



GOD



FAITH

***AND
RELIGION***



By
Major D. S. Bisht (Retd.)
Research Scholar & Director CHI
Due to divine grace of Lord Krishna



INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS ON COVER PAGE

Top line

1. Brahma Kamal Flower
2. Lakshmi Flower
3. Vishnu Flower
4. Shiva Flower
5. Krishna Flower

Left vertical line

6. Brahma Vishnu Mahesh
7. Ganesha
8. Durga
9. Lord Rama
10. Lord Krishna

Right vertical line

11. Jesus Christ
12. Mohammed Prophet
13. Guru Nanak
14. Judaism - Sign
15. Zoroastrian - Sign

Bottom line

16. Vivekanand
17. Mahatma Gandhi
18. Radha Swami
19. Adi Shankara
20. Bahai Faith – Sign

Below top line

21. Lord Buddha
22. Lord Mahavira

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The book is dedicated to my mother

Devi Subhadra Bisht



(1.1.1923 – 15.9.2002)

Who introduced me to Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita with particular reference to 'Karma Yoga' during my childhood itself.

She was married at the age of 15. She was a loving mother and managed her household responsibilities most efficiently till all her children (3 sons & 4 daughters) had settled down in life. She was always very kind to needy people and helped them with alms whenever possible. She had left for her heavenly abode after seeing her great grandchildren.

Ex-Major D.S. Bisht (Eldest son)

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Research Scholar & Director
Central Himalayan Institute, Dehradun (India)**

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**AUTHOR'S OWN OPINION ABOUT THE REVISED AND
ENLARGED FIRST EDITION OF THE BOOK AS ON 15 JUNE,2024**

P R E F A C E

During my childhood, my mother started telling me stories from 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' as well as teaching from the holy book 'Gita' which she used to read in a monthly Hindi magazine 'Kalyan' during her spare time. Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita are supposed to be kept in every house who believed in Hindu religion. Once I started my schooling, there was no time to read or listen teaching of Holy books even though all my family members took part in all kinds of worship and rituals as per traditions starting from Shiva worship to Durga worship. Beside that every Hindu family also have family deity and village deity which are also worshipped regularly and to be never forgotten or else you may invite curse or unhappiness of the god and goddesses. In my own family we had two family deity i.e. Nag Devta and Narsingh Devta (Narsimha).

Once I finished my schooling and joined military service, I started looking for books on Ramayana, Mahabharata and Gita in English language instead of Sanskrit or Hindi. I was more curious to know the teaching of Bhagavad Gita because my mother used to tell me that the holy book Gita is not for children because it is difficult to understand even by adult. However, my mother did teach me essence of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita i.e. Thy right is to work only but never to the fruits thereof, which I continue to follow till to date. I even went further and named my house as ' Karma cottage' in 1973.

It was after 1973 that I was able to buy Mahabharata in English language retold by William Buck which was published by New American Library, London in 1973. Thereafter, I kept on looking for books on ancient and Vedic civilization including Ramayana, Mahabharata and Gita in English language published in India and abroad to strengthen my knowledge about God Faith and Religion. The result was that I had 22 books in my library to study and then write this

book for the benefit of the readers. The list of books I have gone through is given in the bibliography.

After my retirement in 1999 from military- civil service, I took up to full time research and writing and successfully completed two research projects titled ‘Poverty Planning and Development’ published in 2006 and ‘Governance and Development of Rural India’ published in 2014. Beside other books I had also written a book on ‘Modern Life Management Guide’ as part of research study for citizenship education program which was published in 2005. Right now the world is going through the worst period in its history due to climate change, pandemic and military conflicts. In recent years we have been mainly talking, reading and writing about military power and economic strength of the countries at the cost of Human Development Index (HDI) going down steadily all over the world. Unfortunately, there is a total decline in ‘religion or dharma’ (right- action- duty) and ‘irreligion or adharma’ (wrong doing) is on the rise. It was, therefore, the right time for me to complete this book on ‘God Faith and Religion’ and publish it in the larger interest of mankind.

Oral as well as written knowledge of Sanatan Dharma (eternal religion) available through Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads and Gita is vast and touching all aspects of human life followed by Hindu society from birth to death and thereafter. The oral knowledge obtained by ancient sage and saint was through transcendent revelation (sruti) or through traditional teaching by wise human beings (smriti). Lengthy sacred books in ‘Sanskrit’ with different translation, interpretation and elaboration by religious teachers, godmen and spiritual masters fail to reach large population who remain mainly occupied to earn for their livelihood and survival in a highly competitive society in the world today.

In this book I have, therefore, tried to help devotees to understand ancient cultural history of India on the one hand and easy way to understand the existence of God as super power (not a country) already accepted by all religions in the world. For the ordinary people

with or without education, it is good enough to worship their family deity or village deity in India, a representative image of God, on whom the devotees have blind or full faith to get rid off all kinds of problems he or she may be facing in life. However, for the educated masses of today it is necessary to have better understanding of ‘God Faith and Religion’ for peace and happiness for self, family and the society. To this end, I hope that the book will prove to be valuable and useful.

An introduction to mankind, God and civilization has been covered in Part-I of this book. As far as ancient and Vedic civilization is concerned the same has been covered briefly in Part –II of this book. Sacred book of Vedas and Upanishad contain information about the development of Sanatan Dharma since the very creation of the universe by Brahma Himself. The other details available in Part-II of this book are: the Aryan and their sacred books, religion of Rig Vedic period, epic age of Ramayana and Mahabharata, Hindu mythological time structure and incarnation of God.

The meaning of religion given in ‘Bhargava’s standard illustrated dictionary is that: a prevalent system of faith and worship, practice of sacred rites (religious ceremony/observance) or rituals (manner of performing rites, recognition of God and duty (devotion) towards Him. According to progressive English Dictionary, the definition/meaning of religion also includes: belief in God as the creator and the controller of the universe and system of faith and worship on such belief. Together, the meaning of religion given in the two dictionaries are good enough to understand the meaning of religion as far as followers of any religion are concerned. However, the third dictionary ‘New Roget’s Thesaurus in Dictionary Form’ has given various alternative name of religion which include creed, faith, religious persuasion, church, religious preference, orthodoxy, cult, cultism, denomination, sect, theology, divinity and hierology. Beside this, names of all living religions of the world are also given in the dictionary.

Faith is a trust or belief in the philosophy of a particular religion and what that religion expects you to follow the principles or tenets laid down. At present we have many living religion in the world which include Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Bahai's Faith etc. In this book I have included the origin, philosophy and belief of Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism born out of Hinduism in Part-IX of this book. History and philosophy of all other religions of the world have been covered in Part-XII of this book. Devotees will find that almost all religion believe in one God and service to mankind through worship and prayer according to their own customs and traditions

Bhagavad-Gita sums up the true knowledge contained in Vedas, Puran and Upanishad dating back to 10000 years as per latest research study papers published by historians and included in this book. It is this knowledge which Lord Krishna applied to motivate Arjuna to do his duty and to overcome the ideological conflict that Arjuna was faced with. Those who want to run away from 'Karma' (duty) and become saint can never realize God. Those who acquire knowledge while doing their duty are the true saint. Lord Krishna said that whenever and wherever there is decline in religious practices and predominant rise of irreligion, He descends on the earth himself to save the mankind from the suffering caused by evil forces and establish truth in the society. Evil human being can be described as bad, harmful, sinful, evil minded, wicked nature and malicious. As against evil minded, truth must prevail which means the quality of being truthful, fidelity, veracity, reality, virtue, honesty, sincerity and constancy.

Bhagavad-Gita has answers to all the queries from every human being. However, dissemination of knowledge of the holy book could not reach ordinary people mainly it is vast and in 'Sanskrit' language. Even though 'Gita' has been translated in English language by many learned religious teachers, the translation elaboration and interpretation has neither been uniform nor universal. In this book I have tried to enlighten and explain the basic knowledge of God Faith

and Religion with special emphasis on teaching from the holy book 'Gita' in Part-VII & VIII of the book in the larger interest of mankind with the divine blessings of Lord Krishna only. I have attempted to present the historical background of 'God Faith and Religion' as perceived by the followers of all religious communities and its importance in a nutshell for the smooth functioning of the society for peace, happiness and survival of individual human being in this earth planet with resources diminishing on the one hand and demand increasing on the other hand due to population multiplying year after year.

The time and environment in which we are living today and peculiarity of human nature, we are unable to translate our knowledge into action in spite of our desire to practice self discipline. The main cause responsible for this is ignorance combined with absence of faith in God, the scriptures and great sages, saints and philosophers who have been preaching about existence and faith in God for ages. If you do not believe in holy book 'Gita' you should repose faith in God accordingly as you have conceived of Him and surrendering yourself to Him, apply yourself in right earnest to the work of self realization. Supposing you doubt even the existence of God, you should look for the ideal man of the age and arm yourself with sufficient courage to follow in his footsteps. He who does not withdraw his mind from idle pursuits, lethargy and enjoyment of sense objects and put it on the right track, proceeds along the downward path.

"It is well and good if one realizes Him in this very life, if on the contrary one fails to know Him in this life, he will be a greater loser. Man of strong determination who seek for the lord in every creature attain immortality on casting off this body." -Keno Upanishad -II: 5.

Therefore, one has to tread this path of self- evolution by himself; no one else can do it for him. Idle pursuits, lethargy, enjoyment of sense objects and immoral practices out to be given up as the greatest stumbling blocks on this path. By fixing one's mind on God one can

easily surmount all difficulties through his grace. Lord Krishna says: ‘For the wonderful illusion of mine consisting of three Gunas (modes of nature) is extremely difficult to get over; those, however, who take refuge in Me alone cross at.’ (Chapter –VII Verse -14)

After completing life long research study project on ‘God Faith and Religion’ and documenting the outcome of the study, I find that the book is likely to contribute and further strengthen the faith of mankind in God and unity among followers of different religions and sects for peace and happiness of each individual family and the society. Once human being has accepted and realized the existence of God and understood the teaching of his religion, he is likely to work only for the welfare and development of the society on this planet earth. It is also equally important for mankind to understand the historical background of all civilizations in this earth planet so that he is able to realize the role played by God Faith and Religion for the wellbeing of mankind in different part of this planet earth.

Earlier the human being had no or limited communication system to understand each others religion with particular reference to historical background and philosophy behind the origin of different religion on this planet earth. This resulted into all kinds of differences among various religious groups within and outside the countries leading to political and military conflicts all over the world. However, once the people are given correct information and education about God Faith and Religion, the chances of conflicts will reduce considerably in this world.

The aim of this book is not to sermonize on ‘God Faith and Religion’ but to let ordinary human being understand the importance of ‘ God Faith and Religion’ for the very survival of human being on this planet earth. I was not a preacher or a religious teacher but only a research scholar. This research study is purely empirical and as experienced by me as author of this book. To this end every thing that has been spoken and written about God Faith and Religion from the time immemorial has been studied to fulfil the purpose of this book.

Today the ‘World is One’ and all countries are interdependent for their survival and therefore the unity of purpose on the issue of God Faith and Religion should not be overlooked.

Every effort has been made in the book to present historical background and philosophy of Hindu religion being the oldest indigenous religion of the world. Scripture of Vedic civilization are too vast and relevant for historians. Vedic scriptures do give clear picture of highly developed Vedic civilization that was existing at least ten thousand years ago as per latest discoveries made by geologist, archaeologist, astrologers, scientist, sociologist and historians in India and abroad. The available information has been quoted appropriately in this book in nutshell for the information and education of all about ‘God Faith and Religion’. The ‘Encyclopedia of Hindu Religion’ compiled by Indian Heritage Foundation released in 11 volume, contains 7000 entries which includes ancient history, science, art, culture, music, dance, politics, religion etc. This document may be useful for historians and teachers but not for ordinary human being to understand all about ‘God Faith and Religion’ practiced by various religious group in this world today.

For glossary of Vedic words with explanatory notes used by the followers of Hindu religion including glossary of words used for translation of ‘Bhagavad Gita’ from Sanskrit to English have been given at the end of this book. The oldest ‘Dharma Shastra’ (Laws of Manu or Manusmriti) which was written for the followers of ‘Sanatana Dharma’ in Sanskrit language includes jurisprudence, philosophy and religion to create an extraordinary model as to how life should be lived in public and in private, by untouchables as well as priest or kings and by women as well as men. Customs, rites and rituals performed in connection with birth, marriage, death, funeral and worship of ancestors are also laid down in the scriptures for the followers of Hindu religion which are followed even today depending upon the circumstances and the availability of a qualified priest in Dharma Shastra’s or religious scriptures

The origin of Hindu religion is based on nature worship by mankind which existed during Vedic civilization 8-10 thousand years ago. The historical record of Vedic civilization and their religion with latest facts has been covered in Part-II of this book. In due course of time the trinity Brahma (creator of universe), Vishnu (preserver) and Shiva (destroyer of universe) became main object for worship by mankind along with nature worship in the form of Indra, Agni (fire), Surya (sun), Varuna and Yama. Subsequently importance of Lord Ganesh and mother goddess Durga was also realized by mankind who are also worshipped with Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh on different occasion as per scriptures by the followers of Hindu religion all over the world.

However, the arrival of Lord Krishna (incarnation of lord Vishnu or faceless supreme power i.e. Brahmana) 5000 years ago during Dvapara Yuga changed the course of Hindu religion for better with the gift of 'Bhagavad Gita' which is the only legally accepted holy book for Hindus today. The original 'Bhagavad Gita' is written in Sanskrit language which is known to negligible number of people in the world. Efforts made so far to translate 'Bhagavad Gita' in English and other languages with different meaning, lengthy elaboration and interpretations both in India and abroad has failed to spread its teaching to ordinary human beings in simple language. As a result of this, worship of multiple divinities within Hinduism continues to be the main strength of Hindu religion as brought in Part-IV of this book. For this reason, in-depth study of 'Bhagavad Gita' and its eternal importance including its reproduction has been covered in Part-VII of this book for the benefit of devotees and others.

It was my good fortune to find the latest book titled 'Why I am a Hindu' by Shashi Tharoor published in 2019. Shashi Tharoor, who inherited, understood, believed and practiced Hindu religion, could perhaps be only Indian born author with adequate empirical knowledge of Hinduism who succeeded in explaining the origin and deep rooted practices of the oldest indigenous religion of the world with

eternal wisdom and philosophy in a nutshell for the education of all in English language. Relevant portion from the book has been included in Part-II and IV of this book. I did not find any difference in belief and practices between the Hindus of south India and the Central Himalayan region of north India which has been the original source of Vedic civilization also known as land of god and goddesses of Hindus. Beside large number of temples dedicated to god and goddesses equally large number of rivers, mountain top and flowers like Brahma, Vishnu and Lakshmi Kamal are named after Hindu god and goddesses.

Together the text of the book will definitely promote brotherhood among followers of different religion in this world today for peace and prosperity. Alternative path shown by Adi Shankara, Guru Nanak and Radha Swami Satsang to practice religion and service to mankind are included in Part-XI of this book. For meditation and peace, articles by T.R.Seshadri, Shri Ravi Shankar, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan and Dada J.P. Vaswani are included in Part-X of this book. Historical background and philosophy of other religion i.e. Christianity, Islam God and religion, the Bahais faith, Zoroastrianism and Judaism have been covered (all in a nutshell) in Part-XII of this book. Finally lessons learnt about God Faith and Religion based on pious views expressed by Baba Virsa Singh, Sujata Aishwarya Cheema, Anup Mitra, Manorama Lokose and Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev are given in the last Part-XIII of this book. Together, the author of this study project is pleased to conclude that there is no dispute about the faith of human being in one God and religious practices adopted by different religions to connect with almighty God are only for peace and happiness. One should have blind faith in God who is not going to cheat you unlike human being.

Part-I

MANKIND GOD AND CIVILIZATION

1

BRIEF HISTORY OF MANKIND

The existence of mega beasts and humans

It will be in the interest of readers to know all about the earth planet before the arrival of God and human being which have been established by the historians in paleography. Briefly the period has been recorded as follows.

Paleolithic age- Early phase of stone age or prehistorical age.

Neolithic age – Final period of stone age or archaeological period.

Miocene age- Extended from 23 million to 5.3 million years ago.

Polytheism age-The belief in or worship of more than one God.

Pantheism age-The religious or philosophical belief that the universe and nature are identical to divinity and God exists in all natural things and therefore large number of Gods are worshipped.

About 100,000 years ago, mega beasts started disappearing from the face of the planet such as the 13-ton animal stegodon also known as ancestor of elephant, the 600-kg lizard-like Megalania, the 100-kg Giant Beaver. It was a period of significant climate change. It was also when prehistoric humans started expanding their foot print outside Africa. Wherever humans arrived, large animals died out. But not in Africa and South Asia.

It is a pattern that has puzzled historians in paleography for decades. But while Africa has been studied for six decades, India has never been. In a new study, for the first time, researchers from Yale University and others have compiled a database of recent fossils from the Indian subcontinent to fill the gap. Lead author Dr Advait Jukar said “co-evolution has been used to explain the survival of large

animals in Africa. It's a kind of evolutionary rat race, where one species has to be better than the other to survive. So, if humans got better at hunting, animals would get better at escaping. If humans lived in river line plains, animals would move into the safety of dense forests. The theory worked for Africa but India remained a mystery. Because there had never been a comprehensive study of Indian fossil records.

So, Jukar documented the extinction of five large mammals on the subcontinent. If the extinction pattern could be demystified, it would help understand why large animals are found in such abundance in India. With fossil records from 25 sites in India and statistical analysis, they found that the disappearance of large animals here began some 30,000 years ago. Humans had started arriving from Africa about 60,000 years ago. So, there is a 30,000 year gap between the appearance of humans and limited disappearance of megafauna. This is around the time that there was a drop in the Indian Monsoon and several intervals of prolonged drought during 126,000 to 12,000 years ago. The only clear link, it turned out, is with the time humans start using projectiles tools, which made hunting more efficient.

So, only four mammals species went extinct over the past 50,000 years in India while 114 survived. It is the third slowest extinction rate after eastern Africa (eight extinct, 473 surviving) and southern Africa (seven extinct, 265 surviving). Four factors may have helped the survival rate. Jukar said India has been home to different species of humans, with a record going back almost 2 million years. This would have led to coevolution, just like in Africa. Then about 9,000 years ago, cattle domestication began. And finally, the large geographic area over which animals were distributed may have helped support populations.

According to Jukar, we have a fossil records in the Siwalik, which goes back about 24 million years. The only other places we get comparable records are north America and part of China. But in India research has been held back because of a lack of resources.

2

**ARRIVAL OF HUMAN BEING ON THIS MOTHER
EARTH**

Before we proceed further, it was necessary to know broadly the origin of this planet earth and the arrival of living creatures and human being in this world. According to Chidanand, in his article titled 'Jewel in the Corona' (published in Times of India on March 24th, 2020), among the greatest and most catastrophic events to befall planet earth from the time it cohered into existence some 4.5 billion years ago, one occurred relatively recently only some 66 million years ago. A comet or asteroid about 15 Km wide slammed into the Yucatan Peninsula in present day Mexico at a speed of 72,000 Km an hour, unleashing an explosion now estimated at 37.4 billion time more powerful than the Hiroshima nuclear bomb. There were no human being on the planet to record this event. But scientists who figured it out from geological evidence have observed that it was a bad day to be a dinosaur- the most prolific large species of the time when it happened. They were annihilated. According to 'World of Wonder Encyclopedia' published in 1977, millions of years ago, long before human being lived on earth, the mighty dinosaurs ruled the animal world. The first dinosaurs (terrible Lizard which came from reptiles) appeared about 200 million years ago, the last dinosaurs died out about 60 million years ago. So no one has ever seen a living dinosaur. We know something of what they look like from their fossil remains in the rock. Some were quite small but others were huge. There were plant eating dinosaurs and flesh eating dinosaurs.

Among the plant- eaters were the biggest dinosaurs, such as Brontosaurus and Diplodocus. They walked on four thick legs and had long necks and tails. Some giant dinosaurs were nearly 30 meter long, other weighed 80 ton. They had to eat all day long to get enough food for their enormous bodies. Flesh-eating dinosaurs were smaller and

most of them ran on their hind legs. The largest and fiercest was Tyrannosaurus 'the tyrant lizard'. It stood 5.5 meters high and weighed 7 ton. It has huge sharp claws on its legs and long sharp teeth in its cruel mouth. As protection from enemies, dinosaur had heavy body like a tank and tail that it swung like a club. Despite their great size dinosaurs had tiny brains. Scientists are not sure but dinosaurs became extinct because climate became cooler and the vegetation changed. Unable to keep warm and without enough food their huge bodies, the slow witted dinosaur were unable to survive.

Scientific and geological evidence collected by research scholars so far, the earth came into existence some 4.5 billion years ago and the human being came into existence 60 million years ago only after the extinction of Dinosaur. The total period covered by four 'Yuga' of Hindu mythological time structure comes to 4320000 years i.e. about 4 billion years only. The birth of Lord Rama having been established on 10th January, 5114BCE (chapter-IV refers) and that of Lord Krishna on 18th January, 3102BCE (chapter-IV refers) and the existence of Indus valley civilization now has been accepted about 7000 year old, the time structure worked out for the earlier period as per Hindu mythology has been explained in Part-II of this book.

'World of Wonder – Encyclopedia' published in 1977 has briefly given the details of great civilization (on page 50) of the past which includes Egypt (3200 BC-3000BC), Babylon (1800 BC), Assyria (1300 BC - 1200 BC), Persia (500 BC - 330 BC), Hittites (1600 BC - 10 BC), Crete (2500 BC), Phoenicia, Greece (2000 BC - 500 BC), Rome (750 BC to 450 AD), China (1500 BC till date) but India does not figure in the list. However, on page 98 in the table given about world history, Indus valley civilization has been shown in existence since 2400 BC. This has to be corrected in view of the latest research studies about the period of 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' brought out in Part-IV of this book.

Before the human being could think of God and religion, Paleolithic (early phase of stone age) man's primary tasks involved

hunting, food gathering and other necessary needs for survival with all kinds of animals and other living being existing on this planet after the disappearance of Dinosaur. Thereafter in a Neolithic age (final stage of stone age) stretching back to twelve thousand years the earth had become warmer and man discovered agriculture and horticulture. For the first time man could live in a settlement rather than remain on the move behind the wild herds. He domesticated dogs, goats and horse. Wheat corn were cultivated in the middle east, rice in Assam, yams in South East Asia and maize in Central America. In due course of time men developed organized life in settlement based on agriculture with the help of water, forest and proper use of land for different type of crops. As the population kept on multiplying, man was forced to find various other ways and means to regulate the use of natural resources which the nature had created on this earth planet. This was the turning point in the history of human being which led to development of civilization near great rivers like in Egypt, Mesopotamia, China and India.

3

ROLE PLAYED BY GOD TO REGULATE THE LIFE OF HUMAN BEING

Sooner than later the human being realized the importance of nature which provided everything on this earth for his consumption, survival, enjoyment and happiness subject to the condition that it remains under control. The wise men among the ancient population understood the role of super power (God) which was in control of the five gross elements i.e. ether (atmosphere), wind, light, water and earth without which human being could not exist. It is here that mankind realized the importance of nature and its creation including fertility both among male and female. This also finally led to worship of male

and female god on this earth planet. Ancient civilizations also believed in one creator God but worshipped him under different names. The creator God of Aryan was Dyaus Pitar (divine father) which in Greek is Zeus pater, in Latin Jupiter or Deus, in German Tiu or Ziu. The 'Divine Father' was also known as 'The Heavenly one' who in Sanskrit was Varuna and Greek Uranos. He is also known as 'The Friend' who in Sanskrit was 'Mitra' and in Persian 'Mithra'. Fire became the messenger from man to God which is called 'Agni' in Sanskrit. Ignis in Latin and Hagnos in Greek. Therefore, fire was held a sacred among all civilizations in the world. Since civilizations were progressing in various parts of the universe, it is left to the historians to establish as to which civilization was the oldest.

It is to be noted that idols of Lord Shiva and Parvati were also found during discovery of Indus (Harrappan) civilization in the year 1826-1873 as per report published by Archaeological Survey of India in 1875. On May 27, 2006 quake originating under sea jolted the Java Island and reduced to rubble many Indonesia's modern building in the city of Jaggarta which included Prambanan temple also. According to Jag Jakarta Archaeological conservation Agency, wreckage of Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma were found at temple sites. Fortunately the famous Buddhist temple of Borobundur survived the earth quake intact. Both Prambanan and Borobundur in Indonesia attract millions of tourist. Prambanan complex has high idol of Shiva and statue of Durga, Agatha and Ganesh in different chambers. On every full moon day 'Ram Lila' ballet is performed at the temple complex. Even though Indonesia is a Muslim state today, Hindu heritage continues to be existing in South East Asia.

Now with the new evidence coming out like Setubandha (man made bridge) at Rameshwaram being more than 7000 years old, the Ramayana and Mahabharata period can be estimated to be existing prior to Indus valley civilization. In Part-II of this book: beside information about Indus valley civilization, early settlement of Aryan, sacred books of Aryan, religion of Rig Vedic Aryan followed by Vedic

civilization which also includes life of the human being regulated by Brahma (creator of universe), Vishnu (preserver) and Shiva (destroyer of the universe) with main emphasis on worship of nature in the form of Indra, Agni(fire), Surya, Varuna and Yama which continues to be part of Hindu religion and rituals even today.

4

AN INTRODUCTION TO ETERNAL RELIGION- SANATAN DHARMA

According to Scriptures of Sanatan Dharma, the spiritual knowledge came directly from the supreme God (Param Brahman) which was initially received by the ancient saints by hearing (Shruti) and subsequently memorized (Smriti) and the spiritual knowledge was transmitted to disciples in succession and later on was documented by the Saints with the blessings of supreme Lord only. The documented text of the scriptures were estimated to have been memorized at least 20-25 thousand years ago starting with the composition of Vedas and Vaidika Dharma which also means perfect knowledge. No such comprehensive and orderly view of spiritual knowledge could be found elsewhere. It has been described as Dharma (duty) which means capacity to render service which holds together the living human being in this universe. Sanatana-dharma is also the eternal religion of the living being to render service to the Supreme Lord.

Sanatan Dharma means the eternal faith in the supreme God or soul (*Parmatma/Parmeshwar*) which has the power for creation, preservation and destruction of the material universe. God exists to regulate the behavior of human being on the one hand and on the other hand protect those living being who follow the right path and destroy the evil forces who come in the way of those who follow the path of truth and righteousness. The existence of 'Sanatana Dharma' could not have come into play before the development of human being

and its struggle to learn the art of living and survival in this material world. According to historians, it was only after Paleolithic age, Neolithic age, Miocene age- Polytheism age that supreme Lord came into existence millions of year ago when human being started believing in multiple deities.

Earlier the author of this project had completed general study of all religions of the world presently practiced by human being and first draft of the book titled 'God Faith Religion' was made available on the website: www.chidehradun.com.in for the comments of readers. While the present day religions came into existence, attributed to various messengers or prophets of God, only say 2500 years ago or thereafter, the history of 'Sanatana Dharma' eternal religion of this universe goes back millions of year ago and is attributed to the creator of the universe, also called 'Brahmand' in Sanskrit language, by the supreme Lord called 'Brahmana' Himself in the Indian subcontinent. Initially 'Brahmana' vested power to oversee the creation, preservation and destruction of this universe to demigod Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Subsequently with the growth in human population many other demigods and deities attained divine power through transcendental and spiritual path shown by the supreme soul to ensure orderly behavior of human being in this planet earth.

It is also necessary here to give brief historical background of India i.e. Bharat today, to understand the origin of Vedic civilization which goes back to millions of year ago long before the period of Mahabharata which existed about 5000 years ago also known as Dvapara-yuga and the period of Ramayana that existed around 7000 years ago also known as Treta-yuga. Physical knowledge of India's history does not go back to more than ten thousand years which has been summarized by the well known mythologist Devdutt Pattanaik after the row that was triggered following the G20 summit to renaming India as Bharat.

According to Devdutt Pattanaik, it was first the Persians and then the Geeks' inability to say the word eventually led to the word

India. He also said that the term ‘Bharat’ does not refer to entire country but a specific region in Northern part of the country. Pattanaik said that unlike what is believed, the name India was not given by foreigners but was a deviation of the Sanskrit word Sindhu, meaning river. Further clarifications given by Pattanaik, the renowned mythologist, during interview with India Today are as follows.

“In the Middle Eastern mythologies, there is an obsession with one God, one life, one prophet- singularity. Indian mythology loves diversity-plurality. So many gods, many ideas, many saints, many ways of thinking-we have always been a land that has loved diversity and dynamism. So, there is a Middle Eastern concept of singularity and there is an Indian concept of plurality. So, when somebody says we should have only one name, one idea, one thought, one language, they are really drifting towards the Middle East which is the mother of the Western civilization.

“Explaining the origin of the word India, the mythologist said that the word India comes from the Sanskrit word Sindhu meaning river that passes across present day India and Pakistan. From Sindhu comes the name Sindhadesha. But the Arabs could not pronounce ‘sa’ so they started using ‘ha’. So Saptasindhu (seven rivers which originate from the Central Himalayan region of India today) became Haptahindhu, and Sind became Hind. About 2,500 years ago, we had the Persian King referring to India as Hind. The Greeks came to India and they could not pronounce ‘ha’, so they were saying ‘aa’ or ‘ee’. So Indu, Indus and Indica became common word in those days. Greek historian Megasthenes also wrote Indica referring to Sindhu. India could have potentially been a reference to Lord Rama’s grandmother Indu or Indumati. It is really from a Sanskrit word from the Rig Veda.

“Similarly, the term ‘Bharat’ also comes from the Rig Veda. It is a reference to Bharata, king of Bharat clan, who won the battle of ten kings. Now Rig Veda happens only in the Kurukshetra region. You have the Mahabharata epic, again talking about Bharata clan and it happens only in northern part of India. Kuru- Panchala

region is what today roughly Delhi, Mathura, Up-to Prayagraj. Bharatvarsh refers to a certain part of northern India, something like Aryadesh, the land of Aryans. Bharat is a victorious king of the Aryans.” The readers will find in the following chapter about Shrimad Bhagavad Gita that Lord Krishna has also addressed Arjuna as mighty successor of Bharata clan.

Part-II

ANCIENT AND VEDIC CIVILIZATION OF INDIA

1

DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA’S CIVILIZATION

It has been established by studies carried out by the Archaeologist of the government of India and the state government departments that highly advanced urbanized civilization in the Indus valley of the Indian sub-continent existed during 2800 BCE and 1900 BCE with all the amenities including water supply and drainage facilities and brick-laid symmetric structure which are essential part of city life even today. Sufficient proof of well developed art, architecture, food preparation, trade and places of worship existed during the period of Indus valley civilization. Now the Archaeologist have discovered the well organized human settlement similar to Indus valley civilization at various places both in north and south India.

