of the self's future destiny. The fifteenth describes how the supreme lord is different from the pure selves, as well as from selves in association with non-selves, on account of his all-pervasiveness and his nature as upholder and lord. The sixteenth describes the division of beings into godly and demoniac and also the privileged position of the scriptures as the authority for laying the solid foundation of knowledge of the true nature of our duties. The seventeenth distinguishes unscriptural things from scriptural. The eighteenth describes how God alone should be regarded as the ultimate agent of all actions, and states the necessity of purity and the nature of the effects of one's deeds. According to Yāmuna *karma-yoga*, or the path of duties, consists of religious austerities, pilgrimage, gifts and sacrifices; *jñāna-yoga*, or the path of knowledge, consists of self-control and purity of mind; *bhakti-yoga*, or the path of devotion, consists in the meditation of God, inspired by an excess of joy in the communion with the divine. All these three paths mutually lead to one another. All three are essentially of the nature of the worship of God, and, whether regarded as obligatory or occasional, are helpful for discovering the true nature of one's self. When by self-realization ignorance is wholly removed, and when a man attains superior devotion to God, he is received into God.

Rāmānuja, the celebrated Vaiṣṇava teacher and interpreter of the *Brahma-sūtra*, who is said to have been born in A.D. 1017, wrote a commentary on the *Gītā* on *viśiṣṭādvaita* lines, viz. monism qualified as theism. Venkaṭanātha, called also Vedāntācārya, wrote a sub-commentary thereon, called *Tātparya-candrikā*. Rāmānuja generally followed the lines of interpretation suggested in the brief summary by his teacher Yāmuna. On the question of the imperativeness of caste duties Rāmānuja says that the *Gītā* holds that the duties allotted to each caste must be performed, since the scriptures are the commands of God and no one can transgress His orders; so the duties prescribed by the scriptures as obligatory



are compulsory for all. The duties have, therefore, to be performed without desire for their fruits and purely because they are the injunctions of the scriptures (*eka-śāstrārthatayā anuṣṭheyam*). It is only when duties performed simply to please God, and as adoration of Him, have destroyed all impurities of the mind, and when the senses have become controlled, that a man becomes fit for the path of wisdom. A man can never at any stage of his progress forsake the duty of worshipping God, and it is only through such adoration of God that the sins accumulating in him from beginningless time are gradually washed away and he can become pure and fit for the path of knowledge<sup>1</sup>. In interpreting III. 8 Rāmānuja says that the path of duties (*karma-yoga*) is superior to the path of knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*). The path of duties naturally leads to self-knowledge; so self-knowledge is also included within its scope. The path of knowledge alone cannot lead us anywhere; for without work even the body cannot be made to live. Even those who adhere to the path of knowledge must perform the obligatory and occasional (*nitya-naimittika*) duties, and it is through the development of this course that one can attain self-realization by duty alone. The path of duties is to be followed until self-realization (*ātmāvalokana*) and, through it, emancipation are obtained. But the chief duty of a man is to be attached to God with supreme devotion.

Madhvācārya, or Ānandatīrtha, who lived in the first three-quarters of the thirteenth century, wrote a commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, called *Gītā-bhāṣya*, commented on by Jayatīrtha in his *Prameya-dīpikā*, and also a separate monograph interpreting the main purport of the *Gītā*, called *Bhagavad-gītā-tātparya-nirṇaya*, commented on by Jayatīrtha in his *Nyāya-dīpikā*. His main emphasis was on the fact that God is different from everything else, and that the only way of attaining our highest goal is through devotion (*bhakti*) as love and attachment (*sneha*). In the course of his interpretation he also introduced long discussions in refutation of the monistic theory of Śaṅkara. Since everything is dominated by the will of Hari the Lord, no one ought to feel any attachment to mundane things. Duties are to be performed by all. Kṛṣṇabhaṭṭa Vidyādhiraṇja, the sixth disciple from

<sup>1</sup> *Anabhisaṃhita-phalena kevala-parama-puruṣārādhana-rūpeṇānuṣṭhitena karmaṇā vidhvasta-mano-malo 'vyākulendriyo jñāna-niṣṭhāyām adhikaroti*. Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Gītā*, III. 3. See also *ibid.* III. 4. Gujarati Press, Bombay, 1908.



Madhva, who lived in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, wrote a commentary on the *Gītā*, called *Gītā-ṭīkā*. Rāghavendra Svāmin, who lived in the seventeenth century and was a pupil of Sudhīndra Yati, wrote three works on the *Gītā*, called *Gītā-vivṛti*, *Gītārtha-saṃgraha* and *Gītārtha-vivaraṇa*. Commentaries were also written by Vallabhācārya, Vijñānabhikṣu, Keśava Bhaṭṭa of the Nimbārka school (called *Gītā-tattva-prakāśikā*), Āñjaneya (called *Hanumad-bhāṣya*), Kalyāṇa Bhaṭṭa (called *Rasika-rañjinī*), Jagaddhara (called *Bhagavad-gītā-pradīpa*), Jayarāma (called *Gītā-sārārtha-saṃgraha*), Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa (called *Gītā-bhūṣaṇa-bhāṣya*), Madhusūdana (called *Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā*), Brahmānanda Giri, Mathurānātha (called *Bhagavad-gītā-prakāśa*), Dattātreyā (called *Prabodha-candrikā*), Rāmakṛṣṇa, Mukundadāsa, Rāmanārāyaṇa, Viśveśvara, Śaṅkarānanda, Śivadayālu Śrīdharasvāmin (called *Subodhinī*), Sadānanda Vyāsa (called *Bhāva-prakāśa*), Sūryapaṇḍita (*Paramārtha-prapā*), Nīlakaṇṭha (called *Bhāva-dīpikā*), and also from the Śaiva point of view by Rājānaka and Rāmakaṇṭha (called *Sarvato-bhadra*). Many other works were also written on the general purport of the *Gītā*, such as *Bhagavad-gītārtha-saṃgraha* by Abhinavagupta and Nṛsiṃha Ṭhakkura, *Bhagavad-gītārtha-sāra* by Gokulacandra, *Bhagavad-gītā-lakṣābharāṇa* by Vādirāja, *Bhagavad-gītā-sāra* by Kaivalyānanda Sarasvatī, *Bhagavad-gītā-sāra-saṃgraha* by Narahari and *Bhagavad-gītā-hetu-nirṇaya* by Viṭṭhala Dīkṣita. Most of these commentaries are written either from the point of view of Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya*, repeating the same ideas in other language, or from the Vaiṣṇava point of view, approving of the hold of normal duties of men in all stages of life and sometimes differing only in the conception of God and His relation with men. These can claim but little originality either of argument or of opinions, and so may well be left out of detailed consideration for our present purposes.

### Gītā and Yoga.

Whoever may have written the *Gītā*, it seems very probable that he was not acquainted with the technical sense of *yoga* as the cessation of mental states (*citta-vṛtti-nirodha*), as used by Patañjali in his *Yoga-sūtra*, I. 1. I have elsewhere shown that there are three roots, *yujir yoge* and *yuj samādhau*, i.e. the root *yujir*, to join, and the root *yuj* in the sense of cessation of mental states or one-



pointedness, and *yuj samyamane*, i.e. *yuj* in the sense of controlling. In the *Gītā* the word *yoga* appears to have been used in many senses, which may seem to be unconnected with one another; yet it may not be quite impossible to discover relations among them. The primary sense of the word *yoga* in the *Gītā* is derived from the root *yujir yoge* or *yuj*, to join, with which is connected in a negative way the root *yuj* in the sense of controlling or restricting anything to that to which it is joined. Joining, as it means contact with something, also implies disjunction from some other thing. When a particular type of mental outlook or scheme of action is recommended, we find the word *buddhi-yoga* used, which simply means that one has intimately to associate oneself with a particular type of wisdom or mental outlook. Similarly, when the word *karma-yoga* is used, it simply means that one has to associate oneself with the obligatoriness of the performance of duties. Again, the word *yoga* is used in the sense of fixing one's mind either on the self (*ātman*) or on God. It is clear that in all these varying senses the dominant sense is that of "joining." But such a joining implies also a disjunction, and the fundamental and indispensable disjunction implied is dissociation from all desires for pleasures and fruits of action (*phala-tyāga*). For this reason cases are not rare where *yoga* is used to mean cessation of desires for the fruits of action. Thus, in the *Gītā*, VI. 2, it is said, "What is called cessation (of desires for the fruits of action) is what you should know, O Pāṇḍava, as Yoga: without renouncing one's desires (*na hy asaṁnyasta-saṅkalpa*) one cannot be a yogin<sup>1</sup>." The reason why this negative concept of cessation of desires should be regarded as *yoga* is that without such a renunciation of desires no higher kind of union is possible. But even such a dissociation from the fruits of desires (which in a way also means *samyamana*, or self-control) is to be supplemented by the performance of duties at the preliminary stages; and it is only in the higher stages, when one is fixed in *yoga* (*yogārūḍha*), that meditative peace (*śama*) can be recommended. Unless and until one succeeds in conquering all attachments to sense-objects and actions and in giving up all desires for fruits of actions, one cannot be fixed in *yoga*. It is by our attempts at the performance of our duties, trying all the time

<sup>1</sup> *Asaṁnyasto' parityaktaḥ phala-viśayaḥ saṅkalpo 'bhisandhir yena so 'saṁnyasta-saṅkalpaḥ*. Śaṅkara's commentary, VI. 2. *Na saṁnyastaḥ phala-saṅkalpo yena*. Śrīdhara's commentary on the above. Yogāśrama edition, Benares, 1919.



to keep the mind clear from motives of pleasure and enjoyment, that we gradually succeed in elevating it to a plane at which it would be natural to it to desist from all motives of self-interest, pleasure and enjoyment. It is at this stage that a man can be called fixed in *yoga* or *yogārūḍha*. This naturally involves a conflict between the higher self and the lower, or rather between the real self and the false; for, while the lower self always inclines to pathological and prudential motives, to motives of self-interest and pleasure, it has yet within it the higher ideal, which is to raise it up. Man is both a friend and a foe to himself; if he follows the path of his natural inclinations and the temptations of sense-enjoyment, he takes the downward path of evil, and is an enemy to his own higher interests; whereas it is his clear duty to raise himself up, to strive that he may not sink down but may elevate himself to a plane of detachment from all sense-pleasures. The duality involved in this conception of a friend and a foe, of conqueror and conquered, of an uplifting power and a gravitating spirit, naturally involves a distinction between a higher self (*paramātman*) and a lower self (*ātman*). It is only when this higher self conquers the lower that a self is a friend to itself. In a man who has failed to conquer his own passions and self-attachments the self is its own enemy. The implication, however, is that the lower self, though it gravitates towards evil, has yet inherent in it the power of self-elevation. This power of self-elevation is not something extraneous, but abides in the self, and the *Gītā* is emphatic in its command, "Thou shouldst raise thyself and not allow thyself to sink down; for the self is its own friend and its foe as well<sup>1</sup>."

It is only when the self thus conquers its lower tendencies and rises to a higher plane that it comes into touch with the higher self (*paramātman*). The higher self always remains as an ideal of elevation. The *yoga* activity of the self thus consists, on the one hand, in the efforts by which the *yogin* dissociates himself from the sense-attachments towards which he was naturally gravitating, and on the other hand, in the efforts by which he tries to elevate himself and to come into touch with the higher self. At the first stage a man performs his duties in accordance with the injunctions of the *śāstras*; then he performs his duties and tries to dissociate himself from all motives of self-interest and



enjoyment, and at the next stage he succeeds in conquering these lower motives and is in touch with the higher self. Even at this stage he may still continue to perform his duties, merely for the sake of duty, or he may devote himself to meditative concentration and union with the higher self or with God. Thus the *Gītā* says that the person who has conquered himself and is at peace with himself is in touch with *paramātman*. Such a person is a true philosopher; for he not only knows the truths, but is happy in the inner realization and direct intuitive apperception of such truths; he is unshakable in himself; having conquered his senses, he attaches the same value to gold and to stones; he is the same to friends and to enemies, to the virtuous as to the sinful; he is in union (with *paramātman*) and is called a *yogin*<sup>1</sup>. The fact that the word *yogin* is derived here from the root *yuj*, to join, is evident from a number of passages where the verb *yuj* is used in this connection<sup>2</sup>.

The *Gītā* advises a *yogin* who thus wants to unite himself with *paramātman*, or God, in a meditative union, to lead a lonely life, controlling his mind and body, desiring nothing and accepting nothing<sup>3</sup>. The *yogin* should seat himself on level ground, in a clean place, and, being firm on his threefold seat composed of *kuśa* grass, a leopard skin and soft linen, he should control his thoughts, senses and movements, make his mind one-pointed in God (*tatra*), gather himself up in union, and thus purify himself<sup>4</sup>. The *yogin* should eat neither too much nor too little, should neither sleep too much, nor dispense with sleep. He should thus

<sup>1</sup> *Yukta ity ucyate yogi sama-loṣṭāśma-kāñcanaḥ*, vi. 8. Śaṅkara, however, splits it up into two independent sentences, as follows: *ya idrṣo yuktaḥ samāhita itī sa ucyate kathyate; sa yogi sama-loṣṭāśma-kāñcanaḥ*. Śrīdhara, again, takes a quite different view and thinks it to be a definition of the *yogārūḍha* state and believes *yukta* to mean *yogārūḍha*, which in my opinion is unjustifiable. My interpretation is simpler and more direct than either of these and can be justified by a reference to the context in vi. 7 and vi. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Yogī yuñjita satatam ātmānaṁ rahasi sthitaḥ*. *Ibid.* vi. 10.

*Upaviśyāsane yuñjyād yogam ātma-viśuddhaye*. vi. 12.

*Yukta āsita mat-parah*. vi. 14.

*Yuñjann evaṁ sadātmānaṁ yogī niyata-mānasaḥ*. vi. 15, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Ekāki yata-cittātmā nirāśir aparigrahaḥ*. vi. 10. The word *ātmā* in *yata-cittātmā* is used in the sense of body (*deha*), according to Śaṅkara, Śrīdhara and others.

<sup>4</sup> Both Śaṅkara and Śrīdhara make *tatra* an adjective to *āsane*. Such an adjective to *āsane* would not only be superfluous, but would also leave *ekāgram* without an object. The verb *yuñjyāt*, literally meaning "should link up," is interpreted by Śrīdhara as "should practise," apparently without any justification (vi. 12).



lead the middle course of life and avoid extremes. This avoidance of extremes is very unlike the process of *yoga* advised by Patañjali. Patañjali's course of *yoga* formulates a method by which the *yogin* can gradually habituate himself to a condition of life in which he can ultimately dispense with food and drink altogether and desist from all movements of body and mind. The object of a *yogin* in making his mind one-pointed is ultimately to destroy the mind. According to Patañjali the advancement of a *yogin* has but one object before it, viz. the cessation of all movements of mind (*citta-vṛtti-nirodha*). Since this absolute cessation cannot be effected without stopping all movements of the body, desires and passions are to be uprooted, not only because they would make the mind fly to different objects, but also because they would necessitate movements of the body, which would again disturb the mind. The *yogin* therefore has to practise a twofold control of movements of body and mind. He has to habituate himself to dispensing with the necessity of food and drink, to make himself used to all kinds of privations and climatic inconveniences of heat and cold and ultimately to prepare himself for the stoppage of all kinds of bodily movements. But, since this cannot be successfully done so long as one inhales and exhales, he has to practise *prāṇāyāma* for absolute breath-control, and not for hours or days, but for months and years. Moral elevation is regarded as indispensable in *yoga* only because without absolute and perfect cessation of all desires and passions the movements of the body and mind could not be absolutely stopped. The *yogin*, however, has not only to cut off all new causes of disturbance leading to movements of body and mind, but also to practise one-pointedness of mind on subtler and subtler objects, so that as a result thereof the sub-conscious forces of the mind can also be destroyed. Thus, on the one hand, the mind should be made to starve by taking care that no new sense-data and no new percepts, concepts, thoughts, ideas or emotions be presented to it, and, on the other hand, steps are to be taken to make the mind one-pointed, by which all that it had apprehended before, which formed the great storehouse of the sub-conscious, is destroyed. The mind, thus pumped out on both sides, becomes absolutely empty and is destroyed. The ideal of Patañjali's *Yoga* is absolute extremism, consisting in absolute stoppage of all functions of body and mind.

The *Gītā*, on the other hand, prescribes the golden middle course



of moderate food, drink, sleep, movements of the body and activity in general. The object of the *yogin* in the *Gītā* is not the absolute destruction of mind, but to bring the mind or the ordinary self into communion with the higher self or God. To the *yogin* who practises meditation the *Gītā* advises steadiness of posture; thus it says that the *yogin* should hold his body, head and shoulders straight, and, being unmoved and fixed in his posture, should avoid looking to either side and fix his eyes on the tip of his nose. The *Gītā* is, of course, aware of the process of breath-control and *prāṇāyāma*; but, curiously enough, it does not speak of it in its sixth chapter on *dhyāna-yoga*, where almost the whole chapter is devoted to *yoga* practice and the conduct of *yogins*. In the fifth chapter, v. 27, it is said that all sense-movements and control of life-movements (*prāṇa-karmāṇi*) are like oblations to the fire of self-control. In the two obscure verses of the same chapter, v. 29 and 30, it is said that there are some who offer an oblation of *prāṇa* to *apāna* and of *apāna* to *prāṇa* and thus, stopping the movement of inhalation and exhalation (*prāṇāpāna-gatī ruddhvā*), perform the *prāṇāyāma*, while there are others who, taking a low diet, offer an oblation of *prāṇa* to *prāṇa*. Such actions on the part of these people are described as being different kinds of sacrifices, or *yajña*, and the people who perform them are called *yajña-vidah* (those who know the science of sacrifice), and not *yogin*. It is difficult to understand the exact meaning of offering an oblation of *prāṇa* to *prāṇa* or of *prāṇa* to *apāna* and of calling this sacrifice. The interpretations of Śaṅkara, Śrīdhara and others give us but little help in this matter. They do not tell us why it should be called a *yajña* or how an oblation of *prāṇa* to *prāṇa* can be made, and they do not even try to give a synonym for *juhvati* (offer oblation) used in this connection. It seems to me, however, that there is probably a reference to the mystical substitution-meditations (*pratīkopāsanā*) which were used as substitutes for sacrifices and are referred to in the Upaniṣads. Thus in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad*, vi. 9, we find that Brahman is to be meditated upon as the ego, and in this connection, oblations of the five *vāyus* to fire with such *mantras* as *prāṇāya svāhā*, *apānāya svāhā*, etc. are recommended. It is easy to imagine that, in a later process of development, for the actual offering of oblations to fire was substituted a certain process of breath-control, which still retained the old phraseology of the offering of oblations in a sacrifice. If this interpretation is



accepted, it will indicate how processes of breath-control became in many cases associated with substitution-meditations of the Vedic type<sup>1</sup>. The development of processes of breath-control in connection with substitution-meditations does not seem to be unnatural at all, and, as a matter of fact, the practice of *prāṇāyāma* in connection with such substitution-meditations is definitely indicated in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad*, vi. 18. The movement of inhalation and exhalation was known to be the cause of all body-heat, including the heat of digestive processes, and Kṛṣṇa is supposed to say in the *Gītā*, xv. 14, "As fire I remain in the body of living beings and in association with *prāṇa* and *apāna* I digest four kinds of food and drink." The author of the *Gītā*, however, seems to have been well aware that the *prāṇa* and *apāna* breaths passing through the nose could be properly balanced (*samau*), or that the *prāṇa vāyu* could be concentrated between the two eyebrows or in the head (*mūrdhni*)<sup>2</sup>. It is difficult to say what is exactly meant by taking the *prāṇa* in the head or between the eyebrows. There seems to have been a belief in the *Atharva-śiras Upaniṣad* and also in the *Atharva-sikhā Upaniṣad* that the *prāṇa* could be driven upwards, or that such *prāṇa*, being in the head, could protect it<sup>3</sup>. Manu also speaks of the *prāṇas* of young men rushing upwards when old men approached them. But, whatever may be meant, it is certain that neither the balancing of *prāṇa* and *apāna* nor the concentrating of *prāṇa* in the head or between the eyebrows is a phrase of Patañjali, the Yoga writer.

In describing the course of a *yogin* in the sixth chapter the *Gītā* advises that the *yogin* should lead the austere life of a Brahmacārin, withdraw his mind from all mundane interests and think only of God, dedicate all his actions to Him and try to live in communion with Him (*yukta āsita*). This gives to his soul peace, through which he loses his individuality in God and abides in Him

<sup>1</sup> See *Hindu Mysticism*, by S. N. Dasgupta, Chicago, 1927, pp. 18-20.

<sup>2</sup> *prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā nāsābhyantara-cāriṇau*, v. 27. The phrase *samau kṛtvā* is left unexplained here by Śaṅkara. Śrīdhara explains it as "having suspended the movement of *prāṇa* and *apāna*"—*prāṇāpānāv ūrdhvādho-gatinirodhena samau kṛtvā kumbhakam kṛtvā*. It is difficult, however, to say what is exactly meant by concentrating the *prāṇa vāyu* between the two eyebrows, *bhruvor madhye prāṇam āveśya samyak* (viii. 10). Neither Śaṅkara nor Śrīdhara gives us any assistance here. In *mūrdhny ādhāyātmanaḥ prāṇam āsthito yoga-dhāraṇām* (viii. 12) *mūrdhni* is paraphrased by Śrīdhara as *bhruvor madhye*, or "between the eyebrows."

<sup>3</sup> *Atharva-śiras*, 4 and 6 and *Atharva-sikhā*, 1.



in the bliss of self-effacement<sup>1</sup>. A *yogin* can be said to be in union (with God) when he concentrates his mind on his own higher self and is absolutely unattached to all desires. By his efforts towards such a union (*yoga-sevayā*) he restrains his mind from all other objects and, perceiving his self in himself, remains in peace and contentment. At this higher state the *yogin* enjoys absolute bliss (*sukham ātyantikam*), transcending all sense-pleasures by his pure reason, and, being thus fixed in God, he is never shaken away from Him. Such a *yogin* forsakes all his desires and controls all his senses by his mind, and, whenever the mind itself seeks to fly away to different objects, he tries to control it and fix it on his own self. Patiently holding his mind fixed in his self, he tries to desist from all kinds of thought and gradually habituates himself to shaking off attachments to sense-attractions. At this stage of union the *yogin* feels that he has attained his highest, and thus even the greatest mundane sorrows cannot affect him in the least. *Yoga* is thus sometimes defined as the negation of the possibility of all association with sorrows<sup>2</sup>. One can attain such a state only by persistent and self-confident efforts and without being depressed by preliminary failures. When a *yogin* attains this union with himself or with God, he is like the motionless flame of a lamp in a still place, undisturbed by all attractions and unruffled by all passions<sup>3</sup>. The *yogin* who attains this highest state of union with himself or with God is said to be in touch with Brahman or to attain Brahmahood, and it is emphatically asserted that he is filled with ecstatic joy. Being in

<sup>1</sup> *śāntim nirvāṇa-paramāṃ mat-saṃsthām adhigacchati*, VI. 15. The *Gītā* uses the words *śānti* and *nirvāṇa* to indicate the bliss of the person who abides in God. Both these words, and particularly the word *nirvāṇa*, have a definite significance in Buddhism. But the *Gītā* seems to be quite unacquainted with the Buddhistic sense of the word. I have therefore ventured to translate the word *nirvāṇa* as "bliss of self-effacement." The word is primarily used in the sense of "extinguishing a light," and this directly leads to the Buddhistic sense of the absolute destruction of the *skandhas*. But the word *nirvāṇa* is also used from very early times in the sense of "relief from sufferings" and "satisfaction." Thus the *Mahā-bhārata*, with which the *Gītā* is traditionally associated, uses it in this sense in III. 10438:

*sa pītvā śītalam toyam pipāsārto mahā-patih;  
nirvāṇam agamad dhāmān susukhī cābhavat tadā.*

Again, in the *Mahā-bhārata*, XII. 7150 and 13014, *nirvāṇa* is described as being highest bliss (*paramaṃ sukham*), and it is also associated with *śānti*, or peace, as it is in the above passage—*śāntim nirvāṇa-paramāṃ*. In *Mahā-bhārata*, VI. 1079, and in another place it is called a "state of the highest Brahman" (*paramaṃ brahma—ibid.* XII. 13239).

<sup>2</sup> *taṃ vidyād duḥkha-saṃyoga-viyogam yoga-saṃjñitam*, VI. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Yathā dīpo nivāta-stho neṅgate sopamā smṛtā*, VI. 19.



union with God, he perceives himself in all things, and all things in himself; for, being in union with God, he in one way identifies himself with God, and perceives God in all things and all things in God. Yet it is no mere abstract pantheism that is indicated here; for such a view is directly in opposition to the main tenets of the *Gītā*, so often repeated in diverse contexts. It is a mystical state, in which, on the one hand, the *yogin* finds himself identified with God and in communion with Him, and, on the other hand, does not cease to have relations with the beings of the world, to whom he gives the same consideration as to himself. He does not prefer his own happiness to the happiness of others, nor does he consider his own misery and suffering as greater or more important or more worthy of prevention than those of others. Being in communion with God, he still regards Him as the master whom he adores, as the supreme Lord who pervades all things and holds them in Himself. By his communion with God the *yogin* transcends his lower and smaller self and discovers his greater self in God, not only as the supreme ideal of his highest efforts, but also as the highest of all realities. As soon as the *yogin* can detach himself from his lower self of passions and desires, he uplifts himself to a higher universe, where the distinction of *meum* and *teum*, mine and thine, ceases and the interest of the individual loses its personal limitations and becomes enlarged and universalized and identified with the interests of all living beings. Looked at from this point of view, *yoga* is sometimes defined in the *Gītā* as the outlook of equality (*śamatva*)<sup>1</sup>.

In the *Gītā* the word *yoga* has not attained any definite technical sense, as it did in Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra*, and, in consequence, there is not one definition of *yoga*, but many. Thus *yoga* is used in the sense of *karma-yoga*, or the duty of performance of actions, in v. 1, and it is distinguished from the *sāṃkhya* path, or the path of knowledge, in II. 39. The word *karma-yoga* is mentioned in III. 3 as the path of the *yogins*, and it is referred to in III. 7, v. 2 and XIII. 24. The word *buddhi-yoga* is also used at least three times, in II. 49, x. 10 and XVIII. 57, and the *bhakti-yoga* also is used at least once, in XIV. 26. The one meaning of *yoga* that suits all these different contexts seems to be "association." It has already been said that this primary meaning of the word is the central idea of *yoga* in the *Gītā*. One of the main teachings of

<sup>1</sup> *śamatvaṃ yoga ucyate*, II. 48.



the *Gītā* is that duties should be performed, and it is this obligatoriness of the performance of duties that in the *Gītā* is understood by *karma-yoga*. But, if such duties are performed from motives of self-interest or gain or pleasure, the performance could not lead to any higher end. It is advised, therefore, that they should be performed without any motive of gain or pleasure. So the proper way in which a man should perform his duties, and at the same time keep himself clean and untarnished by the good and bad results, the pleasures and sorrows, the praise and blame proceeding out of his own deeds, is to make himself detached from all desires for the fruits of actions. To keep oneself detached from the desires for the fruits of actions is therefore the real art (*kaśāla*) of performing one's duties; for it is only in this way that a man can make himself fit for the higher union with God or his own higher self. Here, then, we have a definition of *yoga* as the art of performing one's duties (*yogaḥ karmasu kaśālam*—II. 50). The art of performing one's duties, e.g. the art of keeping oneself unattached, cannot however be called *yoga* on its own account; it is probably so-called only because it is the indispensable step towards the attainment of the real *yoga*, or union with God. It is clear, therefore, that the word *yoga* has a gradual evolution to a higher and higher meaning, based no doubt on the primary root-meaning of "association."

It is important to note in this connection that the process of *prāṇāyāma*, regarded as indispensable in Patañjali's *Yoga*, is not considered so necessary either for *karma-yoga*, *buddhi-yoga*, or for the higher kind of *yoga*, e.g. communion with God. It has already been mentioned that the reference to *prāṇāyāma* is found only in connection with some kinds of substitution-meditations which have nothing to do with the main concept of *yoga* in the *Gītā*. The expression *samādhi* is used thrice in the noun form in the *Gītā*, in II. 44, 53 and 54, and three times in the verb form, in VI. 7, XII. 9 and XVII. 11; but the verb forms are not used in the technical sense of Patañjali, but in the simple root-meaning of *saṃ + ā + √ dhā*, "to give" or "to place" (*arpaṇa* or *sthāpana*). In two cases (II. 44 and 53) where the word *samādhi* is used as a noun it has been interpreted by both Śaṅkara and Śrīdhara as meaning the object in which the mind is placed or to which it is directed for communion, viz. God<sup>1</sup>. The author of the *Gītā* is well aware of

<sup>1</sup> In II. 44, however, Śaṅkara considers this object of mind to be *antaḥkaraṇa*



the moral conflict in man and thinks that it is only by our efforts to come into touch with our higher self that the littleness of passions and desires for fruits of actions and the preference of our smaller self-interests can be transcended. For, once man is in touch with his highest, he is in touch with God. He has then a broader and higher vision of man and his place in nature, and so he identifies himself with God and finds that he has no special interest of his own to serve. The low and the high, the sinful and the virtuous, are the same in his eyes; he perceives God in all things and all things in God, and it is this state of communion that is the real *yoga* of the *Gītā*; and it is because in this state all inequalities of race, creed, position, virtue and vice, high and low vanish, that this superior realization of universal equality is also called *yoga*. Not only is this union with God called *yoga*, but God Himself is called *Yogeśvara*, or the Lord of communion. As a result of this union, the *yogin* enjoys supreme bliss and ecstatic joy, and is free from the least touch of sorrow or pain; and this absolute freedom from pain or the state of bliss, being itself a result of *yoga*, is also called *yoga*. From the above survey it is clear that the *yoga* of the *Gītā* is quite different from the *yoga* of Patañjali, and it does not seem at all probable that the *Gītā* was aware of Patañjali's *yoga* or the technical terms used by him<sup>1</sup>.

The treatment of *yoga* in the *Gītā* is also entirely different from its treatment in almost all the Upaniṣads. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* speaks of sense-control as being *yoga*; but sense-control in the *Gītā* is only a preliminary to *yoga* and not itself *yoga*. Most of the *yoga* processes described in the other Upaniṣads either speak of *yoga* with six accessories (*ṣaḍ-aṅga yoga*) or of *yoga* with eight accessories (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*), more or less after the manner of Patañjali. They introduce elaborate details not only of breath-control or *prāṇāyāma*, but also of the nervous system of the body, *iḍā*, *piṅgalā* and *suṣumnā*, the nerve plexus, *mūlādhāra* and other similar objects, after the manner of the later works on the *Ṣaṭ-*

or *buddhi*. But Śrīdhara considers this object to be God, and in II. 53 Śaṅkara and Śrīdhara are unanimous that the object, or the support of the union or communion of the mind, is God.

<sup>1</sup> *paśya me yogam aiśvaram*, IX. 5, *etāṃ vibhūtiṃ yogam ca*, X. 7. In the above two passages the word *yoga* seems to have a different meaning, as it is used there in the sense of miraculous powers; but even there the commentators Śaṅkara and Śrīdhara take it to mean "association" (*yukti*) and interpret *aiśvaram yogaṃ* as "association of miraculous powers."



