

THE MEDITATION OF THE BHAGAVADGITA

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The technique of the meditation in the Bhagavadgita is a little more complicated and more comprehensive in its reaches than even the Kathopanishad or the Sutras of Patanjali. Most students of the Gita regard it as a kind of ethical gospel, a war morality, or a scripture on devotion to Bhagavan Sri Krishna. While the Bhagavadgita is all this, it is much more than this. It is difficult, therefore, to pinpoint the Bhagavadgita method of meditation. It seems to say so many things in many places that one cannot easily know what exactly is its final message. Yet we can see, underlying its discourses, a current of thought which can be taken as its central gospel.

While we may go on speaking for hours and saying many things, there may be some central intention behind our speech that may be regarded as our gospel. Likewise, we may try to discover a central motive or intention behind the Bhagavadgita's gospel. Was the intention merely to make Arjuna fight, or was there any other purpose behind this very intricate gospel? We cannot say that it was the only intention because Arjuna could have been goaded to act even without so many other philosophical, ethical, spiritual and metaphysical aspects of the teaching being said. The Vishwarupa Darshana, the Sankhya Yoga, and the Daiva Asura Sampat Vibhaga Yoga all seem to be remotely connected with war or battle. He could have been simply ignited to action by some other direct method of approach. This would not have been a difficult thing for a personality like Krishna. But on the other hand, he gave a very generous teaching on points touching every vital issue in life.

Inasmuch as we do not take the Gita as a gospel intended only for Arjuna but meant for one and all, including ourselves today, how are we to take it as a yoga scripture? It is regarded as a Yoga Shastra and not merely as a Vidya Shastra. It is a Yoga Shastra and a Brahma-vidya. This is how the Bhagavadgita chapters conclude: *brahmavidyāyām yogaśāstre*. So there must be something very profound in this gospel, much more than what appears on the surface.

It is not a historical document of a battle that took place many years back, because then that would not be a Brahma-vidya or a Yoga Shastra. We cannot call a historical chronicle as a Yoga Shastra or a Brahma-vidya. While it is a chronicle and an epic, it is also a perennial and eternal teaching. It is a timeless gospel that was given through an event that took place in time, a person speaking a superhuman truth. Such being the

case, we, as humble seekers of truth and followers of the path of yoga, would do well to discover what the Gita expects us to do in the world.

What does it call upon us to do? 'Us' includes every human being in the world, not merely the disciples of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj or inmates of the Sivananda Ashram. What does the Gita expect a human being as such to do in the world? That would be its central teaching and gospel, and that would be the meditation of the person concerned.

I am not covering here the range of the teaching of the Bhagavadgita, which is too detailed and vast to be taken as any single technique of meditation, but would be confining myself only to the undercurrent of thought which, as I pointed out, appears to me is the intention of the Bhagavadgita. For the time being we shall restrict ourselves only to the intention behind the vast teaching of the Gita, and not the details of the teaching itself. This intention is hidden behind the teaching; it is not visible on the surface, and it is this hidden secret that we are to take as the method of contemplation. It is a difficult method of training the mind, the will, the emotion and the spirit.

However, the Gita starts with the human character as it is, as a good teacher would do when confronting an uninitiated student or a disciple. Human nature is taken for what it is, and from that standpoint of the foibles of human nature the spirit is raised gradually to the higher levels of its realisation. Just to think of it is very thrilling and makes one's hair stand on end.

The initial character of the human mind is fear, confusion, and a kind of overconfidence in oneself. This overconfidence is a cause, and sometimes also an effect, of a fear that does not leave the human mind. When we are not strong enough, we appear to put on a kind of strength and begin to advertise or proclaim the actions that we can do. A very strong person does not proclaim himself as much as a weak person does. A lion does not bark; it is only the dog that barks. Though the lion's strength is much more, it does not wag its tail but simply keeps quiet as if it knows nothing and is not concerned with anything. It is the weakling that brags, and gets irritated, and talks at length.

