

THE VISION OF REALITY-5
PRACTICAL GITA



Kesavabhotla Venkata Subrahmanya Sastry

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Kesavabhotla Venkata Subrahmanya Sastry
(K.V.S. Sastry)

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For Books Contact :

K.V.S. SASTRY

2-2-1109/5/6, Bagh Amberpet,
Hyderabad - 500 013.

Ph. 2742 1643

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DTP:

BALAJI GRAPHICS

1-1-524/B, Flat No.106,
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Dedicated

to

The Lord of the Seven Hills,

The Abode of Bliss :

SRI VENKATESA

with

a devoted heart of

love and earnestness.

By self-giving and seeking refuge.

K.V. Subrahmanya Sastry

My hearty blessing to my sons :

Sasi Bhushan
Rajaninatha Bhushan
Sudhakara Bhushan
Chandra Bhushan

Who have helped me to succeed in publishing all my books by taking on the burden of getting them printed by the Grace of Lord Sri Venkateswara.

– K.V. Subrahmanya Sastry

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PREFACE

We take it as a privilege to publish this book 'The Vision of Reality' in English in six volumes written by our father.

Vol (1) : Self-Knowledge

Vol (2) : Mystery of Creation

Vol (3) : A Revelation

Vol (4) : The Supreme Secret of the Gita

Vol (5) : Practical Gita

Vol (6) : The Nectar of the Gita

We have already published the Telugu version in four volumes and they are well received by the seekers of God. The last volume (5) is yet to be published.

These books give us the Vision of Reality. The vision becomes open the moment the screen of illusion is lifted. The aim of these books is to lift the screen so that the seekers of God will have the privilege of direct experience of that Reality.

We hope the purpose will be fulfilled.

We could do all this only by the Grace of the Lord of Seven Hills, the Abode of Bliss **Sri Venkateswara**

We earnestly seek His mercy, love and favour for our success.

Om Namo Venkatesaya

K. Sasi Bhushan
K. Rajaninatha Bhushan
Dr. K. Sudhakara Bhushan
Dr. K. Chandra Bhushan

18. INTRODUCTION

Sri Krishna was faced with a great and the toughest problem of bringing together the different races and civilization in India in his time into an integrated society with the character of unity in diversity. His aim was to establish peace and harmony in the country. To bring about this he had to put forth before the people a common ideal. Fear about the end pervades all minds. So he decided to put forth the supreme goal of life for all. The condition of Arjuna before the beginning of the battle at Kurukshetra came to his aid. He availed himself of the situation to establish his doctrine to the best of his supra human ability. He looked upon Arjuna as a representative of common human struggling in an endless state of indecision between two alternatives. He spread before him the panorama of life and its subtleties.

He put forth the 'union with God' as the goal of life which nobody could deny. He strated saying that the wordly life is all vanity. He said, "Having obtained this transient, joyless world, your worship Me" (Gita 9-33). That was his entreaty to Arjuna and through him to all warming nations of his time. He based the whole social structure on this solid foundation of the Supreme Reality and that the only thing of value was God. He said all life a meaning in its culmination in union with God. He sought to organise the Indian society round this social fabric. This helped to integrate the diverse racial and ethnic groups in the country with a common ideal which became the common bond of unity among them. As a corollary to this main principle he also preached the main principle he also preached the harmony of religious ideals; thereby he showed that various religious ideals were equally efficacious to lead man to the ultimate goal of union with God.

In explaining the four yogas the teacher of the Gita stressed the

fundamentals of spiritual life. This made it possible to assimilate the alien cultures and religions into the fold of the Aryan faith. According to the teacher of the Gita God is both transcendent and indwelling. So in his effort to attain unity with God, the aspirant is filled with love for his indwelling aspect also. Thus his love embraces the whole humanity. He becomes devoted, to the welfare of all beings and attains absorption in Brahman (Gita 5-25). He by comparison with himself looks upon the pleasure and pain in all creatures as similar (6-32); by seeing the Lord abiding equally every where, he does not injure anybody in any way and thus attains the supreme goal life. (13-27,28)

Krishna in his teaching breaks through the superficial differences between man and man and reaches his inner essence which is God. But the difference between the Aryans and non-Aryans appeared to be great barrier. To avoid this he introduced social liberation within the Aryan society by changing the basis of the division of society. This made it possible to assimilate non-Aryans into the Aryan social fold. He did not reject the four fold division of society but accepted it as God-ordained (4-13). "The four castes (in the sense of Varnas not present day caste system) were created by Me according to differences in aptitudes and actions of men. Though I am the author of them, yet I am actionless and changeless. I am imperishable and free from attachment." Thus Sri Krishna accepted the fourfold division of society based on the qualities and on their fitness to live a particular life suitable to serve society in a particular way. The division was functional and each individual was expected to do that kind of service to society for which he was best equipped according to his Guna (attribute) and 'Karuna' or his moral, spiritual and intellectual endowments as determined by his previous births and actions. The Gita further says, "From whom proceeds the activity of all beings and by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him through his own duty a man attains perfection." (Gita 18-46)

The question of service was the main aspect and not that of rights and privileges. The aspect of service put right man in the right place. There was no waste of energy nor want of efficiency.

Indiscriminate division of labour would have resulted in waste of energy and lack of efficiency. According to the Gita (18-41) the duties are clearly divided according to the dispositions born of their own nature. Spiritual progress depended not on the nature of the work performed, but on the attitude of the mind and the efficiency with which the work was performed. The way to freedom was open to all irrespective of caste. All were equal and had equal opportunities to attain their goal of life. Devotion to God threw open the gates of liberation to everyone.

Gita is concerned more with practice or use rather than theory. It is designed mainly to fulfil a function and it is inclined more to action rather than speculation. It insists on ability to make things function well. It shows the way to find solution to problems. The utility of the Gita lies in its practicality. Hence 'Practical Gita'.

19. GITA IN DAILY LIFE

Swami Vivekananda says, "Man begins to struggle and fight against nature. He makes many mistakes, he suffers. But eventually he conquers nature and realises his freedom. When he is free nature becomes his slave".

"The Reality of every one is that he is the same as the Eternal. It is ever Blessed, ever pure, and ever Perfect One. It is Atman, the soul in the saint and sinner as well, in the happy and the miserable as well, in the beautiful and the ugly as well, in men and in animals as well. It is the same through out. It is the Shining One."

"Just as the water cannot wet the lotus leaf, so work cannot bind the unselfish man by giving rise to attachment to results. The selfless and unattached man may live in the very heart of crowded sinful city, he will not be touched by sin."

"Through the terrors of evil, say 'my God, my love,' through pangs of death, say 'my God, my love'. Through all evils under the sun, say 'my God, my love'. Thou art here, I see thee. Thou art with me, I feel thee, I am thine, take me. I am not of the world's but thine; leave not then me."

This is what man has to bear in mind to get through daily life. How long should a man perform his duties? As long as he identifies himself with the body, in other words, as long as he thinks he is the body, he has to perform his duties. No doubt you need money for your worldly life, but don't worry too much about it. The wise course is to accept what comes of its own accord. Those who are devoted to Him and have taken refuge in Him, they earn and so they spend. This is what the Gita says as "accepting what comes of its own accord." One truly realises God if he performs his worldly duties in a detached spirit, if one lives in the world after realising that everything is illusory.

There is nothing in the universe that can change the changeless. Though this body has its beginning and end, the dweller in the body is infinite and without end. Knowing this, standup and fight! Fight it out, what ever comes. You have cried to all gods in the world. Has misery ceased? Arise! Awake! Standup and fight! says Swami Vivekananda. Make success and defeat the same, do standup and fight. This is the peculiar doctrine of the Gita – the doctrine of non-attachment. That is to say, we have to bear the result of our own actions because we attach ourselves to them. Only what is done as duty for duty's sake, can scatter the bondage of karma.

All the chain of problems in life comes from the identification of ourselves with the body. Who can work without any attachment? That is the real question. Only such a man works who is the same whether his work succeeds or fails. His heart does not give one false beat even if his whole life-work is burnt to ashes in a moment. This is what is called work for work's sake. The Gita further says that it is a tremendous error to feel helpless. Don't seek help from anyone. We are our own help. Vivekananda says, if we cannot help ourselves, there is no one to help us. "Thou thyself art thy only friend, Thou thyself thy only enemy. There is no other enemy but this self of mine". Gita gives this lesson, "Self alone is the friend of the Self and Self alone is the enemy of the Self." (Gita 6-5)

But it is not easy to learn this lesson. However this is the best and greatest lesson that the Gita teaches. Oh! what a time it takes to learn it! We seem to get hold of it and the next moment the old wave comes. The back bone breaks. We weaken and again grasp for that superstition and help. Just think of the huge mass of misery and all caused by this false idea of going to seek for help.

There is only one sin and that is weakness. How to get out of it? There is only one way. Surrender yourself to God who is in the innermost Self in you. That gives strength and confidence and they lead you through out life. then you will be happy.

What is happiness? Happiness is a feeling of well-being acquired through the fulfilment of a cherished desire. To most people happiness is synonymous with joy. Joy derived from sense objects is 'sukham'. So 'sukham' is a state of sense enjoyment. But there is another state called 'Ānamdam' (Bliss). It is supersensuous joy. It is not 'sukham'. 'Ānamdam' is true happiness. 'Ānamdam' is a state beyond the states of suffering and enjoyment. In fact it is a relief from both.

However the Gita does not use the word 'Ānamdam'. It uses the word 'atyanta sukham' to indicate 'Ānamdam' the supreme Bliss. The problem with sense-derived 'sukham' is that it never comes alone. It is inevitably followed by suffering or 'duhkha'. Sense-derived happiness is caused by 'Sattva Guna'. But Sri Krishna asks Arjuna (2-45) to go beyond the three Gunas. But for a common man it is better to get established in Sattva Guna which attaches one to happiness (Gita 14-9). This is happiness but it is sense derived happiness, it is not true happiness. True happiness or Bliss can be attained through meditation (2-66).

The three qualities or Gunas are present in every individual in differing proportions. These differing proportions of the Gunas make for the difference between one individual and another. Sattva leads to inner integration, Rajas leads to tension and Tamas to disintegration of personality. Inner integration paves the way for concentration of mind and meditation. As Rama Krishna says Sattva is the last step of the stairs, next is the roof. That roof is going beyond all the three Gunas and that is the ultimate Bliss.

The utility of the Gita lies in its practical applications to day-to-day life. Its philosophical analysis is different. But it is not easy to place the message of the Gita deep in one's own mind and follow it in life. This requires constant efforts in training one's senses and mind. The Gita provides various methods to do it. The Gita's central idea is to divert all our energies towards Divine. As the name indicates Bhagavad Gita is the Song Celestial. Song means music which is a harmony of sounds. The life attuned to God becomes Bhagavad Gita. So says the Gita (9-34), (18-65). But how? There are two ways to

control the mind, through the active will and through passive will. In this way the 'will' is forced to make the mind quiet. But sometimes it has a negative result. The passive will means controlling the mind quietly but strongly. The mind is made to control itself. The Gita way of mental control is that of passive willing. As Swami Brahmananda, a direct disciple of Sri Rama Krishna, says, if you concentrate your mind on God, the senses will themselves be curbed without much effort on your part. The whole universe is a Bhagavad Gita or Divine Song. When our life is attuned to this song it gives lasting calm and peace of mind.

The Gita shows the way for self-fulfilment. Our search for happiness is the effort for self-fulfilment. Self-fulfilment is the development of one's own potentialities, fulfilment of one self. Self-fulfilment means completion. Otherwise it is also attainment of perfection. Infact, the sense of fulfilment is elusive. To be honest, nobody feels fulfilled. We only hope that the fulfilment is just around the corner.

Modern life, starting in the west and now spreading around the world makes deceptive promise of happiness. We release our life-energy into the world on its own terms and try to grab all that life has to offer. It is a deceptive way because it is not the real way that life works. It leads to confusion, frustration and unhappiness. We see the people in the west trying desperately to look happy, to look excited. It takes some time before we see the sadness behind the smile, the desperation behind the excitement. It does not mean we should go about looking depressed and hopeless. When we are in depression we can make ourselves feel better by forcing ourselves to smile to be pleasant. This is therapetic way. But this covering of our desperation is a mask. It prevents us from dealing with the situation. By changing our attitude and expectations we can find quiet happiness in the midst of difficulties. That is growth. Covering unhappiness is a tragic loss of integrity. New age has promoted another 'Idea' that if we do the right things and think the right way, life will flow smoothly. It is said that

problems are a sign that we are doing something wrong. This also leads to desperation.

There may be some truth in the modern way of thinking. If we have surrendered ourselves to God and can take whatever that happens as the will of God, we get higher ease. It amounts to acceptance of that which comes our way. We no longer fight our circumstances. Is this the right way? May be at a higher level. But at lower level where most of us believe that this principle does not operate. It compounds our problems with a sense of guilt. It intensifies our suffering by making us blame ourselves. No doubt, positive thinking is a wonderful tool, but if it is not based on reality it can itself cause desperation.

This way of thinking that we should grab life and that we are not thinking the right thoughts, ultimately fails because it denies true nature of ordinary life. Life taken on its own terms does not solve problems. Problems are not lonely. They are always in bunches. When we relax with a feeling that a problem is solved, another problem is already around the corner. This is about the middle class common man. What about the rich. They try to buy their way out of the problems. But some times small things become huge problems for them by their own making. Such problems ordinary people may not even notice. Some of the rich may be wise in using their money to get out of the problems. But trying to buy the way out of the problems ultimately leads to degeneration.

Then what is fulfilment and how to get it? Fulfilment literally means completion of work that gives satisfaction. If we think fulfilment is to be 'high' on life by taking life on its own terms, we are mistaken because that sort of fulfilment is not possible in real life. This sort of fulfilment is only occasional subject to reaction. It is 'high' when compared to our dull normal state. If we think fulfilment is following joy in self-centred way, that Joy will soon abandon us. When character is not formed and the mind is not controlled, the fulfilment remains an empty dream. Many are attracted to spiritual life with the hope of fulfilment expressed as 'Illumination', 'Enlightenment', 'Self-

realisation', 'Union with God' etc. But the further we go on the path, the goal seems to go still farther. It means that there is no by-pass way to reach the goal. Thus fulfilment seems to elude us. Sri Krishna, however, brings fulfilment towards us in the Gita. He does not ask us to embrace life on its own terms in a desperate effort to be happy. He does not even promise that we can enjoy life and be free from problems by following the book of right thought and right actions. No doubt, he accepts the 'nature of life', but he points to 'that' within us which can make us rise above it.

Sri Krishna begins his teaching by shaking Arjuna out of despair. The famous verses 2 and 3 in Chapter 2 (2-2,3) are according to Vivekananda the essence of the Gita. Sri Krishna says to Arjuna that the state of cast-off weakness does not befit him. He asks him to throw off small minded faint heartedness and stand up to destroy the enemies and not to yield to unmanliness. Doesn't it look strange? While the Gita speaks of self-surrender to God, Vivekananda finds the essence of the Gita in these two verses (2-2,3). Vivekananda means that the teaching of the Gita stands on the pillars of strength, fearlessness and manliness. Manliness is godliness, it is what the Gita intends to teach according to Vivekananda.

Religious traditions teach us to fear evil, fear temptation, fear hell, fear mistakes and fear God. But Swami Vivekananda says (complete works Vol I PP 478-479) "It is tremendous error to feel helpless. Do not seek help from any one. We are our own help. If we can not help ourselves, there is no one to help us". Vivekananda's call 'Arise, awake' – 'uttishata jāgrata' (Katha Up. 1-3-14) reflects Gita's call. In fact, Vivekananda has spoken only what Sri Krishna said in the Gita.

After giving Arjuna a big shake, Sri Krishna teaches Arjuna about the 'Self' of Man which is untouched by life and death. It is transcendent over all problems of life. Then only, He teaches Arjuna, work without thinking of the fruits ('Nishkama Karma') and the four yogas. So the ultimate fulfilment in life is Self-realisation, says Gita.

This ultimate fulfilment is rare state of illumination. Sri Krishna uses the word 'Stitha-Prajna' which means steadfastness (unwavering state of mind). But some say that 'Stitha-Prajna' is not the fulfilment but awakening the inner and individual Self is the significant step. Sri Krishna says even this is not the ultimate fulfilment. He wants to take us to the Ultimate Illumination. He knows the use and place of everything in life. It must be remembered that while Buddha taught after leaving off everything in life, Sri Krishna taught the Gita in the midst of the battle field.

