

# Avatarhood in the Gita.

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## 1. DIFFICULTIES OF THE MODERN MIND

TO the modern mind Avatārhood is one of the most difficult to accept or to understand of all the ideas that are streaming in from the East upon the rationalized human consciousness. It is apt to take it at the best for a mere figure for some high manifestation of human power, character, genius, great work done for the world or in the world, and at the worst to regard it as a superstition,—to the heathen a foolishness and to the Greeks a stumbling-block. The materialist, necessarily, cannot even look at it, since he does not believe in God; to the rationalist or the Deist it is a folly and a thing of derision; to the thorough-going dualist, who sees an unbridgeable gulf between the human and the divine nature, it sounds like a blasphemy. The rationalist objects that, if God exists, he is extra-cosmic or supra-cosmic and does not intervene in the affairs of the world, but allows them to be governed by a fixed machinery of law,—he is, in fact, a sort of far-off constitutional monarch or spiritual King Log, at the best an indifferent, inactive Spirit behind the activity of Nature, like some generalized or abstract witness *Puruṣa* of the Sāṅkhyas; he is pure Spirit and cannot put on a body, in-

finite and cannot be finite as the human being is finite, the ever unborn creator and cannot be the creature born into the world,—these things are impossible even to his absolute omnipotence. To these objections the thorough-going dualist would add that God is in his person, his role and his nature different and separate from man; the perfect cannot put on human imperfection; the unborn personal God cannot be born as a human personality; the Ruler of the worlds cannot be limited in a nature-bound human action and in a perishable human body. These objections, so formidable at first sight to the reason, seem to have been present to the mind of the Teacher in the *Gītā* when he says that, although the Divine is unborn, imperishable in his self-existence, the Lord of all beings, yet he assumes birth by a supreme resort to the action of his nature and by force of his self-*Māyā*; that he whom the deluded despise because lodged in a human body, is verily in his supreme being the Lord of all; that he is in the action of the divine consciousness the creator of the fourfold Law and the doer of the works of the world and at the same time in the silence of the divine consciousness the impartial witness of the works of his own Nature,—for he is always, beyond both the silence and

the action, the supreme *Puruṣottama*. And the *Gitā* is able to meet all these oppositions and to reconcile all these contraries because it starts from the Vedāntic view of existence, of God and of the universe.

In the Vedāntic view of things, all these apparently formidable objections are null and void from the beginning. The idea of the Avatār is not indeed indispensable to its scheme, but it comes in naturally into it as a perfectly rational and logical conception. For all here is God, is the Spirit or self-existence, is *Brahma*, 'एकमेवाद्वितीयम्',—there is nothing else, nothing other and different from it and there can be nothing else, nothing other and different from it; Nature is and can be nothing else than a power of the divine consciousness; all beings are and can be nothing else than inner and outer, subjective and objective soul-forms and bodily forms of the divine being, which exist in or result from the power of its consciousness. Far from the Infinite being unable to take on finiteness, the whole universe is nothing else but that; we can see, look as we may, nothing else at all in the whole wide world we inhabit. Far from the Spirit being incapable of form or disdaining to connect itself with form of matter or mind and to assume a limited nature or body, all here is nothing but that; the world exists only by that connection, that assumption. Far from the world being a mechanism of law with no soul or spirit intervening in the movement of its forces or the action of its minds and bodies,—only some original indifferent Spirit passively existing somewhere outside or above it,—the whole world and every particle of it is on the contrary nothing but the divine force in action and that divine force determines and governs its very movement, inhabits its very form, possesses here every soul and mind; all is in God

and in him moves and has its being; in all he is, acts and displays his being; every creature is the disguised Nārāyaṇa.

Far from the unborn being unable to assume birth, all beings are even in their individuality unborn spirits, eternal without beginning or end, and in their essential existence and their universality all are the one unborn Spirit of whom birth and death are only a phenomenon of the assumption and change of forms. The assumption of imperfection by the perfect is the whole mystic phenomenon of the universe; but the imperfection appears in the form and action of the mind or body assumed, subsists in the phenomenon,—in that which assumes it there is no imperfection, even as in the Sun which illumines all there is no defect of light or of vision, but only in the capacities of the individual organ of vision. Nor does God rule the world from some remote heaven, but by His intimate omnipresence; each finite working of force is an act of infinite Force and not of a limited separate self-existent energy labouring in its own underived strength; in every finite working of will and knowledge we can discover, supporting it, an act of the infinite all-will and all-knowledge. God's rule is not an absentee, foreign and external government; he governs all not only because he exceeds all, but also because he dwells within all movements and is their absolute soul and spirit. Therefore none of the objections opposed by our reason to the possibility of Avatarhood can stand in their principle; for the principle is a vain division made by the intellectual reason, which the whole phenomenon and the whole reality of the world are busy every moment contradicting and disproving.

