

# VALUES



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## Salutation to Thee, O Vyasa

of all-extensive intelligence,  
whose expansive vision is like  
the fully-opened lotus flower  
and who, by means of the oil  
of the Bharata epic, hast lit  
the Lamp of Wisdom!

*Gita Dhyanam*



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VALUES is devoted to integrating human understanding unitively, impartially and globally in the interests of the general good.

## NEXT MONTH'S TOPIC

THE BHAGAVAD GITA,  
II—DIALECTICS

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## Editorial

OUR survey of science last month concluded with the need for a restated ultimate Science of the Absolute. In this issue the same subject is given amplification in the light of a textbook on this science, a text called the Bhagavad Gita. This may cause many who have considered the Gita as "a religious classic" (an initial description employed by Prof. S. Radhakrishnan) to rock on their pedestals and wonder if we are plumb crazy. We can assure them there are many other shocks awaiting them in these pages, for which we offer no apology, being keener on sticking to the highest rational truth than on joining the mob of yes-men in the proper assessment of wisdom-literature. We say this right away to save such people from the pain of reading further. They have been warned.

We are all inclined either towards relativism or absolutism. The absolutist may be a plain man in the street who suddenly revolts against some legalized injustice, or a daring artist who wants us to *look* at the face of truth through some frank presentation, or even a "criminal" who is willing to be jailed for his unconventional attitude to society. Or he may be a religious devotee who is considered nuts by his contemporaries and later, in the perspective of history, transmogrified into a saint. For in most cases the absolutist has to go against the stream, has to break away from society or, if he remains in it, has to stand up to the charge of being "impossible."

**Neglect of Gurus:** What most English reading people familiar with Indian literature don't know is that the Gurus of India have all been absolutists. Both Indian and non-Indian writers on the subject have themselves been in the dark about this. This is not properly taught in the official university courses on Indian philosophy. Guruhood is pushed into the background.

**TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS IN INDIA :** The advanced date of the present serial *number* of VALUES, which remains unaffected, is for the alignment of our Indian with our overseas edition.

Like the prophets of old, the Gurus have all denounced the relativistic attitude because of its dualistic outlook. While they may not have been martyrs in the sense that Socrates had to drink the hemlock or Jesus was caught by the priests, they have suffered a worse fate—a studied neglect or of being treated as the goody-goody supporters of all the relativistic nonsense that passes for religion and philosophy which they opposed.

Today in India the Gurus and their subject, the Science of the Absolute, or Brahmanavida, have lapsed into obscurity and an almost total lack of recognition. Their writings have been distorted, both by politicians, spiritual adventurers and weak-minded pious freaks in pursuit of some sort of fame. The best works of the Gurus have been misinterpreted and mistranslated.

**A New Look:** Sixty years ago that great Indian patriot-disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, startled Europe and America by countering Christian propaganda with a blast of high moral and religious zeal drawn from Indian sources. Since his time the world has been bombarded with repetitious phrases or paraphrases of what he said at least with fiery enthusiasm. But the advaita that he pointed patriotically to was never patriotic, and it has to be admitted that his conclusions were often more bold snap judgments than seriously critical conclusions. By this time the whole thing is stale; the fireworks have fizzled out. Spiritual spring-cleaning is necessary and also a philosophic restatement.

We are having a new look at the subject. This is quite in order. This is indeed the methodology of Brahmanavida. Another name for a new look is revaluation.

This science is something more than an academic study. It lives. It has to be lived to make sense. Although rigorously exact, it requires the grace and the fine dress of a song. It covers all styles in its literary stride. It boils down to the most intimate discussion between a doubting Thomas and a master of Wisdom, between the seeking individual crazily pacing the little cell of conditioned relativistic thought and the sky-free Absolutist whose freedom knows no frontiers.

**Why the Gita?** Why should we bother about the Gita? First because of all such texts on the Science of the Absolute, it is the most

easily available. Until our own translation is published, that of Mrs. Besant and Prof. Bhagavan Das is sufficiently exact and cheap. Secondly, the Gita deals with Dialectics. It presents yoga which is the same as Dialectics, but a far different thing from the dualistic yoga systems with which east and west are familiar today. Thirdly, the scope of the Gita covers every major universal problem of humanity.

But if the reader does not know how to approach it, even a book as well known and well read as the Gita will not give up its secrets. This is particularly the case when the reader has been misled by mutually-supporting self-styled authorities each quoting the other *ad nauseum*. Our charge against all the exponents is that they have either omitted or meddled with the intentions of Vyasa, the author of the Gita. We get instead, the intentions of the exponents. The author himself is not treated with even scant respect. Vyasa is not treated as a Guru whose every word has to be noted. Not having the principle of Guruhood topmost in their minds, commentators have been misled by the fear of daring to differ from their contemporaries and predecessors, and this has led to an addiction to the background of the book, the framework upon which Guru Vyasa has presented his subject in stroke after stroke of masterly craftsmanship. And finally, commentators have nearly all been of a strongly preconditioned piety, as full of Lord-Lordism as an Archbishop. True the Lord-Lordism is Indian, or Hindu, but the specific nature of the approach and its disastrous result are none the less the same.

**Title and Sub-title:** Thus, without the concept of Guruhood, the interpreters of the Gita have missed the whole aim of the Guru who wrote the book. Vyasa's intentions are clearly summed up in the subtitle, which is placed as a colophon at the end of every one of the eighteen chapters of the Gita. This subtitle qualifies the whole meaning of the main title, Bhagavad Gita or Lord's Song. The Lord here is not a theistic deity to be prayed to, but the Absolute principle as represented by the Guru, while the Song is his shouting for joy. In Sanskrit, the subtitle states :

ity shrimad bhagavad-gita-supanishatsu bramha-vidyayam  
yoga-shastre strikrishna-arjuna-samvade . . .

which, translated, reads :

" This is the glorious Lord's Song of intimate wisdom-teachings dealing with the Science of the Absolute, a textbook on Dialectics, and a spiritual or philosophic Guru-disciple dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna . . . "

This is clear enough. It is a Guru-disciple dialogue. This is not a personal avatar of the god Vishnu laying down a code of regulations for pious followers. It is a Lordly Person, a Guru, who is uttering instructions on the supreme Wisdom-Science by the method of Dialectics, in hymned strains worthy of the highest of subjects.

**What the Gita is not:** One could fill pages telling what the Gita is not. The relativistic ramifications are so great that a lifetime could be exhausted in countering them all. It is like talking about sight to the blind. Fortunately in this case all have eyes and *all can see* if they want to.

The Gita is not a compendium of fixed views. The discipline of

Dialectics and the purpose of revaluation runs through it from beginning to end. It deals, naturally, with all the fixed systematic ways of thought current during the time of the author. Through the dialectical method these are all revalued and brought to a total unity. But no writer to date except Nataraja Guru has cared to look for this revaluation.

Thus the dualistic yoga or self-discipline of Patanjali is revalued in the Gita and the result is poles apart from the "eight-limbed" familiar system which is what the world at large understands as yoga, with postures and breathing exercises and so on. Again, the Gita deals with the rationalist approach called in India the Samkhya doctrine. But its Rationalism is neither that of Kapila or Ishvarakrishna (the orthodox authorities). It equates Rationalism with Self-discipline, Samkhya with Yoga (Gita, v. 4, 5).

As for religion, the Gita deals with the subject descriptively and diagnostically rather than laying down tenets. The patterns of religion popular at the time, such as the ancestral (*pitriya*), animistic (*bhutas*), ritualistic (*vedic*) and theistic (*devas*) are all graded and given an inferior status in an absolutist revaluation. By the same method, current notions of sin and social obligation are transcended. Castes as an actual background feature are considered in terms of occupational or character formations, and revalued by a vision which extends even beyond the equality of a single human species.

**The Last Word:** Nothing could be more definite than the concluding call of the Gita's Absolutist Guru Krishna to Arjuna to abandon all duties and put his whole trust in his Guru (xviii, 66). The Gita is thus more than just a condensation of the intimate wisdom-discourses called the Upanishads. Around an actual complicated situation it sweeps philosophically around a whole circle of values which are human, and in the course of its survey covers and revalues the whole of Indian spirituality and philosophy. It shows how the unitive method of absolutist Dialectics can deal with a thousand topics. It proves over and over, by many examples, how to disentangle oneself from all the dilemmas of the dualistic relative world.

Even in translation, it is possible for all to catch something of the wonderful intensity of this great book. Vyasa's Song of the Absolute soaks in to the secret depths of all who seek Wisdom-values. The Gita is pervaded with the lambency of the numinous, a religious mood freed from the sticky walls of specialization. In its glow, even values ordinarily excluded from religion, such as sex and gambling and mud, are touched with the Absolute and given a numinous virtue.

How else but with gratitude can we remember the wise and noble author, Vyasa, highest of philosophers and least acknowledged! If we seek to be wise, there can be no better way than to turn to the proper study of his perennial words, so that, guided by his genius, we can join with him in his choral song, as "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." [END]

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HAVE YOUR FRIENDS SEEN VALUES?



# Can A Science Be Sung?

By NATARAJA GURU

SCIENCE has been considered as dispassionate. There is no room for enthusiasm or emotion in a scientist. It is a cold-blooded investigation of the facts of life, and excitement or exaltation would be a form of prejudice when applied to the matter or method of the scientific way. Such are some of the notions we hold about this branch of knowledge. In spite of this however, there is still Science that raises its head above this limitation and soars to the sublimity of a song of the soul of man.