Sri Krishna's teaching is different from traditional spiritual teaching. He begins by insulating Arjuna's sense of man hood. Arjuna speaks of renunciation and self-sacrifice. Sri Krishna sees his wisdom is weakness and fear. Arjuna is not conquering life but only, giving up defeated.

There Sri Krishna very wisely starts with his advice to stand up and fight. He does not hesitate to appeal to ordinary values. He tells Arjuna, "If killed in battle you will attain heaven or victorious you will enjoy the earth. Then arise resolved to fight (Gits 2-37)". So for Sri Krishna fulfilment is not one final, ultimate goal because it is achieved only by a small handful of people in any generation. Krishna stresses on one's own duty. Whether we look at the metaphysical truth or the social duty our path is clear. It is possible to rise higher through the performance of one's duty in the right spirit.

In any religion traditional teachers or preachers emphasize self-denial, self-sacrifice, unselfishness, renunciation. Then what is self-fulfilment. How can it fit in a spiritual path? It is possible only if it is defined as "losing oneself in God". Vedantic doctrine of the Self allows all these apparent contradictions. Buddhism denies both the individual Self and the universal Self. Vedanta affirms Self and it is the Core point in Vedanta teaching Sankara's teaching revolves round the individual Self and universal Self. Even Ramanuja says that devotion is based on self-knowledge, "I can truly love God only if I know who I am". He says that one must take his stand on the purity

and glory of his individual Self.

Vedanta also teaches self-sacrifice and self-denial. But its teaching is based on 'Self' – affirmation. Sri Krishna does not touch self-denial or even humility. He teaches 'Sarva darsana' – an 'equal eye'. It means that the 'Eternal' is the same in animals and humans, in learned Brahmin as in despised out caste. The Light of Brahman dwells in all bodies and from the stand point of the Ultimate Reality in all we "see with an equal eye". This does not mean that Sri Krishna teaches egotism who has no place in spiritual life. Even the individual Self is pure consciousness, only individualised and it is the door to the Infinite Self or Universal Self. To speak the truth, the so called difference between knowledge and devotion is only imaginary. Knowledge is a reflection of one's own highest nature and devotion is a spark from the fire of God.

Sri Krishna after shaking away Arjuna's hesitation begins His teaching with description of the Self and asks Arjuna to stand on the glory of the Self. There are two mistakes that are commonly committed; one is thinking that you are great and others are weak. That is egotism which does not help you to stand on glory. The other mistake is that you think you know nothing. It amounts to denial of the Self, the very door way to God.

Thus step by step Sri Krishna leads Arjuna, infact all humans towards greater and greater self-fulfilment. He tells Arjuna first, "complaining, you get the earth and losing you get the heaven". He goes to the next step and asks Arjuna to stand on the glory of Pratyagatma, the inner Self, where the fluctuations of the world will not affect him. He further says, we will come to a point, before actual liberation, where we feel an increasing freedom from the fluctuations of this world. Then we feel inner quiet and blessedness resulting in greater fulfilment than we have experience in the world. If we go a step further, Krishna says, we become stitha prajna, steady-in wisdom. This wisdom is unperturbed like a ocean which takes in all the rushing rivers, yet remains undisturbed. So Krishna says if we know the nature

of the individual Self, we know the nature of the Supreme Self or Universal Self, which is God Himself. The Verse 66 in Chapter 18 reveals Krishna's ultimate advice : "Giving up all duties, take refuge in Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins, donot grieve". (18-66)

This is the ultimate fulfilment.

19:1. STRESS AND STRAIN IN TODAY'S LIFE

'Stress and strain' are the two main problems in to-day's life. Stress is excessive demand on physical and mental energy and strain is overtask or injure by over use. Man faces stress and strain every day in his profession and in his domestic life as well. The causes are many. Oveambition, need and anxiety to complete his work with in the prescribed time, to find the means to meet the ends in domestic life are some of the pressures not there in the past? Yes, they were there because they are a part of human life. But the pattern of today's life is different from the past. The needs are different and the means also have to be different. This search for means generates pressure. Further the way of life is diverse to-day and so problems also are diverse. So much so the means have to be diverse when the ends are varied. It is here that man is forced to over use his mental faculty, intellect. Naturally it imposes heavy weight on the mind and sometimes it may reach the elastic limit or even tresspass. The result is reaction from the mind which reflects in various parts of the body. Can a man remain passive? It is not possible in the midst of pulls and pressures of to-day's life. Then what to do? How to overcome these pulls and pressures and adjust oneself to the trend of to-day's life.

What is the Gita's advice to man in this context? There is a wrong motion that Gita is meant only for the aged and retired people for gaining atleast a little peace of mind. Some feel that the teachings of the Gita are so profound and deep that it is very difficult to understand in today's context. It is only a misnomer and a false perception. The Gita is a scripture of the mind, whether old or young. Infact, Arjuna represents the modern man struggling in the thought, 'to

do or not to do'. It is a confused and chaotic condition of life driven by the fear of failure. The battle of kurukshetra is, infact, the battle of life.

The problems, particularly that the youth face are : how to succeed in life? How o control passions? How to stand the heavy competition in to-day's life? and so on. If we deal with these problems at the peripheral levels, the result will not be encouraging. We must go to the root of the problem. That is what the Bhagavad Gita does. Arjuna was hesitant on the battle field to fight or not. Sri Krishna touched the root of this problem which was his anxiety that he would be forced to kill his kith and kin and teachers. Sri Krishna opened his eyes to the fact that he was only nominal in killing them because they were already destined to die in the battle. Further Krishna taught him that the death would be only to the physical body and not the Self. Man in truth is not simply the body but the Self. The body is only a covering on the Self which throws off this covering and put on something new. It is this that we call rebirth. But what is there in this teaching in the context of to-day's life.

Sri Krishna tries to bring about change of thought in Arjuna, when there is change in our thoughts, the quality of our actions will change and our response to the result also will change. Gita says that the change must come from with in. The teaching of the Gita can be applied in many ways in the context of the youth. Let us focus here on two vital areas : how to overcome stress and lack of motivation.

Stress is the reaction to a demanding situation. It can occur at two levels – physical and psychological. Physical stress is caused to the body by its reaction to the causes like accidents or infections. On the other hand the psychological stress is mental reaction to the situations in life like suspense, fear anxiety and emotions. These situations may be only for a short period but its effects on a person may extend for a long time leaving deep impressions on his sub-conscious mind.

Restlessness is a common problem of mind. Man has to prove

his ability to rise to the expectations in life. It will be a taxing time for him and it results in accumulation of stress. Man to-day lives a fast life and there is no time to take stock of things. Man thinks of working faster than what men did, say, twenty or thirty years ago. But then at what cost? There will be psychological breakdown and also negative thinking.

What does the gita say in this context? Arjuna was under great stress as he was not able to convince himself of the utility of the war and the purpose of killing his cousins, teachers and others in the impending war. He lost his inner steadiness and was unable even to lift his bow and arrow. He sank into depression. Similar is the case with many men in to-day's life. They are strong and mighty physically and mentally like Arjuna. But at the moment when they have to fulfil their duty and carryout their responsibility, they suddenly feel weak and helpless due to a little failure or obstacle here and there.

Sri Krishna asked Arjuna to arise and awake and shake off his mean faint-heartedness. The second and third verses in the second chapter of the Gita (2-2,3) should be a guidance to man in the times of his faint-heartedness. What does Krishna say? Face life, says Krishna, donot run away from it. It only makes your mind weak and makes it more and more incapable to face the challenges of life in future. One should think over and try to focus on strength instead of weakness. One should meditate on these two verses (2-2,3). Let the message of these two verses seep slowly into your sub-conscious mind, which is the store house of our inner motives positive or negative. Regular practice will ease away great part of weakness of mind which gives relief from stress. What is stress actually? It is excessive use of energy, in other words stress is energy. Energy needs to be channelled properly. Otherwise stagnated energy will burst out some day or other and cause damage to a person's life. Stress management is the limitation of stress and its effects by learning special types of behaviour and ways of thinking to reduce it. Face life, don't avoid it. This should be the motto of life.

Facing life is not that easy. It needs courage for which motivation is necessary. Motivation is stimulating the interest of a person. Getting motivated is very essential in life and it is a major issue in life. Motivation lies in constant drive and enthusiasm. Then we will be able to handle our negative thoughts and anxiety about the future. Nobody is an exception. At one time or other everyone faces doubt and depression in life. Our ability to overcome doubts and depression determines our success.

Self-motivation is a great art. Key to self-motivation is to understand our thoughts and how to handle them. We have to nurture positive thoughts in us. We have to learn the art of remaining focussed. This means we have always to be proactive and not reactive. Arjuna understands that he has been misguided by wrong thoughts.

Arjuna says, "I ask you – tell me that which is definitely good for me. I am your disciple. Teach me who have taken refuge in you." (2-7) Infact the real teaching of the Bhagavad Gita begins here, when Arjuna is ready to learn. He is ready to do his duties as a Kshtriya. Krishna teaches him about Atman or indwelling Self. This means that temporary issues of life should not disturb our motivation.

We should not work with raw emotions. We require skill in handling the situation. It means that we should not be attached to the fruits of action, but enjoy working without any self defeating thoughts. Again Gita's message is that one should raise one self through oneself. Don't wait for external help. Derive strength from your inner Self, because one's Self is his friend as well as his enemy. It means that one is one self responsible for one's distinction or debasement. (6-5) The contributions that others make in these respects are secondary.

Radhakrishna says in his "Bhagavadgita", (comments on the Verse 6-5), "The Self is the Lord of the self and the Self is the goal of the self. The Supreme is with in us. It is the consciousness underlying the ordinary individualized consciousness of every day life, but not comparable with it. The two are different in kind, though the

Supreme is realisable. For the most part we are unaware of the Self in us because our attention is engaged by objects which like or dislike. We must get away from them to become aware of Divine in us. If we don't realise the meaninglessness and irrelevance of our ordinary life, true Self becomes the enemy of our ordinary life. The Universal Self and the personal Self are not antagonistic to each other. The Universal Self can be the friend or the foe of the personal self. If we subdue our petty cravings and desires, if we don't exert our selfish will, we become the 'channel' of the Universal Self. If our impulses are under control, and if our personal self offers itself to the Universal Self, then the latter becomes our guide. Every one of us has the freedom to rise or fall and our future is with in our own hands".

Sri Krishna says (8-7), "Therefore at alltimes remember Me and fight. When the mind and intellect (understanding) are dedicated to Me, you shall without doubt come to Me alone". 'Fight' here refers to Arjuna. In general it is not fight on the material plane. Here it is the fight with the powers of darkness that we have to carry on for ever. We must be engaged in the work of the world retaining our consciousness of Eternity. It is just as a dancing girl fixes her attention on waterpot she carries on her head even when she is dancing to various tunes. So also a truly pious man does not give up his attention to the blissful feet of the Supreme Lord even when he attends to his many concerns. All actions of our lives are to be surrendered to God who encloses, penetrates and gives meaning to our lives. The mere remembrance of God liberates us from all stress and strain in our work.

19:2. MATERIAL LIFE AND GITA

What is material life? That which is concerned with bodily comfort, not spiritual is material life. Materialism is tendency to prefer material possessions and physical comfort to spiritual values. It is a doctrine that says, "Nothing exists but matter". It asserts that consciousness and will are wholly due to material agency. 'Material' simply means worldly and sensual based on the responses of the senses not on the spirit. It condemns blind faith.

Whether it is material or traditional or spiritual outlook, there are always problems and struggles. Infact, life is a battle field and Kurukshetra is nothing but battlefield of life. Symbolically it not the scene of a war in the world outside, but it is the war we continually wage within us against the evil forces of passion, prejudice and evil inclination to hold dominion over ourselves. In the struggle against these forces, despondency and weakness will get upper hand, and we fall back on the familiar ways of pleasure, which are the ways of least effort. At this point of weak despair, the Gita urges us to struggle further against our evil nature.

Material out look points out at blind faith as the cause of problems in life. Blind faith is accepting every thing blindly without knowing the reason and taking for granted what ever is said without asking questions. But, infact, Vedanta nowhere insists on blind faith. On the otherhand it says, "By knowing the reason man gets happiness". The Gita also says the same. Krishna tells Arjuna, "Wisdom has more secret than all the secrets, declared to you by Me. Reflect on it fully and act as you like (18-63). Krishna leaves the decision to Arjuna's choice. He wants that each one of us should get to Him by his own free choice. He compels no one since free spontaneity is valuable. Man is to be wooed and not coerced into cooperation. He is to be drawn not driven, persuaded not compelled. The Supreme does not impose His command. The self-surrender should be with fullest consent of the seeker.

Even error is a condition of growth. The teacher encourages the pupil's early steps even as the father does the tollering steps of the child. He stretches out a hand to help when he trips, but leaves it to the disciple to choose his path and control his steps. It is therefore important that the mind should seek rational and experimental justification for its beliefs. One should have a sense of real integrity that his ideas are his own and not imposed by his teacher or anyone else. Teaching is not indoctrination.

Individuals and communities have freedom to grow in their own way, but the evils of individualism and communitism should go.

The evils of exclusiveness and hatred will be removed only when ethical idea of righteousness replaces the political stress on the rights of man. The acts of duty may be determined by a man's condition in life, inherited or chosen, but his inner attitude as defined by the Gita is the same in all. In an ideal state, wisdom, courage and temperance are well balanced in a just way and wisdom reigns over the other virtues.

The Gita is the divine song of love. 'Nara' and 'Nārayana' are inseparable. Krishna and Arjuna are one. But as 'Nara' represents universal man or the whole humanity, the 'Song' is meant for the whole world. The Gita (18-78) says, "wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga and Arjuna the archer, there will surely be fortune, victory, welfare and morality.

The teaching of the Gita is yoga and the teacher is Yogeswara. Yoga is breaking of contact with pain or problem (Gita 6-19). When the human soul becomes enlightened and united with the Divine, fortune and victory, welfare and morality are assured. We are called upon to unite vision (yoga) and energy (dhanush) and not allow the vision to degenerate into madness or the energy into savagery.

19:3. ETHICAL VALUES OF THE GITA

1) Religion and Philosophy

Ethics is the science of morals in human conduct. Value is the worth or utility of a thing. The concern here is the values of the Gita in regard to human ethics.

First let us see what is philosophy and then religion. What is their value? Are they one and the same or entirely different?

Reason and argument form the basis of philosophy. Philosophy tries to seek truth and Knowledge of Reality. It is about the reality of the causes and nature of things and also of the principles governing existence and the material universe. It is, infact, a perception of physical phenomena and human behaviour. So it amounts to

investigation of 'being' gaining knowledge of the causes and laws of all things. If we put it in another way, philosophy is the use of reason in understanding such things as the nature of Reality and existence.

Then, what is religion? Religion is more or less belief in the life of the Spirit. It is usually faith in one or more gods with the belief that the gods made this world and control it. So religion means belief in or worship of a god or gods. Religion is expected to give an awakened sense of a higher unseen controlling power. Emotions and moralities are usually associated with it and ofcourse, worship is the form of religion iwth a certain pattern of rites and rituals. When the rites and rituals gain ascendancy, religion fails to awaken the sense of a higher unseen controlling power and dogmas about life and worship take roots in the minds. Then a plethora of pantheon of gods associated with faiths, fears takes concrete shapes.

In philosophy the spiritual aspect gains ascendancy. In religion too there is spiritual aspect. Philosophical aspect is an effort to have direct experience of the beatific vision which is 'Sat Cit Ānanda' – Sat is Absolute existence, Cit is Absolute Consciousness and Ānanda is Absolute Bliss, while religious aspect is an effort to gain the favours of a favourite god to get earthly desires fulfilled. But even in religion following henotheism (adoption of a particular god) when the devotees get immersed in celestial bliss in praise of that particular god, the external things lose their value for him. As soon as he attains that vision the religius rites and rituals, fulfilment of desires and appendages of the religion lose their value for him. Through his favourite God the devotee is indirectly experiencing the lasting Vision of Supreme Consciousness, which, ofcourse, is the essence of philosophy. But if the religious practices get limited to fulfilment of desires only by pleasing God, it becomes a sort of bargain and trade resulting in vanishing of spiritual values. Thus man gets alianated from 'Consciousness', where as in philosophy man gets identified with God through realization and direct experience. Fulfilment of desires has no place in philosophy as it has no religion.