Potsherds with inscriptions similar to Indus Valley scripts have been discovered in Uthirakosamangal by Ramanathapuram Archaeological Research Foundation in Tamil Nadu state. Earlier Tamil Nadu state Archaeology Department had found microlithic tools and potsherds in a village situated on the Keelakarai-Madurai road near

Theriruvelli. Similarly, findings of the Delhi University Department of Anthropology brought out that settlements dating back to 6th-7th century BCE based on terracotta structures, charred grains were found in village Umra of Sultanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. As per Director Archaeological Survey of India, this could be an epitome of new findings in the field of archaeology and ancient history and the settlement could have been part of the ancient route towards Allahabad.

2

INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION (Harappan Culture)

The beginning of the 20th century exploded the age-old myth that the history of India started with the coming of Aryans. Aryan never came from outside but Central Himalayan Region was the original home of Vedic (Aryan) civilization which has been covered in following Serial-6 of this part of the book. The chance discovery of Indus valley civilization proved beyond doubt that the highly developed urban civilization flourished in India after Vedic civilization. The first attention to Harappan archaeological site was paid by Masson in 1826 but Burnes reiterated the possibility of important archaeological finds in 1831. But the credit of preliminary excavations goes to General Cunningham, who visited Harappa in 1853, 1856 and 1872-1873 and published a report as early as 1875 in the Archaeological Survey of India, mentioning the famous pictographic seal of the 'unicorn' in particular.

In 1922, a Buddhist monk brought to the notice of Rakhaldas Bannerjee, the then superintendent of the Western circle of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), a big mound in the Larkana district of Sind (now in Pakistan) which in his opinion contained some relics connected with Buddhism. The excavations brought to light a big city buried under the mound. The site with highly planned city discovered was known as Mohenjo-Daro (mound of dead in Sindhi

language). ASI discovered similar ruins of another city at Harappa on the bank of the Ravi in the Montgomery district of west Punjab (now in Pakistan). A third city was discovered at Chanhudaro about 130 kilometer south of Mohenjo-Daro. Sometime later, similar ruined city was discovered at Lothal at the head of the Gulf of Cambay in Gujarat, and at Kalibangan in the Ganganagar district of Rajasthan. Since then as many as 250 different sites have been excavated in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and the influence of Harappa culture may have been approximately 1600 kilometer from west to east and 1100 kilometer from north to south.

The objects discovered from Kalibangan were determined to date back 3250 BC to 3202 BC. Another wonderful discovery of Mohenjo-Daro was the existence of big assembly hall with twenty massive pillars of kiln burnt bricks arranged in four rows of five each. Important feature of the architecture of the Indus valley was their concern for making their building solid and durable rather than beautiful. The discovery of large number of statues, figurines, of men and women in stone, metal and terracotta including that of mother goddess and Pashupati Mahadev (Lord Shiva) proved that Mohenjo-Daro sculptor was adept in this art and could fashion these figures both realistically and stylistically. Sculptor included in stone metal terracotta beside pottery, painting, seals with religious beliefs, trade contacts and commercial relations. Sociologists differ with regard to the racial origin of the Indus valley people. Some of them affirm that the great civilization were of Indian origin and belonged to the Dravidian race on the basis of figurines found in the ruins of Mohenjo-Daro. Abrupt end of Indus valley civilization has been attributed to invaders who may have mercilessly slaughtered entire population or destruction due to other causes like earthquake or due to the flooding of rivers is not ruled out.

Historian from the Central Himalayan region namely Shri Bhajan Singh 'Singh' had proved it beyond doubt that the Central Himalayan region is the original place of Vedic (Aryan) civilization in his book titled 'Aryon Ka Adi Niwas Madhya Himalaya' in Hindi language published in 1986. This was supported and with more evidence by Shri S. B. S. Panwar, another renowned historian, in his research paper titled 'The Cradle of Rig Vedic Aryan' which has been included at the end of this part of the book. According to both historian, the Vedic civilization is at least 10 to 25 thousand years old which existed in the Central Himalayan region now known as Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand state. Further the archaeologists have also come to the conclusion that the Aryan were not invaders from Central Asia and the Vedic civilization goes back to beyond 7000-8000 BC .

According to M. Acharya, Archaeologist in-charge of excavating and analyzing various sites in North West India, most of the 1400 sites of Harappan civilization which have been discovered in the Indian sub-continent so far, are on the banks of rivers which find mention in Vedas. The extent of civilization is estimated to be about 2.5 million square km in a time span from 7000BC to1400BC. So geographically also looking at the same area where the Rig Vedic civilization flourished and since so many similarities are being found between motifs of the Harappan and the life of the Aryan as described in the Rig Veda, it is hard to believe that Aryan came as invaders, assimilated the entire culture of Harappans and completely forgot about their homeland.

Historians, scientist and archaeologist have more or less agreed to Rig Vedic civilization and later Indus valley civilization was at least 8000-10000 years old as against 5500 year old , taking roots well before the Egypton (7000BC - 3000BC) and Masopotania (6170BC-3100BC). The excavation sites have revealed preservation of all cultural levels right from Indus valley civilization phase(9000-

8000BC) to early Harappan(8000-7000BC) and mature Harappan times while the earlier phases were represented by pastoral and early village farming communities, the mature Harappan settlement were highly urbanized with big cities.

Let us accept that Vedic texts are not gazetteers of their times. Geographical location and chronology are modern day questions that we are trying to relate to remote past. Sacred literary text can provide some clues but they cannot give connected account of ancient history. Vedic text were memorized and passed on from generation to generation through word of mouth. The existence of 'Ram Setu' between India and Sri Lanka has been there for over 7000 years during Lord Rama's time (Treta Yuga) as quoted in Part-IV of this book about historical record of Lord Rama's life and Ramayana. My own conclusion are that Vedic civilization started with 'Sat Yuga' even though time structure given in Hindu Vedic literature is at variance after the date of birth of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna has been established as quoted in Part-IV of this book.

3

THE ARYAN AND THEIR SACRED BOOKS

Vedas are the oldest literature of the Aryan civilization which provide us the source of information to understand the origin and development of Hindu culture since the creation of the universe by Brahma himself. The Sanskrit word Veda comes from the root 'Vid' meaning knowledge and is applicable to four Vedas (Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva Veda) and containing God given sacred wisdom of the mankind in Rig Vedas. Apart from Vedas the Brahmins, the Upanishads, the Puranas and the epic are other religious books of the Vedic age and also known as Vedic literature which was passed on from one generation to another for thousands of years without any change in syllable or accent. Contents of the four Vedas and other

sacred books are briefly as follows. For more information about the scriptures of Hindu religion, readers are advised to read the following Chapter Srl-5 of this part of the book and also Part-IV of this book.

Rig Veda: The Rig Veda is the oldest and consists of 1028 hymns most of which are invocation addressed to various gods and goddesses to seek their blessings. Rig Veda is divided into ten mandalas (chapters) and each mandala is attached to a sage (rishi) to whom the hymns were revealed. It also contains the important ‘Gayatri Mantra’ which is recited by Hindus even today.

Sama Veda: The Sama Veda contains hymns to be sung in a musical sequence by a special class of priests called ‘udgotris’. It tells great deal about ancient Vedic age.

The Yajur Veda: The Yajur Veda contains hymns to be recited at the time ‘yajnas’ or sacrifices. It lays down rituals and methods to be adopted while performing ‘yajnas’.

The Atharva Veda :The Veda contains ‘mantras’ on three topics- Gyan(knowledge), Karma(deeds) and Upasana (invocation). Some of the ‘mantras’ are meant to ward off evil spirits responsible for disease and suffering. It also contains hymns for success in various fields, for happiness and long life. Certain hymns in Atharva veda are also magical in nature to ward off evil spirits.

Brahmanas: The Brahmanas are the explanatory notes on the Vedic ‘mantras’ so that priests and common people could understand the knowledge in the Vedas. Vedic knowledge was subsequently conveyed through legend and stories.

Aranyakas: The Aranyakas or ‘forest books’ are meant for those who renounce worldly life and retire to forest and hills for penance or

meditation. These books also deal with mysticism, philosophy of life and creation.

The Upanishads: Upanishads are the concluding parts of Brahmanas and are collectively called Vedanta. The Upanishads enlightens mankind about prakriti (matter), atman(soul), and brahma (God). They are opposed to ritualism and sacrifices. The Upanishads explain the doctrine of Karma (action), Mukti (salvation), Maya(illusion) and the transmigration of the soul. Upanishads have been translated in almost major languages of the world.

The Vedangas: The Vedangas literally means limbs of the Vedas. The Vedas were written by scholars of later Vedic period to deal with the pronunciation of words, terms, meter, grammar, astronomy and rituals.

The Up Vedas: Up Vedas deal with other non-religious subject like medicine, art of warfare and Arts. Ayurveda deals with science of medicine, ‘Dhanur Veda’ with the art of warfare, Gandharva Veda with art of music and Shilpa Veda with art of Architecture.

The Sutras: The Sutras explain the customs and rituals of later Vedic period. The Surauta Sutra explains the rituals relating to some Yajana. The Griha Sutra explains the duties and responsibilities of family man from birth to death. ‘Dharma Sutra’ explains the rights and duties towards society.

The Puranas: The word Purana means old. There are 18 Puranas in all of which Bhagawat Puran and Vishnu Puran are very important. Puranas are full of facts and fiction and they deal with creation, genealogies of gods patriarchs, historical and mythological events of ancient times,

The Manu Smriti: The ‘Manu Smriti’ along with other religious books like ‘Vishnu Smriti’ and ‘Narada Smriti’ give us information

regarding the code of law, legal procedure and rights and duties of the four Varnas (castes). It also deals with man's life divided into ashrams (stages) i.e. brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha and sanyasa.

The Epics: Ramayana and Mahabharata are two most remembered sacred epic of the later Vedic period. Mahabharata is the longest poem in the world containing 1,00,000 Shlokas(verses) compiled in 19 volumes. It also contains Bhagavad-Gita (the holy book of Hindus), a discourse of Lord Krishna given to Arjuna consisting of 18 Chapters symbolizing the 18 days of Mahabharata war.

In a book titled 'Why I am A Hindu' by Shashi Tharoor, the author has given out his valuable knowledge about sacred books and Hinduism which is quoted as follows.

“ As I have asserted, Hinduism has not one sacred book, but several, both complementary and contradictory to each other. The Hindu scriptures are commonly divided into Srutis, Smritis, Itihasas, Puranas, Agamas and Darshanas. The Srutis are that which has been heard or revealed. The four Vedas – Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda – are Sruti, having been revealed to, or heard by, the rishis, codified by the sage Veda Vyasa and passed down through generations of disciples. But they are not revealed texts in the Christian and Muslim senses of the term; the rishi is a Mantra-Drashta, a seer mantra or thought; the thought is not his own, but he 'hears' or 'sees' it. It is interesting that the Sanskrit word for philosophy is Darshana, literally 'seeing': the perception of the seer is as important in Hinduism as his intellectual enquiry. In this, too, Hindu philosophy differs considerably from its Western counterparts.

“In fact the Rig Veda is estimated to have taken perhaps half a millennium to attain its corpus of 10,552 mantras in verse, and in the course of these five centuries at least fifty poet-rishis had a hand in its composition. Their sacredness comes from their divine inspiration and

sustained quality, not from having been handed down fully composed by God like the Quran. The story is no different with the later Vedas; the four Vedas are believed to have been created between 1500 BCE and 500 BCE, a period of several thousand years. In that period we see enormous evolution from the nomadic faith of the Rig Veda, in which animal sacrifices, including those of cattle, were offered to the Gods and the healthy skepticism in some of its verses, to the evidence in the later Vedas of adjustment to new social realities, such as the Yajur Veda's references to new gods, clearly taken into Hinduism from prevailing local faiths – including Pashupati, Lord of the Beasts, and Aushadi, Lord of Medicinal herbs.

“Similarly the 108 Upanishads, which distil the essence of the Vedic philosophy, are also Sruti. They were also written over centuries. It is believed that the first eight go back to the period between the eighth century BCE to the fourth century BCE, congruent (similar) with the Age of the Buddha. The next three Upanishads are post-Buddhist and date from 300 BCE to 200 CE, whereas the remaining 97 Upanishads belong to the Puranic period – from the second century CE to the tenth century CE. The chronological gap between the earliest verses of the Rig Veda and the bulk of the Upanishads was greater than the time that separates us today from the life of Jesus Christ. An entire Upanishad (the Mandukya Upanishad) is devoted to the primal(original) sound, Om. In the reckoning of many Hindus, the Upanishads, or subsidiary Vedas, include Ayurveda, the science of wellness, Dhanurveda, the science of weapons and the rules of warfare, Gandharva Veda, the science of the performing arts (including the classic text on music, dance and theatre, the Naty Shastra and the Arthashastra, the treatise on statecraft that in many respects anticipated Machiavelli's 'The Prince' by nearly two millennia. The Vedangas, the explanatory 'limbs' of the Vedas, deal with such matters as grammar, phonetics, etymology, the art of poetry, the science of rituals and in the

famous Jyotisha Vedanga- the subjects of astronomy and astrology. All these again are the product of centuries of writing and reflection.

“The Smritis are that which is remembered; they are composed by human beings without any specific divine inspiration and passed on to guide ordinary people in the conduct of their lives and the performance of their spiritual and worldly duties. The eighteen Smritis, written down largely over the five centuries between 300 BCE and 200 CE, are often referred to as the Dharmashastras, since they explicate how Dharm a must be observed, and these are seen as practices that must change with time and place. The Smritis describe the daily life of individuals, prescribing rituals and rules which vary according to each Varna or social class and are collectively known as Varna – Ashrama – Dharma. The Smritis also lay down the rules of governance, known as Raj Dharma, and adumbrate (to represent) the earliest ideas of what may be considered a Hindu constitutional order, headed by a king.

“Since the Smritis are purely man – made and mutable, Hinduism does not ever say that laws laid down a millennium ago must be followed to the letter today. The foundational laws of Yajnavalkya and the Code of Manu, often cited as the source of ‘Hindu law’ are Smriti; no Hindu seriously argues that they must be observed to the letter today.

“The Itihasas, the epics, respond to the human need for instruction through story: the profound philosophical enquiries of the Srutis and the Smritis are more easily digested by the common people in the form of parables (story to teach moral lessons) and epic narratives which in turn easily lend themselves to theatrical form, dance and music, all the better to communicate their message to the masses. Itihasas literally means ‘the way it was’ and many take the epics literally, though they have been embroidered with mystical and fantastic elements, and it is quite probable that divinity was ascribed to

their principal personages only in later retellings. Their principal purpose remains to impart the values of the Dharmashastras in story form. The Ramayana tells the story of a kingly figure, Rama, who upholds both his personal Dharma and his raja Dharma: in the earliest versions he was not portrayed as a god, but as an ideal man devoted to upholding truth. Indeed there is impressive evidence for the historicity of Rama in Valmiki's text, which is replete with astonishingly accurate geographical, botanical and zoological details about his journey from Ayodhya to Lanka and back. He makes enormous sacrifices in his personal life, including giving up his beloved wife, in order to fulfill his Dharma. The Mahabharata was told and retold, with countless interpolations and additions, till about 400_{CE}; it incorporates the classic poem, the Bhagavad Gita, the song of the Lord, which distils the essence of the Upanishads and to many Hindus is the core religious text of their faith.

“The two greatest Hindu epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, tell stirring stories accompanied by digressive meditations on values, morals and principles. They are polycentric and fundamental texts about such key issues in society as what constitutes ethical conduct; how a just society is made and sustained; and the duties and obligations of kings, counsellors, warriors, women and sages. They deal with great moral dilemmas and issues of right conduct, justice and fidelity, violence and redemption; they give voice to a range of actors and concerns; they provide models for social and political action; and because they are told and retold as stories, they have embedded themselves in the popular consciousness of Hindus. The Ramayana, the epic tale of an exiled prince's conquest of the demon kingdom where his wife is held hostage, is a stirring saga, intimately familiar to all Indians and most Southeast Asians. Lord Rama's ultimate triumph and his return to rule his own kingdom as a just and benevolent king is the archetypal (original) story of the victory of good over evil; yet in many of its episodes, including what becomes of his queen, there are complex

moral dilemmas unveiled that do not lend themselves to simplistic interpretations.

“The Mahabharata deals much more with Adharma: it is a tale of the real world, one whose heroes have feet of clay, whose stories have ambiguous ends, whose events range from great feats of honor and valor to dubious compromises, broken promises, dishonorable battles, expedient lies, dispensable morality. It asks profound questions about the nature of Dharma: Yudhishtira says ‘dharma is subtle’ and each episode in the epic appears to be a case study of what this means – is dharma derived from the shastras, from precedents, from Nyay (Justice), from Niti (Policy)? Is it determined by a caste or gender? The Mahabharata offers much ground for reflection on weighty ethical and moral dilemmas.

“While the Ramayana (composed from around the 200 BCE to perhaps 200CE) and the Mahabharata (said to be composed between about 400 BCE and 400CE) after some eight centuries of retelling and interpolations are the two best –known to practically every Indian, the Itihasas also include the Yogavasishta, stories and fables imparted by the sage Vasishtha to Lord Rama, and the Harivamsha, which tells stories of creation and origin of Lord Krishna. When the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were retold in the vernacular languages, they acquired immense popularity and impact. The Kamban Ramayana in Tamil in the twelfth century CE, and Tulsidas’s Ramcharitmanas in Awadhi in the sixteenth century, exalted Rama to his present place in the Hindu pantheon (temple dedicated to all gods).”

RELIGION OF RIGVEDIC PERIOD

Religion of mankind during Vedic period was based on nature worship. The forces of nature were vested with divine powers and worshipped as male and female gods such as:

Indra: was the god of strength for most in battle, always ready to destroy demon and dragons. He was god of rain and thunder.

Agni: The god of fire was essential requisite of the yajnas. Marriages and other rituals or ceremonies were performed in the presence of fire, as Agni (fire) was considered of the purest of the five elements i.e. earth, water, fire, air and ether of which the universe was created.

Surya or Savitri: A solar deity to whom the famous 'Gayatri Mantra' is dedicated.

Varun: Personified water and was supposed to sustain plant and animal life.

Yama: The god of death occupied place of dignity in heaven.

Marut : Personified storm.

Aditi and Ushas: are some of the female deities which are mentioned in Rig Veda.

The people of Rig Vedic period believed in the existence of one supreme power as the creator of the entire universe. So Yajanas (yagya or sacrifices) occupied an important place in the religion of the early Vedic period. Things like grain, milk, ghee and even soma (liquor) were poured in the sacred fire of the Yajanas as offering to their gods. In return worshippers get blessings of gods so that they remain protected from famine and diseases.

5

SCRIPTURES OF SANATANA DHARMA

Details of scriptures of Sanatan Dharma briefly given in Chapter serial-3 above are further elaborated and expanded in the following paragraphs for the benefit of readers.

Vedas

The oldest and most important scriptures of Sanatan Dharma are the Vedas, revealed to ancient Saints and sages through transcendental experiences which have been documented in four parts as follows.

1. Rig-Veda: The Rig Veda Samhita is the oldest scripture which contain hymn, embody greatest truth of existence and its priest is called Hotri. The Rig-Veda contains 10,552 verses divided into 64 chapters. Besides it has got twenty five branches written by several Saints. The Rig-Veda contains the most sacred hymn ‘Gayatri Mantra’ chanted by the followers of Sanatan Dharma.

2. Yajur-Veda: The name is derived from the root word ‘Yaj’ meaning worship or ‘Yajana’ i.e. sacrifices. Yajur-Veda primarily deals with the rituals to be followed for performing different Yajnas. About half of the Yajur-Veda are composed of verses taken from the Rig-Veda. They are arranged according to their importance in various rituals. The Yajur-Veda contains 1875 verses . Beside that it has 108 branches.

3. Sama- Veda: Sama-Veda is meant to bring peace to the mind and sung by the Udgatri. Many of the seven notes (Sapta Swaras) are fundamental to Indian classical music. The listening of the musical chants give one a sense of universality and mingling with the divine power and ensure the grace of all Devas (demigods). Sama-Veda contains approximately 2000 verses. Beside that it has got 1000 branches.

4.Atharva-Veda: This Veda is named after a sage called Atharvan who discovered the hymns which are chanted to ward off evil powers or sufferings of human beings.

Brahmanas

Brahmanas are the explanations of Mantras or rituals which provide the guidance to perform rituals on various ceremonies like birth, naming, schooling, marriage and death generally applicable during the period of family life or Grihastha Ashram. There are three Rig-Vedic, three Yajur- Vedic, nine Sama-Vedic and one Atharva-Vedic Brahmanas.

Aranyakas

Aranyakas contain rituals to be performed in forest after a man has finished all his worldly duties and he proceeds to the forest to spend rest of his life in solitude and meditation also known as Vanaprastha Ashram. There are two Rig-Vedic, two Yajur-Vedic Aranyakas only but no Aranyakas of Sama and Atharva Vedas.

Upanishads

Upanishads are the essence of Vedic knowledge which are also called Vedantas meaning the concluding portion of Vedas as well as the ultimate conclusion of Vedic wisdom. The collection of teachings generated by the ascetics (strict hermit) who meditated on the mysteries of human existence, came to be known as Upanishads, which literally means 'sitting close to the teacher' thereby indicating that the knowledge it imparts is esoteric (confidential). Many Upanishads existed for ages but large number have been lost and now only 108 are available which are either in prose or in verse. There are ten Rig-Vedic Upanishads, 18 Sukla Yajur-Vedic Upanishads, 32 Krishna Yajur-Vedic Upanishads, 16 Sama-Vedic Upanishads and 32 Atharva-Vedic Upanishads. Beside 108 Upanishads, there are Upa-Upanishads also.

Vedangas

The Vedangas and Upa-Vedas are collection of texts that augment the application of Vedas as a comprehensive system of sacred

living for human being. There are six Vedangas which are described as follows.

1. Siksha (The nose of the Vedas): Siksha means Vedic phonetics and lays down the rules of phonetics-sounds of syllables of pronunciation-euphony. It lays down the parameters of Vedic words. Phonetics are very important in Vedic language because a slight change in sound may lead to change in the meaning of a mantra and consequently have undesirable effects on the sacrifice (Yajana). Siksha explains how the sound of each syllable should be produced , how high or low should be its pitch and for how much duration the *mantra* last.

2. Nirukta (The ears of the Vedas): Nirukta is a Vedic dictionary which may be regarded as a Vedic equivalent of etymology i.e. the study of words. Nirukta explains the origin of each Sanskrit word in the Vedas. In Sanskrit, names or words are not assigned ad-hoc but there is a systematic way of forming words. Every word has a deep meaning and may sometimes be formed by the combination of two or more nouns. All words are derived from the basic roots or Dhatus. As Nirukta breaks each word into its component roots and analyses its meaning, so it is likened to the ear, which distinguishes speech by breaking words into its component phonemes. It is also regarded as the worlds first encyclopedia.

3. Vyakarana (The mouth of the Vedas): Vyakarana or grammar is very important for any language. There are many books on Sanskrit grammar, but the most popular and extensively used is the Vyakarana of Sage Paanini. Paanini grammar is in the form of aphorisms (Sutras).

4. Chanda Saastra (The feet of the Vedas): Chandra Saastra deals with metric composition. Any verse has to have a specified 'meter' and a number of letters in it, for a good fit. Chanda Saastra lays down the rules for this. It defines the boundaries of metrical composition into meter, rhyme etc.

5. Kalpa Saastra (The arms of the Vedas): Kalpa Saastra is a collection of books of Shauwta Sutra, Dharma Sutra, Pithrumedha Sutra, Sulba Sutra, Gruhya Sutra and Prayashchitham. All customs and

rituals laid down for the followers of Sanatan Dharma have been explained in Kalpa Saastra. The duties of a child, student, householder, king, medicant and which mantra, material, deva, priest etc. to be employed have been laid down in Kalpa Saastra. The Kalpa Saastra details the Vedic rituals to be performed from the time the embryo forms in the womb to birth, sacred thread, marriage leading up the final sacrifice of death i.e. cremation or Antyeshti, meaning the last rite as a sacrifice of the whole body to Agni, the fire god. The Vedic system of Architecture i.e. Vaatsu Shastra is also described in Kalpa. The entire Kalpa Saastra weighs more than 250 Kilograms.

6. Jyothisha includes Ganitham, Kalakriya, Golam, Jatakam, Prasnam and Nimiththam. It is the most popular part of Vedangas. Jyotisha gives rules to calculate the positions of the planets and stars at any time instantly in the past or future. Based on the positions of the planet, the fate of a person can be determined provided the date of birth, time and place is known accurately. Vedic astrology is based on lunar sign system as against solar sign system prevalent in the western world. The premise is that the moon being closer to earth has greater influence on mankind than the distant sun.

Upvedas

There are five Upvedas namely Arthasaastra (for governing by Kings), Dhanur Veda (rules for war and use of weapon), Gandharva Veda (for development of art, music and musical instruments), Ayurveda (for medicine, health and longevity) and Saapadhyaveda which deals with the architecture and Vastu Sasstra.

Puranas

Puranas are compiled to further explain the teaching of Vedas and are intended to address the problems faced by human being with different nature. All human being are not equal as also given in Bhagavad Gita. Some are good who follow truthful life while others may be driven by passion and some other may be living under the veil of ignorance. Puranas can help human being to overcome the problems faced due to ignorance and gradually regain their original nature to live

happily thereafter. In addition there are 18 Mahapuranas and 18 Up puranas.

Darsanas

Darsana means vision of Vedanta philosophy which have been recorded by various sages philosophers for the benefit of human being or devotees with regard to existence of God and creation of the universe. The six system of philosophy known are Nyaya Darshana by Sage Gautam, Vaisesika Darshana by Maharishi Kanada, Sankhya Darshana by Sage Kapila, Yoga Darshana by Maharishi Patanjali, Purva Meemamsa Darsana by Sage Jaimani and Uththara Meemamsa Darsana by Maharishi Ved Vyasa.

Smritis

Smritis are the revealed knowledge given by divine incarnations or prophets which were subsequently passed on by saints and sages and recorded in the Vedas . Also revealed knowledge attained by hearing are known as Srutis which have been covered in the above quoted paragraphs. There are 18 important Smritis namely Usana, Yanjavalkya, Vishnu, Manu, Angeerasa, Yama, Atri, Samvarththa, Bruhatparasara, Bruhaspati, Daksha, Saataatapa, Likhita, Vyasa, Parasara, Sanka, Gautama and Vasishta Smriti.

The origin of Sanatan Dharma begins with the revealed truth by supreme power, the God Himself, on the commencement of Satya Yuga long before the Ramayana and Mahabharata period. Ramayana and Mahabharata are the historical record of the role played by Lord Rama during Treta Yuga about 7000 years ago and role played by Lord Krishna during Dwapar Yuga about 5000 years ago. Both having been accepted as incarnation of God by the followers of Sanatana Dharma who came to this earth planet for the destruction of evil forces to save the mankind and the universe in the interest of humanity.

6

EPIC AGE OF RAMAYANA AND MAHABHARATA

After the Vedic age, the epic age of Ramayana and Mahabharata is the biggest source of Hindu civilization which tells us the life and time of the people living during Treta-Yuga and Dwapara-Yuga. Research scholars with the help of historians have established that Lord Rama was born on January 10, 5114 BCE and Lord Krishna was born on July 31, 3228 BCE. For full historical facts based on astrology see Part-IV of this book. It is now clear that history of Ramayana goes back to 7000 years and that of Mahabharata about 5000 years when the people in India had developed well organized system of dynastic rule under various kingdoms. Attributed to sage Valmiki, the Ramayana tells us the story of Ram, the prince of Ayodhya who at the behest of his father Dasaratha chooses a life to be spent in forest for fourteen long years with wife Sita and brother Lakshman, undergo sufferings and ultimately kills demon king Ravana before his return to Ayodhya and then crowned king. Ramayana is a treatise on social morality. The Ramayana puts forward ideal characters bringing into focus sound principles of social ethics and orderly family life.

The Ramayana of Balmiki has been translated by P.Lal without any variation. Balmiki is honoured in the Indian tradition as Adi-kavi or the first poet so in a sense an ideal poet. Ramayana is covered in seven parts or seven books which are known as Bala-kanda, Kishkinda-kanda, Sundar-kanda, Yudhha-kanda and Uttar-kanda. There is no dispute about 'Ramcharitmanas' by Tulsi Das (1532-1633) or (1554-1680) which is in Hindi language. It is based on Bhakti (devotion) to Lord Rama as a personnel God and its clear stress is on sacrifice of self and selfless service to others as exemplified by Lord Rama and other members of the family.

According to Ramayana by C. Rajagopalachari published by Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan- the traditional orthodox view is that Valmiki wrote the Ramayana during the life time of Ram Chandra. It could not be so. The Ramayana as epic, long before written by Valmiki, had been handed down from generation to generation. In Valmiki's Ramayana, Ram is portrayed as a great and unique man, not as an incarnation of God but great prince endowed with divine qualities. Centuries later Kamban and Tulsi Das sang the Ramayana and by that time it had come to be accepted that Shri Rama was Avtar (incarnation) of Vishnu. The story begins with the visit of the saint Narada to Valmiki's ashram. After the usual welcome Valmiki asked him, 'O all-knowing Narada, tell me who among the heroes of the world is the highest in virtue and wisdom. Narada answered: Rama is the Hero that you ask for. Born in Solar dynasty, he at present ruling Ayodhya.' Sage Narada briefly narrated the story of Rama to Valmiki who then composed Ramayana. Thus the holy Ramayana was born.

The tale of Lord and his consort born as mortals, experiencing human sorrow and establishing Dharma on earth, was sung by Valmiki and disciples in words of matchless beauty. Ramayana teaches us that one should keep one's promises as Dashratha did. A son should obey the orders of his father in letter and spirit as 'Rama' did. Lakshman and Bharat present the picture of ideal brothers. Sita represented the ideal of a faithful wife. The friendship between 'Rama' and Sugriva was also an ideal friendship. Hanuman represented the character of an ideal servant and a devotee of Lord Rama who was accepted as incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The popularity of Lord Rama is that of an ideal king based on his qualities of pious conduct and paternal feeling for his subject. The concept of 'Ramayana' continues to be deep rooted guiding principle for the whole Hindu society in India and abroad.

Mahabharata is the second Indian epic in original Sanskrit probably largest ever composed and embodies the essence of Indian cultural heritage. The Mahabharata is the story of a dynastic struggle culminating in a awesome battle between two branches of a single family during ancient India around 3000 BCE the beginning of the age of Misfortune, the Kal Yuga.

The epic Mahabharata tells us the story of the five Pandava princes and their hundred Kaurava cousins and the Mahabharata war between them ending with the victory of Pandavas under the guidance and blessing of Lord Krishna. The historical battle of Mahabharata had taken place at Kurukshetra about 160 kilometer from Delhi in Haryana state today. The importance of Mahabharata is the spiritual sermon given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna to follow the ‘dharma’ when he was reluctant to fight against his own kith and kin. Thereafter, fierce battle took place at Kurukshetra for eighteen days in which Pandavas came out victorious and Kauravas were defeated. The sermon and discourse of Lord Krishna to Arjuna became eternal knowledge for mankind to understand the purpose of life and the duties that need to be performed by every individual human being to attain salvation. Mahabharata was recorded by sage Vyasa and is considered world’s biggest epic containing 120000 or 95586 Sanskrit verses. Bhagavad-Gita which was part of Mahabharata epic was accepted sacred knowledge directly coming from Lord Krishna who was also accepted an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The main ideal underlying in the philosophical discourse of Lord Krishna is that soul is immortal and it never dies. The human body is like a set of clothes which are changed by the soul periodically. Bhagavad –Gita is considered an excellent spiritual philosophy for the mankind and it has been translated into all important languages of the world.