The Bhagavad Gita claims to be a song and a science at once. As conceived by its author there is no innate violation of principle in singing of a science in the ecstatic state of wonder. Absolute truth is a wonder and hardly anything more than that. The flash of lightning in the far-off horizon is both a plain fact and a wonder at once. The sunset that a scientist watches is both a glory and a fact. It is not necessary to banish the appraisal or appreciation of one in favour of the other. The plainest of facts could still be a wonder of wonders.

**Blending of Values:** The scientist need not be ashamed of this element of the emotion of wonder if it tallies with his scientific attitude. The discovery of a new star in the firmament has been referred to as highly exciting in a personal sense to the fact-finding observer who first succeeded in bringing it within the range of vision of his telescope. When Eddington came down from his observatory one night, after seeing a long-looked for astronomical phenomenon, his hair is said to have stood on end. He felt like a sailor who looked at land after the despair of a long voyage.

Song and science can blend, enhancing the value of each other, when the science involved fulfils its highest role. Singing a science would become normal and respectable when the song agreed perfectly with its own high theme. A raving prophet or an angry Jove could meet in the

singing scientist a kindred spirit, perhaps of a more normal type. The dancing dervish could only add to the joy of such a happy company.

The blending of the antinomies of humdrum fact and exalted wonder is an art in which great masters like Dante and Milton have excelled. Vyasa is perhaps the purest example of a poet who was able to sing a veritable Science of sciences without any part of it becoming threadbare. The fabric of poetry that he wove was like some long-lasting homespun stuff whose glossy luxury was enduring.

Gentle sarcasm itself finds its place in some of the verses of the Bhagavad Gita without marring its character as a strictly scientific composition. The attitude of neutral impartiality maintained in some of the verses of this type hidden away here and there in the text of the Gita needs the keen critical eye to discern. Except in the case of the cleverest of readers the joke might be all but missed. Exaggeration, sarcasm, wit and a sense of wonder all blend with different literary devices and idiomatic turns of expression, making the style of the Gita a veritable confection where the figures of speech are most advantageously employed to enhance our conviction about scientific verity or truth of high human value.

**The Scientist as Guru:** It is a hard fact worth recognizing that the mind of man is so constituted that it seeks to soar into the domain of freedom which dwells beyond mere facts. We tend to shut out our appraisal of verity to the extent that the sense of wonder is excluded from our own personal attitudes, in our common human pilgrimage to the temple of supreme Knowledge. We are obliged to speak of truth with a certain zeal which should not be considered out of place when properly moderated by its own opposite corrective tendency.

Science is or should be guided by our interest in worthwhile pursuits of values in life. In its first phase it seeks objects of satisfaction. When material wants and comforts have been catered for, the mind seeks to satisfy subtler hungers and appetites. These are taken in a certain order of importance and human intelligence then penetrates the whole range of human values till it arrives at one supreme or absolute Value. This is to be sought, not outside oneself but within the range and limits of one's own consciousness. The vision thereafter refers to oneself.

As soon as unitive and contemplative values become thus the normal subject-matter of science, the method of scientific investigation itself has to be reversed. The very instruments of knowledge have to be changed. It is the higher faculty of dialectical reasoning that comes into play. The nature of the reasoning also changes. The dearest object to oneself cannot be anything other than the self and the science of self-knowledge begins to touch the emotions. It becomes alluring and absorbing in its nature.

When the sense of wonder in regard to the Truth that one feels in oneself lures one deeper and deeper into one's own consciousness, the scientist improves, to become a poet. Instead of walking, he skips or dances in joy. Rhapsodic or ecstatic states overtake him and the sense of

(continued on page 157)

# An Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita

The Antique Sage-Bard Vyasa's Sublime  
Hymn of Dialectics I—Structural Survey

By NATARAJA GURU

*This is the first half of the author's Introduction to his full-scale translation and commentary on the Gita. While this work, which has a lifetime of contemplative study behind it, awaits publication, we are presenting readers with a foretaste of the profound thought it enshrines. We can confidently assert that, since the time of the three classical Guru commentators, Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva, no other opus on the Gita comes anywhere near this major contribution to wisdom-literature, in both original insight or inspired philosophical finality. The remaining portion of the Introduction will be published in our next issue. (Note : bracketted paragraphs are editorial insertions.)*

OVER the vast sub-continent of India, when the monsoon rains have ceased and the harvest has been gathered in, there is a lull in the goings and comings of human life. At such a season, when the clear starry nights are neither too cold nor too warm, the time is favourable for people young and old to foregather after nightfall and engage their leisure hours in entertainments or in stimulating or elevating occupations. Popular dances and pageantry are naturally included. The stories of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the great epics of India, offer them an endless mine of material from which to draw inspiration and joy.

**How the Gita is a Song :** Such is the natural setting into which the name *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of God) has to be related, before one can understand how this great masterpiece of contemplative philosophy came to be known as a song. Whether we take it to be a "celestial" or "divine" song or as a "simple" song sung by God himself, whether we take the two adjuncts in "God's Song" as equally applicable, as a double epithet to a favourite philosophical work so popular with the masses of India (these interpretations being equally permissible according to the

rules of Sanskrit grammar) the main fact for the lay reader to recognize would be that, in the Gita we have a highly philosophical work which has gained the status of an elevating scripture on a par with the Vedas and the Upanishads.

The Gita itself refers to other similar writings of *Rishis* (seers) under the description of a "song": " Sung by *rishis* (seers) in many ways, severally and distinctly in (different) metres, and also in the aphoristic words of the *Brahma-sutras* replete with critical reasonings and positively determined." (xiii, 4.)

The Gita, therefore, is a very popular well-known song, lulling and elevating, at once soothing and exalting, which has for its subject-matter wisdom-teaching of a very rare and superior order. We can more easily understand the figurative sense in which the Gita is a song when we remember that even in the West, writers like Plato have referred to Dialectic as a hymn (see *The Republic* 532, ABC), and that even Dante calls his epic *La Divina Commedia*—the Divine Comedy. No better example of a text suitable at once for a song and a study in the field of what is called "the wisdom of the East" could be found in such a compact and convenient form.

The Gita may be said to be the finest flowering of wisdom, pure or applied, which is sublime and precise at once. Its growing popularity through the centuries and even in modern times is sufficiently explained, not so much by its cherished position among the religious textbooks of the Hindus in any closed or static sense, but because it highly deserves, by its universal appeal and by the high hope it holds out to all mankind, a permanent place among works referring to perennial and contemplative wisdom, which can know no barrier of race, religion or tradition.

**Authorship:** By popular assent the authorship of the Gita is attributed to Vyasa, also called Veda Vyasa, or Krishna Dvaipayana. He is also reputed to be the author of the *Brahma-sutras* and alluded to under the name Badarayana. As Dvaipayana he was known to be of black colour as suggested by the name Krishna (black) usually applied to him. His father Parasara was the son of a woman of lowly birth while Vyasa himself had a fisher damsel for mother.

Though surrounded by a certain amount of mystery, the name of Vyasa, as it appears in the various scriptures of Hinduism, still occupies a central position as one of the most important reevaluators of spirituality. Whenever the flow of the most subtle aspects of "Hindu" doctrines were threatened with any kind of danger or disaster, whether theoretical or actual, we find Vyasa appearing on the scene to save the situation. Historically, whenever there was the danger of interruption in the continuity of the most precious esoteric heritage of wisdom in India, i.e. whenever the continuity and flow of the wisdom traversing the barriers of one generation after another was likely to be broken or to become extinguished, the same mystic and mysterious figure of Vyasa is seen, as mentioned in many of the *puranas* (traditional legends), emerging into the situation to save wisdom from decay or destruction. Even the physical parenthood of some of the most important custodians of the spiritual heritage of Hindus is often attributed to Veda Vyasa. Vyasa, therefore, occupies a central and key position in Indian spirituality. The whole of the vast body of literature constituting the *Mahabharata* is attributed to Vyasa.

The *Mahabharata* itself has been considered by certain authors as an aggregate of traditional lore which accumulated through a long period of history with the possibility of various interpolations and later accretions and additions.

The Gita appears in the *Bhishmaparva* of the *Mahabharata* (I. 830-1531). It is in the light of the habit so prevalent among ancient classical writers in India of submerging their own identity in favour of some great name belonging to hoary Indian tradition itself, such as that of a Vasishta or a Narada, that we have to fix the authorship of the Gita, vague as it is already, onto the generic and mysterious personage of Vyasa, rather than on a specified or actual person . . . . We can say that some particular Vyasa, though not *the* Vyasa, wrote it.

\* \* \* \*

**Date:** We do not wish to fix finally either the date or the authorship of the Gita. We believe that it would not be far wrong even to suggest that the Indian mind loves to retain the mystery rather than to lay it too

bare. There is even a vernacular proverb which says it is wrong to trace the ancestry of a sage or to follow up a river to its very source. Seeing that many reputed scholars have applied their critical acumen and erudite imagination to this subject in vain, and out of deference also to the delicate sentiments of the popular Hindu mind, we prefer, in this matter, to leave the subject there. Scholars and religionists are free to have their say in this highly speculative domain, while we retain for ourselves an open mind.

\* \* \* \*

**Universal Appeal :** That the Gita has enjoyed an honoured place in India goes without saying .... More than the appreciations shown by individuals sensitive to wisdom-values, the teaching of the Gita may be said to have influenced indirectly the whole population of India, generally enriching and nourishing its spiritual life and promoting a love of truth and justice during the period of at least one and a half millenia ... It can easily be visualized as having been truly momentous in effect, even when we make due allowance for the paradox involved in the Gita teaching.