Christianity and Islam were founded after their prophets. The prophets never say anything about the spirit as they themselves are looked upon as deliverers. So worshipping the deliverers (prophets) becomes their faith and becomes their religion because religion is nothing but a conglomeration of faiths. In Hinduism religion and philosophy go together as Hinduism was not founded by any prophet or a deliverer. It evolved itself from the Vedas which are the expressions of Direct Experiences of a number of 'Rishis' not one. Hinduism aims at realisation of the "Supreme Consciousness" which coincides with the aim of philosophy. However, even in Hinduism there are instances of alienation of religion from philosophy by certain religions fanatics and bigots. In such instances man gets alienated from the Supreme Spirit.

Religion is a way for external purity through certain observances, but philosophy aims at inner purity. When these observances attain external repressive forms, they become superstitions associated with fears. That is the beginning of religious degeneration and moving away from 'Supreme Consciousness'.

Philosophy is logical approach towards realisation of the source of this universe. Whatever may be the way of his approach, a true philosopher never aspires for the fulfilment of his world by desires in his search for Supreme Consciousness. His efforts are aimed at realising that 'Direct Experience with the Supreme. The more a man gains that philosophical approach, the more he gets disinterested in formal observances of religion. It is not as easy in practice as it is to speak of it. The more a man becomes – orthodoxically religious the more he moves away from philosophical approach. Caste and Creed have no place in true philosophical approach, while they form the essence of religious orthodoxy. Religious observances more often than not are aimed at fulfilment of physical desires and also to be freed from the so-called hell which, in fact, is nowhere in the universe except in failure in fulfilment of physical desires. This desire for the fulfilment gets along with the spirit even after leaving the physical body. That agony of the spirit in search of a way to get the unfulfilled

desires fulfilled is nothing but hell. The condition of the Spirit (Jiva) when it is free from such agony is as good as heaven.

So when religion becomes orthodoxy for a way to fulfil physical desires it takes man away for ever from Direct Experience with 'Supreme Consciousness'.

2) What are morals

Then, what are morals? Is helpless obedience to some external religious law morality. Is it so because of faith that there is some intrinsic value in that law? or Is it more out of fear that disobedience to that law results in calamities? – Answer to these questions is the prime factor in morality. Anything done out of fear is selfish. If it is to get rid of unhappiness after death, it is simply insinuating morality. Most of the religious pedants are doing or rather preaching the same. Dogmas, superstitions, rotten traditions are the evil consequences of this attitude. Religious observances have become mechanical and spiritless. Spirituality or happy life after death has become a commodity that can be bargained and purchased. It is the worst degenerated state of any religion that makes a man neither a sensible materialist nor a purposeful spiritualist.

Morality or ethics is concerned in general with goodness of human character or behaviour. It is also concerned with distinction between right and wrong. Character or behaviour is judged by actions. Nature of the will and the motives gives a moral or immortal tone of actions. Ethical ideal realized by performing realized by performing what one sincerely feels is his duty in a particular context without being influenced by considerations of possible advantage to himself. It is what the Gita calls non-attachment to fruits of actions. Though ethical values are of universal validity it must be the individual person who can in each case decide what his duty is. Each moral decision must be a personal responsibility, and a free choice in accordance with the law of one's being. The ethical value of actions is dependent on the quality of this decision.

Sole dictation of the vedic rule or religious dictum in the routine of daily conduct and social duties is not to be completely ethical. The source of the movement of our actions should be with in ourselves. Ethics should be rooted in subjectivity and not at all in some static mechanical rule of action. Ethical experience of one's own traditions should be imbibed and appropriated. They should never become an outward imposition. One ethical experience should contribute to our spiritual development, liberation and ethical insight. We should seek to realise the moral ideals that our insight reveals by an understanding of our own nature and freedom. The time, place and circumstances in which we have to operate also need to be considered. Thus any action has to be founded on knowledge, intelligence and wisdom. This is what is called 'Buddhi Yoga' as given in the Gita. Its principles must never be external but internal based on one's own capacities and spiritual needs. Hinduism thus recognises man's freedom and true ethics as personal. Further it admits the truth that the ethical and spiritual capacities and also qualifications and needs of men are unequal so ethical laws and ways of realising moral ideals have to be formulated with reference to particular contexts and personal factors. It is so, because persons need to be and can be ethical in unique situations.

Ethical living is dharma. Dharma means to support or sustain. It denotes law in the widest sense covering the whole sphere of custom, morals social and religious duty. So dharma covers different activities of life. It is not a religious creed or cult imposing an ethical or social rule. Each man and group, each activity of soul, mind, life and body has its dharma. Man is justified in satisfying his desires which is essential for the expression of life. But it is not the law of his being to conform to the uncontrolled dictates of his desires. He will not get the best out of them if he does not conform to the dharma or the rule of right practice. Dharma tells us that our life is in the first instance for our own satisfaction, but it also says that our life is more essentially for the community and most of all for that universal Self which is in each of us and also all beings. Ethical life is the means to

spiritual freedom as well as its expression on earth. The dharma and its observances are neither the beginning nor the end of human life. Beyond the law of dharma, there is spiritual freedom. It is not merely a noble manhood but universality. The aim is to ennoble the whole life of the individual and the whole order of society.

Ethics, however has meaning during the state of ignorance only. Ethical values cease to operate in respect of liberated person – the Vedas also have no meaning for him. Injunctions and prohibitions do not apply to the liberated man. He becomes supernormal. Moral behaviour becomes his nature. Every act of his, being grounded in Self-knowledge, leads to the highest truth or to an expression of Reality itself. The self-realised man (Jivan Mukta) leads such a life till his 'Prarabdha' is exhausted.

3) The purpose of life

The purpose of life should be to break down the barrier of ego and realise the innermost Self in all beings. The means to that end is to see the One 'Self' revealed in all and to love all equally. He who judges pleasure or pain every where by the standard as he applies to himself. That yogi is regarded as the highest. (Gita 6-32)

The inner life of man must possess perfect tranquility and freedom from passions in order to realise that eternal Bliss. This tranquility is not an indolence, incapacity, insensibility. It is full of immortal power capable of all action. It is attuned to deepest delight, open to profoundest love and compassion and to bliss. To gain this tranquility, the practice of self-control is involved. Sankara sums up the whole in one pregnant sentence : "By whom is this world conquered? By Him who has conquered his own mind."

"Self-control does not mean repression and inhibition. So much it is talked about in religious language. This is condemned by Gita in unmistakable terms : "He who is restraining the organs of action, sits revolving in the mind. He who controls his organs of action but dwells in his mind on the objects of senses, is a deluded man and he is called

a hypocrite. (Gita 3-6)

But at the same time, the behaviouristic remedy of giving free play to all impulses and all desires which is creating a moral chaos among the youth of today, is not the remedy offered by the Gita.

"The turbulent senses do violently snatch away the mind of even a wiseman, striving after perfection. The steadfast having controlled them all, sits with his mind focussed on the Supreme. His wisdom is steady, whose senses are under control". (Gita 2-60,61)

This ideal of control means, in short, the directing of thoughts and energies of the mind towards a higher ideal. Direction rather than repression is the method of the Hindus for the control of operations of mind. Revulsion of sorrow and a yearning for joy are the main activities of human mind. In constantly changing environments, man is engaged in futile effort to find happiness. The common belief today is that sense objects and wealth are the source of joy. Pursuing such a misconceived belief man constantly strives to acquire, possess more and more wealth and objects of the world. Many succeed in amassing a great fortune, but peace and happiness remain as the two wanted things on the horizon.

Man has remained too ignorant to know that the fountain of happiness and tranquility is within himself. Man has the unique capacity of quietening the mind and there by enjoying the real tranquility within the capacity is dormant in him, but being unaware of it he foolishly endeavours to procure happiness through material sources.

19:3:1. An insight into the ethical philosophy of Gita

The Gita looks easy in its apparent simplicity. But it is difficult to understand it. It is a book for the layman but a riddle for the philosopher. It is said to be the quint essence of all vedic knowledge 'Samastha Vedārtha Sarasangraha'. 'Sarva sastra hridayam' – the heart of all sāstras. The Gita does not try to establish a new doctrine ('siddhanta'), but it harmonises all apparently contradictory views by

bringing out their common or essential features. Gita's ethics is not speculative but is broad – based on the psychology of human nature in all its aspects of cognition and feeling. The ultimate problems of ethics are metaphysical as they deal with the reality of the moral order of the universe.

The Absolute Brahman of the Upanishads becomes the Infinite or Isvara (not Siva) and incarnate into humanity in order that man may be uplifted and made divine. The Gita sings the glory of God, becoming man without losing His divinity, to enable man to ascend to his Home by the path of Karma yoga or Jnana yoga and Bhakti yoga. The way in which the yogas are blended together brings out the comprehensive insight into the Gita. The Bhagavad Gita is the divine song whose soul stirring melody enables man to soar to God on the wings of its harmony. The keynote of the whole is the blending of the ethical, spiritual and religious aspects of life and forms the main theme of the present study.

It is strange that the Gita seems to have drawn the attention of modern psychologists who seem to feel that the Gita looks like a manual of mind-cure similar to the modern system of psycho-analysis. It is said that this interpretation would solve many of the problems of the Gita which remained a mystery till now. The main problem is said to be how a disordered mind like that of Arjuna suffering from a division of the conscious and sub-conscious phases of the ego, can be restored to moral health by a supreme psycho-analyst like Sri Krishna. The disorder in the mind is due to the habitual repression of the impulses from the outside and of the emotions of the mind. The accumulated and suppressed feelings show themselves out in perspiration, palpitation, cardiac pains, tremor, fear and grief. According to this view Arjuna suffers from psycho-neurosis. The 'Asvatha' tree is not a myth nor an allegory, but a real apparatus. This theory says that the physical soul 'kshara purusha' and the psychical soul 'akshara purusha' both come from the Absolute. The sub-conscious is the great 'within' which is a vital part of the super-conscious. Krishna is said to

have cured the disease of Arjuna's mind by directing it to the divine qualities of the psyche (the mind or soul) which constitute the divine wealth. The divine consciousness is then aroused and the mind is said to be cured. Then Arjuna exclaims : "Nashto mohah smritir labdha" (18-73) – Destroyed is my delusion and I have gained my memory through your grace, O Achyuta! I stand; free from doubt, I shall act according to your word." Arjuna turns to his appointed action not, with an egoistic mind but with self-knowledge.

The Gita accepts the 'Sankhya' analysis of conduct but gives its own meaning. The 'Sankhya' mentioned in the Gita is not the Sankhya system but a process of rational discrimination of the Self and Yoga that is karma yoga. Sankhya is the vision of the right and the good and yoga is the way and the principle in practice. It is on the whole the theory and practice of conduct. The Sankhya ethics leads to passivity and entire renunciation of action. But the Gita theory makes the Jiva morally free as it is the subject of moral judgement having cognition and feeling.

The Mundaka Upanishad (3-1-1) speaks of the two purushas as two birds on the same tree. "The two birds, who are companions and are always united, cling to the self-same tree of these two, the one eats the sweet fruit and the other looks on without eating". (3-1-1)

"On the self-same tree, a person immersed in the sorrows of the world is deluded and grieves on account of his helplessness. When he sees the other, the Lord who is worshipped and his greatness, he becomes freed from sorrow. Till then as Sankara says, 'Isvara (not Siva)' permits the process of the world as the witness and thus impels their activities.

The Gita (15-16,17,18) speaks of three purushas : The kshara, mutable in nature and embodied in Prakriti (15-16); the Akshara, the immutable Purusha, the silent Self freed from Prakriti (15-17); and the uttama Purusha, the Supreme Lord. He is well known in the world and in the Vedas as the Supreme Being (Purushottama) (15-18). He who is undeluded knows Him as the Highest Self, the Supreme

Being (15-19). Knowing this a man becomes enlightened and all his duties are accomplished. This is the supreme secret of the Gita. (15-20) – (15-16 to 20)

Transition from 'Kāmya karma' (work with desire) to 'Nishkāma karma' (work without desire) is the essence of 'Gita ethics'. Gita recommends 'Nishkāma karma' as the ideal of duty done for its own sake, not out of desire for, or attachment to, its consequences. 'Kāmya karma' fetters the mind and fouls the soul. Nishkāma karma implies the necessity of acting from respect of imperative of duty. The imperative of duty is not dictated by utilitarian considerations but with out attachment.

The philosophy of the Self implies the difference between the mere seeking of God and Kaivalya, the liberation of Mukti. Seeking God is only a means to one's seeing the Self. He who seeks God attains spiritual the spiritual freedom which arises from a sense of dissociation from Prakriti and from dependence on the Cosmic Ruler. Kaivalya is 'mukti' itself in which the 'mukta' enjoys supreme peace.

What is religion? Religion is belief in super human continuing power. Ethics are more related to religion than philosophy. But in Hinduism religion is not isolated from philosophy. They are entwined together. The first six chapters in the Gita deal with rationalisation and spiritualisation of conduct as the means to the goal of religious consciousness. The next six chapters deal with this religious consciousness. Philosophy is the Knowledge of Reality, otherwise called Self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is attained by Jnana Yoga. The disinterested performance of duty without subjective inclination and utilitarian ideas adds to Jnana because karma is rationalised by Jnana and Jnana is vitalised by karma. This leads to action in inaction and inaction in action (Gita 4-18).

The last six chapters expound the way in which ethical endeavour and spirituality have their fruition (realisation of aims) in the philosophy of religion. Duty is religious ideal. Moral consciousness is enriched by the idea of spiritual realisation. It acquires a new

orientation in the religious ideal of duty as a means of Self-realisation. Religion seeks God and philosophy seeks the Self. The Yogi or Jnani brings them together and sees God as the paramātma or the Supreme Self that abides in all beings. He is no longer egocentric but shifts his centre to God and becomes theo-centric (God centric). The Gita says (8-28) that yogi goes beyond the fruits of the good deed related to the study of the Vedas, sacrifices and austerities and attains the supreme abode.

Yamunacharya, the great preceptor of 'Vaishnavism' sums up the ethical philosophy of the Gita in his book 'Gitartha Sangraha'. As the name itself of the book suggests, it is the epitome of the teaching of the Bhagavadgita. Ramanuja, the founder of Visishtadvaita was inspired and guided by this work of Yamunacharya. The tent of 'Gitartha Sangraha consists of only thirty two verses. It brings out the main theme or the subject dealt with in the Gita, as a whole. It divides all the eighteen chapters of the Gita into three sections of six chapters each.

The first section, comprising the first six chapters of the Gita (shatka) defines the nature of karma yoga (action) and of Jnana yoga (Jnana = Knowledge). These two are the two wings of Atman. They aim at mental concentration. Their main purpose is knowledge of the Self or Self-realisation (ātmānubhuti).

The second section comprising the next six chapters of the Gita deals elaborately with 'Bhakti yoga' or the path of devotion. This results from selfless action and Self-knowledge (Karma and Jnana). It explains and extols the nature of 'Bhagavān' as the Supreme Self. Bhakti Yoga helps to foster an unbroken stream of realisation of the real nature of Bhagavān. Bhakti Yoga is the most sure way to know Him and attain Him.

The third and the last section comprising the last six chapters of the Gita. It enters into further details regarding the subjects already dealt with in the proceeding two sections. It completes the truth of the Gita philosophy that absolute self-surrender is the one and only way

to liberation. The quint essence of the whole teaching of the Gita may be summarised as follows. Karma yoga is a necessity and Jnana is its rational. The greatness of Jnani lies in the practice of yoga. The essence of these two yogas is the Bhakti yoga. The ladder of Bhakti leads to the realisation of the infinite Glory of God (Isvara, the qualified Brahman). The ultimate is the Vision of Reality, the nature of the Supreme Self or Purushottama.

The one basic point is that the Gita reconciles the conflict between metaphysics and religion. That is the greatness of Hinduism, of all religions. It identifies the Absolute, the all-inclusive whole with Isvara (the qualified Brahman) the God of ethical religion who is the saviour of all.