In the First Chapter of the Bhagavadgita, which is the beginning of the meditation, the confounded mind of the seeking soul, which is represented by the mind of Arjuna, demonstrates an overconfidence on one side and a weakness on the other side. It is the overconfidence that makes Arjuna say, "Krishna, take me to the centre of this array. Let me have a look at these idiots who are up in arms against us." Likewise, the yoga teacher and the yoga student, both standing on a similar pedestal, may commit the mistake of entertaining an overconfidence of one's own powers and capacities in respect of the practice of yoga. But when we actually see the array in front of us, we get

flabbergasted for a reason quite different from the one which made us so overconfident.

The seeker of truth, the young student of yoga, thinks he can catch God in a few days, as Arjuna thought he could vanquish the whole of the Kaurava army in no time. "I have only to look at them and see what I can do to do them." Likewise, young uninitiated and inexperienced students of yoga, having an emotional enthusiasm of God-consciousness and a *vairagya* boiling up in their heart for the time being, leave their home, their father and mother, and go to ashrams to fight the war of the spirit, the battle of life, for the sake of God-realisation. This is wonderful, a very good aspiration indeed, as it was proper on the part of Arjuna to have thought himself to be so powerful, confident and ready for victory. He was not merely experimenting with the war; he was bent upon victory. Likewise, seekers of yoga are bent upon God-realisation and are not merely experimenting with the practice of yoga, but when they take the initial step and have a look at the vast range of powers arrayed before them, what do they see? They see something within them and also without them, something quite different from what they expected.

What did Arjuna see? He did not see generalissimos, commanders-in-chief, warriors, soldiers who were up in arms against the Pandavas. What did he see? He saw his grandfather, he saw his Guru, he saw his brothers, nephews, and brothers-in-law. These are the things he saw there, not soldiers. There were no soldiers at all, no warriors. Something else was seen there, to his surprise. This is exactly what happens to every one of us. We, as students of yoga, begin to see an obstacle in the world, an obstacle even in our own parents and relations. They are all good-for-nothings. They always impede our progress, talking ill of God and our aspiration for God, so we take to retreats, to monasteries, and go to Gurus. This is exactly what Arjuna did; but the next phase of Arjuna's mind also will be waiting for us. It comes on almost everyone.

When we take a second look at the world, after having left it as an obstacle or an impediment, we see it as a different thing altogether. Old memories come up. What we have left becomes a reality. The *samskaras* or *vasanas*, as we call them, begin to take concrete demonstrations, make faces before us, and then the tender feelings of the human mind – we should call them the weaknesses of the human mind – begin to speak a different language altogether, different from the very stern voice spoken earlier. We become very tender and soft towards the world of objects, and the loves which we tried to overcome become overmastering and get diverted into undesirable channels.

Loves and hatreds are hard to conquer. We wanted to give up the love for the world and the home. There was a kind of dislike for the world and for the home, relations, etc., on account of a love for God which was thought to be there in the mind. But love and hatred have nothing to do with spirituality. Spirituality is not even love

for God if it is opposed to hatred for the world, because love for God does not mean hatred for the world. The word 'love' is inapplicable in this case. It is something different altogether. There is no suitable term for that attitude which we ultimately have towards God. It is not love and hatred. It is not love in the sense of loving our father and mother, our husband, wife, etc.; but our concept of love is only this much. We cannot think of love for God in any other manner than as contradistinguished from hatred for things secular. We make a distinction between the spiritual and the secular, the religious and the profane. From our childhood onwards we make these distinctions that if something is good, something else must be bad. We cannot think of good unless there is also something bad. But this is not true of the spiritual nature. Spirituality is a good which is not opposed to anything else, so there is no bad when we think of the spiritual aspiration.

The good of spiritual life is not opposed to anything else as bad, but we have an emotional attitude towards things, as Arjuna had in the beginning. Spiritual aspiration, or love of God, is not an emotion of the heart because emotions are always like waves, dashing on one shore and then dashing on the other shore. From this side we call it love, from the other side we call it hatred, but it is the same wave that dashes us either way, to either side.

So when we take to seclusion and monastic life or ashram life, these emotional distinctions – or erroneous notions, we should say – which made us draw a line between God-love and world-love pursue us, and we make this distinction even in monasteries, even before a Master or a Guru, and in our private religious lives. So our emotions do not cease. We have worries, anxieties and daily annoyances even in monasteries, which we tried to avoid in home life. It was not our house that we wanted to avoid, but the annoyances of life, and they do not leave us even if we go to sequestered places.