Such a far-reaching influence was not at all confined to the limits of India. As early as 1785 Charles Wilkins translated the work into English.... This was followed by a French translation by Emile Burnouf in 1861. Various other translations followed in the West and the whole story of the rapid popularity gained by the Gita is mentioned in a brochure published by an esteemed friend of the present writer, Mr. Paul Hubert, under the title *Histoire de la Bhagavad-Gita*. This places on record how the reputation of the Gita spread throughout the world from 1785 to the present day. Mr. Paul Hubert in his study in Paris actually had round him as many as 132 different editions of the Gita, in various languages—English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, Polish, Swedish, Czech, Servian, Russian, Hungarian, Esperanto, etc.

Considering the above facts it is clear that the appeal of the Gita has some element of universality implicit in it, for the appreciation of which one has no need to discard his own more limited loyalty of civilization or of religion.

**Various Estimates :** The proverb "God defend me from my friends" can be applied to books as well as people. The Gita has suffered from wrong estimates. It has been used as an amulet, for private prayers and childish religious purposes. Compilations have been made in the name of reputed spiritual personalities like Mahatma Gandhi and Ramana Maharshi. Some stress practice, others renunciation, and a few even think the Gita preaches outright politics with all its evils such as war and wholesale slaughter. These preferences as a rule reflect the temperaments of those who select the verses, and could even be used for diagnosing the types to which they belong. Of the early European writers on the Gita,

(Burnouf, Schlegel, Cousins, etc.), T. Ribot, French psychologist and philosopher gave a valuable assessment in the *Revue Philosophique* in 1894. Among recent editions and translations, there are those of Tilak who as an active politician sees the teaching of the Gita as "energism," Gandhi would see "ahimsa" (non-hurting) above everything else as the central teaching of the book. Academic professors like W. D. P. Hill, F. Edgerton, S. Radhakrishnan, D. S. Sarma and H. Hiriyanna have each made their own assessment. Most of them are theistic, and the Indian writers, regarding it as a holy text of Hinduism, see obligatory duties where the fullest freedom is actually alone implied. Radhakrishnan begins his book with the curious error that "the Bhagavad Gita is more a religious classic than a philosophical treatise." Then there are esotericists like Mrs. Besant and Bhagavan-Das and those who claim to be integral yogis like Sri Aurobindo who have added to the large body of literature on the subject. The divine or the deistic plays a big role in their estimates. Among the poetic renderings there are those of Sir Edwin Arnold (*The Song Celestial*) and Prof. Edgerton, as well as that of Christopher Isherwood and Swami Prabhavananda. Though readable, subtleties of great importance are often sacrificed for the sake of style. In India there have been dozens if not hundreds of translations and editions in the various languages of the country. Among these, honourable mention should be made of the expansive, free and easy but contemplatively written Marathi rendition made in the 14th century by Jnaneshvara Maharaj. This has been translated into English by Mr. Manu Subedar. It enjoys well-merited popularity in the Marathi-speaking region of India.

**The Vedantins :** The classical commentators of the Gita are many. Among them we have the great names of Shankara (788-826 A.D.), Ramanuja (1017-1137 A.D.) and Madhva (1199-1300?). Although there are other names such as those of Vallabhacharya, Nimbarka, Sridharaswami and Anandagiri, whose opinions and comments find place in Gita literature, we propose to give prime importance only to Shankara. Ramanuja and Madhva are founders of religious groups who have based their comments largely on the point of view of Shankara whether by differing considerably from him or by travelling with him on similar lines in the matter of the revaluation and estimation of the Gita. All three of them were orthodox vedantins of what are known as the Advaita (non-dualist), Vishishtadvaita (more specifically non-dualistic) and the Dvaita (dualistic) schools.

Ramanuja and Madhva were Gurus belonging to the Vishnu religion, incorporating the Bhagavata, Pancharatra and Narayaniya sects whose origins are lost in antiquity. On the other hand Shankara follows the equally ancient Shiva tradition, although accepting and adoring all the other gods of the Indian pantheon in a graded, critical and comparative manner. The Vaishnavite Gurus were theologically-minded, while Shankara gave primacy to wisdom (*jnana*), discrediting ritual and totally averse to treating action and wisdom as both important to adopt in spiritual life.

**The Unique Position of Shankara :** Shankara, therefore, although himself recognized as the Guru of the Smartha sect in South India at the present time, was more of a philosopher than a religious

leader. This is not to say, however, that he did not himself influence spiritual life. Indeed, Shankara's is the greatest single philosophical influence prevailing to the present day in India as a whole..... The difference between him and the two other Gurus who have commented on the Gita is one of methodological and epistemological outlook. Vedanta in the hands of Ramanuja and Madhva has a more theistically religious complexion, while Shankara, like his predecessor Gaudapada, of the same rational tradition, remains more purely philosophic.

\* \* \* \*

When they concern philosophical doctrines, Shankara's conclusions are, on the whole, acceptable to us. However, when he tends to look on the Gita as a book laying down religious obligations, or rules of life and conduct, treating it as a *dharma shastra* (textbook on right ways of life) or a *Smriti* (wisdom teachings applied to the practical life, incorporating *dharma shastra*), and not as a purely contemplative textbook, we tend to differ from him.

That Shankara himself does not treat the Gita seriously as a *Smriti* or book of obligatory conduct, should be evident from his definite remark in commenting on it, to as follows :

"The conclusion therefore, of the Bhagavad Gita is that salvation is attained by knowledge alone and not by knowledge conjoined by works. That such is the teaching of the Gita we shall shew here and there in the following sections according to the context."

That knowing cannot be considered an obligation or an action should be clear to anyone. That action belongs to one plane and knowing belongs to another is stated in the beginning of Shankara's *Vivekachudamani* in very unequivocal terms.

Our position in regard to the Gita is that we take it to be a book devoted to the wisdom of the Absolute with no mandatory reference to obligatory action or traditional conduct in it. In this appraisal, it will be noted that we have the support of the greatest commentator on the Gita.

\* \* \* \*

**Not a Book of Obligations:** If we ask why the contents of the eighteen chapters and the 700 verses of the Gita have been so puzzling that most commentators have tended to treat it as a book on obligatory, religious or traditional lore, instead of treating it, as it highly deserves to be, on a par with the most authoritative writings pertaining to pure contemplative wisdom, the reasonable answer is that the author of the Gita was faced with taking cognizance of the existing schools of spiritual thought and practice of his own time, like any other writer.

Such a body of anterior opinion (known in India as *purva-paksha*) happened to be, by necessary historical and ideological circumstances, the inevitable background of the Gita. References had to be made to such opinions, not with a view to recommending a new set of religious or philosophical obligations or doctrines in their place, but to expound the open and dynamic metaphysics of wisdom itself. This is sufficiently clear from the text itself :

"Abandoning all duties, come to Me, the One, for refuge : I shall absolve you from all sins; do not despair." (xviii, 66.)

The Gita's own teaching, however, belongs to the context of contemplative mysticism based on an intuitive approach rather than on reason or logic in the ordinary sense. What the Gita wants to emphasize is repeated twice (in ix, 34 and in xviii, 65) :

"Become one in mind with Me; be devoted to Me; sacrifice to Me; bow down to Me; unifying thus yourself, you shall surely come to Me, . . ."

**Dialectics or Yoga:** Throughout the Gita we are able to recognize a certain antique and somewhat outmoded yet time-honoured type of reasoning known as Dialectics which has close similarities to the method of Yoga as intended by the author of the Gita. Yoga and Dialectics have very much in common. When the dialectical character of the treatment of the Gita is understood, a door then opens automatically leading to the solution of many enigmas that have puzzled commentators throughout history. The yogic method of equating, balancing, or cancelling-out the counterparts belonging to an argument or a situation in life has a tradition dating back to antiquity in India and to pre-Socratic days in the West. The paradoxes of Zeno and the dialectical method of Parmenides which were present in the writings of Plotinus 900 years later, and which have at least a theoretical kinship another 1500 years later in our own times in Hegel and Bergson, have a mystical intuitive contemplative approach to wisdom or happiness which is the way of perennial philosophy none other than the Yoga of the Gita.

Each of the eighteen chapters of the Gita has been called a *Yoga*. Indeed, the very first chapter has the enigmatic title *The Yoga of the Vishada* (*conflict*) of Arjuna. Conflict or suffering itself here becomes elevated to the status of a *Yoga*. It is not merely practical aspects of spiritual life or discipline that have been thus called *Yoga*, but even chapters devoted to theoretical problems of philosophy, such as chapter xiii (The *Yoga* of the Distinction between the Actual and the Perceptual). It is only in the sense of Dialectics that such a term as *Yoga* in these titles has meaning. *Yoga*, therefore, has to be understood in the way the author of the Gita himself intended it to be understood.

The polemical pattern adopted by Shankara and the other classical commentators has followed the usual norms and methods of logical reasoning. With Shankara in particular, it has been one of successively discrediting a series of supposed anterior sceptics called *purva-pakshin*.

**Vyasa's Method still to be Applied:** The Gita, on its part, however, uses a dialectical method to determine a scale of values in life, rather than teaching a particular doctrine. This series of values in the Gita, culminates in that supreme Value called the Absolute or the *Brahman*. The Gita is a textbook on the Science of the Absolute (*Brahma-vidya*). As T. Ribot has been able to recognize in his appreciation of the Gita, "discursive reflection does not belong to the Gita. Rather it is one of mysticism and of intuitive penetration."