*cakra* system. Thus the *Amṛta-nāda* enumerates after the manner of Patañjali the six accessories of *yoga* as restraint (*pratyāhāra*), concentration (*dhyāna*), breath-control (*prāṇāyāma*), fixation (*dhāraṇā*), reasoning (*tarka*) and meditative absorption (*samādhi*), and describes the final object of *yoga* as ultimate loneliness of the self (*kaivalya*). The *Amṛta-bindu* believes in an all-pervading Brahman as the only reality, and thinks that, since mind is the cause of all bondage and liberation, the best course for a *yogin* to adopt is to deprive the mind of all its objects and thus to stop the activity of the mind, and thereby to destroy it, and bring about Brahmanhood. Brahman is described here as being absolutely indeterminate, uninferable, infinite and beginningless. The *Kṣurika* merely describes *prāṇāyāma*, *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā* and *samādhi* in association with the nerves, *suṣumnā*, *piṅgalā*, etc. and the nerve plexuses. The *Tejo-bindu* is a Vedāntic Upaniṣad of the ultra-monistic type, and what it calls *yoga* is only the way of realizing the nature of Brahman as one and as pure consciousness and the falsity of everything else. It speaks of this *yoga* as being of fifteen accessories (*pañca-daśāṅga yoga*). These are *yama* (sense-control through the knowledge that all is Brahman), *niyama* (repetition of the same kinds of thoughts and the avoidance of dissimilar ones), *tyāga* (giving up of the world-appearance through the realization of Brahman), silence, a solitary place, the proper posture, steadiness of mind, making the body straight and erect, perceiving the world as Brahman (*drk-sthiti*), cessation of all states and breath-control (*prāṇa-saṁyamana*), perceiving all objects of the mind as Brahman (*pratyāhāra*), fixing the mind always on Brahman (*dhāraṇā*), self-meditation and the realization of oneself as Brahman. This is, however, a scheme of *yoga* quite different from that of Patañjali, as well as from that of the *Gītā*. The *Trīśikha-brāhmaṇa* speaks of a *yoga* with eight accessories (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*), where the eight accessories, though the same in name as the eight accessories of Patañjali, are in reality different therefrom. Thus *yama* here means want of attachment (*vairāgya*), *niyama* means attachment to the ultimate reality (*anuraktiḥ pare tattve*), *āsana* means indifference to all things, *prāṇa-saṁyamana* means the realization of the falsity of the world, *pratyāhāra* means the inwardness of the mind, *dhāraṇā* means the motionlessness of the mind, *dhyāna* means thinking of oneself as pure consciousness, and *samādhi* means forgetfulness of *dhyānas*. Yet it again includes



within its *yama* and *niyama* almost all the virtues referred to by Patañjali. It also speaks of a number of postures after the *haṭha-yoga* fashion, and of the movement of *prāṇa* in the nerve plexuses, the ways of purifying the nerves and the processes of breath-control. The object of *yoga* is here also the destruction of mind and the attainment of *kaivalya*. The *Darśana* gives an *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* with *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* more or less after the fashion of Patañjali, with a supplementary treatment of nerves (*nāḍī*) and the movement of the *prāṇa* and other *vāyus* in them. The final object of *yoga* here is the attainment of Brahmahood and the comprehension of the world as *māyā* and unreal. The *Dhyāna-bindu* describes the self as the essential link of all things, like the fragrance in flowers or the thread in a garland or the oil in sesamum. It describes a *ṣaḍ-aṅga yoga* with *āsana*, *prāṇa-samrodha*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. It also describes the four *cakras* or nerve plexuses, and speaks of the awakening of the serpent power (*kuṇḍalinī*) and the practice of the *mudrās*. It speaks further of the balancing or unifying of *prāṇa* and *apāna* as leading to *yoga*<sup>1</sup>. The object of this *yoga* is the attainment of the transcendent state of liberation or the realization of the *paramātman*. It is useless to refer to other Upaniṣads; for what has already been said will be enough to show clearly that the idea of *Yoga* in the *Gītā* is entirely different from that in the *Yoga Upaniṣads*, most of which are of comparatively late date and are presumably linked up with traditions different from that of the *Gītā*.

### Sāṃkhya and Yoga in the Gītā.

In the *Gītā* Sāṃkhya and Yoga are sometimes distinguished from each other as two different paths, and sometimes they are identified. But though the *Gītā* is generally based on the doctrines of the *guṇas*, *prakṛti* and its derivatives, yet the word *sāṃkhya* is used here in the sense of the path of knowledge or of philosophic wisdom. Thus in the *Gītā*, II. 39, the path of knowledge is distinguished from that of performance of duties. Lord Kṛṣṇa says there that he has just described the wisdom of Sāṃkhya and he is going to describe the wisdom of Yoga. This

<sup>1</sup> *Tadā prāṇāpānayoṛ aikyaṃ kṛtvā*; see *Dhyāna-bindu*, 93-5 (Adyar Library edition, 1920). This seems to be similar to *prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā* of the *Gītā*.



seems to give us a clue to what is meant by Sāṃkhya wisdom. This wisdom, however, seems to be nothing more than elaboration of the doctrine of the immortality of soul and the associated doctrine of rebirth, and also the doctrine that, howsoever the body might be affected and suffer changes of birth, growth and destruction, the self is absolutely unaffected by all these changes; the self cannot be cut or burned; it is eternal, all-pervasive, unchangeable, indescribable and unthinkable. In another passage of the *Gītā*, XIII. 25, it is said that there are others who perceive the self in accordance with *sāṃkhya-yoga*; and Śāṅkara explains this passage to mean that *sāṃkhya-yoga* means the realization of the self as being absolutely different from the three *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. If this is Sāṃkhya, the meaning of the word *yoga* in this passage (*anye sāṃkhyena yogena*) is not explained. Śāṅkara does not expound the meaning of the word *yoga*, but explains the word *sāṃkhya* and says that this *sāṃkhya* is *yoga*, which seems to be an evasion. Śrīdhara follows Śāṅkara's interpretation of *sāṃkhya*, but finds it difficult to swallow his identification of *sāṃkhya* with *yoga*, and he interprets *yoga* here as the *yoga* (of Patañjali) with eight accessories, but does not explain how this *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* can be identified with *sāṃkhya*. It is, no doubt, true that in the immediately preceding verse it is said that, howsoever a man may behave, if he knows the proper nature of *puruṣa* and of the *prakṛti* and the *guṇas*, he is never born again; but there is no reason to suppose that the phrase *sāṃkhyena yogena* refers to the wisdom recommended in the preceding verse; for this verse summarizes different paths of self-realization and says that there are some who perceive the self in the self through the self, by meditation, others by *sāṃkhya-yoga* and others by *karma-yoga*. In another passage it is said that the *Sāṃkhyas* follow the path of knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*), while the *Yogins* follow the path of duties (*Gītā*, III. 3). If the word *yoga* means "association," as it does in various contexts, then *sāṃkhya* and *sāṃkhya-yoga* would mean more or less the same thing; for *sāṃkhya-yoga* would only mean association with *sāṃkhya*, and the phrase *sāṃkhyena yogena* might mean either association with *sāṃkhya* or the union of *sāṃkhya*. It has already been said that, following the indications of the *Gītā*, II. 39, *sāṃkhya* should mean the realization of the true nature of the self as immortal, all-pervasive, unchangeable and infinite. It has also been pointed out that it is such a true realization of the



self, with its corresponding moral elevation, that leads to the true communion of the self with the higher self or God. Thus this meaning of *sāṃkhya* on the one hand distinguishes the path of *sāṃkhya* from the path of *yoga* as a path of performance of duties, and at the same time identifies the path of *sāṃkhya* with the path of *yoga* as communion with God. Thus we find that the *Gītā*, v. 4, 5, says that "fools only think Sāṃkhya and Yoga to be different, not so wise men," since, accepting either of them, one attains the fruit of them both. The goal reached by the followers of Sāṃkhya is also reached by the *Yogins*; he who perceives *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga* to be the same perceives them in the right perspective. In these passages *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* seem from the context to refer respectively to *karma-sannyāsa* and *karma-yoga*. *Sāṃkhya* here can only in a secondary way mean the renunciation of the fruits of one's actions (*karma-sannyāsa*). The person who realizes the true nature of his self, and knows that the self is unchangeable and infinite, cannot feel himself attached to the fruits of his actions and cannot be affected by ordinary mundane desires and cravings. As in the case of the different uses of the word *yoga*, so here also the word *sāṃkhya*, which primarily means "true knowledge," is also used to mean "renunciation"; and since *karma-yoga* means the performance of one's duties in a spirit of renunciation, *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* mean practically the same thing and are therefore identified here; and they are both regarded as leading to the same results. This would be so, even if *yoga* were used to denote "communion"; for the idea of performance of one's duties has almost always communion with God as its indispensable correlate. Thus in the two passages immediately following the identification of *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* we find the *Gītā* (v. 6, 7) saying that without *karma-yoga* it is hard to renounce *karma*; and the person who takes the path of *karma-yoga* speedily attains Brahman. The person who thus through *karma-yoga* comes into union (with Brahman) is pure in spirit and self-controlled, and, having identified himself with the universal spirit in all beings, he is not affected by his deeds.

One thing that emerges from the above discussion is that there is no proof that the word *sāṃkhya* in the *Gītā* means the discernment of the difference of *prakṛti* and the *guṇas* from *puruṣa*, as Śaṅkara in one place suggests (*Gītā*, XIII. 25), or that it refers to the cosmology and ontology of *prakṛti*, the *guṇas* and their



evolutes of the traditional Kapila-Sāṃkhya. The philosophy of the *guṇas* and the doctrine of *puruṣa* were, no doubt, known to the *Gītā*; but nowhere is this philosophy called *sāṃkhya*. *Sāṃkhya* in the *Gītā* means true knowledge (*tattva-jñāna*) or self-knowledge (*ātma-bodha*). Śaṅkara, commenting on the *Gītā*, XVIII. 13, interprets *sāṃkhya* to mean *vedānta*, though in verse XIII. 25 he interprets the word as meaning the discernment of the difference between the *guṇas* and the *puruṣa*, which would decidedly identify the *sāṃkhya* of the *Gītā* with the Kapila-Sāṃkhya.

The *Mahā-bhārata* also refers to *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* in several places. But in almost all places *sāṃkhya* means either the traditional school of Kapila-Sāṃkhya or some other school of Sāṃkhya, more or less similar to it: *yoga* also most often refers either to the *yoga* of Patañjali or some earlier forms of it. In one place are found passages identifying *sāṃkhya* and *yoga*, which agree almost word for word with similar passages of the *Gītā*<sup>1</sup>. But it does not seem that the *sāṃkhya* or the *yoga* referred to in the *Mahā-bhārata* has anything to do with the idea of *Sāṃkhya* or *yoga* in the *Gītā*. As has already been pointed out, the *yoga* in the *Gītā* means the dedication to God and renunciation of the fruits of one's *karma* and being in communion with Him as the supreme Lord pervading the universe. The chapter of the *Mahā-bhārata* just referred to speaks of turning back the senses into the *manas* and of turning the *manas* into *ahamkāra* and *ahamkāra* into *buddhi* and *buddhi* into *prakṛti*, thus finishing with *prakṛti* and its evolutes and meditating upon pure *puruṣa*. It is clear that this system of *yoga* is definitely associated with the Kapila school of Sāṃkhya. In the *Mahā-bhārata*, XII. 306, the predominant feature of *yoga* is said to be *dhyāna*, and the latter is said to consist of concentration of mind (*ekāgratā ca manasaḥ*) and breath-control (*prāṇāyāma*). It is said that the *yogin* should stop the functions of his senses by his mind, and the movement of his mind by his reason (*buddhi*), and in this stage he is said to be linked up (*yukta*) and is like a motionless flame in a still place<sup>2</sup>. This passage naturally reminds one of the description of *dhyāna-yoga* in the *Gītā*, VI. 11-13, 16-19 and 25, 26; but the fundamental idea of *yoga*,

<sup>1</sup> *yad eva yogāḥ paśyanti tat sāṃkhyair api dṛśyate ekaṃ sāṃkhyān ca yogān ca yāḥ paśyati sa tattva-vit. Mahā-bhārata*, VII. 316. 4. Compare the *Gītā*, V. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the *Gītā*, VI. 19, *yathā dīpo nivāta-sthaḥ*, etc.



as the dedication of the fruits of actions to God and communion with Him, is absent here.

It is needless to point out here that the *yoga* of the *Gītā* is in no way connected with the *yoga* of Buddhism. In Buddhism the sage first practises *śīla*, or sense-control and mind-control, and thus prepares himself for a course of stabilization or fixation of the mind (*samādhāna*, *upadhāraṇa*, *paṭiṭṭhā*). This *samādhi* means the concentration of the mind on right endeavours and of its states upon one particular object (*ekāraṃmana*), so that they may completely cease to shift and change (*sammā ca avikkhippamānā*). The sage has first to train his mind to view with disgust the appetitive desires for food and drink and their ultimate loathsome transformations as various nauseating bodily elements. When a man habituates himself to emphasizing the disgusting associations of food and drink, he ceases to have any attachment to them and simply takes them as an unavoidable evil, only awaiting the day when the final dissolution of all sorrows will come. Secondly, the sage has to habituate his mind to the idea that all his members are made up of the four elements, earth, water, fire and wind, like the carcass of a cow at the butcher's shop. Thirdly, he has to habituate his mind to thinking again and again (*anussati*) about the virtues or greatness of the Buddha, the Saṅgha, the gods and the law of the Buddha, about the good effects of *śīla* and the making of gifts (*cāgānussati*), about the nature of death (*marāṇānussati*) and about the deep nature and qualities of the final extinction of all phenomena (*upasamānussati*). He has also to pass through various purificatory processes. He has to go to the cremation grounds and notice the diverse horrifying changes of human carcasses and think how nauseating, loathsome, unsightly and impure they are; from this he will turn his mind to living human bodies and convince himself that they, being in essence the same as dead carcasses, are as loathsome as the latter. He should think of the anatomical parts and constituents of the body as well as of their processes, and this will help him to enter into the first *jhāna*, or meditation, by leading his mind away from his body. As an aid to concentration the sage should sit in a quiet place and fix his mind on the inhaling (*passāsa*) and the exhaling (*assāsa*) of his breath, so that, instead of breathing in a more or less unconscious manner, he may be aware whether he is breathing quickly or slowly; he ought to mark this definitely by counting numbers, so that by



fixing his mind on the numbers counted he may realize the whole process of inhalation and exhalation in all stages of its course. Next to this we come to *brahma-vihāra*, the fourfold meditation of *mettā* (universal friendship), *karuṇā* (universal pity), *muditā* (happiness in the prosperity and happiness of all) and *upekkhā* (indifference to any kind of preferment of oneself, one's friend, enemy or a third party). In order to habituate himself to meditation on universal friendship, a man should start with thinking how he would himself like to root out all misery and become happy, how he would himself like to avoid death and live cheerfully, and then pass over to the idea that other beings would also have the same desires. He should thus habituate himself to thinking that his friends, his enemies and all those with whom he is not connected might all live and become happy. He should fix himself to such an extent in this meditation that he should not find any difference between the happiness or safety of himself and that of others. Coming to *jhānas*, we find that the objects of concentration may be earth, water, fire, wind, colours, etc. In the first stage of concentration on an object there is comprehension of the name and form of the object; at the next stage the relational movement ceases, and the mind penetrates into the object without any quivering. In the next two stages there is a buoyant exaltation and a steady inward bliss, and, as a result of the one-pointedness which is the culminating effect of the progressive meditation, there is the final release of the mind (*ceto-vimutti*)—the *Nibbāna*.

It is easy to see that, though Patañjali's *yoga* is under a deep debt of obligation to this Buddhist *yoga*, the *yoga* of the *Gītā* is unacquainted therewith. The pessimism which fills the Buddhist *yoga* is seen to affect not only the outlook of Patañjali's *yoga*, but also most of the later Hindu modes of thought, in the form of the advisability of reflecting on the repulsive sides of things (*pratīpakṣa-bhāvanā*) which are seemingly attractive<sup>1</sup>. The ideas of universal friendship, etc. were also taken over by Patañjali and later on passed into Hindu works. The methods of concentration on various ordinary objects also seem to be quite unlike what we find in the *Gītā*. The *Gītā* is devoid of any tinge of pessimism such as we find in the Buddhist *yoga*. It does not anywhere recommend the habit of brooding over the repulsive

<sup>1</sup> See *Nyāya-mañjarī*, *Vairāgya-śataka*, *Sānti-śataka*.



aspects of all things, so as to fill our minds with a feeling of disgust for all worldly things. It does not rise to the ideal of regarding all beings as friends or to that of universal compassion. Its sole aim is to teach the way of reaching the state of equanimity, in which the saint has no preferences, likes and dislikes—where the difference between the sinner and the virtuous, the self and the not-self has vanished. The idea of *yoga* as self-surrendering union with God and self-surrendering performance of one's duties is the special feature which is absent in Buddhism. This self-surrender in God, however, occurs in Patañjali's *yoga*, but it is hardly in keeping with the technical meaning of the word *yoga*, as the suspension of all mental states. The idea appears only once in Patañjali's *sūtras*, and the entire method of *yoga* practices, as described in the later chapters, seems to take no notice of it. It seems highly probable, therefore, that in Patañjali's *sūtras* the idea was borrowed from the *Gītā*, where this self-surrender to God and union with Him is defined as *yoga* and is the central idea which the *Gītā* is not tired of repeating again and again.

We have thus completely failed to trace the idea of the *Gītā* to any of the different sources where the subject of *yoga* is dealt with, such as the Yoga Upaniṣads, Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtras*, Buddhist Yoga, or the *Mahā-bhārata*. It is only in the *Pañca-rātra* works that the *Gītā* meaning of *yoga* as self-surrender to God is found. Thus *Ahīrbudhnyā-saṃhitā* describes *yoga* as the worship of the heart (*hṛdayārādhana*), the offering of an oblation (*haviḥ*) of oneself to God or self-surrender to God (*bhagavate ātma-samarpaṇam*), and *yoga* is defined as the linking up (*saṃyoga*) of the lower self (*jīvātman*) with the higher self (*paramātman*)<sup>1</sup>. It seems, therefore, safe to suggest that the idea of *yoga* in the *Gītā* has the same traditional source as in the *Pañca-rātra* works.

### *Sāṃkhya Philosophy in the Gītā.*

It has been said before that there is no proof that the word *sāṃkhya* in the *Gītā* means the traditional Sāṃkhya philosophy; yet the old philosophy of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* forms the basis of the philosophy of the *Gītā*. This philosophy may be summarized as follows:

<sup>1</sup> The *Ahīrbudhnyā-saṃhitā*, of course, introduces many observations about the nerves (*nāḍī*) and the *vāyus*, which probably became associated with the *Pañca-rātra* tradition in later times.



*Prakṛti* is called *mahad brahma* (the great Brahma or the great multiplier as procreatress) in the *Gītā*, xiv. 3<sup>1</sup>. It is said there that this *prakṛti* is described as being like the female part, which God charges with His energy for the creation of the universe. Wherever any living beings may be born, the great Brahman or *prakṛti* is to be considered as the female part and God as the father and fertilizer. Three types of qualities are supposed to be produced from *prakṛti* (*guṇāḥ prakṛti-sambhavāḥ*)<sup>2</sup>. These are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, which bind the immortal self in its corporeal body. Of these, *sattva*, on account of its purity, is illuminating and untroubling (*anāmayam*, which Śrīdhara explains as *nirupadravam* or *śāntam*), and consequently, on account of these two qualities, binds the self with the attachment for knowledge (*jñāna-saṅgena*) and the attachment for pleasure (*sukha-saṅgena*). It is said that there are no living beings on earth, or gods in the heavens, who are not pervaded by the three *guṇas* produced from the *prakṛti*<sup>3</sup>. Since the *guṇas* are produced from the *prakṛti* through the fertilization of God's energy in *prakṛti*, they may be said to be produced by God, though God always transcends them. The quality of *sattva*, as has been said above, associates the self with the attachments for pleasure and knowledge. The quality of *rajas* moves to action and arises from desire and attachment (*trṣṇā-saṅga-samudbhavam*), through which it binds the self with egoistic attachments for action. The quality of *tamas* overcomes the illumination of knowledge and leads to many errors. *Tamas*, being a product of ignorance, blinds all living beings and binds them down with carelessness, idleness and sleep. These three qualities predominate differently at different times. Thus, sometimes the quality of *sattva* predominates over *rajas* and *tamas*, and such a time is characterized by the rise of knowledge in the mind through all the different sense-gates; when *rajas* dominates *sattva* and *tamas*, the mind is characterized by greed, efforts and endeavours for different kinds of action and the rise of passions, emotions and desires; when *tamas* predominates over *sattva* and *rajas*, there is ignorance, lethargy, errors, delusions and false beliefs.

The different categories are *avyakta*, or the undifferentiated

<sup>1</sup> *mama yoniṁ mahad brahma tasmin garbhaṁ dadhāmy aham*. xiv. 3. I have interpreted *mahad brahma* as *prakṛti*, following Śrīdhara and other commentators. Śaṅkara surreptitiously introduces the word *māyā* between *mama* and *yoni* and changes the whole meaning.

<sup>2</sup> *Gītā*, xiv. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* xviii. 40.



*prakṛti*, *buddhi* (intellect), *ahaṃkāra* (egohood), *manas* (mind-organ) and the ten senses, cognitive and conative. *Manas* is higher and subtler than the senses, and *buddhi* is higher than the *manas*, and there is that (probably self) which transcends *buddhi*. *Manas* is regarded as the superintendent of the different senses; it dominates them and through them enjoys the sense-objects. The relation between the *buddhi* and *ahaṃkāra* is nowhere definitely stated. In addition to these, there is the category of the five elements (*mahābhūta*)<sup>1</sup>. It is difficult to say whether these categories were regarded in the *Gītā* as being the products of *prakṛti* or as separately existing categories. It is curious that they are nowhere mentioned in the *Gītā* as being products of *prakṛti*, which they are in *Sāṃkhya*, but on the other hand, the five elements, *manas*, *ahaṃkāra* and *buddhi* are regarded as being the eightfold nature (*prakṛti*) of God<sup>2</sup>. It is also said that God has two different kinds of nature, a lower and a higher; the eightfold nature just referred to represents the lower nature of God, whereas His higher nature consists of the collective universe of life and spirit<sup>3</sup>. The *guṇas* are noticed in relation to *prakṛti* in III. 5, 27, 29, XIII. 21, XIV. 5, XVIII. 40, and in all these places the *guṇas* are described as being produced from *prakṛti*, though the categories are never said to be produced from *prakṛti*. In the *Gītā*, IX. 10, however, it is said that *prakṛti* produces all that is moving and all that is static through the superintendence of God. The word *prakṛti* is used in at least two different senses, as a primary and ultimate category and as a nature of God's being. It is quite possible that the primary meaning of *prakṛti* in the *Gītā* is God's nature; the other meaning of *prakṛti*, as an ultimate principle from which the *guṇas* are produced, is simply the hypostatization of God's nature. The whole group consisting of pleasure, pain, aversion, volition, consciousness, the eleven senses, the mind-organ, the five elements, egohood, intellect (*buddhi*), the undifferentiated (*avyakta*, meaning *prakṛti* existing, probably, as the sub-conscious mind) power of holding the senses and the power of holding together the diverse mental functions (*saṃghāta*) with their modifications and changes, is called *kṣetra*. In another place the body alone is called *kṣetra*<sup>4</sup>. It seems, therefore, that the word *kṣetra* signifies in its broader sense not only the body, but also the entire mental plane, involving

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, III. 42, XIII. 6 and 7, XV. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* VII. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* VII. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* XIII. 2.



the diverse mental functions, powers, capabilities, and also the undifferentiated sub-conscious element. In this connection it may be pointed out that *kṣetra* is a term which is specially reserved to denote the complex of body and mind, exclusive of the living principle of the self, which is called *kṣetra-jñā*, or the knower of the *kṣetra*, or *kṣetrin*, the possessor of the *kṣetra* or the body-mind complex. It is said that, just as the sun illuminates this whole world, so does the *kṣetrin* illuminate the whole *kṣetra*<sup>1</sup>.

It will be remembered that it is said in the *Gītā* that God has two different natures, one the complex whole of the five elements, *ahamkāra*, *buddhi*, etc., and the other the collective whole of life and spirit (*jīva-bhūta*). It will also be remembered that, by the fertilization of God's power in *prakṛti*, the *guṇas*, or the characteristic qualities, which pervade all that is living, come into being. The *guṇas*, therefore, as diverse dynamic tendencies or characteristic qualities, pervade the entire psychosis-complex of *ahamkāra*, *buddhi*, the senses, consciousness, etc., which represents the mental side of the *kṣetra*. *Kṣetra-jñā*, or the *kṣetrin*, is in all probability the same as *puruṣa*, an all-pervading principle as subtle as *ākāśa* (space), which, though it is omnipresent, remains untouched by any of the qualities of the body, in which it manifests itself. It is difficult to say what, according to the *Gītā*, *prakṛti* is in itself, before the fertilization of God's energy. It does not seem that *prakṛti* can be regarded as being identical with God. It appears more to be like an ultimate principle coexistent with God and intimately connected with Him. There is, however, no passage in the *Gītā* by which the lower *prakṛti* of God, consisting of the categories, etc., can be identified with *prakṛti*; for *prakṛti* is always associated with the *guṇas* and their production. Again, it is nowhere said in the *Gītā* that the categories *ahamkāra*, senses, etc., are in any way the products of the *guṇas*; the word *guṇa* seems to imply only the enjoyable, emotional and moral or immoral qualities. It is these *guṇas* which move us to all kinds of action, produce attachments and desires, make us enjoy or suffer, and associate us with virtues and vices. *Prakṛti* is regarded as the mother-source from which all the knowable, enjoyable, and dynamic qualities of experience, referred to as being generated by the successive preponderance of the *guṇas*, are produced. The categories of the psychosis and the five elements, which form the

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, XIII. 34.



mental ground, do not, therefore, seem to be products of the *guṇas* or the *prakṛti*. They seem to constitute a group by themselves, which is referred to as being a lower nature of God, side by side with His higher nature as life and spirit. *Kṣetra* is a complex of both the *guṇa* elements of experience and the complex categories of body and mind. There seem, therefore, to be three different principles, the *aparā prakṛti* (the lower nature), *parā prakṛti* or *puruṣa*, and *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* produces the *guṇas*, which constitute experience-stuff; the *aparā prakṛti* holds within itself the material world of the five elements and their modifications as our bodies, the senses and the mind-categories. It seems very probable, therefore, that a later development of Sāṃkhya combined these two *prakṛtis* as one, and held that the *guṇas* produced not only the stuff of our experience, but also all the mind-categories, the senses, etc., and the five gross elements and their modifications. The *guṇas*, therefore, are not the products of *prakṛti*, but they themselves constitute *prakṛti*, when in a state of equilibrium. In the *Gītā* *prakṛti* can only produce the *guṇas* through the fertilizing energy of God; they do not constitute the *prakṛti*, when in a state of equilibrium. It is hard to realize the connection between the *aparā prakṛti* and the *prakṛti* and the *guṇas*. The connection, however, can be imagined to take place through the medium of God, who is the fertilizer and upholder of them both. There seems to be but one *puruṣa*, as the all-pervading fundamental life-principle which animates all bodies and enjoys and suffers by its association with its experiences, remaining at the same time unaffected and untouched by the effects of the *guṇas*. This naturally presumes that there is also a higher and a lower *puruṣa*, of which the former is always unattached to and unaffected by the *guṇas*, whereas the lower *puruṣa*, which is different in different bodies, is always associated with the *prakṛti* and its *guṇas* and is continually affected by their operations. Thus it is said that the *puruṣa*, being in *prakṛti*, enjoys the *guṇas* of *prakṛti* and this is the cause of its rebirth in good or bad bodies<sup>1</sup>. There is also in this body the higher *puruṣa* (*puruṣaḥ paraḥ*), which is also called *paramātmān*, being the passive perceiver, thinker, upholder, enjoyer and the great lord<sup>2</sup>. The word *puruṣa* is used in the *Gītā* in four distinct senses, firstly, in the

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, XIII. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *upadraṣṭānumantā ca bhartā bhoktā mahesvaraḥ paramātmēti cāpy ukto dehe 'smin puruṣaḥ paraḥ*. *Ibid.* XIII. 23.



sense of *puruṣottama*, or God<sup>1</sup>; secondly, in the sense of a person<sup>2</sup>; and the *Gītā* distinctly speaks of the two other *puruṣas* as *kṣara* (changeable) and *akṣara* (unchangeable). The *kṣara* is all living beings, whereas the *akṣara* is changeless. It is this higher self (*uttamaḥ puruṣaḥ*), different from the other *puruṣa* and called also *paramātman*, that pervades the three worlds and upholds them as their deathless God<sup>3</sup>. God, however, transcends both the *kṣara puruṣa* and the *akṣara puruṣa* and is therefore called *puruṣottama*<sup>4</sup>. Both *prakṛti* and the *paramātman puruṣa* are beginningless. The *paramātman puruṣa*, being changeless and beyond the sphere of the *guṇas*, is neither the agent of anything nor affected by the *guṇas*, though it resides in the body. *Prakṛti* is regarded as the ground through which all causes, effects, and their agents are determined. It is the fundamental principle of all dynamic operations, motivations and actions, whereas *puruṣa* is regarded as the principle which makes all experiences of joys and sorrows possible<sup>5</sup>. The *paramātman puruṣa*, therefore, though all-pervasive, yet exists in each individual, being untouched by its experiences of joy, sorrow and attachment, as its higher self. It is only the lower self that goes through the experiences and is always under the influence of the *guṇas*. Any attempts that may be made to rise above the sphere of the *guṇas*, above attachments and desires, above pleasures and pains, mean the subordination of the lower self to the pure and deathless higher self. Every attempt in this direction implies a temporary communion (*yoga*) with the higher self. It has already been pointed out that the *Gītā* recognizes a conflict between the higher and the lower selves and advises us to raise the lower self by the higher self. In all our moral efforts there is always an upward and a downward pull by the higher *puruṣa* on the one side, and the *guṇas* on the other; yet the higher *puruṣa* does not itself make the pulls. The energy of the downward pull is derived from the *guṇas* and exerted by the lower self. In all these efforts the higher self stands as the unperturbed ideal of equanimity, steadiness, unchangeableness in good or evil, joys or sorrows. The presence of this superior self is sometimes intuited by self-meditation, sometimes through philosophic knowledge, and sometimes by our moral

<sup>1</sup> *sanātanas tvam puruṣo mato me. Gītā, XI. 18.*

*tvam ādi-devaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ. Ibid. XI. 38.*

For *puruṣottama* see *ibid.* VIII. 1, X. 15, XI. 3, XV. 18 and XV. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* II. 15, II. 21, II. 60, III. 4, etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* XV. 15 and 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* XV. 16 and 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* XIII. 20.



efforts to perform our duties without attachment and without desires<sup>1</sup>. Each moral effort to perform our allotted duties without attachment means also a temporary communion (*yoga*) with the higher self or with God. A true philosophic knowledge, by which all actions are known to be due to the operations of the *prakṛti* and its *guṇas* and which realizes the unattached nature of the true self, the philosophic analysis of action and the relation between God, the higher self, the lower self, and the *prakṛti*, and any devotional realization of the nature of God and dedication of all action to Him, and the experience of the supreme bliss of living in communion with Him, mean a communion with the higher self or God, and are therefore *yoga*.

It is easy to notice here the beginnings of a system of thought which in the hands of other thinkers might well be developed into the traditional school of Sāṃkhya philosophy. It has already been pointed out that the two *prakṛtis* naturally suggested the idea of unifying them into the one *prakṛti* of the Sāṃkhya. The higher and the lower *puruṣas*, where the latter enjoys and suffers, while the former remains unchanged and unperturbed amidst all the experiences of joy and sorrow on the part of the latter, naturally remind one of the Upaniṣadic simile of the two birds in the same tree, of whom the one eats tasteful fruits while the other remains contented without them<sup>2</sup>. The *Gītā* does not seem to explain clearly the nature of the exact relation between the higher *puruṣa* and the lower *puruṣa*. It does not definitely state whether the lower *puruṣa* is one or many, or describe its exact ontological states. It is easy to see how any attempt that would aim at harmonizing these two apparently loosely-connected *puruṣas* into one self-consistent and intelligible concept might naturally end in the theory of infinite, pure, all-pervasive *puruṣas* and make the lower *puruṣa* the product of a false and illusory mutual reflection of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. The *Gītā* uses the word *māyā* in three passages (VII. 14 and 15, XVIII. 61); but it seems to be used there in the sense of an inscrutable power or ignorance, and not in that of illusory or magical creation. The idea that the world or any of the mental or spiritual categories could be merely an illusory appearance seems never to have been

<sup>1</sup> *dhyānenātmani paśyanti kecid ātmānam ātmanā  
 anye sāmṛkhyena yogenā karma-yogenā cāpare. Gītā, XIII. 25.*  
<sup>2</sup> *Muṇḍaka, III. 1. 1 and Svetāśvatara, 4. 6.*



contemplated in the *Gītā*. It is not, therefore, conceivable that the lower, or the *kṣara*, *puruṣa* might be mere illusory creation, accepted as a necessary postulate to explain the facts of our undeniable daily experience. But it is difficult to say how this *kṣetra-jña puruṣa* can have a separate existence from the *para puruṣa* (which is absolutely free from the *guṇas*), as enjoying the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*, unless the former be somehow regarded as the result of the functioning of the latter. Such a view would naturally support a theory that would regard the lower *puruṣa* as being only the *para puruṣa* as imaged or reflected in the *guṇas*. The *para puruṣa*, existing by itself, free from the influence of the *guṇas*, is in its purity. But even without losing its unattached character and its lonely purity it may somehow be imaged in the *guṇas* and play the part of the phenomenal self, the *jīva* or the lower *puruṣa*, enjoying the *guṇas* of *prakṛti* and having the superior *puruṣa* as its ultimate ground. It cannot be denied that the *Gītā* theory of *puruṣa* is much looser than the later Sāṃkhya theory; but it has the advantage of being more elastic, as it serves better to explain the contact of the lower *puruṣa* with the higher and thereby charges the former with the spirit of a higher ideal.

The qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* were regarded as the universal characteristics of all kinds of mental tendencies, and all actions were held to be prompted by specific kinds of *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*. Mental tendencies were also designated accordingly as *sāttvika*, *rājasa* or *tāmasa*. Thus religious inclinations (*śraddhā*) are also described as being of a threefold nature. Those who are of *sāttvika* nature worship the gods, those who are of *rājasa* nature worship the *yakṣas* and the *rakṣas* and those who are of *tāmasa* nature worship ghosts and demons. Those who, prompted by vanity, desires and attachments, perform violent ascetic penances unauthorized by the scriptures and thereby starve and trouble their body and spirit, are really demoniac in their temperament. Again, *sāttvika* sacrifices are those performed solely out of reverence for the scriptural injunctions and from a pure sense of duty, without any desire or motive for any other kind of worldly or heavenly good. Again, *rājasa* sacrifices are those which are performed for the realization of some benefits or good results or for the satisfaction of some vanity or pride. *Tāmasa* sacrifices are those which are performed without proper faith, with improper ceremonials, transgressing Vedic injunctions. Again, *tapas* also is described as



being threefold, as of body (*śārīra*), of speech (*vāṇmaya*) and of mind (*mānasa*). Adoration of gods, Brahmins, teachers and wise men, sincerity and purity, sex-continence and non-injury are known as physical or bodily *tapas*. To speak in a manner that would be truthful, attractive, and conducive to good and would not be harmful in any way, and to study in the regular and proper way are regarded as the *tapas* of speech (*vāṇ-maya tapas*). Mental (*mānasa*) *tapas* consists of sincerity of mind, friendliness of spirit, thoughtfulness and mental control, self-control and purity of mind. The above threefold *tapas* performed without any attachment for a reward is called *sāttvika tapas*. But *tapas* performed out of vanity, or for the sake of higher position, respectability in society, or appreciation from people, is called *rājasa*—such a *tapas* can lead only to unsteady and transient results. Again, the *tapas* which is performed for the destruction of others by ignorant self-mortification is called *tāmasa tapas*. Gifts, again, are called *sāttvika* when they are made to proper persons (holy Brahmins) on auspicious occasions, and in holy places, merely out of sense of duty. Gifts are called *rājasa* when they are made as a return for the good done to the performer, for gaining future rewards, or made unwillingly. Again, gifts are called *tāmasa* when they are made slightly, to improper persons, in unholy places, and in ordinary places. Those who desire liberation perform sacrifices and *tapas* and make gifts without aiming at the attainment of any mundane or heavenly benefits. Knowledge also is regarded as *sāttvika*, *rājasa* and *tāmasa*. *Sāttvika* wisdom consists in looking for unity and diversity and in realizing one unchangeable reality in the apparent diversity of living beings. *Rājasa* knowledge consists in the scientific apprehension of things or living beings as diverse in kind, character and number. *Tāmasa* knowledge consists in narrow and untrue beliefs which are satisfied to consider a little thing as the whole and entire truth through sheer dogmatism, and unreasonable delusion or attachment. An action is called *sāttvika* when it is performed without any desire for a reward, without attachment and without aversion. It is called *rājasa* when it is performed with elaborate endeavours and efforts, out of pride and vanity, for the satisfaction of one's desires. It is called *tāmasa* when it is undertaken out of ignorance and without proper judgment of one's own capacities, and when it leads to waste of energy, harm and injury. An agent (*kartṛ*) is called *sāttvika* when he is free from attachment



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and vanity and absolutely unruffled in success and failure, persevering and energetic. Again, an agent is called *rājasa* if he acts out of motives of self-interest, is impure, is filled with sorrow or joy in failure or success, and injures others. An agent is called *tāmasa* if he is careless, haughty, thoughtless, deceptive, arrogant, idle, procrastinating and melancholic. Understanding (*buddhi*) is said to be *sāttvika* when it grasps how a man has to set himself in the path of virtue, how to refrain from vice, what ought and what ought not to be done, of what one has to be afraid and how to be fearless, what is bondage, and what is liberation. *Rājasa* understanding is that by which one wrongly grasps the nature of virtue and vice, and of right and wrong conduct. *Tāmasa* understanding is that which takes vice as virtue and out of ignorance perceives all things wrongly. That mental hold (*dhṛti*) is called *sāttvika* which by unfailing communion holds together the sense-functions and bio-motor and mind activities. That happiness which in the beginning appears to be painful, but which is in the end as sweet as nectar, and which is the direct result of gaiety of mind, is called *sāttvika sukha*. The happiness arising out of sense-object contact, which in the beginning is as attractive as nectar, but in the end is as painful as poison, is *rājasa*. That happiness which arises out of sleep, idleness and errors, and blinds one in the beginning and in the end, is called *tāmasa*. So also the food which increases life, facilitates mind-function, increases powers of enjoyment, makes one healthy and strong, and is sweet, resistible and delightful is liked by the *sāttvika* people. That food is liked by *rājasa* people which is hot, sour, salt, dry and causes pain and brings on diseases. The food which is impure, tasteless, old and rotten is liked by *tāmasa* people. All this goes to show that the *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, are determinants of the tendencies of, or rather the stuff of, the moral and immoral, pleasurable and painful planes or characteristics of our experience. *Sattva* represents the moral and supermoral planes, *rajas* the ordinary mixed and normal plane, and *tamas* the inferior and immoral characteristics of our experience.

### Avyakta and Brahman.

The word *avyakta* is primarily used in the *Gītā* in the sense of "the unmanifested." Etymologically the word consists of two parts, the negative particle *a* meaning "negation," and *vyakta* meaning "manifested," "differentiated" or "revealed." In this



sense the word is used as an adjective. There is another use of the word in the neuter gender (*avyaktam*), in the sense of a category. As an illustration of the first sense, one may refer to the *Gītā*, II. 25 or VIII. 21. Thus in II. 25 the self is described as the unmanifested; unthinkable and unchangeable. In the Upaniṣads, however, it is very unusual to characterize the self as *avyakta* or unmanifested; for the self there is pure consciousness and self-manifested. In all later Vedāntic works the self is described as *anubhūti-svabhāva*, or as being always immediately intuited. But in the *Gītā* the most prominent characteristic of the self is that it is changeless and deathless; next to this, it is unmanifested and unthinkable. But it does not seem that the *Gītā* describes the self as pure consciousness. Not only does it characterize the self as *avyakta* or unmanifested, but it does not seem anywhere to refer to it as a self-conscious principle. The word *cetanā*, which probably means consciousness, is described in the *Gītā* as being a part of the changeable *kṣetra*, and not the *kṣetra-jñā*<sup>1</sup>. It may naturally be asked how, if the self was not a conscious principle, could it be described as *kṣetra-jñā* (that which knows the *kṣetra*)? But it may well be replied that the self here is called *kṣetra-jñā* only in relation to its *kṣetra*, and the implication would be that the self becomes a conscious principle not by virtue of its own inherent principle of consciousness, but by virtue of the principle of consciousness reflected or offered to it by the complex entity of the *kṣetra*. The *kṣetra* contains within it the conscious principle known as *cetanā*, and it is by virtue of its association with the self that the self appears as *kṣetra-jñā* or the knower.

It may not be out of place here to mention that the term *kṣetra* is never found in the Upaniṣads in the technical sense in which it is used in the *Gītā*. The term *kṣetra-jñā*, however, appears in *Śvetāśvatara*, VI. 16 and *Maitrāyaṇa*, II. 5 in the sense of *puruṣa*, as in the *Gītā*. The term *kṣetra*, however, as used in the *Gītā*, has more or less the same sense that it has in Caraka's account of Sāṃkhya in the *Caraka-saṃhitā*, III. 1. 61-63. In Caraka, however, *avyakta* is excluded from the complex constituent *kṣetra*, though in the *Gītā* it is included within the constituents of *kṣetra*. Caraka again considers *avyakta* (by which term he means both the Sāṃkhya *prakṛti* and the *puruṣa*) as *kṣetra-jñā*, whereas the *Gītā* takes only the *puruṣa* as *kṣetra-jñā*. The *puruṣa* of the *Gītā* is further

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, XIII. 7.



characterized as the life-principle (*jīva-bhūta*, VII. 5 and XV. 7) by which the whole world is upheld. The *Gītā* does not, however, describe in what particular way the life-principle upholds the world. In Caraka's account also the *ātman* is referred to as the life-principle, and it is held there that it is the principle which holds together the *buddhi*, the senses, the mind and the objects—it is also the principle for which good, bad, pleasure, pain, bondage, liberation, and in fact the whole world-process happens. In the *Caraka-saṃhitā* *puruṣa* is regarded as *cetanā-dhātu*, or the upholder of consciousness; yet it is not regarded as conscious by itself. Consciousness only comes to it as a result of the joint operation of *manas*, the senses, the objects, etc. In the *Gītā* *puruṣa* is not regarded as the *cetanā-dhātu*, but *cetanā* or consciousness is regarded as being a constituent of the *kṣetra* over which the *puruṣa* presides. Thus knowledge can accrue to *puruṣa* as *kṣetra-jñā*, only in association with its *kṣetra*. It may well be supposed that *puruṣa* as *kṣetra-jñā* and as a life-principle upholds the constituents of the *kṣetra*, and it is probable that the *puruṣa*'s position as a cognizer or knower depends upon this intimate association between itself and the *kṣetra*.

Another relevant point is suggested along with the considerations of the nature of the *puruṣa* as the cognizer, namely, the consideration of the nature of *puruṣa* as an agent (*kartr*). It will be pointed out in another section that the fruition of actions is rendered possible by the combined operations of *adhiṣṭhāna*, *kartr*, *kāraṇa*, *ceṣṭā* and *daiva*, and this doctrine has been regarded as being a Sāṃkhya doctrine, though it has been interpreted by Śaṅkara as being a Vedāntic view. But both Sāṃkhya and the Vedānta theories are explicitly of the *sat-kārya-vāda* type. According to the *sat-kārya-vāda* of the traditional Sāṃkhya philosophy the fruition of actions is the natural result of a course of unfolding evolution, consisting in the actualization of what was already potentially present. On the Vedāntic *sat-kārya-vāda* view all operations are but mere appearances, and the cause alone is true. Neither of these doctrines would seem to approve of a theory of causation which would imply that anything could be the result of the joint operation of a number of factors. That which is not cannot be produced by the joint operation of a collocation of causes. It may be remembered, however, that the *Gītā* explicitly formulates the basic principle of *sat-kārya-vāda*, that what exists cannot be destroyed and that what does not exist cannot come into being.



This principle was applied for proving the deathless character of the self. It is bound to strike anyone as very surprising that the *Gītā* should accept the *sat-kārya-vāda* doctrine in establishing the immortality of the self and should assume the *a-sat-kārya-vāda* doctrine regarding the production of action. It is curious, however, to note that a similar view regarding the production of action is to be found in Caraka's account of Sāṃkhya, where it is said that all actions are produced as a result of a collocation of causes—that actions are the results of the collocation of other entities with the agent (*kartr*)<sup>1</sup>.

The word *avyakta* is also used in the sense of "unknowability" or "disappearance" in the *Gītā*, II. 28, where it is said that the beginnings of all beings are invisible and unknown; it is only in the middle that they are known, and in death also they disappear and become unknown. But the word *avyakta* in the neuter gender means a category which is a part of God Himself and from which all the manifested manifold world has come into being. This *avyakta* is also referred to as a *prakṛti* or nature of God, which, under His superintendence, produces the moving and the unmoved—the entire universe<sup>2</sup>. But God Himself is sometimes referred to as being *avyakta* (probably because He cannot be grasped by any of our senses), as an existence superior to the *avyakta*, which is described as a part of His nature, and as a category from which all things have come into being<sup>3</sup>. This *avyakta* which is identical with God is also called *akṣara*, or the immortal, and is regarded as the last resort of all beings who attain their highest and most perfect realization. Thus there is a superior *avyakta*, which represents the highest essence of God, and an inferior *avyakta*, from which the world is produced. Side by side with these two *avyaktas* there is also the *prakṛti*, which is sometimes described as a coexistent principle and as the *māyā* or the blinding power of God, from which the *guṇas* are produced.

The word "Brahman" is used in at least two or three different senses. Thus in one sense it means *prakṛti*, from which the *guṇas* are produced. In another sense it is used as an essential nature of God. In another sense it means the Vedas. Thus in the *Gītā*,

<sup>1</sup> *Caraka-saṃhitā*, IV. 1. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Gītā*, IX. 10, *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sacarācaram*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* VIII. 20 and VIII. 21; also IX. 4, where it is said, "All the world is pervaded over by me in my form as *avyakta*; all things and all living beings are in me, but I am not exhausted in them."



III. 15, it is said that the sacrificial duties are derived from Brahman (Vedas). Brahman is derived from the eternal; therefore the omnipresent Brahman is always established in the sacrifices<sup>1</sup>. The idea here is that, since the Vedas have sprung from the eternal Brahman, its eternal and omnipresent character is transmitted to the sacrifices also. The word "omnipresent" (*sarva-gata*) is probably used in reference to the sacrifices on account of the diverse and manifold ways in which the sacrifices are supposed to benefit those who perform them. In the *Gītā*, iv. 32, also the word "Brahman" in *Brahmaṇo mukhe* is used to denote the Vedas. But in iv. 24 and 25, where it is said that all sacrifices are to be made with the Brahman as the object and that the sacrificial materials, sacrificial fire, etc. are to be looked upon as being Brahman, the word "Brahman" is in all probability used in the sense of God<sup>2</sup>. In v. 6, 10, 19 also the word "Brahman" is used in the sense of God or Īśvara; and in most of the other cases the word is used in the sense of God. But according to the *Gītā* the personal God as Īśvara is the supreme principle, and Brahman, in the sense of a qualityless, undifferentiated ultimate principle as taught in the Upaniṣads, is a principle which, though great in itself and representing the ultimate essence of God, is nevertheless upheld by the personal God or Īśvara. Thus, though in VIII. 3 and x. 12 Brahman is referred to as the differenceless ultimate principle, yet in XIV. 27 it is said that God is the support of even this ultimate principle, Brahman. In many places we also hear of the attainment of Brahmahood (*brahma-bhūta*, v. 24, VI. 27, XVIII. 54, or *brahma-bhūya*, XIV. 26), and also of the attainment of the ultimate bliss of Brahman (*Brahma-nirvāṇa*, II. 72, v. 24, 25, 26). The word *brahma-bhūta* does not in the *Gītā* mean the differenceless merging into oneness, as in the Vedānta of Śaṅkara. It is wrong to think that the term "Brahman" is always used in the same sense in which Śaṅkara used it. The word "Brahman" is used in the sense of an ultimate differenceless principle in the Upaniṣads, and the Upaniṣads were apprized by all systems of Hindu thought as the repository of all sacred knowledge. Most systems regarded the attainment of a changeless eternal state as the final goal of realization. As an illustration, I may refer to the account of

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, III. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Śrīdhara, in interpreting this verse (iv. 24), explains it by saying, *tad evam paramēśvarārādhana-lakṣaṇaṁ karma jñāna-hetutvena bandhakatvābhāvād akarmaiva*.



Sāṃkhya given by Caraka, in which it is said that, when a man gives up all attachment and mental and physical actions, all feelings and knowledge ultimately and absolutely cease. At this stage he is reduced to Brahmahood (*brahma-bhūta*), and the self is no longer manifested. It is a stage which is beyond all existence and which has no connotation, characteristic or mark<sup>1</sup>. This state is almost like a state of annihilation, and yet it is described as a state of Brahmahood. The word "Brahman" was appropriated from the Upaniṣads and was used to denote an ultimate superior state of realization, the exact nature of which differed with the different systems. In the *Gītā* also we find the word "Brahman" signifying a high state of self-realization in which, through a complete detachment from all passions, a man is self-contented within himself and his mind is in a perfect state of equilibrium. In the *Gītā*, v. 19, Brahman is defined as the faultless state of equilibrium (*nirdoṣaṃ hi samaṃ brahma*), and in all the verses of that context the sage who is in a state of equanimity and equilibrium through detachment and passionlessness is said to be by virtue thereof in Brahman; for Brahman means a state of equanimity. In the *Gītā*, XIII. 13, Brahman is described as the ultimate object of knowledge, which is beginningless, and cannot be said to be either existent or non-existent (*na sat tan nāsad ucyate*). It is said that this Brahman has His hands and feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears everywhere in the world, and that He envelopes all. He is without senses, but He illuminates all sense-qualities; Himself unattached and the upholder of all, beyond the *guṇas*, He is also the enjoyer of the *guṇas*. He is both inside and outside of all living beings, of all that is moving and that is unmoved. He is both near and far, but unknowable on account of His subtle nature. Being one in many, yet appearing as many, the upholder of all living beings, the devourer and overpowerer of all, He is the light of all light, beyond all darkness, He is both knowledge and the object of knowledge, residing in the heart of all. It is easy to see that the whole concept of Brahman, as herein stated, is directly borrowed from the Upaniṣads. Towards the end of this chapter it is said that he who perceives the many living beings as being in one, and realizes everything as an emanation or elaboration from that, becomes Brahman. But in the next chapter Kṛṣṇa as God says,



“I am the upholder of the immortal and imperishable Brahman of absolute bliss and of the eternal *dharma*.” In the *Gītā*, xiv. 26, it is said that “he who worships me unflinchingly through devotion, transcends all *guṇas* and becomes Brahman.” It has just been remarked that the *Gītā* recognizes two different kinds of *avyaktas*. It is the lower *avyakta* nature of God which has manifested itself as the universe; but there is a higher *avyakta*, which is beyond it as the eternal and unchangeable basis of all. It seems very probable, therefore, that Brahman is identical with this higher *avyakta*. But, though this higher *avyakta* is regarded as the highest essence of God, yet, together with the lower *avyakta* and the selves, it is upheld in the super-personality of God.

The question whether the *Gītā* is a Sāṃkhya or a Vedānta work, or originally a Sāṃkhya work which was later on revised, changed, or enlarged from a Vedānta point of view, need not be elaborately discussed here. For, if the interpretation of the *Gītā*, as given herein, be accepted, then it will be evident that the *Gītā* is neither a Sāṃkhya work nor a Vedānta work. It has been pointed out that the word *sāṃkhya*, in the *Gītā*, does not mean the traditional Sāṃkhya philosophy, as found in Īśvarakṛṣṇa’s *Kārikā*. But there are, no doubt, here the scattered elements of an older philosophy, from which not only the Sāṃkhya of Īśvarakṛṣṇa or the *Ṣaṣṭi-tantra* (of which Īśvarakṛṣṇa’s work was a summary) developed, but even its earlier version, as found in Caraka’s account, could be considered to have developed. There is no doubt that the *Gītā*’s account of Sāṃkhya differs materially from the Sāṃkhya of the *Ṣaṣṭi-tantra* or of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, from the Sāṃkhya of Caraka, from the Sāṃkhya of Pāñcāsikha in the *Mahā-bhārata* and from the Sāṃkhya of Patañjali and the *Vyāsa-bhāṣya*. Ordinarily the Sāṃkhya of Patañjali is described as a theistic Sāṃkhya (*śeṣvara-sāṃkhya*); but the Īśvara of Patañjali is but loosely attached to the system of Sāṃkhya thought as expounded in Yoga. The Īśvara there appears only as a supernormal, perfect being, who by his permanent will removes the barriers in the path of the evolution of *prakṛti* in accordance with the law of *karma*. He thus merely helps the fulfilment of the teleology of the blind *prakṛti*. But in the *Gītā* both the *puruṣas* and the root of the cosmic nature are but parts of God, the super-person (*puruṣottama*). The *prakṛti*, from which the *guṇas* which have only subjectivistic characteristics are derived, is described as the *māyā* power of God, or like a



consort to Him, who, being fertilized by His energies, produces the *guṇas*. The difference of the philosophy of the *Gītā* from the various schools of Sāṃkhya is very evident. Instead of the one *prakṛti* of Sāṃkhya we have here the three *prakṛtis* of God. The *guṇas* here are subjectivistic or psychical, and not cosmical. It is because the *Gītā* admits a *prakṛti* which produces the subjectivistic *guṇas* by which the *puruṣas* are bound with ties of attachment to their experiences, that such a *prakṛti* could fitly be described as *guṇamayī māyā* (*māyā* consisting of *guṇas*). The *puruṣas*, again, though they are many, are on the whole but emanations from a specific *prakṛti* (divine nature) of God. The *puruṣas* are not stated in the *Gītā* to be of the nature of pure intelligence, as in the Sāṃkhya; but the cognizing element of consciousness (*cetanā*) is derived from another *prakṛti* of God, which is associated with the *puruṣa*. It has also been pointed out that the *Gītā* admits the *sat-kārya-vāda* doctrine with reference to immortality of the self, but not with reference to the fruition of actions or the rise of consciousness. The Sāṃkhya category of *tan-mātra* is missing in the *Gītā*, and the general teleology of the *prakṛti* of the Sāṃkhya is replaced by the super-person of God, who by his will gives a unity and a purpose to all the different elements that are upheld within Him. Both the Sāṃkhya of Kapila and that of Patañjali aim at securing, either through knowledge or through Yoga practices, the final loneliness of the translucent *puruṣas*. The *Gītā*, however, is anxious to secure the saintly equanimity and a perfect, unperturbed nature by the practice of detachment of the mind from passions and desires. When such a saintly equanimity and self-contentedness is achieved, the sage is said to be in a state of liberation from the bondage of *guṇa*-attachments, or to be in a state of Brahmahood in God. The philosophy of the *Gītā* thus differs materially from the traditional Sāṃkhya philosophy on almost every point. On some minor points (e.g. the absence of *tan-mātras*, the nature of the production of knowledge and action, etc.) the *Gītā* philosophy has some similarities with the account of the Sāṃkhya given in the *Caraka-saṃhitā*, IV. 1, as already described in the first volume of this work<sup>1</sup>.

The question whether the *Gītā* was written under a Vedāntic influence cannot be answered, unless one understands what is exactly meant by this Vedāntic influence; if by Vedāntic influence

<sup>1</sup> *A History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. I, 1922, pp. 213-222.



one means the influence of the Upaniṣads, then the *Gītā* must plainly be admitted to have borrowed very freely from the Upaniṣads, which from the earliest times had been revered for their wisdom. If, however, by Vedāntic influence one means the philosophy of Vedānta as taught by Śaṅkara and his followers, then it must be said that the *Gītā* philosophy is largely different therefrom. It has already been pointed out that, though Brahman is often described in Upaniṣadic language as the highest essence of God, it is in reality a part of the super-personality of God. The *Gītā*, moreover, does not assert anywhere that Brahman is the only reality and all else that appears is false and unreal. The word *māyā* is, no doubt, used in the *Gītā* in three passages; but its meaning is not what Śaṅkara ascribes to it in his famous interpretation of Vedāntic thought. Thus in the *Gītā*, VII. 14, *māyā* is described as being of the nature of *guṇas*, and it is said that he who clings to God escapes the grip of the *māyā* or of the *guṇas*. In the *Gītā*, VII. 15, the word *māyā* is also probably used in the same sense, since it is said that it is ignorant and sinful men who, through demoniac ideas, lose their right wisdom under the influence of *māyā* and do not cling to God. In all probability, here also *māyā* means the influence of *rajas* and *tamas*; for it has been repeatedly said in the *Gītā* that demoniac tendencies are generated under the preponderating influence of *rajas* and *tamas*. In the *Gītā*, XVIII. 61, it is said that God resides in the heart of all living beings and moves them by *māyā*, like dolls on a machine. It has been pointed out that the psychical tendencies and moral or immoral propensities which move all men to action are produced under the influence of the *guṇas*, and that God is the ultimate generator of the *guṇas* from the *prakṛti*. The *māyā*, therefore, may well be taken here to mean *guṇas*, as in the *Gītā*, VII. 14. Śrīdhara takes it to mean the power of God. The *guṇas* are, no doubt, in a remote sense, powers of God. But Śaṅkara's paraphrasing of it as deception (*chadmanā*) is quite inappropriate. Thus it is evident that the *Gītā* does not know the view that the world may be regarded as a manifestation of *māyā* or illusion. It has also been pointed out that the word "Brahman" is used in the *Gītā* in the sense of the Vedas, of faultless equanimity, of supreme essence and of *prakṛti*, which shows that it had no such crystallized technical sense as in the philosophy of Śaṅkara. The word had in the *Gītā* all the looseness of Upaniṣadic



usage. In the *Gītā* the word *avidyā*, so famous in Śaṅkara's philosophy of the Vedānta, is nowhere used. The word *ajñāna* is used several times (v. 15, 16; x. 11; XIII. 11; XIV. 8, 16, 17; XVI. 4); but it has no special technical sense in any of these passages. It has the sense of "ignorance" or "misconception," which is produced by *tamas* (*ajñānaṃ tamasaḥ phalam*, XIV. 16) and which in its turn produces *tamas* (*tamas tv ajñāna-jaṃ viddhi*, XIV. 8).

### Conception of Sacrificial Duties in the *Gītā*.

The Vedic view of the obligatoriness of certain kinds of sacrifices or substitution-meditations permeated almost all forms of Hindu thought, excepting the Vedānta philosophy as interpreted by Śaṅkara. The conception of the obligatoriness of duties finds its best expression in the analysis of *vidhi* in the Mīmāṃsā philosophy. *Vidhi* means the injunctions of the Vedas, such as, "Thou should'st perform such and such sacrifices"; sometimes these are conditional, such as, "Those who wish to attain Heaven should perform such and such sacrifices"; sometimes they are unconditional, such as, "Thou should'st say the three prayers." The force of this *vidhi*, or injunction, is differently interpreted in the different schools of Mīmāṃsā. Kumārila, the celebrated commentator, in interpreting Jaimini's definition of *dharma*, or virtue, as a desirable end (*artha*) or good which is enjoined by the Vedic commands (*codanā-lakṣaṇo 'rtho dharmah*, *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, I. 1), says that it is the performance of the Vedic injunctions, sacrifices, etc. (*yāgādih*) that should be called our duty. The definition of virtue, then, involves the notion that only such a desired end (on account of the pain associated with it not exceeding the associated pleasure) as is enjoined by Vedic commands is called *dharma*. The sacrifices enjoined by the Vedas are called *dharma*, because these would in future produce pleasurable experiences. So one's abstention from actions prohibited by Vedic commands is also called *dharma*, as by this means one can avoid the undesirable effects and sufferings of punishments as a result of transgressing those commands. Such sacrifices, however, are ultimately regarded as *artha*, or desired ends, because they produce pleasurable experiences. The imperative of Vedic commands is supposed to operate in a twofold manner, firstly, as initiating a volitional tendency in obedience to the verbal command (*śābdī bhāvanā*), and, secondly, in releasing



the will to the actual performance of the act enjoined by the command (*ārtihī bhāvanā*). The propulsion of verbal commands is not like any physical propulsion; such a propulsion only arises as a result of one's comprehension of the fact that the performance of the acts enjoined will lead to beneficial results, and it naturally moves one to perform those acts out of self-interest<sup>1</sup>. So of the twofold propulsion (*bhāvanā*) implied in a Vedic imperative the propulsion to act, as communicated by the verbal command, is called *śābdī bhāvanā*; and this is followed by the actual efforts of the person for the performance of the act<sup>2</sup>. The prescriptive of the command (*vidhi*) is comprehended directly from the imperative suffix (*lin*) of the verb, even before the meaning of the verb is realized. If this is so, it is contended that the imperative, as it is communicated by the command, is a pure contentless form of command. This contention is admitted by the Bhaṭṭa school, which thinks that, though in the first stage we have communication of the contentless pure form of the imperative, yet at the successive stages the contentless form of duty is naturally supplemented by a more direct reference to the concrete context, as denoted by the verb with which the suffix is associated. So the process of the propulsion of *bhāvanā*, though it starts at the first instance with the communication of a pure contentless form, passes, by reason of its own necessity and the incapacity of a contentless form of duty to stand by itself, gradually through more and more concrete stages to the actual comprehension of the duty implied by the concrete meaning of the associated verb<sup>3</sup>. So the communication of the contentless duty and its association with the concrete verbal meaning are not two different meanings, but are

<sup>1</sup> *adṛṣṭe tu viṣaye śreyah-sāadhanādhigamaḥ śabdaika-nibandhana iti tad-adhigamopāyaḥ śabda eva pravartakāḥ; ata eva śabdo 'pi na svarūpa-mātreṇa pravartako vāyve-ādi-tulyatva-prasaṅgāt;...arthapratītiṃ upajanayataḥ śabdasya pravartakatvam. Nyāya-mañjarī, p. 342. The Vizianagram Sanskrit Series, Benares, 1895.*

<sup>2</sup> *Lin-ādeḥ śabdasya na pratīti-janana-mātre vyāpārah kintu puruṣa-pravṛttāu api; sa cāyam lin-ādi-vyāpārah śabda-bhāvanā-nāmadheyo vidhir ity ucyate sa eva ca pravartakāḥ...yo bhavana-kriyā-kartr-viṣayaḥ prayojaka-vyāpārah puruṣa-stho yatra bhavana-kriyāyāḥ kartā svargādhikarmatām āpadyate so 'rtha-bhāvanā-śabdena ucyate. Ibid. p. 343.*

<sup>3</sup> *Yady apy aṁśair asaṁsprṣtām vidhiḥ sprṣati bhāvanām tathāpy aśaktito nāsau tan-mātre paryavasyati anuṣṭheye hi viṣaye vidhiḥ pumsām pravartakāḥ aṁsa-trayeṇa cāpūrṇam nānutiṣṭhati bhāvanām tasmāt prakrānta-rūpo 'pi vidhiḥ tāvāt pratīkṣate yāvād yogyatvam āpannā bhāvanā'nyānapekṣinī. Ibid. p. 344.*



rather the prolongation of one process of communication, just as cooking includes all the different associated acts of putting the pan on the fire, lighting the fire, and the like<sup>1</sup>. These two *bhāvanās*, therefore, mean nothing more than the reasoning of the will and its translation into definite channels of activity, as the performance of the sacrifice, etc., and *vidhi* here means simply the prompting or the propulsion (*vyāpārah prerāṇā-rūpaḥ*); and it is such prompting that initiates in the performer the will, which is later on translated into concrete action.

Another Mīmāṃsā view objects to this theory of dual *bhāvanā* and asserts that the suffix *lin* involves the notion of an order to work (*prerāṇa*), as if the relation of the Vedas to us were one of master and servant, and that the Vedic *vidhi* as expressed in the *lin* suffix conveys the command (*praiśya-praiśayoḥ sambandhaḥ*). The *vidhi* goads us to work, and, being goaded by it, we turn to work. It does not physically compel us to act; but the feeling we have from it that we have been ordered to act constitutes the driving power. The knowledge of *vidhi* thus drives us to our Vedic duties. When a man hears the command, he feels that he has been commanded and then he sets to work. This setting to work is quite a different operation from the relation of the command and the commanded, and comes after it. The essence of a Vedic sentence is this command or *niyoga*. A man who has formerly tasted the benefits of certain things or the pleasures they produced naturally intends to have them again; here also there is a peculiar mental experience of eagerness, desire or intention (*ākūta*), which goads him on to obey the Vedic commands. This *ākūta* is a purely subjective experience and cannot, therefore, be experienced by others, though one can always infer its existence from the very fact that, unless it were felt in the mind, no one would feel himself goaded to work<sup>2</sup>. *Niyoga*, or a prompting to work (*prerāṇa*), is the sense of all *vidhis*, and this rouses in us the intention of working in accordance with the command. The actual performance of an action is a mere counterpart of the intention (*ākūta*), that is subjectively felt as roused by the *niyoga* or the

<sup>1</sup> *Yathā hi sthāly-adhīśrayaṇāt prabhṛtyā nīrākāṅkṣaudana-nīspatter ekaiveyaṃ pāka-kriyā salilāvaseka-taṇḍulāvapana-darvī-vighaṭtanāśrāvanādy-aneka-kṣaṇa-samudāya-svabhāvā tathā prathama-pada-jñānāt prabhṛti ā nīrākāṅkṣa-vākyārtha-paricchedād ekaiveyaṃ śābdi pramitiḥ. Nyāya-mañjari, p. 345.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ayam api bhautika-vyāpāra-hetur ātmākūta-viśeṣo na pramāṇāntara-vedyo bhavati na ca na vedyate tat-samvedane sati ceṣṭā yadvantaṃ dṛṣtvā tasyāpi tādṛk-prerāṇā-vagamo 'numīyate. Ibid. p. 348.*



driving power of the *vidhi*. This view differs from the view of Kumārila in this, that it does not suppose that the propulsion of the Vedic command takes effect in a twofold *bhāvanā*, through the whole process of the conception and the materialization of the action in accordance with the Vedic commands. The force of the command is exhausted in prompting us to action and arousing in us the inward resolution (*ākūta*) to obey the command. The actual performance of the action comes as a natural consequence (*artha*). The force of the *vidhi* has a field of application only when our ordinary inclinations do not naturally lead us to the performance of action. *Vidhi*, therefore, operates merely as a law of command which has to be obeyed for the sake of the law alone, and it is this psychological factor of inward resolution to obey the law that leads to the performance of action.