Shri K.M.Munshi in his preface to book ‘Ramayana’ by C. Rajagopalachari explained the goals that were set for Bharatiya Vidya

Bhavan, the institute of Indian culture in Mumbai. He says, “we seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities, we seek harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but with in the frame work of moral order, we seek the creative art of life by the alchemy(process) of which human limitations are progressively transmuted so that man became the instrument of God and is able to see Him in all and all in Him”.

Mahabharata was first summarized by C. Rajagopalachari and the work is on a section of it, the Sita by H.V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and student of philosophy . Mahabharata contains everything from heights and depths of the soul; trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life. According to K.M. Munshi, the Mahabharata is not mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women, and of some who were divine; it is whole literature in itself, containing code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all , it has for its core the Gita, which is as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures.

The author of the two books Mahabharata and Ramayana, Shri C. Rajagopalachari said, “ that the two books helped our great sages to speak to our dear men and women again in their own language, elevating their minds through sorrows borne by Kunti, Kaushalya, Draupadi and Sita. The real need of the hour is to re-communicate between us and sages of our land so that the future may be built on rock and not on sand. Mythology is an integral part of religion. It is as necessary for religion and national culture as the skin and skeleton that preserve a fruit with its juice and its taste. Mythology and holy figures are necessary for any great culture to rest on its stable spiritual foundations as a life giving inspiration and guide. It is the Ramayana

and the Mahabharata that bind our vast numbers together as one people despite caste, space and language that seemingly divide them.”

The anguished intensity of the Indian involvement with the Mahabharata can be seen in the way reference is made to the epic in public life today. The Ramayana is cited generally when ethical ideals are expected. Mahabharata is referred to when compromises are made, shady deals are struck, promises are broken, battle are fought and disasters are lamented.

7

HINDU MYTHOLOGICAL TIME STRUCTURE AND INCARNATION OF GOD

Mahabharata chronicle, the last year of third Yuga i.e. Dwapara- Yuga of the mythological time structure. According to Hindu mythology the life and time of each of the four Yuga has been stated as follows.

- The first Krita-Yuga, 1728000 years long is symbolized by the color white. It has only one caste called Lamsa, only one goal -truth. Its people live for 4000 years.
- The second, Treta Yuga is red. It has goal-knowledge. It lasts 1296000 years. The average individual life span being 3000 years.
- The third, Dwapara- Yuga of Mahabharata. Its color is yellow. It lasts 864000 years. The individual life span being 2000 years.
- The present Kali-yuga is the last before the world is destroyed and gets recreated. It is calculated to have started at midnight on February 17-18, 3102 BC when

Abhimanyu's son Parikshit ascended the throne in Hastinapur after the Kurukshetra carnage. It will last 427000 years. Its color is black and the average life span varies.

Some scholars of geology in a research paper published in 1980 have given their opinion that 'Ramayana' period can not be more than 2800 years old and 'Ramayana' could not have been written before 800BCE. However, research papers included in this book about life and time of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna in Part-IV (Srl.6&7) will prove that Ramayana period was at least 7000 years ago and that of Mahabharata was 5000 years ago. In the light of another research paper by historian S.B.S.Panwar included in the following Chapter-8, the original source of Vedic civilization and time structure of Indian Vedic civilization needs to be reassessed for evaluation and for correct historical record.

8

CENTRAL HIMALAYAN REGION- THE ORIGINAL HOME OF VEDIC(ARYAN) CIVILIZATION

In spite of some historians that Aryan civilization came to India from central Asian countries, the theory stands totally rejected on the basis of translated Vedic literature now available to researchers both in India and abroad. Large number of historian from western countries have already accepted that 'Sanskrit' is the oldest and rich language in the world with so many literary work in the form of Vedas and Upanishads etc. which was orally conveyed from generation to generation and later through written words. Sometime in the year 1786, Sir William Jones, then founder of Asiatic Society of Bengal after studying 'Sanskrit' literature such as matri (mother in English and

mather in Persian) and pitri (father in English and pither in Persian) etc. came to the conclusion that on the basis of original words spoken in Sanskrit, it can be concluded that people speaking similar word may have been living originally in the same region. In India the religion and worship of god and goddesses is practiced with full faith in accordance to rituals laid down in Vedic literature which happens to be all in Sanskrit language. It is for this reason that Brian Durrans and Robert Know in their work titled 'India past into the present' concluded by saying that- throughout the events of the past 10000 years the village has endured as soul of life in the Indian sub-continent. Invaders have come and gone, the empires have risen and fallen but the villages have remained. The continuity is as true for the ancient period as it is for the present day'.

Even though the holy books of Hindus i.e. Ramayana, Mahabharat, Bhagavad-Gita have been translated and are available for study of Indian philosophy and religion, the ancient and vast Vedic literature is not available to the researchers of the day. However, the last two historians of the Central Himalayan region have been able to carry out in- depth study and explain convincingly that the central Himalayan region was the original home of Aryan (Vedic civilization). On this subject, a comprehensive and most authentic book in Hindi titled "Aryon ka Adi- Niwas Madhya Himalaya" by Shri Bhajan Singh 'Singh' was published in 1986 (pp350). In addition a comprehensive research paper by another historian Shri S.B.S.Panwar titled 'Uttarakhand- the cradle of Rig Vedic Aryans'(A histogenesis approach to myth, legend and chronicles). According to Shri Panwar the compilers of Rig Veda, the oldest book of the human race (later the author of Avesta) have described the 'Sapta Sindhu' as the nursery of human race. It is the starting point from which descendants of the original stock migrated to other parts of India and the world.

The Central Himalayan region i.e. modern day state of Uttarakhand (Garhwal and Kumaon region) and Himachal Pradesh had a long history originating from Vedic civilization which only ended after the introduction of British rule sometime after 1800AD. The region has been known as the land of god and goddesses. Beside custom and traditions, the people of this region inherited Sanskrit language of Vedic times which helped Brahmins of Uttarakhand play a very important role to carry forward Hindu culture and Vedic traditions as Pandits, religious teacher and astrologers. In fact large number of religious teachers and astrologers hailing from Uttarakhand has been working as religious teachers and astrologers all across the country in India and abroad for centuries. With the passage of time, access to formal education helped local writers and historians to document all available information in connection with the history of Central Himalayan region from Vedic time to till date.

In this connection, renowned historian Shri Shiv Prasad Dabral had made the greatest contribution through his research, writing and publishing 14 volume of 'Uttarakhand Ka Itihas' in Hindi. Shri Shiv Prasad Dabral had access to all known scriptures of Vedic civilization in Sanskrit language. Regional history may not be relevant now. However, the Central Himalayan region will continue to be relevant to know the origin and roots of Vedic or Hindu civilization for all time to come. Yet another book by local historian titled 'Aryo Ka Adi Niwas Madhya Himalaya' in Hindi by Shri Bhajan Singh 'Singh' was brought out in the year 1986 which proved convincingly that Central Himalayan region was the original place of Vedic civilization. This was followed by a research paper by Shri S.B.S.Panwar in English titled 'Uttarakhand- The Cradle of Rigvedic Aryans (A Histogenesis approach to Myth, Legend and Chronicles). All relevant facts given by Shri S.B.S.Panwar are reproduced in the following paragraphs.

“The compilers of Rig Veda, the oldest book of human race, and later the authors of Avesta, have described the land of ‘Sapta-Sindhu’, as the nursery of human race. It is the starting point from which the descendants of the original stock migrated to other parts of India and the world. There is no allusion (hint) in Rigveda to show that any of the people mentioned therein had migrated from outside. This fact also finds support in Manu Smriti (2.23).

“In Rigveda ‘Sindhu is the term mainly used for a river to which other streams join. The term has its root in the word ‘Sandhi’ which means ‘to join’ or ‘to meet’. The hymn repeated in Atharva Veda also clearly explains that the term ‘Sindhu’ meant a river. The name ‘Sapta- Sindhu’ in Rig Veda itself show that it means seven rivers or the land of seven rivers.

“The central part of the celestial land of Uttarakhand is drained entirely by the seven streams of the sacred Ganga i.e. 1. Vishnu Ganga, 2. The Dhauli Ganga (the Alaknanda comes into being at Vishnu Prayag at the confluence of Vishnu Ganga and Dhauli Ganga). 3. Nandakini which meets Alaknanda at Nand Prayag, 4. Pindar which meets Alaknanda at Karan Prayag 5. Mandakini which rises in the mountain near Kedarnath and meets Alaknanda at Rudra Prayag. 6. Bhagirathi which originates from mountain just above Gangotri and meets Alaknanda at Dev Prayag from where the river is known as Ganga. 7. Nayar is the seventh river which rises in Duda-Toli mountain and joins Ganga at Vyas –Ghat which is described as ‘Sapta-Samudrik Teerth’ in Skand Puran.

“Sindhav, Saidhav and Samudrik are synonymous terms in Sanskrit. ‘Samudrik’ in vedic language means having a collection of water; water flowing etc. The hymns of Rigveda also gives the same meaning for ‘Samudra’. The name ‘Sapta-Samudrik Teerth’ was therefore correctly adopted in the Purans for the place where the

seventh river Nayar joins the main stream of the Ganga. Mahabharat (Adi Parva 170-19, Vayu Puran 47-37-58, Brahmand Puran 18-40 and Padam Puran (Swarga Khand-Chapter 2,5,68) mention the seven streams of the Ganga.

“The Saraswati is one of the seven streams. It has been described in Rigveda to be flowing strong and swift currents through the ravine of the hills breaking both the banks. With her immeasurable velocity, overcoming all obstructions, she makes a thundering sound. (Rig veda 6-61-2, 6-61-8 and 7-36-6). We also find in Rigveda (5-43-11) that the river has its source in high mountain. We have a river Saraswati in Uttarakhand which separates the massed peaks of Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath from the group of peaks to the east. It rises nearly from the crest of Mana pass in the glaciers at 18000 feet above sea level. After a course of 20 miles through the narrow and desolate valley full of the remains of the ancient moraines in the vast accumulation of fragments, it joins Vishnu Ganga at Keshavprayag, just below mana village, situated at an elevation of 10560 feet above sea level. A huge boulder forms a natural bridge (called Bhimseni bridge) over the Saraswati just little over the confluence of Saraswati and Vishnu Ganga. Vishnu Ganga is the first of the ‘Sapta Sindhu’. It has in the same sense been also called the first amongst the rivers.

“In Manaskhand of Skand Puran, in the story of ‘Shambhuka’ the hunter, we find a mention of Saraswati river in Uttarakhand. Shambhuka meets the joyous band of pilgrims singing the praises of Saraswati near ‘Madh-kshetra’ (Madhmaheswar), Kedar-Mandal in Uttarakhand, and such is the virtue of the sacred steam of Saraswati that even the partial ablution in it sends the hunter and his dog to Shiva’s heaven. Saraswati flow in the north-east of Madh-Kshetra. The shrine of Madhmaheswar is situated in the western region of Madh-kshetra, and is 18 miles north-east of Gupta Kashi in

Uttarakhand. The faith that the current of the stream of auspicious and gracious Saraswati continues to flow in the Ganga, retaining its own individuality, was apparently the reason why later in the Purans, the confluence of Ganga and Jamuna at Prayag (Allahabad) became famous as Triveni, meaning thereby that Jamuna meets the two rivers Ganga and Saraswati, which is flowing in the Ganga retaining its individuality in a concealed form. Yajurveda also makes the position of Saraswati quite clear. It says 'Five rivers i.e. Vishnu Ganga, Dhauli Ganga, Nandakini, Pindar and Mandakini flowing on their way speed inward to the Saraswati. Saraswati, the first river of their original home, was so sacred, and dear to the Vedic people, that on migrating to other parts of India, some of them preserved its remembrance by giving the name 'Saraswati' to some river or the other where they settled. We find the name of Saraswati in the Puran and Mahabharat, locating it at different places, such as Kurukshetra, Saurashtra, Nepal, Naimisharan, Mathura, Abu hill, Bikaner in north Rajasthan and south of Narmada etc. At some places the river had been forgotten during the course of time, and people later started believing that the river Saraswati has disappeared in the sands there.

“In ancient Iran the remembrance of the auspicious Saraswati was preserved in the name 'Harahvati' (The Vedic 'S' is represented by the Zend 'H'). Saraswati is the bestower of life, food, water and property to the ancestors of the human race. Great sacrifices used to be performed on her banks. The Rigveda, Brahman texts and the Mahabharat have recognized her position as 'Vak' or 'Vach', the goddess of speech, by whom knowledge was communicated to man. The praises of 'Vak' have been sung in several hymns of Rigveda. 'Vak' is speech personified, the word, the first creation and the representative of 'Spirit'. Vedic language was evolved out of the earliest one spoken by the learned Rishis through discussions at the assemblies 'like man cleansing flour in the cribble'. Taittiriya Brahman and Mahabharat have addressed the Saraswati as 'the mother of

Vedas'. In Atharva Veda, she has been mentioned as 'Vach Viraj'. She has also been called Brahmi, Bharti and Bhagheswari. She is also called ruler of all 'Dhis' which means that glory of God was sung in pious hymns over her banks. The word 'Dhi' in Rigveda denotes hymns containing pious thoughts. It sings the glory of God. It proves that Rigveda was revealed on the banks of Saraswati. The account of Rigveda also supports it (Rigveda 6-61-7). Ved Vyas collected and arranged the Vedas in the famous Vyas Gufa (cave) on the banks of Saraswati, near the village of Mana, the birth place of first Manu, the ancestor of the human race. Western scholars also agree that some of the hymns of Rigveda were composed before the arrival of the Aryans in the plains of India. The study of ancient theological works of Vedic sages known as 'Brahmans' also shows that they were composed in the region of the upper valleys of Ganga and Jamuna in Uttarakhand. Saraswati has also been described in our ancient scriptures as inventors of the letters. Our ancient letters are called 'Brahmi' letters after her name. The Kaushitaki- Brahman text also describes Uttarakhand as the region of Pathya Svasti (Goddess of speech). The land of Badrinath was renowned as a seat of learning and abode of holy men, from the earliest period. The sound of the Vedas is heard here. Men and women used to go to this region to learn speech. The Vedic rishis attained the pinnacle of knowledge and glory and composed most of their hymns on the banks of Saraswati and the seven streams of Ganga.

“Brahmanda- Puran mentions that the seven channels of the river Ganga flow from Meru. Meru is the Sumeru peak in Garhwal region. Padma Puran and Kalki Puran also refer to it. Sri Mad- Bhagat also says that Ganga flowed into Bharat i.e. India from Meru. Moreover from geological observations it has been proved that there was a sea (Tethys) touching the base of the hills near about this place during the miocene age. The ancient Romans also had knowledge of 'Sapta Sindhu'. We find the following lines in Virgil's Aensid (Chapter-IX)- 'Ceus Sepem Surgens Annibus Altus per Tactum Ganges'. Means –they

move silently, majestically and slowly like the seven streams of Ganges (Ganga).

“Vishnu Pad hill is the name of that part of Shivalik- range which lies on the north of Kurukshetra (Mahabharata III). Vishnu theerth mentioned in Kedar-khand section of Skand- Puran is situated near Kalsi in Jaunsar (Dehradun district). The Iron Pillar (the pillar of victory) was raised somewhere in the upper part of the Sivalik hills on the bank of Jamuna, from where it had later been brought down in the river Jamuna to Delhi by Anang Pal whose name has also been separately inscribed on it. The date of Anang Pal, 419 Samvat given on it is of Ballabhi-Gupa Samvat, which start in 319 A.D.

“ There is overwhelming and conclusive evidence for Vahlka land and of Vahalika tribe being in north-east Punjab and Himachal Pradesh in India. People used to go to Vahlka via Bhuling, which apparently is the present Philong, a part of Tehri Garhwal region, near the valley of Bhagirathi Ganga. Vishnu Pad hill and Beas river have been mentioned along with Vahlka in the Balmiki Ramayan. From the accounts given in Drona Parv of Mahabharat we find that the land on the banks of Beas river was called Vahlka or Vanik after the names of Vahi and Hik, the two Asuras (demons) who used to reside there. Vahlka is used for Vahik at several places in Mahabharat. The people of Madra have also been called Vahik in Mahabharat.

“The Sangla village is still in existence in the famous Sangla-valley, of Mahasu district in Himachal Pradesh. It was a fortified town and a stronghold of ‘Kathais’- Kathaeans (the Kathaits of Garhwal) and also the center of the confederacy of some of the independent martial tribes at the time of Alexander’s invasion. It was situated on the kingdom of younger Poros (Puru), who was the lord of the Uttarakhand hills. The original home of Puru was, according to the Rig Veda, the

land of Saraswati, some of them in course of time had moved south and westward. Elder Puru, lord of Kekoya Pradesh, who gave battle to Alexander on the upper Indus, was the head of these Purus. The region of Saraswati in Uttarakhand was the birth place of Manu. His daughter Ila had her domain over Uttarakhand. Ilavarta was clearly the part of the region which is known as Uttarakhand now. Vahlika land was adjacent to Ilavarta on its west.

“Kurus were the descendants of the Ailas. Their ancient home was later known as Uttar Kuru, which is nearly the same region which is now known as northern part of Uttarakhand. We find mention of Uttarkuru in Bhagwat Puran (1:16.13). Vinaya commentary mentions Tidasa-pura as the city of Uttar Kuru. Brahmana Puran (Chapter 48 sloka 53) clearly locates Uttar Kuru in the north of Aryavarta and mentions a sea on the north of it. The sea was part of Tethys and covered the region which is now the land of Tibet. The Kurus who had settled in Madhya Desa (Uttar Pradesh) were known as Dakshina Kurus (Mahabharat 1,109,10). The ancient Vahlika land is, therefore, clearly identified with the tract of land which is now known as Himachal Pradesh. From the above it is established that the seven streams of Ganga in Uttarakhand are the ‘Sapta Sindhu’ of Rigveda, and also of the Iron Pillar of Delhi.”

Conclusion

The testament of Hindu scriptures is that India’s civilization goes back far earlier than contemporary western historian acknowledge. Swami Shri Yukteswar in the Holy science (published by Yogada Satsanga Society of India), calculates that the golden age in which Indian spiritual and material civilization reached its pinnacle, ended about 6700 BCE having flowered for many thousand years before that. India’s spiritual literature lists many generations of kings and sages who lived prior to the events that are main subjects of

Mahabharata. In the Gita itself, Krishna describes the long descent of India's spiritual culture from golden age to his own era and the knowledge of Yoga was gradually lost.

Saraswati was there from the beginning of Vedic civilization, and has been praised as a goddess of learning. Scientist using Ecological Dynamic Model Methodology say that something like 10,000 years ago, the ice sheets of the world started melting and the great rivers started flowing out. These scientist say that, naturally, the ice on mountains that were closest to the equator melted first, and hence, around that time, the first river system was Saraswati. The Vedas mention that Saraswati flowed between the Yamuna and Sutlej rivers. On its banks were ancient settlements like Dhalewal, Kunal (Kamal) Kalibhangan now in Rajasthan, Ladulai (Lethal) etc. and the river flowed from the Himalayas to the ocean. NASA satellite imagery has reasserted what our historians had, along with Rama's existence, rubbished as a mythical river.

The sages of the past praised Saraswati so much simply because the river gave rise to that developed civilization that created Vedas themselves in ashrams all along the banks. The Saraswati started flowing out around 10,000 years ago, fed by two glaciers Rupin and Supin. By 8000BCE the flow had increased so much that the river ran into the sea. But these scientific discoveries lead to the theory that there was no Aryan invasion as once propounded by Max Mueller. In fact, the website of the Max Mueller Foundation itself says that his theory was no longer valid. Around 2000 BCE, glaciologists say, the Rupin glacier suffered from a tectonic shift and its channel flowing into Saraswati was abruptly blocked. The battle of Mahabharata took place, according to astronomical calculations in 1478BCE and at that time the Saraswati river was still there but a major one. After the Rupin glacier disaster, gradually the mighty river petered out and became a rain fed river, and than vanished altogether.

Part-III

RISE OF JAINISM-BUDDHISM AND REVIVAL OF HINDUISM

1

RISE OF JAINISM AND BUDDHISM

The 6th century BC (320-540AD) is a period of religious ferment in the history of India. It is remembered for the rise of two great religions, Jainism and Buddhism. There were various reasons for the rise of these religious movements which may be summed up as follows.

With the passage of time the simple religion of Aryan became complex and laden(burdened) with rituals. The observance of austere form of religion such as sacrifices and also elaborate Yajnas gained precedence over sincerity and purity of heart. The people longed for a religion which could be easily understood and practiced by them. The religion became expensive due to indiscriminate slaughter of animal to appease the gods through sacrifices which shocked their feelings. Not only the religion of Hindus degenerated into a man of ceremonies but it also clung to the 'Sanskrit' language which was beyond the comprehension of the masses. During the post- Vedic period caste system played havoc with life of 'Sudras'. The Sudras were looked down by the three upper caste and subjected to worst type of humiliation. They were snubbed as untouchables, not permitted to enter the places of worship and chant Vedic hymns.

In this age of religious ferment holy men who had a life of purity, simplicity and self denial attracted large member of people in India. The doctrine of 'Karma' and denial of the authority of the Vedas appealed the common masses. The most famous among these holy men

were Vardhmana Mahavira th founder of Jain religion and Gautama the founder of Buddhism.

Jainism: According to Jain literature, there have been twenty four tirthankaras or spiritual gurus of the Jains. The first of them was Rishabha and the last one was Mahavira. Nothing is known about his date of birth but historian believe that he was born in 599 BC. His father Siddhartha was a Kshatriya ruler of the present Vaishali region of Bihar and his mother Trishala hailed from the royal family a Lichchvi clan. He travelled extensively as a preacher in the kingdom of Maghada, Videha and Anga. At the age 72 Mahavira breathed his last in 527 BC at Pava near Rajgriha. Doctrine of Jainism and teaching included- no belief in God, no faith in Yajna sacrifices and ritualism, faith in Ahimsa or non-violence, no faith in caste system, attainment of salvation (moksha) can be achieved only by three virtues i.e. right faith, right knowledge and right action. Jains also believe in hard penance, mortification of body and the practice of suicide by starvation. Jainism produced effects of great importance on the social, religious, political and cultural life of India and made valuable contribution to Indian literature and art. Ahimsa or non-violence was successfully used by Mahatma Gandhi as a political weapon for achieving the independence for India from British rule.

Buddhism: Gautam Buddha or Siddhartha was a contemporary of Lord Mahavira. His father Suddhodana was a Kshatriya ruler of Kapilvastu in the Tarai region on the Indo-Nepal border. Gautam Buddha is said to have been born in 567 BC at Lumbini near Kapilavastu. His mother named Maya died when he was only 7 days old and he was brought up with utmost care by his step mother, Gautami. Gautama had a spiritual bent of mind and pondered over the philosophical questions of human suffering, birth, old age and death from his early childhood. In order to divert his attention his father married hm to beautiful princes Yashodhara when he was just 19 years

of age. Gautama had a son named Rahul. But even the love of his wife and affection of his son could not keep him tied to worldly life. Gautama decided to renounce the luxuries of royal life at the age of 29 after in search of truth seeing the dead man surrounded by his wailing relatives, sick man crying with pain. After the 'Great Renunciation', Gautama spent time in a cave, practiced severe penance in the pursuit of divine light but bore no fruit. Then he sat down for meditation under a banyan tree at Gaya. Divine light dawned on him and he became Buddha (enlightened one) in 587BC. At the site Mahabodhi temple stands today at Bodhi Gaya. The Banyan tree under which Buddha attained divine knowledge is known as 'Mahabodhi Tree'. Having attained divine knowledge, Buddha decided to preach it in the language of the people i.e. Prakrit or Pali for the rest of his life. Initially five holy men became Buddha's disciple who formed nucleus of the great Buddhist sangha or order. After strenuous life of 45 years he breathed his last at the age of 80 at Kushinagar in the territory of Nepal 487BC. His remains were distributed among the followers in different parts of the country. They raised spacious mounds on these remains. These mounds are called 'stupas'. The main teachings of Buddha include:

- To understand 'Four Noble Truth': The world is full of suffering-suffering is caused by human desires- the renunciation of desire is the path to salvation and the salvation can be achieved by following the eight-fold path.
- Right belief-thought-speech-action-means of livelihood-meditation and remembrance or memory.
- Nirvana: By following Buddha's middle path one can attain nirvana or salvation and thus secure release from the chain of births and deaths.
- Karma: Like Hinduism, Buddhism recognized the law of Karma and no person can escape the consequences of his action.
- Ahimsa: Like Mahavira, the Buddha also laid emphasis on Ahimsa and attached utmost importance to the sanctity of life in all its form.

- No faith in caste system: The Buddha condemned the caste system and wanted to establish a casteless society. Buddha remained silent on the existence of God but he held that the whole universe was controlled by universal law to which he gave the name 'dharma'.
- Buddha had no faith in Yajna, Sacrifice and Ritualism. He, however, did not agree with Mahavira that there is a life force even in animate objects like trees and plants.
- Emphasis on Morality: Buddha laid stress on morality and advised his followers to lead highly moral and disciplined life i.e. not to tell lies, not to steal or covet others property, not to commit violence, not to use intoxicants and not to indulge in corrupt practices.

During the reign of Kanishka, Buddhism came to be split into two sects- the Hinayana and the Mahayana Buddhism. The term Hinayana implies 'lessor vehicle' of salvation. It conveys the original and orthodox philosophy of Lord Buddha who is regarded to be guide, teacher and guru. Hinayana Buddhist do not believe in idol-worship nor do they believe that Buddha was God himself. They believe in the eight- fold path as laid down by the Great masters for the achievement of nirvana or salvation from the cycle of birth and death. The word 'Mahayana' means 'Greater Vehicle' of salvation. It is a combination of old Buddhism and Hinduism. The followers of 'Mahayana Buddhism' believe that Buddha was an incarnation of God. They worship the images and statues of Lord Buddha and the Bodhisattavas. The great Buddhist monk Nagarjuna was the first leader of the Mahayana sect. Mahayana Buddhism adopted Sanskrit and preached in it, while the Hinayana Buddhist still preached in Pali.

Buddhist-Jain schools of Art and architecture raised monumental structures in the form of stupas, vihars, chaityas, pillars and statues as part of Indian cave temples. A large number of these rock cut sanctuaries have been found in Ajanta, Ellora, Karle, Nasik and Aurangabad.

BUDDHISM AFTER THE REVIVAL OF HINDUISM

It was an irony that after having been popular religion in India for many centuries, Buddhism quietly slipped away from the soil of its origin. Revival of Hinduism started mainly due to reform implemented in the Hindu religion by Vedic scholars. They were shaken out of their deep slumber and realized that the degeneration of Hinduism was primarily responsible for its gradual extinction. Hindu philosophers like Kumarila Bhatta and Shankaracharya came forward to salvage Hinduism and reinforce its true Vedic spirit. Useless and irrational rituals were condemned and the superiority of Vedic religion was highlighted. The Buddhist could not hold their own in debates and discussions against these erudite religious philosophers. Eventually, this led to the creation of as many as sixteen sects including Hinayanas and Mahayanas. One of the chief causes of Buddhism was the absence of image- worship and ritualism in it. But with the passage of time the Buddhist began to make images of Buddha and Bodhisattvas and worship them. Many of the Buddhist sect almost merged with the main stream Hindu faith and Buddhism lost its separate identity and reduced to the position of a sect of Hinduism.

Hinduism was particularly patronized by the monarchs of the Gupta line of dynasty. Hundreds of temples of Hindu gods and goddesses were constructed and the Brahmins began to be respected. This resulted into down fall of Buddhism and revival of Hinduism. Subsequently due to rise of Rajputs who were opposed to the theory of Ahimsa and Muslim invaders, Buddhism lost its relevance in India. The Turks are supposed to have plundered the monasteries of Takshila and Nalanda and killed the Buddhist monks under the impact of Muslim violence. Many Buddhist either embraced Islam or fled to neighboring countries like Nepal and Tibet carrying with them Buddhist scriptures

and literature. Though Buddhism was wiped out of India it continued to be living faith of million people in South-East Asia, Tibet, China and Japan.

3

GOLDEN AGE OF HINDU CULTURE

The fourth century AD is known as the imperial age of Gupta's empire in India. The Gupta's controlled the destiny of India for more than two hundred years from 320 to 540 AD which is also known as 'Golden age of Indian culture'. The Gupta dynasty included a succession of brilliant rulers of exceptional ability, who made extensive conquests and established a well governed empire. The government was mild and enlightened. People were happy and prosperous. The rulers revived art, science and literature and developed the same with great success and distinction. The Gupta Kings were Brahmanical Hindus so the Gupta period has also been described as a period of revival and renaissance. Under them the old Brahmanical faith was gradually changed into the shape of Hinduism as is understood today. The old gods of Vedic period like Surya, Varuna and Indra receded into the background and Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh came in the forefront. Worship of images became popular during this period. Beautiful temples of Hindu gods like Shiva and Vishnu began to be built in large numbers. Gradually and by peaceful means, Hinduism recovered the position of supremacy. The most striking feature of the religious life of the people during this period was that Bhakti cult proved a unifying force between Shivas (worshipper of Shiva) and Vaishnavas (worshipper of Vishnu) as it preached to love fellow beings and tolerance of the opinion of others. Fahiens account bears out the fact that the Gupta emperors respected all faiths and creeds without any discrimination whatsoever.

Gupta age is marked by vigorous outburst of Sanskrit literature which was led by Kalidasa, Visakhadatta, Megha and Nalodaya etc. Panchatantra, storehouse of wonderful stories was written during Gupta period which has been translated in many languages of the world. Puranas took final literary form. Ramayana and Mahabharata were also revised and rewritten during Gupta period. Manusmriti or the code Manu, the famous law giver, was also revised. Apart from a network Pathshalas and temple schools, many other centers of higher learning at Nalanda, Takshasilla, Ujjain, Sarnath and Ajanta assumed greater importance because of specialization. For example Takshasilla specialized in science and medicine, Sarnath in religion (Buddhism), Ujjain in astronomy, Ajanta in art and architecture and Nalanda being the biggest of seats of learning handled all branches of knowledge. Students from all parts of India and abroad came in these universities (great center of learning). It was during Gupta age that great progress was seen in various sciences. As a result, Aryabhata became great mathematician and astronomer with two great scientific work Aryabhatiya and Surya Sidhanta which are regarded as the basis of modern astronomy. Similarly, another scientist Varahamihra became famous because of his book 'Brihat Samhita' which is an encyclopaedia of astronomy, mathematics, botany, geography and many other branches of knowledge. Vrindvagabhata became famous because of his contribution in Ayurveda system of medicine and for elaboration of the basic theories of Charaka. **Note: To know more about Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism, the three indigenous religions of India born out of Hinduism, read Part-IX of this book.**

Part-IV

ALL ABOUT HINDUISM IN A NUTSHELL

1

SCRIPTURES OF HINDU RELIGION

The tenets, traditions and belief of Hindu religion are based on the teachings of ancient saints and sages which are well recorded in the scriptures like the Vedas, Upanishads, Puran, Ramayana and Bhagavad Gita. Hinduism is now accepted as eternal religion (Sanatan Dharma) and practiced for over 10000 years since the birth of the original Aryan (Vedic) civilization in the region of Central Himalayas

Scriptures of Sanatana Dharma that existed during Vedic civilization as narrated in Part-II (Srl.5) of this book , continue to guide and regulate the life and traditions of Hindu society and the followers of Hindu religion in the Indian subcontinent and the world over. The period of Hindu scriptures can now be estimated to have been known for 10,000 years which were documented between 4500 BCE and 6500 BCE. The Mahabharata period is known to be about 5561 years ago. The details of scriptures are briefly given below.