Our father and mother are not simply personalities. They are certain emotional centres. When we think that the relationships of father and mother, husband and wife are obstacles to God-realisation, what we actually intend is not that some personalities are against us but that some emotions are against us. Father is a kind of emotion. Wife is a kind of emotion. Likewise, family relation is a kind of emotion. It is not a person, so we do not leave or abandon a person when we leave a father and mother. It is an emotion or a kind of attachment, a feeling, an urge that we want to give up, but we mistake the one for the other. When we think we have left a person, we think the emotion also has left, but that has not been done. We have left a person, but the father and mother have not been left because they are not persons. They are emotional centres connected to our own hearts. Husband and wife are not human beings; they are emotional centres of likes.

So when we go to monasteries, to ashrams, we are no better if we have not understood the psychology of *vairagya*. *Vairagya* is not abandonment of a thing or a person, but the abandonment of that factor which makes it necessary to give up certain centres of like and dislike. Inasmuch as all youngsters, seekers of yoga and novitiates, are not accustomed to this psychological thinking in their personal life, they get caught up in another net altogether wherever they are, whether they are in a temple, in Badrinath, or in Madras or Bombay. It makes no difference because our bondages are carried with us wherever we go.

The Arjuna in every one of us begins to work when we enter the battlefield of life, which is the practice of yoga. The battle of life is the practice of yoga, and this Mahabharata battle of the Bhagavadgita is the yoga of the cosmic that is described before us in its vast reaches. So the first step and the initial move in the practice of yoga is the resolution, the decision made by the seeker mind Arjuna as the representative of all people. Confidence and decision give way to emotion and sentiment. "This is no good for me. I am not for this. I made a mistake. I am very sorry." This is what Arjuna said: "I made a mistake, Bhagavan. It is not possible for me. Excuse me. I lower my weapons." This is what the seeker also will say, and has said many times: "It is no good. I am very sorry indeed. What a mistake I have committed! I have become a Christian priest. I have left that, and this I am not getting. So where am I standing now?"

Kārpaṇyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ pṛcchāmi tvāṃ dharmasaṃmūḍhacetāḥ (Gita 2.7). Now the disciple speaks: "Master, I am confounded. I don't know what to do. That has gone, this is not coming, and I am grieved to the core of my heart. Wretched is my fate." This is the central point of the First Chapter of the Bhagavadgita, which opens up the gateway of the Second Chapter where the Guru begins to speak: "What is this? What has happened to you? You were so powerful and confident and decisive, and now you are speaking like this? Instead of Bhishma, Drona, Duryodhana being seen as grandfather, Guru and brother, can you not see them as warriors girding up their loins to fight against you in battle?" The same thing looks different after some time. In the Panchadasi it is said that a woman is standing somewhere. Her child thinks, "It is my mother," her husband thinks, "It is my wife," her father thinks, "It is my daughter," but a tiger thinks, "It is my food." The same thing looks different depending on the angle of vision of the onlooker. Arjuna saw Bhishma on the battlefield as a poor man, a generalissimo, an old widowed grandfather who tended him when he was a small child. What is the attitude that he should have towards him? It depends upon the context of the situation.

Now we are in the context of yoga, and not in the context of family, so in the context of yoga, how are we to look upon the world – as our dear friend or as a foe? It is not our friend, and it is not our foe. It is something else altogether, as a woman is

neither a mother nor a daughter nor a food. She has got an independent status of her own. We give her names and have a different attitude towards her from our point of view, but what is she by herself? That is the independent status of the person. Likewise, the world has an independent status of its own, different from what we would like it to appear before our mind. First it appeared as an enemy, now it looks like a friend. But unfortunately it is neither an enemy nor a friend. It is an independent something on which we have foisted certain characters and values from the standpoint of our understanding and emotion.