Maṇḍana, in his *Vidhi-viveka*, discusses the diverse views on the significance of *vidhi*. He interprets *vidhi* as a specific kind of prompting (*pravartanā*). He distinguishes the inner volitional intention of attaining an end and its translation into active effort leading to muscular movements of the body. *Pravartanā* here means the inner volitional direction of the mind towards the performance of the action, as well as actual nervous changes which are associated with it<sup>1</sup>. The command of the Vedas naturally brings with it a sense of duty or of "oughtness" (*kartavyatā*), and it is this sense of *kartavyatā* that impels people to action without any reference to the advantages and benefits that may be reaped by such actions. The psychological state associated with such a feeling of "oughtness" is said to be of the nature of instincts (*pratibhā*). It is through an instinctive stimulus to work, proceeding from the sense of "oughtness," that the action is performed.

The Nyāya doctrine differs from the above view of *vidhi* as a categorically imperative order and holds that the prompting of the Vedic commands derives its force from our desire for the attainment of the benefits that we might reap if we acted in accordance with them. So the ultimate motive of the action is the attainment of pleasure or the avoidance of pain, and it is only with a view to attaining the desired ends that one is prompted to follow the Vedic

<sup>1</sup> *Bhāva-dharma eva kaścit samāhita-sādhanaṁguṇo vyāpāra-padārthaḥ; tad yathā ātmano buddhy-ādi-janana-pravṛttasya mauḥ-samyoga evāyaṁ bhāva-dharmah tadvad atrāpi spandas tad-itaro vā bhāva-dharmah pravṛtti-janana-nukūlatayā vyāpāra-viśeṣaḥ pravartanā. Vācaspati's Nyāya-kārikā on Vidhi-viveka, pp. 243, 244.*



commands and perform the sacrifices. In this view, therefore, the prompting, or *preraṇā*, has not in it that self-evident call of the pure imperative or the rousing of the volitional tendency through the influence of the imperative; the prompting felt is due only to the rise of desires for the end.

Most of the above interpretations of *vidhi* are of much later date than the *Gītā*. No systematic discussion of the nature of *vidhi* which can be regarded as contemporaneous with or prior to the date of the *Gītā* is now available. But even these latter-day explanations are useful in understanding the significance of the force of the notion of the imperative in the *Gītā*. It is clear from the above discussion that the notion of the imperative of *vidhi* cannot be called moral in our sense of the term, as has been done in a recent work on Hindu Ethics<sup>1</sup>. For the imperative of *vidhi* is limited to the injunctions of the Vedas, which are by no means coextensive with our general notion of morality. According to the Mīmāṃsā schools just described virtue (*dharma*) consists in obedience to Vedic injunctions. Whatever may be enjoined by the Vedas is to be considered as virtue, whatever is prohibited by the Vedas is evil and sin, and all other things which are neither enjoined by the Vedas nor prohibited by them are neutral, i.e. neither virtuous nor vicious<sup>2</sup>. The term *dharma* is therefore limited to actions enjoined by the Vedas, even though such actions may in some cases be associated with evil consequences leading to punishments due to the transgression of some other Vedic commands. The categorical imperative here implied is scriptural and therefore wholly external. The virtuous character of actions does not depend on their intrinsic nature, but on the external qualification of being enjoined by the Vedas.

<sup>1</sup> S. K. Maitra's *Hindu Ethics*, written under Dr Seal's close personal supervision and guidance.

<sup>2</sup> Kumārila holds that even those sacrifices which are performed for the killing of one's enemies are right, because they are also enjoined by the Vedas. Prabhākara, however, contends that, since these are performed only out of the natural evil propensities of men, their performance cannot be regarded as being due to a sense of duty associated with obedience to the injunctions of the Vedas. Kumārila thus contends that, though the Śyena sacrifice is attended with evil consequences, yet, since the performer is only concerned with his duty in connection with the Vedic commands, he is not concerned with the evil consequences; and it is on account of one's obedience to the Vedic injunctions that it is called right, though the injury to living beings that it may involve will bring about its punishment all the same. Sāṃkhya and some Nyāya writers, however, would condemn the Śyena sacrifice on account of the injury to living beings that it involves.



Whatever is not enjoined in the Vedas or not prohibited in them is simply neutral. It is clear, therefore, that the term *dharma* can be translated as “virtue” only in a technical sense, and the words “moral” and “immoral” in our sense have nothing to do with the concept of *dharma* or *adharma*.

The *Gītā* distinguishes between two kinds of motives for the performance of sacrifices. The first motive is that of greed and self-interest, and the second is a sense of duty. The *Gītā* is aware of that kind of motive for the performance which corresponds to the Nyāya interpretation of Vedic *vidhis* and also to the general Mīmāṃsā interpretation of *vidhi* as engendering a sense of duty. Thus it denounces those fools who follow the Vedic doctrines and do not believe in anything else; they are full of desires and eager to attain Heaven, they take to those actions which lead to rebirth and the enjoyment of mundane pleasures. People who are thus filled with greed and desires, and perform sacrifices for the attainment of earthly goods, move in an inferior plane and are not qualified for the higher scheme of life of devotion to God with right resolution<sup>1</sup>. The Vedas are said to be under the influence of mundane hankerings and desires, and it is through passions and antipathies, through desires and aversions, that people perform the Vedic sacrifices and think that there is nothing greater than these. One should therefore transcend the sphere of Vedic sacrifices performed out of motives of self-interest. But the *Gītā* is not against the performance of Vedic sacrifices, if inspired by a sheer regard for the duty of performing sacrifices. Anyone who looks to his own personal gain and advantages in performing the sacrifices, and is only eager to attain his pleasurable ends, is an inferior type of man; the sacrifices should therefore be performed without any personal attachment, out of regard for the sacred duty of the performance. Prajāpati created sacrifices along with the creation of men and said, “The sacrifices will be for your good—you should help the gods by your sacrifices, and the gods will in their

<sup>1</sup> *Vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhiyate. Gītā, II. 44.* The word *samādhau* is explained by Śrīdhara as follows: *samādhīḥ cittaikāgryaṃ, para-meśvarābhīmukhatvam iti yāvat; tasmin niścayātmikā buddhiḥ tu na vidhiyate. Samādhī* is thus used here to mean one-pointedness of mind to God. But Śaṅkara gives a very curious interpretation of the word *samādhī*, as meaning mind (*antaḥkaraṇa* or *buddhi*), which is hardly justifiable. Thus he says, *samādhīyate 'smin puruṣopabhogāya sarvaṃ iti samādhīr antaḥkaraṇaṃ buddhiḥ*. The word *vyavasāyātmikā* is interpreted by commentators on II. 41 and II. 44 as meaning *niścayātmikā* (involving correct decision through proper *pramāṇas* or proof). I prefer, however, to take the word to mean “right resolution.”



turn help you to grow and prosper. He who lives for himself without offering oblations to the gods and supporting them thereby is misappropriating the share that belongs to the gods.”

This view of the *Gītā* is different from that of the later *Mīmāṃsā*, which probably had a much earlier tradition. Thus Kumārila held that the final justification of Vedic sacrifices or of *dharma* was that it satisfied our needs and produced happiness—it was *artha*. The sacrifices were, no doubt, performed out of regard for the law of Vedic commands; but that represented only the psychological side of the question. The external ground for the performance of Vedic sacrifices was that it produced happiness for the performer and satisfied his desires by securing for him the objects of desire. It was in dependence on such a view that the *Nyāya* sought to settle the motive of all Vedic sacrifices. The *Naiyāyikas* believed that the Vedic observances not only secured for us all desired objects, but that this was also the motive for which the sacrifices were performed. The *Gītā* was well aware of this view, which it denounces. The *Gītā* admitted that the sacrifices produced the good of the world, but its whole outlook was different; for the *Gītā* looked upon the sacrifices as being bonds of union between gods and men. The sacrifices improved the mutual good-will, and it was by the sacrifices that the gods were helped, and they in their turn helped men, and so both men and the gods prospered. Through sacrifices there was rain, and by rain the food-grains grew and men lived on the food-grains. So the sacrifices were looked upon as being sources not so much of individual good as of public good. He who looks to the sacrifices as leading to the satisfaction of his selfish interests is surely an inferior person. But those who do not perform the sacrifices are equally wicked. The Vedas have sprung forth from the deathless eternal, and sacrifices spring from the Vedas, and it is thus that the deathless, all-pervading Brahman is established in the sacrifices<sup>1</sup>. The implied belief of the *Gītā* was that the prosperity of the people depended on the fertility of the soil, and that this again depended upon the falling of rains, and that the rains depended on the grace of gods, and that the gods could live prosperously only if the sacrifices were performed; the sacrifices were derived from the Vedas, the Vedas from the all-pervading Brahman, and the Brahman again forms the main content of the

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, III. 15.



Vedas. Thus there was a complete cycle from Brahman to sacrifices, from sacrifices to the good of the gods and from the good of the gods to the good and prosperity of the people. Everyone is bound to continue the process of this cycle, and he who breaks it is a sinful and selfish man, who is not worth the life he leads<sup>1</sup>. Thus the ideal of the *Gītā* is to be distinguished from the ideal of the *Mīmāṃsā* in this, that, while the latter aimed at individual good, the former aimed at common good, and, while the latter conceived the Vedic commands to be the motives of their action, the former valued the ideal of performing the sacrifices in obedience to the law of continuing the process of the cycle of sacrifices, by which the world of gods and of men was maintained in its proper state of prosperity. When a man works for the sacrifices, such works cannot bind him to their fruits; it is only when works are performed from motives of self-interest that they can bind people to their good and bad fruits<sup>2</sup>.

The word *dharma* in the *Gītā* does not mean what Jaimini understood by the term, viz. a desirable end or good enjoined by the sacrifices (*codanā-lakṣaṇo 'rtho dharmah*). The word seems to be used in the *Gītā* primarily in the sense of an unalterable customary order of class-duties or caste-duties and the general approved course of conduct for the people, and also in the sense of prescribed schemes of conduct. This meaning of *dharma* as "old customary order" is probably the oldest meaning of the word, as it is also found in the *Atharva-Veda*, 18. 3. 1 (*dharmam purāṇam anupālayanti*)<sup>3</sup>. Macdonell, in referring to *Maitrāyaṇa*, IV. 1. 9, *Kāthaka*, xxxi. 7 and *Taittirīya*, III. 2. 8. 11, points out that bodily defects (bad nails and discoloured teeth) and marrying a younger daughter while her elder sister is unmarried are coupled with murder, though not treated as equal to it, and that there is no distinction in principle between real crimes and what are now regarded as fanciful bodily defects or infringements of merely conventional practices. In the *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, XIV. 4. 2. 26, also we find *dharma* for a Kṣattriya<sup>4</sup> is illustrated as being the characteristic duties of a Kṣattriya. The central meaning of the word *dharma* in the *Gītā* is therefore the oldest Vedic meaning of the word, which is

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, III. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* III. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *dharma*, *dharmān* are the regular words, the latter in the *Rg-veda* and both later, for "law" or "custom." See Macdonell's *Vedic Index*, p. 390.

<sup>4</sup> *tad etat kṣattrasya kṣattram yad dharmah tasmād dharmāt param nāsti*. Dr Albrecht Weber's edition, Leipzig, 1924.



a much earlier meaning than the latter-day technical meaning of the word as it is found in *Mīmāṃsā*. *Dharma* does not in the *Gītā* mean sacrifices (*yajña*) or external advantages, as it does in *Mīmāṃsā*, but the order of conventional practices involving specific caste-divisions and caste-duties. Accordingly, the performance of sacrifices is *dharma* for those whose allotted duties are sacrifices. Adultery is in the Vedas a vice, as being transgression of *dharma*, and this is also referred to as such (*dharme naṣṭe*, I. 39) in the *Gītā*. In the *Gītā*, II. 7, Arjuna is said to be puzzled and confused regarding his duty as a Kṣatriya and the sinful course of injuring the lives of his relations (*dharmasammūḍha-cetāḥ*). The confusion of *dharma* and *adharma* is also referred to in XVIII. 31 and 32. In the *Gītā*, IV. 7 and 8, the word *dharma* is used in the sense of the established order of things and conventionally accepted customs and practices. In II. 40 the way of performing one's duties without regard to pleasures or sorrows is described as a particular and specific kind of *dharma* (*asya dharmasya*), distinguished from *dharma* in general.

The *yajña* (sacrifice) is said to be of various kinds, e.g. that in which oblations are offered to the gods is called *daiva-yajña*; this is distinguished from *brahma-yajña*, in which one dedicates oneself to Brahman, where Brahman is the offerer, offering and the fire of oblations, and in which, by dedicating oneself to Brahman, one is lost in Brahman<sup>1</sup>. Then sense-control, again, is described as a kind of *yajña*, and it is said that in the fire of the senses the sense-objects are offered as libations and the senses themselves are offered as libations in the fire of sense-control; all the sense-functions and vital functions are also offered as libations in the fire of sense-control lighted up by reason. Five kinds of sacrifices (*yajña*) are distinguished, viz. the *yajña* with actual materials of libation, called *dravya-yajña*, the *yajña* of asceticism or self-control, called *tapo-yajña*, the *yajña* of union or communion, called *yoga-yajña*, the *yajña* of scriptural studies, called *svādhyāya-yajña*, and the *yajña* of knowledge or wisdom, called *jñāna-yajña*<sup>2</sup>. It is easy to see that the extension of the application of the term *yajña* from the actual material sacrifice to other widely divergent methods of self-advancement is a natural result of the extension of the concept of sacrifice to whatever tended towards self-advancement. The term *yajña* had high and holy associations, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, IV. 24 and 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* IV. 26-28; see also 29 and 30.



newly discovered systems of religious endeavours and endeavours for self-advancement came to be regarded as but a new kind of *yajña*, just as the substitution-meditations (*pratīkōpāsana*) were also regarded as being but new forms of *yajña*. Thus, while thought advanced and newer modes of self-realization began to develop, the older term of *yajña* came to be extended to these new types of religious discipline on account of the high veneration in which the older institution was held.

But, whatever may be the different senses in which the term *yajña* is used in the *Gītā*, the word *dharma* has not here the technical sense of the *Mīmāṃsā*. The *Gītā* recommends the performance of sacrifices to the Brahmins and fighting to the Kṣatriyas, and thus aims at continuity of conventional practices which it regards as *dharma*. But at the same time it denounces the performance of actions from desire, or passions or any kind of selfish interest. A man should regard his customary duties as his *dharma* and should perform them without any idea of the fulfilment of any of his own desires. When a man performs *karma* from a sense of disinterested duty, his *karma* is no longer a bondage to him. The *Gītā* does not, on the one hand, follow the old *karma*-ideal, that one should perform sacrifices in order to secure earthly and heavenly advantages, nor does it follow, on the other hand, the ideal of the Vedānta or of other systems of philosophy that require us to abandon our desires and control our passions with a view to cleansing the mind entirely of impurities, so as to transcend the sphere of duties and realize the wisdom of the oneness of the spirit. The *Gītā* holds that a man should attain the true wisdom, purge his mind of all its desires, but at the same time perform his customary duties and be faithful to his own *dharma*. There should be no impelling force other than regard and reverence for his own inner law of duty with reference to his own *dharma* of conventional and customary practices or the duties prescribed by the *śāstra*.

### Sense-control in the *Gītā*.

The uncontrollability of the senses was realized in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, where the senses are compared with horses. The *Gītā* says that, when the mind is led on by fleeting sense-attractions, the man loses all his wisdom, just as a boat swings to and fro in deep waters in a strong gale. Even in the case of the wise



man, in spite of his efforts to keep himself steady, the troubled senses might lead the mind astray. By continually brooding over sense-objects one becomes attached to them; out of such attachments there arise desires, out of desires there arises anger, out of anger blindness of passions, through such blindness there is lapse of memory, by such lapse of memory a man's intelligence is destroyed, and as a result of that he himself is destroyed<sup>1</sup>. Man is naturally inclined towards the path of evil, and in spite of his efforts to restrain himself he tends towards the downward path. Each particular sense has its own specific attachments and antipathies, and attachment (*rāga*) and antipathy are the two enemies. The *Gītā* again and again proclaims the evil effects of desires and attachments (*kāma*), anger (*krodha*) and greed (*lobha*) as the three gates of Hell, being that which veils wisdom as smoke veils fire, as impurities sully a mirror or as the foetus is covered by the womb<sup>2</sup>. Arjuna is made to refer to Kṛṣṇa the difficulty of controlling the senses. Thus he says, "My mind, O Kṛṣṇa, is violent, troubled and changeful; it is as difficult to control it as it is to control the winds<sup>3</sup>." True *yoga* can never be attained unless and until the senses are controlled.

The Pāli work *Dhamma-pada* is also filled with similar ideas regarding the control of attachments and anger. Thus it says, "He has abused me, beaten me, worsted me, robbed me—those who dwell not upon such thoughts are freed from hate. Never does hatred cease by hating, but hatred ceases by love; this is the ancient law....As the wind brings down a weak tree, so Māra overwhelms him who lives looking for pleasures, has his senses uncontrolled, or is immoderate in his food, slothful and effeminate. ...As rain breaks through an ill-thatched house, so passion will break through an undisciplined mind<sup>4</sup>." Again, speaking of mind, it says, "As an arrow-maker levels his arrow, so a wise man levels his trembling, unsteady mind, which it is difficult to guard and hold back....Let the wise man guard his mind, incomprehensible, subtle, capricious though it is. Blessed is the guarded mind<sup>5</sup>." Again, "Not nakedness, nor matted hair, not dirt, nor fastings, not lying on earth, nor ashes, nor ascetic postures, none of these things purify a man who is not free from desires<sup>6</sup>." Again, "From

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, II. 60, 62, 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* III. 34, 37-39; XVI. 21.

<sup>3</sup> VI. 34.

<sup>4</sup> *Dhamma-pada* (Poona, 1923), I. 4, 5, 7, 13.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* III. 36, 38.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* X. 141.



attachment (*piyato*) comes grief, from attachment comes fear; he who is free from attachment knows neither grief nor fear. From affection (*pemato*) come grief and fear. He who is free from affection knows neither grief nor fear. From lust (*rati*) come grief and fear. He who is free from affection knows neither grief nor fear. From lust (*kāma*) come grief and fear. He who is free from lust knows neither grief nor fear. From desire (*tanhā*) come grief and fear. He who is free from desire knows neither grief nor fear<sup>1</sup>."

It is clear from the above that both the *Gītā* and the *Dhamma-pada* praise sense-control and consider desires, attachments, anger and grief as great enemies. But the treatment of the *Gītā* differs from that of the *Dhamma-pada* in this, that, while in the *Dhamma-pada* there is a course of separate lessons or moral instructions on diverse subjects, the *Gītā* deals with sense-control as a means to the attainment of peace, contentment and desirelessness, which enables a man to dedicate all his actions to God and follow the conventional courses of duties without looking for anything in them for himself. The *Gītā* knows that the senses, mind and intellect are the seats of all attachments and antipathies, and that it is through the senses and the mind that these can stupefy a man and make his knowledge blind<sup>2</sup>. All the sense-affections of cold and heat, pleasure and sorrow, are mere changes of our sensibility, are mere touches of feeling which are transitory and should therefore be quietly borne<sup>3</sup>. It is only by controlling the senses that the demon of desire, which distorts all ordinary and philosophic knowledge, can be destroyed. But it is very hard to stifle this demon of desire, which always appears in new forms. It is only when a man can realize within himself the great being which transcends our intellect that he can control his lower self with his higher self and uproot his desires. The self is its own friend as well as its own foe, and one should always try to uplift oneself and not allow oneself to sink down. The chief aim of all sense-control is to make a man's thoughts steady, so that he can link himself up in communion with God<sup>4</sup>.

The senses in the *Gītā* are regarded as drawing the mind along with them. The senses are continually changing and fleeting, and they make the mind also changeful and fleeting; and, as a result of

<sup>1</sup> *Dhamma-pada*, XVI. 212-216.

<sup>2</sup> *Gītā*, III. 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* II. 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* II. 61; III. 41, 43; VI. 5, 6.



that, the mind, like a boat at sea before a strong wind, is driven to and fro, and steadiness of thought and wisdom (*prajñā*) are destroyed. The word *prajñā* is used in the *Gītā* in the sense of thought or wisdom or mental inclinations in general. It is used in a more or less similar sense in the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad*, IV. 4. 21, and in a somewhat different sense in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, 7. But the sense in which Patañjali uses the word is entirely different from that in which it is used in the *Gītā* or the *Upaniṣads*. Patañjali uses the word in the technical sense of a specific type of mystical cognition arising out of the steady fixing of the mind on an object, and speaks of seven stages of such *prajñā* corresponding to the stages of *yoga* ascension. *Prajñā* in the *Gītā* means, as has just been said, thought or mental inclination. It does not mean *jñāna*, or ordinary cognition, or *viññāna* as higher wisdom; it means knowledge in its volitional aspect. It is not the *kriyākhyajñāna*, as moral discipline of *yama*, *niyama*, etc., of the *Pañca-rātra* work *Jayākhyasamhitā*. It means an intellectual outlook, as integrally connected with, and determining, the mental bent or inclination. When the mind follows the mad dance of the senses after their objects, the intellectual background of the mind determining its direction, the *prajñā* is also upset. Unless the *prajñā* is fixed, the mind cannot proceed undisturbed in its prescribed fixed course. So the central object of controlling the senses is the securing of the steadiness of this *prajñā* (*vaśe hi yasyendriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā*—II. 57). *Prajñā* and *dhi* are two words which seem to be in the *Gītā* synonymous, and they both mean mental inclination. This mental inclination probably involves both an intellectual outlook, and a corresponding volitional tendency. Sense-control makes this *prajñā* steady, and the *Gītā* abounds in praise of the *sthita-prajñā* and *sthita-dhi*, i.e. of one who has mental inclination or thoughts fixed and steady<sup>1</sup>. Sense-attachments are formed by continual association with sense-objects, and attachment begets desire, desire begets anger, and so on. Thus all the vices spring from sense-attachments. And the person who indulges in sense-gratifications is rushed along by the passions. So, just as a tortoise collects within itself all its limbs, so the person who restrains his senses from the sense-objects has his mind steady and fixed. The direct result of sense-control is thus steadiness of will, and of mental inclinations or mind (*prajñā*).

<sup>1</sup> II. 54-56.



The person who has his *prajñā* fixed is not troubled in sorrows and is not eager to gain pleasures, he has no attachment, no fear and no anger<sup>1</sup>. He is indifferent in prosperity and in adversity and neither desires anything nor shuns anything<sup>2</sup>. He alone can obtain peace who, like the sea receiving all the rivers in it, absorbs all his desires within himself; not so the man who is always busy in satisfying his desires. The man who has given up all his desires and is unattached to anything is not bound to anything, has no vanity and attains true peace. When a man can purge his mind of attachments and antipathies and can take to sense-objects after purifying his senses and keeping them in full control, he attains contentment (*prasāda*). When such contentment is attained, all sorrows vanish and his mind becomes fixed (*buddhiḥ paryavati-ṣṭhate*)<sup>3</sup>. Thus sense-control, on the one hand, makes the mind unruffled, fixed, at peace with itself and filled with contentment, and on the other hand, by making the mind steady and fixed, it makes communion with God possible. Sense-control is the indispensable precondition of communion with God; when once this has been attained, it is possible to link oneself with God by continued efforts<sup>4</sup>. Thus sense-control, by producing steadiness of the will and thought, results in contentment and peace on the one hand, and on the other makes the mind fit for entering into communion with God.

One thing that strikes us in reading the *Gītā* is that the object of sense-control in the *Gītā* is not the attainment of a state of emancipated oneness or the absolute cessation of all mental processes, but the more intelligible and common-sense ideal of the attainment of steadiness of mind, contentment and the power of entering into touch with God. This view of the object of self-control is therefore entirely different from that praised in the philosophic systems of Patañjali and others. The *Gītā* wants us to control our senses and mind and to approach sense-objects with such a controlled mind and senses, because it is by this means alone that we can perform our duties with a peaceful and contented mind and turn to God with a clean and unruffled heart<sup>5</sup>. The main emphasis of this sense-control is not on the mere external control of volitional activities and the control of motor propensities

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, II. 56.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* II. 57.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* II. 65; see also II. 58, 64, 68, 70, 71.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* VI. 36.

<sup>5</sup> *rāga-dveṣa-vimuktaiḥ tu viṣayān indriyaiḥ caran  
ātma-vaśyair vidheyātmā prasādam adhiḡacchati.* *Ibid.* II. 64.



in accordance with the direction of passions and appetites, but on the inner control of the mind behind these active senses. When a person controls only his physical activities, and yet continues to brood over the attractions of sense, he is in reality false in his conduct (*mithyācāra*). Real self-control does not mean only the cessation of the external operations of the senses, but also the control of the mind. Not only should a man cease from committing actions out of greed and desire for sense-gratification, but his mind should be absolutely clean, absolutely clear of all impurities of sense-desires. Mere suspension of physical action without a corresponding control of mind and cessation from harbouring passions and desires is a vicious course<sup>1</sup>.

### The Ethics of the Gītā and the Buddhist Ethics.

The subject of sense-control naturally reminds one of Buddhism. In the Vedic religion performance of sacrifices was considered as the primary duty. Virtue and vice consisted in obedience or disobedience to Vedic injunctions. It has been pointed out that these injunctions implied a sort of categorical imperative and communicated a sense of *vidhi* as law, a command which must be obeyed. But this law was no inner law of the spirit within, but a mere external law, which ought not to be confused with morality in the modern sense of the term. Its sphere was almost wholly ritualistic, and, though it occasionally included such commands as "One should not injure anyone" (*mā hiṃsyāt*), yet in certain sacrifices which were aimed at injuring one's enemies operations which would lead to such results would have the imperative of a Vedic command, though the injury to human beings would be attended with its necessary punishment. Again, though in later Sāṃkhya commentaries and compendiums it is said that all kinds of injuries to living beings bring their punishment, yet it is doubtful if the Vedic injunction "Thou shouldst not injure" really applied to all living beings, as there would be but few sacrifices where animals were not killed. The Upaniṣads, however, start an absolutely new line by the substitution of meditations and self-knowledge for sacrificial actions. In the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Dhamma-pada*, 1. 2. All phenomena have mind as their precursor, are dependent upon mind and are made up of mind. If a man speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness accompanies him, just as a shadow follows a man incessantly.



primary stage of Upaniṣadic thoughts a conviction was growing that instead of the sacrificial performances one could go through a set form of meditations, identifying in thought certain objects with certain other objects (e.g. the dawn as the horse of horse-sacrifice) or even with symbolic syllables, OM and the like. In the more developed stage of Upaniṣadic culture a new conviction arose in the search after the highest and the ultimate truth, and the knowledge of Brahman as the highest essence in man and nature is put forward as the greatest wisdom and the final realization of truth and reality, than which nothing higher could be conceived. There are but few moral precepts in the Upaniṣads, and the whole subject of moral conflict and moral efforts is almost silently dropped or passes unemphasized. In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, I. 11, the teacher is supposed to give a course of moral instruction to his pupil after teaching him the Vedas—Tell the truth, be virtuous, do not give up the study of the Vedas; after presenting the teacher with the stipulated honorarium (at the conclusion of his studies) the pupil should (marry and) continue the line of his family. He should not deviate from truth or from virtue (*dharma*) or from good. He should not cease doing good to others, from study and teaching. He should be respectful to his parents and teachers and perform such actions as are unimpeachable. He should follow only good conduct and not bad. He should make gifts with faith (*śraddhā*), not with indifference, with dignity, from a sense of shame, through fear and through knowledge. If there should be any doubt regarding his course of duty or conduct, then he should proceed to act in the way in which the wisest Brahmins behaved. But few Upaniṣads give such moral precepts, and there is very little in the Upaniṣads in the way of describing a course of moral behaviour or of emphasizing the fact that man can attain his best only by trying to become great through moral efforts. The Upaniṣads occupy themselves almost wholly with mystic meditations and with the philosophic wisdom of self-knowledge. Yet the ideas of self-control, peace and cessation of desires, endurance and concentration are referred to in *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka*, IV. 4. 23, as a necessary condition for the realization of the self within us<sup>1</sup>. In *Kaṭha*, VI. 11, the control of the senses (*indriya-dhāraṇa*) is referred to as *yoga*, and in *Muṇḍaka*, III. 2. 2,

<sup>1</sup> *śānto dānta uparatas titikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvātmany eva ātmānam paśyati.*  
*Bṛh.* IV. 4. 23.



it is said that he who consciously desires the objects of desire is again and again born through desires; but even in this world all desires vanish for him who is self-realized in himself and is self-satisfied<sup>1</sup>. The idea that the path of wisdom is different from the path of desires was also known, and it was felt that he who sought wisdom (*vidyābhīṣita*) was not drawn by many desires<sup>2</sup>.

The point to be discussed in this connection is whether the central idea of the *Gītā*, namely, sense-control and more particularly the control of desires and attachments, is derived from the Upaniṣads or from Buddhism. It has been pointed out that the Upaniṣads do not emphasize the subject of moral conflict and moral endeavours so much as the nature of truth and reality as Brahman, the ultimate essence of man and the manifold appearance of the world. Yet the idea of the necessity of sense-control and the control of desires, the settling of the mind in peace and contentment, is the necessary precondition for fitness for Vedic knowledge. Thus Śaṅkara, the celebrated commentator on the Upaniṣads, in commenting on *Brahma-sūtra*, I. 1. 1, says that a man is fit for an enquiry after Brahman only when he knows how to distinguish what is permanent from what is transitory (*nityānitya-vastu-viveka*), and when he has no attachment to the enjoyment of the fruits of his actions either as mundane pleasures or as heavenly joys (*ihāmutra-phala-bhoga-virāga*). The necessary qualifications which entitle a man to make such an enquiry are disinclination of the mind for worldly joys (*śama*), possession of proper control and command over the mind, by which it may be turned to philosophy (*dama*), power of endurance (*viśaya-titikṣā*), cessation of all kinds of duties (*uparati*), and faith in the philosophical conception of truth and reality (*tattva-śraddhā*). It may be supposed, therefore, that the Upaniṣads presuppose a high degree of moral development in the way of self-control and disinclination to worldly and heavenly joys. Detachment from sense-affections is one of the most dominant ideas of the *Gītā*, and the idea of *Muṇḍaka*, III. 2. 2, referred to above, is re-echoed in the *Gītā*, II. 70, where it is said that, just as the waters are absorbed in the calm sea (though poured in continually by the rivers), so the person in whom all desires are absorbed attains peace, and

<sup>1</sup> *kāmān yah kāmāyate manyamānaḥ sa kāmabhir jāyate tatra tatra paryāpta-kāmasya kṛtātmanas tu ihaiva sarve pravṛtīyanti kāmāḥ. Muṇḍaka, III. 2. 2.*

<sup>2</sup> *Kaṭha, II. 4.*



not the man who indulges in desires. The *Gītā*, of course, again and again emphasizes the necessity of uprooting attachments to pleasures and antipathy to pains and of controlling desires (*kāma*); but, though the Upaniṣads do not emphasize this idea so frequently, yet the idea is there, and it seems very probable that the *Gītā* drew it from the Upaniṣads. Hindu tradition also refers to the Upaniṣads as the source of the *Gītā*. Thus the *Gītā-māhātmya* describes the Upaniṣads as the cows from which Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd boy, drew the *Gītā* as milk<sup>1</sup>.