Vedas: There are four Vedas, namely Rig , Sama, Yajur and Atharva Veda. Rig Veda is the most important of the Vedas. It is a collection of 1,028 hymns written in praise of the most important gods of the Vedic period-such as Agni (god of fire), Indra (the storm God) and Varuna(the God of rain). The Sama Veda is a Samhita (collections of hymns) are read during worship. The Yajur Veda is a collection of hymns narrated during worship followed by sacrifices. The last of the Veda Atharva contains the importance of incarnations as per Vedic philosophy.

Upanishads: There are 108 Upanishads which are also called Vedanta because they expound on spiritual essence of Vedas which includes the relationship between Atman (the soul of an individual) and Brahman (the universal soul).

Smritis: Smirti scriptures are five distinct set of writing which include epics of Ramayan-Mahabharat, Purans(18 puranas narrating religious stories for common people to understand higher truth in life. Dharma Shastras (law codes) like Manu Smriti. Agmas and Tantras also known as sectarian scriptures which includes Vaihnivism, Shaivism and Shaktism and lastly the Darshan Sutras which are manuals of philosophy for daily practice and understanding. The six Darshan Sutras include: Brahma Sutra, Mimamsa Sutra, Nyaya Sutra, Vaisheshika Sutra, Sankhya Sutras and Yoga Sutras.

2

TENETS AND TRADITIONS OF HINDU SOCIETY

Hindu believe in the existence of only one supreme God which has been adequately narrated in Bhagavad Gita by Lord Krishna Thy self. However, Hindu also worship God in various forms known as god, goddesses, deities and other incarnation of God. There are Vedic gods like Dyaus , Varuna, Indra, Surya, Soma, Agni, Vayu, Yam. and Kuber. The Brahmanic or demi gods are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva who are worshipped with their consort i.e. Brahma with Saraswati, Vishnu with Lakshimi and Shiva with Parvati. Brief description of various god and goddesses is given in the following paragraphs.

For Hindus the entire universe is part of the Brahman. It represents the past, present and future of this universe. All gods are only various aspects of Brahman. Brahman has multiple role to play i.e. to create, to preserve and to destroy. This resulted into Trinity of

Hindu gods Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver) and Shiva (the destroyer). With the passage of time god and goddesses came into being in various forms or as incarnation of God to establish the rule of law and truth for the existence and righteous living for human being. The large number of other god and goddesses or incarnation God which are worshipped by the followers of Hindu religion are: Durga, Vaishnav Devi, Mansa Devi, Santoshi Mata, Kali Devi, Venkateswara, Satyanarayan, Sita and Rama, Radha and Krishna, Kartikeya, Ganesh, Hanuman and Gayatri etc. Those who have lived in or travelled through rural Indian subcontinent would find that every family has a family deity and every village has village god traditionally worshipped individually or collectively perhaps from the Vedic age itself.

The guiding principles of Hindu religion are: to follow Jnana-yoga (the path of acquiring knowledge), Karma-yoga (the path of doing selfless duties), Bhakti-yoga (the path of devotion) and finally Raja-yoga (the path of meditation) for the realization of supreme soul and salvation from the material world. The four goals in life for a Hindu laid down in the scriptures are: Dharma(righteous living), Artha (pursuit of material gain by lawful means), Kama (delight of the senses) and Moksha (salvation). The working of social system within Hindu society was also laid down during Vedic age which was purely to define the duties or occupation of each individual as Brahmin (priestly and learned class), Kshatriya (warrior and ruling class), Vaishya (those engaged in agriculture, as merchant and business occupation) and lastly the Sudra (the working class which require hard labor). Together they were created to serve the society as a whole in an organized manner and this is also clarified by Lord Krishna in Bhagavad Gita. Unfortunately over a period of time caste system turned into class between those who were seated in the position of power with wealth and others as working class who were subjugated or exploited and finally leading to backward class and victim of untouchability. Efforts continue to be made today to remove this drawback within Hindu

religion undertaken by various leading reformers of Hindu society under the present day constitution of India today.

Worship of god and goddesses

Hindu worship or puja involves following certain rituals laid down in the scriptures through prayers in front of images or idols of family deity or favorite god and goddesses in temples or at home individually or collectively in the presence of the priest who would recite the hymns from the scriptures to seek blessings of almighty God for good health, wealth, peace and happiness in the family. *Gayatri Mantra* is the most revered and widely known hymn of Hindu religion which is considered the essence of Vedas. In 'Bhagavad Gita' Lord Krishana says: 'Amongst the Mantras I am the Gayatri'. It is believed that by chanting the Gayatri Mantra and firmly absorbing the same in mind, one can expect total peace and happiness in life. The English translation of *Gayatri Mantra* is as follows:

We meditate on the glory of the Creator;
 Who has created the Universe;
 Who is worthy of Worship;
 Who is the embodiment of Knowledge and light;
 Who is the remover of all Sin and Ignorance;
 May He enlighten our Intellect.

3

REFORM MOVEMENTS WITHIN HINDUISM

Being the oldest indigenous religion in the world, large number of reform movements were undertaken over a period of time by social workers within Hindu society to remove the prevailing weaknesses which did not fit into the changing life and time of the people.

Brahmo Samaj : In 1828, Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the Brahmo Samaj (Society of Brahma) in an attempt to reform Hindu religious beliefs and practices. He was born in a Brahmin family in Bengal and experienced orthodox practices of Hinduism when he was still young. He studied the Quran, Buddhism and the New Testament. He disliked idol worship and was deadly against the practice of Sati, after seeing his brother's widow burnt alive on her husband's funeral pyre. He raised his voice against polytheism, idol worship, the caste system, child marriage, animal sacrifice and Sati. Brahmo Samaj believed in only one God who is omnipresent, the creator and the savior of this world. The human soul is immortal and responsible to God for its doings. Therefore human being should worship God with truth and spirit for ultimate communion with God and salvation.

Radhaswami Satsang: Radhaswami Satsang was founded in 1861 by a banker named Shiv Dayal Sahib ((1818-1878) in Agra when he proclaimed his philosophy towards life. He was the first Guru who promoted common tenets and love among all human being irrespective of the religion one believed in. The basic tenets of Radhaswami tradition are: 1. The practice of daily meditation. 2. Obedience to living master who initiates the disciple into the path. 3. Pure moral life which includes abstinence from meat, fish, eggs, alcohol, drugs and sex outside marriage. 4. Firm conviction that salvation can be realized under the guidance of a Guru while living in this world. The teachings of Radhaswami are similar to those given by Guru Nanak, Kabir and other saints. Radhaswami Satsang centers are now established in various places in India and abroad with main center being at Agra, Beas in Punjab and Bani Asharam in New Hampshire in US.

SAINTS AND MISSIONARIES OF HINDU RELIGION

Adi Shankaracharya: Born in 9th century AD at Kaladi in Kerala and had a very short life of 32 years. In that brief span of life he changed the outlook of the country and its people by revamping the vast literature into simple, easy to understand language, revived Hinduism and strengthened its base. He established temples everywhere he halted. He established five Mutths headed by successive Shankaracharyas till to this day. The five Mutths are Jyotirmutth near Badrimath (Uttarakhand), Goverdhan Mutth near Puri (Odisha), Kalika Mutth in Dwarka (Gujarat), Sarada Peetham at Sringeri at Kanchi (Karnataka) and Kamakati Peetham in Kanchipuram (Tamilnadu).

Shri Ramanujacharya (1017-1137AD): Born at Shri Perambadur in Southern India and named Ilaya Perumal by his parent. Shri Ramanujacharya was one of the foremost exponents of the Vishishtadwaita (qualified dualism) philosophy which was based on the premise that God and soul were separate entities as opposed to Shankara's philosophy of Advaita (non duality).

Vallabhacharya (1479-1531AD): Son of a Telugu Brahmin and contemporary of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, he was a founder of the Vaishnavite cult in Rajasthan and Gujarat and was regarded Avtara (incarnation) of god Agni.

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1533AD): Born in Mayapur West Bengal, he was the tenth child of his parents Jagannath and Sachi Devi. In 1509 Gauranga, name given by his parents, went on a pilgrimage to Gaya and became devotee of Lord Krishna. At the age of twenty four. Gauranga was initiated by Swami Keshava Bharati under the name of ' Krishna Chaitanya'. He preached Vaishnavism wherever he went and held Sankirtan attracting thousands of people. His last words were the chanting of the holy names of Hare Krishna-Hare Rama at any time and at any place in this age of Kal Yuga so to always remain at the feet of the Lord Krishna.

Mirabai (1504-1550AD): Daughter of a Rajput chieftain Ratan Singh, she was devoted to Lord Krishna from her childhood itself. Her mother had died when she was only 4-5 year old. She was married to Bhoja Raj, the heir apparent to the throne of famous warrior Rana Sanga of the house of Sisodiya but took no interest in household affairs. She believed that she was married to Lord Krishna only. She lost her father in 1527 AD and later her husband but refused to commit Sati (self immolation). Because of her belief that she was married to Lord Krishna only. Finally she left the palace and went to Mathura, Vridavan and Dwarka and continued her prayer and dancing in praise of her God Lord Krishna till her death in 1550.

Goswami Tulsi Das(1532-1623AD): He was born in a Saryuparin Brahmin family of Gonda district of Uttar Pradesh. It was his wife Ratnawati who encouraged him to show his love for Lord Rama which will help him to attain immortality and eternal bliss. These words touched him and he left his home and became an ascetic. He spent fourteen years in visiting the various sacred places of pilgrimage. He is believed to have started his work on 'Ram Charit Manas' (in Avadhi dialect) in 1574 AD at the age of 42 and completed the sacred book of Ramayana in 1584 AD which is read and worshipped by millions Hindus.

Sant Tuka Ram (1608-1649AD): Was born in a Sudra family. He is said to have been visited in a dream by Namdeo, a great poet-saint of the thirteenth century and a family deity who inspired him to compose hymns in praise of family deity. This helped him to acquire the reputation of great saint among his followers. Most of the hymns are devoted to Lord Krishna. He was kind to beggars and poor whom he gave all his possessions before he disappeared in 1649 at the age of 42.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883AD): Born in Tankara in the state of Gujarat and his first name was Mool Shankar. He became the founder of Hindu reform organization Arya Samaj and his main message was 'back to Vedas'. By this he meant that Hindus

should stop idol worship, caste, polytheism, pantheism, child marriage, forced widowhood and many other practices which he thought were wrong. To preach and propagate his teaching he wrote many books to send his message across India as a result of that, principles of Arya Samaj are followed by large number of Hindu population in India.

Shri Ramkrishana (1836-1886AD): Born at Kamarpukur near Kolkatta in West Bengal, he was originally known as Gadadhar Chatterjee. Sri Ramkrishana was destined to return to Hinduism the glory it enjoyed before the foreign rule. He showed wonderful quality of purity and love. He was initiated into Vedantic meditation by Totapuri, a reputed monk who attained oneness with God after forty years of penance. Such was the devotion of Sri Ramkrishana that, to the amazement of his Guru, he attained in one day, what his Guru took forty years to achieve. He explored each of the great religion of the world i.e. Islam, Christianity and Buddhism and found that he could have vision of God by following any one of their paths. He could neither read or write but soon he could acquire basic teachings of all the sects of Hinduism. A great part of Sri Ramakrishna's life was spent in training of his disciples, among whom was Swami Vivekanand whose impact on India and the world has been tremendous.

Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902AD): Born in Kolkatta and named Narendranath Datta, he was very generous, loving and devoted with a very strange attraction for wandering Saints. He loved doing worship of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna with his mother. He came in contact with Sri Ramkrishana and followed the Master for realization. Narendra was now known as Swami Vivekanand who founded an Ashram near Kolkatta, in order to organize and to better the Master's mission. This was the beginning of the Ramakrishana Mission. In 1893, Swami Vivekanand went to America to attend the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. His powerful speech on Hinduism, which he described as the mother of all religions, brought him instant fame and he was acclaimed as the most ideal interpreter of India's wisdom. As a true saint he refused to teach religion for money.

Instead he preached the gospel of unity of faiths and stressed for service to the poor and the sick. After his stay in America for two years and tour of England and Europe for three years, Vivekanand worked for the revival of original Vedic religion with purity. He had given his call to the masses to ‘Awake, arise, and stop not till the goal is reached.

Shri Aurobindo(1872-1950AD): Born in Kolkatta, Sri Aurovindo was sent to England for education at the age of seven and returned to India in 1893. He worked in Baroda State Service and developed deep interest in Indian culture, nationalism and Yoga. He studies Indian religious scriptures and translated Upanishad, Gita and works of other prominent writers to spread his faith in Indian cultural heritage. At this stage he decided to join the revolutionary independence movement. In 1906 he joined National college as Principal where he practiced Yoga and meditation. Due to his revolutionary activities Aurovindo was sentenced to one year imprisonment. While in the jail he experienced universal presence of Lord Krishna. After his release from jail he shifted to Pondicherry where he continued to practice and explore various level of consciousness to realize universal presence of God in this earth planet.

Swami Ram Tirtha (1873-1906AD): Swami Tirtha Ram was born in a small village in the district of Gujranwala now in Pakistan. From early childhood he was very keen to listening to recitations from the holy scriptures. After completing his college education he worked for a while as Professor of Mathematics. A few years later he resigned from his job, renounced the worldly life and went to the Himalayas. After returning from the Himalayas, Swami Rama Tirtha spent the rest of his life in spreading the message of Vedanta all over the world including Japan and America before leaving the world .

Note: The Missionaries of 20th century include Sathya Sai Baba Mission, International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), Shirdi Sai Baba, Anandamayi Ma, Sant Morari Babu and many other

saints and missionaries who continue to promote teachings from the sacred scriptures of Hindu religion or Sanatan Dharma which is eternal and universal i.e. there is only one God, respect all religion and render selfless service to the needy in this world.

5

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS AND PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE FOR HINDUS

Holi (Feb-Mar), Krishna Janmasthan (Aug-Sep), Dussehra (Sep- Oct) and Deepawali (Oct-Nov) are the most important festivals of Hindus. Important pilgrimage centers of Hindus in India are as follows.

1. Amarnath(J&K) – Lord Shiva
2. Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh) - Birth place of Lord Rama
3. Dakshineswar (West Bengal) - Goddess Kali
4. Dwaraka (Gujarat) - Lord Krishna
5. Gokarna (Karnataka) - Lord Shiva
6. Haridwar (Uttarakhand) - Holy river Gang
7. Kanchi (Tamilnadu) - Kamakshi
8. Kanyakumaari (Kerala) - Parvati
9. Kurukshetra (Haryana) -Hindu Dharma Kshetra
10. Madurai (Tamilnadu) -Meenakshi
11. Mathura(Uttar Pradesh) – Shri Krishna (Birth place)
12. Melukote (Karnataka) – Cheluvanarayana(krishna)
13. Nasik (Maharashtra) - Kumbh (Godavri River)
14. Nanjanagudu (Karnataka) -Srikanteshwara
15. Pandharpur (Maharashtra) – Panduranga
16. Prayag (Uttar Pradesh) – Kumbh
17. Puri (Odisha)- Lord Jagannath
18. Sabarimalai (Kerala)- Ayyappa
19. Srirangam (Tamilnadu)- Ranganatha

20. Sringeri (Karnataka) – SharadambaTirupati (Andhra Pradesh)
- Venkateshwara (Vishnu)
21. Tiruvananthapuram (Kerala) – Anantha Padmanabha
22. Vaishnodevi (J&K) - Durga

6

INVOKING LORD GANESHA

(The remover of all obstacles)

The son of Shiva and Parvati, Ganesha has an elephantine countenance with a curved trunk, big ears and a huge pot-bellied body of a human being. He is the Lord of success and destroyer of evils and obstacles. He is also worshipped as the god of education, knowledge, wisdom and wealth. In fact Ganesha is one of the five prime Hindu deities (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Durga being the other four) whose idolatry is glorified as the Panchayatana Puja. In any kind of prayer or puja Lord Ganesha is first worshipped which followed by other deities of Hindu society. Ganesh Chaturthi is an occasion or a day on which Lord Ganesha makes his presence on earth for all his devotees. It is also known as Vinayak Chaturthi in Telgu. It is not the birth day of Lord Ganesha. The festival is observed in the Hindu calendar month of Bhaadrapada starting on the Shuklachaturchi (fourth day of the waxing moon period). While held all over India, it is at its most elaborate in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh and other areas which were former states of the Maratha empire. This typically comes sometime between 20th of August and 15th September. The festival lasts for 10 days, ending on Anantachaturdashi.

Legend say that Lord Ganapati of the ‘semi divine creatures’ that serve Shiva was created by goddess Parvati, wife of Lord Shiva. Parvati created Ganesha out of the sandalwood paste that she

used for her bath and breathed life into him. Letting him stand guard at the door she went to have her bath. However, while Parvati was taking her bath, Lord Shiva happened to come there and as Ganesha didn't know him, he didn't allow him to enter the house. As a result, Lord Shiva got angry and severed the head of the child and entered his house. But after realizing that he had beheaded his own son, Lord Shiva fixed the head of an elephant in place of Ganesha's head. In this way, Lord Ganesha acquired the image of elephant headed God.

According to historian Shri Rajwade, records reveal that Ganesh Chaturthi was celebrated even during reigns of Satavahana, Rashtrakuta and Chalukya. There are also references in historical record to similar celebrations during Peshwa times, Lord Ganapati being the family deity of the Peshwas. After the end of Peshwa rule from 1818 to 1892, Ganesh festival remained a family affair in Maharashtra.

From then onwards this festival has grown in acceptance and today commands the respect of millions of citizens in Maharashtra. Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak brought Ganesha as a deity out on the street. It was a unique move by this freedom fighter, which he achieved with the Ganapati Visarjanta or immersion procession wherein the mass output of several Ganesh Mandals is taken out on a parade on the first day of the Ganesh festival and taken to be immersed. This process was started in 1892 is now prevalent virtually all over Maharashtra with special emphasis in Mumbai and Pune. Lokmanya Tilak attached this mass celebration to increase national awareness to the Freedom movement. Herein, neighborhood Ganeshas are worshipped and brought to immersion sites, where huge crowds gather to bid him an emotional and frenzied farewell. It was around 1893 during the growth of Indian nationalism that the radical nationalist Bal Gangadhar Tilak began to organize the Ganesh Utsav as a social and religious function. Since then Ganesh Chaturthi has been celebrated

throughout Maharashtra with great community enthusiasm and participation.

Ganesh Chaturthi was further promoted by Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who brought to the cause of independence a fire of religious revivalism. Tilak (1856-1920) was a Maharashtrian Brahmin from Poona, who believed that self-government could not be achieved by cooperating with the British. His slogan, Swaraj (Home rule) is my birthright, was echoed from miles on every side, and when he wrote articles in the Kesari applauding the action of a terrorist and the death of two British women in a bomb blast in Bengal he was promptly brought to trial and sentenced to 6 years imprisonment, resulting in 6 day long riot in Mumbai. He was the first Indian freedom fighter to be given the kind of hero worship, later acquired by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Sardar Patel, by millions of people. After his release, he rose to become an all India leader, working with like of Anne Besant for home rule and was always respected as an intellectual.

Ganesha and his divine power

As ekdanta (single tooth), the Lord has limitless powers. As Heramba, he removes obstacles. As Lambodara, he protects all worlds. As Surpa Karna, He shows compassion by giving the highest knowledge. All these names are for Lord Vinayaka who is the Lord of all. The Lord has four hands. In one hand he has a rope while in another he has an axe. With the Axe he cuts off attachment of his devotees to the world of plurality and thus end all the sorrows that go with it. Ganapathi is the embodiment of Buddhi and Jnana (wisdom). Truth emerges out of wisdom and ultimately leads to Ananda (bliss). This is the teaching of Ganapathi.

Who is Ganapathi? He is the Adhipathi (master) of all gunas five senses, five elements and five life sheaths. Human body

consists of five sheaths- Annamaya(food sheath), Pranamaya(life sheath), Manomaya (mind sheath), Vijnanamaya (wisdom sheath and Anandamaya (bliss sheath). Man progresses only up to Manomaya. He is unable to go up to the sheaths of wisdom and bliss. One has to take refuge in God in order to reach the state of bliss.

7

IMPORTANCE OF DURGA WORSHIP IN INDIA

(Mother of All goddesses)

According to ‘Tales of the Mother goddess’ published by Amar Chitra Katha Pvt Ltd, mother goddess represented as Shakti or the Female Divine Force. The Mother goddess in Indian Mythology has appeared in various forms and is revered as the vibrant creative feminine presence in all creation. As the goddess Durga she personifies universal energy. As Sati, the first consort of Shiva, she symbolizes marital loyalty and devotion. As Parvati, the incarnation of Sati, she embodies perfect love and motherhood.

Every year we have in India one month of festivities known as ‘Durga Puja’. Beginning with nine days of frenzied puja for the ten arm’s goddess of power and fertility, Durga puja going on to Vijay Dashami i.e Lord Rama’s victory over Ravana, and culminating with his home coming to Ayodhya on Diwali. Celebration make the Navratris one of the most spectacular festival in the Indian sub-continent. Durga is worshipped because she rescued the universe from the atrocities committed by demon King Mahishasura. Legend say that Mahishasura, after severe penance for several years, had sought and received boon from Lord Brahma that he would be killed only by a woman. Arrogant of his power, he believed that no woman could kill him. When the gods could not tame the buffalo demon, they begged Lord Shiva for help. Shiva advised them to unite their ‘Shakti’ or power, and when they did this ‘Durga’ came into being. The gods then

endowed her with all their weapons, and went on to slay Mahisasura, riding a lion.

One view holds that Mahishasura himself might have founded the ‘Durga Puja’ upon learning of his impending demise at the hands of goddess. He invoked her and said, Durga I have dreamed of you and in the dream I worshipped you. I will be glad to die at your hands- all I ask is that I am also worshipped by all. Durga is believed to have blessed him: In three of my forms you will forever be at my feet and worshipped by gods, by humanity and by demons.’”

The story of Durga Ma appears mainly in the Skand Purana and in Chandi, a part of Markandeya Purana. But similar stories with minor differences also appear in Brahmananda Purana and the Mahabharata. Various sources paint different pictures of the goddess. As Kali, she is dark and fierce showing death and destruction. In other forms, like Parvati she the embodiment of beauty and virtue.

It is believed that the worship of Durga started over 7000 years ago. Durga is mentioned in the Mahabharata as ‘ a virgin delighting in wine, flesh and animal sacrifice’. As Uma, she plays the role of the consort of Shiva. She is also Shiva’s Shakti, the composite of pure might The details of more widespread practices of her worship are found in the text of the 4th and 7th centuries when there was a resurgence of goddess worship.

What makes Durga special? She represents all the ‘gunas’ or good traits of the female form and spirit. She represents the beauty, the tenacity, the patience and the love of a women, but is also deadly in wrath and fury in the fight against injustice. She fights against all manifestations of evil and protects her devotees from its all-pervading shadows.

The festival lasts for nine days in honour of nine manifestations of Durga. That is why it is also called Navaratri (nine nights). Devotees observe fast, girls are honored and given food specially prepared for the occasion and prayers are offered in the temple for good health and prosperity. The devotion, love and due care is taken by skilled workers to prepare the statues of 'Durga' so that she can behold upon humanity through her sharp and brilliant eyes. She is shown holding lethal weapons in her ten hands. Statues of her daughters Lakshmi and Saraswati are also installed with goddess Durga. The nine day festival signify the nine facets of Durga which refer to nine 'rasas' of human existence. The entire universe is born out of 'rasas'. God himself is born out of 'rasas' and can not be 'nirasa' or devoid 'rasas'. And man who is God embodied is also born out of 'rasas'. The goddess more belligerent aspects signify triumph over the negative 'rasas' (lust, anger, selfishness etc.) and the positive aspects portray compassion, love etc. The weapons that she carries similarly depicts the 'tool that man must employ to triumph over each negative quality.

On a mystic plane, Durga is said to represent Kundalini, the seat of the female or 'yang' energy in the human body. The male and female energies in varying proportions exists in all human beings. In ordinary people, the Kundalini energy is released in minute quantities, but spiritual aspirants and practitioners with their meditative practices awaken the Kundalini and access greater quantities of this life giving energy to raise their consciousness to immense levels. The Kundalini energy is called Shakti-another name of Durga. With the aid of Shakti, the individual overcomes the Mahishasura in him i.e. tames the 'navarasas' and kills demon or ego in him. Durga puja, therefore, is worship of human life. (*Courtesy P.P. Wangchuk*)

HISTORICAL RECORD OF LORD RAMA'S LIFE AND RAMAYANA

(Latest scientific methods like glaciology, satellite imagery, ecological dynamic modelling, astronomy and highly advanced software had finally established our belief in all historical facts including Lord Ram's date of birth and the role played by Him to save 'Dharma' during Treta Yuga. A comprehensive research study report on this subject was published in August 2005 by CNC CAM NEWS NETWORK TODAY which has been included in this chapter for the benefit all interested to know in a nut-shell all about Lord Rama and Ramayana. The report is based on contribution made by Dr.Pushkar Bhatnagar,IRS (a trained physicist), Saroj Bala, IRS,passionate historian along with Surjit Chakraborty.)

Astronomy of Dating Rama

Dr. Pushkar Bhatnagar has taken some of the most important astronomical descriptions in the Valmiki Ramayana and put them through the Planetarium Gold software used by NASA. The findings are astounding. Maharishi Valmiki has recorded in Balkaand Sarga 18 and Sholka 8&9 that Shri Ram was born on 9th tithee (day) Chaitra month during day time when the position of different planets vis-à-vis zodiac constellations and nakshatras (visible stars) was as follows. Sun in Aries, Saturn in Libra, Jupiter in cancer (cancer was rising in the east), Moon on the Punarvasu (Gemini constellation and Pollu star)

This has been put along with the latitudinal and longitudinal positions of Ayodhya, and thus the date arrived at was January 10, 5114 BCE. There are several other dates that are important. Valmiki Ramayana refers to the solar eclipse at the time of war with Khar-dushan in the later half of the 13th year of Shri Ram's living in forests. Valmiki has also mentioned that it was the Amavasya (new moon) day

and planet Mars was in the middle. When this data was entered, the computer software indicated that there was solar eclipse on October 7, 5077BC (Amavasya day) which could be seen from Panchvati (20 degree N, 73 degree E). On that date, the planetary configuration shown by NASA software was the same as described by Valmiki i.e Mars was in the middle. On one side Venus and Mercury and on other side were Sun and Saturn. Only six of the 12 constellations remain above the horizon at the same time. Valmiki Ramayana contains graphic and poetic details of eight constellations seen during Hanuman's return journey from Shri Lanka to Sunaabh Hill in the middle of the sea, which apparently took about four and a half hours, from 6:30 to 11AM. All these details of planet and Nakshatras with references to eight constellations in Sarga 57 (1,2,3) of Chapter Five tally exactly with the sky view generated by the software of the morning of 14th September, 5076 BCE.

Ramayana story in nutshell

“ Lord Rama has ascended the throne at Ayodhya, and thus it is that I write his biography.” Begins Rishi Valmiki, starting to write one of the greatest epics in the world. Lord Rama was born on January 10, 5114BCE. It was Shukla Navami(the ninth day of waning half of the moon) of Chaitra. It was an auspicious occasion, and kings from all across the land came for the Putresthi ceremony of Raja Dasarath's son. Among those who came was the King of Mithila, Janak.

“ Valmiki Ramayana mention that about seven years after that, Raja Janak, who had a wide interest in the welfare of his subjects, was inspecting farmlands when he found a baby girl in one field. Having no child, King Janak adopted the girl, whose signs were also too very auspicious. Meanwhile, King Dasarath was blessed with three other sons, Lakshman and Satrugan from from his second wife Sumitra, and Bharat from his last wife Kaikai. Although all four

brothers were loving and caring, Rama and Lakshman paired well, as did Bharat and Satrugan. “When Rama was 13 years old in 5101BCE, Rishi Vishwamitra came to the court of Dasarath and asked for Rama to be sent to his ashram where various demons, the worst being Taraka Rakshasi, was terroring the saint and his disciples, stopping their meditation and studies .This indicates that by the age of 13, Rama was sufficiently adept to warfare, and Vishwamitra himself is considered as Guru of warfare. So Rama went to sage’s ashram and Lakshman followed suit. At the ashram Rama not only displayed his skill as warrior, but also learnt much more from his Guru. And this went for about one year. Towards the end of one year, King Janak of Mithila sent an invitation to Vishwamitra, among others prominent sages and kings across the country, to attend Swayambar of Sita. His conditions are well known: whoever could lift the legendary Shiva bow at Janak’s house and break it alone would receive the hands of Sita in marriage. Apparently, no one had ever been able to handle the bow, though Sita had once lifted it, itself a miracle.

“ Vishwamitra went to Mithila with Rama and Lakshman, though he did not inform Janak of this. When Rama eventually broke the bow and Janak learnt of his lineage, he sent a word to Dasarath that he has three other nieces who could be perfect spouses for the other brothers of Rama. Eventually all four brothers got married. Valmiki mentions that for the seven or eight years the royal couple had happy married life. Sometime later, Rishi Vashishtha told King Dasrath that sun, mars and rahu had surrounded his nakshatra, Rewati (his zodiac sign was Meen or Pisces), and under such circumstances, the king can become victim of conspiracy or even die. So he decided to hand over the reigns to Rama. The astrologers found that the most suitable date for the ascent for Rama would be Chaitra Shukla Navami, which fell on January 5, 5089BCE. Rama was then 25 years old.

“ Then came the well known conspiracy by Manthara led to kaikei demanding the Rama be sent on exile and Bharat be made king. Dasarath did so but died. At that time, Bharat was at his maternal grand parent’s house, which according to researcher Saroj Bala, was in a place near modern Lahore. He came to Ayodhya after crossing the mighty Saraswati.

“ Throughout his exile in forests, Rama went about saving scores of sages and all the wars mentioned by Valmiki relate the virtual wiping out the stretch of land from Ayodhya to Panchvati of evil forces inimical to the practice of Dharma. Lord Rama , Sita and Lakshman finally reached Panchavati. There are two Panchvati known to us, one being in modern Madhya Pradesh and the other in Maharashtra near Nasik. Lord Rama settled at Panchvati near Nasik where there are still signs of his settlement.