So Bhagavan Sri Krishna opens up the subject of real yoga when he tells Arjuna, “All this confusion in your mind is due to your wrong attitude towards the world. Don’t think they warriors, don’t think they are friends or enemies. They are something with whom you have to deal in a very scientific manner.” There is a difference between a sense object and a scientific object. A sense object stimulates the senses in a particular manner and gives back to us only the reactions of our senses, nothing more. But a scientific object is an independent unit by itself, having a character of its own quite different from the reactions which the senses have in respect of that object.

The world is a scientific principle by itself. It is not meant for our enjoyment or for our hatred. It has an independence of its own, and we have to look upon the world as it is, and not as it appears. This knowledge is called *sankhya*, which is the subject of the Second Chapter of the Bhagavadgita. The *sankhya* to which Bhagavan Sri Krishna refers in the Second Chapter is the knowledge of the scientific nature of things, free from the emotional attitudes we have towards them. While emotion may lead us to love and hatred, the scientific attitude leads us to knowledge and understanding. This is *sankhya-tattva*, and acting on the basis of this understanding is yoga. The understanding is *sankhya*, and the implementation of it is yoga.

This knowledge of the true nature of things will tell us what to do with those things. If we do not know what these things are by themselves, we will not know how to conduct ourselves in respect of them. When we see a person, we should put on a sort of conduct and attitude towards him, but first we must know who he is. It is a governor or a prime minister or a friend or an enemy or an animal such as a tiger, a lion, a snake, etc. When we know what sort of thing is in front of us, we know what sort of attitude we can put on in respect of it. But we do not know what it is. The essential nature of the world is not known to us, so we mistake it for different things at different times and then come to grief like a moth falling on fire thinking it is food.

Therefore, Bhagavan Sri Krishna, the Guru, tells the disciple Arjuna that knowledge is the basis of the practice of yoga, and not the sentiment, emotion or imagination that was ruling his mind in the beginning. Knowledge is power, strength, confidence and capacity to act, but emotion and sentiment are weaknesses which will tell us one thing now and another thing afterwards. “So don’t depend on sentiment

and feeling of your mind, Arjuna, O seeker, but brace yourself, ground yourself in a superior understanding, *sankhya*. Put it into action.” This is *sankhya* yoga.

Now the teaching goes further. How do we put it into action? How do we implement this knowledge? But what this knowledge is must be known first. Knowledge of the true nature of things is *sankhya*, but what is the true nature of things? If that is known to some extent at least, we may be able to act in the world in the proper manner. What is this knowledge?

The knowledge of things as they are, on a higher analysis, a superior investigation, tells us that the world and the individual are intimately connected to each other. While the senses tell us that the world is outside us, knowledge tells us the world is not as outside us as it appears. This is the difference between the report of analytical knowledge and the report of the confounded senses. The senses tell us that the objects are totally outside us, that they are to be loved or hated, but the understanding tells us that we have no business either to love it or hate it because it is inseparable ultimately from our own personal life. Like threads connecting a fabric of cloth, forces connect the world with our personality. We are part of the world as threads are part of a cloth. What can be more stupid than a thread hating another thread in the very same cloth? It is the same as hating a part of our own structure or loving a part of what we ourselves are. Neither of these attitudes can be called wisdom. “Arjuna,” says Sri Krishna, “this is the truth of the whole matter.”

The elements which constitute the world enter into our own senses ultimately. The fibre of the thread is uniform everywhere throughout the cloth. Likewise, a single fibrous matter permeates the structure of the world and the structure of the individual at the same time. The five elements which constitute the world outside also constitute the sense organs which perceive the objects as outside. Look at this wonder. It is as if the elements are looking at themselves. On one side they appear as the subject, on the other side they appear as the object. When the elements get rarefied into the functional apparatus of the subject, they become instruments of individual knowledge. When they appear as gross, they look like objects.