But the similarity of Buddhist ethical ideas to those of the *Gītā* is also immense, and, had it not been for the fact that ideas which may be regarded as peculiarly Buddhistic are almost entirely absent from the *Gītā*, it might well have been contended that the *Gītā* derived its ideas of controlling desires and uprooting attachment from Buddhism. Tachibana collects a long list of Buddhist vices as follows<sup>2</sup>:

- aṅganaṃ*, impurity, lust, *Sn.* 517.  
*ahaṅkāro*, selfishness, egoism, *A.* I. 132; *M.* III. 18, 32.  
*mamaṅkaro*, desire, *A.* I. 132; *M.* III. 18, 32.  
*mamāyitaṃ*, selfishness, *S.N.* 466.  
*mamattaṃ*, grasping, egoism, *S.N.* 872, 951.  
*apekkhā*, desire, longing, affection, *S.N.* 38; *Dh.* 345.  
*icchā*, wish, desire, covetousness.  
*ejā*, desire, lust, greed, craving, *S.N.* 751; *It.* 92.  
*āsā*, desire, longing, *S.N.* 634, 794, 864; *Dh.* 397.  
*pīpāsā*, thirst.  
*esā*, *esana*, wish, desire, thirst, *Dh.* 335.  
*ākāṅkhā*, desire, longing, *Tha.* 20.  
*kiñcanaṃ*, attachment, *S.N.* 949; *Dh.* 200.  
*gantho*, bond, tie, *S.N.* 798; *Dh.* 211.  
*ādāna-gantho*, the tied knot of attachment, *S.N.* 794.  
*giddhi*, greed, desire, *Sn.* 328; *M.* I. 360, 362.  
*gedho*, greed, desire, *Sn.* 65, 152.  
*gahanaṃ*, entanglement, *Dh.* 394.  
*gāho*, seizing, attachment.  
*jālinī*, snare, desire, lust, *Dh.* 180; *A.* II. 211.  
*pariggaho*, attachment, *Mahānid.* 57.  
*chando*, wish, desire, intention, *S.N.* 171, 203, etc.  
*jaṭā*, desire, lust, *S.N.* I. 13; *V.M.* I.  
*jigīmsanā*, covetousness, desire for, *Vibhaṅga*, 353.  
*nijigīmsanā*, covetousness, *V.M.* I. 23.  
*taṇhā*, *tasinā*, lust, unsatisfied desire, passion.

<sup>1</sup> *Sarvopaniṣado gāvo dogdhā gopāla-nandanah.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Ethics of Buddhism*, by S. Tachibana, p. 73.



- upādānam*, clinging, attachment, *Dh.* II. 58, III. 230.  
*paṇidhi*, wish, aspiration, *Sn.* 801.  
*pihā*, desire, envy, *Tha.* 1218.  
*pemaṃ*, affection, love, *A.* III. 249.  
*bandho*, thong, bondage, attachment, *Sn.* 623; *Dh.* 344.  
*bandhanam*, bond, fetter, attachment, *Sn.* 522, 532; *Dh.* 345.  
*nibandho*, binding, attachment, *S.* II. 17.  
*vinibandhanam*, bondage, desire, *Sn.* 16.  
*anubandho*, bondage, affection, desire, *M.* III. 170; *Jt.* 91.  
*upanibandho*, fastening, attachment, *V.M.* I. 235.  
*paribandho*, *Com.* on *Thi.* p. 242.  
*rāgo*, human passion, evil, desire, lust, *passim.*  
*sārāgo*, *sārajjanā*, *sārajjitattam*, affection, passion, *Mahānid.* 242.  
*rati*, lust, attachment, *Dh.* 27.  
*manoratho*, desire, wish (?).  
*ruci*, desire, inclination, *Sn.* 781.  
*abhilāso*, desire, longing, wish, *Com.* on *Peta-vattu*, 154.  
*lālasā*, ardent desire (?).  
*ālayo*, longing, desire, lust, *Sn.* 535, 635; *Dh.* 411.  
*lobho*, covetousness, desire, cupidity, *Sn.* 367; *Dh.* 248.  
*lobhanam*, greed, *Tha.* 343.  
*lubhanā*, *lobhitattam*, do. (?).  
*vanam*, desire, lust, *Sn.* 1131; *Dh.* 284, 344.  
*vanatho*, love, lust, *Dh.* 283, 284.  
*nīpesanam*, clinging to, attachment, *Sn.* 470, 801.  
*saṅgo*, fetter, bond, attachment, *Sn.* 473, 791; *Dh.* 397.  
*āsatti*, attachment, hanging on, clinging, *Sn.* 777; *Vin.* II. 156;  
*S.* I. 212.  
*visatikā*, poison, desire, *Sn.* 333; *Dh.* 180.  
*santhavam*, friendship, attachment, *Sn.* 207, 245; *Dh.* 27.  
*ussado*, desire (?), *Sn.* 515, 783, 785.  
*sneho*, *sineho*, affection, lust, desire, *Sn.* 209, 943; *Dh.* 285.  
*āsayo*, abode, intention, inclination, *V.H.* I. 140.  
*anusayo*, inclination, desire, *A.* I. 132; *Sn.* 14, 369, 545.  
*sibbanī*, desire (?), *Sn.* 1040.  
*kodho*, anger, wrath, *Sn.* I. 245, 362, 868, 928; *Dh.* 221-3; *It.* 4,  
12, 109.  
*kopo*, anger, ill-will, ill-temper, *Sn.* 6.  
*āghāto*, anger, ill-will, hatred, malice, *D.* I. 3, 31; *S.* I. 179.  
*paṭigho*, wrath, hatred, *Sum.* 116.  
*doso*, anger, hatred, *passim.*  
*viddoso*, enmity, hatred (?).  
*dhūmo*, anger (?), *Sn.* 460.  
*upanāho*, enmity, *Sn.* 116.  
*vyāpādo*, wish to injure, hatred, fury, *Sum.* 211; *It.* III.  
*anabhiraddhi*, anger, wrath, rage, *D.* I. 3.  
*veram*, wrath, anger, hatred, sin, *Sn.* 150; *Dh.* 3-5, 201.  
*virodho*, opposition, enmity (?).



*roso*, anger (?).

*rosanam*, anger (?).

*vyāroṣaṇam*, anger, *Sn.* 148.

*aññāṇam*, ignorance, *It.* 62.

*moho*, fainting, ignorance, folly, *passim*.

*mohanam*, ignorance, *S.N.* 399, 772.

*avijjā*, ignorance, error, passion.

It is interesting to note that three vices, covetousness, hatred and ignorance, and covetousness particularly, appear under different names and their extirpation is again and again emphasized in diverse ways. These three, ignorance, covetousness and hatred or antipathy, are the roots of all evils. There are, of course, simpler commandments, such as not to take life, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to tell a lie, and not to take intoxicating drinks, and of these stealing gold, drinking liquors, dishonouring one's teacher's bed, and killing a Brahmin are also prohibited in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, v. 10. 9-10<sup>1</sup>. But, while the *Chāndogya* only prohibits killing Brahmins, the Buddha prohibited taking the life of any living being. But all these vices, and others opposed to the *aṭṭhaṅgāsila* and *dasa-kusala-kamma*, are included within covetousness, ignorance and hatred. The *Gītā* bases its ethics mainly on the necessity of getting rid of attachment and desires from which proceeds greed and frustration of which produces anger. But, while in Buddhism ignorance (*avidyā*) is considered as the source of all evil, the *Gītā* does not even mention the word. In the twelvefold chain of causality in Buddhism it is held that out of ignorance (*avijjā*) come the conformations (*saṅkhāra*), out of the conformations consciousness (*viññāna*), out of consciousness mind and body (*nāma-rūpa*), out of mind and body come the six fields of contact (*āyatana*), out of the six fields of contact comes sense-contact, out of sense-contact comes feeling, out of feeling come desires (*taṇhā*), out of desires comes the holding fast to things (*upādāna*), out of the holding fast to things comes existence (*bhava*), out of existence comes birth (*jāti*), and from birth come old age, decay and death. If ignorance, or *avijjā*, is stopped,

<sup>1</sup> There is another list of eightfold prohibitions called *aṭṭhaṅgāsila*; these are not to take life, not to take what is not given, to abstain from sex-relations, to abstain from falsehood, from drinking liquors, from eating at forbidden times, from dancing and music and from beautifying one's body by perfumes, garlands, etc. There is also another list called *dasa-kusala-kamma*, such as not to take life, not to take what is not given, not to commit adultery, not to tell a lie, not to slander, not to abuse or talk foolishly, not to be covetous, malicious and sceptical.



then the whole cycle stops. But, though in this causal cycle ignorance and desires are far apart, yet psychologically desires proceed immediately from ignorance, and a frustration of desires produces anger, hatred, etc. In the *Gītā* the start is taken directly from attachment and desires (*kāma*). The Buddhist word *trṣṇā* (*tanhā*) is seldom mentioned in the *Gītā*; whereas the Upaniṣadic word *kāma* takes its place as signifying desires. The *Gītā* is not a philosophical work which endeavours to search deeply into the causes of attachments, nor does it seek to give any practical course of advice as to how one should get rid of attachment. The Vedānta system of thought, as interpreted by Śaṅkara, traces the origin of the world with all its evils to ignorance or nescience (*avidyā*), as an indefinable principle; the Yoga traces all our phenomenal experience to five afflictions, ignorance, attachment, antipathy, egoism and self-love, and the last four to the first, which is the fountain-head of all evil afflictions. In the *Gītā* there is no such attempt to trace attachment, etc. to some other higher principle. The word *ajñāna* (ignorance) is used in the *Gītā* about six or eight times in the sense of ignorance; but this "ignorance" does not mean any metaphysical principle or the ultimate starting-point of a causal chain, and is used simply in the sense of false knowledge or ignorance, as opposed to true knowledge of things as they are. Thus in one place it is said that true knowledge of things is obscured by ignorance, and that this is the cause of all delusion<sup>1</sup>. Again, it is said that to those who by true knowledge (of God) destroy their own ignorance (*ajñāna*) true knowledge reveals the highest reality (*tat param*), like the sun<sup>2</sup>. In another place *jñāna* and *ajñāna* are both defined. *Jñāna* is defined as unvacillating and abiding self-knowledge and true knowledge by which truth and reality are apprehended, and all that is different from this is called *ajñāna*<sup>3</sup>. *Ajñāna* is stated elsewhere to be the result of *tamas*, and in two other places *tamas* is said to be the product of *ajñāna*<sup>4</sup>. In another place it is said that people are blinded by ignorance (*ajñāna*), thinking, "I am rich, I am an aristocrat, who else is there like me? I shall perform sacrifices make gifts and enjoy<sup>5</sup>." In another place ignorance is said to

<sup>1</sup> *ajñānenāvṛtaṃ jñānaṃ tena mukhyanti jantavaḥ*. v. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *jñānena tu tad-ajñānaṃ yeṣāṃ nāśitaṃ ātmanaḥ*. v. 16.

<sup>3</sup> *adhyātma-jñāna-nīyatvaṃ tattva-jñānārtha-darśanam etaj-jñānam iti proktaṃ ajñānam yad ato 'nyathā*. *Gītā*, XIII. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* XIV. 16, 17; x. 11; XIV. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* v. 16.



produce doubts (*saṁśaya*), and the *Gītā* lecture of Kṛṣṇa is supposed to dispel the delusion of Arjuna, produced by ignorance<sup>1</sup>. This shows that, though the word *ajñāna* is used in a variety of contexts, either as ordinary ignorance or ignorance of true and absolute philosophic knowledge, it is never referred to as being the source of attachment or desires. This need not be interpreted to mean that the *Gītā* was opposed to the view that attachments and desires were produced from ignorance; but it seems at least to imply that the *Gītā* was not interested to trace the origin of attachments and desires and was satisfied to take their existence for granted and urged the necessity of their extirpation for peace and equanimity of mind. Buddhist Hinayāna ethics and practical discipline are constituted of moral discipline (*śīla*), concentration (*saṁādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). The *śīla* consisted in the performance of good conduct (*caritta*) and desisting (*vāritta*) from certain other kinds of prohibited action. *Śīla* means those particular volitions and mental states, etc. by which a man who desists from committing sinful actions maintains himself on the right path. *Śīla* thus means (1) right volition (*cetanā*), (2) the associated mental states (*cetasika*), (3) mental control (*saṁvara*), and (4) the actual non-transgression (in body and speech) of the course of conduct already in the mind by way of the preceding three *śīlas*, called *avittikkama*. *Samvara* is spoken of as being of five kinds, viz. (1) *pāṭimokkha-saṁvara* (the control which saves him who abides by it), (2) *sati-saṁvara* (the control of mindfulness), (3) *ñāna-saṁvara* (the control of knowledge), (4) *khanti-saṁvara* (the control of patience) and (5) *virīya-saṁvara* (the control of active restraint). *Pāṭimokkha-saṁvara* means all self-control in general. *Sati-saṁvara* means the mindfulness by which one can bring in the right and good associations, when using one's cognitive senses. Even when looking at any tempting object, a man will, by virtue of his mindfulness (*sati*), control himself from being tempted by not thinking of its tempting side and by thinking on such aspects of it as may lead in the right direction. *Khanti-saṁvara* is that by which one can remain unperturbed in heat and cold. By the proper adherence to *śīla* all our bodily, mental and vocal activities (*kamma*) are duly systematized, organized and stabilized (*saṁādhānam*, *upadhāraṇam*, *paṭiṭṭhā*). The practice of *śīla* is for the practice of *jhāna* (meditation). As a preparatory measure thereto, a man must train himself

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, IV. 42; XVIII. 72.



continually to view with disgust the appetitive desires for eating and drinking (*āhāre paṭikūla-saññā*) by emphasizing in the mind the various troubles that are associated with seeking food and drink and their ultimate loathsome transformations as various nauseating bodily elements. He must habituate his mind to the idea that all the parts of our body are made up of the four elements, viz. *kṣiti* (earth), *ap* (water), etc. He should also think of the good effects of *śīla*, the making of gifts, of the nature of death and of the deep nature and qualities of the final extinction of all phenomena, and should practise *brahma-vihāra*, as the fourfold meditation of universal friendship, universal pity, happiness in the prosperity and happiness of all, and indifference to any kind of preferment for himself, his friend, his enemy or a third party<sup>1</sup>.

The *Gītā* does not enter into any of these disciplinary measures. It does not make a programme of universal altruism or hold that one should live only for others, as is done in Mahāyāna ethics, or of the virtues of patience, energy for all that is good (*vīrya* as *kuśalotsāha*), meditation and true knowledge of the essencelessness of all things. The person who takes the vow of saintly life takes the vow of living for the good of others, for which he should be prepared to sacrifice all that is good for him. His vow does not limit him to doing good to his co-religionists or to any particular sects, but applies to all human beings, irrespective of caste, creed or race, and not only to human beings, but to all living beings. Mahāyāna ethical works like the *Bodhi-caryāvatāra-paṇjikā* or *Śikṣā-samuccaya* do not deal merely with doctrines or theories, but largely with practical instructions for becoming a Buddhist saint. They treat of the practical difficulties in the path of a saint's career and give practical advice regarding the way in which he may avoid temptations, keep himself in the straight path of duty, and gradually elevate himself to higher and higher states.

The *Gītā* is neither a practical guide-book of moral efforts nor a philosophical treatise discussing the origin of immoral tendencies and tracing them to certain metaphysical principles as their sources; but, starting from the ordinary frailties of attachment and desires, it tries to show how one can lead a normal life of duties and responsibilities and yet be in peace and contentment in a state of equanimity and in communion with God. The *Gītā*

<sup>1</sup> See *A History of Indian Philosophy*, by S. N. Dasgupta, vol. I, p. 103.



has its setting in the great battle of the *Mahā-bhārata*. Kṛṣṇa is represented as being an incarnation of God, and he is also the charioteer of his friend and relation, Arjuna, the great Pāṇḍava hero. The Pāṇḍava hero was a Kṣātriya by birth, and he had come to the great battle-field of Kurukṣetra to fight his cousin and opponent King Duryodhana, who had assembled great warriors, all of whom were relations of Arjuna, leading mighty armies. In the first chapter of the *Gītā* a description is given of the two armies which faced each other in the holy field (*dharma-kṣetra*) of Kurukṣetra. In the second chapter Arjuna is represented as feeling dejected at the idea of having to fight with his relations and of eventually killing them. He says that it was better to beg from door to door than to kill his respected relations. Kṛṣṇa strongly objects to this attitude of Arjuna and says that the soul is immortal and it is impossible to kill anyone. But, apart from this metaphysical point of view, even from the ordinary point of view a Kṣātriya ought to fight, because it is his duty to do so, and there is nothing nobler for a Kṣātriya than to fight. The fundamental idea of the *Gītā* is that a man should always follow his own caste-duties, which are his own proper duties, or *sva-dharma*. Even if his own proper duties are of an inferior type, it is much better for him to cleave to them than to turn to other people's duties which he could well perform. It is even better to die cleaving to one's caste-duties, than to turn to the duties fixed for other people, which only do him harm<sup>1</sup>. The caste-duties of Brahmins, Kṣātriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras are fixed in accordance with their natural qualities. Thus sense-control, control over mind, power of endurance, purity, patience, sincerity, knowledge of worldly things and philosophic wisdom are the natural qualities of a Brahmin. Heroism, bravery, patience, skill, not to fly from battle, making of gifts and lordliness are the natural duties of a Kṣātriya. Agriculture, tending of cattle and trade are the natural duties of a Śūdra. A man can attain his highest only by performing the specific duties of his own caste. God pervades this world, and it is He who moves all beings to work. A man can best realize himself by adoring God and by the performance of his own specific caste-duties. No sin can come to a man who performs his own caste-duties. Even if one's caste-duties were sinful or wrong, it would not be wrong

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, III. 35.



for a man to perform them; for, as there is smoke in every fire, so there is some wrong thing or other in all our actions<sup>1</sup>. Arjuna is thus urged to follow his caste-duty as a Kṣatriya and to fight his enemies in the battle-field. If he killed his enemies, then he would be the master of the kingdom; if he himself was killed, then, since he had performed the duties of a Kṣatriya, he would go to Heaven. If he did not engage himself in that fight, which was his duty, he would not only lose his reputation, but would also transgress his own *dharma*.

Such an instruction naturally evokes the objection that war necessarily implies injury to living beings; but in reply to such an objection Kṛṣṇa says that the proper way of performing actions is to dissociate one's mind from attachment; when one can perform an action with a mind free from attachment, greed and selfishness, from a pure sense of duty, the evil effects of such action cannot affect the performer. The evil effects of any action can affect the performer when in performing an action he has a motive of his own to fulfil. But, if he does not seek anything for himself, if he is not overjoyed in pleasures, or miserable in pains, his works cannot affect him. A man should therefore surrender all his desires for selfish ends and dedicate all his actions to God and be in communion with Him, and yet continue to perform the normal duties of his caste and situation of life. So long as we have our bodies, the necessity of our own nature will drive us to work. So it is impossible for us to give up all work. To give up work can be significant only if it means the giving up of all desires for the fruits of such actions. If the fruits of actions are given up, then the actions can no longer bind us to them. That brings us in return peace and contentment, and the saint who has thus attained a perfect equanimity of mind is firm and unshaken in his true wisdom, and nothing can sway him to and fro. One may seek to attain this state either by philosophic wisdom or by devotion to God, and it is the latter path which is easier. God, by His grace, helps the devotee to purge his mind of all impurities, and so by His grace a man can dissociate his mind from all motives of greed and selfishness and be in communion with Him; he can thus perform his duties, as fixed for him by his caste or his custom, without looking forward to any reward or gain.

The *Gītā* ideal of conduct differs from the sacrificial ideal of

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, XVIII. 44-48.



conduct in this, that sacrifices are not to be performed for any ulterior end of heavenly bliss or any other mundane benefits, but merely from a sense of duty, because sacrifices are enjoined in the scriptures to be performed by Brahmins; and they must therefore be performed from a pure sense of duty. The *Gītā* ideal of ethics differs from that preached in the systems of philosophy like the Vedānta or the Yoga of Patañjali in this, that, while the aim of these systems was to transcend the sphere of actions and duties, to rise to a stage in which one could give up all one's activities, mental or physical, the ideal of the *Gītā* was decidedly an ideal of work. The *Gītā*, as has already been pointed out, does not advocate a course of extremism in anything. However elevated a man may be, he must perform his normal caste-duties and duties of customary morality<sup>1</sup>. The *Gītā* is absolutely devoid of the note of pessimism which is associated with early Buddhism. The *śīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* of Buddhism have, no doubt, in the *Gītā* their counterparts in the training of a man to disinclination for joys and attachments, to concentration on God and the firm and steady fixation of will and intelligence; but the significance of these in the *Gītā* is entirely different from that which they have in Buddhism. The *Gītā* does not expound a course of approved conduct and prohibitions, since, so far as these are concerned, one's actions are to be guided by the code of caste-duties or duties of customary morality. What is required of a man is that he should cleanse his mind from the impurities of attachment, desires and cravings. The *samādhi* of the *Gītā* is not a mere concentration of the mind on some object, but communion with God, and the wisdom, or *prajñā*, of the *Gītā* is no realization of any philosophic truth, but a fixed and unperturbed state of the mind, where the will and intellect remain unshaken in one's course of duty, clear of all consequences and free from all attachments, and in a state of equanimity which cannot be shaken or disturbed by pleasures or sorrows.

It may naturally be asked in this connection, what is the general standpoint of Hindu Ethics? The Hindu social system is based on a system of fourfold division of castes. The *Gītā* says that God Himself created the fourfold division of castes into Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, a division based on characteristic

<sup>1</sup> Śaṅkara, of course, is in entire disagreement with this interpretation of the *Gītā*, as will be discussed in a later section.



qualities and specific duties. Over and above this caste division and its corresponding privileges, duties and responsibilities, there is also a division of the stages of life into that of *Brahma-cārin*—student, *gr̥ha-stha*—householder, *vāna-prastha*—retired in a forest, and *bhikṣu*—mendicant, and each of these had its own prescribed duties. The duties of Hindu ethical life consisted primarily of the prescribed caste-duties and the specific duties of the different stages of life, and this is known as *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Over and above this there were also certain duties which were common to all, called the *sādhāraṇa-dharmas*. Thus Manu mentions steadiness (*dhairya*), forgiveness (*kṣamā*), self-control (*dama*), non-stealing (*cauryābhāva*), purity (*śauca*), sense-control (*indriya-nigraha*), wisdom (*dhi*), learning (*vidyā*), truthfulness (*satya*) and control of anger (*akrodha*) as examples of *sādhāraṇa-dharma*. Prāśastapāda mentions faith in religious duties (*dharma-śraddhā*), non-injury (*ahiṃsā*), doing good to living beings (*bhūta-hitatva*), truthfulness (*satya-vacana*), non-stealing (*asteya*), sex-continence (*brahmacharya*), sincerity of mind (*anupadhā*), control of anger (*krodha-varjana*), cleanliness and ablutions (*abhiṣecana*), taking of pure food (*śuci-dravya-sevana*), devotion to Vedic gods (*viśiṣṭa-devatā-bhakti*), and watchfulness in avoiding transgressions (*apramāda*). The caste-duties must be distinguished from these common duties. Thus sacrifices, study and gifts are common to all the three higher castes, Brahmins, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas. The specific duties of a Brahmin are acceptance of gifts, teaching, sacrifices and so forth; the specific duties of a Kṣatriya are protection of the people, punishing the wicked, not to retreat from battles and other specific tasks; the duties of a Vaiśya are buying, selling, agriculture, breeding and rearing of cattle, and the specific duties of a Vaiśya. The duties of a Śūdra are to serve the three higher castes<sup>1</sup>.

Regarding the relation between *varṇa-dharma* and *sādhāraṇa-dharma*, a modern writer says that “the *sādhāraṇa-dharmas* constitute the foundation of the *varṇāśrama-dharmas*, the limits within which the latter are to be observed and obeyed. For

<sup>1</sup> The *Gītā*, however, counts self-control (*sama*), control over the mind (*dama*), purity (*śauca*), forgiving nature (*kṣānti*), sincerity (*ārjava*), knowledge (*jñāna*), wisdom (*viññāna*) and faith (*āstikya*) as the natural qualities of Brahmins. The duties of Kṣatriyas are heroism (*śaurya*), smartness (*tejas*), power of endurance (*dhṛti*), skill (*dākṣya*), not to fly in battle (*yuddhe cāpy apalāyana*), making of gifts (*dāna*) and power of controlling others (*īśvara-bhāva*). The natural duties of Vaiśyas are agriculture, rearing of cows and trade. *Gītā*, XVIII. 42-44.



example, the Brahmin in performing religious sacrifice must not appropriate another's property, non-appropriation being one of the common and universal duties. In this way he serves his own community as well as subserves (though in a negative way) the common good of the community—and so, in an indirect way, serves the common good of humanity. Thus the individual of a specific community who observes the duties of his class does not serve his own community merely, but also and in the same process all other communities according to their deserts and needs, and in this way the whole of humanity itself. This, it will be seen, is also the view of Plato, whose virtue of justice is the common good which is to be realized by each class through its specific duties; but this is to be distinguished from the common good which constitutes the object of the *sādhāraṇa-dharmas* of the Hindu classification. The end in these common and universal duties is not the common well-being, which is being correctly realized in specific communities, but the common good as the precondition and foundation of the latter; it is not the good which is common-in-the-individual, but common-as-the-prius-of-the-individual. Hence the *sādhāraṇa* duties are obligatory equally for all individuals, irrespective of their social position or individual capacity<sup>1</sup>. The statement that the common good (*sādhāraṇa-dharma*) could be regarded as the precondition of the specific caste-duties implies that, if the latter came into conflict with the former, then the former should prevail. This is, however, inexact; for there is hardly any instance where, in case of a conflict, the *sādhāraṇa-dharma*, or the common duties, had a greater force. Thus, for example, non-injury to living beings was a common duty; but sacrifices implied the killing of animals, and it was the clear duty of the Brahmins to perform sacrifices. War implied the taking of an immense number of human lives; but it was the duty of a Kṣatriya not to turn away from a battle-field, and in pursuance of his obligatory duty as a Kṣatriya he had to fight. Turning to traditional accounts, we find in the *Rāmāyaṇa* that Śambūka was a Śūdra saint (*muni*) who was performing ascetic penances in a forest. This was a transgression of caste-duties; for a Śūdra could not perform *tapas*, which only the higher caste people were allowed to undertake, and hence the performance of *tapas* by the Śūdra saint Śambūka was regarded

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics of the Hindus*, by S. K. Maitra under Dr Seal's close personal supervision and guidance, pp. 3-4.



as *adharma* (vice); and, as a result of this *adharma*, there was a calamity in the kingdom of Rāma in the form of the death of an infant son of a Brahmin. King Rāma went out in his chariot and beheaded Śambūka for transgressing his caste-duties. Instances could be multiplied to show that, when there was a conflict between the caste-duties and the common duties, it was the former that had the greater force. The common duties had their force only when they were not in conflict with the caste-duties. The *Gītā* is itself an example of how the caste-duties had preference over common duties. In spite of the fact that Arjuna was extremely unwilling to take the lives of his near and dear kinsmen in the battle of Kurukṣetra Kṛṣṇa tried his best to dissuade him from his disinclination to fight and pointed out to him that it was his clear duty, as a Kṣatriya, to fight. It seems therefore very proper to hold that the common duties had only a general application, and that the specific caste-duties superseded them, whenever the two were in conflict.

The *Gītā* does not raise the problem of common duties, as its synthesis of *nivṛtti* (cessation from work) and *pravṛtti* (tending to work) makes it unnecessary to introduce the advocacy of the common duties; for its instruction to take to work with a mind completely detached from all feelings and motives of self-seeking, pleasure-seeking and self-interest elevates its scheme of work to a higher sphere, which would not be in need of the practice of any select scheme of virtues.

The theory of the *Gītā* that, if actions are performed with an unattached mind, then their defects cannot touch the performer, distinctly implies that the goodness or badness of an action does not depend upon the external effects of the action, but upon the inner motive of action. If there is no motive of pleasure or self-gain, then the action performed cannot bind the performer; for it is only the bond of desires and self-love that really makes an action one's own and makes one reap its good or bad fruits. Morality from this point of view becomes wholly subjective, and the special feature of the *Gītā* is that it tends to make all actions non-moral by cutting away the bonds that connect an action with its performer. In such circumstances the more logical course would be that of Śaṅkara, who would hold a man who is free from desires and attachment to be above morality, above duties and above responsibilities. The *Gītā*, however, would not advocate



the objective *nivṛtti*, or cessation of work; its whole aim is to effect subjective *nivṛtti*, or detachment from desires. It would not allow anyone to desist from his prescribed objective duties; but, whatever might be the nature of these duties, since they were performed without any motive of gain, pleasure or self-interest, they would be absolutely without fruit for the performer, who, in his perfect equanimity of mind, would transcend all his actions and their effects. If Arjuna fought and killed hundreds of his kinsmen out of a sense of his caste-duty, then, howsoever harmful his actions might be, they would not affect him. Yudhiṣṭhira, however, contemplated an expiation of the sin of killing his kinsmen by repentance, gifts, asceticism, pilgrimage, etc., which shows the other view, which was prevalent in the *Mahā-bhārata* period, that, when the performance of caste-duties led to such an injury to human lives, the sinful effects of such actions could be expiated by such means<sup>1</sup>. Yudhiṣṭhira maintained that of asceticism (*tapas*), the giving up of all duties (*tyāga*), and the final knowledge of the ultimate truth (*avadhi*), the second is better than the first and the third is better than the second. He therefore thought that the best course was to take to an ascetic life and give up all duties and responsibilities, whereas Arjuna held that the best course for a king would be to take upon himself the normal responsibilities of a kingly life and at the same time remain unattached to the pleasures of such a life<sup>2</sup>. Regarding also the practice of the virtues of non-injury, etc., Arjuna maintains that it is wrong to carry these virtues to extremes. Howsoever a man may live, whether as an ascetic or as a forester, it is impossible for him to practise non-injury to all living beings in any extreme degree. Even in the water that one drinks and the fruits that one eats, even in breathing and winking many fine and invisible insects are killed. So the virtue of non-injury, or, for the matter of that, all kinds of virtue, can be practised only in moderation, and their injunctions always imply that they can be practised only within the bounds of a commonsense view of things. Non-injury may

<sup>1</sup> *Mahā-bhārata*, XII. 7. 36 and 37.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Arjuna says:

*aśaktaḥ śaktavad gacchan niḥsaṅgo mukta-bandhanah  
samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca sa vai mukto mahāpate;*

to which Yudhiṣṭhira replies:

*tapas tyāgo 'vadhīr iti niscayas tv eṣa dhīmatām  
paraṣparam jyāya eṣām yeṣām naiḥsreyasī matiḥ.*

*Ibid.* XII. 18. 31 and XII. 19. 9.



be good; but there are cases where non-injury would mean doing injury. If a tiger enters into a cattle-shed, not to kill the tiger would amount to killing the cows. So all religious injunctions are made from the point of view of a practical and well-ordered maintenance of society and must therefore be obeyed with an eye to the results that may follow in their practical application. Our principal object is to maintain properly the process of the social order and the well-being of the people<sup>1</sup>. It seems clear, then, that, when the *Gītā* urges again and again that there is no meaning in giving up our normal duties, vocation and place in life and its responsibilities, and that what is expected of us is that we should make our minds unattached, it refers to the view which Yudhiṣṭhira expresses, that we must give up all our works. The *Gītā* therefore repeatedly urges that *tyāga* does not mean the giving up of all works, but the mental giving up of the fruits of all actions.

Though the practice of detachment of mind from all desires and motives of pleasure and enjoyment would necessarily involve the removal of all vices and a natural elevation of the mind to all that is high and noble, yet the *Gītā* sometimes denounces certain types of conduct in very strong terms. Thus, in the sixteenth chapter, it is said that people who hold a false philosophy and think that the world is false and, without any basis, deny the existence of God and hold that there is no other deeper cause of the origin of life than mere sex-attraction and sex-union, destroy themselves by their foolishness and indulgence in all kinds of cruel deeds, and would by their mischievous actions turn the world to the path of ruin. In their insatiable desires, filled with pride, vanity and ignorance, they take to wrong and impure courses of action. They argue too much and think that there is nothing greater than this world that we live in, and, thinking so, they indulge in all kinds of pleasures and enjoyments. Tied with bonds of desire, urged by passions and anger, they accumulate money in a wrongful manner for the gratification of their sense-desires. "I have got this to-day," they think, "and enjoy myself; I have so much hoarded money and I shall have more later on"; "that enemy has been killed by me, I shall kill other enemies also, I am

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*Loka-yātrārtham evedaṃ dharma-pravacanam kṛtam  
ahiṃsā sādhu hiṃseti śreyān dharma-parigrahaḥ  
nātyantaṃ guṇavat kiṃcin na cāpy atyanta-nirguṇam  
ubhayaṃ sarva-kāryeṣu dṛśyate sādho asādhu vā.*

*Mahā-bhārata*, XII. 15. 49 and 50.



a lord, I enjoy myself, I am successful, powerful and happy, I am rich, I have a noble lineage, there is no one like me, I perform sacrifices, make gifts and enjoy." They get distracted by various kinds of ideas and desires and, surrounded by nets of ignorance and delusion and full of attachment for sense-gratifications, they naturally fall into hell. Proud, arrogant and filled with the vanity of wealth, they perform improperly the so-called sacrifices, as a demonstration of their pomp and pride. In their egoism, power, pride, desires and anger they always ignore God, both in themselves and in others<sup>1</sup>. The main vices that one should try to get rid of are thus egoism, too many desires, greed, anger, pride and vanity, and of these desire and anger are again and again mentioned as being like the gates of hell<sup>2</sup>.