“ Valmiki says that for 12 years after his banishment, Rama and Sita lived a very happy life. But it was in the 13th year that of all sorts of trouble started. First came small irritants and then came Surpanakha, sister of King Ravana proposing marriage to Rama, which he refused. After repeated pleas, Lakshman finally hacked off the princess nose. To avenge this, Surpanakha went to many of the ‘demons’, and Rama and Lakshman had to face small wars almost every day. But then came the terrible duo, Khar and Dushan, with an army of 14000 warriors. It was a massive fight and Valmiki says that there was a sudden solar eclipse. The eclipse, on the 13th year of the exile happened on October 7, 5077 BCE which again is the precise date validated by the use of computer software and astronomical details given by Valmiki. Just a year before, Rama had killed another warrior menace, Bali (5076BCE), when again there was a sequential solar eclipse.

“ Seeing that even Khar and Dushan were slayed by the mighty warriors, Surpanakha finally went to brother Ravana and wanted him to avenge her insult. Ravana himself was a great scholar as well as a skilled warrior. He realized that he would have to cut off Rama’s supply base and for that he would have to draw Rama into his own Kingdom- the Island of Lanka (now cylon). Thus it is that he created a situation in which he could abduct Sita, so that Rama would come chasing him.

“It is during this time that the Vanar sena(the army of monkeys) repaired the old bridge that once linked main land India with Lanka. There is evidence that the bridge existed, and the Shri Lankan government is also saying this. From time to time parts of the bridge would get damaged and it would get repaired. Satellite pictures of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) show clearly that this is a man made bridge lying just ten feet below the sea surface, says Saroj Bala. The war has been well described in all Valmiki Ramayana who gives graphic description untainted by concerns of miracles and myths.

“Lord Rama finally killed Ravana on December 4, 5076 BCE, exactly the last day of the 14th year of exile. Then, Lord Rama ,Sita and brother Lakshman left for the journey back to Ayodhya. This is an important point. He had received missive that Bharat had decided that if Rama did not return by a certain date, he would end his own life. So Rama was hard pressed for time, because he would have to keep his promise of meeting Kevat and Rishi Bharadwaj on the way back. So , the newly anointed King of Shri Lanka, Rama’s ally Vibhishan gave him a Vimana, translatable as an Aeroplane, to reach Ayodhya on time, and it took royal entourage four days to reach from Shri Lanka, Saroj Bala asserts. They reached Ayodhya on January 4, 5075 BCE. Then started the creation of the Ramrajya, the ideal rule of Dharma, to the extent of the banishment of Sita which is well known. What is

important is that though Valmiki does not mention the date of Lord Rama's departure for the heaven, it is calculable that he graced this earth for something like 60 years, and handed over Ramarajya to his son Kush before his demise.

Concluding remarks and comments

“ According to Surjit Chakraborty hard core science has demystified Lord Rama, without taking away from him his fantabulous achievements, but placing them in historic situation. Astronomy and other sciences have together established that Lord Rama was born on January 10, 5114 BCE. The date can not be disputed anymore, because the veracity of this depends on software that NASA uses as part of its entire space programme!

“ Rama was born to King Dasarath of Ayodhya and his first wife, Kaushalya. Rama was the 64th descendent of the great Surya Vansh, which has such eminent rulers like King Sagar, the first Suryavanshi rulers. The famous king Raghu was the great grandfather of Lord Rama. The empire stretched across all around what is known as Aryavarta. The civilization was settled across the Sindhu- Saraswati valley. And Lord Rama became the greatest ruler of the dynasty.

“No man is ever remembered for ages together unless he has come to this earth and done something so great that is not achievable by common men. But such a man earns huge appreciations from his contemporaries, then finds a following, who are prone to eulogizing him and exaggerate his deeds; and then his image, much after he is gone, gathers devotees, who make him into a myth. Be it Prophet Mohammed, Guru Nanak, Jesus Christ, devotees have created myths at the cost of history, says Saroj Bala who calls herself an ‘amateur historian’.

“ Interestingly, the issue of Lord Rama is interlinked with another so called myth: River Saraswati, which NASA has shown as the first mighty river on the face of earth that sprouted a massive civilization all along its banks some 8000 years ago. That rubbishes the Max Mueller theory of Aryans coming from Europe or Central Asia only in 1500 BCE. There is mention in Valmiki Ramayana of river Saraswati at least at two places which includes return of Bharat and Shatrughan to Ayodhya from their maternal grandparents house near Lahore after crossing river Saraswati , when Dasarath died.”

Another team of historians in Delhi have traced each destinations of Rama’s exile that Valmiki mentions in his Ramayana, and there are memorials of Lord Rama and Sita everywhere. It is now proved beyond doubt that Saraswati, who has been praised and worshipped from the time of Rigveda, was a reality, and geologist and historians have traced its path of flow from the central Himalayan region down in the plains before it disappeared as brought out in Part-II Chapter-6 of this book.

LIFE AND TIME OF LORD KRISHNA AND THY GIFT BHAGAVAD GITA TO MANKIND

(It is also good to know and understand the life and time of Lord Krishna on the basis of date of birth now established by the astrologers with the help of computer astrology and planetary influences if there were any. A comprehensive article on the subject written by Smita Mitra and published in September, 2004 edition of Outlook Magazine is reproduced as follows. However devotees must read 'Gita' where Lord Krishna clarifies all doubts in the mind of normal human beings. Attention is also drawn to Shloka 19 and 20 of Chapter-X in Gita where Lord says that there is no end to the particulars of my manifestation and that I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all being.)

“ Even god come to earth with their destinies chalked out for them, claims astrology, at any rate. So when K Bansal, the father of computer astrology in India, says Hindu God Krishna was born on July 21, 3228BCE, it feels mementoes somehow. The date essentially transforms Krishna in our minds: from mythological figure of mystery, even if a much loved one human being .You can almost see him gurgling in Yashoda's lap as Rishi Garg performs the naming ceremony in a cow shed more than 50 centuries ago.

“But backtracking into the past can be a sloppy misadventure if you don't get your calculation right. So Bansal rests his claim on two of his software packages- the Leo Gold and the Palm computer program. They can stimulate and planetary configuration that has occurred or could occur in time. All they need is a date. And July 21,3228BCE, according to Bansal, satisfies every condition described during Krishna's birth. Krishna was born in the Rohini nakshatra, in the Hindu month of Bhadrapada, on the 8th day of the waning moon at midnight. Bansal says this was enough information for him to nail the

date, working backwards from Krishna's death, which he says occurred at 2 pm on February 18, 3102BC.

“ His entire case rests on the accuracy of this. However Bansal quotes extensively from the Shrimad Bhagavad and Shri Vishnu Purans old Hindu calendars and the Mahabharata to illuminate the clues he chose to follow. A shloka in the 38th chapter of Shri Vishnu Purans says that Kali Yuga started on the day Krishna died.” He unearths another shloka in the Shrimad Bhagawad Puran (part 11, chapter 6) where Brahma himself speaks to Krishna about how old he is.’ Brahma says that 125 years have passed since Krishna's birth; this is just before Krishna plans his death.’ Though not empirically verifiable, the advent of Kaliyuga is traditionally taken to be 3102 BCE, because all our Panchangas or astrological journals maintain that 5100 years Kaliyuga had passed before 1999 AD. The belief is supported by mathematician Aryabhata, the Surya Siddhanta, an astronomical text that dates back to 400AD, and a 5th century inscription from a temple in Aihole.

“Deleting 125 year from the date, Bansal figured Krishna was born either in 3327 or 3228 BC. The rest he left to his software merely feeling in the planetary configuration that Krishna was supposedly born under, to generate row of figures that confirms to the epochal moment. Would astrology have thrown any light on what such an individual may have been like? Outlook Bansal to create a birth chart based on that date. His computer churns out 15 pages sectioned under tantalizing headings like love, romance, appearance, personality and journeys. With Saturn in his seventh house, he would have been fated to court many women- enter Radha, the Gopies and later his 16,108 wives. But since the seventh house was also under the sign of attention among them Scorpio, which guarantees a joyful marital life he'd also have had the power to keep them happy despite having to divide his attention among them. An attractive appearance and personality would

have come from the exalted moon under the sign of Taurus, Jupiter and the exalted Mercury in the fifth house will have conferred intelligence and oratory skills. Fame and power would have come from Ketu in the 9th house, though it would also have forced him to lead a life away from his birth place. Even the Bhagavad Gita seems to have its origin in his birth chart; it predicts that a person under this astral spread would have been great believer in Karma who would advise others about Karma and noble deeds.

“But there are a few adverse planetary configuration to contend with. The chart describes a life to continuous strife, peppered with battles and wars because Rahu, Mars and Venus are in third house. Due to the location of Jupiter in Leo, he would also have been destined to be estranged from his mother or mothers in his case. According to Bansal temple priest of Somnath temple and Pandit Gyananand Saraswati in Varanasi have also come with same dates.

“At peace with research, Bansal prefers to turn a blind eye to the long-long line of astrologers, godmen, NASA scientist, mathematicians and writers stretching all the way back to Aryabhatta who have worked on the same thing. They all quote the same scriptures taking into account some or all of the astral happenings recorded in great detail, especially the ones during the calamitous tome of the Mahabharata war, when Krishna was said to have been 90 year old. These include rare astronomical happening like the solar and lunar eclipse that occurred consecutively in the space of a month just before the war, a fortnight that lasted only for 13 days instead of 15 when the moon was waning, and a comet burned through the skies. Also, the planetary positions recorded during the Mahabharata war were roughly replicated 36 years later, when Krishna died.

“Most scholars prefer to concentrate on the Mahabharata war where a significant cluster of astronomical events occurred, before

zooming on to their own set of dates that binds down from the same source, strain in opposite directions. Authors like P.V.Vartak push back the date of Mahabharata much further to 5561BCE. Swami Prakashanand Saraswati, in his book, 'The True History and Religion of India' comes up with the same dates as Bansal. Considering that there are 150 astronomical references provided about the characters and events in the Mahabharata in one lakh odd shlokas, there is little consensus on what information is worth concentrating on. In addition, there is to believe that our scriptures grew over time incorporating events of every period. So there is little we contribute collectively in one age."

Part-V

REALIZATION OF GOD THROUGH WORSHIP AND RENUNCIATION

According to scriptures man can realize God through the practice of renunciation even though living life of a householder. Indeed, renunciation is the principal means of attaining God. The renunciation laid down in scriptures include the following.

“Total renunciation of indolence and desire of fruits in the performance of duties: such as in the practice of devotion to God, desire in connection with the worship of celestials, desire in the service of parents and other elders, desire in the performance of sacrifices, charities, austerities and other auspicious deeds. Desire in the performance of proper works for the maintenance of one’s family through earning of livelihood, desire in works for the preservation of the body. Total renunciation of the sense of attachment with regard to all worldly objects and activities: such as indulging in fun, luxury, wrong doing, backbiting, enjoyment and idle gossip etc. Total renunciation of subtle desires and egoism means absence of desire and egoism in regard to all objects, including the body and all actions, constant union through identity with God is the mark of a person who has attained ripeness in the third stage of wisdom. That is why in Chapter-XIII of Gita (verses 7 to 11) Lord Krishna enumerated most of these virtues as knowledge and in Chapter-XVI(verses 1 to 3) as divine qualities.

“Contrary to the above, long years back Raman Maharishi (entered mahasamadhi on April, 14th 1950) asserted that to realize the Self, it is neither necessary to resign from one’s job nor leave home in the name of renunciation. Why do you think you are a grihastha? If you go out as a sanyasi, ascetic, the thought of your being sanyasi will haunt

you. Whether you continue to lead the worldly life of the householder or renounce it and go to the forest, your mind always accompanies you. Renunciation of the world will only substitute the thought of being a sanyasi with that being a grihastha; the mental obstacles will continue to remain same. In fact they become more pronounced in view of surrounding and make it difficult for the seekers to pursue his meditation in a peaceful frame of mind. The change of environment , thus, is not much help.

“Drawing distinction between internal and external renunciation the Maharishi pointed out that the former implied renunciation of ego-mind, the I thought, while the later meant giving up worldly possessions. Together, they meant renunciation of ‘I’ and ‘mine’. It is former that bestows upon the seeker of Brahman jnana, self realization. Thus for the seekers who succeeds in attaining mastery over internal renunciation, external renunciation becomes redundant and meaningless. Such a seeker is blessed with the power of discrimination and is able to attain Brahma jnana even while leading a normal worldly life, typical of householder.” (adapted from speaking tree by Arup Taneja)The author of this book would like to advise readers to understand the real purpose and meaning of renunciation with the help of Bhagavad- Gita where in Chapter- V, (verse-2) The Blessed Lord said: Both renunciation and performance of action lead to freedom: of these, performance of action is superior to the renunciation of action.”

Part-VI

UNENDING DEBATE ABOUT SANATANA DHARMA AND HINDUISM

Historical background of religions

Religion is difficult to formally define, but it's something humans believe and recognize, says anthropologist Robin Dunbar in his book 'How Religion evolved: And why It Endures'. It is universal. There is barely a culture that doesn't have a recognizable form of religion, some sense of the transcendent in supreme God or messenger of God.

In the early belief systems, animists sensed spiritual presence every where, in mountains and rivers and trees. This is not a primitive attitude unless the human being are educated about this. Look at the offerings to banyan or peepul trees, to see how the belief in an occult world persists. These older religions are about experience. Over the last few thousand years, organized religions like Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism have come to dominate the world. They are a relatively recent phenomenon, and they have explicit theological frames, priesthood or hierarchies. This does not mean that religion based on idol worship has been replaced; rather the doctrinal phase has been bolted on to the ancient forms. Old festivals and figures take on new meanings in the doctrinal religions.

Religion does have benefit for believers. At an individual level it contributes to living pious and peaceful life. At a social level it encourages socially useful behavior and those who attend religious services feel supported by the whole congregation. Disagreements over the belief and rituals give rise to different religions. Christianity and Islam are the offsprings of Judaism, Sikhism developed from the 15th

century constellation of religions in north India, the Baha's faith emerged out of Shia Islam. It is common that religion begin as cult, built around a charismatic religious master, prophet or messenger of God. They splinter when they get too large to manage disagreement over the rules to be followed by the followers of the religion as well as conduct at the places of worship.

Present approach to religious teachings

As reported in the media, the parliamentary panel has recommended that the rise of India vis-à-vis other countries of strategic importance, diversity of religious teachings, contribution of prominent women personalities and unsung heroes should be highlighted in school text books. Parliamentary standing committee on education, women, children, youth and sports also recommended adequate representation of Sikh and Maratha history and the need to have to have regulatory mechanism for scrutinizing content of text books and other material. Beside rise of India in the world scenario, especially in the light of progress made in the field of economy, defense production, the department can make adequate efforts to highlight and present the diversity of religious teachings as brought out in all ancient scriptures.

To quell misconceptions and promote inter-faith bonhomie, the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) is working on finalizing the draft of what could take the shape of a textbook for school children with basic information on all six recognized minority religions and Hinduism which is the religion of majority population in India. The six religions that have been awarded the national minority status are Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism and Zoastrianism (Parsis). The NCM is planning to have a duly approved book which can be made part of school curriculum so that children understand the basic idea, rituals and history of various religions. This

will help to check isolated vigilante groups to prevent them from creating communal disharmony.

Ancient history of Sanatan Dharma

Beside an introduction to Sanatana Dharma given in Part-I of this book, it is necessary to know the ancient history of Sanatana Dharma to end the debate on the subject matter being examined here. Sanatan Dharma is a Sanskrit word that can be translated variously as ‘Eternal Religion’ or eternal law or ancient continuing guidelines. According to mythologist and author Devdutt Pattanaik, ‘Sanatan’, meaning eternal, which does not appear in the Vedas. The word Sanatan started being used in the Bhagavad Gita, and refers to knowledge of the soul, which is eternal. Pattanaik said that Sanatan Dharma refers to eternal religions which believe in soul and rebirth.

‘Hindus: Their Beliefs and Practices’ (1994), Julius, J Lipner, Emeritus Professor of Hinduism and Comparative Study at the University of Cambridge, wrote that the term ‘Sanatan Dharma’ was used in the Gita by Arjuna, when he told Krishna that “when the clan is vitiated, the Sanatan Dharma of the clan are destroyed”. Lipner noted that a similar term was used by Draupadi when the onlookers did not speak up on her behalf. According to Pattanaik, although the term is most commonly associated with Hinduism, it is also used by Jains and Buddhists because these religions also believe in rebirth. It is not used for religions that believe in one life that is Judaism, Christianity and Islam which come from the Middle East.

Historian John Zavos in his article in 2001, ‘Defending Hindu Tradition: Sanatan Dharma as a symbol of orthodoxy in colonial India’ noted that the term gained popularity in the late 19th century with the emergence of various Sabhas designated to promote Sanatan Dharma in the face of reform movement which was being carried out

by missionaries and reformers such as the Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj led by Dayanand Saraswati. In Punjab in 1890s, Pandit Din Dayal Sharma began defending certain religious practices such as murti puja or idol worship against the teachings of the Arya Samaj. The movement was carried forward by Hindu Mahasabha with the sole aim of promoting orthodox Hindus to record themselves as ‘ Sanatan Dharmis’. John Zavos concluded that Aryas criticized image worship and position of Brahmins in Hindu society, the Sabha reacted by arguing in defence of the caste system and idol worship as being the core features of the Sanatan Dharm traditions.

Sanatan Dharma and Tamil identity

Swaminathan Gurusurthy, Editor of Thuglak, in his article titled ‘The truth of the false debate’ published in Times of India on 29 September, 2023 expressed that the most actively suppressed truth in the debate on Sanatan Dharma is that it is the very soul of the ancient Tamil people. Few paragraphs of this article are reproduced as follows to enlighten the knowledge of the readers in the larger interest of Sanatan Dharma (SD).

“The anti-SD rhetoric rooted in the anti-Brahmin politics of Tamil Nadu in the last century has systematically concealed the umbilical cord between SD and Tamil people. This politics began with the Justice Party that was promoted by the British as part of their divide and rule policy. Ancient Tamil literature including Tolkappiyam, Tirukkural and Silapathikaram all testified that SD was at the core of Tamil life. Yet, DMK pretends as if SD was imported into Tamil land, when it looks more like it has been exported from Tamil soil. The greatest Acharyas of SD – Adi Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhawacharya- were born in Dravidian land, the first two in Tamil soil when it included Kerala.

“Sankara expounded the Advaita that transcended all differences among humans and regarded the entire universe-animate and inanimate- as one and indivisible. When Sankara once asked an outcaste to move away, the latter revealed himself as Lord Shiva, and reminded Sankara of his own Advaita. Sankara then touched the person’s feet and composed his *Manisha Panchakam*, which says that Brahmins and outcastes are equals. Are the illiterates in DMK unaware of this? Ramanujacharya, who expounded Visishtadvaita, revolted against his own Guru and publicly shared the mantra diksha given to him confidentially, with all castes. He rejected caste distinctions. In the autumn of his life Karunanidhi wrote Ramanuja’s life history, praising him as beyond caste differences, made a film about this and his own KTV telecast it! Are DMK leaders, his own and grandson ,aware of this?

“The link between Tamil culture and SD is a millennial continuity. The great Tamil Siddha Tirumoolar, whose time period some say even predates Sankara, expounded Advaita by saying that the formless Brahman hid behind the external form. The 19th century saint Vallalar explained Advaita saying that idol worship is the first to realize the formless Brahman. DMK rejects Advaita but respects both Tirumoolar and Vallalar!

“ Hindu faith is also known as Sanatan Dharma, Vedic faith and Vaidika faith. Sanatan Dharma means eternal and indestructible values. Varnashrama Dharma is based on work division and there is no hierarchy in it. This is what is said in a Class 12 text book on Indian Culture, revised and published in 2022 by the present DMK government itself. Tamil literature *Tolkappiyam* also defines Tamil society as a four-fold varna hierarchy of Arasar (*Kshatriya*), Andanar (*Brahmin*), Vaisiyar (*Vaishya*) and Velalar (*Sudra*), while listing the rights, privileges and dress code of each. ‘Marabiyal’ that

classifies this four -fold social order, means ‘genetics’ which also means by birth.”

About varna, Lord Krishna in Bhagavad Gita has also described varna as profession and social order adopted according to the aptitude of the human beings. The practice of treating Sudras, who opted for work requiring hard labor, as lower caste or untouchables or inferior, was adopted by those human beings who had acquired money or muscle power over a period of time. Today we can find people coming from all traditional caste or four varna working in all kinds of professions in today’s world which needs to be understood correctly by all following different religions.

Madras High Court on Sanatan Dharma

Amidst ongoing debate over Sanatana Dharma following DMK minister Udhayanidhi Stalin’s comments, Madras High Court said that Sanatan Dharma is a set of eternal duties enjoined upon those who follow the Hindu way of life including duties towards nation, parents and Gurus and wondered why such duties should be destroyed. Single- Judge Justice N Seshasayee said he was conscious of the debates around Sanatan Dharma and could not help but ponder over it in a judicial order for he felt genuinely concerned about the issue.

The Judge went on to say that while Sanatan Dharma was intended to be a way of life but somewhere down the line, the idea that it was only about promoting casteism and untouchability had spread. Untouchability cannot be tolerated even if it is permitted within the principles of Sanatana Dharma. The court clarified that it still cannot have a space to stay, since Article 17 of the Constitution has declared that untouchability has been abolished.

The court was hearing a petition challenging a circular issued by a local government Arts College asking students to share their

thoughts on the topic ‘Opposition to Sanadhana’ which had been withdrawn by the college. The court in an order passed on 15 September, 2023 said that it has broadly understood Sanathana Dharma as a set of ‘eternal duties’, and that it cannot be traced to one specific literature, but has to be gathered from multiple sources which, either relate to Hinduism, or which those who practice the Hindu way of life, have come to accept. It includes the duty towards nation, duty to the King, King’s duty to his people, duty to one’s parents and Gurus, care of the poor, and whole lot of other duties. The framers of the constitution had consciously not made right to free speech an absolute right and instead chose to impose reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2).

It would be appreciable, if free speech encourages dispassionate, and healthy public debates, and help the society to move forward, along the lines which the Constitution envisages. At the end of the day, every citizen traces his existence to the Constitution, and hence it is his duty to abide by its values, its ethos, and to hold an uncompromising abidance to its spirits. This should not be forgotten. Hope it prevails, the Court said.

Radhakrishnan on Sanatan Dharma and Hinduism

As presented by Anup Taneja, the views of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan who was the most learned scholar of comparative and philosophy of religion are also quoted in the following paragraphs to fulfil the aim of this study project.

“Radhakrishnan in his philosophy of religion, synthesizes the non-dual philosophy of Sankara’s Advaita Vedanta and the idea of Absolute Idealism of the western tradition. Thus, by presenting a refined amalgamated philosophy comprising the finest elements of the East and the West, Radhakrishnan succeeded in bridging the gap between the eastern and western spirituality. He was an exponent of

dynamic Hinduism which, true to original character as a synthesis of diverse faiths and philosophies of life, is now presented as a universal doctrine capable of embracing humanity-as a Sanatan Dharma, Perennial Philosophy.

“It is an irony that religion, which is supposed to bind people together and spread the message of universal love and brotherhood, has created narrow, sectarian walls in society, where followers of one particular belief system are completely intolerant towards the followers of some other belief system-so much so that communal clashes have become a common occurrence. Speaking at the General Conference of UNESCO, Beirut, November,1948, Radhakrishnan , as the leader of Indian delegation said: ‘The threat which hangs over human civilization is the symptoms of a desperate moral need. There can be no stable future for the world without a spiritual revolution-without a transformation of human motivation. A good world cannot be built on pride or selfishness, hatred or injustice, greed or lust for power.... A spiritual renewal is necessary if the world to be saved’.

“According to Radhakrishnan, the Hindu philosophical thought, which adopts the perennial approach to religion, lays more emphasis on direct spiritual experience rather than any kind of creed where rituals are performed in an insipid, mechanical manner. It is precisely for this reason that the Hindu religion is referred to as Sanatan Dharma (Eternal religion) which by accepting different kinds of religious and mystical experiences and beliefs of other religions, adopts an inclusive and magnanimous attitude.

“If religion is to serve as the basis of new world order, it must become more inward and more universal. The Perennial Philosophy of Religion presented by Radhakrishnan not eliminates all the religious conflicts and divergent viewpoints but also brings together

under one umbrella the different religions of the world, weaving them into a thread of unity. He further asserts that instead of adhering to an insipid dogmatic theology, the seekers should endeavor to get connected with the Light of Pure Consciousness, by directing the mind inwards through regular meditation. It is important to consciously realize that the Supreme Spirit dwells in the hearts of all creatures and that each soul is filled with the same divine essence. This sublime experience will help the seeker in getting firmly anchored in the non-dual state of consciousness and in bringing about love and harmony among people owing allegiance to different religious belief systems. True religion, said Radhakrishnan, is one that is devoid of dogmatic sentiments, bigotry, creed and parochial attitude.

“The Hindu attitude to religion is interesting. While fixed intellectual belief marks off one religion from another, Hinduism sets no such limits. Intellect is subordinate to intuition, dogma to experience, and outer expression to inward realization.”

Authors own opinion

The author of this book is of the view that there has been unnecessary debate on various issues within Hindu society for ages resulting into various kind of reforms and birth of many more religious groups or sect. The first was for or against idol worship which is based on the fact that initially the universe was ruled by demigods and deities only for millions of year who had the divine power bestowed by the supreme soul or God. This was followed by the birth of various kingdoms created by human beings that took charge of ruling the society in the Indian subcontinent in other parts of this planet earth. Though every kingdom had the blessings of the deity to rule yet the rituals adopted to worship the deity differed. Some believed in sacrifices of human beings or animals to please the deity, whereas others rejected any kind of sacrifice and followed the rituals to worship

the deity by offering of flowers and fruits etc. while engaging in the worship of the deity. Today we have differences coming among the religious masters and others responsible for the management of the places of worship. All these issues were created by human beings and had nothing to do with teachings of 'Shrimad Bhagavad Gita' which is the original source of Sanatan Dharma.

Part-VII

ETERNAL IMPORTANCE OF SHRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA

1

ORIGIN OF BHAGAVAD GITA

The Shrimad-Bhagavad-Gita occurs in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata and comprises 18 chapters from 25th to 42nd. The discourse between Arjuna and Krishna on the battlefield, on the eve of the war which forms the subject matter of the work, was strung together in seven hundred verses and put in its place in the body of this great epic Mahabharata by sage Vyasa. The Gita opens with Dhrtarastra's query to Sanjay about the progress of events. The second Chapter of the Bhishma Parva, we find Vyasa offering the power of sight to the blind King, that he might see the war. Dhrtarastra declined to have it, saying that he did not care to have eyes with which only to see the death of his own people; but he would like to hear what was happening. On this the great sage Vyasa said, that all the occurrences in connection with the war would be reflected in the mind of Sanjaya, and he would faithfully report them to Dhrtarastra.

The Gita is called an Upanishad, because it contains the essence of self-knowledge, and because its teachings, like those of the Vedas, are divided into three sections, Karma (work), Upasana (devotion) and Jnana (knowledge). The first Chapter is introductory. The second Chapter of Gita is the summary of the whole work i.e. in 1 to 48 and connected Slokas (verses) teach selfless work devoid of desire for fruits for the purification of the heart; in 49 to 61 and the connected Slokas (verses) devotion is taught to the pure-hearted to qualify them further to the highest Sannyasa, which is taught in 71 and the connected Slokas.

The central teaching of the Gita is the attainment of freedom, by the performance of one's Swadharma or duty in life. It is well known why that Gita came into existence. It was owing to Arjuna's unwillingness to do his duty as a Kshatriya – to fight for a just cause because it involved the destruction of his own people. Not that Arjuna did not recognize the justice and right of the cause, but he would rather renounce the world and try to liberate himself from worldly affairs i.e. Moksa – than kill his relatives and friends. Krishna characterization of this weakly sentimental attitude of Arjuna is well known. He called it “Un-Arya-like delusion, contrary to the attainment alike of heaven and honor” and exhorted Partha to “yield not to unmanliness” but to “cast off this mean faint-hearted-ness”. Chapter-2.23) Could a coward who fails to do his duty, be worthy to attain Moksha? “Seems to be Krishna's rejoinder, could a man not purified by the fire-ordeal of Swadharma, could a renegade, a slave, attain Moksa? No, says the Lord and this is the lesson the followers of Bhagavad Gita have forgotten all these years, though we have been reading and discussing the Bhagavad-Gita all the time.

SHRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA

(Word by word original translation of 700 verses from 18 chapters of 'Bhagavad Gita' in English without any elaboration)

Historical background

The origin of Mahabharata war begins with the path adopted by Duryodhana to capture power through deceit and deprive the Pandavas who were the true successor to rule the Kuru Kingdom of Dhrratrastra after his demise. Full details of power struggle and the battle fought are available in the great epic of Mahabharata. The aim of the text here is only to narrate the happenings during the Mahabharata war with particular reference to conversation which took place between King Dhrratrastra - Sanjay and between Arjuna -Lord Krishna that later became the holy book 'Shrimad Bhagavad Gita' because of the role played by Lord Krishna Himself to motivate and ensure victory of Pandavas to protect and preserve the truthful path followed by the Pandavas from the evil forces led by Duryodhana (son of King Dhrratrastra) .

When all efforts of preventing the war between Kauravas and Pandavas failed and subsequently both sides had thoroughly prepared to start the battle of Kurukshetra, the sage Veda Vyasa asked Dhrratrastra, the king and father of Duryodhana, if he would like to see the terrible carnage so that he could make a gift of transcendent vision (as king Dhrratrastra was visually handicapped otherwise). Dhrratrastra replied: O Maharishi, I have no desire to see with my own eyes this slaughter of my own family, but would like to hear all the events of the battle. Thereupon, Vedavyasa conferred the gift of divine vision on Sanjaya, a trusty counsellor of Dhrratrastra and told that Sanjaya would

describe all the happenings of the war while sitting with King Dhrastrastra.

ORIGINAL TEXT OF SHRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA

CHAPTER ONE

(The scene before Mahabharata war Total Verses-47)

Verse-1 to 27

No translation of the Verses is given here which included only initial events and the same have been quoted briefly as follows.

Sanjaya narrates in Verse -1 to 27 of Bhagavad Gita, the introduction of the warrior from Pandavas and Kauravas who are there in the battle to participate in the war. Lord Sri Krishna placed the magnificent chariot between two Armies in front of Bhishma, Drona and all other kings and said, Arjuna, behold these Kauravas assembled here. Arjuna saw there in both Armies his uncles, grand uncles and teachers, even great grand uncles, maternal uncles, brothers, cousins, sons and nephews and grand nephews, even so friends, father-in- laws and well wishers as well.

Verse -28 to47

After seeing the sight of kinsmen in the battle, Arjuna said to Krishna that he is unable to fight this war nor I see any good in killing my kinsmen in battle. I do not covet (wish) for victory , nor kingdom nor pleasures or even life be to us. How can we be happy after killing own kinsmen? Even if these people, with minds blinded by greed; perceive no evil in destroying their own race and no sin in treason to friends. Arjun further asked Krsna as to why we should not see clearly the sin accruing from the destruction of one's family and think turning away from this crime. Sanjaya said: Arjuna, whose mind was agitated

by grief on the battle field and having thrown aside his bow and arrows, sank into the hinder part of his chariot.