But still, apart from the possibility, there is the question of the actual divine working,—whether actually the

divine consciousness does appear coming forward from beyond the veil to act at all directly in the phenomenal, the finite, the mental and material, the limited, the imperfect. The finite is indeed nothing but a definition, a face-value of the Infinite's self-representations to its own variations of consciousness; the real value of each finite phenomenon is an infinite in its self-existence, whatever it may be in the action of its phenomenal nature, its temporal self-representation. The man is not, when we look closely, himself alone, a rigidly separate self-existent individual, but humanity in a mind and body of itself; and humanity, too, is no rigidly separate self-existent species or genus—it is the All-existence, the universal God-head figuring itself in the type of humanity; there it works out certain possibilities, develops, evolves, as we now say, certain powers of its manifestation. What it evolves, is itself, is the Spirit.

## 2. THE TEXT OF THE GĪTĀ REGARDING AVATARHOOD

We may first translate the words of the Teacher Himself in which the nature and purpose of Avatarhood are given summarily and remind ourselves also of other passages or references which bear upon it. "Many are My lives that are past, and thine also, O Arjuna; all of them I know, but thou knowest not, O scourge of the foe. Though I am the unborn, though I am imperishable in my self-existence, though I am the Lord of all existences, yet I stand upon my own Nature and I come into birth by my self-*Māyā*. For whensoever there is the fading of the *Dharma* and the uprising of unrighteousness, then I pose myself forth into birth. For the deliverance of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the enthroning of the Right, I am born from age to age. He who knoweth thus in its right principles my divine birth and my divine

work, when he abandons his body, comes not to rebirth; he comes to Me, O Arjuna. Delivered from liking and fear and wrath, full of me, taking refuge in me, many purified by austerity of knowledge have arrived at my nature of being ("महात्मन्," —the divine nature of the *Puruṣottama*). As men approach me, so I accept them to my love ("सजामि"); men follow in every way my path, O son of Prthā.'

Again, *Vibhūti* is not the Avatar; otherwise Arjuna, Vyāsa, Uśanā would be Avatars as well as Kṛṣṇa, even if in a less degree of the power of Avatarhood. The divine quality is not enough; there must be the inner consciousness of the Lord and Self governing the human nature by his divine presence. The heightening of the power of the qualities is part of the becoming, "भूतग्राम्," an ascent in the ordinary manifestation, in the Avatar there is the special manifestation, the divine birth from above, the eternal and universal God-head descended into a form of individual humanity, "अहमानं सजामि", and conscious not only behind the veil but in the outward nature.

## 3. ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA'S AVATARHOOD

The Gītā, however, goes much farther. It speaks clearly of the Lord himself being born; Kṛṣṇa speaks of his many births that are past and makes it clear by his language that it is not merely the receptive human being but the Divine of whom he makes this affirmation, because he uses the very language of the Creator, the same language which he will employ when he has to describe his creation of the world. "Although I am the unborn Lord of creatures, I create (loose forth) "myself" by my *māyā*," presiding over the actions of my *Prakṛti*. Here there is no question of the Lord and the human *Jīva* or of the Father and the Son, the divine Man, but only of the Lord and his *Prakṛti*. The Divine descends by his own

*Prakṛti* into birth in its human form and type and brings into it the divine Consciousness and the divine Power, though consenting, though willing to act in the form, type, mould of humanity, and he governs its actions in the body as the indwelling and over-dwelling Soul, "अधिष्ठाय". From above he governs always, indeed, for so he governs all nature, the human included; from within also he governs all nature, always, but hidden; the difference here is that he is manifest, that the nature is conscious of the divine Presence as the Lord, the Inhabitant, and it is not by his secret will from above, "the will of the Father which is in heaven," but by his quite direct and apparent will that he moves the nature. And here there seems to be no room for the human intermediary; for it is by resort to his own nature, "प्रकृतं स्वम्," and not the special nature of the *Jiva* that the Lord of all existence thus takes upon himself the human birth.