Among the principal virtues called the divine equipment (*daivi sampat*) the *Gītā* counts fearlessness (*abhaya*), purity of heart (*sattva-saṁsuddhi*), knowledge of things and proper action in accordance with it, giving, control of mind, sacrifice, study, *tapas*, sincerity (*ārjava*), non-injury (*ahiṁsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), control of anger (*akrodha*), renunciation (*tyāga*), peacefulness of mind (*śānti*), not to backbite (*apaśūna*), kindness to the suffering (*bhūteṣu dayā*), not to be greedy (*alolupatva*), tenderness (*mārdava*), a feeling of shame before people in general when a wrong action is done (*hrī*), steadiness (*acapala*), energy (*tejas*), a forgiving spirit (*kṣānti*), patience (*dhṛti*), purity (*śauca*), not to think ill of others (*adroha*), and not to be vain. It is these virtues which liberate our spirits, whereas vanity, pride, conceit, anger, cruelty and ignorance are vices which bind and enslave us<sup>3</sup>. The man who loves God should not hurt any living beings, should be friendly and sympathetic towards them, and should yet be unattached to all things, should have no egoism, be the same in sorrows and pleasures and full of forgivingness for all. He should be firm, self-controlled and always contented. He should be pure, unattached, the same to all, should not take to actions from any personal motives, and he has nothing to fear. He is the same to friends and enemies, in appreciation and denunciation; he is the same in heat and cold, pleasure and pain; he is the same in praise and blame, homeless and always satisfied with anything and everything; he is always unperturbed and absolutely unattached to all things<sup>4</sup>. If one carefully goes through

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, XVI. 8-18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* XVI. 1-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* XVI. 21.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* XII. 13-19; see also *ibid.* XIII. 8-11.



the above list of virtues, it appears that the virtues are pre-eminently of a negative character—one should not be angry, hurtful to others, egoistic, proud or vain, should not do anything with selfish motives, should not be ruffled by pleasure and pain, heat and cold and should be absolutely unattached. Of the few positive virtues, sincerity and purity of heart, a forgiving spirit, tenderness, friendliness, kindness, alertness and sympathy seem to be most prominent. The terms *maitra* (friendliness) and *karuṇā* (compassion) might naturally suggest the Buddhist virtues so named, since they do not occur in the Upaniṣads<sup>1</sup>. But in the *Gītā* also they are mentioned only once, and the general context of the passage shows that no special emphasis is put on these two virtues. They do not imply any special kind of meditation of universal friendship or universal piety or the active performance of friendly and sympathetic deeds for the good of humanity or for the good of living beings in general. They seem to imply simply the positive friendly state of the mind that must accompany all successful practice of non-injury to fellow-beings. The *Gītā* does not advocate the active performance of friendliness, but encourages a friendly spirit as a means of discouraging the tendency to do harm to others. The life that is most admired in the *Gītā* is a life of unattachedness, a life of peace, contentment and perfect equanimity and unperturbedness in joys and sorrows. The vices that are denounced are generally those that proceed from attachment and desires, such as egoism, pride, vanity, anger, greediness, etc. There is another class of virtues which are often praised, namely those which imply purity, sincerity and alertness of mind and straightness of conduct. The negative virtue of sense-control, with its positive counterpart, the acquirement of the power of directing one's mind in a right direction, forms the bed-rock of the entire superstructure of the *Gītā* code of moral and virtuous conduct.

The virtue of sameness (*saṁatva*), however, seems to be the great ideal which the *Gītā* is never tired of emphasizing again and again. This sameness can be attained in three different stages: subjective sameness, or equanimity of mind, or the sameness in joys and sorrows, praise and blame and in all situations of life; objective sameness, as regarding all people, good, bad or indifferent, a friend or an enemy, with equal eyes and in the same

<sup>1</sup> The term *maitra* occurs only once in the *Muktikopaniṣat*, II. 34, and the *Muktika* is in all probability one of the later Upaniṣads.



impartial spirit; and the final stage of the achievement of this equanimity is the self-realized state when one is absolutely unperturbed by all worldly things—a state of transcendence called *guṇātīta*. Thus in the *Gītā*, II. 15, it is said that he whom sense-affections and physical troubles cannot affect in any way, who is unperturbable and the same in joys and sorrows, attains immortality. In II. 38 Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to think of joys and sorrows, gain and loss, victory and defeat as being the same, and to engage himself in the fight with such a mind; for, if he did so, no sin would touch him. In II. 47 Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that his business is only to perform his duties and not to look for the effects of his deeds; it is wrong to look for the fruits of deeds or to desist from performing one's duties. In II. 48 this sameness in joys and sorrows is described as *yoga*, and it is again urged that one should be unperturbed whether in success or in failure. The same idea is repeated in II. 55, 56 and 57, where it is said that a true saint should not be damped in sorrow or elated in joy, and that he should not be attached to anything and should take happiness or misery indifferently, without particularly welcoming the former or regretting the latter. Such a man is absolutely limited to his own self and is self-satisfied. He is not interested in achieving anything or in not achieving anything; there is no personal object for him to attain in the world<sup>1</sup>. To such a man gold and stones, desirables and undesirables, praise and blame, appreciation and denunciation, friends and foes are all alike<sup>2</sup>. Such a man makes no distinction whether between a friend and foe, or between a sinner and a virtuous man<sup>3</sup>. Such a man knows that pleasures and pains are welcomed and hated by all and, thinking so, he desires the good of all and looks upon all as he would upon himself—on a learned Brahmin of an elevated character, on a cow, an elephant, a dog or a *caṇḍāla*; and the wise behave in the same way<sup>4</sup>. He sees God in all beings and knows the indestructible and the immortal in all that is destructible. He who knows that all beings are pervaded by all, and thus regards them all with an equal eye, does not hurt his own spiritual nature and thus attains his highest<sup>5</sup>. As the culmination of this development, there is the state in which a man transcends all the corporeal and mundane characteristics of the threefold *guṇas*, and, being freed from birth, death, old age and

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, III. 17, 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* VI. 31; also V. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* XIV. 24, 25.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* XIII. 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* VI. 9.



sorrow, attains immortality. He knows that the worldly qualities of things, the *guṇas*, are extraneous to his own spiritual nature, and by such thoughts he transcends the sphere of all worldly qualities and attains Brahmahood<sup>1</sup>.

Apart from the caste-duties and other deeds that are to be performed without any attachment, the *Gītā* speaks again and again of sacrifices, *tapas* and gifts, as duties which cannot be ignored at any stage of our spiritual development. It is well worth pointing out that the *Gītā* blames the performance of sacrifices either for the attainment of selfish ends or for making a display of pomp or pride. The sacrifices are to be performed from a sense of duty and of public good, since it is only by the help of the sacrifices that the gods may be expected to bring down heavy showers, through which crops may grow in plenty. Physical *tapas* is described as the adoration of gods, Brahmins, teachers and wise men, as purity, sincerity, sex-continence and non-injury; *tapas* in speech is described as truthful and unoffending speech, which is both sweet to hear and for the good of all, and also study; mental *tapas* is described as serenity of mind (*manah-prasāda*), happy temper (*saumyatva*), thoughtfulness (*mauna*), self-control (*ātma-vini-graha*) and sincerity of mind; and the higher kind of *tapas* is to be performed without any idea of gain or the fulfilment of any ulterior end<sup>2</sup>. Gifts are to be made to good Brahmins in a holy place and at an auspicious time, merely from a sense of duty. This idea that gifts are properly made only when they are made to good Brahmins at a holy time or place is very much more limited and restricted than the Mahāyāna idea of making gifts for the good of all, without the slightest restriction of any kind. Thus it is said in the *Śikṣā-samuccaya* that a Bodhisattva need not be afraid among tigers and other wild animals in a wild forest, since the Bodhisattva has given his all for the good of all beings. He has therefore to think that, if the wild animals should eat him, this would only mean the giving his body to them, which would be the fulfilment of his virtue of universal charity. The Bodhisattvas take the vow of giving away their all in universal charity<sup>3</sup>.

Thus the fundamental teaching of the *Gītā* is to follow caste-duties without any motive of self-interest or the gratification of sense-desires. The other general duties of sacrifices, *tapas* and

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, XIV. 20, 23, 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* XVI. 11-17.

<sup>3</sup> *Śikṣā-samuccaya*, ch. XIX, p. 349.



gifts are also to be practised by all and may hence be regarded in some sense as being equivalent to the *sādhāraṇa-dharmas* of the Vaiśeṣika and Smṛti literature. But, if caste-duties or customary duties come into conflict with the special duties of non-injury (*ahiṃsā*), then the caste-duties are to be followed in preference. It does not seem that any of the other special duties or virtues which are enjoined can come into conflict with the general caste-duties; for most of these are for the inner moral development, with which probably no caste-duties can come into conflict. But, though there is no express mandate of the *Gītā* on the point, yet it may be presumed that, should a Śūdra think of performing sacrifices, *tapas* or gifts or the study of the Vedas, this would most certainly be opposed by the *Gītā*, as it would be against the prescribed caste-duties. So, though non-injury is one of the special virtues enjoined by the *Gītā*, yet, when a Kṣatriya kills his enemies in open and free fight, that fight is itself to be regarded as virtuous (*dharma*) and there is for the Kṣatriya no sin in the killing of his enemies. If a person dedicates all his actions to Brahman and performs his duties without attachment, then sinfulness in his actions cannot cleave to him, just as water cannot cleave to the leaves of a lotus plant<sup>1</sup>. On the one hand the *Gītā* keeps clear of the ethics of the absolutist and metaphysical systems by urging the necessity of the performance of caste and customary duties, and yet enjoins the cultivation of the great virtues of renunciation, purity, sincerity, non-injury, self-control, sense-control and want of attachment as much as the absolutist systems would desire to do; on the other hand, it does not adopt any of the extreme and rigorous forms of self-discipline, as the Yoga does, or the practice of the virtues on an unlimited and universalist scale, as the Buddhists did. It follows the middle course, strongly emphasizing the necessity of self-control, sense-control and detachment from all selfish ends and desires along with the performance of the normal duties. This detachment from sense-pleasures is to be attained either through wisdom or, preferably, through devotion to God.

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, v. 10.



Analysis of Action.

The consideration of the *Gītā* ethics naturally brings in the problem of the analysis of the nature of action, volition and agent. The principal analysis of volition in Hindu Philosophy is to be found in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika works. Prāśastapāda divides animal activities into two classes, firstly, those that are of a reflex nature and originate automatically from life-functions (*jīvana-pūrvaka*) and subserve useful ends (*kām api artha-kriyām*) for the organism, and, secondly, those conscious and voluntary actions that proceed out of desire or aversion, for the attainment of desirable ends and the avoidance of undesirable ones. Prabhākara holds that volitional actions depend on several factors, firstly, a general notion that something has to be done (*kāryatā-jñāna*), which Gaṅgabhaṭṭa in his *Bhāṭṭa-cintāmaṇi* explains as meaning not merely a general notion that a particular work can be done by the agent, but also the specific notion that an action must be done by him—a sense which can proceed only from a belief that the action would be useful to him and would not be sufficiently harmful to him to dissuade him from it. Secondly, there must be the belief that the agent has the power or capacity of performing the action (*kṛti-sādhyatā-jñāna*). This belief of *kṛti-sādhyatā-jñāna* leads to desire (*cikīrṣā*). The Prabhākaras do not introduce here the important factor that an action can be desired only if it is conducive to the good of the agent. Instead of this element they suppose that actions are desired when the agent identifies himself with the action as one to be accomplished by him—an action is desired only as a kind of self-realization. The Nyāya, however, thinks that the fact that an action is conducive to good and not productive of serious mischief is an essential condition of its performance.

The *Gītā* seems to hold that everywhere actions are always being performed by the *guṇas* or characteristic qualities of *prakṛti*, the primal matter. It is through ignorance and false pride that one thinks himself to be the agent<sup>1</sup>. In another place it is said that for the occurrence of an action there are five causes, viz. the body, the agent, the various sense-organs, the various life-functions and biomotor activities, and the unknown objective causal elements or the all-controlling power of God (*daiva*)<sup>2</sup>. All actions

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, III. 27; XIII. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *adhiṣṭhānam tathā kartā karaṇam ca prthag-vidham  
vividhaś ca prthak ceṣṭā daivam caivātra pañcamam. Ibid.* XVIII. 14.



being due to the combined operation of these five elements, it would be wrong to think the self or the agent to be the only performer of actions. Thus it is said that, this being so, he who thinks the self alone to be the agent of actions, this wicked-minded person through his misapplied intelligence does not see things properly<sup>1</sup>. Whatever actions are performed, right or wrong, whether in body, speech or mind, have these five factors as their causes<sup>2</sup>. The philosophy that underlies the ethical position of the *Gītā* consists in the fact that, in reality, actions are made to happen primarily through the movement of the characteristic qualities of *prakṛti*, and secondarily, through the collocation of the five factors mentioned, among which the self is but one factor only. It is, therefore, sheer egoism to think that one can, at his own sweet will, undertake a work or cease from doing works. For the *prakṛti*, or primal matter, through its later evolutes, the collocation of causes, would of itself move us to act, and even in spite of the opposition of our will we are led to perform the very action which we did not want to perform. So Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that the egoism through which you would say that you would not fight is mere false vanity, since the *prakṛti* is bound to lead you to action<sup>3</sup>. A man is bound by the active tendencies or actions which necessarily follow directly from his own nature, and there is no escape. He has to work in spite of the opposition of his will. *Prakṛti*, or the collocation of the five factors, moves us to work. That being so, no one can renounce all actions. If renouncing actions is an impossibility, and if one is bound to act, it is but proper that one should perform one's normal duties. There are no duties and no actions which are absolutely faultless, absolutely above all criticism; so the proper way in which a man should purify his actions is by purging his mind of all imperfections and impurities of desires and attachment. But a question may arise how, if all actions follow necessarily as the product of the five-fold collocation, a person can determine his actions? The general implication of the *Gītā* seems to be that, though the action follows necessarily as the product of the fivefold collocation, yet the self can give a direction to these actions; if a man wishes to dissociate himself from all attachments and desires by dedicating the fruits of all his actions to God and clings to God with such a purpose, God helps him to attain his noble aim.

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, XVIII. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* XVIII. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* XVIII. 59.



Eschatology.

The *Gītā* is probably the earliest document where a definite statement is made regarding the imperishable nature of existent things and the impossibility of that which is non-existent coming into being. It says that what is non-existent cannot come into being, and that what exists cannot cease to be. In modern times we hear of the principle of the conservation of energy and also of the principle of the conservation of mass. The principle of the conservation of energy is distinctly referred to in the *Vyāsa-bhāṣya* on *Patañjali-sūtra*, iv. 3, but the idea of the conservation of mass does not seem to have been mentioned definitely anywhere. Both the Vedāntist and the Sāṃkhyist seem to base their philosophies on an ontological principle known as *sat-kārya-vāda*, which holds that the effect is already existent in the cause. The Vedānta holds that the effect as such is a mere appearance and has no true existence; the cause alone is truly existent. The Sāṃkhya, on the other hand, holds that the effect is but a modification of the causal substance, and, as such, is not non-existent, but has no existence separate from the cause; the effect may therefore be said to exist in the cause before the starting of the causal operation (*kāraṇa-vyāpāra*). Both these systems strongly object to the Buddhist and Nyāya view that the effect came into being out of non-existence, a doctrine known as *a-sat-kārya-vāda*. Both the Sāṃkhya and the Vedānta tried to prove their theses, but neither of them seems to have realized that their doctrines are based upon an *a priori* proposition which is the basic principle underlying the principle of the conservation of energy and the conservation of mass, but which is difficult to be proved by reference to a *posteriori* illustration. Thus, the Sāṃkhya says that the effect exists in the cause, since, had it not been so, there would be no reason why certain kinds of effects, e.g. oil, can be produced only from certain kinds of causes, e.g. sesamum. That certain kinds of effects are produced only from certain kinds of causes does not really prove the doctrine of *sat-kārya-vāda*, but only implies it; for the doctrine of *sat-kārya-vāda* rests on an *a priori* principle such as that formulated in the *Gītā*—that what exists cannot perish, and that what does not exist cannot come into being<sup>1</sup>. The *Gītā* does not try to prove this proposition, but takes it as a self-evident principle which no one could

<sup>1</sup> *nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhavo vidyate sataḥ. Gītā, II. 16.*



challenge. It does not, however, think of applying this principle, which underlies the ontological position of the Sāṃkhya and the Vedānta, in a general way. It seems to apply the principle only to the nature of self (*ātman*). Thus it says, "O Arjuna, that principle by which everything is pervaded is to be regarded as deathless; no one can destroy this imperishable one. The bodies that perish belong to the deathless eternal and unknowable self; therefore thou shouldst fight. He who thinks the self to be destructible, and he who thinks it to be the destroyer, do not know that it can neither destroy nor be destroyed. It is neither born nor does it die, nor, being once what it is, would it ever be again.... Weapons cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot dissolve it and air cannot dry it." The immortality of self preached in the *Gītā* seems to have been directly borrowed from the Upaniṣads, and the passages that describe it seem to breathe the spirit of the Upaniṣads not only in idea, but also in the modes and expressions. The ontological principle that what exists cannot die and that what is not cannot come into being does not seem to have been formulated in the Upaniṣads. Its formulation in the *Gītā* in support of the principle of immortality seems, therefore, to be a distinct advance on the Upaniṣadic philosophy in this direction.

The first argument urged by Kṛṣṇa to persuade Arjuna to fight was that the self was immortal and that it was the body only that could be injured or killed, and that therefore Arjuna need not feel troubled because he was going to kill his kinsmen in the battle of Kurukṣetra. Upon the death of one body the self only changed to another, in which it was reborn, just as a man changed his old clothes for new ones. The body is always changing, and even in youth, middle age and old age, does not remain the same. The change at death is also a change of body, and so there is no intrinsic difference between the changes of the body at different stages of life and the ultimate change that is effected at death, when the old body is forsaken by the spirit and a new body is accepted. Our bodies are always changing, and, though the different stages in this growth in childhood, youth and old age represent comparatively small degrees of change, yet these ought to prepare our minds to realize the fact that death is also a similar change of body only and cannot, therefore, affect the unperturbed nature of the self, which, in spite of all changes of body at successive



births and rebirths, remains unchanged in itself. When one is born one must die, and when one dies one must be reborn. Birth necessarily implies death, and death necessarily implies rebirth. There is no escape from this continually revolving cycle of birth and death. From Brahmā down to all living creatures there is a continuous rotation of birth, death and rebirth. In reply to Arjuna's questions as to what becomes of the man who, after proceeding a long way on the path of *yoga*, is somehow through his failings dislodged from it and dies, Kṛṣṇa replies that no good work can be lost and a man who has been once on the path of right cannot suffer; so, when a man who was proceeding on the path of *yoga* is snatched away by the hand of death, he is born again in a family of pure and prosperous people or in a family of wise *yogins*; and in this new birth he is associated with his achievements in his last birth and begins anew his onward course of advancement, and the old practice of the previous birth carries him onward, without any effort on his part, in his new line of progress. By his continual efforts through many lives and the cumulative effects of the right endeavours of each life the *yogin* attains his final realization. Ordinarily the life of a man in each new birth depends upon the desires and ideas that he fixes upon at the time of his death. But those that think of God, the oldest instructor, the seer, the smallest of the small, the upholder of all, shining like the sun beyond all darkness, and fix their life-forces between their eyebrows, and control all the gates of their senses and their mind in their hearts, ultimately attain their highest realization in God. From the great Lord, the great unmanifested and incomprehensible Lord, proceeds the unmanifested (*avyakta*), from which come out all manifested things (*vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ*), and in time again return to it and again evolve out of it. Thus there are two forms of the unmanifested (*avyakta*), the unmanifested out of which all the manifested things come, and the unmanifested which is the nature of the eternal Lord from whom the former come<sup>1</sup>. The ideas of *deva-yāna* and *pitṛ-yāna*, *dakṣiṇāyana* and *uttarāyana*, the black and the white courses as mentioned in the Upaniṣads, are also referred to in the *Gītā*. Those who go through smoke in the new-moon fortnight and the later six months (when the sun is on the south of the equator), and thus take the black course, return again; but those who take the white course of fire

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, viii. 16-23.



in the full-moon fortnight and the former six months (when the sun is on the north of the equator) do not return again<sup>1</sup>. No very significant meaning can be made out of these doctrines. They seem to be but the perpetuation of the traditional faiths regarding the future courses of the dead, as referred to in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. The *Gītā*, again, speaking of others, says that those who follow the sacrificial duties of the Vedas enjoy heavenly pleasures in heaven, and, when their merits are exhausted by the enjoyments of the good fruits of their actions, they come back to earth. Those who follow the path of desires and take to religious duties for the attainment of pleasures must always go to heaven and come back again—they cannot escape this cycle of going and coming. Again, in the *Gītā*, xvi. 19, Kṛṣṇa says, “I make cruel vicious persons again and again take birth as ferocious animals.”

The above summary of the eschatological views of the *Gītā* shows that it collects together the various traditionally accepted views regarding life after death without trying to harmonize them properly. Firstly, it may be noted that the *Gītā* believes in the doctrine of *karma*. Thus in xv. 2 and in iv. 9 it is said that the world has grown on the basis of *karma*, and the *Gītā* believes that it is the bondage of *karma* that binds us to this world. The bondage of *karma* is due to the existence of attachment, passions and desires. But what does the bondage of *karma* lead to? The reply to such a question, as given by the *Gītā*, is that it leads to rebirth. When one performs actions in accordance with the Vedic injunctions for the attainment of beneficial fruits, desire for such fruits and attachment to these desirable fruits is the bondage of *karma*, which naturally leads to rebirth. The proposition definitely pronounced in the *Gītā*, that birth necessarily means death and death necessarily means birth, reminds us of the first part of the twelvefold causal chain of the Buddha—“What being, is there death? Birth being, there is death.” It has already been noticed that the attitude of the *Gītā* towards Vedic performances is merely one of toleration and not one of encouragement. These are actions which are prompted by desires and, like all other actions similarly prompted, they entail with them the bonds of *karma*; and, as soon as the happy effects produced by the merits of these actions are enjoyed and lived through, the performers of these actions come down from heaven to the earth and

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, viii. 24-26.



are reborn and have to pass through the old ordeal of life. The idea that, there being birth, there is death, and that, if there is death there is also rebirth, is the same in the *Gītā* as in Buddhism; but the *Gītā* form seems to be very much earlier than the Buddhistic form; for the Buddhistic form relates birth and death through a number of other causal links intimately connected together in an interdependent cycle, of which the *Gītā* seems to be entirely ignorant. The *Gītā* does not speak of any causal chain, such as could be conceived to be borrowed from Buddhism. It, of course, knows that attachment is the root of all vice; but it is only by implication that we can know that attachment leads to the bondage of *karma* and the bondage of *karma* to rebirth. The main purpose of the *Gītā* is not to find out how one can tear asunder the bonds of *karma* and stop rebirth, but to prescribe the true rule of the performance of one's duties. It speaks sometimes, no doubt, about cutting asunder the bonds of *karma* and attaining one's highest; but instruction as regards the attainment of liberation or a description of the evils of this worldly life does not form any part of the content of the *Gītā*. The *Gītā* has no pessimistic tendency. It speaks of the necessary connection of birth and death not in order to show that life is sorrowful and not worth living, but to show that there is no cause of regret in such universal happenings as birth and death. The principal ideas are, no doubt, those of attachment, *karma*, birth, death and rebirth; but the idea of Buddhism is more complex and more systematized, and is therefore probably a later development at a time when the *Gītā* discussions on the subject were known. The Buddhist doctrine that there is no self and no individual anywhere is just the opposite of the *Gītā* doctrine of the immortality of the self.

But the *Gītā* speaks not only of rebirth, but also of the two courses, the path of smoke and the path of light, which are referred to in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*<sup>1</sup>. The only difference between the Upaniṣad account and that of the *Gītā* is that there are more details in the Upaniṣad than in the *Gītā*. But the ideas of *deva-yāna* and *pitṛ-yāna* do not seem to fit in quite consistently with the idea of rebirth on earth. The *Gītā*, however, combines the idea of rebirth on earth with the *deva-yāna-pitṛ-yāna* idea and also with the idea of ascent to heaven as an effect of the merits

<sup>1</sup> *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, v. 10.



accruing from sacrificial performances. Thus the *Gītā* combines the different trains of ideas just as it finds them traditionally accepted, without trying to harmonize them properly. It does not attempt to discuss the point regarding the power of *karma* in determining the nature of rebirths, enjoyments and sufferings. From some passages (IV. 9 or VI. 40-45) it might appear that the bonds of *karma* produced their effects independently by their own powers, and that the arrangement of the world is due to the effect of *karma*. But there are other passages (XVI. 19) which indicate that *karma* does not produce its effects by itself, but that God rewards or punishes good and bad deeds by arranging good and bad births associated with joys and sorrows. In the *Gītā*, v. 15, it is said that the idea of sins and virtues is due to ignorance, whereas, if we judge rightly, God does not take cognizance either of vices or of virtues. Here again there are two contradictory views of *karma*: one view in which *karma* is regarded as the cause which brings about all inequalities in life, and another view which does not attribute any value to good or bad actions. The only way in which the two views can be reconciled in accordance with the spirit of the *Gītā* is by holding that the *Gītā* does not believe in the objective truth of virtue or vice (*punya* or *pāpa*). There is nothing good or bad in the actions themselves. It is only ignorance and foolishness that regards them as good or bad; it is only our desires and attachments which make the actions produce their bad effects with reference to us, and which render them sinful for us. Since the actions themselves are neither good nor bad, the performance of even apparently sinful actions, such as the killing of one's kinsmen on the battle-field, cannot be regarded as sinful, if they are done from a sense of duty; but the same actions would be regarded as sinful, if they were performed through attachments or desires. Looked at from this point of view, the idea of morality in the *Gītā* is essentially of a subjective character. But though morality, virtue and vice, can be regarded from this point of view as subjective, it is not wholly subjective. For morality does not depend upon mere subjective conscience or the subjective notions of good and bad. The caste-duties and other duties of customary morality are definitely fixed, and no one should transgress them. The subjectivity of virtue and vice consists in the fact that they depend entirely on our good or bad actions. If actions are performed from a sense of obedience to scriptural commands, caste-



duties or duties of customary morality, then such actions, in spite of their bad consequences, would not be regarded as bad.

Apart from these courses of rebirth and ascent to heaven, the last and best and ultimate course is described as being liberation, which transcends all that can be achieved by all kinds of merits attained by sacrifices, gifts or *tapas*. He who attains this highest achievement lives in God and is never born again<sup>1</sup>. The highest realization thus consists in being one with God, by which one escapes all sorrows. In the *Gītā* liberation (*mokṣa*) means liberation from old age and death. This liberation can be attained by true philosophic knowledge of the nature of *kṣetra*, or the mind-body whole, and the *kṣetra-jñā*, the perceiving selves, or the nature of what is truly spiritual and what is non-spiritual, and by clinging to God as one's nearest and dearest<sup>2</sup>. This liberation from old age and death also means liberation from the ties of *karma* associated with us through the bonds of attachment, desires, etc. It does not come of itself, as the natural result of philosophic knowledge or of devotion to God; but God, as the liberator, grants it to the wise and to those who cling to Him through devotion<sup>3</sup>. But whether it be achieved as the result of philosophic knowledge or as the result of devotion to God, the moral elevation, consisting of dissociation from attachment and the right performance of duties in an unattached manner, is indispensable.

### God and Man.

The earliest and most recondite treatment regarding the nature and existence of God and His relation to man is to be found in the *Gītā*. The starting-point of the *Gītā* theism may be traced as far back as the *Puruṣa-sūkta*, where it is said that the one quarter of the *puruṣa* has spread out as the cosmic universe and its living beings, while its other three-quarters are in the immortal heavens<sup>4</sup>. This passage is repeated in *Chāndogya*, III. 12. 6 and in *Maitrāyaṇī*, VI. 4, where it is said that the three-quarter Brahman sits root upward above (*ūrdhva-mūlaṃ tripād Brahma*). This idea, in a slightly modified form, appears in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, VI. 1, where it is said that this universe is the eternal *Aśvattha*

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, VIII. 28; IX. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* VII. 29; XIII. 34.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* XVIII. 66.

<sup>4</sup>

*pādo 'sya viśvā bhūtāni  
 tripād asyāmṛtaṃ divi. Puruṣa-sūkta.*



tree which has its root high up and its branches downwards (*ūrdhva-mūlo 'vāk-sākhah*). The *Gītā* borrows this idea and says, "This is called the eternal *Āśvattha* (*pipul* tree) with its roots high up and branches downwards, the leaves of which are the Vedas; and he who knows this, he knows the Vedas" (xv. 1). Again it is said, "Its branches spread high and low, its leaves of sense-objects are nourished by the *guṇas*, its roots are spread downwards, tied with the knots of *karma*, the human world" (xv. 2); and in the next verse, it is said, "In this world its true nature is not perceived; its beginning, its end, and the nature of its subsistence, remain unknown; it is only by cutting this firmly rooted *Āśvattha* tree with the strong axe of unattachment (*asaṅga-śāstreṇa*) that one has to seek that state from which, when once achieved, no one returns." It is clear from the above three passages that the *Gītā* has elaborated here the simile of the *Āśvattha* tree of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*. The *Gītā* accepts this simile of God, but elaborates it by supposing that these branches have further leaves and other roots, which take their sap from the ground of human beings, to which they are attached by the knots of *karma*. This means a duplication of the *Āśvattha* tree, the main and the subsidiary. The subsidiary one is an overgrowth, which has proceeded out of the main one and has to be cut into pieces before one can reach that. The principal idea underlying this simile throws a flood of light on the *Gītā* conception of God, which is an elaboration of the idea of the *Puruṣa-sūkta* passage already referred to. God is not only immanent, but transcendent as well. The immanent part, which forms the cosmic universe, is no illusion or *māyā*: it is an emanation, a development, from God. The good and the evil, the moral and the immoral of this world, are all from Him and in Him. The stuff of this world and its manifestations have their basis, an essence, in Him, and are upheld by Him. The transcendent part, which may be said to be the root high up, and the basis of all that has grown in this lower world, is itself the differenceless reality—the Brahman. But, though the Brahman is again and again referred to as the highest abode and the ultimate realization, the absolute essence, yet God in His super-personality transcends even Brahman, in the sense that Brahman, however great it may be, is only a constitutive essence in the complex personality of God. The cosmic universe, the *guṇas*, the *puruṣas*, the mind-structure composed of *buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra*, etc., and the Brahman,



are all constituents of God, having their separate functions and mental relations; but God in His super-personality transcends them all and upholds them all. There is, however, one important point in which the *Gītā* differs from the Upaniṣads—this is, its introduction of the idea that God takes birth on earth as man. Thus in the *Gītā*, iv. 6 and iv. 7, it is said that “whenever there is a disturbance of *dharma* and the rise of *adharmā*, I create myself; though I am unborn, of immortal self and the lord of all beings, yet by virtue of my own nature (*prakṛti*) I take birth through my own *māyā* (blinding power of the *guṇas*).” This doctrine of the incarnation of God, though not dealt with in any of the purely speculative systems, yet forms the corner-stone of most systems of religious philosophy and religion, and the *Gītā* is probably the earliest work available to us in which this doctrine is found. The effect of its introduction and of the dialogue form of the *Gītā*, in which the man-god Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna in the philosophy of life and conduct, is that the instruction regarding the personality of God becomes concrete and living. As will be evident in the course of this section, the *Gītā* is not a treatise of systematic philosophy, but a practical course of introduction to life and conduct, conveyed by God Himself in the form of Kṛṣṇa to His devotee, Arjuna. In the *Gītā* abstract philosophy melts down to an insight into the nature of practical life and conduct, as discussed with all the intimacy of the personal relation between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, which suggests a similar personal relation between God and man. For the God in the *Gītā* is not a God of abstract philosophy or theology, but a God who could be a man and be capable of all personal relations.

The all-pervasive nature of God and the fact that He is the essence and upholder of all things in the world is again and again in various ways emphasized in the *Gītā*. Thus Kṛṣṇa says, “There is nothing greater than I, all things are held in me, like pearls in the thread of a pearl garland; I am the liquidity in water, the light of the sun and the moon, manhood (*pauruṣa*) in man; good smell in earth, the heat of the sun, intelligence in the intelligent, heroism in the heroes, strength in the strong, and I am also the desires which do not transgress the path of virtue<sup>1</sup>.” Again, it is said that “in my unmanifested (*avyakta*) form I pervade the whole world; all beings exist completely in me, but

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, vii. 7-11.