The Voice of God is not merely the call of duty or inspiration of Knowledge (Jnana), but it is the call of Divine Love. Sri Krishnais an embodiment of Divine Love as He himself says in the Gita (7-21).

"What ever form any devotee worships with faith or wishes to worship, I make that faith steady and deep in him. Ultimately he reaches Me". (7-21)

The Supreme Lord confirms the faith of each and grants the rewards each seeks. All worship elevates. So long as own worship is serious it does not matter whom or which form of God, it helps progress. God is all pervading. He is Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent.

19:3:2. The Moral Ideal

The moral ideal has been portrayed in various ways. They may be called the materialistic, the vitalistic, the rationalistic and ascetic theories of morality. Each of them gives only a partial view of human nature as it concentrates on one of the factors that constitute the dynamism of conduct and excludes the others. Sensuous pleasure, physical health and efficiency, rational determination or religious asceticism which starve the senses – none of these can provide a way out of the contractions of life. Each of these has to be transcended by

the next in the series to which it has to give place in the development of moral man. More than all these factors, is the part played by God in the evolution of conduct. It is the fact of divine determination within the bounds of human freedom. This synthesis between the human and divine is the recognition of the fact that "Our wills are ours to make them thine". This makes the Gita theory of morality complete.

Psychology, metaphysics and religion together are related to ethics. The problem of metaphysics is, "What is it that I can know?" The problem of morality is "What ought I to do?" and then there is the religious quest, "What may I become?" Psychology is the foundation of the answers to these questions. First we have to know the nature of the 'I' who has to know, who has to do and who has to become. The three subjects mentioned above deal with kinds of knowledge and experience. These are interrelated though they can be analysed and distinguished logically for the purpose of specialised study. To establish a satisfactory system of ethics, we should start with a certain psychological preface. The preface should give the nature of the 'self' (Jiva) that acts and also the essential constituents of voluntary action. Wrong psychology leads to an unsatisfactory ethical theory.

The ethical point of view is that the 'Self' or 'Atman' is a moral self or karta. Freedom is its essential quality but the influences of Prakriti and its three gunas act upon it. According to Vedantic ethics 'Atman' is a spiritual entity. Vedanta distinguishes between Atman and Jiva, the empirical self that regards sense-data as valid information. When Self identifies itself with the body (Kshetra) due to 'avidya' it becomes empirical Self or Jiva. While Kshetra the body is the composite of prakriti with ahamkara and mahat (Buddhi or intellect) along with the five gross elements (mahabhutas), the Atman is not a byproduct of matter or Prakriti. Atman is an eternal self-luminous spiritual entity distinct from gross body (sthula sarira) and subtle body (sukshma sarira).

The existence of Atman as Purusha is proved only by direct experience and not by means of perception or inference. Atman is a

self-conscious entity. This is Supreme Consciousness of the Brahman and not Physical Consciousness of the mind. Physical Consciousness is an attribute of the mind which is a physical entity. The Jiva is linked with body through intellect (mind). As such the Jiva though is essentially free, in its moral life, is influenced by its character, mental content and heritage, in the long course of its evolution.

19:3:3. Moral Self

The central idea in the Vedanta psychology of moral self is the theory of karma and rebirth. It involves the operation of the law of causation on the moral level. Every act is causally determined by its antecedent and determines its effects. The present is the child of the past and also the parent of the future. When the gross body is dissolved at death, the 'Self' with the subtle body (sukshma sareera) is born again in a new environment suited to its moral development. Every act (karma) done in its moral activity in the past is conserved in the subtle body. It becomes the seed of ethical life in the new life after rebirth. Thus life and death form a cycle like day and night or the seed and the tree. From the scientific point of view, every moral act can be explained in terms of cause and effect. From the ethical point of view every act (karma) implies a moral agent or karta who has freedom to shape his destiny. This 'self' or 'Jiva' also called 'moral self' can rise to the status of Brahman or sink to the level of the brute.

What does the Gita say about this. The Gita psychology of ethics is based on the three Gunas (attributes) Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and their interaction our desires and dispositions, moods and temperaments, actions and tendencies, feelings and emotions are all to be traced to the influence of these 'Gunas' and to their varying predominance in human nature.

No 'Jiva' is exempt from the influences of the Gunas of Prakriti. The Gunas are interdependent and are not independent. However they have their own specific mental tendencies or psycho-physical functions. There are six factors in every moral judgement : the subject (Karta),

the object (Jneya), knowledge (Jnana), discrimination (buddhi), determination (dhruti) and satisfaction (sukha). For ethical perfection the guidance of a discriminating mind is essential. Otherwise it will be like the blind groping in the dark without proper guidance. Each of these six factors is influenced by the three Gunas and it determines one's moral disposition.

Gita (18-37 to 40) speaks of the influence of the three Gunas on the beings. The threefold happiness is described in these verses. The practice of virtue is bitter in the beginning and blissful at the end. It is happiness on the sattvika level. The happiness on the Rajasika level is the reverse of sattvika state because it results from a life of restless adventure. It is like nectar in the beginning but like poison at the end. It is called Vishaya Sukha, the pleasure of the senses. These are the seductive pleasures of senses, otherwise called passionate happiness. Poison causes physical death while physical passion or lust causes moral (ethical) degeneration and spiritual extinction. Then there is 'Tāmasic sukha', the pleasure of drowsiness or dullness. This happiness is self-delusive all through. It arises from negligence. It does not give spiritual joy but only spirituous (alcoholic) intoxication.

The Gita says (18-40) that there is no being on earth or in heaven that is liberated from these three Gunas born of Prakriti.

The psychological analysis of these factors has an ethical significance. The ethical value of conduct is more important than its psychological content. It consists in the progression from the lowest grade of 'Tamas' to the highest stage of Sattva. Happiness is the universal aim of life. Only it is of different kinds according to the modes (manners) which dominate life. If the Tamas prevails we are satisfied with inertia and violence. If 'Rajas' predominates wealth, power, pride and glory give us happiness. True happiness of human beings lies not in the possession of outward things but in the fulfilment of the higher and of the Spirit (Soul). It is in the development of what is most inward in us. It may mean pain and restraint in the process but it will lead us to joy and ultimate freedom. We can pass

from the happiness and virtue to the eternal calm and joy. It is 'Ananda' (Bliss) of the Self when we become one with Supreme Self.

The Gīta speaks much of 'Kshetra' and 'Kshetrajna'. Kshetra is the body and 'Kshetrajna' is the individual Self, Atman. The Jiva (individual soul) lives in the Kshetra which forms a suitable environment for evolving self (Jiva). By contact with Jiva, the Atman (Self) 'Kshetrajna' experiences the pleasures and pains of bodily life and finally seeks liberation (Moksha).

'prakriti' and 'Purusha' are different. Prakriti is inert (Jada) and 'Purusha' is self-luminous entity subjecting itself to the moral law of karma. The physical body is the replica of 'Prakriti' (Nature) and the Self (Atman) is 'Purusha'. The contact between 'Prakriti' and 'Purusha' (between the body and the Self) results in 'Samsāra' – the sequence of birth, life and death. It has no beginning (anadi) and so it cannot be casually explained. However there is an end to the bondage of 'karma'. When the karma is done without desire ('Nishkāarma karma), then the Jiva is freed from Prakriti and its Gunas. By means of wisdom (Viveka) the Kshetrajna, Atman is released from 'Kshetra' the body because the Jiva becomes one with Atma.

19:3:4. Ethical Quality of Brahman

Sri Krishna is the All-Self or Vāsudeva. He is indwelling in the world and at the same time the controller of world. The ethical quality of Brahman is His transcendental purity and perfection. The Gīta says (9-4) that all beings are in Him, but He is not in them. The idea is that the whole universe is with in Him. At the beginning of the next cycle of Creation, He sends forth out. Then He pervades the whole universe as the universal Self (Gīta 9-7). From the religions stand, Brahman is the body (Sariram) that sustains the Jiva and rules it from with in (as inner Self). Thus Brahman, the Absolute of philosophy as the all-inclusive unity becomes the supra personal God Isvara (not Siva) of religion. He is the Purushottama, the Supreme Person. Thus philosophy of monism and the God of ethical religion are reconciled.

The chief idea of ethical religion is the definition of Isvara (Personal God) as the Ruler and also Redeemer. He is the one without a second that wills many. He becomes manifold and enters into the world as its inner Ruler Immortal.

The Avatāra or Divine Incarnation is mortal like all men and is an illusory appearance of Brahman. The theory of Divine Incarnation is the basic concept of theism regarded as ethical religion. Ethical religion is the religion of redemption. Brahman is beyond Prakriti and Purusha. He is formless and has no attributes. But then, Brahman as Isvara becomes Bhagavān Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna by His Maya assumes transcendental form of Beauty and love to captivate humanity and the seekers of God out of their fleshly feeling. His aim is to transmute the Jiva in His blissful nature.

Sri Krishna says (Gita 3-30) "Resign all your works to Me with your consciousness fixed in the Self. Be free from desire and egoism banishing grief". By self-surrender to the Lord who presides over Cosmic existence, and activity, we must be engaged in work. "Yours will be done" – is to be our attitude in all work. We must do the work with the sense that we are the servants of the lord. (Also see 18-59,60,66)

The finite self (the individual self) has the moral freedom to attain control over its empirical (based on sense-sensual) nature by subduing its animal inclinations. But the real actor in the universe is Isvara the Personal God and the Controller of the Self. So the devotee (Bhakta) act as the willing instrument of the Divine will. The instances given in the Gita are now interpreted in terms of this new formula.

Every man is essentially god-like in nature. But his real nature is shrouded by ignorance and material attitude. Sri Krishna is the concrete form of compassion (grace and kindness) and is the Divine saviour of all. Since every Jiva has its home in God, its sins are forgivable and forgiven. Thus all may attain mukti (liberation), since Sri Krishna guarantees eternal Bliss to everyone who seeks refuge in

Him as the only Saviour. Divine life is the birth right of every man as the son of God and he can regain his godliness.

The Gita view of ethical philosophy says that Prakriti, Purusha and Parana Purusha are distinctive as explained in the 13th and 15th Chapters. The thirteenth chapter speaks of the body as the 'Kshetra' or the field and Atman as the 'Kshetrajna' or the dweller in the field and also point out the means of freeing oneself from the bondage of embodiment or samsāra. The fifteenth chapter points out to Purushottama as the higher than the highest state of Jiva known as Akshara or freed Self.

19:3:5. Ethics of Science and Religion

It is highly essential to satisfy the need of ethics, science and religion. The theory of natural evolution is interpreted in terms of Parinamic process (transforming process) of Prakriti. The social evolution is the moral progress of the Purusha (Self) and self-realisation in its individual and collective aspects. The law of 'Parinama' (the theory of transformation or evolution) states that 'Prakriti' not only exists but also evolves. The visible universe or the world of space-time does not consist of any natural species but it is a process without beginning or end. Like-wise from biological and psychological stand point, Life is a continuous creative evolution.

Psychical processes are particular, perishing states. Though matter serves as a medium for soul-making, it is wrong to explain the soul in terms of physical and cerebral changes. The soul (Self) is free and immortal. From moral stand point the conduct of the soul (individual Self) is not determined by the environment, but it is the expression of moral freedom and spiritual progress. Progress involves an ideal to be realised and that is self-knowledge or knowledge of soul. The ideal of religion is the attainment of God-consciousness and its fulfilment is self-realisation which is the ideal of philosophy.

Ethics (morality) points beyond itself. It is fulfilled in spiritual realisation and spirituality has meaning only in religious experience.

Soul-culture is nodoubt superior to the materialised out look or 'dehātma bhāva' thinking that body itself is atma. But the soul-culture by itself is not perfect because it leads to the godless state of 'kaivalya' or quietism of sankhya philosophy. The Gita the centre from Purusha (Self) to Purushothama (Universal Self) is the philosophy of the individual Self. 'Vidya' is now termed as Brahma Vidya, also called religious consciousness. It makes a revolution in ethical religion. Atman is eternal and self-luminous. But Paramatman (Brahman) is All-Self who is the eternal among the eternal, and is ever perfect. Also called Parama Purusha, Parmatma is pure and perfect. Its divine purpose is to divinise the Jiva and make it perfect. The theory of purpose (teleology) applies to both to both the Supra-Personal (Brahman) as well as to the Personal God. The theory of purpose is the explanation of phenomena by the purpose they serve rather than by postulated causes.

The key words of ethical philosophy, which are summed up in the Gita, are process, progress and purpose. They are the inner meaning of ethical philosophy. Process is employed in science, progress in ethics and purpose in religion. This world is Prakriti or nature. It is a cyclic process of creation – dissolution ('Srishti-Pralaya'). This process is without beginning or end. Here 'Purusha' identifies himself with 'Prakriti' or matter and becomes 'Kshetrajna' or the individual self (Jiva). Thus subjects himself to the pangs (pains) of birth and death, also called the ills of 'Samsara'. The empirical self (physical self guided by sense data as valid information) which is guided by senses is determined or controlled by 'Prakriti' and Gunas, but the Real Self is self-controlled. It is free to shape its destiny. With Jnana or Wisdom this Self knows by itself that it is nirguna by nature and free and blissful. It strives to regain its original supreme state. Nature becomes the field for its moral and spiritual progress and self-expression. As it (Jiva or self) reaches the state of self-knowledge or Atma-Jnana it is no longer controlled by matter and becomes matter-free. It is the divine plan and purpose to identify the Jiva with Brahman, the inner Self (Antarātma). The man who reaches this stage goes beyond (transcends)

'Kshetra' (body) or 'Kshetrajna' (Jiva) and becomes perfect like Purushottama. Then being a knower, he shakes off good and evil and the condition of body, and being free from stain, attains supreme equality with Brahman (Isvara).

19:3:6. The Problem of Evil

The problem of evil and suffering is important in ethics. Moralists have attempted to investigate the source of evil and to root it out. Some have come to the conclusion that good and evil are always there fighting against each other and that the moral man is one who allies himself with the good as against the evil. There are also some who say that good and evil are essential and mutually opposing elements in the cosmic scheme. Yet there are some others who say that there is no such thing as good or evil in the world but only thinking makes it so. Thus the problem of evil has remained persistent in ethics and also in philosophy and religion.

There is the deep faith that even a spark of repentance destroys the life-long sin. By absolute self-surrender to the will of God who is the Real Self, the seeker (mumkshu) becomes liberated (mukta). When the sinner seeks God, he is liberated and is saved. Then what happens to ethics? The idea of morality becomes amoral (goes out the scope of morality). We have to understand the state of redemption to explain the skipping over (off) morality. God is a symbol of Love and Grace. His intention is not to punish man always but bring about change in him to be good and holy. He tries to redeem man from sin. Grace is a free gift of God. God gives it and man cannot earn it. It is the responsibility of man to respond properly and receive it. He cannot demand it as a right or reward. God's Grace is like an overflow of spring water. We cannot guess or assert when it overflows. It is what is called Gods 'Daya' or 'Kripa' (mercy) and ethics can not hinder it.

If Grace is absolute without cause the consequence will be moral laxity. If Grace is caused it becomes conditioned and not spontaneous. Then there will be difficulty in reconciling morality of religious life

with that which is outside the scope of morality. However the relation between these two is ultimately not causality but the intrinsic view of mystic experience. What is mystic experience? It is love because God is basically an embodiment of Love. The mystic experience in its relation to love cannot be estimated as to how much comes from God. This problem ultimately becomes dissolved in mystic experience of Love.

Mysticism defines God as Love. Mysticism means a hidden meaning. A mystic is a person who seeks by contemplation and self-surrender, unity or identity with or absorption into the Deity or the Ultimate Reality. The mystic knows that he is the 'Atman' different from Prakriti. He also knows that the Lord is the Life of his life and Love of his Love and seeks union with Him. The philosopher seeks union with the Ultimate Reality while the mystic feels the urge for union with God (Isvara, not Siva). Isvara is qualified Brahman but He is not controlled by the attributes or the Gunas. He controls them.