(Chapter-1 ends here)

CHAPTER TWO

(Sankhya Yoga Total Verses-72)

Verse-1 to 5

Sanjaya said: Shri Krsna then addressed Arjuna whose eyes were filled with tears and agitated and was full of sorrow. Sri Bhagavan said: Arjuna, how has this infatuation overtaken you at this odd hours? It is shunned by noble souls; neither it brings heaven, nor fame to you. Arjuna replied: It is better to live on alms in the world without slaying these elders, because even after killing them we shall after all enjoy blood stained pleasures in the form of wealth and sense enjoyment.

Verse-6 to 9

We do not even know which is preferable for us-to fight or not to fight; nor we know whether we will win or they will conquer us. Those very sons of Dhrrastra, killing whom we do not even wish to live, stand in the enemy ranks. With my very tainted by the vice of faint-heartedness and my mind puzzled with regard to duty, I am asking you. Tell me that which is decidedly good; I am your disciple. pray to instruct me, who have put myself into your hands.

For on obtaining undisputed sovereignty and an affluent kingdom on this earth and lordship over the gods, I do not see any means that can drive away the grief which is drying up on my senses. Sanjaya said: O king, having thus spoken to Krsna, Arjun again said to Him, 'I will not fight' and became silent.

Verse -10 to 18

Sanjaya said to Dhrtarastra: Sri Krsna, as if smiling addressed the following words to sorrowing Arjuna, in the midst of the two armies.

Sri Bhagavan said: Arjuna, you grieve over those who should not be grieved for, and yet speak like the learned; wise men do not sorrow over the dead or the living. In fact, there was never a time when I was not or when you or these kings were not. Nor is it a fact that hereafter we shall cease to be. Just as boyhood, youth and old age are attributed to the soul through this body, even so it attains another body. The wise man does not get deluded about this.

O son of Kunti, the contacts between the senses and their objects, which give rise to the feeling of heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc. are transient. Therefore, Arjuna ignore them indestructible substance. The wise man to whom pain and pleasure are alike, and who is not tormented by these contacts, becomes eligible for immortality. The unreal has no existence, and the real never ceases to be, the reality of both has thus been perceived by the seers of truth. Know that alone to be imperishable, which pervades this universe; for no one has power to destroy the indestructible substance. All these bodies pertaining to the imperishable, indefinable and eternal soul are spoken of as perishable, therefore, Arjuna fight.

Verses-19 to 38

Soul neither kills, nor is killed. The soul is never born nor dies; nor does it become only after being born. For it is unborn, eternal, everlasting and ancient; even though the body is slain, the soul is not. As a man shedding worn out garments, takes other new ones, likewise the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others which are new. For in that case, death is certain for a man and rebirth

is inevitable for the dead. You should not, therefore, grieve over the inevitable. Besides: considering your own duty too, you should not waver; for there is nothing more welcome for a man of the warrior class than a righteous war. And a warrior-chiefs who thought highly of you, will now despise you, thinking that it was fear which drove you from battle.

Verses – 39

Treating alike victory and defeat, gain and loss, pleasure and pain, get ready for the fight then; fighting thus you will not incur sin. Arjuna, this attitude of mind has been presented to you from the point of view of Jnana (knowledge) Yoga; now you hear the same as presented from the standpoint of Karma Yoga (the yoga of selfless action). Equipped with this attitude of mind, you will be able to throw off completely the shackles of Karma.

Verses- 40, 41

Arjuna, in this Yoga (of disinterested action) the intellect is determinate and directed singly towards one ideal; whereas the intellect of the undecided (ignorant men moved by desires) wanders in all directions, after innumerable aims.

Verses- 42,43,44

Arjuna, those who are full of worldly desires and devoted to the letter of Vedas, who look upon heaven, as the supreme goal and argue that there is nothing beyond heaven are unwise. They utter flowery speech recommending many rituals of various kinds for the attainment of pleasure and power with rebirth as their fruit. Those whose minds are carried away by such words, and who are deeply attached to pleasure and worldly powers can not attain the determinate intellect concentrated on God.

Verse-45

O Arjuna, the Vedas thus deal with evolutes of three Gunas (modes of Prakriti or nature); viz, worldly enjoyments and the means of attaining such enjoyments; be thou indifferent to these enjoyments and their means, rising above pairs of opposite like pleasure and pain etc. established in the Eternal Existence (God), absolutely unconcerned about the supply of wants and preservation of what has been already attained, and self controlled.

Verse-46

A Brahmana, who has obtained enlightenment, has the same use of all the Vedas as one who stand at the brink of a sheet of water overflowing on all sides has for a small reservoir of water.

Verse-47 to 53

Yours right is to work only, but never to the fruit thereof. Be not instrumental in making your actions bear fruit, nor let your attachment to inaction. Arjuna, perform your duties established in Yoga, renouncing attachment, and even-tempered in success and failures, evenness of temper is called Yoga. Endowed with equanimity, one sheds in this life both good and evil. Therefore, strive for the practice of this Yoga of equanimity (evenness of mind). Skill in action lies in the practice of this Yoga. When your intellect, confused by hearing conflicting statements, will rest, steady and undistracted in meditation in God, you will attain Yoga for lasting union with God.

Verse-54 to 72

Arjuna said: Krsna, what is the definition of marks of a God- realized soul, stable to mind and established in Samadhi (perfect tranquility of mind)? How does the man of stable mind speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?

Sri Bhagavan said; Arjuna, when one thoroughly dismisses all cravings of the mind and is satisfied in the self through the joy of the self, then he is called of stable mind. The sage whose mind remains unperturbed amid sorrows, whose thirst for pleasure has altogether disappeared, and who is free from passion, fear and anger is called of stable mind. He who is unattached to everything, meeting with good or evil, neither rejoices nor recoils, his mind is stable. Sense-objects turn away from him, who does not enjoy them with his senses; wise man, who is practicing self control, forcibly carry away his mind.

The man dwelling on sense-objects develops attachment for them; from attachment springs up desire, and from desire unfulfilled ensues anger. From Anger arises infatuation; from infatuation confusion of memory, from confusion of memory loss of reason; and from loss of reason one goes to complete ruin. Therefore, Arjuna, he whose senses are completely restrained from their objects, is said to have a stable mind.

That which is right to all beings, in that state of divine knowledge and supreme bliss, the God-realized Yogi keeps awake. And that ever changing, transient worldly happiness in which all beings keep awake is right for the seer. He who has given up all desires and moves free from attachment, egoism and thirst for enjoyment attains peace. Arjuna, such is the state of the God-realized soul; having reached this state, he overcomes delusion. And established in this state, even at the last moment, he attains Brahmic.

(Chapter-2 ends here)

CHAPTER THREE

(Karma Yoga Total verses-43)

Verses-1&2

Arjuna said: Krsna, if you consider knowledge as superior to action, then why You urge me to do this dreadful action, Kesava? You are as were puzzling my mind by these seemingly involved expressions; therefore, tell me definitely the one discipline by which I may obtain the highest good.

Verses-3,4,5

Sri Bhagavan said: Arjuna, in this world two courses of Sadhana (spiritual discipline) have been enunciated by me in the past. In this case of Sankhya Yoga, the Sadhanas proceeds along the path of knowledge, whereas in the case of Karma Yoga, it proceeds along the path of action. Man does not attain freedom from action without entering upon action, nor does he reach perfection merely by ceasing to act. Surely none can ever remain inactive even for a moment; for every one helplessly driven to action by nature-born qualities.

Verse-6 to 9

He who outwardly restraining the organs of sense and action, sits mentally dwelling on the objects of senses, that man of deluded intellect is called a hypocrite. On the other hand, he who controlling the organs of sense and action by the power of his will, remaining unattached, undertakes the Yoga of action through those organs, he excels. Therefore, do and perform your allotted duty, for action is superior than inaction. Desisting from action, you can not even maintain your body. Man is bound by his own action except when it is performed for the sake of sacrifice. Arjuna, perform your duty

efficiently, free from attachment for the sake of sacrifice alone. **Verse-10,11,12**

Having created mankind along with the spirit of sacrifice at the beginning of creation, the creator Brahma, said to them, “You shall prosper by this; may this yield the enjoyment you seek. Foster the gods through this sacrifice, and let the gods be gracious to you. Each fostering other disinterestedly, you will attain the highest good. Fostered by sacrifice, the gods will surely bestow on you unasked all the desired enjoyments. He who enjoys the gifts bestowed by them, without giving them in return, is undoubtedly a thief”.

Verse-13,14,15

The virtuous who partake of what is left over after sacrifice are absolved of all sins. These sinful ones who cook for the sake of nourishing their body alone eat only commit sin. All beings are evold from food; production of food is dependent on rain, rain ensues from sacrifice, and sacrifice is rooted in prescribed action. Know that prescribed action has its origin in the Vedas, and the Vedas proceed from the Indestructible (God); hence all pervading infinite is always present in the sacrifice.

Verse-16 to 21

Arjuna, he who does not follow the wheel of creation thus set going in the world i.e. does not perform his duties, sinful and sensual, he lives in vain. He, however, who takes delight in the self alone and is gratified with self, and is contented in the self, has no duty. In this world that great soul has no use whatsoever for things done nor things not done; nor has he selfish dependence of any kind on any creature. Therefore, go on efficiently doing your duty without attachment. Doing work without attachment, man attains the Supreme soul. It is through action without attachment alone that Janaka and other

wise men reached perfection. Having an eye to maintenance of world order too you should take to action. For whatever a great man does, that very thing other men also do; whatever standard he sets up; the generality of men follow the same.

Verse-22,23,24

Arjuna, there is nothing in all the three worlds for me to do, nor is there anything worth attaining unattained by Me. Yet I continue to work. Should I not engage in action, scrupulously at any time, great harm will come to the world. Arjuna, men follow My way in all matter. If I cease to act, these worlds will perish; nay, I should prove to be the cause of confusion and of the destruction of the people.

Verse-25,26

Arjuna, as the universe act with attachment, so should the wise man seeking maintenance of the world order, act without attachment. A wise man established in the self, should not unsettle the mind of the ignorant attached to action, but should get them to perform all their duties, duly performing his own duties.

Verse-27,28

All actions are being performed by the modes of Prakriti (Primordial Matter). The fool, whose mind is deluded by egoism, thinks: “ I am the doer”. He, however, who has true insight into the respective spheres of Gunas (mode of Prakriti) and their actions, holding that it is the Gunas (in the shape of senses, mind etc.) that move among the Gunas (object of perception), does not get attached to them, Arjuna.

Verse-29 to 34

Those who are completely deluded by the Gunas (mode of nature or Prakriti) remain attached to those Gunas and actions; the man of perfect knowledge should not unsettle the mind of those who are ignorant due to weak mind. Therefore, Arjuna: dedicating all actions to Me with your mind fixed on me leaving aside hope, affection and depression, fight this war. Those following this teaching of mine are freed from the bondage of all actions. However, those who do not follow this teaching of mine, such ignorant people are deluded and their knowledge is lost. All living creatures follow their tendencies; even the wise acts according to the tendencies of his own nature. So no external restraint will work. Passion and zeal are rooted in all sense-objects. Man should never allow himself to be swayed by them, because they are the biggest enemy to hinder this righteous path.

Verse-35 to 43

Even death in the performance of one's duty brings blessedness but another duty is fraught with fear. Therefore, Arjuna, you must first control your senses; and then kill this evil thing which obstructs Jnana (knowledge of the Absolute or Nirguna Brahma) and knowledge of Vijnana (knowledge of *Sakar* Brahma or manifest Divinity). Senses are to be greater than body; but mind is greater than senses and soul is beyond mind. Thus, Arjuna, knowing which is higher than intellect, control your senses and kill the evil or enemy in the form of desire.

(Chapter-3 ends here)

CHAPTER FOUR

(Gyan Karm Sanyas Yog Total Verses- 42)

Verses-1,2,3

Sri Bhagavan said: I taught this immortal Yoga to Vivasvan (Sun -god); Vivasvan conveyed it Manu (his son); and Manu imparted it to (his son) Iksvaku. This is how this tradition was transmitted to sons by the Raja Rishis (Royal sages). But , thereafter it disappeared, from the earth planet for long time. The same ancient Yoga has this day been imparted to you by me, because you are my devotee and friend; and because it is a mysticism (spiritual secret knowledge) which subject must be kept secret.

Verses-4,5,6

Arjuna said: You are of recent origin, while the birth of Vivasvan dates back to remote antiquity. How, then am I to believe that You taught this Yoga at the beginning of the creations. Sri Bhagavan said: Arjuna, you and I have passed through many births, I remember them all; you do not remember. O Chastiser of foes. Though birthless and deathless, and the Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself through my own Yogamaya (divine potency), keeping my nature (prakriti) under control.

Verse-7 to 11

O Bharata, whenever righteousness is on the decline, and unrighteousness is in the ascendent, then I body Myself forth for the protection of the virtuous, for the extirpation (the act of rooting out) of evil-doers, and the establishment of Dharma (righteousness) on the firm footing, I am born in different Yuga (time) to Yuga. Arjuna, My birth and activities are divine he who knows this in reality is not born on leaving his body, but comes to Me. Completely rid of passion, fear and

anger wholly absorbed in Me, depending on Me and purified by the penance of wisdom; many have become one with Me even in the past. Arjun, howsoever men seek Me; even so do I approach them; for all men follow My path in every way.

Verse-12 to 15

In this world of human beings; men seeking the fruition of their activities worship the gods; for success born out of actions follow quickly. The four orders of the society (the Brahamana, the Ksatriya, the Vaisya and the Sudra) were created by Me classifying them according to mode of Prakrti predominant in each apportioning corresponding duties to them; though the author of this creation, know Me, the immortal Lord to be a non doer. Since I have no craving for the fruits of actions; action do not contaminate Me. Even he who thus knows Me in reality is not bound by actions. Having known thus, action was performed even by the ancient seekers for liberation; therefore, you also perform such actions as have been performed by the ancients from the beginning of the time.

Verse-16 to 23

Lord Krsna explained the difference in action (Karma) and inaction (akarma) in the verses-16 to 23 as follows. The truth about action must be known and ruth (pity) of inaction also must be known; even so truth about prohibited action must be known. For mysterious are the ways of action. He who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, is wise among men; he is Yogi, who has performed all action. Even the wise call him a sage, whose understandings are free from desire and thoughts of the world, and whose actions are burnt up by the fire of wisdom. He who having totally given up attachment to actions and their fruits, no longer depends on the world, and is ever satisfied, does nothing at all, though fully engaged in action. Having subdued his mind and body, and given up all objects of enjoyment, and

free from craving; he who performs sheer bodily actions, does not incur any sin.

The Karma yogi, who is contented with whatever is got unsought, is free from jealousy and has transcended all pairs of opposite like joy and grief, and is balanced in success and failure, not bound by his action. All his action melt away, who is free from attachment, who has no identification with the body and does not claim it as his own, whose mind is established in the knowledge of self and who works only for the sake of sacrifice.

Verse-24

In the practice of seeing Brahma every where as a form of sacrifice, Brahma is the ladle (with which the oblation is poured into the fire etc.); Brahma again, is the oblation; Brahma in the fire, Brahma itself the scarifier, and so Brahma itself constitutes the act of pouring the oblation into the fire. And finally Brahma is the goal to be reached by him who is absorbed in Brahma as the act of such sacrifice.

Verses-25 to 42

Other Yogis duly offer sacrifice only in the shape of worship to gods. Other pour into the fire of Brahma the very sacrifice in the shape of the self through the sacrifice known as the perception of identity. Some other offer sacrifice self control of senses or offer sacrifice in the shape of austerities. The practice of Pranayama (breath control) is also known as sacrificial worship. To the man, who does not offer sacrifice even in this world, is not happy, how, then the other world be happy? Many such forms of sacrifice have been set forth in detail through the mouth of Vedas; know them all by involving the action of mind, senses and body.

Arjuna, sacrifice through knowledge is superior to sacrifice performed with material things. Understand the true nature of that knowledge by approaching wise seers of truth. When you have reached enlightenment, ignorance will delude you no more. On earth there is no purifier as great as knowledge, he who has attained purity of heart through a prolonged practice of Karma yoga automatically sees the light of Truth in the self in course of time and immediately attains supreme peace in the form of God realization. Therefore, Arjuna, slashing to pieces with the sword of wisdom; this doubt in your heart, born of ignorance, establish yourself in Karma yoga in the shape of even temperedness, and stand up for the fight.

(Chapter-4 ends here)

CHAPER FIVE

(Karma Sanyas or renouncer Yoga Total verses-29)

Verses-1 to 5

Arjuna said Krsna, you extol (praise) Sankhya yoga (the yoga of knowledge) and then the Yoga of action. Pray tell me which of the two is decidedly conducive to my good. Sri Bhagavan said: The Yoga of knowledge and Yoga of action, both lead to supreme bliss. Of the two, however, the Yoga of action being easier for practice is superior to the Yoga of knowledge. The Karma yogi who neither hates nor desires fruits should be ever considered a renouncer. For, Arjuna, who is free from the pairs of opposite (passion and hate) is easily freed from bondage. It is the ignorant, not the wise, who say Sankhya yoga and Karma yoga lead to divergent results. For one who is firmly established in either, gets the fruits of both which is same i.e. God - realization.

Verse-6&7

Without Karm yoga, however, Sankhya yoga or renunciation of doer ship in relation to all activities of the mind, senses and body is difficult to accomplish; whereas Karma yogi, who keeps his mind fixed on God, reaches Brahma in no time, Arjuna. Karma yogi, who has fully conquered his mind and mastered his senses, whose heart is pure, and who has identified himself with the self of all beings i.e. God, remains untainted even though performing action.

Verse-8,9,10

The Sankhya yogi, however, who knows the reality of things, must believe, even though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating or drinking, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, answering the call of nature, gasping and opening or closing the eyes, that he does nothing, holding that it is the senses that are moving among other objects. He who acts offering all actions to God, and shaking off attachment, remains untouched by sin, as the lotus leaf by water.

Verses-11 to 14

Offering the fruit of actions to God, the Karm yogi attains everlasting peace in the shape of God- realization ; whereas he who works with the selfish motive, being attached to the fruit of action through desire, gets tied down. The self-controlled Sankhya yoga, doing nothing himself and getting done by others, rests happily in God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, mentally relegating all actions to the mansions of nine gates, the body with nine openings. God determines not the doer ship nor the doings of men, nor even their contact with the fruit of actions; but it is nature alone that functions.

Verses-15,16,17

The omnipresent God does not receive the virtue or sin of any one. Knowledge is enveloped in ignorance, hence it is that beings are constantly falling a pray to delusion. In the case, however, to those whose said ignorance has been set aside by true knowledge of God, that wisdom shinning like the sun reveals the supreme. Those whose mind and intellect are wholly merged in Him, who remains constantly established in identity with Him, and have finally become one with Him, their sins being wiped out by wisdom, reach the state whence there is no return.

Verse-18,19,20

A wise look with the same eye on the Brahma endowed with learning and culture, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and pariah too. Even here is the mortality conquered by those whose mind is established in unity; since the absolute is untouched by evil and knows no distinction, hence they are established in the eternal supreme soul. He who, with reason firm and free from doubt, rejoins not on obtaining what is pleasant and does not feel perturbed on meeting with the unpleasant, that knower of Brahma lives eternally in identity with Brahma.

Verse-21&22

He whose mind remains unattached to sense-objects, derives through meditation the joy of Sattavika (mode of goodness) which dwells in the mind; then that Yogi, having completely identified himself through meditation with Brahma enjoys eternal bliss. The pleasures which are born of sense-contacts are verily (certainly) a source of suffering only though appearing as enjoyable to worldly-minded people. They have a beginning and an end, they come and go. Arjuna, it is for this reasons that a wise man does not indulge in them.

Verse-23&24

He alone who is able to stand, in this very life before casting off this body, the urges of lust and anger is Yogi; and he is a happy man. He who is happy within himself, enjoys within himself the delight of the soul, and even so is illuminated by the inner light, light of the soul, such a Yogi (Sankhya Yogi) identified with Brahma attains Brahma, who is all peace.

Verse-25&26

The seers whose sins have been wiped out, whose doubts have been dispelled by knowledge, whose disciplined mind is firmly established in God and who are actively engaged in the service of all beings, attain Brahma, who is all peace. To those wise men who are free from lust and anger, who have subdued their mind and have realized God, Brahma, the abode of eternal peace is present all around.

Verse-27,28,29

Shutting out all thoughts of external enjoyments, with the gaze fixed on the space between the eye-brows, having regulated the Prana (outgoing) and Apana (incoming) breaths flowing within the nostrils; he who has brought his senses, mind and intellect under control- such contemplative soul intent on liberation and free from desire, fear and anger, is ever liberated. Having known Me in reality as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the supreme Lord of all the worlds and disinterested friend of all beings, My devotee attains peace.

(Chapter-5 ends here)

CHAPTER SIXTH

(Atma Sayam or soul patience Yoga Total verses-47)

Verses-1,2,3,4

The Bhagavan said: He who does his duty without expecting the fruit of his actions is a Sanyasi (Sankhya yogi and Karma Yogi both). He is no Sanyasi (renouncer) who have merely renounced the sacred fire; even so he is no Yogi, who has merely given up all activity. O Arjuna, you must know that what they call Sanyasa is no other than Yogi; for none becomes Yogi, who has not given up thoughts of the world. To the contemplative soul who desires climb – to the heights of Karma yoga without looking for fruits. And once established such Yogi free from thoughts of the world is the only way to blessedness. When a man ceases to have any attachment either for the objects of senses or for actions, and has renounced all thoughts of the world, he is said to have climbed to the heights of Yoga.

Verse-5,6,7

The Bhagavan said: One should lift himself by one's own efforts and should not degrade oneself because human being is himself his own friend as well as enemy. Any living soul who has won over his mind, senses and body, he himself is a friend. Whereas a person who has failed to control his mind, sense and body- he becomes his own enemy. A person who remains in peace both in cold and heat, joy and sorrow, honor and dishonor, such person can be said to be living with full knowledge of super soul in this universe.

Verse-8,9,10

A person who has acquired full Jnana (Knowledge of Nirgun Brahm) and Vijnana (Knowledge of manifest divinity) who has won over all his senses and who remains unmoved under all circumstances and does not differentiate between pebbles, stones and gold, he can be said to be God-realized soul. He who looks upon well wishers, friends and foes, relatives, the virtuous and sinner with same feeling, he can be said to be the supreme among the human being. A person living in seclusion all by himself, the Yogi who has controlled his mind, body and is free from desires and void of possessions should constantly engage in super soul through meditation.

Verse-11,12,13

For meditation, one should firmly place his seat in a spot which is free from dirt and other impurities with the sacred Kusa grass, and a deer skin and a cloth spread thereon one below another (Kusa grass below, deer skin in the middle and cloth uppermost) neither very high nor very low. After occupying that seat, controlling the mind and senses through concentration, one should practice Yoga for self purification. Further one should hold the trunk, head and neck straight and steady, remaining firm and fixing the gaze on the tip of his nose without looking in other direction.

Verse-14,15

Firm in the vow of complete chastity and fearless, keeping himself perfectly calm and with the mind held in restraint and fixed on Me, the vigilant Yogi should sit absorbed in Me. Thus constantly applying his mind to Me, the Yogi of disciplined mind attains the everlasting peace consisting of supreme bliss, which abides in Me.

Verse-16 to 19

Arjuna, this Yoga is neither for him who over eats, nor for him who observes complete fast; it is neither for him who is given to too much sleep; nor even for him who is ceaselessly awake. Yoga which rids one of woe, is accomplished only by him who has regulated his diet, recreation, performing actions, sleep and wakefulness. When the mind is controlled and establishes itself in God alone, then the person who is free from yearning for all enjoyments is said to be established in Yoga. As the light does not flickers in a windless place, such is stated to be the picture of the disciplined mind of the Yogi practicing meditation on God.

Verses-20 to 23

The state in which, curbed through the practice of Yoga, the mind becomes still, purified by meditation on God, the soul rejoices only in God. In other words once all senses have been controlled through purified brain, the Yogi can experience the transcendent (supreme) happiness and thus never departs from truth. Having established himself in such a situation, Yogi does not waver even by the heaviest of the sorrows faced in life.

Verse-24,25&26

Completely renouncing all desires arising from thoughts of the world, and fully restraining the whole pack of the senses from all sides, one should through gradual practice attain tranquility; and fixing the mind on God only without thinking about any thing else. Drawing back the restless and fidgety (restless) mind from all those objects after which it runs, one should repeatedly fix mind on God.

Verse-27 to 32

Yogi whose mind is perfectly serene who is sinless, whose passion is subdued and who is identified with Brahma, the embodiment of Truth, knowledge and bliss or supreme happiness comes as a matter of course. A true Yogi with infinite consciousness, sees Me in all beings and also sees all beings in Me and he never loses sight of Me and I never lose sight of him in all circumstances Arjuna, true Yogi sees the true equality of all beings in their happiness and distress.

Verse-33,34,35,36

Arjuna said: O Madhusudana, the system of Yoga which you have summarized appears impractical and unendurable to me, for the mind which is restless and unsteady. For the mind which is unsteady, turbulent (turbulent) and powerful and to subdue it is more difficult than controlling the wind. Sri Bhagavan said, O mighty armed son of Kunti, it is undoubtedly difficult to curb the restless mind, it is possible by constant practice of meditation and detachment from worldly objects. Any one who has established control over his mind, he can achieve the desired results of Yoga.

Verse-37,38,39

Arjun said: Krsna what becomes of the soul which believes in Yoga but fails to control his mind and subdue his passions and does not meet the supreme soul after his death. Krsna, strayed from the path leading to God realization and without anything to stand upon, is he not lost like the torn cloud with no place in any sphere. This is my doubt and only you can destroy this completely.

Verse-40 to 47

Bhagavan said: Dear Arjuna, a transcendentalist engaged in self- redemption never dies in this world or in the spiritual world. Any one working for God Realization never meets with evil destiny. The unsuccessful Yogi, after many years of enjoyment on the planet with pious living entities, is born into a wealthy family of righteous people. And enlightened Yogis, which is also very difficult to attain. Arjuna, he automatically regains in that birth, the spiritual insight of his previous birth, and through that he strives harder than ever, for perfection to achieve the objective of God-Realization.

The other one born in a rich family though under the sway of his senses, feels drawn towards God by force of the habits acquired in his previous birth; such an inquisitive striving for Yoga stands always above the ritualistic principles of the Vedic scriptures. The Yogi, however, who diligently (hard working) takes up the practice can obtain perfection in this very life and be with the supreme soul after being thoroughly purged of sins. Yogi is considered to be superior to ascetics (strict hermit) and those who are the masters of spiritual scriptures as well as those who are fruitive workers. Of all Yogis, again, he who devoutly worship Me with his mind focused on Me is considered by Me to be the best Yogi.

Chapter-6 ends here)

CHAPTER SEVEN

(Gyan Vigyan or knowledge and science Yog Total verses-30)

Verse-1

Sri Bhagavan said: Arjuna, now listen how with the mind attached to Me with exclusive love and practicing Yoga with absolute dependence on Me, you will know me, the repository (stored

up for safety) of all power, strength and other attributes in entirety and without any shadow of doubt.

Verse-2&3

Lord Krsna said: I shall unfold to you in its entirety the wisdom i.e. knowledge of God in his absolute formless aspect. Having known God both with form and without, nothing else remains to be known in this world. Hardly one among thousands of human being strive to realize Me; of these striving Yogis, again, some rare one totally devoting himself exclusively to Me in reality.

Verse-4&5

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego- are the eight kind of my lower material nature. Other than this by which the whole universe is sustained, is the my higher spiritual nature in the form of Jiva (the life principle), which you have to understand, O Arjuna.

Verse-6,7,8

Arjuna, Know that all beings have evolved from this two fold Prakrti, and that I am the source of the entire creation, and into Me again it disappears. There is nothing else besides Me, Arjuna. This whole universe rests upon Me like pearls are strung on a thread. O Arjuna, I am the tastefulness (sapidity) in water, light of the sun and moon sacred syllable OM in Vedas , I am the sound in ether, and manliness in Men.

Verse-9,10 &11

I am the pure o'dour (scent) in the earth and heat in fire and I am the life in all beings and I am the penance in all austerities in men. Arjuna, know Me the eternal seed of all beings I am the

intelligence of the intelligent; the glory of all powerful men. Arjuna , of the mighty I am the might free from passion and desire. I am the sexual desire not conflicting with religious scriptures.

Verse-12 to 15

All the material nature, be they of Sattava Guna (goodness), Rajo Guna (passion) and Tamo Guna (ignorance) are manifested by my energy. Know that all are evolved from Me alone. But in reality neither do I exist in them, nor they in Me. As a result of these modes of material nature Sattava, Rajas and Tamas, the world fails to recognize Me standing apart from these and imperishable. For this most wonderful Maya (veil) of Mine, consisting of three Gunas (modes of nature), is extremely difficult to break through. However, those who constantly adore Me alone are able to cross it. Others whose wisdom has been carried away by Maya (illusion) and who have embraced the demoniac nature, such foolish and vile (wicked) men of evil deeds do not adore Me.

Verse-16 to 19

O Best of Bharatas, Arjuna, four type of devotees worship Me. Devotees of noble deeds, the seekers after worldly possessions, those in distress, the seekers of knowledge and the man of wisdom. Of these , best is the man of wisdom with exclusive devotion in Me. Because I am extremely dear to wise man who knows Me in reality and he is extremely dear to Me. Indeed all these are noble, the man of wisdom is My very self; such is my view. For such a devotee, who has his mind and intellect merged in Me, he remains established and attains Me in life. In the very last of all births the enlightened soul worships Me, such great soul is very rare.

Verse-20 to 23

Those whose wisdom has been carried away due to various material desires and due to their nature, they worship other deities as per rules or rituals laid down for each deities. Whatever celestial form a devotee chooses to worship the deity with reverence, I stabilize the faith of that particular devotee in that deity. Endowed with such faith he worship that particular deity and obtains through him without doubt his desired enjoyments of the fruits as ordained (destined) by Myself. The fruits gained by these people of lesser intelligence, however, is perishable. The worshippers of gods attain the gods, whereas My devotee in whatever manner they may worship Me, eventually come to Me and Me alone.

Verse-24 to 28

Not knowing My unsurpassable and un-decaying supreme nature, the ignorant believe Me- the supreme spirit beyond the reach of mind and senses, the embodiment of truth to have assumed a finite form through birth as an ordinary human being.

Veiled by My Yogamaya (divine potency); I do not manifest to all and therefore ignorant human beings fail to recognize Me as unperishable supreme soul who is neither born nor dies. Arjuna, I know all beings, past as well as present and even those that are yet to come, but none devoid of faith and reverence knows Me. O valiant Arjuna, because of desire and jealousy leading into delusion of pleasure and pain, all living creatures are falling pray to infatuation. But those men of virtuous deeds whose sins have vanished and are free from passion and hate, only such committed and determined devotees worship Me by all means.