This doctrine is a hard saying, a difficult thing for the human reason to accept; and for an obvious reason, because of the evident humanity of the Avatar. The Avatar is always a dual phenomenon of divinity and humanity; the Divine takes upon himself the human nature with all its outer limitations and makes them the circumstances, means, instruments of the divine consciousness and the divine power, a vessel of the divine birth and the divine works. But so surely it must be, since otherwise the object of the Avatar's descent is not fulfilled; for that object is precisely to show that the human birth with all its limitations can be made such a means and instrument of the divine birth and divine works, precisely to show that the human type of consciousness can be compatible with the divine essence of consciousness made manifest, can be converted into its vessel, drawn into nearer conformity with it by a change of its mould and a heightening of its

powers of light and love and strength and purity; and to show also how it can be done. If the Avatar were to act in an entirely supernormal fashion, this object would not be fulfilled. A merely supernormal or miraculous Avatar would be a meaningless absurdity; not that there need be an entire absence of the use of supernormal powers such as Christ's so-called miracles of healing, for the use of supernormal powers is quite a possibility of human nature; but there need not be that at all, nor in any case is it the root of the matter, nor would it at all do if the life were nothing else but a display of supernormal fireworks. The Avatar does not come as a thaumaturgic magician, but as the divine leader of humanity and the exemplar of a divine humanity. Even human sorrow and physical suffering he must assume and use so as to show, first, how that suffering may be a means of redemption,—as did Christ,—secondly, to show how, having been assumed by the divinè soul in the human nature, it can also be overcome in the same nature,—as did Buddha. The rationalist who would have cried to Christ, "If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross," or points out sagely that the Avatar was not divine because he died, too, by disease,—as a dog dieth,—knows not what he is saying: for he has missed the root of the whole matter. Even, the Avatar of sorrow and suffering must come before there can be the Avatar of divine joy; the human limitation must be assumed in order to show how it can be overcome; and the way and the extent of the overcoming, whether internal only or external also, depends upon the stage of the human advance; it must not be done by a non-human miracle.

In some such spirit some would interpret the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu—first in animal forms; then the animal man; then in the dwarf man-soul, Vāmana; the violent Asuric man, Rāma of the axe; the divinely-natured man,

a greater Rāma; the awakened spiritual man, Buddha; and, preceding him in time, but final in place, the complete divine manhood, Kṛṣṇa,—for the last Avatar, Kalki, only accomplishes the work Kṛṣṇa began,—he fulfils in power the great struggle which the previous Avatars prepared in all its potentialities.

On the other hand, the life of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa belongs to the prehistoric past, which has come down only in poetry and legend, and may even be regarded as myths; but it is quite immaterial whether we regard them as myths or historical facts, because their permanent truth and value lie in their persistence as a spiritual form, presence, influence in the inner consciousness of the race and the life of the human soul. Avatarhood is a fact of divine life and consciousness which may realize itself in an outward action but must persist, when that action is over and has done its work, in a spiritual influence; or may realize itself in a spiritual influence and teaching, but must then have its permanent effect, even when the new religion or discipline is exhausted in the thought, temperament and outward life of mankind.

#### 4. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ORDINARY BIRTH AND AVATAR

Now it is notable that with a slight but important variation of language the *Gītā* describes in the same way both the action of the Divine in bringing about the ordinary birth of creatures and his action in his birth as the Avatar. "Leaning upon my own Nature (प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य)," it will say later "I loose forth variously (विस्सृजामि) this multitude of creatures helplessly subject owing to the control of *Prakṛti* (अवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात्)." "Standing upon my own Nature" it says here "I am born by my self-*Māyā*, (प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय...आत्ममायया). I loose forth myself,—(आत्मानं सृजामि). The action implied in the word प्रवृत्त्य is a forceful down-