The Gita considers the Jnani as the highest devotee. He being a mystic alone knows that 'Vāsudeva' (Krishna) pervades all beings without being tainted by their imperfections. Jnani's love for God does not bargain for boons. He knows no fear. His Love for God is for Love's sake. 'Jnana' (Knowledge of God) is exalted by Bhakti and Bhakti is illumined by Jnana. Ultimately these two Jnana and Bhakti together are transformed into Love (Prema). What is ethical or moral here? The morality of Bhakti is that the devotee (bhakta) will become attuned (adjusted) to the Divine. From the point of view of religion the morality is self-surrender to His Grace. But in mysticism Bhakti is the instinct of Love for God or the Infinite. In this mystic devotion the usual animal instinct in man is transformed into love for God. The animal instincts like anger, fear, hatred and lust lose their sting and become sublimated and become the instinct for God. (Instinct is a pattern of behaviour without impulsion or conscious intention. Simply it is unconscious behaviour) Bhakti is not mere intellectual love or mere desire to be in the presence of God. It is Craving for God. The true Bhakta

is intuitive and his love for the inswelling Self is intuitive. Sin, in the highest sense of the term, is the feeling of separation from God. God never separates a devotee from Himself. It is only a feeling of the devotee in his Craving for the unity with God.

19:3:7. Who is Isvara?

About Isvara, it has already been discussed extensively in Vol.I 'Self-Knowledge'. Here it is only a contextual reference to Isvara in connection with the ethical values of the Gita.

God or Isvara (not Siva) is not merely qualified Brahman but an incarnation of Beauty. He incarnates Himself as Beauty into Nature and Man to beautify the Self. Krishna of the Gita is the incarnation of Isvara because Vishnu Himself is Isvara formalised. He is the inner ruler of all beings and brings them out of their fleshy attractions. He transmutes the earthly self into god-like Jnani who then renounces sensuality and egoism. Sri Krishna plays the game of love in which He forgets His divinity and seeks the bhakta as His very life. The bhakta loses earthly consciousness and longs to become one with God. This game of Sri Krishna is beyond the bounds of ethics because the game is only illusion played by God and the bhakti is in intoxication of love for God. In this intoxication of love for God the feeling of separation vanishes in the enjoyment of union with God. The river that flows into the sea loses itself in the ocean and similarly the bride entering into the arms of the bridegroom loses her self-feeling. So also in this intoxication of love for God the fine self (Soul or Jiva) of man loses its finitude and becomes one with the Infinite.

The Gita is the quint essence of philosophy preached by all the three great preceptors of Vedanta. Sankara, Ramanuja and Madva. They expounded the Gita with authority of immemorial insight. Their methods of interpretation vary and are contradictory in some instances, but there is clear agreement in certain essential points, especially in Gita's ethics. For them philosophy is not merely a view but a way of life to Brahman.

Realisation of Brahman is the vertical ascent from the temporal (worldly) to the eternal spirituality and service go together service is benevolence. The vertical ascent to Brahman includes benevolence which is horizontal. Ethical exaltation includes abandoning of individualistic outlook and endless service to all Jivas. As such the vertical ascent to divine life is practically the same as horizontal progress in social and spiritual service. God is there above. He is the same God in man and nature. Spirituality and service are the two aspects of the same religious experience.

The Gita philosophy of ethics or conduct follows the way from 'Prakriti' to 'Purusha' and then to 'Purushottama'. It infers the lower from the higher and analyses the chief factors of conduct. Its morals utilise the philosophy of the embodied 'self' (Jiva) as determined by Prakriti and its three Gunas – Sattva, Rajas, and tamas. Its spiritual philosophy is an enquiry into the nature of Atman and its moral theory is evolved from it. Religion has its support from psychology, ethics and the philosophy of the 'self' (Jiva).

The Gita views 'Purushothama' as the end of moral and spiritual effort. It is realised progressively by the three-fold practices of Karma yoga, Jnana yoga and Bhakti yoga. They are realised by the moral, the spiritual and the religious formulas.

The first is the formula of duty. Duty is imperative as a divine command. It should be 'rishkama karma' (action without thinking of the fruit. You must know that your action is influenced by Prakriti and its three 'Gunas'. The conduct of 'Jiva' is conditioned by the Gunas as it identifies itself with Prakriti. When one realises this, he will do his duty for duty's sake in detached way. It means freedom in action and not freedom from action. Gita asserts that nobody can escape from action that is duty.

The second is the spiritual formula. It is to treat this world of living beings as Purusha and not as product of Prakriti. This paves the way to Self-realisation. Atman has its own freedom to make or mar its future. So fatalism has no place here.

The third is transition from spiritual philosophy to philosophy of religion. Religious philosophy is belief in super human controlling power. All your actions are regarded as determined by 'Purushottama' who is the inner Self of all beings. Now all work becomes the worship of God. Every thought, word and deed should be dedicated to God. He is Himself the way and end of life. That God is none other than 'Isvara'. The 'self' (Jiva) becomes the real 'Self'. This is the highest stage at moral, spiritual and religious levels.

This is in short the Gita philosophy and ethics.

19:4. SOCIAL ROLE OF THE GITA

The Bhagavad Gita is the inspired poem of ancient India. It is the Song Celestial. It has played great role in guiding modern man in the performance of his day-to-day duties. It has been important in the lives and thoughts of some Indian statesmen and religious leaders. This sacred poem continues even at present to stir the imagination of social and cultural theoreticians and from its deep-spring flows forth an inexhaustible flood of new insights. These insights may lead mankind to reinterpret the nature of the problems it faces day after day. The insight or divine sight that was granted by Lord Sri Krishna to Arjuna has been interpreted and re-interpreted in many ways from time to time.

The practical aspect of the Gita's teaching is its insistence that involvement with the world is an ethically correct function of human behaviour and attitude to mind. It is perhaps more central to the meaning of the Gita for modern man than its traditional interpretation. Spiritual vision and social service should go together. Human life has a double purpose of personal perfection and social efficiency. According to the Gita to achieve this purpose of human life must be the aim of man for ever.

If we understand 'Loka samgraha' we will be able to realise the social role and goal of the Bhagavad Gita. This is in addition to the individual goals of 'Preyas' (the pleasant) and the Sreyas (the good). The Gita deals with 'Loka samgraha' in the Verses 20-26 in Chapter

three (3-20 to 26). 'Loka samgraha' means 'Welfare' of society. In other words it means world-maintenance. 'Loka samgraha' stands for the unity of the world, the interconnectedness of society. If the world is not to sink into the condition of physical misery and moral degradation. If the common life is to be decent and dignified religious ethics must control social action. The aim of religion is to spiritualize society and to establish brotherhood on earlier.

Yoga Vasishta says (6-199), "The knower has nothing to gain either by performing or abstaining from action. Therefore he performs action as it arises. It was by works that Janaka and others attained to perfection. Janaka ruled giving up his personal sense of being the worker. Janaka was the King of Mithila and father Sita, the wife of Rama. "Thou shouldst do works with a view to the maintenance of the world." (Gita 3-20)

Loka samgraha is a compound word of two component words, 'Loka' and 'samgraha'. The first word 'Loka' denotes, in different contexts, either human beings or the world. The second word 'samgraha' has also more than one meaning, ranging from 'keeping together' to 'protecting' as also to 'regulating'.

Sankara defines the word 'Loka samgraha' as "weaning the people away from the tendency to take to the path of wrong". Vivekananda defines 'Loka samgraha' as 'working for the good of others' and added that this is "a very powerful idea – which has become the ideal of India" – (Complete works Vol.I P.468). Tilak is perhaps the first commentator to highlight, most forcefully with a detailed explanation, the concept of 'Loka samgraha' in the Gita. Tilak has suggested two meanings, one referring to mankind and another referring to various worlds.

Tilak writes taking 'Loka' to mean mankind, "The last and the most important direction of the Blessed Lord to Arjuna in support of the doctrine of karma-yoga is centred on 'Loka samgraha'. Taking all the meanings of 'samgraha' as given in dictionaries, 'Loka samgraha'

means 'binding men together, and protecting and maintaining and regulating them in such a way that they might acquire that strength which results from mutual cooperation, there by putting them on the path of acquiring merit while maintaining the good condition. (After looking at Sankara's definition) it will be clear that my interpretation of 'Loka samgraha' as "making wise, those persons who behave recklessly as a result of ignorance and keeping them together in a state and putting them on the path of self-amelioration" is neither strange nor without authority". – Gita Rahasya P.456 by Tilak

Tilak compares his first meaning of 'Loka samgraha' to the concept of the "welfare of the society which, he says, 'has been a very important science at the present time in western countries'. Tilak also says that "the words 'welfare of a nation' have been used in the same sense in 'Manusmriti' (7-144)".

Secondly, Tilak interprets 'Loka' in a wider sense so as to include the world not only of humans but also of gods. Tilak writes, "I must say that the word 'Loka samgraha' has in this place, the comprehensive meaning that the activities of all the various spheres should go on properly in the same way as those of mankind. 'Loka samgraha' = Lokam samgraha (ie) the maintenance of various worlds). Further more, all these worlds should not only be maintained, but also should become mutually beneficial. – (Gita Rahasya P.457)

Tilak gives the Verse (3-20) of the Gita in support of his interpretation. The verse (3-20) of the Gita explicitly introduces 'Loka samgraha' for the first time mentioning King Janaka as an ideal Karma yogi. Let us now see what exactly the verse (3-20) of the Gita says : "By action alone Janaka and others realised perfection. You should do works with an eye to maintenance of the world. Considering incentive to people, you should perform action (Loka samgraha).

From the point of 'Loka samgraha' the main question is why Janaka was still carrying on the activities of ruling, though he had no selfish interest or advantage and had become perfectly non-attached to his kingdom. Janaka himself says : "all these activities are for the

benefit of gods, the ancestors, all creatures and my guests but not for myself." – Gita Rahasya (Tilak P.451)

Who are these devas? Gandhi's interpretation of devas in the verses 3-11; 3-12, of the Gita is very interesting. It has a bearing on his definition of 'Loka samgraham'. Gandhi says : The term 'gods' in the verses (3-11; 3-12) of the Gita means the whole creation of God. The service of all created beings is the service of the gods and the same is yajna. He defines Loka samgraha as welfare of humanity and links it with the concept 'yajna'. (M.K. Gandhi 'The Bhagavad Gita' P.94 and also 'The Gita according to Gandhi P.176)

Aurobindo translates 'Loka samgraha' as 'the holding together of the people. Regarding the seven 'Loka samgraha' Verses of the Gita (3-20 to 3-26). Aurobindo writes in his 'Essays on the Gita' (P.122) there are a few more important passages in the Gita than seven striking couplets. (3-20 to 3-26). In his 'Essays on the Gita' (P.94) Aurobindo finds in the karma-yoga ideal set by Janaka, a message that. He rejects any idea of large and intellectual altruism (unselfishness) in the concept of Loka samgraha and states that what Gita means is "a spiritual unity with God and with this world of beings who dwell in Him and in whom He dwells".

S. Radhakrishna interprets Loka samgraha as maintenance of the world. He sees in this concept a cell to rise above narrow visions that seek comfort in merely doing duty to family, neighbours, city or state. He says that Loka samgraha stands for the unity of the world, the interconnectedness of society. The Gita requires us to lay stress on human brotherhood. (The Gita P.69; 13-9)

Vinoba Bhave interprets Loka samgraha as keeping people together and on the right path. He says that the karma-yoga method of getting rid of selfishness will be successful only if the process of purification of desire is carried on simultaneously. A desire is not purified merely by extension to society. (The Steadfast Wisdom P.20-23)

Ultimately we can say that Loka samgraha is not only the stability, solidarity and progress of society but also an active awareness of one's social obligations. Gita – ideal of 'social integrity' is significantly different from the individualistic view of the upanishads. The upanishadic attitude of life and society is fundamentally individualistic while the Gita teaches that man has a duty to promote 'Loka samgraha' or stability, solidarity and progress of society. Nishkama Karma of the Gita can be translated as the principle of duty for duty's sake. Both Loka samgraha and individual salvation constitute the double aim of the Gita.

Some interpret Loka samgraha in a comprehensive sense to cover the objective of preserving the world. Loka samgraha can be called guidance and control of the world or taking world along with one. There are various interpretations making 'Loka samgraha' an umbrella-like term. While explaining 'Loka samgraha' to Arjuna in the Gita (3-24) Krishna says, "If I cease to work the worlds would fall in ruin". So every person should ask himself "What will be the impact of my action or inaction on the society?" This is what the Gita intends to teach us. The social responsibility is different from 'individualism'. Society is nothing but the sum of human activity regarded as a whole functioning interdependently. 'Individualism' need not be abandoned as long as the individual freedom to act does endanger other people's freedom. So social responsibility of Loka samgraha concept and individualism can go hand in hand. But Loka samgraha concept of social responsibility has a larger area of awareness of social obligation than individualism. However it must be noted that this 'Loka samgraha' concept has nothing to do with the implications of Indian caste system. At any rate the Loka samgraha concept of the Gita can free the society from divisive and discriminatory notions of all types and serve the present-day needs of the society.

" 'Sreyas' and 'Preyas' which mean the good and the pleasant respectively approach a man. The wise man chooses the good in preference to the pleasant. The simple minded, for the sake of worldly well-being, prefers the pleasant." – (Katha Upanishad 1-2-2)

The Katha upanishad presents 'sreyas' as the choice of the wise and 'Preyas' as the choice of the unwise. A pertinent question is often raised. Do the Hindu scriptures emphasize only the ultimate individual goal, 'Sreyas' or Moksha, or do they also at the same time attach importance to intermediate goals – 'Preyas' at the individual level and Loka samgraha at the social level. The Gita takes a more balanced view. Although the Gita does not use the term 'Preyas', it recognises the importance of its components – artha and kama (ie) wealth and pleasure, provided they are in conformity with Dharma. This is more or less a conditional acceptance of the significant role of 'Preyas' for an individual. It is in a way a sort of modification of the upanishadic view. This process goes a step further when Gita also stresses the importance of social ideal, Loka samgraha, which is a term not found in the upanishads.

Now let us see what the Loka samgraha verses of the Gita (3-20 to 26) actually say. In the Gita Sri Krishna reveals his own example as working for 'Loka samgraha'. The meaning and scope of the word 'Karma' (Work) is implied in Krishna's words. Krishna implicitly refers to His karma of Loka samgraha which means world maintenance. As Gandhi observes Krishna kept a sleepless vigil over the world. (3-20)

What ever a great man does, the same is done by others as well. What ever standard he sets, the world follows. The Gita points out that the great men are path makers who blaze the way that others follow. (3-21)

Krishna says, "O Arjuna! there is not for Me any work in the three worlds which has to be done nor anything to be obtained which has not been obtained; yet I am engaged in work. (3-22)

Life of God and Life of the world are not opposed to each other. A strong warning is given in this verse (22) to those who have a narrow view about the purpose of karma that it will help them obtain something which they don't have and want to obtain. Krishna emphasizes here that the real purpose of karma is not to satisfy any narrow, selfish desire, because if it had been so, then He need not

have performed any karma.

Krishna says, "For, if ever I did not engage in work unwearied, O, Arjuna, men in every way follow My path". (3-23)

Krishna says, "If I should cease to work, these worlds would fall in ruin and I should be the creator of disordered life and destroy these people." (3-24)

Krishna says, "As the ignorant perform action being attached to it, even so the learned also should act, but without attachment desiring the welfare of the world." (3-25)

Krishna warns, "The wise man should not unsettle the minds of the ignorant who are attached to action. The enlightened man doing all works in a spirit of yoga should set others to act as well." (3-26)

Swami Vivekananda describes Sri Krishna as the "most rounded man". "Every moment of Sri Krishna", says Vivekananda, "was alive with activity either as a gentleman, as a scholar, as a poet. This all rounded and wonderful activity and combination of brain and heart – and nothing can approach it any where". Vivekananda declared emphatically. (Complete works of Vivekananda Vol.I, P.457)

In the Mahabharata war when every leaves the battle field at sunset, Lord Krishna unyokes the horses from the chariot, gives them water, cleans them and feeds them with grain. So saints have pictured Sri Krishna as a perfect karma yogi.

As Vivekananda says (complete works Vol.I, P.457), Sri Krishna preached Bhagavadgita in the midst of activity on the battle field of Kurukshetra. It means nothing to Him. Calm and sedate we goes on discussing the problems of life and death. He practised what the preached in the Gita. He who finds Himself in greatest calmness and greatest peach in the midst of intense activity is the greatest yogi as well as the wisest man.