The supreme Value implied in the Gita teaching is the attainment of identity with the Absolute personified in the Guru here who happens to be Krishna. That the Guru and the Absolute are one is not a new

proposition in Vedanta. Stress on devotion to a Guru cannot be considered a form of theism but is only normal to wisdom-teaching in India. The twice repeated verse quoted above, occupying key positions at the end of chapter IX (which marks the centre of the work) and near the end of the last chapter, respectively, fix for us the simple truth that the Gita is meant by the author to teach one doctrine only. This teaching is that of a complete bi-polar affiliation between the contemplative and the pure Absolute as one of the most important prerequisites for attaining to full wisdom of the Absolute.

**Guru-sishya Samvada:** The key to the proper appraisal of the Gita consists in its recognition as a *Guru-sishya samvada*, i.e. a dialogue between a wisdom-teacher and a disciple. All wisdom teaching implies a representative questioner or a doubter who is sceptical of the doctrine propounded. Such a person typifies and sums up in himself the position in regard to the wisdom in question and is known in Vedantic literature as the *purva-pakshin*, the one of anterior position. The Guru himself who gives the revised, revalued or restated version of the wisdom in question represents the *siddhantin*, the one of finalized or accomplished view. Between the two poles represented by the Guru and the sishya there takes place what is called the dialectical revaluation of the wisdom.

[Space does not permit us here to quote the many similar spiritual dialogues found throughout philosophy. They abound in Platonic, Buddhist, Upanishadic, Sufi, Christian Mysticism, Tao and other writings.]

\* \* \* \*

If the Upanishads are considered *shrutis* (original wisdom texts) there is no reason to exclude the Gita from such a category of literature, when we know that Vyasa inserted this dialogue between Guru and sishya in a large epic poem, the *Mahabharata*.

It is easy to imagine how Vyasa was obliged to resort to some literary devices so that a wisdom dialogue could be fitted into an epic text in the most unobtrusive manner possible. These literary devices are introduced in a graded order of actual or perceptual value and help to merge the contemplative context lodged at the core of the epic. There is a perfect symmetry of construction and, whatever artificial elements are introduced at the beginning of the work are again resorted to in inverse order, before the event of the dialogue is left behind normally for the continuation of the narrative of the *Mahabharata* epic itself.

**Orthodoxy's Domain:** If, in spite of its clear character as a wisdom text, some persons still persist in calling the Gita a religious book of obligations, it must be because of their inability to separate the painting from the canvas, or the wall from the picture drawn thereon. The epic is the wall on which the picture is the wisdom teaching of Vyasa. If it is not ignorance that makes them call it an epic or traditional lore of religious obligation, the persistent wilfulness must be attributed to the fact that orthodoxy still secretly nourishes the idea of having chosen preserves or private domains into which they do not wish the generality of the people to walk as freely as they like. This tendency is not unknown in respect of orthodoxies other than Hinduism. We can only say by way of

a note of warning that such closing tendencies are neither possible nor compatible with the free and open way of unity and human solidarity towards which all thinking men and women are turning their eyes at present.

**Vyasa's "Signature":** Vyasa's name occurs thrice in the text. He is first mentioned as a Rishi (seer) in x, 13, and again as a Muni (silent recluse) in x, 37; but in xviii, 75 Vyasa is referred to as having to do with the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. In the last instance the use of his name has a definite purpose which should not be missed. After the various devices have been discarded, and before closing the work, Vyasa puts his own real signature to the treatise, just as an artist might initial the corner of a painting. Indirectly, he wants to make it clear that all that was reported by Sanjaya to the blind king Dhritarashtra as actually having transpired objectively, had its original prototype in the words of Vyasa himself. In other words, if we consider it as a dramatic piece rather than a narrative poem, Vyasa himself appears before the close of the drama, from behind the drop curtain in which Sanjaya is seen reporting the events of the Mahabharata war to the king. Vyasa thus explicitly intends to claim the authorship of the Gita.

**Guru Character of Krishna:** It should further be noticed that in the verse (xviii, 74) just preceding the verse mentioned, there is the use of the word *samvada* (dialogue). That this dialogue was not intended to be merely one between the charioteer Krishna and the warrior Arjuna is made sufficiently clear to the reader as early as 11, 7, where Arjuna refers to himself as a *sishya* or disciple; "I am your disciple; do discipline me coming thus for refuge to you." The Guru is not so directly mentioned there, but only in another context in xi, 43 "You are the supreme Guru"; but given the disciple, the teacher is to be understood. The situation demands him, by implication. Thus, although Krishna is successively a Charioteer, Friend, Adviser, Divine Person or Representative of the Absolute Principle, there is no violation of principle to call him Guru over and above and inclusive of all the other relationships.

He is not, however, a Guru like Bhishma or Drona who are referred to as Gurus in 11, 5, but a Guru in a more absolute sense. He is called the Lord of Yoga (*Yogeshvara*) in xviii, 78 which is also not inconsistent with Guruhood. Krishna refers to himself as representing the Absolute in its different aspects in viii, 3 "My womb is great Brahma—supreme deity"—and 27 "For I am the basis of the Absolute and the unexpended nectar of immortality, and the eternal way of right conduct, and of lonely final happiness," and in many other places.

These indications are more than sufficient to justify our taking the Gita as a dialogue on wisdom between a Guru and his *sishya*.

This dialogue portion occupies the centre of the Gita and covers a greater portion of the work. If the Gita is to be compared to a lotus flower, as has been done in the *Gita Dhyana* (Meditation on the Gita—a composition in classical style with a prolonged metaphorical description praising the work), such a lotus would have many protective petals covering its heart. The core of the Gita with its fragrance would represent the dialogue portion set down by the son of Parasara (Vyasa) which contains the wisdom of the Absolute stated as revealing itself to the

supreme Sun. Protecting such a precious teaching are the outer features that accompany the teaching only indirectly, and which refer to the epic's war situation. These latter have to be treated as incidental to the Gita teaching, although not to be treated as having nothing to do with the rest or as being totally extraneous to the subject-matter of the Gita.

**Literary Devices:** Here we must recognize three grades of literary devices. Sanjaya the charioteer of the blind king Dhritarashtra speaking to his sire is the front curtain, and the actualities of war are dealt with in the words of Sanjaya. This is device or curtain No. 1.

When the dialogue is between Arjuna as the warrior speaking to Krishna, his relation, or charioteer, a more philosophical or religious attitude is reflected, though still of the relativist order. This is device or curtain No. 2.

Then, when Krishna speaks to Arjuna as a teacher of Absolute Truth after being called a Guru by Arjuna, the subject-matter attains to the purity of the white light of Vedantic wisdom in its best sense. The Vedanta as presented in the Gita, however, has an original ring which is different from the academic and theoretical versions of later exponents such as Gaudapada or Shankara, where it is based on states of consciousness only. In the Gita it retains its Upanishadic ontological character, closely resembling the later Upanishads such as the Svetashvatara which encompass all life values, ontological and teleological more comprehensively. Where Krishna thus teaches wisdom to Arjuna should be treated as the third degree referring to the core of the Gita. This is device or curtain No. 3.

There is yet another separation, filtration, or elimination to be effected before we arrive at the central doctrinal core of the Gita. There are many matters treated as anterior opinion (*purva-paksha*) which must be kept apart from the proper teaching of the Guru. This is the first filtration.

Then, even in the words of the Guru we have to distinguish between what is referred to as permissive only, coming as it does from the background of the spiritual life of India, and which is merely incidental to the discussion, and the independent original teaching. This is the second filtration.

Thus in trying to arrive at the very central core of the teaching of the Gita, we have to keep in mind three curtains and two filtrations to rid it of all matter extraneous to the teaching proper, and which are like the outer packing protecting its precious inner content.

**The Archway:** When all the precautions mentioned above have been taken in trying to arrive at the core of the teaching of the Gita, the careful reader will find there are still kinds, degrees or gradations of secret teachings alluded to by means of the words of Krishna or Arjuna whether at the ends or beginnings of chapters. Each of the eighteen chapters has a separate frame of reference enshrining a unitive value, within whose four walls the reasoning lives and moves. Moreover, the validity of a certain statement even by the Guru Krishna would seem to be contradicted in a different chapter. No such contradiction will be found within the same chapter except in the second and last ones where the structure is complex, and where the literary devices and some philosophical considerations tend to mix different points of view.

Each chapter of the Gita, as a rule, however, should be regarded as a distinct unit, though not as a separate *darshana* (philosophical vision) altogether. Rather each chapter is a differently shaped stone forming the archway that the total eighteen chapters together may be likened to. The early and later chapters have to rest on pillars that touch the ground. Hence they are conceived in a more actual matter-of-fact or earthly spirit, actuality and realism being retained side by side with thoroughgoing Absolutism, as far as they are in keeping with the scheme of contemplative values conceived by the author of the Gita.

**Importance of Central Chapters:** As far as the wisdom teaching is concerned chapters ix and x occupy a key position. The end of chapter ix contains that famous verse which we have said sums up the Gita doctrine and this verse is repeated almost verbatim in xviii, 65 which is the end of the work. The end of chapter ix is thus the middle of the Gita taken as a whole. We should note that in ix, 2 the distinction of this chapter is very openly indicated :

“ Royal Science, Crowning Secret, purificatory is this, superior, objectively verifiable, conforming to right living, very easy to live, (and) subject to no decrease.”

The first verse of chapter x likewise refers to the further superiority of the contents of that chapter even to chapter ix :

“ Again, O Mighty-Armed, listen to My supreme Word, which I, desiring your well-being, shall tell you, so dear (and favourably disposed).”