ward pressure by which the object controlled is overcome, oppressed, blocked or limited in its movement or working and becomes helplessly subject to the controlling power,—अवशं वशात्; Nature in this action becomes mechanical and its multitude of creatures are held helpless in the mechanism, not lords of their own action. On the contrary, the action implied in the word अधिष्ठाय is not only a dwelling in, but also a standing upon and over the Nature, a conscious control and government by the indwelling Godhead, (अधिष्ठात्री देवता), in which the *Puruṣa* is not helplessly driven by the *Prakṛti* through ignorance, but rather the *Prakṛti* is full of the light and the will of the *Puruṣa*. Therefore in the normal birth that which is loosed forth,—created, as we say,—is the multitude of creatures or becomings, ("भूतस्रामन्"); in the divine birth that which is loosed forth, self-created, is the self-conscious self-existent being, 'आत्मानन्' for the Vedantic distinction between "ātmā" and "bhūtāni" is that which is made in European philosophy between the Being and its becomings. In both cases *Māyā* is the means of the creation or manifestation, but in the divine birth it is by self-*Māyā* 'आत्ममायया', not the involution in the lower *Māyā* of the ignorance, but the conscious action of the self-existent Godhead in its phenomenal self-representation, well aware of its operation and its purpose,—that which the *Gītā* calls elsewhere *Yogamāyā*. In the ordinary birth *Yogamāyā* is used by the Divine to envelop and conceal itself from the lower consciousness, so it becomes for us the means of the ignorance, "Avidyā-māyā"; but it is by this same "Yogamāyā" that self-knowledge also is made manifest in the return of our consciousness to the Divine, it is the means of the knowledge "Vidyāmāyā," and in the divine birth it so operates—as the knowledge controlling and enlightening the works which are ordinarily done in the Ignorance.

The language of the *Gītā* shows, therefore, that the divine birth is that of the conscious Godhead in our humanity and essentially the opposite of the ordinary birth, even though the same means are used, because it is not the birth into the Ignorance, but the birth of the knowledge, not a physical phenomenon, but a soul-birth. It is the soul's coming into birth as the self-existent Being controlling consciously its becoming and not lost to self-knowledge in the cloud of the ignorance. It is the Soul born into the body as the Lord of Nature, standing above and operating in her freely by its will, not entangled and helplessly driven round and round in the mechanism; for it works in the knowledge and not, as most do, in the ignorance. It is the secret Soul in all coming forward from its governing secrecy behind the veil to possess wholly in a human type, but as the Divine, the birth which ordinarily it possesses only from behind the veil as the *Īswara* while the outward consciousness in front of the veil is rather possessed than in possession because there it is a partially conscious being, the *Jiva* lost to self-knowledge and bound in its works through a phenomenal subjection to Nature.

The Avatar,\* therefore, is a direct manifestation in humanity by *Kṛṣṇa*, the divine soul, of that divine condition of being to which Arjuna, the human soul, the type of a highest human being, a *Vibhūti*, is called upon by the Teacher to arise, and to which he can only arise by climbing out of the ignorance and limitation of his ordinary humanity. It is the manifestation from above of that which we have to develop from below; it is the descent of God into that divine birth of the human being into which we mortal

creatures must climb; it is the attracting divine example given by God to man in the very type and form and perfected model of our human existence.

But ordinary man is ignorant because there is upon the eyes of his soul and all its organs the seal of the Nature, "Prakṛti", "Māyā," by which he has been put forth into manifestation out of God's eternal being; she has minted him like a coin out of the precious metal of the divine substance, but overlaid with a strong coating of the alloy of her phenomenal qualities, stamped with her own stamp and mark of animal humanity; and, although the secret sign of the Godhead is there, it is at first indistinguishable and always with difficulty decipherable, not to be really discovered except by that initiation into the mystery of our own being which distinguishes a Godward from an earthward humanity. In the Avatar, the divinely-born Man, the real substance shines through the coating; the mark of the seal is there only for form, the vision is that of the secret Godhead, the power of the life is that of the secret Godhead, and it breaks through the seals of the assumed human nature; the sign of the Godhead, an inner soul-sign, not outward, not physical, stands out legible for all to read who care to see or who can see; for the Asuric nature is always blind to these things, it sees the body and not the soul, the external being and not the internal, the mask and not the Person. In the ordinary human birth the Nature-aspect of the universal Divine assuming humanity prevails; in the incarnation the God-aspect of the same phenomenon takes its place. In the one he allows the human nature to take possession of his partial being and to dominate it; in the other he takes possession of his partial type of being and its nature and divinely dominates it. Not by evolution or ascent like the ordinary man, the *Gītā* seems to tell us, not by a growing

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\* The word 'Avatar' means a "Descent"—it is a coming down of the Divine below the line which divides the divine from the human world or status.

into the divine birth, but by a direct descent into the stuff of humanity and a taking up of its moulds.