Verse-29&30

The human being who have taken refuge in Me through devotional service and strive for deliverance (rescue) from old age and death. Such human being actually know Me as Brahma (the absolute), the supreme soul through spiritualism and fruitive activities. The unmanifest divinity dwelling in the heart of all being even at the hour of death, know Me alone with steadfast mind.

(Chapter-7 ends here)

CHAPTER EIGHT

(Akshar Brahma Yoga Total verses-28)

Verses-1&2

Arjuna said: Krsna, what is that Brahma (absolute), what is Adhyatma (spiritualism), and what is Karma (action)? What is called Adhibhuta (matter) and what is termed as Adhidaiva (divine intelligence). Krsna, who is Adhiyajna here and how does he dwell in the body? And how are to be realized at the time of death by those steadfast mind.

Verse-3 to 7

Sri Bhagavan said: The supreme indestructible is Brahma; one's own self (the individual soul) is called Adhyatma; and discharge of spirits which brings forth the existence of beings, is called Karma (action). All perishable objects are Adhibhuta; the shining Purusa (Brahma) is Adhidaiva; and in this body I Myself dwelling in the heart of every embodied being which is called Adhiyajna. O Arjun?

He who departs from the body, thinking of Me alone at the time of death, attains My nature and there is no doubt about it. In

whatever state one leaves his body at the time of death, the same is absorbed in its thought forever. Therefore, Arjuna, think of Me at all times and fight with mind and reason thus set on Me, you will without doubt come to Me only.

Verse-8

O Partha (Arjuna), he who with his mind disciplined through Yoga in the form of practice of meditation and thinking of nothing else, is constantly engaged in contemplation of God attains the supremely effulgent (brightly shining) divine Purusa (God).

Verse-9 &10

He who contemplates on the all-wise, ageless Being, the Ruler of all, subtler than the subtle (clever), the universal sustainer possessing a form beyond human conception, refulgent (bright) like the sun and far beyond the darkness of ignorance. Having by the power of Yoga firmly held the life-breath between the two eyebrows at the time of death and contemplating as God with a steadfast mind, full of devotion, he reaches verily (certainly) that supreme divine Purusa (God).

Verse-11

Krsna: Learned persons in Vedas who call supreme soul imperishable, embodiment of truth and striving free from passion and one who practices celibacy, I shall explain you briefly as to how this level of perfection is attained.

Verse-12&13

Having closed all the doors of senses, and firmly holding the mind in the cavity of the heart, and then fixing the life breath in the head, and thus remaining steadfast in Yogic concentration on God, he

who leaves the body and departs, uttering the one indestructible Brahma, OM, and dwelling on Me in My absolute aspect, reaches the supreme goal.

Verse-14,15&16

Arjuna, whosoever always and constantly thinks of Me with steadfast mind, for such Yogi ever absorbed in Me, I am easily attainable. Great souls who have attained the perfection, having come to Me, are no more subjected to rebirth to suffer the sorrow in this planet. O Arjuna: from the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode never takes birth again.

Verse-17 to 20

Those Yogis who know from realization Brahma's day as covering thousand Mahayugas know the reality of times. All embodied beings emanate from the unmanifest i.e. Brahma's subtle body at the coming of cosmic days and at the night fall they merge into the same subtle body of Brahma, known as the unmanifest.

Arjuna, this multitude of beings, being born again and again, is dissolved under compulsion of its nature at the coming of the cosmic night, and rises at the commencement of the cosmic day. Far beyond even this unmanifest, there is yet another unmanifest Existence, that supreme divine person who does not perish even though all being perish.

Verse-21&22

The same Unmanifest which has been spoken of as the Indestructible is also called the supreme goal; that again is My supreme abode, attaining after which they never return to this mortal world. Arjuna, that unmanifest supreme power in whom all beings reside, and

by whom all this is pervaded, is attainable only through exclusive devotion.

Verse-23 to 28

Arjuna, I shall now tell you the time (path) departing when Yogi do not return, and also the time (path) departing when they do return. Of the two path, the one is that which are stationed all- effulgent (brightly shining) fire-god and the deities presiding over daylight, the bright fortnight, and the six months of the northward course of the sun respectively; proceeding along it after death. Yogis who have known Brahma, being successively led by the above gods, finally reach Brahma.

The other path is that wherein are stationed the gods presiding over smoke, night, the dark fortnight, and the six months of the south course of the sun, the Yogi, devoted to fruitive action, taking to this path after death is led by the above gods, one after another, and attaining the luster (brightness) of the moon and enjoying the fruits of this meritorious deeds in heaven, returns to this mortal world.

For these two paths of the world, the bright and the dark, are considered to be eternal. Proceeding by one of them, one reaches the supreme state from which there is no return. When one passes in darkness, he returns the mortal world and becomes subject to birth and death once more. Know thus the secret of these two paths. O sun of Kunti, no Yogi gets deluded. Therefore, Arjuna, at all times be steadfast in Yoga in the form of equanimity i.e. strive constantly for My realization. The Yogi, realizing this profound truth, doubtless transcends all rewards, ascribed in the scriptures to the study of Vedas, as well as to the performance of sacrifices, austerities and charities, and attains the eternal supreme state forever.

(Chapter-8 ends here)

CHAPTER NINE

(Raj Vidya Raj Guhya or confidential science Yog Total verses-34)

Verse-1

Sri Bhagavan said: To you, a devotee who is devoid of any passion, I shall now unfold the most secret knowledge of Nirgun Brahma along with the knowledge of manifest divinity, knowing which you shall be free from the evil of worldly existence.

Verse-2&3

This knowledge of both the Nirguna and Saguna aspects of divinity is a confidential science, a confidential secret, supremely holy, most excellent, directly fruitive and virtuous, very easy to practice and imperishable. Arjuna, people having no faith in the Dharma, failing to reach Me and continue to remain in the cycle of birth and death in this world.

Verse-4,5 &6

The whole of this universe is permeated (passing through holes) by Me like water and ice as manifest of divinity and all beings rest on the idea within Me. But I am not present in them. But behold the wonderful power of My divine Yoga. Though I am the source of sustainer and creator but My soul does not dwell in those beings. Just as the extensive air, which is moving every where, being born of ether, ever remains in ether, likewise know that all beings who have originated from My thought abide in Me only.

Verse-7 to 10

O Arjuna, at the end of millennium all beings enter into My nature and at the beginning of next millennium I create them again by

My potency. Wielding My nature I release all beings and recreate them according to their deeds. Arjuna, those actions do not bind Me and I remain unattached being supreme God. I am the superior and the nature brings the whole creation consisting of both sentient (moving) and un-sentient (unmoving) beings and because of this world (samsara) keeps moving.

Verse-11,12 &13

Fools, not knowing My supreme nature, think low of Me, the overlord of entire creation, who have put on the human semblance i.e. due to My Yog maya (divine potency). I am in human garb for the deliverance (rescue) of the world and believe Me who is a supreme God as ordinary human being. Those who are thus bewildered by vain hopes, futile action and fruitless knowledge continue to be attracted to demonic, atheistic and delusive nature. On the other hand, Arjuna, great souls who have embraced the divine nature, knowing Me as the prime source of all lives and imperishable eternal, worship Me constantly with none else in mind.

Verse-14 &15

Constantly chanting My names and glories and striving for My realization, and bowing again and again to Me, those devotees of firm resolve, ever united with Me through meditation, worship Me with single minded devotion. Other who follow the path of knowledge worship Me through their offering of knowledge in My absolute formless aspect. While still others worship Me in My universal form in many ways as supreme Lord.

Verse-16 &17

I am the Vedic ritual, I am the sacrifice, I am the offering to the departed, I am sacred formula, the healing herb, I am the clarified

butter, I am the sacred fire and I am verily (certainly) the act of offering oblation into fire. I am the sustainer and the ruler of this universe, its father and grandfather, the one worth knowing, the purifier, the sacred syllable OM and the worth knowing three Vedas i.e. Rig Veda, Sama Veda and Yajur Veda.

Verse-18&19

Krsna said, I am the supreme goal, supporter, lord, witness, abode, refuge, well wisher seeking nothing in return, origin and end, resting-place, store house to which all beings return at the time of universal destruction and imperishable seed. I radiate heat as the sun and hold back as well as send forth showers, Arjuna. I am immortality as well as death; even so I am being and non- being both.

Verse-20&21

Those who perform fruitive action as laid down in the three Vedas and drink sap (juice) of Soma plant, and have thus been purged of sin, worshipping Me through sacrifices, seek access to heaven; attaining Indra's paradise as the result of their virtuous deeds, they enjoy the celestial (heavenly) pleasures of gods in heaven. Having enjoyed the extensive heaven-world, they return to this world of mortals on the stock of their merits being exhausted. Thus devoted to the ritual with interested motive recommended by the three Vedas as the means of attaining heavenly bliss, and seeking worldly enjoyments, they repeatedly come and go i.e. ascend to heaven by virtue of their merits and return to earth when their fruit has been enjoyed.

Verse-22,23&24

Krsna said: The devotees, however, who loving no one else constantly think of Me, and worship Me in a disinterested (without selfish motive) spirit, to those ever united in thought with Me I bring

full security and personally attend to their needs. Arjuna, even those devotees who endowed with faith, worship other gods with some interested motives worship Me alone, though with a mistaken approach. For I am the enjoyer and also the lord of all sacrifices; but they know Me not in reality as the supreme Deity, hence they fall i.e. return to life on earth.

Verse-25 to 28

Those who are devoted to gods go to gods; those who are devoted to ancestors go to the ancestors; those who worship ghost or spirits reach the spirits and those who worship Me come to Me alone. That is why My devotees are not subject to birth and death.

Whosoever offers to Me with love a leaf, a flower a fruit or even water, I appear in person before that disinterested (free from selfish motives) devotee of sinless mind and delightfully partake (share) of that article offered by him with love. Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation (person dedicated to religious work) to the sacred fire, whatever you bestow as a gift, whatever you do by way of penance, offer it all to Me. With your mind thus established in the Yoga of renunciation (offering of all actions to Me), you will be freed from the bonds of Karma in the shape of good and evil consequences; and freed from them you will attain Me.

Verse-29 to 34

I am equally present in all beings; there is none hateful or dear to Me. They, however, who devoutly worship Me abide in Me; and I too stand revealed in them. Even if the vilest (wicked) sinner worship Me with exclusive devotion, he should be accounted a saint; for he has rightly resolved and established himself in positive belief that there is nothing like devoted worship of God.

Speedily, he becomes virtuous and secures lasting peace. Know it certain, Arjuna, that My devotee never falls. Arjuna, women, Vaishyas (member of the trading and agricultural classes), Sudras (those belonging to laboring and artisan classes), as well as those of vile birth, such as the pariah, whoever they may be, taking refuge in Me they too attain the supreme goal. Even the virtuous Brahmanas and sinless royal sages devoted to Me also attain the supreme goal. Therefore, having obtained this the joyless and transient human life, constantly worship Me. Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me and make obeisance (salute by bowing) to Me; thus linking your self with Me and entirely depending on Me, you shall come to Me. **(Chapter-9 ends here)**

CHAPTER TEN

(Bibhuti Yoga or supernatural divine power: Total verses-42)

Verse-1,2 &3

Sri Bhagavan said: O mighty armed Arjuna, listen again My supreme word which I shall speak to you, who are so loving and out of solitude (secluded from society) for your welfare. Neither the demigods nor-the great sages know the secret of My birth i.e. My appearance in human and other garb. I am the prime cause in all respects of gods as well as the great seers. He who knows Me in reality as birthless and without beginning and as the supreme Lord of the Universe, he undeluded among other beings is purged of all sins.

Verse-4 to 11

Power to make up one's mind, fundamental knowledge, unclouded understanding, forgiveness, truthfulness, control over the mind and senses, joy and sorrow, evolution and dissolution, fear and fearlessness- these diverse traits of creatures emanate from Me alone.

The seven great seers, their four elders (Sanaka and others), and the fourteen Manus, who are all devoted to Me, were born of My will; from them all these creatures in the world have descended. He who knows in reality this supreme divine glory and supernatural power of Mine gets established in Me and through unfaltering devotion and there is no doubt in this. I am the source of all creation and every thing in the world moves because of Me. Knowing this, the wise full of devotion constantly worship Me.

With their mind fixed on Me, and their lives surrendered to Me, enlightening one another about My supreme power and derive great satisfaction and My devotees ever remain contented and take delight in Me. On those ever united through meditation with Me and worshipping Me with love, I confer that Yoga of wisdom through which they come to Me. O Arjuna, in order to shower My grace on them I, dwelling in their heart, dispel the darkness born of ignorance by the shining light of wisdom.

Verse-12 to 16

Arjuna said: You are the transcendent Eternal, the supreme Abode and the greatest purifier; all the seers speak of You as the eternal divine Purus (supreme enjoyer), the primal Deity, unborn and all pervading. Like wise speak the celestial sage Narada, the sages Asita, Devala and the great sage Vyasa; and Your self too proclaim this to me. Krsna, I believe as true all that You tell me, Lord, neither demons nor gods are aware of Your manifestation through Yog maya (the eternal potency of the Lord) which hides him from non-devotees. O creator of beings, O Ruler of creatures, O God of gods, the Lord of the universe, O supreme Purusa, You alone know what you are by Yourself. Therefore, You alone can describe in full Your divine glories whereby You stand pervading all these worlds and abide by them.

Verse- 17 &18

O Master Yoga, through what process of continuous meditation shall I know You? And in what particular forms, O Lord, are you to be meditated upon by me. Krsna, tell me once more in detail your power of Yoga and Your glory; for I know not satiety (fully satisfied) in hearing Your Nectar like words.

Verse-19 &20

Sri Bhagavan said: Arjuna, now I shall tell you My conspicuous divine glories which are prominent; for there is no limit to My magnitude. Arjuna I am the universal Self seated in the heart of all beings; so I am alone the beginning, the middle and end of all beings.

Verse-21 to 25

I am Vishnu among the twelve sons of Aditi, and the radiant sun among the luminaries; I am the glow of Maruts (the forty nine wind gods), and moon among the stars. Among the Vedas, I am the Sama Veda; among the gods I am Indra; among the senses I am mind; I am the consciousness (life-energy) in the living being. Among the eleven Rudras (gods of destruction) I am Shiva; and among the Yaksas and Raksasas; I am the lord of riches (Kubera), Among the eight Vasus, I am the god of fire; and among the mountains, I am the Meru. Among the priests, Arjuna know Me to be their chief Brahaspati. Among the warrior-chiefs, I am Skanda (the lord of war); and among the waters; I am the ocean. Among the great seers, I am Bhrigu. Among words I am the sacred syllable OM. Among the offering, I am the offering of Japa (chanting of holy names) and among the immovables, the Himalayas.

Verse-26 to31

Among all trees I am the Asvattha (the holy fig tree); among the celestial sages, Narada; among the Gandharvas (celestial

musicians) Citraratha; and among the Siddhas, I am the sage Kapila. Among horses, know Me to be the celestial horse Uccaihsrava, be gotten of the churning of the ocean along with nectar; among the mighty elephants Airavata (Indra's elephant); and among men I am the King.

Among weapons, I am the thunderbolt; among cows, I am the celestial cow Kamdhenu (cow of plenty). I am the sexual desire which leads to procreation (as enjoined by the scriptures); among serpents, I am Vasuki. Among Nagas (a special class of serpents), I am the serpent-god Ananta, and I am Varuna, the lord of aquatic creatures. Among manes (departed ancestors), I am Aryama (the head of the Pitars), and among rulers, I am Yama (the god of death).

Among the Daityas, I am the great devotee Prahlada; and among reckoners, I am Time. So among quadrupeds, I am the lion and among birds I am Garuda. Among purifiers, I am the wind; among warriors, I am Shri Rama. Among fishes the shark; and among streams, I am Ganges.

Verse-32 &33

Arjuna, I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all creations. Of sciences, I am the science of the soul or metaphysics (the philosophy of being or knowing), in disputants, I am the right of reasoning. Among the sounds represented by various letters, I am 'A' (i.e. AA in Hindi/Sanskrit) and among compounds I am the dual word. I am also inexhaustible time and creators of Brahma and sustainer of this universe with my face on all side.

Verse-34 to 38

I am the all destroying death and the origin of all that shall be born. Among women, I am Kirti, Sri, Vak, Smrti, Medha, Dhrti and

Ksama - the goddesses presiding over glory, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, steadfastness and forbearance (patience) respectively. Like wise among the Srutis that can be sung, I Brhatsama and among the Vedic hymns, I am the hymn known as Gayatri. Among the months I am 'Margaairsa' and among the six seasons I am flower bearing spring season. I am gambling among deceitful practices and of the glorious. I am the victory of the victorious, the resolve of the resolute and goodness of good being.

Among the descendants of Vrsnis, I am Krsna and among the sons of Pandavas I am Arjuna i.e. you. I am Vyasa among the sages and sage Sukracarya poet among the wise thinkers. I am the power to punish those who suppress and the power to those who seek victory. Of things to be kept secret-I am the silent custodian and I am the wisdom of the wise.

Verse-39 to 42

Arjuna, I am the cause of the birth of all being born because there is no creative moving or inert which exists without Me. Arjuna, there is no limit to My divine manifestation. This is only a brief description by Me of My glory. Every such thing as a glorious, brilliant and powerful, know that to be part of manifestation of My glory. Or, what you will gain by knowing all this in detail, Arjuna? Suffice it to say that I stand holding this entire universe by a fraction of My Yogic power.

(Chapter-10 ends here)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

(Vishwa Roop Darshan Yoga or multifarious divine form of Lord)
(Total verses-55)

In the first four verses of this Chapter, Arjuna appreciates the most profound words of spiritual wisdom given to him by Lord Krsna and further prays to Krsna to reveal him the imperishable form of the universe that He rules.

Verses-1 to 5

Arjun said: Thanks to the most profound or confidential of words of spiritual wisdom that you have spoken out of kindness to me which has completely dispelled my delusion. For Krsna, I have heard from you in detail an account of evolution and dissolution of the living being and also your immortal glory. O lord I see you before me in your actual position. But best person, I want to see You in divine form possessed of wisdom, glory, energy, strength, valor and effulgence (shining with light). Krsna, if you think that it can be seen by me, then O Lord of Yoga, reveal to me your imperishable form. Sri Bhagavan said: Arjuna, behold now and see Me in hundreds and thousands, My multifarious divine form of various colors and shapes.

Verse-6,7&8

Behold in Me Arjuna, see the twelve sons of Aditi, the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras (the gods of destruction), the two Asvini Kumaras (the twin born physicians of gods) and forty nine Maruts (wind-gods) and witness many more wonderful forms not seen before. Arjuna, behold as concentrated within this body of Mine, the entire creation consisting of both animate and inanimate beings, and whatever else you desire to see. But surely, you cannot see Me with

these human eyes of yours, therefore; I vouch safe to you the divine eye. With this you behold My divine power of Yoga (opulence).

Verses-9 to 13

Sanjaya said: My lord having spoken this, Sri Krsna, the supreme Lord of Yoga revealed to Arjuna His supremely glorious divine form. Thereafter, Arjuna saw the supreme Deity possessing many mouth and eyes, presenting many wonderful sight, decked with divine ornaments, wielding many uplifted divine weapons, wearing divine garlands and clothes, besmeared all over with divine sandal-pastes, full of all wonders, unlimited and having faces on all sides. If there be the effulgence (bright light) of the thousand suns bursting forth all at once in the heavens, even that would hardly approach the spender of the universal supreme Lord. Arjuna then beheld the whole universe with-the manifold divisions concentrated at one place in the person of that supreme Deity.

Verse-14 to 17

Then Arjun, astonished and with great feeling in his body, reverentially bowed his head before the Supreme Lord of the universe after closing the palm of his hands addressed Him. Thus Arjun said: Lord I behold within Your body all gods and host of different beings- Brahma throned on his lotus flower seat, Shiva and all sages and celestial serpents. O Lord of the universe, I see you endowed with numerous arms, bellies, mouths and eyes and having innumerable forms extended on all sides. Neither I see your beginning nor middle or even end, manifested as You are in the form of this universe. I see you endowed with diadems (crown), clubs and discs, a mass of splendor flaming all around, having the brilliance of a blazing fire and the sun, hard to gaze and immeasurable on all sides.

Verse-18 to 21

You are the supreme indestructible worthy of being known; You are the ultimate refuge of this universe. You are, again, the protector of the ageless Dharma; I consider You to be the eternal imperishable Being. I see You without beginning, middle or end, possessing unlimited prowess (valor) and endowed with numberless arms, having the moon and sun like eyes, mouth like blazing fire and I see You heating the entire universe by Your radiance. O supreme Lord, the space between heaven and earth from all quarters are filled by You alone. Seeing this transcendent, dreadful form of Yours, all the three worlds feel greatly perturbed. Hosts of gods are entering You; some with palms joined out of fear are uttering Your names and glories. Multitude of great sages and seers, saying 'Let their be peace', are extolling (to praise highly) You by means of excellent hymns.

Verse-22 to 31

O Supreme Lord seeing Your dreadful form of with many faces, eyes, mouths, many arms, thighs and feet, many bellies and many teeth, all beings are terribly disturbed and fearful and so aml. Because O all pervading Vishnu, seeing Your Form reaching the heavens, multicolored having its mouth wide open possessing large flaming eyes, I am frightened and lost my self control and peace. Seeing Your faces frightful on account of teeth, and flaring like the fire at the time of universal destruction, I failed to follow any direction and find no happiness. O Lord of celestials be kind to me.

All those sons of Dhrtarastra with hosts of Kings are entering You. Bhisma, Drona and like Karna, with the principal warriors on our side as well, are rushing headlong into Your fearful mouths and are seen with their heads being crushed between Your teeth. As the large number of streams of rivers rush towards the sea alone and get merged in the sea, so do those warriors of the mortal

world enter Your flaming mouths. As moths rush with great speed into the blazing fire for extinction out of their folly, so are all these people are entering Your mouth with speed to meet their doom.

Swallowing through Your blazing mouths; You are licking all these people on all sides, Lord. Your terrible immeasurable rays are burning the entire universe with radiance. Tell me who You are with a form so dreadful. My obeisance to You. O best of gods, be kind to me. I wish to know You, the Primal (original) Being in particular because I do not know Your nature.

Verse-32,33&34

Sri Bhagavan said: I am inflamed Mahakal (eternal time spirit). I have come here to destroy these people. Therefore, the warriors who are part of forces on the other side will not live. All these people will not be exterminated even if you do not fight this war. Therefore, get up to fight and win glory after winning over the enemy and enjoy the fruits of affluent kingdom. These warriors stand already slain by Me, be only an instrument, O Arjuna. Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karn and others brave warriors already stand killed by Me. Do not fear and now you can kill them. You will surely win this war against these enemies. Therefore, you simply fight this war.

Verse-35,36 &37

Sanjaya said to Dhrtarastra: After these words of Bhagavan Keshava, Arjuna tremblingly bowed and offered obeisances with folded hand began and spoke the following accounts. Arjun said: It is appropriate to say that upon hearing and chanting Your name, attributes and glory- this universe feels extremely joyful and demons feel terrified and fleeing in different directions and the Siddhas are bowing to pay respect to You. O great soul, why should they not offer their homage to You? You are the progenitor of Brahma himself. O

infinite Lord of celestials, Abode of the universe, You are that which is existent (Sat) and that which is non-existent (Asat), You are invincible true source of -highest bliss and knowledge i.e. Satchitananda.

Verse-38,39&40

Arjuna said: You are the primal (original) Godhead and eternal. You are the ultimate abode of this universe. You know every thing and You are knowable. It is You who pervade the universe and assume endless form through manifestation. You are Vayu (the wind god), Yama (the god of death), Agni (the god of fire), the moon god, Brahma (the lord of creation) or You are father of Brahma Himself. I offer my respectful obeisances thousand times yet again and again. O Lord of infinite prowess, my salutation to You from all directions. O soul of all, my obeisance to You who possess the eternal power and pervade all, therefore, You are everything.

Verse-41 to 44

I have been addressing You as O Krsna, O Yadava or O my friend without knowing Your glories or greatness. I sometime ridiculed You being a friend in bed, on the ground while eating our food etc. for which I feel guilty and I pray before You now that you will pardon me for the same. You are the father of this moving and unmoving creation, great spiritual master and adorable. O Lord, of no one is comparable with You in this universe within three worlds. Therefore, no one can be higher than You. O Lord I fall down to Your feet to pray and You to be kind to me and grant mercy being a supreme Lord. As father tolerates the mistake done by son, husband of his beloved wife or friend of the friend, similarly You will also bear with me for the mistakes I have done.

Verse-45 &46

I am gladdened after seeing your wonderous form which I never seen before and at the same time my mind is disturbed due to fear. I, therefore, pray You again to reveal again Your divine form of Vishnu with four arms. O Lord of the celestial abode of the universe, be gracious. I wish to see You adorned in the same way with a diadem on the head, the holding of conch, lotus, mace and discuss in two of Your hands. O Lord with thousand arms, O Universal being, appear again in the same four- armed form.

Verse-47,48 &49

Sri Bhagavan said: eased with you I have shown you through My own power of Yoga, this supreme, effulgent, primal and infinite cosmic body which was never seen by any one else in the past. Arjuna, in this mortal world I can not be seen by anyone else than you, either through study of Vedas or of rituals or again through charities, actions or austere penances. Seeing such a dreadful Form of Mine as this, be not perturbed or perplexed; with a fearless and complacent mind, behold once again the same four-armed Form of Mine bearing conch, discuss, mace and lotus.

Verse-50 to 55

Sanjay said to Dhrtarastra: Having spoken thus to Arjuna, Bhagavan Vasudeva again showed to him in the same way His own four armed form; and then assuming the gentle form with two arm and thus consoled the frightened Arjuna.

Arjuna said: Krsna, seeing this gentle human form of Yours I have regained my composure and I am myself again. Sri Bhagavan said: This form of Mine (with four arms) which you have seen is exceedingly difficult to perceive. Even the demigods are always

looking for an opportunity to see Me in this form. Neither by study of Vedas nor by penance, nor by charity or by ritual or worship I can be seen in this form with four arms as you have seen Me. But O Arjun, through single- minded devotion, however, I can be seen in this form with four arms and enter into the essence and mysteries of my understanding. Arjuna, who performs all his duties for My sake, depends on Me, is totally devoted to Me; has no attachment, without any malice towards all beings, such devoted beings comes to Me only.

(Chapter-11 ends here)

CHAPTER TWELVE

(Bhakti or devotional Yoga Total verse-20)

Verse-1

Arjuna said: The devotees who, with their minds constantly fixed on You as explained so far, adore You as possessed of form any attributes, and those who adore as the supreme Reality only the un destructible and unmanifest Brahma, who is truth knowledge and bliss – of these two types of worshippers who are best knowers of Yoga?

Verse-2 to 5

Sri Bhagavan said: I consider them to be best Yogis, who endowed with faith, and ever united through meditation and worship Me with the mind centered on Me. Those, however, who fully controlling all their senses and even minded towards all, and devoted to the welfare of all being adore as their very self the unthinkable; omnipresent, indestructible, indefinable, eternal, immovable, unmanifest, changeless Brahma, they too come to Me. Of course, the strain is greater for those who have their mind attached to the unmanifest; for atonement with the unmanifest is attained with difficulty by those who are centered in the body.

Verse-6 to 10

On the other hand, those who depending exclusively on Me, and surrendering all actions to Me, worship Me (God with attributes) constantly meditating on Me with single minded devotion, for those Arjuna, I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death in this world. Therefore, fix your mind on Me, and establish your intellect in Me alone, thereafter you will abide solely in Me. There is no doubt about it. If you can not steadily fix the mind on Me, Arjuna, then seek to attain Me through the Yoga of repeated practice. If you are unable to pursue such practice, be intent to work for Me, you shall attain perfection, in the shape of My realization, even by performing actions for My sake.

Verse-11&12

If, taking recourse to the Yoga of My realization, you are unable to do this, then subduing your mind and intellect etc. meditation on God is superior than knowledge, and renunciation of the fruit of actions is even superior to meditation; peace follows immediately from renunciation.

Verse-13,14 &15

He who is free from malice, not selfish, friendly and compassionate, rid of 'I' and mine, balanced in joy and sorrow, forgiving by nature, ever contented and mentally united with Me and who has subdued his mind, senses and body, has a firm resolve, and has surrendered his mind and reason to Me, that devotee of Mine is dear to Me He who is not a source of annoyance to his fellow-creatures, and who in his turn does not feel vexed with fellow-creatures and who is free from delight and envy perturbation and fear, is dear to Me.

Verse-16 to 20

He who wants nothing, who is both internally and externally pure, is clever impartial and has risen above all distractions, and who renounces the feelings of doer ship in all undertaking-that devotee of Mine is dear to Me. He who neither rejoices nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires and who renounces both good evil actions and is full of devotion, is dear to Me. He who is alike to friend and foe, as well as to honor and ignominy (dishonor), who remains balanced in heat and cold, pleasure and distress and free from attachment, he who takes praise and reproach alike and is given to contemplation and always contented with the means of subsistence, free from attachment to ownership of dwelling place and devotee with stable mind is dear to Me. Those devotees, however, who partake without any motive the nectar of pious wisdom set forth above, endowed with faith and solely devoted to Me, they are extremely dear to Me.

(Chapter-12 ends here)

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

(Ksetra Ksetrajana Vibhag Yoga Total verses-34)

In this Chapter Arjuna expressed his desire to know from Lord Krsna all about the nature of body, soul and its knowledge through Gyan or Janana Yoga.

Verse-1,2,3&4

Sri Bhagavan said: This body Arjuna, is termed as the Field (Ksetra) and he who knows it, the sages discerning the truth about both is referred to as the knower of the Field (Ksetrajana). Know Myself to be the Ksetrajana (individual soul) also in all the Kestra (Field), Arjuna. And it is the knowledge of Kestra and Ksetrajana i.e. of Matter and its evolutes and the spirit which I consider as wisdom.

What that Ksetra is and what it is like; and also what are its evolutes, again where is what and also finally who that Ksetrajana is and what is his glory - hear all this from Me in a nutshell. Sri Krsna said. The truth about the Kestra and Ksetrajana has been expounded by the seers in manifold ways; again it has been separately stated in different Vedic chants and also in the conclusive and reasoned texts of the Brahma-sutras.

Verse-5&6

The five elements – the ego, the intellect, the unmanifest (Primordial matter), the ten organs (of perception and actions), the mind, and the five objects of sense (sound, touch, color, taste and smell) and also desire, aversion, pleasure, pains of the physical body, consciousness, firmness; thus is the Ksetra, with its evolutes, briefly states.

Verse-7 to 11

Not to be proud of superiority, keep away from hypocrisy, not to terrify any being, ability to pardon, to be honest in mind and speech, service of the teachers with devotion, to remain internally and externally pure, steadfastness of mind and control over the body and senses. Dispassion towards the objects of enjoyment of this world-and the next, to be free from egoism and repeatedly thinking of the pain and evils of birth, death, old age and disease. Non-attachment to children, wife, home, wealth etc., not to have affection and unpleasant events. Unflinching devotion to Me through exclusive no enjoyment in the company of being with artificial nature. Totally concentrating on the self knowledge through meditation and accepting that realization of God is the true knowledge and opposite of this is ignorance.