Sattva, *rajas* and *tamas* constitute the five elements, and every element has all the three characters. The *tamasic* aspect of the elements makes them appear as gross objects, the *sattvic* principle present in them makes them instruments in the perception by a subject, and the *rajasic* element present in them creates this urge for perception. So *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the three strands of the elements, become responsible for perception and external knowledge. Thus, the perceiver and the perceived are not really independent of each other. “Arjuna, you thought that the world is outside you, that you have enemies outside, that you have father and mother, brother and sister, friends and relatives. No such thing is possible. They do not exist at all. What you see in front of you is neither your relation, nor your friend or enemy. It

is something inseparable from the structure of your own being.” *Guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate* (Gita 3.28): *Gunas* operate upon *gunas*. It is not Arjuna operating on Bhishma, it is *guna* operating upon *guna*. One *guna* of *prakriti* operates on another *guna* of *prakriti*. There is a mutual concourse of these *gunas*, or properties of matter, and therefore, O seeker, do not get confused. Where is the question of loving and hating now? Impossible is this attitude of emotion.

Oh! Now the eyes are open. We have a wonderful vista in front of us, quite different from the world we saw before. We felt that we had a father and mother, brother and relatives, friends and foes in the world as objects of sense. Now it does not appear to be like that: “These are all certain principles, centres, independent units connected inseparably with my own being. So it is not I that look upon the world, but something else looking upon itself.” This is a far-reaching consequence of the Gita analysis in the Second and the Third Chapters.

Oh, wonderful! We are in a different world altogether now. We are not in India, we are not in the world, we are not on planet earth. This is also a kind of restricted notion of our minds. There is no such thing as a country, a geographical area or a nationality, not even planet earth. They do not exist. They are only notions in our mind due to an erroneous way of thinking. There is a vaster field permeating before us, inseparably connected with ourselves. The universe is so wondrous in its stretch, and we have to deal with it: “How can I deal with it? What shall I do? What is my duty in this new universe that has now been brought before my eyes?” We do not know how to deal with it because our knowledge seems to be insufficient.

But the Fourth Chapter of the Gita tells us that this is not the whole truth of the matter. This is only one aspect, and the truth is still deeper. When we are ready to receive this illumination and understanding of the novel structure of the cosmos in front of us, a new power will take possession of us. We need not call it or invite it; it will come of its own accord. When disease goes, health comes of its own accord. We need not tell health, “Please come. The disease has gone. Why are you not coming?” Health will be there automatically when disease goes. So when this ignorance has left us, a new insight will take possession of us; divinity will manifest itself in ourselves. This is the *avatara* of God, which is mentioned in the Fourth Chapter of the Gita. God descends into our hearts uncalled for, uninvited. God is a health principle that descends into us when the illness of world perception leaves us. We need not call God. He is already there as the principle of health and integration in us, but the disease in us does not allow Him to manifest Himself properly. Thus, the illness has gone with the Third Chapter.

Now health manifests itself in the Fourth Chapter as God-consciousness, as the incarnation: *yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata, abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānaṃ sṛjāmy aham* (Gita 4.7). When this knowledge, this insight, this

illumination of divinity manifests itself in us, we become totally detached from the world of objects in a new manner altogether, not in the way in which we did in the initial stages. The detachment of the wise person is different in calibre from the detachment of the novitiate. It is something like a wise man saying he knows nothing and a foolish man also saying he knows nothing. There is a difference between these two people saying that. The wise one says he knows nothing for one reason, whereas the foolish one says he does not know anything for another reason altogether, but both make the same statements. Likewise, the detachment that comes upon us when this insight takes possession of us is different in quality from the detachment which we try to impose upon ourselves when we leave home, etc. Here we have the detachment born of knowledge, whereas earlier we had the detachment born of emotion and enthusiasm.

In the Yoga Vasishtha we have a similar reference. Rama was reluctant to do anything. "Oh, it is all useless. The world is *nashwara*, perishable," he said. Vasishtha reprimanded him for this kind of attitude, but he taught the very same thing to him from a different angle of vision: "Be detached, O Rama." Yes, we are already detached, so what are we being taught now? This previous detachment was a different thing, and now the detachment that we are to learn is born of a different force altogether. This is the Fifth Chapter of the Gita where the detachment born of knowledge is described, with which we gird up our loins, integrate our personality, concentrate it and fix it for the achievement of the goal. This is the Sixth Chapter, *dhyana* yoga, concentration.

Now the personality is integrated, while in the beginning it was disintegrated. Arjuna's personality was a disintegrated psychopathic personality. In the Sixth Chapter we have a healthy, mature, wise, integrated personality ready to take a jump into the unknown. These descriptions of yoga are quite different from what we hear in other scriptures such as the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali or even in some of the Upanishads.