When chapter x ends, Arjuna is made by the author to refer backwards (to the two chapters ix and x) in xi, 1, as pertaining to *adhyatma* (having the Self for subject) helping us to determine the status of these two chapters, as intended by the author :

“ Arjuna said : By that speech which has been spoken by you out of favour for me, the highest secret known as pertaining to the Self, this, my confusion, has vanished.”

**The Invisible Keystone:** We know that the cosmology of the Upanishads which began with the worship of the phenomenal gods of the Vedas found maturity in the course of the history of thought and arrived at wisdom having its centre in the Self of man. The Self was finally equated to the Absolute and spoken of as a supreme Value referred to as *Ananda* (Happiness).

It is this same central and neutral Value which the Gita places at the core of its teaching in these most centrally placed chapters, the ixth and xth. We can also see that chapter ix is conceived asymmetrically and negatively, as compared with chapter x, which refers to a more positive aspect of the Absolute.

The Neutral Absolute is not discussed at all, but left as a numinously silent factor implied or hidden in the two chapters together. Like the verb in a sentence, the keystone of the Gita archway is almost invisible—an ineffable presence—and left to the intuitive imagination of the seeker for wisdom to realize or experience. He is free to see a golden or green leaf which contains the Verb of verbs or the Word of words representing the Absolute as the Self or as a unique Value between the two chapters as a correlating Principle hidden between them, if he so likes. This is as

much as to say that the Gita teaching in its essence is the same as that of the *Maha-vakyas* (great dicta) of the Upanishads and the Vedanta generally. Vedism and Rationalism meet in the Gita teaching without conflict, through Dialectics which is the same as Yoga.

**Function of the Last Chapter :** A well known Sanskrit verse of the *Mimamsakas* (doctrinal critics) lays down seven *lingas* (indications) by which to determine the subject-matter of a *shastra* (text-book): "Commencement and end, repetition, originality, utility, critical discussion and legitimacy of conclusion are the indications in determining the meaning." The beginning and the end are the two first mentioned among them, and when a statement is repeated many times (*abhyasa*) that should also be taken to indicate the original contribution or the finalized doctrine of the work. The finding and the contribution of the Gita as a whole has therefore to be determined by some similar methodical approach.

A careful study of the structure of the last chapter gives up to us many indications of value regarding what is intended to be taught finally by the Gita. It is sufficient to note here that the very topics which have concluded the ixth chapter are found at the conclusion of the xviii<sup>th</sup>. Moreover, the reference to *samnyasa* (renunciation) at the beginning of the last chapter repeats a subject which has found prominent mention quite early in the work in III, 4; v. 1; and IV, 1 and 2. The last chapter returns to the same subject.

From the repeated return to the same topic, taken together with the reference to renouncing the world and living a life of begging, mentioned by Arjuna himself as early as 11, 5, (which is really the proper beginning of the dialogue) we can discover that the discussion and revaluation of the Gita is round the topic of what constitutes proper renunciation.

The last chapter helps us to determine the matter beyond doubt. *Tyaga* (relinquishment) is the revised idea that the Gita recommends for the generality of aspirants, although the possibility of full-fledged *samnyasa* (renunciation) is not ruled out as in XVIII, 49:

"He whose reason is unattached in situations, whose Self has been won over, from whom desire has gone, by renunciation (*Samnyasa*) he reaches the supreme perfection of transcending action."

As Ramakrishna, the saint of Bengal, is said to have put it, the Gita teaches *tyaga* (relinquishment), and fast repetition of the word Gita results in the reversed syllabic formation of the word *tyagi* (relinquisher)—as near as is natural to the pronunciation of the syllables by a Bengali.

In the essential wisdom which the Gita teaches in common with the rest of the Upanishads and in its own original revaluation of the notion of that particular contemplative pattern of behaviour known as *Samnyasa* we have two of the main contributions of the Gita teaching. If to these we add the third item which is the method of attaining to wisdom by establishing a strict bi-polar relation with the Absolute (in ix, 34 and XVIII, 65, already quoted), we would have touched on all the chief items of the teaching that the Gita represents.

We give below a review of the Gita, chapter by chapter.

**Chapter I:** The Dialectical Conflict of Arjuna (*Arjuna-vishada-Yoga*):

The first curtain is raised in the middle of verse 21, where Arjuna is introduced and asks charioteer Krishna to "stop my chariot right in the middle between the two armies." The second curtain is introduced in the middle of verse 28 and remains to the end of the chapter, when the first curtain drops again. No wisdom proper is intended to be discussed here, yet despite this fact, we note that the author does not intend it to be outside the scope of the work. It has as respectable a title as the other chapters, being called a *Yoga*. This *Yoga* does not refer to a state of happiness as should be expected from the definition of *Yoga* in the *Gita* itself—"disaffiliation from the context of suffering" (vi. 23)—but here, even referring to agony or unhappiness it is still called a *Yoga*. The agony of Arjuna is not the plight of a coward in the face of imminent danger. Note the phases of his despondency beginning with pity and proceeding to philosophical, religious and humanitarian considerations—all of a very respectable order. Although Krishna laughs at Arjuna, in the remainder of the *Gita* we find no contradiction of Arjuna's opinions, but rather a revalued statement of Arjuna's position in Absolutist terms.

The only possible fault of Arjuna's attitude lurks in the expression "my own people" (*svajana*) in verse 28 where he starts his arguments. Ancestor-worship, considerations of caste or clan, the non-hurting principle and the principle of renunciation are not against the spirit of the *Gita* teaching as a whole. But Arjuna thinks as a relativist in these matters, while Krishna teaches an Absolutist revision of the same.

This first chapter is thus the only one which contains the problems of the *Gita* stated correctly before their discussion by the Guru Krishna. This chapter therefore requires the closest attention. And yet, oddly enough, commentators even like Shankara have almost ignored it or even treated it as superfluous. Shankara's commentary begins only with verse 10 of chapter II, and he dismisses what precedes in a summary fashion not at all in proportion with the rest of his labours.

We should note that a secondary literary device consisting of Duryodhana the ruler speaking to Drona the Vedic type of Guru and reporting himself to Bhishma, the patriarchal type of Guru, is found between verses 2 and 12, hidden, as it were as a device No. 1 (a) within the device No. 1 of Sanjaya. The object must be to bring out the contrast existing even in the relativist and actual world of this impending battle. Vedic values referring to the way of the shining phenomenal gods (*devayana*) have to be contrasted with ancestral values referring to the way of the forefathers (*pitriyana*), and Duryodhana as the chief goes from Drona to Bhishma who each respectively represent these sets of values. King Duryodhana needs Sanjaya's enumeration of the names of heroes for purposes of clear classified recognition (*saṃjārtham*) as stated in verse 7, i.e. to relate the contending parties to the sets of values each represents.

Contemplation is not different from commonsense in its keenness of the sense of the actual. Lazy indifference to actuality is not the kind of mysticism upheld in the *Gita*. This secondary device underlines the need for seeing things as they actually are before the contemplative life is recommended, so that no escapism may be implied in the teaching. This

attitude is further evident in the qualification "expert" (*daksha*) as applied to a yogi in XII, 16 which is again found in XVIII, 43 included among the virtues of a true fighter.

Verses 13 to 20 describe the actualities of the war situation again as seen by Sanjaya according to the 1st curtain device. Verses 21 to 28 continue the 1st curtain device, and when the 2nd curtain device is revealed in the middle of verse 28 it continues to the end of the chapter. At the end of this section Arjuna attains to a state of intransigence rather than continuing in the state of pity with which he began. He throws away the bow and arrow instead of merely letting the bow slip from his hands (verse 30). The feeling of pity which was vague is backed by a definite attitude which leads into the maturely formulated dilemma, to ripen further into the dialectically formulated doubt brought out in the next chapter. Only after all these stages does Arjuna become qualified, according to the secret scheme of the author, to call himself a disciple of the Guru Krishna.

This chapter, therefore, is meant to indicate the nature of Arjuna's spiritual agony which by the end of the chapter, attains the status of a religious conflict based on sin. Arjuna's scruples are vague, but they still have the strength and virility of a representative sceptic of his time. As the anterior prerequisite for the whole teaching to follow, Arjuna's conflict deserves to be treated as a *Yoga*.

**Chapter II:** Unitive Reasoning (*Samkhya-Yoga*): The Sanjaya 1st curtain device opens with verse 1, but in verse 2 the 2nd curtain appears where the dialogue between the charioteer Krishna and the friend Arjuna appears. This continues up to verse 9 where the 1st curtain drops for a moment, to be again raised in verse 11. Arjuna has now been able to formulate his doubt properly to form the anterior sceptic's position which Krishna begins to answer seriously. The actual teaching of the *Gita* pertains to wisdom from this point. Practical wisdom is added on after chapter IX only. What is most significant here is that Krishna gains the full status of a Guru after the discipleship of Arjuna has been expressed by him in verse 7. Arjuna's doubt is given the same rank as that of a Nachiketas or a Svetaketu of the *Upanishads*. The 3rd curtain device is thus revealed from verse 11.

In passing we should particularly note verse 39 where there is a change-over from the two sections of this chapter, from the first part called *Samkhya-buddhi* (Rationalism revalued) to the second part, called *Yoga-buddhi* (Unitive discipline rationalized). The change-over has been missed in most commentaries but is one of vital importance to the understanding of the method and teaching of the *Gita*. Although internally divided into these two sections, the title *Samkhya-Yoga* (Unitive Reasoning) is justified. *Samkhya* (Rationalism) when treated unitive attains the status of a *Yoga*, and *Buddhi* (pure reason) when employed to reconcile counterparts also attains to the same *Yoga* status. That *Samkhya* and *Yoga* are the same has been plainly stated in v, 4 and 5:

"That *Samkhya* (Rationalism) and *Yoga* (Self-discipline) are distinct, only children say, not the well-informed (pandits); one well-established in any one of them obtains the result of both.