God, by His incessant activity preserves the world and prevents it from falling back into non-existence. For Aurobindo also, Sri Krishna

of the Bhagavad Gita is the ideal karma yogi. He, the Charioteer driving the Chariot of Arjuna over the field of ruin, is the image of perfect karma yogi.

Though the Self which is centred in the light has nothing further to accomplish for itself, it unites itself with the cosmic action, even as the Divine does. Its activity will be inspired by the light and joy of the Supreme.

The spirit of the Gita is that one should make the ignorant to work, performing action himself intently and carefully. If the mind of the ignorant is unsettled, then his faith in work ceases and knowledge does not arise. As a result they will lose both ways. This is the meaning of 'Loka samgraha' of the Gita.

That is why Lord Krishna said, "For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness I come into being from age to age." (Gita 4-8) Sri Krishna's role as the preserver and protector of the universe, the dharma, and the people is 'Loka samgraha'. Thus 'Loka samgraha' is the social role of the Gita.

19:5. RELEVANCE OF THE GITA TO MANAGEMENT

In truth, 'Economic development and management' is also a part of 'Loka samgraha' of the Bhagavadgita. To the present generation, it may look rather strange to find that Gita which is a religious and spiritual book, could say something about economic development and modern management. But infact, the Gita is not merely a religious and spiritual book, but a book of practical wisdom which does not only preach how to seek God, but also it is a 'Sastra' which teaches one how to live a good, successful and happy life in this world.

Modern management theories and practices were mostly developed during the last 150 years ever since the industrial organisations of the west began to get established. It is a general belief that globally

renowned corporations adopt best practices and manage their organizations well. But according to a study made in 1997 most large and apparently successful corporation are in fact profound by unhealthy. The study reveals the average life expectancy of the so called Fortune Companies was 40 to 50 years. But at least one-third of such companies listed in 1970 vanished by 1983. All newly created companies lasted less than ten years. This high rate of infant mortality of the companies and organisations reveal that today we are in very primitive stages of management.

Note : This information has been gathered from Business magazines and Industrial brochures, and various books on Industrial and business management.

For the economic development of any industry you need man power, money power and material management and marketing. These are quite often referred to as '5M's'. Out of these five the most important one is the man at the top of the management. He should be an expert in the art of management. If not, no amount of money or material would make the industry or corporation a success. Bhagavad Gita provides the Indian manager a vast reservoir of knowledge. It is not only sound and scientific but also thought provoking. The Indian management has much to learn from the managerial concept elaborated in the Gita. Time is ripe for Indian management to have a critical look at the managerial philosophy of the Bhagavadgita.

Inability to understand the true spirit of the Bhagavadgita led to some misconceptions not only in the west but also among some so called or pseudo reformers in India. Now, ofcourse, there seems to be some realisation not only in India but in the west also. Efforts are being made to look deep into the Gita to elicit what the Gita teaches in respect of day to day life. The allegations against the Bhagavadgita, particularly against the philosophy of karma yoga are frivolous. Majority of the population of Indian business, social and political leaders consider karma yoga as the philosophy of action. Contextual interpretation of karma yoga is important and it is needed. K.K. Birla

an industrialist of international repute interpret karma yoga thus : Gita advocates incessant action irrespective of rewards. It preaches the mantra of karma yoga and defines it as dexterity in action – 'yoga karmeshu kausalam' makes work sacrosanct. (From K.K. Birla's Speech at FICC, Delegates at Delhi 1978 – Collected from excerpts in new papers.)

However the western view of Indian personality continues to be unfriendly. It looks upon him as a person of low aspiration without any desire to achieve much in life because he is a Hindu. He is tradition-bound and his world is centred around his caste group. He does not make any effort to achieve much in life and improve his career prospects because he believes that is what is written in his karma. He seeks salvation in the 'other world' rather than achieving excellence and material gains in the present world. Renunciation is his creed. He is feudalistic in his attitudes to his subordinates but prostrates willingly before his bosses. He is thus a bully, yet his ultimate goal is 'Moksha' and works for it by renouncing this world. 'Māya' does not attract him. He is more an obstruction than a catalyst in the process of economic development. A Hindu is stereotyped and also a split personality.

These are some of the misconceptions regarding Hindu ethics and its relationship with economic development and management. Now we shall see what the Gita says to contradict and erase these misconceptions, first broadly and then in detail.

All these misconceptions are due to the habit of rejecting as absurd what ever we cannot understand at once or what to us seems irrational and fanciful. Only after deeper understanding of the truth, a far deeper meaning than we ever have expected will be disclosed.

Swami Prabhavananda makes the key result area of the Gita clear in his "Vedic Religion and Philosophy" (P.123), "The Gita and all Hindu books on ethics meet this central problem of conduct in a somewhat different way. Instead of drawing a sharp line of distinction between virtues, worldly and spiritual, they indicate the existence of

graded virtues different according to the different types of humanity and their varying conditions of life. But they insist that each is a step leading to a virtue higher in the scale of life, and that the ultimate goal is the attainment of spiritual consciousness.

The Gita is emphatic regarding the duties and virtues of various types of humanity. Sri Krishna asserts that they are differentiated "according to the Gunas, born of their own nature".

19:5:1. Leadership

The Bhagavad Gita is sometimes called 'poorman's Veda' and it can be interpreted to help the managers to reach their ultimate goal. The manager requires a calm and poised mind which only mental purity can bring. In order to attain this goal, he requires a thorough grasp of the meaning of the "Doctrine of Karma" supported by a clear understanding the theory of samskaras (impressions) and of the theory of the Gunas. The manager then acquires an increasing inner power to process his experience and information into wholesome decisions. Thus he slowly evolves into an integrated personality which feature is indispensable for team work and leadership.

In the corporate world, for that matter in any field, team work is necessary for success but it is the leader who builds the team. Manager is the leader in the corporate world every one of us has a primeval desire to worship leaders. This desire places the leaders on pedestals rigidly supported by expectations. If the leaders fail the same desire ruthlessly tears them down. However the charming idea that the manager or the leader is the universal remedy for all problems is not given up. The same desire searches for a new leader to fill the vacancy.

Though collectivity is emphasized in the corporate field, the desire for a towering personality as a leader who can bring order out of chaos persists. In such a setting, success or failure is believed to depend entirely on the leader's vision. In the event of failure the blame is placed directly on the leader, atleast a major part of it. At

the same time the team is almost declared free from blame. But the team is not separate or different from the leader to be declared free from blame.

There is also a contrasting part in us. It rejects the idea of leaders as drivers of change and progress. It believes that a leader is nowhere without his team and that the leader is as good as his team. Consciously or unconsciously organisations express agreement with either of the two view points. However most of them follow the middle path because each of these view points has its own appeal.

Those who believe that team is as important as the leader say that the leader has to get his team ready to reach the goals of organisation in the best possible way. He has to bridge the gap between capabilities and goals. The gap may be technical or behavioural. He has to motivate his team to fill the behavioural gap. Outright change of team may not be possible. He should turn the team at his disposal into a winning team. A leader may not get the chance of choosing his team entirely. Sometimes he may inherit the entire team. However he cannot show it as an excuse for not creating an efficient team.

Dream team is not easy to get where every member brings out his exemplary ability. However manager's leadership skills are put to test when he has to work with ordinary team without minimum efficiency. Psychologists say that organisation will be successful only when space for situational leadership is created. It means that the leader does not strictly follow the hierarchical system of management. In such organisation each member is given freedom to act as a leader within his sphere of work. Individual differences are respected and thus leadership skill is promoted in each member of the team. No doubt hierarchy, experience and seniority factors are to be valued. However they are made flexible enough to absorb the ideas from a young member.

A team cannot do without a leader who brings vision and charisma to his job. He enables the team to move forward together and speak in one voice. However the members should be given powers to act decisively whenever a situation demands it. Here there is the danger of discordant notes. So freedom should be given to the members in right doses. This is the middle path between the two view points; team leader or the team members. This is the best way for any team.

What does the Gita say in this regard

Now let us see what the Gita says in terms of building a team. The verse (14-5) says : "Nature-born qualities (Gunas or modes) of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas tie down firmly the imperishable dweller in the body, the Atman to the actions of man." The fact is that the unfettered Atman seems as if fettered due to ignorance. Walklets in the water cause the reflection of the sun in it to quiver. It is the reflection of the sun that quiver not the real sun. Similarly the reflected Atman appears as Jiva and seems to be in the shackles of the Gunas. But infact neither Atman nor its reflection, Jiva in any way gets bound by the Gunas.

We cannot find equivalent terms in English to Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The nearest terms would be "illumination" for Sattva, "passion for work or action" for Rajas, and "lethargy or obstruction" for Tamas. We find many men with narrow perspectives who indulge in actions beyond their capacities and who are insolent (arrogant) and procrastinating (deffering or postponing action). They are every inch Tamasic. How can with such Tamasic members reach the constructive goals. Rajasic members also are in plenty in every team. We miss the members with Sattva features in almost all teams.

The Guna inspired model for a team should be as follows particularly for Finance research and development, corporate planning; Manufacture – Industrial production; and Marketing :

Duties	Team Leader	Team members
1. Finance : research and development. Corporate Planning	More Sattva Guna with some Rajas	More Rajasic with some Sattvic
2. Manufacturing : Industrial Production	More Rajasic with some Sattva	A mixture of Sattva and Rajas (or) Rajas with little Tamasic
3. Marketing :	More Rajasic with some Sattva	Sattvic and Rajasic (or) More Rajasic with little Tamasic

19:5:2. Management

First we shall see the main points in Management, then we shall go remedies in practice.

Main Points

Point (1) : It is often said that management is action and inaction – work, doing and the doer.

Gita also says the same but in a deeper and detailed way. The verse (4-18) says, "He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is wise among men. He is a yogi who has accomplished all his work." The Gita enumerates five factors for the accomplishment of all actions (18-13,14,15). They are the seat of action (the physical body), the agent (karta or doer) instruments, efforts and the last, providence (fate). It is undesirable if an activity is not integral (necessary to the completeness of a whole) to the organisation's purpose and mission. The Gita gives a detailed account of persons with 'Tamasic' nature and their undesirable qualities and actions (14-8)

Point (2) : It is said that efficiency not related to consequences is incomplete.

Now let us see the difference between efficiency and effective-

ness. Efficiency is doing thing right and effectiveness is doing the right things. Effectiveness is the foundation of success; Efficiency is the minimum condition required for survival after success has been achieved.

This dual concern of effectiveness and efficiency pervades the Gita and to achieve the goal it prescribes four yogas : Jnana yoga the path of knowledge; Karma yoga the path of action or work; Bhakti yoga the path of love and devotion; Raja yoga the path of meditation. All these are not only expounded in the Gita as various methods of reaching the goal but also they are blended, reconciled and harmonised.

Gita is concerned with efficient consequences. Pleasant, unpleasant and mixed-threelfold is the fruit of action. In the context of 'Management' fruit means 'impersonal effect'. (18-12) Threelfold is the fruit of action. Here it means in this context pesonal or impersonal.

It is said in the Gita (14-16) : the fruit of Sattvic action is of the nature of 'goodness' and it is faultless. The fruit of Rajasic action is pain and sorrow and the fruit of Tamasic action is ignorance. If you still say that it implies that the Gita breeds inefficiency because it does not allow one to press claim for consequences, then it becomes a tree missing wood. There cannot be any tree without wood. So also there can be no action without result (fruit). What Gita says is action without attachment. You need not press claim for consequences. They come by themselves. It is the pracical way.

Point (3) : Some attribute ambiguity over the meaning of the Sanskrit word 'Phalam' (2-47). This famous verse contains the essential principle of action without attachment. You have a right to action alone and never at all to its fruits (phalam) let not the fruits of action be your motive and also let there be no attachment to inaction. "I have done my duty. The result is in the hands of God." – This should be the motive. In corporate matters 'phalam'

simply means personal or impersonal effects or both as the context warrants.

Point (4) : Detachment is equated with disinterestedness. It is only a misconception and confusion. Detachment is only without attachment to the result. The Gita nowhere speaks of disinterested action. It speaks of karma (action) as yoga. Unattached action simply means exclusion of emotions, desires and other such evils – Nishkama karma. As Sri Aurobindo says the Gita does not teach disinterested performance of duties.

Point (5) : Some say that without emotional attachment, professional commitment may not be effective. There can never be emotional detachment because emotion is the basis of attachment. Action in emotion never yields good results. Even if we accept the possibility of emotional detachment, there cannot be real detachment in emotion because emotions are only passing phases. As Sri Ramakrishna explains, "let the boat rest on water but not let water come into the boat". Surgeon's detachment is emphasized because he is trusted with other's life or death. Gita asks to trust ourselves. In corporate management also no professional will be successful if he allows emotions to interfere with his duties. Unattached action is professionalism. Involvement is not attachment. Involvement is participation while attachment is selfishness.

Point (6) : It is said that result oriented action is the basis of management. It is wrong to say that the Gita has no such basis. The verse (18-25) clears this doubt. This verse says, "the action which is undertaken through ignorance without regard to the consequences or to loss and to injury is declared as Tamasika (dullness).

In the verse (9-25) Krishna says, "worshippers of the gods go to the gods, worshippers of manes go to the manes, worshippers of the spirits go to the spirits and My worshippers come to Me."

The two verses are enough to show how result oriented the Gita is.

Point (7) : Some say, if one is unattached to the consequences of his action he can claim unaccountability. Accountability is corner stone of good management.

Accountability in management necessarily involves 'servility' (slavery); but in Gita's language it is 'freedom'. If a man becomes accountable to himself; what more does he or anybody else want? Yes, the Gita's corner stone is self-growth.

Point (8) : Gandhiji, a self-proclaimed believer in the Gita, called off his non-cooperation movement after the chowri chowra incident. It is given as an example for 'feed-back' based self-correcting management.

- (A) Here, Gandhiji was not a good manager but a good man. The point is, he was able to do it because he was unattached to the consequences of both – starting it and calling it off. If he had been attached he would have been afraid of possible consequences of the failure of the movement if called off at that advanced stage. For that matter, if he had been attached to any consequence of his many achievements and few failures – he would not have become Mahatma – Manager par excellence.
- (B) The Gita consistently insists on ceaseless activity. Is any good and self improving ceaseless activity possible with out feed back and self-correcting mechanism.
- (C) The Verse (18-48) says how vigilant Gita wants you to be. One should not give up his duty even though defective because all enterprises are clouded by defects as fire by smoke.

Gandhiji said, "I find a solace in the Bhagavadgita that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares at me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavadgita. I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies – my life has been full of external tragedies – and if they have left no visible, no indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the

teaching of the Bhagavad Gita." M.K. Gandhi in 'Young India (1925) PP 1078, 1079 as quoted by S. Radha Krishna in his introduction to the Bhagavadgita'.

Point (9) : There is another complaint, "The concept of key result area in management loses all meaning if consequences are treated as inconsequential.

The verse (18-17) says, "He who is free from the notion of 'I' (egoism) and whose understanding is not sullied, though he kills these beings, he does not really kill and he is not bound his actions". Strange it looks, the union carbide people must have read this verse, because nobody has accepted the Bhopal tragedy as the consequence of his action, it was as would say somebody's inaction or prohibited action.

It need not be interpreted that Gita encourages escapism. This verse (18-17) has laid down a condition that one should be free from self-sense or 'I' sense (egoism), then only he is not bound by his actions.

The verses (4-16,17) make this clear, "Even the wise are deluded as to what is action and what is inaction. I shall declare to you what action is, knowing which you shall be delivered from evil". (4-16)

"One has to understand what prescribed action is and prohibited action is as also about inaction. It is hard to understand the way of work because the way of action is mysterious". (4-17)

What the right course is, is not generally obvious. The ideas of our time, the prescriptions of tradition, the voice of conscience get mixed up and confuse us. In the midst of all this the wise man seeks a way out by a reference to immutable truths, with the insight of highest reason.

Sri Krishna the author of the Bhagavadgita had without any doubt a most profound, subtle and sophisticated mind and he could not have been unaware of the limitations and contradictions which are always there.

Experts in management consider this as 'conservation of energy'. They say, once you decide to do something, do not worry or burden your mind with thoughts of what rewards or penalties might follow in the wake of completion which will dissipate your energies and the quality of execution of the task will suffer in consequence".