#### 5. THE OBJECT OF THE AVATAR

We have to remark carefully that the upholding of *Dharma* in the world is not the only object of the descent of the Avatar, that great mystery of the Divine manifest in humanity; for the upholding of the *Dharma* is not an all-sufficient object in itself, not the supreme possible aim for the manifestation of a Kṛṣṇa, a Christ, a Buddha, but is only the general condition of a higher aim and a more supreme and divine utility. For there are two aspects of the divine birth; one is a descent, the birth of God in humanity, the Godhead manifesting itself in the human form and nature, the eternal Avatar; the other is an ascent, the birth of man into the Godhead, man rising into the divine nature and consciousness (सद्भावमागतः); it is the being born anew in a second birth of the soul. It is that new birth which Avatarhood and the upholding of the *Dharma* are intended to serve. This double aspect in the *Gītā*'s doctrine of Avatarhood is apt to be missed by the cursory reader satisfied, as most are, with catching a superficial view of its profound teachings, and it is missed too by the formal commentator petrified in the rigidity of the schools. Yet it is necessary, surely, to the whole meaning of the doctrine. Otherwise the Avatar idea would be only a dogma, a popular superstition, or an imaginative or mystic deification of historical or legendary supermen, not what the *Gītā* makes all its teaching, a deep philosophical and religious truth and an essential part of or step to the supreme mystery of all (रहस्यमुत्तमम्).

If there were not this rising of man into the Godhead to be helped by the descent of God into humanity, Avatarhood for the sake of the *Dharma*

would be an otiose phenomenon, since mere Right, mere justice or standards of virtue can always be upheld by the divine omnipotence through its ordinary means, by great men or great movements, by the life and work of sages and kings and religious teachers, without any actual incarnation. The Avatar comes as the manifestation of the divine nature in the human nature, the apocalypse of its Kṛṣṇahood, Christhood, Buddhahood, in order that the human nature may by moulding its principle, thought, feeling, action and being on the lines of that Kṛṣṇahood, Christhood, Buddhahood transfigure itself into the divine. The Law, the *Dharma* which the Avatar establishes is given for that purpose chiefly; the Kṛṣṇa, Christ, Buddha stands in its centre as the gate, he makes through himself the way men shall follow. That is why each incarnation holds before men his own example and declares of himself that he is the way and the gate: he declares, too, the oneness of his humanity with the divine being, declares that the Son of Man and the Father above, from whom he has descended, are one; that Kṛṣṇa in the human body (मातृवीं तनुमाश्रितम्) and the supreme Lord and Friend of all creatures are but two revelations of the same divine *Puruṣottama*, revealed there in his own being, revealed here in the type of humanity.

That the *Gītā* contains as its kernel this second and real object of the Avatarhood, is evident even from this passage by itself rightly considered; but it becomes much clearer if we take it, not by itself,—always the wrong way to deal with the texts of the *Gītā*,—but in its right close connection with other passages and with the whole teaching. We have to remember and take together its doctrine of the one Self in all, of the Godhead seated in the heart of every creature, its teaching about the relations between the Creator and his creation, its strongly emphasized idea

of the "Vibhūti",—noting, too, the language in which the Teacher gives his own divine example of selfless works, which applies equally to the human Kṛṣṇa and the divine Lord of the Worlds, and giving their due weight to such passages as that in the ninth chapter "Deluded minds despise me lodged in the human body, because they know not my supreme nature of being, Lord of all existences."

It is to assist that ascent or evolution the descent is made or accepted; that the *Gītā* makes very clear. It is, we might say, to exemplify the possibility of the Divine manifest in the human being, so that man may see what that is and take courage to grow into it. It is also to leave the influence of that manifestation vibrating in the earth nature and the soul of that manifestation presiding over its upward endeavour. It is to give a spiritual mould of divine manhood into which the seeking soul of the human being can cast itself. It is to give a *dharma*, a religion—not a mere creed, but a method of inner and outer living,—a way, a rule and law of self-moulding by which he can grow towards divinity. It is, too, since this growth, ascent is no mere isolated and individual phenomenon, but like all the divine world-activities a collective business, a work and the work for the race, to assist the human march, to hold it together in its great crisis, to break the forces of the downward gravitation when they grow too insistent, to uphold or restore the great *dharma* of the Godward law in man's nature, to prepare even, however far off, the kingdom of God, the victory of the seekers of light and perfection ('साधुनाम्') and the overthrow of those who fight for the continuance of the evil and the darkness. All these are recognized objects of the descent of the Avatar, and it is usually by his work that the mass of men seek to distinguish him and for that they are