The Seventh Chapter gives us a description of the world before us, with which we have to establish a proper relation in such a manner that we come to a realisation of its identity with us. The Seventh, Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Chapters gradually take us into the deeper and deeper layers of cosmic relationship until we touch the very borderland of God-existence when we reach the Tenth Chapter. In the first six chapters we try to overcome our individuality; in the next six chapters we try to overcome even universality itself because, finally, that also is a limitation. Individuality enters into universality when it crosses the border of the Sixth Chapter and enters the Seventh onwards, but after the Tenth and Eleventh the Universal is reached, and even that idea or concept of universality is shed by a different technique altogether. So from the individual we have come now to the cosmos. The integration of individuality is over. Now we have come to universal integration of the identity of the cosmos with the

individual. These themes are treated in great detail through the Seventh, Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Chapters.

From a perception of a universal impersonal cosmos before us, we begin to see twinklings of light in the cosmos itself. The world is not a dark mass of matter, as it appeared to be earlier. It is spirit camouflaging, masquerading as matter. We will begin to see stars twinkling in the fibres and atoms of matter. God will begin to seep gradually, slowly, from every corner of the world. He has covered Himself with a screen, as it were, and makes us feel that a world is before us. But there is no world before us; it is God before us. This insight will come to us gradually. The truth will be described in the Gita with greater and deeper emphasis through these chapters from the Seventh onwards. Divinity begins to be revealed more and more in these chapters. Previously, only how to train the individual is mentioned. There is no mention of God until the Sixth Chapter, but God begins to take a place in our scheme of things when the Seventh Chapter begins. Even in the Seventh Chapter the mention of God is scanty, but it receives greater emphasis as it proceeds further.

In the Eighth Chapter it is said that God is there, transcendent. *Kaviṁ purāṇam anuśāsītāraṁ aṅor aṅīyāṁsam anusmared yaḥ, sarvasya dhātāram acintyarūpaṁ ādityavarṇaṁ tamaśaḥ parastāt* (Gita 8.9): The Transcendent God, the Supreme Being, is difficult to achieve. We cannot see Him. Far off is God, but He is there as the transcendent goal of our life. In the Ninth Chapter we are told that He is not merely transcendent, He is around us. He is also immanent, and how He is immanent is emphasised in the Tenth Chapter. The whole world is permeated by Him. He is not simply a Cosmic Creator hovering in the heavens. Everywhere He is there. Ah! It is not enough if we merely say that He is everywhere; He has to be seen, and He is seen in the Eleventh Chapter where the flood is upon us like an ocean coming and swallowing us. The Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgita tells us a different truth altogether from where we started. What a difference between the condition of Arjuna in the First Chapter and the state of affairs which is told to us in the Eleventh Chapter! We are taken to some other realm altogether.

Now, this is a grand apotheosis to which we have come. The whole world is flooded with God's presence. It is not merely flooded; He Himself is that: *mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiṁcid asti* (Gita 7.7). *Amṛtaṁ caiva mṛtyuś ca sad asac cāham arjuna* (Gita 9.19): Immortality, death, existence and non-existence all are Myself only. Even immortality and death, even existence and non-existence, what is more? Everything is Myself, so where are you now? Where is the world? Where is the individuality? Where is the battle? Where are the friends? Where are the enemies? Where is love? Where is hatred? All these things have gone to the winds, as mist before the rising sun.

Now, from the Twelfth Chapter onwards we have the practical guidance given for substantiating this knowledge in day-to-day life – the vision of God working through

our daily routine. The four meditations we call karma, bhakti, yoga and jnana, through which we can substantiate this vision of the Eleventh Chapter, are mentioned in the Twelfth Chapter. The *jivanmukta*'s condition is described from the Thirteenth Chapter onwards. The *jivanmukta* sees the world, but he does not see it as we see it. How he sees it and what he does with it, we are told from the Thirteenth Chapter onwards, until the conclusion of the Eighteenth Chapter.

The Thirteenth Chapter tells us that the world is not made up of matter, the five elements, as we were told earlier. I mentioned that the world is made up of elements. There are no elements. Only two things are there: *purusha* and *prakriti*. The five have become only two. *Prakṛtiṃ puruṣaṃ caiva kṣetraṃ kṣetrajñam eva ca* (Gita 13.1) says the Thirteenth Chapter. So there are no five elements. Only two things are there, and we have to see that they are related to each other in an inseparable universality of absoluteness. *Sarvataḥ pāṇipādaṃ tat sarvatokṣīsiromukham, sarvataḥ śrutimal loke sarvam āvr̥tya tiṣṭhati* (Gita 13.14): Everywhere everything is; such is the relationship between spirit and matter. It is not the old *sankhya* that is described here, but a new kind of *sankhya* which gives us the knowledge of the Absolute. So in the Thirteenth Chapter we have the description of Brahman, the Absolute. *Jyotiṣām api taj jyotis tamasah param ucyate* (Gita 13.18): Transcending matter and darkness is that Light of lights. *Na tatra sūryo bhāti* (Katha 2.2.15). With this attitude, the *jivanmukta* will look upon the world. This was the condition of Bhagavan Sri Krishna himself. It is as if he is describing his own attitude towards the world. A Siddapurusha, Mahapurusha, Purushottama, superman was Sri Krishna and all those who have attained that stage. This stage is described in the Thirteenth Chapter. What Sri Krishna himself was and how he works, that attitude is given there.

Then we are told that the relationship between *prakriti* and *purusha* is really no relationship at all. It is only a manner of speaking. The world is not constituted of five elements. It is not constituted even of one element called *prakriti*. It is only force, energy, as modern scientists tell us. The Fourteenth Chapter tells of the *gunas*: *guṇatrayavibhāgayogaḥ*. The world is constituted only of energy force, and not of matter, elements. We are going deeper and deeper into the investigation of matter. And when this knowledge comes, we are really Bhagavan Sri Krishna, Purushottama. The Purushottama's condition is described in the Fifteenth Chapter: *puruṣottamayogaḥ*. We become what Sri Krishna himself was. Ranging beyond the frailties of human life and towering up to the heavens is our personality. That was the Purushottama, that was Sri Krishna, as he is described, and he also is described as a *jivanmukta*, who is called a Purushottama in the Thirteenth Chapter.

Then the duality, the opposition between divine and undivine, is abolished. The *deva asura sangrama* is no more. The opposition between spirit and matter is completely gone, and there is only a single Om Tat Sat, as mentioned in the

Seventeenth Chapter – the Supreme Absolute, transcendent-immanent, existing as this cosmos.

The Eighteenth Chapter is a summing up of all these teachings, a content index, as it were, of the teachings of the Gita, where the application of karma, bhakti, yoga and jnana to personal life, social life and political life are all mentioned. *Yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pāṛtho dhanurdharaḥ, tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama* (Gita 18.78): Where God and man work together in unison, when we work with this confidence in our minds, when we are in unison with God in this way as described in the Gita, success is sure to come. We will not be defeated in any field of life. Whether it is in business or in other professions, whatever be the work that we do, we shall be successful.

This is apparently the undercurrent of the teaching of the Gita, to take man from mortality to immortality, to make man God Himself – Purna Yoga, the integral yoga of the Bhagavadgita. This is the central thread that runs through the chapters of the Gita. To describe this, to give a glorious colourful touch to this inner thread of teaching, a vast detail is given in the many verses in every chapter of the Gita. Every chapter contains many verses, as we know, and all these verses of the different chapters are only the vast detail provided to give us an idea of what this central intention of the Gita is.

Thus, we can very confidently say that this is the yoga of the Bhagavadgita as we would like to make it an instrument of action in our lives – the karma yoga of the Bhagavadgita, which is a superior form of yoga with God-consciousness and God aspiration. Thus, in its central core as well as in its vast detail, the structure and formation of the Bhagavadgita yoga is slightly in variance from the other yogas we generally hear of, such as the Patanjali Yoga Sutras, the meditations mentioned in the Srimad Bhagavata and in the Upanishads, to which we hope to make reference in the coming days.