

BHAGAVAD GĪTA

The Pāñcarātra view is substantially what has been the informing metaphysique of the Viśiṣṭādvaita. Though this is so, yet the viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy saw that Pāñcarātra taught the essential inner teaching of the Veda and the up Upanishads (vedānta). Though the mantras may vary and the rites also be slightly different, yet there was a profound unity in the revelations of the Vedanta and the Pāñcarātra. The Bhagavad Gita has been from the very beginning considered to be a sātva or Pāñcarātra manual thought by Bhagavan Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is claimed to be in the incarnation of Narayana Vasudeva Himself, who originally propounded the Pāñcarātra for the help of those who are not fit for the other rites and methods of the Vedas. Indeed the statement of Bhagavan in the IV chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā that He had on an earlier occasion taught this supreme mystery of His incarnational existence and the Yogta (of Pāñcarātra) to Vivaśwan who taught it to Ikṣwāku (the Yoga (of Pāñcarātra) to Vivaśwan who taught it to Ikṣwāku (the ancestor of Śrī Rāma of Rāmāyaṇa) shows that this Pāñcarātra idea was also at the back of the Rāmāyaṇa scripture, which accepts the incarnation Śrī Rāmā as that of Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa (Yuddha Kanda).

That is the reason why some of the basic teachings of Viśiṣṭādvaita are to be gleaned from the Bhagavad Gītā (Mahābhārata) and the Rāmāyaṇa which is known as the prapatti – Veda. Bhārata is known as the Fifth Veda on account of its containing all knowledge but more because it is Pāñcarātra document as well. So too th Rāmāyaṇa is know as Śaraṇāgati Veda, where the Divine Lord reveals the supreme Love and mercy and capacity to forgive and save even the most recalcitrant enemy of truth and righteousness if only he would surrender to the Lord. The Bhagavad Gītā teaches the Nyāsa-Vidyā as the supreme Yoga of ātmasamarpaṇa or offering of the soul to the Divine. It is the yoga that is open to

all those who seek refuge in God. The Bhagavad Gītā is said to be the teaching of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna on the battlefield when overcome by sympathy, misplaced as Śrī Kṛṣṇa was to show, to those who had gone wrong or placed themselves in the wrong.

The problem by itself was a straight one, should one sacrifice all one's relatives and plunge them all into sorrow as well as those who depend on them for their very virtue and being? or should one technically or abstractly try to enforce the rights of individuals, come what may? Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna indeed differ from one another, the former counsels the latter course of performance of one's duty as more important and righteous, where as Arjuna prefers the former course of welfare of one's kith and s=ki in the long run. At first sight it appears that Arjuna is right and most would incline towards Arjuna, give weight to compassion and ahimsa and sacrifice duty itself, finding that there is a conflict of duties and that the social duty is much more important than the individual study of station and place in the society, a duty that, has devolved on one by the fact of belonging to one's cast and s on. Śrī Kṛṣṇa thus says that the real trouble is that Arjuna has taken a short view of things, and is sympathizing with men and things that hardly should be sympathized with, especially when the higher call to duty is present. There is the eternity of the souls, the duties eternal which are inherited by every one, the fact of the inevitability of death to all that is born, the supreme Law Divine which one can overstep. To be consciously God's instrument through surrender of all fruits of actions, of all effort, of all one that is to Him, is the way and the path of freedom from confusion of dharmas, and the attainment of the highest place here and hereafter. The Bhagavad Gītā teaches gradually the karma – yoga, the union of man with God through performance of all duties,, prescribed by the sāstras without attachment to fruits, through detachment , non-identification and as service to God ultimately as *Kartavyam Karma*, This karma yoga directly puts one in touch with God, whilst it cleanses the soul of avidya (ignorance), and false sympathies.

Then Śrī Kṛṣṇa shows how the goal of Sāṃkhya (discrimination or jñāna) is also the goal of Yoga or union through works (yāga). Jñāna Yoga is the path of knowledge to which pure and disinterested action leads. Renunciation or sanyāsa is not the way of knowledge as such, though it is a preparation for the knowledge. True sanyāsa is ātma-nyāsa rather than karma-renunciation. The nature of God is the true jñāna and one must perceive oneself as belonging to Him. all this creation, all these wonderful creatures are sustained by the one Suprem Vāsudeva. Everything originates from Him and everything returns to Him. He who sees that Supreme Being in everything and everything in Him is the sage, who always perceives all in an equal manner- *samadarśana*. The person who remains in that knowledge is a *sthita - prajñā*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa shows how He is the best in all, and all greatness is through His manifestation – *vibhūti*. Not only that. He also showed to Arjuna His own Supreme Cosmic Form that illustrated and illumined His statement that all are His body- His Viśvarūpam. He also showed His own form that is not perceptible to sensory eyes by granting the Divine Vision, *divya cakṣus*, which is indeed the eye of revelation a Sense that includes all other sense – transcendent abilities: *Divyendriay grāhya*. This form is that which only the lovers of God can see, none other, thus mere jñāna that God is the transcendent, is the cosmic reactor or even that he has pervaded all within and without will not be enough to be able to lead a to a vision of God. Those that love God with one pointed aim; those to whom nothing else is valuable, those whom God has chosen to reveal Himself those alone can attain to the Vision that is the culmination of knowledge of the Transcendent Greatness of God. It is here we see also the explanation of the Truth that God is the Ultimate Transcendent, that He is the immanent God-head in each and in all, that He is the God of Gods and creator of creators, that His is indeed Time itself in its cosmic and all forms that, He is the instigator in all and that He is the incarnating Deity for the sake of righteousness and truth, and that he has a special worshippable form of four hands, wearing the discus and conch, club and lotus – eyed (which recalls the arcā form) in which God Viṣṇu has to be contemplated outside in temples and inside the heart. The highest knowledge is the knowledge