Ability alone to set objectives does not make a manager; any more than the ability to tie a small knot in a confined space makes a surgeon. As a surgeon becomes a better surgeon by improving the knot-tying skill, so also a manager becomes a better manager by improving skill and performance in all categories of work. That is how consequences become inconsequential.

Point (10) : It is argued by some that need of satisfaction is the source of all motivation and therefore no action can be unattached to consequences.

Here the authors of this argument do not realise that a want brings changes in the act of being satisfied. It is argued that 'incentives' become 'entitlements' soon enough and not long before they become 'deterrents'. The psychologists say "we need to know much more than what we know about dimensions of the working and their relationships. We deal with a combination of factors and that seems likely to defy analysis.

The Gita satisfied this need.

Point (11) : It is pointed out by some that the Gita is an adequate philosophy for attempting management excellence in modern context.

It must be noted that the Gita is not a text book for management but for life here and after. The Gita is highly metaphorical and its teachings should be taken in metaphorical sense. Then it can be useful to managers as already explained.

(1) In verses (12-13 to 20) the Gita mentions the qualities of a true devotee : freedom of spirit, friendliness to all, patience and

tranquility. If you read 'manager' for devotee, you will find the qualities of manager capable of achieving excellence.

(2) The verse (8-6) says : Thinking of what ever state of object at the time of death is or thinks of, he attains that state and being. That vey state is being constantly absorbed in his thought there of. If understand metaphorical meanings in the Gita, practical tips are there to be taken. Metaphor is an imaginative expression applied to an object, person or action to which it is applicable only imaginatively but not literally. Ex. The mind is an ocean. Now substitute 'at the time of death' with 'at the time of decision making', then the meaning of the verse applies to 'management'.

(3) (4-33) verse says : "sacrifice through knowledge is superior to sacrifice performed with materials. Here replace 'sacrifice' with 'development' or 'training'. The verse (4-34) makes out that in spiritual life faith comes first, then knowledge and then experience. Those who have experienced the truth are expected to guide. Now replace spiritual life with managerial duty, then the whole thing applies to manager's duty to develop sub-ordinates.

(4) The verse (5-18) says that sages see with an equal eye. We must look at things from the stand point of the Ultimate Reality present in all. We must see all with an 'equal eye'. So also managers are expected to avoid favouritism.

Point (12) : It is pointed out that the Gita falls short of management thought in its pursuit of positive motivation for achieving excellence in performance.

On the contrary, the Gita is full action oriented thoughts and performance oriented actions. In the verses (3-6,7) there is, infact, a precise prescription for excellence. "He, who controls the organs of sense and action by the mind and without attachment engages the organs of action in the path of work, excels. In verse (6) Sri Krishna condemns mere outer renunciation which is hypocrisy and in verse (7) he commends the true spirit of inward detachment.

But one thing is to be noted. Psychologists say motivation

defies analysis if the job itself is not suitable for achieving, nothing else will provide achievement. The job has to make achievement possible.

Point (13) : There is criticism that the Gita is only a one-time device to make Arjuna fight. It is not meant to be logical and universal system of operational philosophy.

If this is true, it makes great yogis like Sri Aurobindo, Sri Rama Krishna, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Ramana Maharshi fools. As Swami Prabhavananda explains in his "The Spiritual Heritage of India" (P.102)

"Kuruksheetra is not a scene of a war in the world outside, but of one which we continually wage with in us against the evil forces of passion, prejudice and evil inclination in order that we may hold dominion over ourselves. Arjuna was awakened enough to realise the need of struggling against these forces."

Point (14) : Some say that a rational minded student of modern management would probably reply to Gandhiji on his admittedly finding solace in the Gita : Gita is an excellent tranquiliser but not a true tonic or energy pill.

The Gita is not intended to be sensational but to be systematic teaching. Only a patient needs sensational tonic and energy pill but not Gandhiji the world's greatest karma yogi. Nobody can reply so flippantly to him.

As management experts advise : there is need for psychological insight, help and consel. There is need for the healer of the soul and the comforter of the afflicted.

The Gita serves that need.

Point (15) : Finally what is the place of the Gita in the management 'materia medica'? The verse (18-72) gives the answer : Sri Krishna asks Arjuna :

*"Has this been hears by you, O Partha!
With mind intent? Has all your delusion*

*By ignorance caused, been dispelled
From your mind? O Dhanamjaya!"*

Have you listened to it with undivided attention? Has your delusion due to ignorance been destroyed.

Sri Ramakrishna said, "If you utter the word 'Gita' a few times, you begin to say 'tagi', 'tagi' – meaning one who has renounced. The call to renunciation pervades the Gita." (The Spiritual Heritage of India by Swami Prabhavananda. (P.100))

If we apply this to the doctrine of Management, it means performance of duty with out attachment which means without selfish motive.

19:5:3. Management 'Materia Medica'

Now we move to certain other factors in the theory of Management. We may call it 'Management Materia medica' though it looks strange and even meaningless. First let us see what Materia medica is. Then everything becomes clear and obvious. It is the study of the origin and properties of substances used in medicine. Simply it is the science of their properties and use. If we read it as the science of 'facts and factors' of Management it becomes Management Materia Medica. 'Fact' is verified information and 'Factor' is influenced contributing to a result.

Now we go into details. The Indian social order was an extremely stable one. The caste system, what ever may be its draw backs, did provide a certain amount of stability and economic security to all. It may be noted that the conditions prevailing thousands of years ago probably demanded such a division of society. It was purely functional at the point of time in our history. Today it has degenerated into an evil institution and has certainly deviated from the purpose for which it was intended in ancient India. Today it has branched out into thousands of sects and sub-sects each with its our rigid rules and retrictions.

Abbe Dubois's remarks that, if the people of India never became barbaric, it was because of the caste system, appear to be logical. If

such a critic of Indian thoughts as Dobois regards the institution of caste as the "happiest efforts of Hindu legislation", there must be something in it. ('Politics in Ancient India' – M. Jahari 1954) The verses of the Gita (18-41 to 45) are the proof of this or stand in support of this.

The caste system provides every man with his place, his career, his occupation, his circle of friends. It makes him at out set a member of a corporate body, it protects him through life from the canker of social jealousy and unfulfilled aspirations; it ensures him companionship and a sense of community with others. Caste organization to the Hindu is the club, his trade union, his 'benefit society' – ('Motivational Concepts of Gita' A.K. Srivastava)

It has been emphasized that thousands of years ago when industrialisation had not taken place, when the unity of Hindu society itself was being threatened, when the economic structure demanded functional division of labour such a system of 'Varnāśramam' as conceived in the Gita (4-13) may have been the only solution to the problems of that society. In case it has outlined its utility, nothing prevents us from overthrowing it.

But all efforts to root out caste system failed (caste system is not 'Varnāśrama' system) because caste system has become so deep rooted even down to the bowels of earth that it has been proved fruitless again and again to root it out. It is certain that any effort to dislodge it will shake the roots of the social and political system in the country. Mere intercaste marriages are not a solution because they are peripheral surge of emotion under the guise of social and political reforms which have in no time vanished into the air.

Hindu ethics is not opposed to changes but opposed to change for change's sake and reforms for reforms' sake. It approves planned change. The decline of Hindu society is intimately linked with the defects it suffered from foreign invaders from time to time. As a matter of fact, we have remained slaves for more than 1200 years. The military defeats are attributed by Bajaj ('The Role of Gita in India'.

M.L.B.D; Delhi 1971) and others to the rut that set in following certain principles of Hindu ethics such as non-violence, rules and codes which prohibited initiative, drive and leadership. Das Gupta attributes this decline to the negative impact of caste system, weakened faith in material gains and these constitute a complex that has made the Hindu, a stereotype distinct from the westerner, as if the western stereotype is the ideal which Das Gupta would like us to emulate. (From International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences)

Das Gupta further contends that Nishkama karma led to its opposite 'Nishkarma kama'. By trying to restrain desire the sages of the past were choking the spring of life itself – thus Das Gupta accuses. According to Das Gupta, the ideals of self-denial are not conducive to progressive and expanding economy. He further contends that the ideal for expanding economy is the 'economic man' concept and it is ideal for the society in which profit motive is the prime mover and 'material gains' is the principal motivating agent.

Yet non-violence was and is the most talked about revolutionary concept in the social sciences today. It is being practised all over the world and has become the potent tool of the weak the underdog. The Gospel of the Gita is 'Arise and awake', O Bharata and fight so that 'Dharma' can be protected. 'Arise and awake' – 'Uttishata jāgrata' – is from Katha Upanishad (1-3-14). This is exactly what Mahatma Gandhi pleaded. It is absurd to plead that aggressiveness to environment is an essential prerequisite for survival, especially when competition is stiff. A Hindu is pretty aggressive when it comes to business and introvert otherwise.

It is further alleged that free choice of occupation was forbidden by the Gita (3-35) which commands that one should defend his dharma rather than change it for another's. The varna system as preached in the Gita (4-13) was a system devised to provide stability to society or to integrate Indian society. Besides this, when Krishna preached this principle, the point of time in our history may have demanded such a classification of groups with in a society. It was a

functional necessity, not a social discrimination and so it was emphasised. The Gita (3-35) does say that one must perform one's duty (Dharma) at all costs and not exchange it for petty gains. Infact, it is a constant and incessant appeal for action and not inaction.

The degeneration of caste system today is not the result of the preaching of the Gita, but an inheritance of the British regime in India insligating the sense of superiority and inferiority among the castes. Infact, the Gita no where preached differences or superiority of castes or discrimination of castes on the basis of inferiority or superiority. It only preached classification of society into four varnas not castes for its proper maintenance.

No doubt in course of time evils prop up in every system and the same happened in the case of caste system. The evils of caste system should not be defended. For that matter, is the west free from caste system? It is prevalent there, if not as caste system, in some other name like groups.

Even in the Gita values of team work are emphasised (3-10). Lord Krishna says, "In the beginning of Creation the Creator created mankind together with sacrifice and by mutual sacrifice (by 'tyaga') and mutual help they will grow, prosper and multiply". Sacrifice means not killing for the sake of 'yajna'. It is to be interpreted in the larger sense as 'tyaga', which means renunciation. We have to sacrifice the lower mind to the higher. By doing one's allotted duty one can be saved.

In truth, the period of renaissance started with the Mahabharata not with the British period as asserted by some historians. The process started with the Mahabharata and the Gita was the beginning of Hindu reaffirmation. The Gita is not merely an upanishad but also yogasastra. It gave an entirely new meaning to religion and work. For the first time in Hindu ethics Gita asserts that success lies in action not renunciation. One can attain liberation by carrying out the functions allotted to him. The Gita completely reinterprets the metaphysical aspects of Hinduism and prescribes an integrated plan by which renunciation and action can be combined. It advocates a triple path consisting of Karma yoga

(action without attachment), Bhakti yoga (devotion) and Jnana yoga (knowledge).

The upanishadic thoughts are more speculative and etherial (cosmic) beyond the comprehension of an ordinary man. The common man always desires to worship something more personal and practical. The Gita exactly satisfies these elements of religious faith. It blends the higher values and subtle thoughts of the upanishads with popular feelings. Sri Krishna becomes the ideal and the Supreme God. He appears in the Gita both as human and as super human.

It is also a fact that the teachings of the Gita are not for saints and seers only but for the masses also. It provides a plan for self-motivation of the humblest. It is a doctrine of achieving happiness without renouncing the world. It is the doctrine of incessant action. One's Duty or Dharma allotted to him is to be performed. People should perform only those actions that are not egoistic. So it advocates Nishkama karma which means, "one should do his work without seeking the fruit. He then becomes a yogi".

The cancer of modern society is hankering for rights and disinterest in the duties attached to them. Modern society is plagued with a demand for inaction rather than action. It is a complete departure from the basic principle of the Gita namely karma yoga.

Gita also provides a simple plan by which people can be self-motivated to carry out their duties. It also provides guidelines for interpersonal relationships and more so between superiors and subordinates. The Gita spells out code of conduct for both leaders and followers. However it makes it clear that the leadership role is much more difficult than the followers' role. It lays down principles of leadership which are ideal ones and yet practical. The Gita's concept of achievement-motivation is much more practical and suits our social and cultural environment than the western concept.

The Gita is a bold attempt to save Hindu society from degenerating further. It is a sincere and honest attempt to improve socio-

economic condition of our society. But more than anything else, the Gita is an intensely human document, which has analysed with penetrating insight the social, psychological, economical and spiritual aspects of society and the ways and means for providing resilience (springing back to its original shape or state) and stability to it.

When you read the Gita closely, you find that it provides excellent material in a concealed way for management. The entire gospel of the Gita is concerned with motivation and leadership – the two most important aspects of management today.

Verse (2-62) :

*Dhyā yato viṣayān punisaḥ
saṅgas teṣū 'pajāyate /
Saṅgāt samjāyate kāmāḥ
Kāmāt krodho abhijāyate //*

When a man broods over the object of senses, he develops attachment to them; from attachment springs desire and from desire comes anger.

Verse (2-63) :

*Krodhād bhavati saṁmohaḥ
saṁmohāt smṛiti vibhramaḥ /
Smṛiti bhraṁśad buddhi nāśo
buddhināśāt praṇaśyati //*

From anger arises delusion; from delusion loss of memory; from loss of memory the ruin of intelligence and from the ruin of intelligence he perishes.

Verse (2-47) :

*Karmaṇy evā adhikāras te
mā phaleshu kadācana /
Mā karma phalahetur bhūr
mā te sango stv akarmaṇi //*

To action alone you have a right and never at all to its fruits. Let not the fruits of action be your motive; but let there be no attachment to inaction.

The Gita is the divine song of love. Nārāyana and nara are inseparable. Krishna and Arjuna are one and as nara (Arjuna) represents Universal man or the whole of humanity, the song is means for the whole world. It is the call to the spirit of humanity.

These are the prominent clues for successful leadership and management.

19:6. PROFESSIONALISM AND THE GITA

Profession is a vocation. It is one that involves some branch of advanced learning or science. It is any type of work which needs a special training or a particular skill of one which is respected because it involves a high level of education.

A professional is one that does his work as a job. The word professional is often used to mean having qualities that connect you with trained and skilled people.

Professionalism is the combination of the qualities or typical features of a profession or of professionals especially competence, skill, etc. that are connected with trained and skilled people.

Now we shall see what Bhagavad Gita tells about professionalism.

What is greatness. It is a quality that man acquires. The great of a man is not in how much wealth he acquires, but in his integrity and his ability to influence those around him positively. Conflict is a part of life. The professional experience faces conflict every day at home and office. What is conflict? It is a state of opposition or hostility, fight or struggle. Psychologically conflict is the opposition of incompatible wishes or needs of a person. Clash is the result of this incompatibility. This clash is conflict. Compatibility is ability to coexist and mutual tolerance. This is the essential quality of professionalism, as it dilutes conflict.

The Gita has answer to these conflicts. It shows a path based on duty and ethics. The concept of duty is illustrated by the actions of a lawyer. A lawyer is expected to defend his client. To defend means to argue in favour of his client despite being conscious of the fact that his client's actions are not justified. Whether he wins the case or not is a different matter. It is not in his hands. The accused has to be defended and this action is based on the concept that it is the duty of a lawyer to defend his client. Otherwise there is no need of courts and jurisprudence.

At the same time the value of ethics should not be ignored. While stressing the importance of duty in life Gita does bypass ethics. Ethics is the science of morals in human conduct. Value is the worth or utility of a thing. The concern here is the values of the Gita in regard to human ethics. Ethics is a part of philosophy. Reason and argument form the basis of philosophy. Philosophy tries to seek truth and knowledge of Reality. It is about the reality of causes and nature of things and also the principles governing existence and the material universe. It is infact a perception of physical phenomena and human behaviour. It is this perception that the lawyer utilizes in his arguments in the court.

Then what are morals? Is helpless obedience to some external religious law morality? Is it so because of faith that there is some intinsic values in that law? Or it more out of fear that disobedience to that law results in calamities. Answer to this questions is the prime factor in morality. Anything done out of fear is utterly selfish. If it is to get rid of unhappiness in life after death. It is simply insinuating morality. Most of the religious pedantics are dong or rather preaching the same. Dogmas, superstitions, rotten traditions are the evil consequences of this attitude. Religious observances have become mechanical and spiritless. Spirituality or happy life after death has become a commodity that can be bargained and purchased. It is the worst degenerated state of any religion that makes a man neither a sensible materialist nor a purposeful spiritualist.