I am not exhausted in them; yet so do I transcend them that none of the beings exist in me—I am the upholder of all beings, I do not exist in them and yet I am their procreator<sup>1</sup>.” In both these passages the riddle of God’s relation with man, by which He exists in us and yet does not exist in us and is not limited by us, is explained by the fact of the threefold nature of God; there is a part of Him which has been manifested as inanimate nature and also as the animate world of living beings. It is with reference to this all-pervasive nature of God that it is said that “as the air in the sky pervades the whole world, so are all beings in ‘me’ (God). At the end of each cycle (*kalpa*) all beings enter into my nature (*prakṛtiṃ yānti māmikām*), and again at the beginning of a cycle I create them. I create again and again through my nature (*prakṛti*); the totality of all living beings is helplessly dependent on *prakṛti*<sup>2</sup>.” The three *prakṛtis* have already been referred to in the previous sections—*prakṛti* of God as cosmic matter, *prakṛti* as the nature of God from which all life and spirit have emanated, and *prakṛti* as *māyā*, or the power of God from which the three *guṇas* have emanated. It is with reference to the operation of these *prakṛtis* that the cosmic world and the world of life and spirit may be said to be existent in God. But there is the other form of God, as the transcendent Brahman, and, so far as this form is concerned, God transcends the sphere of the universe of matter and life. But in another aspect of God, in His totality and super-personality, He remains unexhausted in all, and the creator and upholder of all, though it is out of a part of Him that the world has come into being. The aspect of God’s identity with, and the aspect of His transcendence and nature as the father, mother and supporter of the universe, are not separated in the *Gītā*, and both the aspects are described often in one and the same passage. Thus it is said, “I am the father, mother, upholder and grandfather of this world, and I am the sacred syllable OM, the three Vedas, Ṛk, Sāman and Yajus; I am the sacrifice, the oblations and the fire, and yet I am the master and the enjoyer of all sacrifices. I am the final destiny, upholder, matter, the passive illuminator, the rest, support, friend, the origin, the final dissolution, the place, the receptacle and the immortal seed. I produce heat and shower, I destroy and create, I am both death and the deathless, the good and the bad<sup>3</sup>.” With reference to His transcendent part it is

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, ix. 3-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ix. 6-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ix. 16-19, 24.



said, "The sun, the moon and fire do not illuminate it—it is my final abode, from which, when once achieved, no one returns<sup>1</sup>." And again, immediately after, it is said, "It is my part that forms the eternal soul-principle (*jīva-bhūta*) in the living, which attracts the five senses and the *manas* which lie buried in *prakṛti*, and which takes the body and goes out of it with the six senses, just as air takes out fragrance from the flowers<sup>2</sup>." And then God is said to be the controlling agent of all operations in this world. Thus it is said, "By my energy I uphold the world and all living beings and fill all crops with their specific juices; as fire in the bodies of living beings, and aided by the biomotor *prāṇa* functions, I digest the four kinds of food; I am the light in the sun, the moon and fire." Again it is said, "I reside in the hearts of all; knowledge, forgetfulness and memory all come from me; I alone am to be known by the Vedas; I alone know the Vedas, and I alone am the author of the Vedānta<sup>3</sup>." From these examples it is evident that the *Gītā* does not know that pantheism and deism and theism cannot well be jumbled up into one as a consistent philosophic creed. And it does not attempt to answer any objections that may be made against the combination of such opposite views. The *Gītā* not only asserts that all is God, but it also again and again repeats that God transcends all and is simultaneously transcendent and immanent in the world. The answer apparently implied in the *Gītā* to all objections to the apparently different views of the nature of God is that transcendentalism, immanentalism and pantheism lose their distinctive and opposite characters in the melting whole of the super-personality of God. Sometimes in the same passage, and sometimes in passages of the same context, the *Gītā* talks in a pantheistic, a transcendental or a theistic vein, and this seems to imply that there is no contradiction in the different aspects of God as preserver and controller of the world, as the substance of the world, life and soul, and as the transcendent substratum underlying them all. In order to emphasize the fact that all that exists and all that is worthy of existence or all that has a superlative existence in good or bad are God's manifestation, the *Gītā* is never tired of repeating that whatever is highest, best or even worst in things is God or

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, xv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xv. 7 and 8. It is curious that here the word *Īśvara* is used as an epithet of *jīva*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* xv. 8, 12, 13, 14, 15.



God's manifestation. Thus it is said, 'I am the gambling of dice in all deceptive operations, I am victory in all endeavours, heroism of the heroes and the moral qualities (*sattva*) of all moral men (*sattvavatām*)'; and after enumerating a number of such instances Kṛṣṇa says that, wherever there are special gifts or powers or excellence of any kind, they are to be regarded as the special manifestation of God<sup>1</sup>. The idea that God holds within Himself the entire manifold universe is graphically emphasized in a fabulous form, when Kṛṣṇa gives Arjuna the divine eye of wisdom and Arjuna sees Kṛṣṇa in his resplendent divine form, shining as thousands of suns burning together, with thousands of eyes, faces and ornaments, pervading the heavens and the earth, with neither beginning nor end, as the great cosmic person into whose mouths all the great heroes of Kurukṣetra field had entered, like rivers into the ocean. Kṛṣṇa, after showing Arjuna his universal form, says, "I am time (*kāla*), the great destroyer of the world, and I am engaged in collecting the harvest of human lives, and all that will die in this great battle of Kurukṣetra have already been killed by me; you will be merely an instrument in this great destruction of the mighty battle of Kurukṣetra. So you can fight, destroy your enemies, attain fame and enjoy the sovereignty without any compunction that you have destroyed the lives of your kinsmen."

The main purport of the *Gītā* view of God seems to be that ultimately there is no responsibility for good or evil and that good and evil, high and low, great and small have all emerged from God and are upheld in Him. When a man understands the nature and reality of his own self and its agency, and his relation with God, both in his transcendent and cosmic nature, and the universe around him and the *guṇas* of attachment, etc., which bind him to his worldly desires, he is said to have the true knowledge. There is no opposition between the path of this true knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*) and the path of duties; for true knowledge supports and is supported by right performance of duties. The path of knowledge is praised in the *Gītā* in several passages. Thus it is said, that just as fire burns up the wood, so does knowledge reduce all actions to ashes. There is nothing so pure as knowledge. He who has true faith is attached to God, and he who has controlled his senses, attains knowledge, and having attained it, secures peace. He who

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, x. 36-41.



is foolish, an unbeliever, and full of doubts, is destroyed. He who is always doubting has neither this world, nor the other, nor does he enjoy any happiness. Even the worst sinner can hope to cross the sea of sins in the boat of knowledge<sup>1</sup>. In the *Gītā*, IV. 42, Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, "Therefore, having destroyed the ignorance of your heart by the sword of knowledge, and having cut asunder all doubts, raise yourself up." But what is this knowledge? In the *Gītā*, IV. 36, in the same context, this knowledge is defined to be that view of things by which all beings are perceived in this self or God. The true knowledge of God destroys all *karma* in the sense that he who has perceived and realized the true nature of all things in God cannot be attached to his passions and desires as an ignorant man would be. In another passage, already referred to, it is said that the roots of the worldly *Aśvattha* tree are to be cut by the sword of unattachment. The confusion into which Arjuna falls in the *Gītā*, III. 1 and 2, regarding the relative excellence of the path of *karma* and the path of knowledge is wholly unfounded. Kṛṣṇa points out in the *Gītā*, III. 3, that there are two paths, the path of knowledge and the path of duties (*jñāna-yoga* and *karma-yoga*). The confusion had arisen from the fact that Kṛṣṇa had described the immortality of soul and the undesirability of Vedic actions done with a motive, and had also asked Arjuna to fight and yet remain unattached and perform his duty for the sake of duty. The purpose of the *Gītā* was to bring about a reconciliation between these two paths, and to show that the path of knowledge leads to the path of duties by liberating it from the bonds of attachment; for all attachment is due to ignorance, and ignorance is removed by true knowledge. But the true knowledge of God may be of a twofold nature. One may attain a knowledge of God in His transcendence as Brahman, and attain the philosophic wisdom of the foundation of all things in Brahman as the ultimate substance and source of all manifestation and appearance. There is another way of clinging to God as a super-person, in a personal relation of intimacy, friendship and dependence. The *Gītā* admits that both these ways may lead us to the attainment of our highest realization. But it is the latter which the *Gītā* prefers and considers easier. Thus the *Gītā* says (XII. 3-5) that those who adore the indefinable, unchangeable, omnipresent, unthinkable, and the unmanifested, controlling all their senses, with equal eyes for all

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, IV. 37-41.



and engaged in the good of all, by this course attain Him. Those who fix their mind on the unmanifested (*avyakta*) find this course very hard. But those who dedicate all their actions to God and, clinging to Him as their only support, are devoted to Him in constant communion, them He saves soon from the sea of death and rebirth<sup>1</sup>.

The most important point in which the *Gītā* differs from the Upaniṣads is that the *Gītā* very strongly emphasizes the fact that the best course for attaining our highest realization is to dedicate all our actions to God, to cling to Him as our nearest and dearest, and always to be in communion with Him. The *Gītā* draws many of its ideas from the Upaniṣads and looks to them with respect. It accepts the idea of Brahman as a part of the essence of God, and agrees that those who fix their mind on Brahman as their ideal also attain the high ideal of realizing God. But this is only a compromise; for the *Gītā* emphasizes the necessity of a personal relation with God, whom we can love and adore. The beginning of our association with God must be made by dedicating the fruits of all our actions to God, by being a friend of all and sympathetic to all, by being self-controlled, the same in sorrow or happiness, self-contented, and in a state of perfect equanimity and equilibrium. It is through such a moral elevation that a man becomes apt in steadying his mind on God and ultimately in fixing his mind on God. In the *Gītā* Kṛṣṇa as God asks Arjuna to give up all ceremonials or religious courses and to cling to God as the only protector, and He promises that because of that God will liberate him<sup>2</sup>. Again, it is said that it is by devotion that a man knows what God is in reality and, thus knowing Him truly as He is, enters into Him. It is by seeking entire protection in God that one can attain his eternal state<sup>3</sup>.

But, though in order to attain the height at which it is possible to fix one's mind on God, one should first acquire the preliminary qualification of detaching oneself from the bonds of passions and desires, yet it is sometimes possible to reverse the situation. The *Gītā* thus holds that those whose minds and souls are full of God's love, who delight in constantly talking and thinking of God and always adore God with love, are dear to Him, and God, through His great mercy and kindness, grants them the proper wisdom and destroys the darkness of their ignorance by the light of knowledge<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, XII. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* XVIII. 66.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* XVIII. 55, 62.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* X. 9-11.



In the *Gītā*, XVIII. 57-58, Kṛṣṇa as God asks Arjuna to leave all fruits of actions to God and to fill his mind with God, and He assures him that He will then, by His divine grace, save him from all sorrows, troubles or difficulties. Again, in IX. 30-32 it is said that, even if a man is extremely wicked, if he adores God devotedly, he becomes a saint; for he has adopted the right course, and he soon becomes religious and attains eternal peace of mind. Even sinners, women, Vaiśyas and Sūdras who cling to God for support, are emancipated. Kṛṣṇa as God assures Arjuna that a devotee (*bhakta*) of God can never be lost<sup>1</sup>. If a man clings to God, no matter whether he has understood Him rightly or not, no matter whether he has taken the right course of approaching Him or not, God accepts him in whichever way he clings to Him. No one can be lost. In whichever way one may be seeking God, one is always in God's path<sup>2</sup>. If a man, prompted by diverse desires, takes to wrong gods, then even unto those gods God grants him true devotion, with which he follows his worship of those gods, and, even through such worship, grants him his desires<sup>3</sup>. God is the Lord of all and the friend of all beings. It is only great-souled men who with complete constancy of mind worship God, and with firm devotion repeat the name of God, and, being always in communion with Him, adore Him with devotion. God is easily accessible to those who always think of God with inalienable attachment<sup>4</sup>. In another passage (VII. 16, 17) it is said that there are four classes of people who adore God: those who are enquiring, those who are in trouble, those who wish to attain some desired things, and those who are wise. Of these the wise (*jñānin*), who are always in communion with Him and who are devoted to Him alone, are superior; the wise are dear to Him and He is dear to them. In this passage it has been suggested that true wisdom consists in the habit of living in communion with God and in being in constant devotion to God. The path of *bhakti*, or devotion, is thus praised in the *Gītā* as being the best. For the *Gītā* holds that, even if a man cannot proceed in the normal path of self-elevation and detach himself from passions and desires and establish himself in equanimity, he may still, simply by clinging to God and by firm devotion to Him, bring himself within the sphere of His grace, and by grace alone acquire true wisdom and

<sup>1</sup> *Gītā*, IX. 30-32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* VII. 20-22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* IV. 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* IV. 13-15; V. 29; VII. 14.



achieve that moral elevation, with little or no struggle, which is attained with so much difficulty by others. The path of *bhakti* is thus introduced in the *Gītā*, for the first time, as an independent path side by side with the path of wisdom and knowledge of the Upaniṣads and with the path of austere self-discipline. Moral elevation, self-control, etc. are indeed regarded as an indispensable preliminary to any kind of true self-realization. But the advantage of the path of devotion (*bhakti*) consists in this, that, while some seekers have to work hard on the path of self-control and austere self-discipline, either by constant practice or by the aid of philosophic wisdom, the devotee makes an easy ascent to a high elevation—not because he is more energetic and better equipped than his fellow-workers in other paths, but because he has resigned himself completely to God; and God, being pleased with his devotees who cling fast to Him and know nothing else, grants them wisdom and raises them up through higher and higher stages of self-elevation, self-realization and bliss. Arjuna treated Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation of God on earth, as his friend, and Kṛṣṇa in the rôle of God exhorted him to depend entirely on Him and assured him that He would liberate him—He was asking him to give up everything else and cling to Him as his only support. The *Gītā* lays down for the first time the corner-stone of the teachings of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* and of the later systems of Vaiṣṇava thought, which elaborated the theory of *bhakti* and described it as the principal method of self-elevation and self-realization.

Another important feature of the *Gītā* doctrine of devotion consists in the fact that, as, on the one hand, God is contemplated by His devotees in the intimate personal relation of a father, teacher, master and friend, with a full consciousness of His divinity and His nature as the substratum and the upholder of the entire animate and inanimate cosmic universe, so, on the other hand, the transcendent personality of God is realized not only as the culmination of spiritual greatness and the ultimate reconciliation of all relative differences, of high and low, good and bad, but as the great deity, with a physical, adorable form, whom the devotee can worship not only mentally and spiritually, but also externally, with holy offerings of flowers and leaves. The transcendent God is not only immanent in the universe, but also present before the devotee in the form of a great deity resplendent with brightness, or in the personal form of the man-god Kṛṣṇa, in whom



God incarnated Himself. The *Gītā* combines together different conceptions of God without feeling the necessity of reconciling the oppositions or contradictions involved in them. It does not seem to be aware of the philosophical difficulty of combining the concept of God as the unmanifested, differenceless entity with the notion of Him as the super-person Who incarnates Himself on earth in the human form and behaves in the human manner. It is not aware of the difficulty that, if all good and evil should have emanated from God, and if there be ultimately no moral responsibility, and if everything in the world should have the same place in God, there is no reason why God should trouble to incarnate Himself as man, when there is a disturbance of the Vedic *dharma*. If God is impartial to all, and if He is absolutely unperturbed, why should He favour the man who clings to Him, and why, for his sake, overrule the world-order of events and in his favour suspend the law of *karma*? It is only by constant endeavours and practice that one can cut asunder the bonds of *karma*. Why should it be made so easy for even a wicked man who clings to God to release himself from the bonds of attachment and *karma*, without any effort on his part? Again, the *Gītā* does not attempt to reconcile the disparate parts which constitute the complex super-personality of God. How are the unmanifested or *avyakta* part as Brahman, the *avyakta* part as the cosmic substratum of the universe, the *prakṛti* part as the producer of the *guṇas*, and the *prakṛti* part as the *jīvas* or individual selves, to be combined and melted together to form a complex personality? If the unmanifested nature is the ultimate abode (*param dhāma*) of God, how can God as a person, who cannot be regarded as a manifestation of this ultimate reality, be considered to be transcendent? How can there be a relation between God as a person and His diverse nature as the cosmic universe, *jīva* and the *guṇas*? In a system like that of Śāṅkara Brahman and Īśvara, one and the many could be combined together in one scheme, by holding Brahman as real and Īśvara and the many as unreal and illusory, produced by reflection of Brahman in the *māyā*, the principle of illusoriness. But, howsoever Śāṅkara might interpret the *Gītā*, it does not seem that it considered Īśvara or the world as in the least degree illusory. In the Upaniṣads also the notion of Īśvara and the notion of Brahman are sometimes found side by side. As regards God as Īśvara, the *Gītā* not only does not think him to be



illusory, but considers him the highest truth and reality. Thus there is no way of escaping from any of the categories of reality—the two *avyaktas*, *prakṛti*, *jīva* and the super-personality of Īśvara comprehending and transcending them all. The concepts of Brahman, *jīva*, the unmanifested category from which the world proceeds, and the *guṇas* are all found in the Upaniṣads in passages which are probably mostly unrelated. But the *Gītā* seems to take them all together, and to consider them as constituents of Īśvara, which are also upheld by Him in His superior form, in which He transcends and controls them all. In the Upaniṣads the doctrine of *bhakti* can hardly be found, though here and there faint traces of it may be perceived. If the Upaniṣads ever speak of Īśvara, it is only to show His great majesty, power and glory, as the controller and upholder of all. But the *Gītā* is steeped in the mystic consciousness of an intimate personal relation with God, not only as the majestic super-person, but as a friend who incarnates Himself for the good of man and shares his joys and sorrows with him, and to whom a man could cling for support in troubles and difficulties and even appeal for earthly goods. He is the great teacher, with whom one can associate oneself for acquisition of wisdom and the light of knowledge. But He could be more than all this. He could be the dearest of the dear and the nearest of the near, and could be felt as being so intimate, that a man could live simply for the joy of his love for Him; he could cling to Him as the one dear friend, his highest goal, and leave everything else for Him; he could consider, in his deep love for Him, all his other religious duties and works of life as being relatively unimportant; he could thus constantly talk of Him, think of Him, and live in Him. This is the path of *bhakti* or devotion, and the *Gītā* assures us that, whatever may be the hindrances and whatever may be the difficulties, the *bhakta* (devotee) of God cannot be lost. It is from the point of view of this mystic consciousness that the *Gītā* seems to reconcile the apparently philosophically irreconcilable elements. The *Gītā* was probably written at a time when philosophical views had not definitely crystallized into hard-and-fast systems of thought, and when the distinguishing philosophical niceties, scholarly disputations, the dictates of argument, had not come into fashion. The *Gītā*, therefore, is not to be looked upon as a properly schemed system of philosophy, but as a manual of right conduct and right perspective of things in the light of a mystical approach to God in self-resignation, devotion, friendship and humility.



Viṣṇu, Vāsudeva and Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣṇu, Bhagavat, Nārāyaṇa, Hari and Kṛṣṇa are often used in a large section of Indian religious literature as synonymous names of the supreme lord. Of these Viṣṇu is an important god of the *Ṛg-Veda*, who is one of the *ādityas* and who makes three strides in the sky, probably as he manifests himself in the eastern horizon, as he rises to the zenith and as he sets in the west. He is also represented in the *Ṛg-Veda* as a great fighter and an ally of Indra. It is further said that he has two earthly steps and another higher step which is known only to himself. But in the *Ṛg-Veda* Viṣṇu is certainly inferior to Indra, with whom he was often associated, as is evident from such names as *Indrā-viṣṇu* (R.V. IV. 55. 4; VII. 99. 5; VIII. 10. 2, etc.). According to later tradition Viṣṇu was the youngest, the twelfth of the *ādityas*, though he was superior to them all in good qualities<sup>1</sup>. His three steps in the *Ṛg-Vedic* allusion have been explained in the *Nirukta* as referring to the three stages of the sun's progress in the morning, at midday and at evening. One of the names of Viṣṇu in the *Ṛg-Veda* is *Śipiviṣṭa*, which Durgācārya explains as "surrounded with the early rays" (*śipi-saṃjñāir bāla-raśmibhir āviṣṭa*)<sup>2</sup>. Again, the sage praises Viṣṇu in the *Ṛg-Veda* in the following terms: "I, a master of hymns and knowing the sacred customs, to-day praise that name of thine, *Śipiviṣṭa*. I, who am weak, glorify thee, who art mighty and dwellest beyond this world<sup>3</sup>." All this shows that Viṣṇu was regarded as the sun, or endowed with the qualities of the sun. The fact that Viṣṇu was regarded as dwelling beyond this world is probably one of the earliest signs of his gradually increasing superiority. For the next stage one must turn to the *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*. In I. 2. 4 of that work it is said that the demons (*asura*) and the gods were vying with one another; the gods were falling behind, and the demons were trying to distribute the world among themselves; the gods followed them, making Viṣṇu the sacrifice as their leader (*te yajñam eva Viṣṇum puraskṛtyeyuh*), and desired their own shares; the demons felt jealous and said that they could give only so much ground as would

<sup>1</sup> *Ekādaśas tathā Tvaṣṭā dvādaśo Viṣṇur ucyate jaghanyajas tu sarveṣām ādityānām guṇādḥhikah.*

*Mahā-bhārata*, I. 65. 16. Calcutta, Bangavasi Press, second edition, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> *Nirukta*, v. 9. Bombay edition, 1918.

<sup>3</sup> *Ṛg-Veda*, VII. 100. 5, translated by Dr L. Sarup, quoted in *Nirukta*, v. 8.



be occupied by Viṣṇu when he lay down, Viṣṇu being a dwarf (*vāmano ha Viṣṇur āsa*). The gods felt dissatisfied at this, and they approached him with various *mantras* and in consequence attained the whole world. Again, in xiv. 1 of the same work, Kurukṣetra is referred to as being the place of the sacrificial performances of the gods, and it is said there that in industry, rigorism (*tapas*), faith, etc. Viṣṇu was the best of all gods and was regarded as being superior to them all (*tasmād āhur Viṣṇur devānāṃ śreṣṭhaḥ*), and was himself the sacrifice. Again, in *Taittirīya-saṃhitā*, I. 7. 5. 4, in *Vājasaneyi-saṃhitā*, I. 30; II. 6. 8; V. 21, in *Atharva-Veda*, v. 26. 7; VIII. 5. 10, etc., Viṣṇu is referred to as the chief of the gods (*Viṣṇu-mukhā devā*). Again, Viṣṇu as sacrifice attained unlimited fame. Once he was resting his head on the end of his bow; and, when some ants, perceiving that, said, "How should we be rewarded, if we could gnaw the strings of the bow," the gods said that they would then be rewarded with food; and so the ants gnawed away the strings, and, as the two ends of the bow sprang apart, Viṣṇu's head was torn from his body and became the sun<sup>1</sup>. This story not only shows the connection of Viṣṇu with the sun, but also suggests that the later story of Kṛṣṇa's being shot with an arrow by an archer originated from the legend of Viṣṇu's being killed by the flying ends of his bow. The place of Viṣṇu (*Viṣṇu-pada*) means the zenith, as the highest place of the sun, and it is probable that the idea of the zenith being the place of Viṣṇu led also to the idea that Viṣṇu had a superior place transcending everything, which was, however, clearly perceived by the wise. Thus, at the beginning of the daily prayer-hymns of the Brahmans, known as *sandhyā*, it is said that the wise see always that superior place of Viṣṇu, like an open eye in the sky<sup>2</sup>. The word *vaiṣṇava* is used in the literal sense of "belonging to Viṣṇu" in the *Vājasaneyi-saṃhitā*, v. 21, 23, 25, *Taittirīya-saṃhitā*, v. 6. 9. 2. 3, *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa*, III. 38, *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, I. 1. 4. 9; III. 5. 3. 2, etc.; but the use of the word in the sense of a sect of religion is not to be found anywhere in the earlier literature. Even the *Gītā* does not use the word, and it is not found in any of the earlier Upaniṣads; it can be traced only in the later parts of the *Mahā-bhārata*.

<sup>1</sup> *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, XIV. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *tad Viṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padaṃ sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ divya ca cakṣur ātatam.* *Ācamana-mantra* of the daily *sandhyā* prayer-hymn.



Again, it is well known that the supreme man, or *puruṣa*, is praised in very high terms in the man-hymn (*Puruṣa-sūkta*) of the *Rg-Veda*, x. 90, where it is said that *puruṣa* is all that we see, what is past and what is future, and that everything has come out of him; the gods performed sacrifice with him with the oblations of the seasons, and out of this sacrifice *puruṣa* was first born, and then the gods and all living beings; the various castes were born out of him; the sky, the heavens and the earth have all come out of him; he is the creator and upholder of all; it is by knowing him that one attains immortality; there is no other way of salvation. It is curious that there should be a word *nārāyaṇa*, similar in meaning (etymologically *nara* + *phak*, born in the race or lineage of man) to *puruṣa*, which was also used to mean the supreme being and identified with *puruṣa* and Viṣṇu. In *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, xiv. 3. 4, *puruṣa* is identified with *nārāyaṇa* (*purusaṃ ha nārāyaṇaṃ Prajāpatiṃ uvāca*). Again, in *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, xiii. 6. 1, the idea of the *puruṣa-sūkta* is further extended, and the *puruṣa nārāyaṇa* is said to have performed the *pañca-rātra* sacrifice (*pañcarātraṃ yajña-kṛatū*) and thereby transcended everything and become everything. This *pañca-rātra* sacrifice involves the (spiritual) sacrifice of *puruṣa* (*puruṣa-medho yajña-kṛatur bhavati*, xiii. 6. 7). The five kinds of sacrifice, five kinds of animals, the year with the five kinds of seasons, the five kinds of indwelling entities (*pañca-vidham adhyātmam*) can all be attained by the *pañca-rātra* sacrifices. The sacrifice was continued for five days, and the Vedic habit of figurative thinking associated each of the days of the sacrifice with various kinds of desirable things, so that the five-day sacrifice was considered to lead to many things which are fivefold in their nature. The reference to the five kinds of indwelling entities soon produced the *pañca-rātra* doctrine of the manifestation of God in various modes as the external deity of worship (*arcā*), inner controller (*antar-yāmin*), as various manifestations of His lordly power (*vibhava*), as successive deity-forms in intimate association as *vyūha* and as the highest God (*para*). This idea is also found in the later *Pāṇca-rātra* scriptures, such as *Ahīrbudhnyasamhitā* (I. 1) and the like, where God is described as having his highest form along with the *vyūha* forms. *Puruṣa* is thus identified with *nārāyaṇa*, who, by sacrifice of *puruṣa* (*puruṣa-medha*), became all this world. The etymological definition of *nārāyaṇa* as "one who has descended from man (*nara*)," as herein suggested in accordance



with Pāṇini, IV. 1. 99, is not, however, accepted everywhere. Thus Manu, I. 10, derives *nārāyaṇa* from *nāra*, meaning "water," and *ayana*, meaning "abode," and *nāra* (water), again, is explained as "that which has descended from *nara*," or supreme man<sup>1</sup>. The *Mahā-bhārata*, III. 12,952 and 15,819 and XII. 13,168, accepts Manu's derivation; but in v. 2568 it says that the supreme God is called *nārāyaṇa* because he is also the refuge of men<sup>2</sup>. The *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka*, x. 1. 6, identifies *nārāyaṇa* with Vāsudeva and Viṣṇu<sup>3</sup>. It may be suggested in this connection that even the Upaniṣad doctrine of the self as the supreme reality is probably a development of this type of ideas which regarded man as supreme God. The word *puruṣa* is very frequently used in the Upaniṣads in the sense of man, as well as in that of the highest being or supreme reality. In the *Mahā-bhārata* *nara* and *nārāyaṇa* are referred to as being the forms of the supreme lord. Thus it is said, "The four-faced Brahmā, capable of being understood only with the aid of the *niruktas*, joined his hands and, addressing Rudra, said, "Let good happen to the three worlds. Throw down thy weapons, O lord of the universe, from desire of benefiting the universe. That which is indestructible, immutable, supreme, the origin of the universe, uniform and the supreme actor, that which transcends all pairs of opposites and is inactive, has, choosing to be displayed, been pleased to assume this one blessed form (for, though double, the two represent but one and the same form). This *nara* and *nārāyaṇa* (the displayed forms of supreme Brahman) have taken birth in the race of *dharma*. The foremost of all deities, these two are observers of the highest vows and endowed with the severest penances. Through some reason best known to Him I myself have sprung from the attribute of His Grace Eternal, as thou hast; for, though thou hast ever existed since all the pure creations, thou too hast sprung from His Wrath. With myself then, these deities and all the great Ṛṣis, do thou adore this displayed form of Brahman and let there be peace unto all

<sup>1</sup> *āpo nārā iti proktā āpo vai nara-sūnavah  
tā yad asyāyanam pūrvam tena nārāyaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ.* Manu, I. 10.

Water is called *nāra*; water is produced from man, and, since he rested in water in the beginning, he is called *nārāyaṇa*. Kullūka, in explaining this, says that *nara*, or man, here means the supreme self, or Brahman.

<sup>2</sup> *Narāṇām ayanāc cāpi tato nārāyaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ.* *Mahā-bhārata*, v. 2568.

<sup>3</sup> *Nārāyaṇāya vidmahe vāsudevāya dhīmahi tan no Viṣṇuḥ pracodayāt.* *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka*, p. 700. Ānandāśrama Press, Poona, 1898.



the worlds without any delay<sup>1</sup>. In the succeeding chapter (i.e. *Mahā-bhārata*, *Śānti-parva*, 343) *nara* and *nārāyaṇa* are described as being two foremost of sages (*ṛṣi*) and two ancient deities engaged in the practice of penances, observing high vows and depending upon their own selves and transcending the very sun in energy.

The word *bhagavat* in the sense of blissful and happy is a very old one and is used in the *R̥g-Veda*, I. 164. 40; VII. 41. 4; X. 60. 12 and in the *Atharva-Veda*, II. 10. 2; V. 31. 11, etc. But in the *Mahā-bhārata* and other such early literature it came to denote Viṣṇu or Vāsudeva, and the word *bhāgavata* denoted the religious sect which regarded Viṣṇu as Nārāyaṇa or Vāsudeva as their supreme god. The Pali canonical work *Niddesa* refers to various superstitious religious sects, among which it mentions the followers of Vāsudeva, Baladeva, Puṇṇabhadda, Maṇibhadda, Aggi, Nāga, Suparṇa, Yakkha, Asura, Gandhabba, Mahārāja, Canda, Suriya, Inda, Brahmā, dog, crow, cow, etc. It is easy to understand why a Buddhist work should regard the worship of Vāsudeva as being of a very low type; but at any rate it proves that the worship of Vāsudeva was prevalent during the period when the *Niddesa* was codified. Again, in commenting upon Pāṇini, IV. 3. 98 (*Vāsudevārjunābhyām vun*), Patañjali points out that the word Vāsudeva here does not denote the Vāsudeva who was the son of Vasudeva of the Kṣatriya race of Vṛṣṇis, since, had it been so, the suffix *vuñ*, which is absolutely equivalent to *vun*, could well be by Pāṇini, IV. 3. 99 (*gotra-kṣattriyākhyebhyo bahulaṃ vuñ*), by which *vuñ* is suffixed to names of Kṣatriya race. Patañjali thus holds that the word *Vāsudeva* is in this rule not used to refer to any Kṣatriya race, but is a name of the Lord (*saṃjñaiṣā tatra bhagavataḥ*). If Patañjali's interpretation is to be trusted, for which there is every reason, Vāsudeva as God is to be distinguished from the Kṣatriya Vāsudeva, the son of Vasudeva of the race of Vṛṣṇis. It was well established in Pāṇini's time that Vāsudeva was God, and that His followers were called *Vāsudevaka*, for the formation of which word by the *vun* suffix Pāṇini had to make the rule (IV. 3. 98). Again, the Ghosundī inscription in Rajputana, which is written in Brāhmī, an early form of about 200-150 B.C., contains a reference to the building of a wall round the temple of Vāsudeva and Saṃkarṣaṇa. In the Besnagar inscription of about 100 B.C.

<sup>1</sup> *Mahā-bhārata*, *Śānti-parva*, 342. 124-129. P. C. Roy's translation, *Mokṣa-dharma-parva*, p. 817. Calcutta.