of God, and the knowledge of one's relationship to Him is to be one of absolute subservience to Him, to be His nimitta matrum mmere instrument. The Yoga of dedicatin is taught to the great warrior to do everything as His mere instrument, becoming of His mind, being devoted to Him absolutely and unreservedly, for this alone will lead him to that immortal state of God experience – *param gatim*.

Bhakti has indeed to be developed. This growth of bhakti has to follow the usual methods of raja yoga, complete offering comprising the Pāñcarātra – method of abhigammana, upādhāna aijya ārādhyana and samādhi or at least the essentials of offering with love a flower, or fruit or leaf or water Bhakti thus develops through the simple worship of an adorable beautiful image of an avata or a representation of the higher forms of the one divine. It is clear that the worship of certain souls however eminent or having divine status could ever be valuable or helpful except as the bodies of the supreme Lord. Thus the worship of such deities as Rudra or Brahma or Indra really, is the worship of the Supreme Resident in them. So too the Mīmāṃsākāra Jaimini has stated that the worship could also be of them if only it is done with the knowledge that they are but the bodies of the One Supreme Lord, (*Sāksā dapi Jaimini; V.s.*) Śrī Kṛṣṇa has reconciled the teaching of the Pāñcarātra with that of the Veda. The Veda taught the Ultimate Being (Sat) is one only, though it is spoke of variously in the sense that he has all the functions and qualities attributed to all souls, be they of God class or human class etc., it is this meaning that Śrī Kṛṣṇa shows to be the true one in his description of the worship of other gods as referring to Him alone ultimately: and thus reconciles the Pantheism with the Polytheism which culminates in the Monotheism, achieved through the concept of śarīratva of all things, and beings, inclusive of all gods. No doubt he says the true mode of worship must be followed and if it were otherwise it would eased to results otherwise 0 *avidhipūrgvakam*. But it is indeed to get over the results so arising due to wrong performance that one has to surrender to the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva - Nārāyaṇas a kind of *prayścitta* (penance) so to speak. The ancients were as much concerned with the fear of punishment in the improper performances of duties, even as to day men are afraid of disobedience of laws

and regulations of the State. Thus the great word of consolation and hope was given by the Lord in His final word (*caama śloka*) asking one who is distressed and confused as to one's duty and the proper performance of the duties devolving on one, to surrender oneself to Him as the sole means (*upāya*) and end (*upeya*) and that He would protect the surrendered from all sin, and that He would look after his yoga and the welfare. The Bhagavad Gītā thus shows the *tattva*, the *hita* and *puruṣārtha* to be the One Supreme Being who has the souls and Nature as His power and modes and who orders all and leads the souls to the highest mansions of His eminence when they surrender to Him alone knowing Him to be the One Highest and the Incarnate one whose birth and activity are *divya* (divine).

Śrī Yāmunaçārya indeed wrote a brief analysis (Gitārtha Samgraha) of the teaching of the Gītā and Śrī Rāmānuja commented on the entire Gītā on the lines set by Śrī Yāmunaçārya. The Divine enjoyment of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was however the mystical Divine Life or the Life of Religion, and the source of Viśiṣṭādvaita in this direction was found in the wonderful spiritual life led by the 'Enjoyers of the Divine Forms and perfections – the divers in the deep of Spiritual Rapture' – the āḷvār . The Āḷvārs supplied the experience that at once supported and sustained the philosophy of Organic union with God of the soul, and explained the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita by the realisation of Divine communion. The Āḷvār – *Anubhavas* rank with the Vedic, but in a profoundly sātṛvika measures their hymns breath not the victories of the Gods over the dāsyas nor chant the glories of the Gods but of the One God who had become the beloved of the souls in His descents; and the praise of the necessity of the God of Gods was the wonderful refrain of their realisation.