Marality or ethics is concerned in general with goodness of human character or behaviour. It is also concerned with distinction between right and wrong. Character or behaviour is judged by actions. Nature of will and motives gives a moral tone to actions. Ethical ideal realised by performing what one sincerely feels is his duty in a particular context without being influenced. It is what the Gita calls non-attachment to fruits of actions. Though ethical values are of universal validity, it must be the individual person who can in each case decide what his duty is. Each moral decision must be a personal responsibility and a free choice in accordance with the law of one's being. The ethical value of actions is dependant on the quality of this decision – the moment of the will behind hem, the intentional tone. A professional, a lawyer or what ever he may be, essentially needs to be ethical.

The environment of corruption is against ethics. Means to achieve an end are as important as the end. This is the emphasis of ethics. The aim of all professionals is to achieve success both professional and material. It is really painful to see some of the professionals resorting to unethical means to achieve material success. Today the environment abounds in deception, double dealing and dirty tricks.

Lord Krishna declares in the Gita : "Follow ethical means, do your duty and I will take care of you". Mahatma Gandhi achieved success by following an ethical code. He always preached what he himself practised first. Once Gandhi was accused of sedition. While examining in the court the judge asked him, "How should I deal with you". Gandhi did not pray for mercy but at once responded saying, "Deal according to law". That is an ethical response.

The Gita is a divine gift to man kind. It is a comprehensive guide giving sound advice and words of comfort. It is a fountain of wisdom that served humanity well ever since it was revealed by Sri Krishna to Arjuna on the battle field of Kurukshetra. It is only in recent times that scholars have paid attention to the Gita in daily life situations. Swami Vivekananda called the Gita 'Practical Vedanta'.

Oflate several books have emerged that take the text of Gita even closer to modern people some times to select groups of people like college students. Gita for the professionals is one such effort. "Truth is not confined to any particular individual or nation, but it is for every body. As the sun rises and shines equally upon all nations, even so does the sun of eternal Truth shine and reveal itself among all nations. Who ever will long for such realisation will find a way to the attainment of Truth" says Swami Abhedananda.

Most of us lead our lives in a mundane, monotonous way without even clear goals and without even clear goals and without clear understanding of the body and the mind. As such the difficulties of day-to-days existence dominate us. The consequence is frustration, diseases and an uncomfortable existence. When we read the Gita the difficulties get translated into challenges which can be overcome. The Gita is the quint essence of all that is there in the heritage of our scriptures. You might not understand or remember everything in the Gita, but when read it, it brings about a change you inside and out. The reason is that the Gita teaches reality that makes life more meaningful, stable, peaceful and purposeful. Great scholars have identified three secrets in the teachings of the Gita. **The first** is about duty. One must do one's duty in accordance with one's dharma (Swadharma) – Karma yoga (3-35). "Sreyan swdharmo". **The second** is about the inner Self. This is the real Self which is different from outer physical self (I). This must be realised by every one of us. **The third** is the Omnipresence of the universal Self otherwise called Krishna the universal God who is there in everything that exists in the world.

Is the Gita a revelation and an actual event? This is a big controversy. Nobody can confidently answer. But nobody can deny that it is priceless and is of immeasurable value for mankind. Let us leave this debate to those mundane scholars. But it is a fact that the Gita reveals wisdom.

Difficulties are common in life. But are they stumbling blocks or stepping stones. Though only a few agree, a little reflection and thought

will possibly make us feel differently that difficulties make a person stronger. Great men say that we can progress in life if we have faced difficulties. Professionals particularly have to bear this truth in mind.

Competition in profession or sport is common. This can happen even between friends. In such situations our scriptures like Gita provide solace and strength to find solutions. The disposition of Sri Krishna while he teaches Arjuna in the middle the battle field is the best example. The right choice in trying to solve a problem is patience and understanding but not anger and brute force.

Our scriptures have an immense wealth of knowledge and wisdom waiting to be used. Our sages in the past realised that much of the knowledge would not be easy to understand. Therefore, they passed on this knowledge through parables and stories in an interesting manner easy to understand.

Any professional has to realise from these parables that only hard work brings success but success should not generate vanity. Pride and ego should not overcome our natural goodness. Fairplay, ethics and good behaviour, when in adversity have their own strength. It has to be tried out and experienced to be believed. This is possible only when one does one's duty irrespective of the circumstances. The Gita says the same in the verse (2-47).

"Karmanyevādhī karste"

A relevant saying in this connection is, "Do good onto others so that good always will fall onto you".

Anger is the root cause of delusion. The Gita also says (2:63)

*"Krodhad bhavati sammohaḥ
Sammohāt smṛiti vibramah"*

"From anger arises delusion, from delusion comes loss of memory, from loss of memory the destruction of intellect and from loss of intellect one goes to complete ruin and finally perishes."

So a professional has to bear it mind for ever that anger should

never intrude into his professional life. Otherwise he will be ruined in course of time. Control of his mind is very essential in his life. The Gita advocates devotion and bhakti (love) as one of the strongest paths towards God. The professionals are always advised to do what is their duty even if it is cumbersome. The chapter 12 in the Gita relates to the way of devotion to God which is very useful to all professionals. The need of service to mankind is very useful in this regard. Don't believe anything even though it is too obvious until it is proved by more than one independent source. Man is often an easy victim of optical illusion. The reason, is that man is often not ruled by what he actually sees but by what he thinks he sees and he come to conclusion which may not be the correct one. The subconscious brain adds its deeprooted beliefs and presumptions to any message received by it from conscious thinkings.

Jealousy and ego are the powerful tools of Satan. Any true professional should not yield to these tools of Satan. The Gita also gives highest importance to shedding ego.

"All actions are done by three qualities of nature (Gunas); but who is deluded by 'ego' or 'I' sense thinks that 'I am the doer.'" (3-27)

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna (18-17) : "He who is free from self sense, whose understanding is not sullied, though he slays these people, he slays not really, nor is he bound by his actions." (18-17)

For a successful professional nothing is more important than open mind. The goals and principles of life remain unchanged, but a professional to be successful, has to adapt his ideas, thoughts, procedures to the changing times. A true professional should not simply dump the assignments on juniors presuming that they will come to him if they have difficulties. It is not the child that should hold the mother's hand, but the mother should hold the child's hand. The senior professional is experienced and so he should lead his team. This will reduce any possible risk to the bare minimum.

Life is not always meaningless. The Lord is always aware of our difficulties. If you want to do some good thing, you must do it

immediately, because there is every possibility of time changing our thought process. Our mind is almost like monkey. We cannot be sure how it swings.

As Charles Darwin says in his theory of 'Evolution' only the fittest survives. That is his well known phrase 'survival of fittest'. It is the species that should adapt to the changing environment and not the environment to the species. Such adapting species survive the longest. It is possible only with an open mind and open mind is possible only by constant meditation.

Greed, lust and other temptations mislead a person in life and trap him in wrong doings. When we have strayed from our path of dharma or righteousness. We should look to the message of the Gita (9-30). We will still attain divinity if we make use of devotion or service.

"Even if a man of the most vile conduct worships Me with undistracted devotion, he must be reckoned as righteous for he has rightly resolved." (9-30)

Gita further says : Krishna says : "Abandoning all duties come to Me alone for shelter. Be not grieved, for I shall release you from all evils." (18-66)

God speaks to us through our conscience. So we must trust and do what our conscience says.

In chapter 12 Gita advocates devotion and service to God as one of the best ways to realise God.

If it so happens that a professional falls into a major conflict of any kind he should place himself in a position to acquire full view of both sides so that he will have fair understanding of both sides. In Kurukshetra Sri Krishna placed Arjuna's Chariot in full view of both sides so that Arjuna could see both sides well. Sri Krishna gave the Gita discourse before the Kurukshetra battle began.

It is always good for a professional to see and examine both

sides of any conflict between two parties or a conflict with in his own mind as regards the right course of action.

Any professional should always remember that success in life or profession depends on competence, presentation, and soft speech. Reading Gita every day will help in acquiring these qualities.

Most important message of the Gita is found in chapter (8), verses (6) and (7). Sri Krishna says : "Arjuna, what ever a person thinks at the end while giving up his body, that state alone attains as he is ever absorbed in the thought of that state or object". (8-6)

"Therefore at all times remember Me and fight. When your mind and understanding are set on Me, to Me alone you shall come without any doubt".

This is the way to Self realisation. The real test of human life is to go through experiences in a manner which brings us closer to Self-realisation.

On the whole this is what the Gita says to a professional or for that matter to every person to get success in life. As a matter of fact the great Kurukshetra war is a fatal conflict between two massive armies of established professionals in war. The result is total annihilation except Pandava brothers and Draupadi.

Salient features of a professional :

- 1) What ever the profession may be, sports, art or business, one has to be a good human being first, without ego, hatred, jealousy greed or anger.
- 2) Anger leads to delusion which destroys our reasoning power.
- 3) Our mind becomes our enemy if we don't control it.
- 4) Our intellect (buddhi or mind) is the gateway to the Self.
- 5) "Let a man lift himself up by himself; let him not degrade himself; because Self alone is the friend the Self and Self alone is the enemy of the self. The Self is the Lord and the goal of the Self." (Gita 6-5)

19:7. EPILOGUE

Professionalism, A Mighty River

A full, deep and calm,
sliding embanked river
'professionalism' is.

With open hands
the tributaries, the river welcomes,
while itself not being disturbed.
Taking turns and curves on the way
it rolls on to merge in the sea at last.

A river mingles and also merges,
egoless it remains.
So too a professional, to be
successful and popular,
has to mingle and merge too if needed.

A constant flow, a river is
Indians' way of life becomes one with it.

Thus speaks the river Ganga :

I am the holy river Ganga,
born somewhere in the crevices
of the great Himalayas,
I roll on down to the lands.

Right from my birth in the Himalayas
I have never been myself till I merge in the sea.
Constant change of names
I have endured.
My birth place is named Gangotri.

Initially I was Bhāgiradhi,
later I have become Ganga.
I cross the snow mountains
and reach the land at Rishikesh.

South-West I have been flowing so far,
but south-east I turn hurriedly
at Haridwar.

Before I reach Allahabad
the 'Ramaganga' accost me.
On the way I see the 'Yamuna'
that looks as if waiting for me.
Though a tributary of mine
never it mingles with me,
as if doesn't like to lose its identity.

True it is, 'Yamuna' is faster.
We together look bluish at one bank,
While at the other bank I turn reddish.
Only after marching ten miles the 'Yamuna'
accepts my elderliness.

From there I take in the Tāmasa
and move on east ward.
At Kasi I suddenly turn to north.

Welcoming the 'Gomati and Ghangra
I take the way seeing Pataliputra.
I reminisce the golden days of Chandraguptas.
Making friends with
the Son, Gandaki and Kosi rivers
I enter Jharkhand.

The moment I reach 'Pakar'
Oh! what a sudden change!
Abruptly I am split
as it my heart is taken away
from me.
The bigger slice by name 'Hugli'
passes on aside.
As my slice it quenches

the thirst of Calcutta,
I appease myself.

As I view Farakka Barrage,
the memories of Indo-Bangladesh
Water-treaty cluster around
as big bees.

Meanwhile I am addressed
as 'Padma',
that means I have entered Bangladesh.
Aided by the Jamuna,
a slice of the Brahmaputra
I move along.

Another slice of the Brahmaputra,
the Meghana even without my consent
embraces me.

Better it is to say that I joined with
the Meghana than the Meghana joining me.
For, even the attributed name
the Padma is not left to me.

As I am addressed as 'Meghana'
I feel shocked doubting
Whether I am still Ganga.
However I should say
compassion is still alive;
for, the place of my mingling
with the sea is named as
Ganga-delta,
rather Ganga-Brahmaputra delta.
I feel coquetted as my name Ganga
comes to my mind again.

I find a place in mythology.
As Bhagiradha managed to bring me

down from a height of over 1300 feet
 from sea level, I am even made a goddess;
 a temple was built for me in 18th century
 near Gangotri.

Born at a height of over 13000 feet
 from the sea level, I travelled for over 2500 kms
 All through I have been embraced by all.

Seeing people getting along in life.
 propped up by my shores, I pass by
 Haridwar, Kanpur, Allahabad
 Varanasi, Patna, Ghajipur
 Bhagalpur, Meerjapur. I hear
 a number of languages, accents
 and see their food habits and garments.

On the way I have the privilege
 of seeing the Bengal tiger
 at Sunderbans tiger reservoir.
 Passing through Rajmahal mountains
 I absorb mineral salts.
 The cultivation of land by Santhal
 Hill tribes is a treat to watch.

The land at my shores is highly fertile.
 The farmers who trust the land,
 the fishermen who trust water
 are living so happily
 that my hair stands on end.
 It is festivity for them
 when the dolphin falls in the net.

While the fishermen catch the dolphins
 for livelihood,
 Some greedy men for their selfish ends
 mercilessly scoop out the dolphins
 I feel my heart is squeezed.

However much I give,
 these men want still more.
 Their avarice pollutes me.
 The aquatic animals are
 becoming breathless.
 To save the animals
 I have to cleanse myself.
 Can you help me in my effort?

Once it was a sentiment
 that my water brings back the dying man
 to life when poured into his mouth.
 But today one falls into danger
 drinking my water. The present-day truth.
 Plenty of Oxygen I have in my water.
 capacity I have to cleanse myself.

Such a river I am, but today
 I am dragged to the top
 of the polluted rivers in the world.
 Alas! what a pity!

Everyday the people give
 wave-offering to me
 in praise of my eminence.
 Helplessly I am looking forward
 to some body to help me
 in cleansing myself.

A metaphorical birds'-eyeview this is
 of what practical professionalism
 is to-day.

19:7:1. I see you in them all

When you are there in my mind
 Why these rites and rituals.
 Ripened crop and the river in full flow,

the sin in splendour and the clouds bright,
 Omnipresent you are
 The Supreme Being.
 The sun and the moon your eyes
 The five elements your forms,
 I see you, the Lotus-eyed
 In them all, O! Almighty!

19:7:2. Reverence to Gita

Gita the tree of paradise,
 planted by Lord Krishna,
 by Vedavyasa nourished,
 the upanishads its seed,
 self-awakening its sprout,
 sacred precepts its branches,
 passionless patience its sprouting leaves.
 Devotion to the Lotus feet of Sri Krishna
 Its flowery fragrance,
 the fount of Nectar,
 Gita the deliverer of the seers
 I worship.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kesavabhotla Venkata Subrahmanya Sastry more known as K.V.S.Sastry was born on January 1st 1935 in a Village, Kunchavaram, near Tenali town, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, India. Literary talents, are his paternal inheritance. He got his school education at Tenali and later at Guntur A.P. He did B.Sc; B.A; B.Ed at Guntur. He did M.A (Eng); LL.B, as a regular student in Saugar University, Saugar, Madhya Pradesh. Later he did M.A (Tel) at Hyderabad, A.P, India. He worked as Lecturer in English in Government Colleges in Telangana for 35 years and retired from service in December 1992 on attaining the age of superannuation.

Even while in service he had immense interest in the upanishads, but he could not find enough time to put in writing his deep thoughts. It was only after retirement from service he could give book shape to his knowledge. 'That art Thou' forms the core of his philosophy.

He first wrote in Telugu in four volumes (5 books) and they were printed. Now he made English his means of expression and put all the matter in English in 6 books.

Books by the author

- IN TELUGU**
1. Tatva Drishti-1
Vedanta Saramu
 2. Tatva Drishti-2
Anusthana Vedantamu
 3. Tatva Drishti-3
3-(1) Srishti Rahasyamu
3-(2) Srishti Rahasyamu
 4. Tatva Drishti-4
Gita Darsanam – Samajika Spriha

5. Vyasa Guchamu
6. Bhava Vallari
7. Ekankikalu

IN ENGLISH

1. The Vision of Reality-1
Self-Knowledge
2. The Vision of Reality-2
Mystery of Creation
3. The Vision of Reality-3
A Revelalion
4. The Vision of Reality-4
Supreme Secret of Gita
5. The Vision of Reality-5
Practical Gita
6. The Vision of Reality-6
The Nectar of Gita
7. A posy of Essays
8. Nose Gay
9. One-act plays