ready to worship him. It is only the spiritual who see that this external Avatarhood is a sign, in the symbol of a human life, of the eternal inner Godhead making himself manifest in the field of their own human mentality and corporeality so that they can grow into unity with that and be possessed by it. The divine manifestation of a Kṛṣṇa, Christ, Buddha in external humanity has for its inner truth the same manifestation of the eternal Avatar within in our own inner humanity. That which has been done in the outer human life of earth, may be repeated in the inner life of all human beings.

The work for which the Avatar descends has like his birth a double sense and a double form. It has an outward side of the divine force acting upon the external world in order to maintain there and to reshape the divine law by which the Godward effort of humanity is kept from decisive retrogression and instead decisively carried forward in spite of the rule of action and reaction, the rhythm of advance and relapse by which Nature proceeds. It has an inward side of the divine force of the Godward consciousness acting upon the soul of the individual and the soul of the race, so that it may receive new forms of revelation of the Divine in man and may be sustained, renewed and enriched in its power of upward self-unfolding. The Avatar does not descend merely for a great outward action, as the pragmatic sense in humanity is too often tempted to suppose. Action and event have no value in themselves, but only take their value from the force which they represent and the idea which they symbolize and which the force is there to serve.

The crisis in which the Avatar appears, though apparent to the outward eye only as a crisis of events and great material changes, is always in its



source and real meaning a crisis in the consciousness of humanity when it has to undergo some grand modification and effect some new development.

The inner fruit of Avatar's coming is gained by those who learn from it the true nature of the divine birth and the divine work and who, growing full of him in their consciousness and taking refuge in him with their whole being ('मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः'), purified by the realizing force of their knowledge and delivered from the lower nature, attain to the divine being and divine nature ('मद्भावम्'). The Avatar comes to reveal the divine nature in man above this lower nature and to show what are the divine works, free, unegoistic, disinterested, impersonal, universal, full of the divine light, the divine power and the divine love. He comes as the divine personality which shall fill the consciousness of the human being and replace the limited egoistic personality,

so that it shall be liberated out of ego into infinity and universality, out of birth into immortality. He comes as the divine power and love which calls men to itself, so that they may take refuge in that and no longer in the insufficiency of their human wills and the strife of their human fear, wrath and passion, and, liberated from all this unquiet and suffering, may live in the calm and bliss of the Divine.\* Nor does it matter essentially in what form and name or putting forward what aspect of the Divine he comes: for in all ways, varying with their nature, men are following the path set to them by the Divine, which will in the end lead them to him, and the aspect of him which suits their nature is that which they can best follow when he comes to lead them; in whatever way men accept, love and take joy in God, in that way God accepts, loves and takes joy in man. "ये यथा मा प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।"



## The Conduct of a Devotee of Sri Krishna.

Thus says Śukadeva to King Parīkṣit about Bhakta Ambarīṣa:—

"He had concentrated his mind on the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and employed his speech in singing His praises. His hands did no other work than cleaning every nook and corner of the temple of Śrī Hari and other similar duties, and his ears heard only the sacred stories of Bhagavān Achyuta.

"His eyes saw nothing but the soul-enrapturing form of Bhagavān Mukunda (the liberator of men), while his limbs enjoyed the embrace of His devotees. His nose smelt only the fragrance of the lotus feet of Śrī Hari as well as of the sacred Tulasi (basil) plant and his palate tasted only His *Prasāda* (offerings).

"His legs were kept busy in frequenting the places of pilgrimage sacred to the Lord, and his head constantly bowed to the feet of Lord Hṛṣīkeśa (the Lord of our senses). He enjoyed the worldly pleasures as something consecrated to the Lord, always conscious of his being a servant of the Lord, and not in a spirit of self-indulgence."

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata IX. iv. 18—20)



\* "जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यंभेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः । त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥  
वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः । बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥"