

## Synthetic Viewpoint of the Gita.

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The *Bhagavadgītā*, embodying as it does, the priceless teachings imparted by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa to His disciple Arjuna on the spacious field of Kurukṣetra some thousands of years ago, is probably the most cosmopolitan scripture in existence. It is not tainted by the least trace of sectarianism or bigotry and may be rightly regarded the 'Sun of Truth'. As in the physical world, the sun is the synthesis of the seven prismatic colours, so in the spiritual, the *Gītā* synthesizes all the divergent viewpoints regarding the one and only Truth.

The scriptures of many faiths are, it is sad to note, characterized by what one may without disrespect call religious snobbishness. Briefly, their viewpoint is: 'My-ism is the only ism'. It is not 'this *also* but this *alone*', and is dogmatic. "Unless you follow me, you shall be lost for ever and ever." This attitude has been mainly responsible for the religious feuds and persecutions which have disgraced the annals of humanity in the past—not to speak of the squabbles, quarrellings and schisms which still exist and are the despair of the religiously-minded. Here the *Gītā* comes with its refreshing universality and proclaims:—

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।  
मम वर्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

"By whatsoever way a man travel-  
leth, I meet him on that way.

All men, however diverse, but  
follow My path."

Commenting on this verse, Bankim Chandra, the philosopher of neo-Bengal, after saying how sectaries have quarrelled and squabbled about Saṅga and Nirṅa and Saḱara and Nirākara, etc., etc., remarks that he who speaks of the Himalayas in terms of an ant-hill and another in terms of a hillock, are equally removed from the truth and ends by saying that one who has grasped the truth underlying the above verse is free of all religions and denominations and can look with an equal eye on the Hindu and the Moslem, the Christian and the Buddhist and the Jain, the Jew and the Zoroastrian. So Bankim Chandra characterized the religion of the *Gītā* as the only *universal* religion—as the true *catholic* religion.

Coming after the above proclamation of the *Gītā*, when the *Mahimna Stotra* says that—स्वीनां वैचित्र्याद्भुक्तुदिलनानापथ-  
जुषाम् or when Kalidasa speaks of the various scriptures as so many streams following devious courses but ultimately losing themselves in the bosom of the mighty ocean—we feel that we are hearing but faint echoes of the grand symphony of the *Gītā*, which in this anticipated, by several millennia, the teaching of the Christian mystic that 'as many as are the breaths in the nostril of man—so many are the pathways to God', and of Sri Rama-

krishna, whose message to the modern world was—'यत्त मत तत्त पथ'. Did not the Christ himself declare that 'in my Father's house there are *many* mansions? Thus they, who speak of the *Bhagavadgītā* as the *Bible of Humanity* (and not of any particular sect or creed or denomination) have, I am sure, hit upon the right characterization of this unique scripture.

The synthetic viewpoint of the *Gītā* may be illustrated in many ways but in the present article I shall confine myself to one topic only, namely, what I may speak of 'the Trivenī of the *Gītā*'—the confluence, as at Prayāga, of the three diverse streams of religious culture that we speak of in the Hindu Books as Karma, Jñāna and Bhakti—that is, Action, Intellection and Devotion.

As all students of India's religious history know, there were current in India in the pre-*Gītā* days, three parallel streams of religious culture—the path of Karma, the path of Jñāna and the path of Bhakti. The Karmavādīs regarded 'Action' as the sole method of salvation:—

आन्नायस्य क्रियार्थत्वाद् आनर्थक्यम् अतदर्थात् ।

( *Mimansa-Sutra* I. ii. 7 )

On the other hand, the Jñānavādīs said,—the *only* way is the way of Wisdom—*Jñānāt Muktiḥ*. 'By action one is fettered but is released by wisdom (Jñāna) alone.' As against that, the Bhaktivādīs insisted that it was only Devotion, divorced from and uncontaminated by either Karma or Jñāna which led to union with the

Godhead. In this confusion of tongues the World-Teacher sounds in the *Gītā* His Pāñchajanya note of concord, viz., that 'all mystic ways (whether of Action, Wisdom or Devotion) are co-equal—are all equally roads to God', and to attain the highest beatitude, neither Action nor Intellection nor Devotion *by itself* is sufficient, but if one were to achieve what the *Gītā* calls Divine similitude ( मम साधर्म्यम् ), the three pathways must be harmoniously blended.

What is the philosophical justification of this supreme synthesis? We know that God is a Trinity—a Trinity in unity. He is at one and the same time Sat, Chit and Ānanda—that is, He is the glorious Trinity of Power, Wisdom and Bliss—of Pratāpa, Prajñā and Prema—of Light, Life and Love. And Man? Man being made in the image of God, being a fragment of Divinity ( ममैवांशः ) is also triune in his composition. So the *Pāñchadaśī* says,—'सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तत्र ह्यस्तीह ब्रह्मलक्षणम्'. Therefore, if Man is to become one with God, if he is to achieve what the Christian calls 'Deification', he must by *Sādhanā* develop the three aspects of Divinity—namely, Power, Wisdom and Love which are latent in him, so that when he is nearing his goal, he might be able to say with the Mukta 'Soham: Aham Brahmāsmi': 'I and my Father are one'.

Now a little introspection will show us that there are really three human types, neither less nor more—the hero type, the sage type and the saint type—the hero type, like

Julius Caesar, Shivaji, Napoleon, etc., being those in which the power-aspect of the self is dominant; the sage-type like Plato, Yājñavalkya, Hegel, etc., being those in whom the wisdom-aspect of the self is dominant; and the saint-type like Bilwamangal, Mirabai, St. Teresa, etc., being those in whom the love-aspect of the self is dominant—they, to whom God is the 'sweetest Love'—'रसो वै सः'. What we call evolution is the unfoldment of these latent potentialities of Power, Wisdom and Love in man and when these have been fanned into flames—we, gods in the becoming, actually become gods. To achieve this high destiny and in order that the unfoldment may be hastened and be harmonious, the above-mentioned threefold technique of approach to God—the three paths of Action, Intellection and Devotion referred to above must be trodden successively, if not simultaneously—the first being mainly the line of approach for the heroic temperament, the second for the philosophic and the third for the devotional. This is the justification of the synthesis worked out in the *Gītā* and the result is the devising of the Trivenī (the confluence) where the three concurrent streams—the Ganga-stream of Jñāna, the Yamuna-stream of Bhakti and the Saraswati-stream of Karma merge and mingle so as to form this holier Trivenī—a dip in which leads to ultimate emancipation.

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## A Hero Soul Triumphant.

Fix not thy gaze upon thy transient self,  
 But on the *Real*—the Higher Self,  
 For we become like that we gaze upon.  
 God dwells in thee, imperishably pure,  
 Is in thee now—the Presence in the rough,  
 Not what thou art, but what thou mayst become,  
 God takes His measure by.  
 Heroes and saints are made by failures,  
 Better to fail than not to try.  
 Ask the bright heaven to shine upon thy way,  
 Till thou canst see it.  
 Then through gloom and trial,  
 Or what else may come, go on !  
 Strive for the highest, believe the best, then lo !  
 Thou shalt be stronger than events,—  
 A hero soul Triumphant !

—Arthur E. Massey.

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