Heliiodorus, son of Diya, describes himself as a great devotee of Bhagavat (*parama-bhāgavata*), who had erected a pillar bearing an image of Garuḍa. In the Nānāghāt inscription of 100 B.C. Vāsudeva and Saṃkarṣaṇa appear together as deities to whom adorations are addressed along with other gods. If the testimony of Patañjali is accepted, the religious sect of Vāsudevas existed before Pāṇini. It is generally believed that Patañjali lived in 150 B.C., since in course of interpreting a grammatical rule which allowed the use of the past tense in reference to famous contemporary events not witnessed by the speaker he illustrates it by using a past tense in referring to the Greek invasion of the city of Sāketa (*aruṇad Yavanaḥ Sāketam*); as this event took place in 150 B.C., it is regarded as a famous contemporary event not witnessed by Patañjali. Patañjali was the second commentator of Pāṇini, the first being Kātyāyana. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar points out that Patañjali notices variant readings in Kātyāyana's *Vārttikas*, as found in the texts used by the schools of Bhāradvājiyas, Saunāgas and others, some of which might be considered as emendations of the *Vārttikas*, though Patañjali's introduction of them by the verb *paṭhanti*, "they read," is an indication that he regarded them as different readings<sup>1</sup>. From this Sir R. G. Bhandarkar argues that between Kātyāyana and Patañjali a considerable time must have elapsed, which alone can explain the existence of the variant readings of Kātyāyana's text in Patañjali's time. He therefore agrees with the popular tradition in regarding Pāṇini as a contemporary of the Nandas, who preceded the Mauryas. Kātyāyana thus flourished in the first half of the 5th century B.C. But, as both Goldstücker and Sir R. G. Bhandarkar have pointed out, the *Vārttika* of Kātyāyana notices many grammatical forms which are not noticed by Pāṇini, and this, considering the great accuracy of Pāṇini as a grammarian, naturally leads to the supposition that those forms did not exist in his time. Goldstücker gives a list of words admitted into Pāṇini's *sūtras* which had gone out of use by Kātyāyana's time, and he also shows that some words which probably did not exist in Pāṇini's time had come to be used later and are referred to by Kātyāyana. All this implies that Pāṇini must have flourished at least two or three hundred years before Kātyāyana. The reference to the Vāsudeva sect in Pāṇini's *sūtras* naturally suggests its existence before his time. The allusions

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. G. Bhandarkar's *Early History of the Deccan*, p. 7.



to Vāsudeva in the inscriptions referred to above can be regarded as corroborative evidence pointing to the early existence of the Vāsudeva sect, who worshipped Vāsudeva or Bhagavat as the supreme Lord.

Turning to literary references to Vāsudeva and Kṛṣṇa, we find the story of Vāsudeva, who is also called by his family name Kanha and Keśava (probably on account of his bunch of hair), in the *Ghaṭa-jātaka*. The story agrees in some important details with the usual accounts of Kṛṣṇa, though there are some new deviations. A reference to the Vṛṣṇi race of Kṣattriyas is found in Pāṇini, IV. 1. 114 (*ṛṣy-andhaka-vṛṣṇi-kurubhyaś ca*). The word is formed by an *uṇādi* suffix, and it literally means "powerful" or "a great leader<sup>1</sup>." It also means "heretic" (*pāṣaṇḍa*) and one who is passionately angry (*caṇḍa*). It is further used to denote the Yādava race, and Kṛṣṇa is often addressed as Vārṣṇeya, and in the *Gītā*, x. 37, Kṛṣṇa says, "Of the Vṛṣṇis I am Vāsudeva." The Vṛṣṇis are referred to in Kauṭilya's *Artha-sāstra*, where the group of Vṛṣṇis (*vṛṣṇi-saṅgha*) is said to have attacked Dvaipāyana. The *Ghaṭa-jātaka* also has the story of the curse of Kanha Dvaipāyana as the cause of the destruction of the Vṛṣṇis. But the *Mahā-bhārata* (xvi. 1) holds that the curse was pronounced by Viśvāmitra, Kaṇva and Nārada upon Śāmba, the son of Kṛṣṇa. Two Vāsudevas are mentioned in the *Mahā-bhārata*: Vāsudeva, the king of the Paundras, and Vāsudeva or Kṛṣṇa, the brother of Saṃkarṣaṇa, and both of them are mentioned as being present in the great assemblage of kings at the house of King Drupada for the marriage of Draupadī; it is the latter Vāsudeva who is regarded as God. It is very probable that Vāsudeva originally was a name of the sun and thus became associated with Viṣṇu, who with his three steps traversed the heavens; and a similarity of Kṛṣṇa or Vāsudeva to the sun is actually suggested in the *Mahā-bhārata*, xii. 341. 41, where Nārāyaṇa says, "Being like the sun, I cover the whole world with my rays, and I am also the sustainer of all beings and am hence called Vāsudeva."

Again, the word *Sātvata* also is used as a synonym of Vāsudeva or Bhāgavata. The word *Sātvata* in the plural form is a name of a tribe of the Yādavas, and in the *Mahā-bhārata*, vii. 7662, the phrase *Satvatām varah* is used to denote Sātyaki, a member of the Yādava race, though this appellation is applied to Kṛṣṇa in a

<sup>1</sup> *Yūthena vṛṣṇir ejati, Rg-Veda*, i. 10. 2.



large number of places in the *Mahā-bhārata*<sup>1</sup>. In the later *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* (IX. 9. 50) it is said that the Sātvatas worship Brahman as Bhagavān and as Vāsudeva. In the *Mahā-bhārata*, VI. 66. 41, Saṃkarṣaṇa is said to have introduced the *sātvata* rites in worshipping Vāsudeva. If Sātvata was the name of a race, it is easy to imagine that the persons may have had special rites in worshipping Vāsudeva. Yāmūnācārya, the great teacher of Rāmānuja in the tenth century A.D., says that those who adore God (*bhagavat*), the supreme person, with purity (*sattva*), are called *bhāgavata* and *sātvata*<sup>2</sup>. Yāmuna strongly urges that Sātvatas are Brāhmaṇas by caste, but are attached to Bhagavat as the supreme lord. Yāmuna, however, seems to urge this in strong opposition to the current view that Sātvatas were a low-caste people, who had not the initiation with the holy thread and were an outcast people originated from the Vaiśyas<sup>3</sup>. The Sātvatas are said to be the fifth low-caste people, who worship in the temples of Viṣṇu by the orders of the king, and are also called Bhāgavatas<sup>4</sup>. The Sātvatas and Bhāgavatas are those who make their living by worshipping images and are hence low and disreputable. Yāmuna urges that this popular view about the Bhāgavatas and the Sātvatas is all incorrect; for, though there are many Sātvatas who make a living by worshipping images, not all Sātvatas and Bhāgavatas do so; and there are many among them who worship Bhagavat, as the supreme person, solely by personal devotion and attachment.

From Patañjali's remarks in commenting on Pāṇini, IV. 3. 98, it is seen that he believed in the existence of two Vāsudevas, one a leader of the Vṛṣṇi race and the other God as Bhagavat. It has already been pointed out that the name Vāsudeva occurs also in the *Ghaṭa-jātaka*. It may therefore be argued that the name Vāsudeva was an old name, and the evidence of the passage of the *Niddesa*, as well as that of Patañjali, shows that it was a name of God or Bhāgavat. The later explanation of Vāsudeva as "the son of Vāsudeva" may therefore be regarded as an

<sup>1</sup> *Mahā-bhārata*, v. 2581, 3041, 3334, 3360, 4370; IX. 2532, 3502; X. 726; XII. 1502, 1614, 7533.

<sup>2</sup> *tataś ca sattvād bhagavān bhajyate yaiḥ paraḥ pumān te sātvatā bhāgavatā ity ucyante dvijottamāḥ.*

Yāmuna's *Āgama-prāmānya*, p. 7. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Thus Manu (X. 23) says:

*vaiśyāt tu jāyate vrātyāt sudhamvācārya eva ca kārūṣaś ca vījanmā ca maitras sātvata eva ca.*

<sup>4</sup> *pañcamaḥ sātvato nāma Viṣṇor āyatanam hi saḥ pūjayed ājñayā rājñām sa tu bhāgavataḥ smṛtaḥ.*

*Ibid.* p. 8.



unauthorized surmise. It is very probable that Vāsudeva was worshipped by the race of Yādavas as a tribal hero according to their own tribal rites and that he was believed to be an incarnation of Viṣṇu, who was in his turn associated with the sun. Megasthenes, in his account of India as he saw it, speaks of the Sourasenoī—an Indian nation in whose land are two great cities, Methora and Kleisobora, through which flows the navigable river Jobares—as worshipping Heracles. “Methora” in all probability means Mathurā and “Jobares” Jumna. It is probable that Heracles is Hari, which again is a name of Vāsudeva. Again in the *Mahā-bhārata*, vi. 65, Bhīṣma says that he was told by the ancient sages that formerly the great supreme person appeared before the assembly of gods and sages, and Brahmā began to adore Him with folded hands. This great Being, who is there adored as Vāsudeva, had first created out of Himself Saṁkarṣaṇa, and then Pradyumna, and from Pradyumna Aniruddha, and it was from Aniruddha that Brahmā was created. This great Being, Vāsudeva, incarnated Himself as the two sages, Nara and Nārāyaṇa. He Himself says in the *Mahā-bhārata*, vi. 66, that “as Vāsudeva I should be adored by all and no one should ignore me in my human body”; in both these chapters Kṛṣṇa and Vāsudeva are identical, and in the *Gītā* Kṛṣṇa says that “of the Vṛṣṇis I am Vāsudeva.” It has also been pointed out that Vāsudeva belonged to the Kanhāyana *gotra*. As Sir R. G. Bhandarkar says, “It is very probable that the identification of Kṛṣṇa with Vāsudeva was due to the similarity of the *gotra* name with the name of Kṛṣṇa<sup>1</sup>.” From the frequent allusions to Vāsudeva in Patañjali’s commentary and in the *Mahā-bhārata*, where he is referred to as the supreme person, it is very reasonable to suppose that the word is a proper noun, as the name of a person worshipped as God, and not a mere patronymic name indicating an origin from a father Vasudeva. Kṛṣṇa, Janārdana, Keśava, Hari, etc. are not Vṛṣṇi names, but were used as personal appellations of Vāsudeva. Patañjali in his commentary on Pāṇini, iv. 3. 98, notes that Vāsudeva, as the name of a Kṣātriya king of the race of Vṛṣṇis, is to be distinguished from Vāsudeva as the name of God. This God, worshipped by the Sātvatas according to their family rites, probably came to be identified with a Vṛṣṇi king Vāsudeva, and some of the personal characteristics of this king became also personal

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. G. Bhandarkar’s *Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism*, pp. 11–12.



characteristics of the god Vāsudeva. The word Kṛṣṇa occurs several times in the older literature. Thus Kṛṣṇa appears as a Vedic ṛṣi, as the composer of *R̥g-Veda*, VIII. 74. In the *Mahā-bhārata Anukramaṇī* Kṛṣṇa is said to have descended from Āṅgiras. Kṛṣṇa appears in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (III. 17) as the son of Devakī, as in the *Ghaṭa-jātaka*. It is therefore probable that Vāsudeva came to be identified with Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī. The older conception of Kṛṣṇa's being a *ṛtvij* is found in the *Mahā-bhārata*, and Bhīṣma in the *Sabhā-parva* speaks of him as being a *ṛtvij* and well-versed in the accessory literature of the Vedas (*vedāṅga*). It is very probable, as Dr Ray Chaudhury points out, that Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, was the same as Vāsudeva, the founder of the Bhāgavata system; for he is referred to in the *Ghaṭa-jātaka* as being Kanhāyana, or Kanha, which is the same as Kṛṣṇa, and as Devakī-putra, and in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, III. 17. 6, also he is referred to as being Devakī-putra. In the *Ghaṭa-jātaka* Kṛṣṇa is spoken of as being a warrior, whereas in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* he is a pupil of Ghora Āṅgirasa, who taught him a symbolic sacrifice, in which penances (*tapas*), gifts (*dāna*), sincerity (*ārjava*), non-injury (*ahimsā*) and truthfulness (*satya-vacana*) may be regarded as sacrificial fees (*dakṣiṇā*). The *Mahā-bhārata*, II. 317, describes Kṛṣṇa both as a sage who performed long courses of asceticism in Gandhamādana, Puṣkara and Badarī, and as a great warrior. He is also described in the *Mahā-bhārata* as Vāsudeva, Devakī-putra and as the chief of the Sātvatas, and his divinity is everywhere acknowledged there. But it is not possible to assert definitely that Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa the warrior and Kṛṣṇa the sage were not three different persons, who in the *Mahā-bhārata* were unified and identified, though it is quite probable that all the different strands of legends refer to one identical person.

If the three Kṛṣṇas refer to one individual Kṛṣṇa, he must have lived long before Buddha, as he is alluded to in the *Chāndogya*, and his guru Ghora Āṅgirasa is also alluded to in the *Kauṣītaki-brāhmaṇa*, xxx. 6 and the *Kāthaka-saṃhitā*, I. 1, which are pre-Buddhistic works. Jaina tradition refers to Kṛṣṇa as being anterior to Pārśvanātha (817 B.C.), and on this evidence Dr Ray Chaudhury thinks that he must have lived long before the closing years of the ninth century B.C.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Sect*, p. 39.



**Bhāgavata and the Bhagavad-gītā.**

The *Mahā-bhārata* (xii. 348) associates the *Bhagavad-gītā* with the doctrines of the Ekānti-Vaiṣṇavas. It is said there that the God Hari (*bhagavān Hari*) always blesses those that are devoted to God without any idea of gain (*ekāntin*) and accepts their adorations, offered in accordance with proper rites (*vidhi-prayukta*)<sup>1</sup>. This *ekānta* religion (*ekānta-dharma*) is dear to Nārāyaṇa, and those who adhere to it attain to Hari, as Nīlakaṇṭha, the commentator on the *Mahā-bhārata*, points out, without passing through the three stages of Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Saṃkarṣaṇa. The *ekāntin* faith leads to much higher goals than the paths of those that know the Vedas and lead the lives of ascetics. The principles of this *ekāntin* faith were enunciated by the Bhagavat himself in the battle of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kurus, when Arjuna felt disinclined to fight. This faith can be traced originally to the *Sāma-veda*. It is said that, when Nārāyaṇa created Brahmā, he gave him this *sātvata* faith, and from that time forth, as the *Mahā-bhārata* states, there has been a host of persons who were instructed in this faith and followed it. It was at a much later stage briefly described in the *Hari-gītā*<sup>2</sup>. This faith is very obscure and very difficult to be practised, and its chief feature is cessation from all kinds of injury. In some places it is said to recognize one *vyūha*: in other places two, and in others three, *vyūhas* are mentioned. Hari, however, is the final and absolute reality; he is both the agent, the action and the cause, as well as the absolute beyond action (*akartā*). There are, however, but few *ekāntins* in the world: had the world been filled with *ekāntins*, who never injured anyone, were always engaged in doing good to others and attained self-know-

<sup>1</sup> *Ekāntino niṣkāma-bhaktāḥ*, Nīlakaṇṭha's commentary on the *Mahā-bhārata*, xii. 348. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *kathito hari-gītāsu samāsa-vidhi-kalpitaḥ, Hari-gītā*. 53. The traditional teaching of the *Gītā* doctrines is represented as ancient in the *Gītā* itself (iv. 1-3), where it is said that Bhagavān declared it to Vivasvān, and he related it to Manu, and Manu to Ikṣvāku, and so on, until after a long time it was lost; it was again revived by Kṛṣṇa in the form of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In the *Mahā-bhārata*, xii. 348, it is said that Sanat Kumāra learned this doctrine from Nārāyaṇa, from him Prajāpati, from him Raibhya and from him Kuṁṣi. It was then lost. Then again Brahmā learned it from Nārāyaṇa, and from him the Barhiṣada sages learned it, and from them Jyeṣṭha. Then again it was lost; then again Brahmā learned it from Nārāyaṇa, and from him Dakṣa learned it, and from him Vivasvān, and from Vivasvān Manu, and from Manu Ikṣvāku. Thus the tradition of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, as given in the poem itself, tallies with the *Mahā-bhārata* account.



ledge, then the golden age, *kṛta yuga*, would have come again. This *ekānta* religion is a faith parallel to that of the Sāṃkhya-yoga, and the devotee who follows it attains Nārāyaṇa as his ultimate state of liberation. From this description in the *Mahā-bhārata* it seems that the doctrine of the *Gītā* was believed to be the *ekāntin* doctrine originally taught by Nārāyaṇa to Brahmā, Nārada and others long before the recital of the *Gītā* by Kṛṣṇa in the *Mahā-bhārata* battle. It is further known that it had at least four or five different schools or variant forms, viz. *eka-vyūha*, *dvi-vyūha*, *tri-vyūha*, *catur-vyūha* and *ekānta*, and that it was known as the Sātvata religion.

Yāmuna-cārya in his *Āgama-prāmāṇya* tries to combat a number of views in which the Bhāgavatas were regarded as being inferior to Brahmins, not being allowed to sit and dine with them. The Sātvatas, again, are counted by Manu as a low-caste people, born from outcast Vaiśyas and not entitled to the holy thread<sup>1</sup>. The Sātvatas were, of course, regarded as the same as Bhāgavatas, and their chief duties consisted in worshipping for their living in Viṣṇu temples by the order of the king<sup>2</sup>. They also repaired or constructed temples and images for their living, and were therefore regarded as outcasts. That the Bhāgavatas did in later times worship images and build images and temples is also evident from the fact that most of the available *Pañca-rātra* works are full of details about image-building and image-worship. The *Gītā* (IX. 26) also speaks of adoration with water, flowers and leaves, which undoubtedly refers to image-worship. Saṃkarṣaṇa, as the brother or companion of Kṛṣṇa, is mentioned in Patañjali's *Mahā-bhāṣya* (II. 2. 24) in a verse quoted by him, and in II. 2. 34 he seems to quote another passage, in which it is related that different kinds of musical instruments were played in the temple of Dhana-pati, Rāma and Keśava, meaning Balarāma, Saṃkarṣaṇa and Kṛṣṇa<sup>3</sup>.

As Yāmuna points out, the opponents of the Bhāgavata school urge that, since the ordinary Brahminic initiation is not deemed

<sup>1</sup> *vaiśyāt tu jāyate vrātyāt sudhanvācārya eva ca kārūṣa ca vijanmā ca maitraḥ saśvata eva ca. Āgama-prāmāṇya*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *pañcamah sātva to nāma Viṣṇor āyatanām hi sa pūjayed ājñayā rājñām sa tu bhāgavataḥ smṛtaḥ. Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Saṃkarṣaṇa-dvītiyasya balaṃ Kṛṣṇasya ardhitaṃ.*

*Mahā-bhāṣya*, II. 2. 27.

*mydaṅga-saṅkha-panavāḥ prthañ nadanti saṃsadi prāsāde dhana-pati-rāma-keśavānān.*

*Ibid.* II. 2. 34.



a sufficient qualification for undertaking the worship of Viṣṇu, and since special and peculiar forms of initiation and ceremonial performances are necessary, it is clear that the Bhāgavata forms of worship are not Vedic in their origin. The fourteen Hindu sciences, viz. the six *vedāṅgas* on Vedic pronunciation (*śikṣā*), ritual (*kalpa*), grammar (*vyākaraṇa*), metre (*chandas*), astronomy (*jyotiṣa*), lexicography (*nirukta*), the four Vedas, Mīmāṃsā, argumentative works or philosophy (*nyāya-vistara*), the mythologies (*purāṇa*) and rules of conduct (*dharma-śāstra*), do not refer to the *Pañca-rātra* scriptures as being counted in their number. So the Bhāgavata or the *Pañca-rātra* scriptures are of non-Vedic origin. But Yāmuna contends that, since Nārāyaṇa is the supreme god, the Bhāgavata literature, which deals with his worship, must be regarded as having the same sources as the Vedas; the Bhāgavatas also have the same kind of outer dress as the Brahmins and the same kinds of lineage. He further contends that, though *sātvata* means an outcast, yet *sātvata* is a different word from *sātvata*, which means a devotee of Viṣṇu. Moreover, not all Bhāgavatas take to professional priestly duties and the worshipping of images for their livelihood; for there are many who worship the images through pure devotion. It is very easy to see that the above defence of the Bhāgavatas, as put forward by one of their best advocates, Yāmunācārya, is very tame and tends to suggest very strongly that the Bhāgavata sect was non-Vedic in its origin and that image-worship, image-making, image-repairing and temple-building had their origin in that particular sect. Yet throughout the entire scriptures of the *Pañca-rātra* school there is the universal and uncontested tradition that it is based on the Vedas. But its difference from the Vedic path is well known. Yāmuna himself refers to a passage (*Āgama-prāmāṇya*, p. 51) where it is said that Śaṇḍilya, not being able to find his desired end (*puruṣārtha*) in all the four Vedas, produced this scripture. The *Gītā* itself often describes the selfish aims of sacrifices, and Kṛṣṇa urges Arjuna to rise above the level of the Vedas. It seems, therefore, that the real connection of the *Pañca-rātra* literature is to be found in the fact that it originated from Vāsudeva or Viṣṇu, who is the supreme God from whom the Vedas themselves were produced. Thus the *Īśvara-saṃhitā* (1. 24-26) explains the matter, and states that the Bhāgavata literature is the great root of the Veda tree, and the Vedas themselves are but trunks of it, and the followers of Yoga are but its branches. Its



main purpose is to propound the superiority of Vāsudeva, who is the root of the universe and identical with the Vedas<sup>1</sup>.

The affinity of this school of thought to the Upaniṣad school becomes apparent when it is considered that Vāsudeva was regarded in this system as the highest Brahman<sup>2</sup>. The three other *vyūhas* were but subordinate manifestations of him, after the analogy of *prajñā*, *virāt*, *viśva* and *taijasa* in monistic Vedānta. Patañjali's *Mahā-bhāṣya* does not seem to know of the four *vyūhas*, as it mentions only Vāsudeva and Saṃkarṣaṇa; and the *Gītā* knows only Vāsudeva. It seems, therefore, that the *vyūha* doctrine did not exist at the time of the *Gītā* and that it evolved gradually in later times. It is seen from a passage of the *Mahā-bhārata*, already referred to, that there were different variations of the doctrine and that some accepted one *vyūha*, others two, others three and others four. It is very improbable that, if the *vyūha* doctrine was known at the time of the *Gītā*, it should not have been mentioned therein. For the *Gītā* was in all probability the earliest work of the *ekāntin* school of the Bhāgavatas<sup>3</sup>. It is also interesting in this connection to note that the name Nārāyaṇa is never mentioned in the *Gītā*, and Vāsudeva is only identified with Viṣṇu, the chief of the *ādityas*. Thus Sir R. G. Bhandarkar says, "It will be seen that the date of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which contains

<sup>1</sup> *mahato veda-vṛkṣasya mūla-bhūto mahān ayaṃ skandha-bhūtā ṛg-ādyās te śākhā-bhūtās ca yoginaḥ jagan-mūlasya vedasya Vāsudevasya mukhyataḥ pratipādakatā siddhā mūla-vedākhyatā dvijāḥ.*

*Īśvara-saṃhitā*, I. 24-26.

<sup>2</sup> *yasmāt sāmyak paraṃ brahma Vāsudevākhyam avyayam asmād avāpyate śāstrāḥ jñāna-pūrveṇa karmaṇā.*

*Pauṣkarāgama*, as quoted in *Rāmānuja-bhāṣya*, II. 2. 42.

The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII. 1. 2) refers also to the study of *ekāyana*, as in the passage *vāko-vākyam ekāyanam*; *ekāyana* is also described as being itself a Veda in *Śrīpraśna-saṃhitā*, II. 38, 39:

*vedam ekāyanam nāma vedānām śirasi sthitam tad-arthakam pañca-rātram mokṣa-daṃ tat-kriyāvatām yasminn eko mokṣa-mārgo vede proktaḥ sanātanaḥ mad-ārādhana-rūpeṇa tasmād ekāyanam bhavet.*

See also the article "The Pañca-rātras or Bhāgavata-śāstra," by Govindācārya Svāmīn, *J.R.A.S.* 1911.

<sup>3</sup> That the *ekāntin* faith is the same as the Sātvata or the *Pañca-rātra* faith is evident from the following quotation from the *Pādma-tantra*, IV. 2. 88:

*sūris suhrd bhāgavatas sātvatataḥ pañca-kāla-vit ekāntikas tan-mayaś ca pañca-rātriḥ ity api.*

This faith is also called *ekāyana*, or the path of the One, as is seen from the following passage from the *Īśvara-saṃhitā*, I. 18:

*mokṣāyanāya vai panthā etad-anyo na vidyate tasmād ekāyanam nāma pravadaṃti māniṣiṇaḥ.*



no mention of the *vyūhas* or personified forms, is much earlier than those of the inscriptions, the *Niddesa* and *Patañjali*, i.e. it was composed not later than the beginning of the fourth century before the Christian era; how much earlier it is difficult to say. At the time when the *Gītā* was conceived and composed the identification of Vāsudeva with Nārāyaṇa had not yet taken place, nor had the fact of his being an incarnation of Viṣṇu come to be acknowledged, as appears from the work itself.... Viṣṇu is alluded to as the chief of the Ādityas and not as the supreme being, and Vāsudeva was Viṣṇu in this sense, as mentioned in chapter x, because the best thing of a group or class is represented to be his *vibhūti* or special manifestation<sup>1</sup>."

The date of the *Gītā* has been the subject of long discussions among scholars, and it is inconvenient for our present purposes to enter into an elaborate controversy. One of the most extreme views on the subject is that of Dr Lorinser, who holds that it was composed after Buddha, and several centuries after the commencement of the Christian era, under the influence of the *New Testament*. Mr Telang in the introduction to his translation of the *Bhagavad-gītā* points out—as has been shown above—that the *Bhagavad-gītā* does not know anything that is peculiarly Buddhistic. Attempt has also been made to prove that the *Gītā* not only does not know anything Buddhistic, but that it also knows neither the accepted Sāṃkhya philosophy nor the Yoga of Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra*. This, together with some other secondary considerations noted above, such as the non-identification of Vāsudeva with Nārāyaṇa and the non-appearance of the *vyūha* doctrine, seems to be a very strong reason for holding the *Gītā* to be in its general structure pre-Buddhistic. The looseness of its composition, however, always made it easy to interpolate occasional verses. Since there is no other consideration which might lead us to think that the *Gītā* was written after the *Brahma-sūtras*, the verse *Brahma-sūtra-padais caiva hetumadbhir viniścitaḥ* has to be either treated as an interpolation or interpreted differently. Śaṅkara also thought that the *Brahma-sūtra* referred to the *Gītā* as an old sacred writing (*smṛti*), and this tallies with our other considerations regarding the antiquity of the *Gītā*. The view of Dr Lorinser, that the *Bhagavad-gītā* must have borrowed at least some of its materials from Christianity, has been pretty successfully refuted by

<sup>1</sup> *Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism*, p. 13.



Mr Telang in the introduction to his translation, and it therefore need not be here again combated. Dr Ray Chaudhury also has discussed the problem of the relation of Bhāgavatism to Christianity, and in the discussion nothing has come out which can definitely make it seem probable that the Bhāgavata cult was indebted to Christianity at any stage of its development; the possibility of the *Gītā* being indebted to Christianity may be held to be a mere fancy. It is not necessary here to enter into any long discussion in refuting Garbe's view that the *Gītā* was originally a work on Sāṃkhya lines (written in the first half of the second century B.C.), which was revised on Vedāntic lines and brought to its present form in the second century A.D.; for I suppose it has been amply proved that, in the light of the uncontradicted tradition of the *Mahā-bhārata* and the *Pañca-rātra* literature, the *Gītā* is to be regarded as a work of the Bhāgavata school, and an internal analysis of the work also shows that the *Gītā* is neither an ordinary Sāṃkhya nor a Vedānta work, but represents some older system wherein the views of an earlier school of Sāṃkhya are mixed up with Vedāntic ideas different from the Vedānta as interpreted by Śaṅkara. The arbitrary and dogmatic assertion of Garbe, that he could clearly separate the original part of the *Gītā* from the later additions, need not, to my mind, be taken seriously. The antiquity of the Bhāgavata religion is, as pointed out by Tilak, acknowledged by Senart (*The Indian Interpreter*, October 1909 and January 1910) and Bühler (*Indian Antiquary*, 1894), and the latter says, "The ancient Bhāgavata, Sātvata or *Pañca-rātra* sect, devoted to the worship of Nārāyaṇa and his deified teacher Kṛṣṇa Devakī-putra, dates from a period long anterior to the rise of the Jainas in the eighth century B.C." And assuredly the *Gītā* is the earliest available literature of this school. As regards external evidence, it may be pointed out that the *Gītā* is alluded to not only by Kālidāsa and Bāṇa, but also by Bhāsa in his play *Karṇa-bhāra*<sup>1</sup>. Tilak also refers to an article by T. G. Kale in the *Vedic Magazine*, VII. pp. 528-532, where he points out that the *Bodhāyana-Grhya-śeṣa-sūtra*, II. 22. 9, quotes the *Gītā*, IX. 26,

<sup>1</sup> Tilak quotes this passage on page 574 of his *Bhagavad-gītā-rahasya* (Bengali translation of his Marathi work) as follows:

hato 'pi labhate svargaṃ jītvā tu labhate yaśaḥ  
ubhe bahumate loka nāsti niṣphalatā raṇe,

which repeats the first two lines of the *Gītā*, II. 37.



and the *Bodhāyana-Pitr-medha-sūtra*, at the beginning of the third *praśna*, quotes another passage of the *Gītā*<sup>1</sup>. Incidentally it may also be mentioned that the style of the *Gītā* is very archaic; it is itself called an Upaniṣad, and there are many passages in it which are found in the *Īśa* (*Īśa*, 5, cf. the *Bhagavad-gītā*, XIII. 15 and VI. 29), *Muṇḍaka* (*Muṇḍ.* II. 1. 2, cf. the *Gītā*, XIII. 15), *Kāṭhaka* (II. 15, II. 18 and 19 and II. 7, cf. the *Gītā*, VIII. 11; II. 20 and 29) and other Upaniṣads. We are thus led to assign to the *Gītā* a very early date, and, since there is no definite evidence to show that it was post-Buddhistic, and since also the *Gītā* does not contain the slightest reference to anything Buddhistic, I venture to suggest that it is pre-Buddhistic, however unfashionable such a view may appear. An examination of the *Gītā* from the point of view of language also shows that it is archaic and largely un-Pāṇinian. Thus from the root *yudh* we have *yudhya* (VIII. 7) for *yudhyasva*; *yat*, which is *ātmane-pada* in Pāṇinian Sanskrit, is used in *parasmai-pada* also, as in VI. 36, VII. 3, IX. 14 and XV. 11; *ram* is also used in *parasmai-pada* in X. 9. The roots *kāṅkṣ*, *vraj*, *viś* and *ing* are used in Pāṇinian Sanskrit in *parasmai-pada*, but in the *Gītā* they are all used in *ātmane-pada* as well—*kāṅkṣ* in I. 31, *vraj* in II. 54, *viś* in XXIII. 55 and *ing* in VI. 19 and XIV. 23. Again, the verb *ud-vij*, which is generally used in *ātmane-pada*, is used in *parasmai-pada* in V. 20; *nivasiṣyasi* is used in XII. 8 for *nivatsyasi*, *mā śucaḥ* for *mā śociḥ* in XVI. 5; and the usage of *prasaviṣyadhvam* in III. 10 is quite ungrammatical. So *yamaḥ saṁyamatām* in X. 29 should be *yamaḥ saṁyacchatām*, *he sakheti* in XI. 41 is an instance of wrong *sandhi*, *priyāyārhasi* in XI. 44 is used for *priyāyāḥ arhasi*, *senāninām* in X. 24 is used for *senānyām*<sup>2</sup>. These linguistic irregularities, though they may not themselves be regarded as determining anything definitely, may yet be regarded

<sup>1</sup> *Bodhāyana-Gṛhya-śeṣa-sūtra*:

*tad āha bhagavān,  
patram puṣpam phalaṁ toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati  
tad aham bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayatātmanah.*

Also *Bodhāyana-Pitr-medha-sūtra*: *yatasya vai manuṣyasya dhruvam maraṇam  
iti vijānīyāt tasmā jāte na prahṛṣyen mrte ca na viśideta.*

Compare the *Gītā*, *jātasya hi dhruvo mrtyuḥ*, etc.

N.B. These references are all taken from Tilak's *Bhagavad-gītā-rahasya* pp. 574, etc.

<sup>2</sup> For enumeration of more errors of this character see Mr V. K. Rajwade's article in the Bhandarkar commemoration volume, from which these have been collected.



as contributory evidence in favour of the high antiquity of the *Gītā*. The *Gītā* may have been a work of the Bhāgavata school written long before the composition of the *Mahā-bhārata*, and may have been written on the basis of the Bhārata legend, on which the *Mahā-bhārata* was based. It is not improbable that the *Gītā*, which summarized the older teachings of the Bhāgavata school, was incorporated into the *Mahā-bhārata*, during one of its revisions, by reason of the sacredness that it had attained at the time.



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<sup>1</sup> The words are arranged in the order of the English alphabet. Sanskrit and Pāli technical terms and words are in small italics; names of books are in italics with a capital. English words and other names are in Roman with a capital. Letters with diacritical marks come after ordinary ones.



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