"That status attained by men of Samkhya (rationalist persuasion) is reached also by those of the Yoga (self-disciplined persuasion): Samkhya and Yoga as one—he who thus sees, he (alone) sees."

**Chapter III:** The Unitive Way of Action (*Karma-Yoga*): From this chapter to xi, 9, the 1st curtain device is abandoned. This is to indicate that it is idealistic, perceptual or conceptual aspects of wisdom alone as opposed to practical, objective or actual features of reality that have been included within these limits. This chapter treats of "Necessity", in the form of an urge to action in life, prompted by desire, as a negative yet imperative or eternal value in human life. Verse 41 refers to desire as the enemy. A person under the sway of desire is condemned at the end of chapter xvi. In that chapter, as here, desire is named as the enemy. Here it is to be fought by Arjuna within his own nature. There in chapter xvi the man of desire is to be punished by an angry god, representing the Absolute conceived dualistically. In that later chapter, the corrective principle is spoken of as an outside factor while it resides, though also dualistically, within the nature of Arjuna himself, in chapter iii. The explanation of this difference will be clearer as we examine the other chapters where the author's architectural design becomes manifest. Here meanwhile, action is raised to the status of a supreme Necessity, as in its symmetrically placed counterpart, chapter xvi.

**Chapter IV:** Unitive Wisdom (*Jnana-Yoga*): This chapter belongs to the 3rd curtain device. Whereas the last chapter gave primacy to action in the form of Necessity with a capital N, this chapter shows a complete turnabout by giving primacy to wisdom in its concluding verses. This apparent adoption of two opposing standpoints in two adjacent chapters will be explained when in the next chapter, the unitively revalued attitude to *Samkhya* (Rationalism) and *Yoga* (Self-discipline) is stated in emphatic terms, as we quoted above.

The wisdom referred to in this chapter is not plain knowledge arising out of season in the logical sense, but a timeless or unitive wisdom belonging to the context of the Absolute. In the last verse it is disclosed that there is still a victory to be won by the wise man against his own ignorance. The actual enemy was subjectively referred to in chapter iii. Here the enemy has a more theoretical status. Actual fighting is not referred to at all, but a positive attitude is given to Arjuna to "stand firm in the unitive way (yoga) and stand up O Bharata (Arjuna)!" (verse 42). Thus the call to actual warfare fades off into the background as the chapter stones in the archway are placed nearer to the crowning keystone.

**Chapter V:** Unitive action and Renunciation (*Karma-Samnyasa-Yoga*): Yoga as a practical discipline is all that is alluded to as action here. Supreme peace is the note on which this chapter ends. To obey Krishna, it is hardly necessary for Arjuna to stir from his posture of sitting.

**Chapter VI:** Unitive Contemplation (*Dhyana-Yoga*): This chapter finally arrives at treating the subject of Yoga as a personal discipline. In verse 6:

"The Self is dear to one (possessed) of Self, by whom even the Self by the Self has been won, for one not (possessed) of Self, the Self would be in conflict with the very Self, as if an enemy."

the two selves mentioned implies giving equal and opposite status to the contingent and the necessary aspects of the personality. The avoidance of conflict between the actor and the action is the Yoga here. Yoga is a unitive discipline wherein opposing tendencies in life are cancelled-out in the neutrality of the Absolute. Verses 20-23, where happiness is stressed and disconnection with suffering is defined as Yoga, is a revaluation of the Yoga more dualistically treated by Patanjali and others. The question of any social duties does not even remotely arise here.

**Chapter VII:** The Unitive Way of Wisdom-Synthesis (*Jnana-Vijnana-Yoga*) : The synthesis of subjective and objective attributes of the Absolute, without any trace of duality between them, is the peculiarity of this fully philosophical chapter. These aspects of the Absolute, distinguished as "higher" and "lower" are referred to in verses 4 and 5 :

"Earth, water, fire, air, sky, mind, reason also, and consciousness of individuality, thus here divided is my eightfold nature.

"This is the non-transcendental (*apara* = immanent). Know the other to be My nature, which is transcendental, constituting life, O Mighty-Armed (Arjuna), by which the phenomenal world is sustained."

and the synthesis is clear from verse 24 :

"Unreasoning persons consider Me as the unmanifest come to manifestation; not knowing My supreme (value), unexpended, with no superior."

The subjects covered in this chapter are indicated in the last verse (30) :

"Those who know Me, taking together what refers to existential (*adhibhuta*), hypostatic (*adhidaiva*) and sacrificial aspects (*adhiyajna*), they know Me in a unitive spirit, even at the time of their departure."

The purely philosophical and non-social nature of the teaching of the Gita becomes more and more clear as we approach the central chapters. No bow and arrow or even "standing up" is required of Arjuna here!

**Chapter VIII :** The Unitive Way in (General) Spiritual Progress (*Akshara-Brahma-Yoga*) : The fighting referred to in verse 7 of this chapter :

"Therefore at all times remember Me and fight: when your mind and intelligence are surrendered to Me, you shall come to Me; (have) no doubt."

has been made a secondary matter to the contemplation of the Absolute. Some vestige of the necessary aspect of life might still cling to a person who might have attained to the wisdom of the Absolute. Such a vestigial factor makes the path of the aspirant tend to the dark or bright way mentioned in verse 26 :

"These, the white and the black, are known to be in this world the twin perennial paths; by one of them one attains to non-return, while by the other one comes back."

Yet, in spite of this reference to two paths leading to worlds dark or

bright, this chapter is a purely spiritually conceived one, leading to unitive values in the next two chapters. But before coming to them, this chapter answers many theoretical questions synthetically.

**Chapter IX:** Unitive Contemplation (as a) Royal Science (and) Crowning Secret (*Raja-Vidya-Raja-Guhya-Yoga*); The pure, neutral and impersonal Absolute to be thought of as the highest of values in spiritual or contemplative life is clearly evident from verses 4 and 5:

“By Me all this world is pervaded, My form unmanifested; all beings have existence in Me and I do not have existence in them.

“And further, beings do not exist in Me; behold My status as a divine mystery; further, Myself remaining that urge behind beings, I bear them but do not exist in them either.”

This should be read with verse 11 in the first instance:

“The foolish misunderstand Me because of My adopting the human form, ignorant as they are of My being that is beyond, as the Lord of all beings.”

and with the series of verses from verse 13 culminating in verse 19:

“But those of Great Self, O Partha (Arjuna), affiliated to My divine nature, adore with mind exclusive of all extraneous interests, having known Me as the Unexpended Primal Source of all beings.

“Always singing praises of Me, ever striving, firm in vows and saluting Me devotedly, they are ever-united in worshipful attendance.

“Others also, sacrificing with the wisdom-sacrifice, univitely, dualistically, as also in many ways facing universally everywhere, worshipfully attend on Me.

“I the ritual action, I the sacrifice, I the ancestral oblation, I the potent medicinal herb, I the holy formula, I also the melted butter, I the fire, I the offering.

“I the Father of this world, the Mother, the Supporter, and the Grandsire (Ancestor), the Holy One that is to be known, the Purifier, the syllable AUM, as also the (Vedas called) *Rik, Sama* and *Yajus*.

“(I) the Goal, the Supporter, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Refuge, the Friend, the Becoming, the Dissolution, and Ground of being, ontological Basis, and never-expended Seed.

“I radiate heat (and) I rain; I withhold and I send forth; I am immortality and death, as also being and non-being, O Arjuna.”

This series enumerates all possible contemplative values, ending with that neutral Absolute which is both existing and non-existing (*sat* and *asat*). Not only is the Absolute free from all taint of action, but the status of the worshipper and the worshipped here becomes equal, as verse 29 puts it:

“I (regard) all beings equally. To Me there is none hateful or dear. They however who worship with devotion, they are in Me and I too am in them.”

There is a note of hope for all irrespective of any conduct or class of society as stated in verses 30 and 31 :

"Even if one of very evil actions should worship Me with a devotion exclusive of all else, he should be accounted to be good all the same merely by the fact that he has a properly settled determination.

"Instantaneously he becomes established in his own right nature and enters into eternal peace. Believe Me in all confidence, O Son of Kunti (Arjuna) that one affiliated to Me with fidelity knows no destruction."

Social obligations are declared to be not binding on anybody at all in the next verse :

"They too who resort to Me for refuge, O Partha (Arjuna), whoever they might be, (whether) women, workers (*vaishyas*) as well as farmer-merchants (*shudras*), (all) of sinful origin, they too attain to the supreme Goal."

Verse 34 gives that secret code indication that the first half of the discussion of contemplative wisdom is over. A scanning of the items of values implied in verses 16 to 19 inclusive (given above), will however, reveal, that more objective or positive values are reserved for the next chapter, where the specialized aspects of the Absolute overtly obtruding into the visible world of values (though only partially representative of the Absolute universal Principle) are enumerated. This chapter may thus be considered "negative-subjective" compared with the next chapter which becomes "positive-objective." The later chapters maintain this positive character to a greater and greater degree.

**Chapter X :** Unitive Recognition of Positive Value (*Vibhuti-Yoga*) : We have now passed the zenith of the teaching of the Gita. Here objective values of the nature of presences or numinous factors still of a contemplative rather than of a public or socialized order are enumerated first. Verses 4 and 5 have the complete series of the innermost of contemplative values which could also be virtues :

"Reason, wisdom, non-delusion, patience, truth, self-restraint, calmness, pleasure-pain, becoming-and-non-becoming, sense of danger-security,

"Non-hurting, balance, contentment, austerity, benevolence, fame-shame, are the various distinct attitudes arising from Me alone."

The overt aspects of the contemplative presences are enumerated in the latter half of the chapter. The Absolute has an urge, a force of becoming, exerting its pressure on the flux of life. This creative becoming in its most potent expression has three grades which are called "having specific character (*vibhutimat*)," "having value here and now (*shrimat*)" and "expressing a radical stability (*urjitam*)."<sup>1</sup> This last named aspect of the Absolute, which emerges again in xiv, 27, is the foundation aspect from which the notions of justice and duty have their source.

**Chapter XI :** Unitive Vision of the Absolute (*Vishvarupa-Darshana-Yoga*) : Leaving "objective" entities behind, a bolder, yet positively objective vision of the Absolute is given in three different sub-sections in this chapter. There is the Sanjaya version of Arjuna's vision which

belongs to the 1st curtain device, and there is also the vision as seen by Arjuna which belongs to the 2nd curtain device, and there is the vision as explained by Krishna which belongs to the 3rd curtain device or wisdom-discourse (*samvada*) proper.

Arjuna's request for a vision of a theological deity (in the conventional 1st degree relativist context of a Sanjaya) is significantly *not granted* by Krishna. He prefers to assume his ordinary form after discarding the vision aspect, thus ruling out a theistic god from the Gita teaching altogether. Arjuna himself wavers between the status of a contemplative disciple and mere friend of Krishna as revealed in verse 41.

What we should by no means fail to notice in this chapter is that the author goes out of his way to introduce the 1st degree Sanjaya device in referring to the terrible and destructive aspect of the Absolute. It is the actual warfare that is terrible and not the idea of it. When Krishna refers to himself as representing time, it is not pure Time that is meant, but actual time, like that kept by a ticking clock. Actual time is filled with terrible events which need not terrify a wise man at all who is capable of looking at the same Time in a more conceptual or purer manner.

When Krishna refers to himself as engaged in the destruction of the people it is the actuality of war that is portrayed in a lively and imaginative manner. Arjuna is asked to be only the incidental outward cause of the killing. Because even this encouragement to incidental or pretended fighting as seen in verse 30 belongs only to the Sanjaya or 1st degree device it need not be taken as belonging to the serious philosophical doctrine of the Gita. The epic canvas has cruder necessary features which do not and are not meant by the author to belong to the contemplative picture that he wishes to paint thereon.

The need for introducing Sanjaya in the middle of the chapter thus becomes justified and necessary to explain the nature of the subject under reference. The concluding verse of the chapter marks the return to the normal contemplative style of the Gita. Values like devotion and non-hatred, which are again introduced, have nothing in common with the spirit of the battlefield.

**Chapter XII :** Unitive Devotion and Contemplation (*Bhakti-Yoga*) : This chapter has no reference to watlike attitudes at all, but refers to two degrees of contemplative life, the personal and the impersonal, of which the former is easy but inferior and the latter is difficult but superior. The 3rd curtain device of normal dialogue continues unbroken from here till we reach almost the end of the Gita, where Sanjaya alone comes on the stage again, in XVIII, 74. All the teaching to that point has thus to be taken as belonging to the contemplative order.

**Chapter XIII :** Unitive understanding of the Distinction between the Actual and the Perceptual (*Kshetra-Kshetrajna-Vibhaga-Yoga*) : This chapter is devoted to methodology and epistemology. The "actual" and the "perceptual" aspects of the Absolute should never be mixed up in the mind of the contemplative if he is to be able to recognize higher contemplative values. Verse 26 enunciates the law that all beings are born of the union of these two aspects.

The *kshetra* (the actual field) and the *Kshetrajna* (the perceptual Knower of the field) are dialectical counterparts, first to be distinguished

but later to be equated one with the other to make the Paramount Spirit of chapter xv emerge.

**Chapter XIV :** Unitive way of Transcending the Three Nature-Modalities (*Guna-Traya-Vibhaga-Yoga*) : In verse 45 of chapter ii Arjuna was asked to discard the Vedas because they had to do with the three *gunas* or modalities of nature. How have they become in the present chapter so respectable in the eyes of the author Vyasa ? The answer is that here the *gunas* are used more as symbols or signs of a diagnostic nature for the comparison of contemplative values after the synthesis between the higher and lower notions of the Absolute has been sufficiently explained.

The last verse here makes it clear that it is the foundation aspect of the Absolute which is given prime place, belonging with equal status to its transcendental or supreme aspect. Irrespective of their relative superiority or inferiority, the modalities have all to be transcended, as stated in verse 20, while neutralization is the revision given by Krishna in verses 22 to 25 inclusive. The yogi so capable of neutralizing the modalities as they act on him from the foundation aspect of the Absolute which he represents in himself by the knowledge of the supreme Value of the Absolute, is "fit to become the Absolute Itself" as stated in verse 26.

**Chapter XV :** Unitive Approach to the Paramount Person (*Puru-shottama-Yoga*) : All Vedic values are here discarded by the fusion of the two persons which forms the subject-matter of this chapter. The difference between these two *personal factors* here and the two *philosophical concepts* of chapter xiii consists in that here two sets of personal values are synthesized while in chapter xiii the object was for philosophical concepts of methodological importance to be defined and discussed. Values pertain to consciousness and the objectivity or subjectivity of values are only important for guidance in correct philosophical thinking. The Paramount Person of this chapter represents the Absolute unitive notion of Value. No reference to any war situation is even distantly suggested or implied here where the subject is one dealing purely with contemplative or perennial philosophy alone.

**Chapter XVI :** The Unitive Way of Discrimination between Higher and Lower Values (*Daiyasura-Sampad-Vibhaga-Yoga*) : Two types of persons attached to sets of values that are ambivalent and wide apart in the scale of human values are discussed in this chapter. Ethics is dealt with ; not social ethics, however, but rather a new variety of contemplative or personal ethics. The lower virtues or personal endowments, when subjected to the sublimating influence of contemplation within birth limitations, yield the higher virtues of endowments. The *Dharma Shastras* (Codes of Conduct) such as that of Manu, discuss ethics from the angle of relationships between individuals. But here we find it is the individual himself, isolated from his social environment, as a contemplative ought to be, who is kept in the mind of the author. From "strength" to "ignorance" is the range of these virtues, as seen from verses 3 and 4. Though born to be only a *Kshatriya* (fighter) and not a *Brahmana* or a *Sannyasi*, Arjuna is admitted to the group of persons endowed with the higher series of virtues (verse 5). A non-sublimated or a non-contem-

plative *Kshattriya* (fighter) could be one of demonic endowment. Arjuna, being a disciple of Krishna in the wisdom context, is admitted to the higher group. The greater part of this chapter is devoted to the strong condemnation of the personal with demonic endowments. Duryodhana perhaps comes under this category, at least in so far as he is not affiliated to Absolute wisdom but only to relativist notions of religious holiness or life values.

**Chapter XVII:** Unitive Recognition of the Three Patterns of Faith (*Shraddha-Traya-Vibhaga-Yoga*) : That the personality of man is determined by what he believes is the dictum (verse 3) on which this chapter is based. The good, indifferent and bad forms of faith are graded and discussed here under the categories of faith which are mainly sacrifice, austerity and offering (or giving). All three types are discussed finally as conforming to the most sacred of patterns known in India, whether in the context of the Vedas or of the larger Upanishadic teaching of the Vedanta based on the great philosophic aphorism (*Maha-Vakya*) *Aum-Tat-Sat*—“Aum—that is real”. Religion and philosophy are equated here. Religion consists of philosophy and philosophy consists of religion. The contemplative personality of man has its character fixed by the supreme faith in the Absolute at three levels represented by the secret meaning of the *Maha-Vakya* above. AUM represents affiliation to the Absolute, TAT represents freedom from benefit-motive, and SAT the reality that is basic and goodness in general. Dedication to the Absolute becomes confirmed at three levels to determine the perfected type of spiritual man who is to be discussed in the final chapter.

**Chapter XVIII:** Unitive Way in Behaviour Patterns (*Samnyasa-Yoga*) : This last chapter has two different grades of conclusions to arrive at. First there is the particular conclusion resulting from the discussion *after* the ixth chapter (which concluded already the theoretical discussion of contemplative philosophy without its applied aspects); and secondly, there is a general conclusion belonging to the whole work, dealing with applied aspects and reaching the discussion of actual patterns of behaviour. Even here no social obligation is involved, but only an intelligent and free recognition by oneself of what his own personality fits a man to play a particular role in life, on a given or particular occasion.

Arjuna is a free man having divine endowments and already aware of the theoretical implications of wisdom of the most secret kind. Necessary action in the form of patterns of behaviour, each implying its own personal attitude, is already there in the world that Arjuna is facing. As in the case of faith that is ready-made with its own patterns of sacrifice, austerity and offering, so at that historical epoch in India there were ready-made moulds of available patterns of behaviour such as that of the Renoucer (*Samnyasi*), the Relinquer (*Tyagi*) and those statically codified patterns well known as the *Brahmana* (priest), the *Kshattriya* (fighter), the *Vaishya* (businessman) and the *Shudra* (worker). Each of these static forms of rigid obligatory religious tradition are here taken up by Vyasa and boldly revalued. Neither heredity nor the dead weight of obligation statically and narrowly conceived are allowed to vitiate the question of the free choice of models of active life from the available range open to every man.

When the concluding position has been brought to this important and still philosophical question of matching inner and outer factors in life, there is still left the particular case of Arjuna on the battlefield to which such a theory is to be applied.

The Gita takes up the challenge of referring even to the problem of Arjuna in philosophical and contemplative terms. Firmness on a battlefield is a value that could be brought within the contemplative order, as seen in verses 33 and 43 :

“ The firmness by which the activities of mind, vital functions and the senses, O Partha ( Arjuna ), are kept from deflecting ( from the true path ) by Yoga, is pure ( *sattvik* ). ”

“ Prowess, brightness, firmness, skill, and also never-absconding, generosity and dignity of mien refer to the ( pattern of ) activity of the *Kshatriya*, born of his own nature. ”

The happiness of a warrior who has done what he should normally do on a given occasion is also another similarly contemplative value as precious as life itself to one wholeheartedly affiliated to the Absolute, as mentioned in verse 36. Just as in the case of a would-be mother caught in the labours of childbirth, it would be futile and absurd at the last moment not to permit her, by wrong philosophy of any kind, to obstruct her free fulfilment of her particular life activity at that particular moment, so Arjuna is advised by Krishna not to have false scruples of a negative order in fully living according to the pattern of life meant for him by nature and circumstances which are in his case of an absolutely imperative character. He is still treated as a free man in verse 63 :

“ Thus has wisdom more secret than all that is secret been declared to you by Me ; ( critically ) scrutinizing all, omitting nothing, *do as you like.* ”

Vyasa takes care to put the reply of Arjuna at the very limit of the part which belongs to the dialogue. The very next verse brings in the epic context in which Sanjaya enters again. Whether Arjuna’s obedience of Krishna led to killing on the part of Arjuna is not stated in the Gita, as such a subject would not be respectable within a contemplative text. Moreover, in an extra section ranging from verses 50 to 53 Vyasa opens up the possibility of a pattern of life for Arjuna which would be quite outside the harsh context of war, if Arjuna liked to avoid it. This alternative course, which is more truly contemplative, further proves that social obligations are not binding on Arjuna any more than they are binding generally in the wisdom context. Contemplation belongs to the domain of contingent freedom and not to the necessary obligation of the spiritual life of man.

In keeping with the two trends of the discussion, one more quietly contemplative, and the other more overtly or actively contemplative, we have two different grades of secrets referred to in the verses 63 and 64. We have already quoted verse 63 above. Verse 64 says :

“ Listen again to My supreme word, the most secret of all . . . ”

These two lines of contemplative life come to a grand conclusion in that famous verse 65 repeated almost verbatim from ix, 34, which brings the Gita teaching to its supreme culminating point :

"Become one in mind with Me: be devoted to Me; sacrifice to Me; bow down to Me; you shall come to Me alone: I promise you (in) truth; you are dear to Me."

The non-religious and non-obligatory character of the Gita as a whole is evident from verse 66 where the Absolute is given primacy over all other considerations in contemplative or spiritual life, which in the Gita is meant to be free and open, while yet offering the highest hope for man:

"Abandoning all duties, come to Me, the One, for refuge: I shall absolve you from all sins; do not despair!"

(To be concluded next month) [END]

## Preview of Next Month's Contents

NEXT month Nataraja Guru continues his masterly Introduction to the Gita. The following are some of the subjects covered: Analysis of the Terminal Description of Each Chapter—The Gita as a Yoga Textbook—The Meaning of Dialectic and Yoga—The Unitive or Dialectical Concepts of Every Chapter Explained—Examination of Some Striking Verses of the Gita—Peculiar Expressions—Enigmatic Paired Compounds—Double-edged Recommendations—Minuter Hints of Unitive Treatment—The Gita as a Dialectical Revaluation of Contemplation—Devayana and Pitriyana—Samkhya-Yoga—Sacrifice, Austerity and Offering—So-called Contradictions and Inconsistencies—The Charges of Eclecticism, Syncretism and Solipsism Examined—Rhapsodic Interludes—Final Conclusion.

CAN A SCIENCE BE SUNG? (continued from page 134)

wonder permeates his ways. The true scientist, however, holds the balance between the two tendencies, and sits in the neutrality of the Absolute. He represents the Absolute in himself in a simple and normal way. He can be silent or he can sing of the Absolute in words, and point his finger to the Absolute that is beyond. All these functions combine in him, blending into what he represents in his thoughts, words and deeds. Like Vyasa of old, the singing scientist pointing his finger to the Absolute becomes both a personal and an impersonal Guru, representing a priceless value to humanity for all time. [END]

# The Arjuna Situation Today

THE perennial nature of the spiritual agony which Vyasa in the Gita described in the case of the character Arjuna, still confronts modern man. Writing in *The Nation*, New York of November 5, 1955, author Lawrence Lipton describes what he calls *The New Nonconformism* or expatriation, i.e. the disadoption by sensitive writers, of the whole of modern society. Within the historical setting of today, it would appear that the "Arjuna situation" still persists. Many popular writers of the postwar era reveal this revolt in their novels, e.g.,

"If he'd had to shoot anybody, he wouldn't have known which direction to shoot in. He said the army was practically as full of bastards as the Nazis were."—young Caulfield in *Catcher in the Rye*, by J. D. Salinger.

In this dollar-worshipping society where you can be a success at the price of dog-eat-dog and "a blood-money economy geared to production for war," current literature "documents the growing suicide rate, increasing drug addiction, juvenile gangs, hot-rod speed mania, and anything for kicks. It also reflects the intellectual, social and spiritual contrempts."

With what result on the modern Arjunas? They "seem to prefer almost any alternative: an embattled little underground community like that of jive and jazz (Rock'n Roll?) with its private language, the closed circle of the heroin addicts, even the precariously free community of crime."

**Modern Samnyasis:** Lipton's final paragraph clinches the Arjuna situation today. The younger disaffiliates, he says "may yet discover the positive virtues of disaffiliation and the *poverty on principle* that goes with it and helps to keep it uncorrupted." Could one find a nearer modern expression of the antique samnyasi, whose problem is the main theme of the whole of the Gita?

Continuing, Lipton says: "Not the picturesque poverty of the bohemian twenties. Not the 'Tell the Truth and Run' poverty that George Seldes implies in the title of his recent autobiography. Not the conspiratorial underground poverty of those European radicals who are telling one another: 'Stay poor, keep out of their way, lay low—and wait.' But rather the dedicated poverty of those whose way of living and way of looking at life bears no relationship to the size of their royalty checks. The dedicated poverty of the disaffiliated in search of new loyalties that no amount of money can buy, because it is not for sale. Only from such a point of view will the disaffiliated writer continue to see his world from behind the billboards and know that his duty is, as Nelson Algren has expressed it, 'forever with the accused. Guilty or not guilty, with the accused.'"

For such baffled humans, seeking a clean vision, the Gita when properly understood, will still have its timeless reward.

# World Government News

WE are glad to announce the following addresses of **Regional Offices** of World Government, for those who seek information, World Passports, etc.:

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Inquirers are requested to get in touch with their nearest Regional Office and, except on matters bearing directly with this magazine, NOT to write to Bangalore or to World Government, Bangalore, India, whose function is purely between these Regional Offices.

## Garry Davis

GARRY DAVIS, First World Citizen and Co-ordinator for World Government, has been having the usual dust-up with "separate sovereign state" minded officials in Tehran, Iran, where he arrived at the end of November 1956.

His World Passport now bears the visas of India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Iran, and he is busily seeking a transit visa to get on his way to Berlin.

Unable to enter Egypt to join the UNEF, Mr. Davis has offered to go to Austria where he will place his organization at the service of the Hungarian refugees.

In the meantime, having been refused visas by the Egyptian Charge d'Affaires in Tehran, and by the Turkish Government, he is now a baffling problem for the Government of Iran. Garry has petitioned the Shah, and refuses to be stormed by threats of one kind and another from General Darakhshan, the Deputy Chief of Police.

[ END ]

# INFORMATION ABOUT THE GURUKULA MOVEMENT

Inspired by the Guru Narayana (1854-1928), greatest recent exemplar of the non-dual wisdom of the Absolute, **The Narayana Gurukula** (an institutional Teacher-Disciple succession body) and its democratic counterpart, **The Yellow Fellowship**, form the Gurukula Movement which was founded in 1923 by Dr. Natarajan, the present Guru Head and foremost disciple of the Guru Narayana.

Under the motto "Of one kind, one faith and one God, is man," this Movement is intended for all who seek in living terms the wisdom of the Absolute.

**Central Office** : The Gurukula, Varkala, Travancore, India.

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**European Centre** : Institut Monnier, Versoix, Geneva, Switzerland.

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The Gurukula Movement is not a socialized religious organization. It stands neutrally above all particular expressions of faith or ideology. It is based on a vertical personal relationship of the individual with the Guru as a living representative of wisdom. Membership of the Yellow Fellowship requires only the acceptance of the following principles and the sending of a token outright gift of one rupee or its equivalent in any currency, along with the signed pledge below.

## Principles of Affiliation :

1. Divisions such as caste and nation, attachment to faith or ideology, belief in deity or ideal, should not set up barriers between man and man, but should be understood and acted upon so as to promote integral human solidarity based on freedom, justice and fellowship.

2. A single kindly and generous attitude should be held in respect of all human beings.

3. The line of wisdom-teachers or Gurus of all times and places, of whom the Guru Narayana and his wisdom-successor the Guru Natarajan are true representatives in modern times has a high value for humanity.

4. Guruhood constitutes a moral and spiritual asset leading to the betterment of life and the increasing happiness of one and all.

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