Verse-12 to 15

Now I will speak to you at length which should be known to human being and by knowing that one attains supreme bliss of Brahma who is the Lord of the beginningless entities. He is neither Sat (being) nor Asat (non-being). It has hands and feet on all sides, eyes, head and mouth in all directions, and ears all around; for it stands pervading all in the universe.

Though perceiving all sense objects, it is devoid of all senses. Not attached, yet He is the sustainer of all. Even though attribute less yet He is the enjoyer of qualities (the three modes of nature). It exists without and within all beings and constitutes animate and inanimate creation as well. And by reason of its subtlety (cleverness) it is incomprehensible; it is close at hand and stand a far too.

Verse-16&17

Though integral like space undivided, It appears divided as it were in all animate and inanimate beings. And that Godhead which is the object worth knowing, is the sustainer of beings as Vishnu, destroyer as Rudra and the creator of all as Brahma. That supreme Brahma is said to be the light of all lights and entirely beyond Maya (illusion). That Godhead is knowledge itself, worth knowing and worth attaining through real wisdom, and is particularly seated in the heart of all.

Verse-18 to 21

Thus the truth of the Ksetra, knowledge and supreme soul worth knowing, is briefly explained here. And by knowing this in reality, My devotee enters into My being. Prakrti and Purusa are both beginning less. And all mode of nature like passion, ego etc. All objects constituted of the three Gunas (mode of nature) as born of Prakrti.

Prakrti is said to be responsible for bringing forth evolutes and the instruments; while the individual's soul is known to be the cause of experiencing joys and sorrows. Only the Purusa seated in Prakrti senses objects of nature of three Gunas evolved from Prakrti. And it is contact with three Gunas that is responsible for the birth of this soul in good or evil wombs.

Verse-22,23&24

The soul dwelling in this body, is really the same supreme soul. He has been spoken of as the witness, the true guide, the sustainer of all, the experiencer the embodied soul, He is the Lord of Brahma and absolute and true bliss of supreme soul. He who thus knows Purusa (spirit) and Prakrti (nature) of the three Gunas- even though performing his duties is never born again. Some by meditation behold the supreme spirit in the heart with the help of their refined and sharp intellect. Others realize it through the discipline of knowledge Yoga and yet others attain it through the discipline of Karma Yoga.

Verse-25 to 29

Other dull witted persons, however, not knowing, thus worship even as they have heard from other persons devoted to supreme Lord and their tendency to hear from competent teachers, also transcend through the cycle of birth and death of in this ocean of universe. Arjuna, whatever being animate or inanimate, know it as emanated from the union of Kestra (matter) and Ksetrajana (spirit). He alone truly sees, who sees the supreme Lord as imperishable and abiding equally in all perishable beings, both animate and inanimate. For, he who sees supreme Lord equally present in all and does not kill himself by himself, he reaches the supreme state of mind. And the being who sees also actions are performed in every way by Prakrti alone and not by soul, actually sees or realizes the truth.

Verse-30 & 31

The moment human being perceives the diversified existence of being as rooted in the same supreme spirit, and spreading forth of all being from the same, that very moment he attains Brahma who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss solidified. Arjuna, being without beginning and without attributes, this indestructible supreme spirit, though dwelling in the body, in fact does nothing nor gets contaminated.

Verse-32,33&34

Like the sky, due to its nature, does not mix with any thing, similarly the soul being attribute less seated every where in the body, is not affected by the attributes of the body. Arjuna, as the one sun illuminates the whole body of entire universe, so the only soul illuminates the whole body consciousness. One who has understood the difference between body and the owners of the body can understand the soul and the spirit through wisdom, such being reach the supreme Lord.

(Chapter-13 ends here)

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

(Gunatraya Vibhag or mode of nature Yoga Total verses-27)

Verse-1,2&3

Sri Bhagavan said: I shall again explain the supreme wisdom, the best of all wisdoms, acquiring which all sages attained highest perfection and got liberated from this universe. Those who, by practicing this wisdom, have entered into My Being are not born again at the cosmic dawn nor feel disturbed even during the cosmic night. O Arjuna, My primordial (with or

without) nature, known as the great Brahma, is the womb of all creatures, in that womb I place the seed of all life and the creation of all beings follows from that union of matters and spirit.

Verse-4 to 13

O Arjuna, of all embodied beings that appear in all the species of various kinds, Prakruti or nature is the conceiving mother, while I am the seed-giving father. Sattava, Rajas and Tamas (goodness, passion and ignorance)- these three qualities born of Nature tie down the imperishable soul to the body. Arjuna, of these Sattava, being immaculate is illuminating and free from all sinful reactions. It binds through identifications with joy and wisdom. Arjuna, know the qualities of Rajas, which is the nature of passion born of cupidity and attachment. It binds the soul with the fruitive activities. And know about those with Tamas who look upon the body as their own self as born out of ignorance. It binds the soul through error, sloth and sleep. Sattava drives one to joy and Rajas to actions while Tamas clouding wisdom, incites one to error, sleep and sloth.

O Arjuna: Overpowering Rajo Guna and Tamo Guna, Sattav Guna prevails- overpowering Sattav Guna and Tamo Guna, Rajo Guna prevails and similarly overpowering Sattav Guna and Rajo Guna, Tamo Guna prevails. In other words the stronger Guna prevails. When light and discernment (ability to judge) down in this body as well as in the mind and senses, then one should know that Sattava Guna is predominant. O Arjuna: With the predominance of Rajo Guna-greed undertaking action with selfish interest, restlessness and thirst for enjoyment make their appearance. With the growth of Tamo Guna obtuseness (dull) of mind and senses, disinclination to perform one's obligatory duties and frivolity (futile) and stupor (helplessness)-all these appear.

Verse-14 to 17

When the human being dies during the preponderance of Sattav Guna, he obtains the stainless ethereal world also known as heaven which is attained due to noble deeds. A man dying when Rajo Guna predominate, he is reborn among those in the species such as insects, and beasts etc. The reward for righteous act, they say, is Sattavika and faultless in the shape of joy, wisdom and dispassion etc.; sorrow is the fruit of Rajasika act and ignorance is the result of Tamasika act. Wisdom follows from Sattava and greed undoubtedly from Rajas Guna, likewise obstinate error, stupor and also ignorance follow from Tamo Guna.

Verse-18 to 20

Those human being situated in the mode of Sattava Guna wend their way upwards to the heaven, those being in the mode of Rajo Guna (passion) live in this earthly planet and with Tamo gunsink down into the hellish world due to ignorance. When you perceive that there is no agent other than three modes of nature then you realize the true spirit and bliss of the supreme Lord and thus enter My being. Having transcended the aforesaid three Gunas which have caused the body and freed from birth, death, old age and all kinds of sorrow, the human being can attain the supreme bliss of the Lord.

Verse-21

Arjuna said: What are the marks (symptoms) of him who has risen above the three Gunas (mode of nature) and what would be his conduct? And how does he rise above the three Gunas? O Lord.

Verse-22 to 27

Sri Bhagavan said: Human being who does not hate the Gunas born out of Sattava activity, born out of Rajo Guna and even

stupor born out of Tamo Guna when prevalent nor longs for them they have ceased to exist and sits like a witness, does not get disturbed due to prevalence of three Gunas, he remains in identity and established in the true bliss of the supreme Lord (Sachidaanandham).

He who is even established in the Self takes sorrow and joy alike, regards clod of earth, stone or a piece of gold as equal in value and treats equally the person possessed of wisdom or dear one or not so dear one and views censure or praise alike, treats friend or enemy alike and has renounced the senses in all undertakings- such person is considered to have risen above all three Gunas, becomes eligible for attaining the supreme bliss of Brahma. Because I am the ground of the imperishable Brahma, of immortality of the eternal virtue and unending immutable bliss.

(Chapter -14 ends here)

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

(Purshotam or related to primitive Yoga Total verse-20)

Verse-1&2

Sri Bhagvan said: He who knows the Pipal tree (in the form of creation) ; which is said to be imperishable with its roots in the Primal Being God, whose stem is represented by Brahma (the creator), whose leaves are the Vedas, the man who understands this universe like tree, he would be knower of Vedas also. Fed by the three Gunas and having sense objects for their tender leaves, the branches of the aforesaid tree (in the shape of different orders of creation) extend both downwards and upwards and its roots, which bind the soul according to its action in the human body, are spread in all regions, higher as well as lower.

Verse-3&4

The nature of this tree of creation does not on mature thought turn out what it is represented to be; for it has neither beginning nor end nor even stability. Therefore, felling this Pipal tree, which is not firmly rooted, with the formidable axe of dispassion. Thereafter, a man should diligently seek that supreme state, viz. God, having attained to which they return no more to this world; and having fully resolved that he stand dedicated to that Primeval being (ancient original being) Himself, from whom the flow of this beginningless creation has progressed, he should dwell and mediate on Him.

Verse-5,6 & 7

Those wise men who are freed from pride and delusion who have conquered the evil of attachment, who are in eternal union with God, whose cravings have altogether ceased and those who have freed themselves from duality of happiness and distress- they attain the supreme immortal state. Neither the sun nor the moon nor even the fire can illumine that supreme self-effulgent state, attaining to which they never return to this world. That is my supreme abode. The eternal Jivatma (soul in the body) is a particle of my own being; and it is that alone which draws around itself the mind and five senses which rest in Prakrti or nature.

Verse-8 to11

Even as the wind wafts smell from their seat, so too the Jivatma, which is the controller of the body etc. taking the mind and the body which he leaves behind, migrates to the body which it acquires. It is while dwelling in the senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell, as well as the mind, Jivatma enjoys the particular objects of senses.

The ignorant do not know the soul departing from or dwelling in the body or enjoying the objects of senses i.e. even when it is connected with three mode of nature (Guna); only those enclosed with the eye of wisdom are able to realize it. Striving Yogis too are able to realize this enshrined soul in their heart. The ignorant, however, whose heart has not been purified may not understand this even after making efforts.

Verse-12&13

The light of the sun which illuminates the whole solar world and that which shines in the moon and the fire- know that energy to be Mine. And permeating the earth, it is I who support all creatures by My vital power; and by becoming nectarine moon I nourish botanical and medicinal plants.

Verses-14&15

I am the fire living in the body of all creatures which helps to digest four types of food and is supported jointly by breathing incoming (Prana) and outgoing (Apana). It is I who remain seated in the heart of all creatures and I am the cause for memory, knowledge and forgetfulness. I am the only object worth knowing through Vedas and I am the creator of Vedanta and knower of Vedas too.

Verse-16 to 20

There are two kinds of being in this world, perishable and imperishable. Among them the bodies of all being are called perishable and Jivatma (embodied soul) is called imperishable. However, there is yet another supreme person who dwells in all the three worlds and maintains all and he who is imperishable supreme Lord or supreme soul or spirit i.e. Parmeshwar or Paramatma. Because I am wholly beyond the perishable and superior than the imperishable soul in the body and

therefore I am celebrated as supreme person in the Vedas. Arjun, the wise man who thus realize Me as the supreme person knowing all, he constantly worship Me, the all pervading Lord with his whole being. Arjuna, this is the most confidential knowledge full of mystery given by Me and grasping it in essence a man becomes wise and accomplished. **(Chapter-15 ends here)**

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

(Devasur Sampad Vibhag Yog Verses-24)

Verse-1

Sri Bhagavan said: free from fearlessness, perfect purity of mind, cultivation of spiritual knowledge through constant fixity in the Yoga of meditation, charity in its Sattava form, control over senses, following the best of actions and performance of Agnihotra (sacrifices or Havan i.e. pouring of oblation into the sacred fire) and other sacred duties, study and teaching of Vedas and other sacred books as well as chanting God's names and praises, suffering hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations and straightness of mind as well as of the body and senses.

Verse-2 &3

Non-violence in thought, word and deed, truthfulness and friendly speech, absence of anger even on provocation, disclaiming doer ship in respect of actions, steady mind, free from obtaining malicious gossip, kindness towards all human and other beings, absence of attachment of senses even during their contact with senses, mildness, a sense of shame in transgressing against the scriptures and obtaining from frivolous pursuits, sublimity, forbearance, fortitude, external purity, bearing hostility to none, absence of self esteem- these are the attributes of a godly persons born with divine nature.

Verse-4 to 9

O Arjuna: Hypocrisy, arrogance, pride, anger, sternness and ignorance too – these are symptoms of a person born with demoniac nature. The divine gift has been recognized conducive to bondage; Grieve not, Arjun; for you are born with divine endowment. There are only two types of being in this world, Arjuna. The one possessing a demoniac disposition. Of these, the one possessing a divine nature has been dealt with by Me in length; now hear in detail from Me about the type possessing demoniac disposition.

Men possessing demoniac disposition know abstinence from activity. Hence they possess neither purity (external or internal) nor good conduct nor even truthfulness. Men possessing a demoniac disposition say this world is without any foundation, false and Godless, the human being is born out of mutual union of male and female and hence conceived in lust; what else than this? Clinging to this false view who have lost their nature, who have no intelligence and who remain engaged in horrible deeds, such enemies of mankind are only capable of destroying this universe.

Verse-10,11&12

These beings cherishing insatiable desires and embracing false doctrines through ignorance which cannot be fulfilled- such beings with impure conduct or corrupt practices remain active in this world. Giving themselves up to innumerable cares ending with only death, they remain devoted to enjoyment of sensuous pleasures and in their belief that this is the highest limit of joy. Held in bondage by hundreds of ties of expectations and wholly giving themselves up to lust and anger, they strive to amass by unfair means hoards of money and other objects for the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures.

Verse-13 to 16

They think that I have achieved so much today and now I shall fulfill my this ambition. So much wealth is already with me and the additional will also be mine. That enemy has been slain by me and I shall kill those others too. I am the Lord of all, the enjoyer of all power; I am endowed with all supernatural powers, mighty and happy. I am wealthy and own a large family, who else is like unto me? I will sacrifice to gods, I will give alms, I will make money. Thus blinded by ignorance, enveloped in the mesh of delusion and addicted to the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures, these men of a devilish dispositions fall into the foulest hell.

Verse-17 to 21

Intoxicated by wealth and honor, those self conceited and haughty men worship God through nominal sacrifices for ostentation without following the sacred rituals. Given over to egotism, brute force, arrogance, lust and anger etc. and culminating others, they Me (the inner controller of all) dwelling in their own bodies as well as in those of others. These haters, sinful, cruel and vilest among men, I cast them again and again into demoniacal wombs in this world. Failing to reach Me, Arjun, those stupid souls are born life after life in demoniac wombs and again verily sink down deeper into the hell. Desire, anger and greed- this triple gate of hell brings about ruination of the soul. Therefore, one should give up all these three and protect the sacred soul.

Verse-22,23 &24

O son of Kunti Arjun; the man who freed himself from these three gates of hell and works for his own salvation and thereby attains supreme goal i.e. God. The man who has abandoned the laid down rituals of scriptures and acts in an arbitrary way according to his sweet

will neither attains perfection nor the supreme goal nor even happiness. Therefore, the scriptures alone is your guide in determining what should be done and what should not be done. Knowing this, you ought to perform only such action as is ordained by the scriptures.

(Chapter-16 ends here)

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

(Shradhaksya Vibhag or worship with faith Yog Total verses-28)

Verse-1

Arjun said O Krsna: Those who endowed with faith, worship gods and others casting aside the injunction of the scriptures, where do they stand Krsna- Sattava, Rajas or Tamas. (In goodness, in passion or in ignorance)

Verse-2 to 6

Sri Bhagavan said: That untutored innate faith (acquired by embodied soul) of men is of three kinds- Sattavika, Rajasika and Tamasika. Hear of it from Me. The faith of all human being conforms to their mental constitution, Arjuna. A living being has a nature of faith which he truly acquired. Those with Sattavika disposition worship gods; those with Rajasika temperament worship demigods and demons and others, others of Tamasika nature worship the spirit of the dead and groups of ghosts. Men who practice dire penance of an arbitrary type not sanctioned by the scriptures, and who are full of hypocrisy and egotism and obsessed with desire, attachment and pride of power and who emaciate (waste) the elements constituting their body as well as Me, the supreme spirit dwelling in their heart – know these senseless people to have a demoniac disposition.

Verse-7

Sri Bhagavan said: Food also, which is agreeable to different human being according to their innate disposition, is also of three kinds. And likewise sacrifice, penance and charity too are of three kinds each; hear their distinction as follows.

Verse-8,9 &10

Foods which promote longevity, intelligence, vigor, health, happiness and cheerfulness and which are sweet, bland, substantial and naturally agreeable, are dear to Sattavika type of human being. Foods which are bitter, acid salty, over hot, pungent, dry and burning and which causes suffering, grief and sickness are dear to Rajasika type of men. Food which is half cooked, or half ripe, putrid state and polluted, and which is impure too, is dear to human being of Tamasika dispositions.

Verse-11,12 &13

The sacrifice which offered, as ordained by scriptural injunctions, by human being who expect no reward and who believe that such sacrifices must be performed, is of Sattavika nature. But sacrifices which are offered for the sake of mere show or even an eye to its fruit, know it to be Rajasika, Arjun. A sacrifice which has no respect for scriptural injunctions, in which no food is offered, and no sacrificial fees are paid, which is without sacred chant and devoid of faith, is said to be Tamasika.

Verse-14,15&16

Worship of gods, the Brahmanas, one's elders and wise men, purity, simplicity, continence (restraint) and non-violence are also called bodily penance. Words or speech which cause no annoyance to others and truthful, friendly and beneficial and those who

study Vedic scriptures and recite the name of supreme soul repeatedly is also known as the austerity of speech. Serenity or cheerful mind, placidity, habit of remembering (contemplation) God, control over mind, perfect purity in inner feeling-all this is called austerity of mind.

Verse-17,18&19

The threefold penance performed with supreme faith by Yogis expecting no reward is called Sattavika. The penance or worship which is performed for the sake of name and honor or for any other selfish gain naturally or ostentation and results into uncertain and momentary fruits, has been spoken of here as Rajasika. Austerity which is practiced through perversity and accompanied with self-mortification or is intended to harm others, such austerities have been described as Tamasika.

Verse-20,21&22

When gift or charity is given as a duty and with this in mind at the right time and right place to a deserving person without expecting anything in return, is called Sattavika. And charity performed with grudging spirit or with an object of getting reward in return is called Rajasika. A gift which is made without grace and in a disdainful spirit out of time and place to undeserving persons, is said to be Tamasika.

Verse-23 to 28

OM TAT SAT- the three syllables are indicative of the Supreme Absolute Truth (Sachidanandan-Brahman) and since the beginning of the creation of the universe- Brahmanas, Vedic hymns and sacrifices were composed to worship the supreme soul, the creator of this universe. Therefore, those who are superior human being while chanting Vedic hymns during sacrifices, charities and austerities in

accordance to spiritual scriptures always start after remembering divine name OM of the supreme soul (Paramatma).

With the belief that this belongs to God, who is devoted by the appellation TAT, acts of sacrifice, austerity and charity of various kinds are performed by the seekers of blessedness expecting no rewards in return. SAT, the name of the God is expressed as truth and goodness in the sense of praiseworthy act, O son of Pratha Arjun. And steadfastness in sacrifice, austerity and charity is likewise spoken of as TAT and action for the sake of God is verily termed as SAT.

(Chapter-17 ends here)

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

(Moksha Sanyas or renunciation Yoga Total verses-78)

Verses-1,2 &3

Arjun said: O mighty-armed Sri Krsna, O inner controller of all, O of Vasudeva, I wish to know separately the truth about the purpose of renunciation and the renounced order of life. Sri Bhagavan said: Some sages understand renunciation (Sanyasa) giving up all actions motivated by desire and other wise thinker person say that relinquishing the fruits of all action is renunciation or renounced order of life. Some wise persons say that all actions a measure of evil, and are therefore worth giving up, while others say that acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not worth shunning.

Verse-4 to 8

O best of Bharatas Arjun, first hear my conclusion on the subject of (Tyaga) renunciation. Because Tyaga has been declared to be of three kinds. Sattavika, Rajasika and Tamasika. Acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not to be given up; they

must be performed. Indeed all these acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are purifiers of wise persons too. Hence these acts of sacrifice, charity and penance and all other act for duties too must be performed without attachment and hope for reward. This is my considered and supreme opinion.

Prohibited acts and that are motivated by desire should no doubt be given up. But it is not advisable to abandon a prescribed duty. Therefore, abandonment of such duties due to ignorance is declared as Tamasika. Should any one give up his duties for fear of physical strain, thinking that all action is verily of the nature of discomfort, practicing such Rajasika (mode of passion) form of renunciation, he reaps no fruits of renunciation.

Verse-9 to12

O Arjuna: A prescribed which is performed simply because it has to be performed, giving up attachment and fruit, that alone has been recognized as the Sattavika form of renunciation. A person who neither hates inauspicious work nor are attached to auspicious work , such person with a quality of goodness who has resolved all doubt is an intelligent man of true renunciation. It is impossible for an embodied being to give up all activities. Therefore, it is said that he who renounces the fruit of actions is called a man of renunciation.

For one who is not renounced, the threefold fruits of action- desirable, undesirable and mixed, accrue after death. But those who are in the renounced order of life have no such results or fruits of action after death.

Verse-13 to 17

O mighty- armed Arjuna, learn from Me of the five factors which bring about accomplishment of all actions which have been

described in Sankhyas philosophy. The five factors operating towards the accomplishment of actions are: the place of action, the performer, the senses, different kind of efforts one makes to accomplish the action and finally the destiny or divine power. Whatever right or wrong action a man performs by body, mind or speech in accordance to or against prescribed directions in the scriptures, these five factors stated above contribute to accomplishment of the work performed.

Not withstanding this, however, he who have an impure mind, regards himself as the only doer, that man of perverse understanding fails to see the reality. He whose mind is free from the sense of doer ship, and who reasons is not tainted by worldly objects and activities, does not really slay, even having slaughtered all these creatures, nor is bound by sin.

Verse-18 to 22

The knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge are the three factors which motivate the doer for action. Hear them too duly from Me.

That knowledge by which man perceives imperishable divine existence undivided and equally present in all individual beings know, that knowledge to be Sattavika (mode of goodness). However, the knowledge by which a person knows different type of living entity existing in different bodies, such knowledge is to be Rajasika. But that knowledge which clings to one body as if it were the whole and which is irrational, meaningless and trivial is said to be as Tamasika.

Verse-23,24 &25

That action which is ordained by the scriptures and is not accompanied by the sense of doer ship, and has been without prejudice by one who seeks no fruitive reward is called Sattavika. But that action,

however, which involves much strain and is performed by one who seeks enjoyments or by person full of egotism, such action is called Rajasika. The action which is undertaken through sheer ignorance, without counting the upshots, loss to oneself, injury to others and one's own capacity, is called Tamasika (mode of ignorance).

Verse-26,27&28

A worker who is free from attachment, who does not speak words of egotism, endowed with firmness and vigor and un swayed by success and failure- such a doer is said to be Sattavika (mode of goodness). The doer who is full of attachment, seeks the fruits of actions and is greedy, and who is oppressive by nature and impure conduct, and is affected by joy and sorrow, has been called Rajasika. Lacking piety, uncultured, arrogant, deceitful, inclined to rob others of their livelihood, slothful, lazy and procrastinating (to postpone) such a doer is called Tamasika

Verse-29

Now hear Arjuna, the threefold division, based on the predominance of each Guna (prakriti) in intelligence (budhi) and the steadiness (dhrti) which is being told by Me in detail one by one.

Verse-30, 31& 32

O Partha: The intellect which correctly determines the paths of activity and renunciation, what out to be done and what should not be done, fear and fearlessness and knows what is bondage and what is liberation, that intellect is Sattavika. The intellect of a person which does not perceive the truth about religious and irreligious duty, such intellect is Rajasika. The intellect which under the influence of Tamo Guna and imagine the irreligious as religious activity and sees all other thing in the wrong directions, that intellect is Tamasika, Arjuna.

Verse-33,34 &35

The unwavering firmness by which man controls through Yoga of meditation the functions of the mind, the vital breath and the senses, that firmness, Arjuna, is Sattavika. However, a person seeking reward for actions and clutches with extreme fondness the duty, earthly possessions and worldly enjoyments-that person is Rajasika (in the mode of passion). The firmness by which an evil-minded person refuses shake off and clings to sleep, fear ,anxiety, sorrow and vanity as well, that firmness is Tamasika (mode of ignorance).

Verse-36&37

O Best of Bharat: Now hear from Me about threefold joy too. That in which the striver finds enjoyments through practice of adoration, meditation and service to God etc. whereby he reaches the end of sorrow, such a joy, though appearing as poison in the beginning, taste like nectar in the end; hence that joy, born as it is placidity(calmness) of mind brought about by meditation on God, has to be called as Sattavika (mode of goodness).

Verse-38,39 &40

The delight which follows from the contact of the senses with their objects is eventually poison-like though appearing at first as nectar; hence it has been called as Rajasika. The happiness which stupefies the self during its enjoyment as well as in the end, -derived from sleep, indolence and obstinate error; such delight is called Tamasika. There is no being on earth or in the middle or among the demigods or anywhere else, which is free from these three Gunas born out of Prakrti (nature).

Verse-41

O Arjuna: The duties of the Brahmanas, the Kastriyas and Vaishyas, as well as of the Sudras (who have the capacity to do hard physical labor), have been divided according to their inborn qualities.

Verse-42

Subjugation of the mind and senses, enduring hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations, external and internal purity, forgiving the faults of others, keeping one's mind senses and body in control, faith in Vedas, other scriptures and the on this planet after death, study and teaching of Vedic literature and realization of truth relating to God-all these constitute natural duties of Brahmanas.

Verse-43

Exhibition of valor, power, steadiness, cleverness and courageous in the battle field, bestowing charity and lordliness are the natural traits of Ksatriya which enables them to do their duty.

Verse-44

Agriculture , rearing of cows and honest exchange of merchandise constitute the duty of Vaishya (a member of the trading class). Sudras have the natural traits to do their duty in service sector involving hard physical labor.

Verse-45,46 & 47

Keenly devoted to his own natural duty, man attains the highest perfection in the shape of God-realization. Arjuna: now hear from Me the mode of performance whereby man engaged in his inborn duty reaches that highest consummation. Man attains the highest perfection by worshipping Him through his own natural duties from

whom the tide of creation has streamed forth and by whom all this universe is pervaded. Better is one's own duty, through devoid of merit, than the duty of another well performed, by performing the duty ordained by his own nature, man does not incur sin.

Verse-48 &49

Therefore, Arjuna, one should not abandon one's innate duty, even though it may be tainted with blemish, for even as fire is enveloped in smoke, all undertakings are also clouded with demerit. He whose intellect is unattached to material world for enjoyment and who has established self control over his desires, he can attain -the highest stage of renunciation through Sankhya yoga (the path of knowledge).

Verse-50

Arjuna, know from Me briefly- the process through which man having attained action free from self interest, which is the highest perfectional stage of consummation of Jnana Yoga (on the path of knowledge) , reaches Brahma.

Verse-51,52 &53

Endowed with untarnished intellect and partaking (sharing) of a light, Sattavika and regulated diet, living in lonely and undefiled place, having rejected sound and other object of sense, having controlled the mind and senses through firmness of a Sattavika type, taking a resolute stand on dispassion, after having completely got rid of aversion and remaining ever devoted to the Yoga of meditation, having given up egotism, violence, arrogance, lust, anger and luxuries, devoid of the feeling of mean (low in rank) and tranquil of hear; such a man becomes qualified for oneness with Brahma, who is the Sachidanand (truth, consciousness and bliss all in one).

Verse-54 to 57

Established in identity with Brahma, who is truth, consciousness and bliss solidified; and cheerful in mind, he neither grieves nor craves for anything. Such Yogi who treats all living being equally he attains pure devotional service unto Me. Through that supreme devotion he comes to know Me in reality, what and how great I am; and thereby knowing Me in essence he forthwith enters My being. The Karma Yogi, however, who depends on Me, attains by My grace the eternal, imperishable state though performing all actions. Mentally resigning all your duties to Me, and taking recourse to Yoga in the form of even-mindedness, be solely devoted to Me and constantly keep your mind on Me.

Verse-58,59 &60

With your mind thus given to Me, you shall tide over all difficulties by My grace. And if, from egotism, you do not listen then you will be lost. If, taking your stand on egotism, you think, 'I will not fight', then this decision of yours is false, because it is your nature which will drive you to fight this war. O son of Kunti, that action too which you are willing to undertake through ignorance; bound by your own duty born of your nature, you will helplessly perform.

Verse-61 to 64

Arjuna, God abides in the heart of all creatures, causing them to revolve according to their Karma by His illusive power, seated as those beings are in the vehicle of the body. Take shelter in Him alone, with all your beings. By his mere grace you shall attain supreme peace and the eternal state. Thus this wisdom, more secret than secrecy itself, been imparted to you by Me. Fully pondering over it, do as you like. Hear again, My supremely secret word, the most esoteric of all truths.

You are extremely dear to Me; therefore, I shall offer you this salutary advice.

Verse-65 to 69

Give your mind to Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me and bow to Me. Doing so you will come to Me alone, I truly promise you; for you are exceptionally dear to Me. Resigning all your duties to Me, the all powerful and supporting Lord, take refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins, worry not. This secret gospel of Gita should never be imparted to a man who lacks penance, nor to him who is wanting in devotion, nor even to him who lends not a willing ear; and in no case to him who finds fault with Me. He who, offering highest love to Me, preaches the most profound gospel of the Gita among My devotees, shall come to Me alone; there is no doubt about it.

Verse-70,71&72

A person who studies this sacred dialogue of ours in the form of Gita, I shall be worshipped by him through wisdom-sacrifice, that is My opinion. The man who hears the holy Gita with reverence and in an uncarping spirit, he gets liberated from sin and he too shall reach the superior world of the virtuous beings. Here you heard the gospel of Gita with total attention. O Dhananjaya Arjuna, has your delusion born of ignorance now dispelled?

Verse-73

Arjun said: Krsna, by Your grace my delusion has fled and wisdom has been gained by me. Now I am firm and free from any doubt and therefore prepared to act according to your instructions.

Verse-74 to 78

Sanjay said: Thus I heard the wonderful, mysterious and thrilling conversation between Vasudev Sri Krsna and great soul Arjuna. Having been blessed with divine grace of Sri Vyasa, I heard this supremely esoteric (confidential) gospel from the Lord of Yoga. Sri Krsna Himself imparting it to Arjuna before my eyes. O King: Remembering over and over, that mystic holy dialogue between Lord Krsna and Arjuna, I am rejoicing again and again. Remembering also, again and again that most wonderful Form of Sri Krsna, I am struck even with greater wonder and I rejoice over and over again. O King; wherever there is Lord of Yoga (yogeshwar), Lord Krsna, and wherever there is Arjuna, the wielder of the Gandive bow (archer) - there is goodness (Sri), victory, glo and unfailing righteousness, that is my conviction.

(Shrimad Bhagavad Gita ends here)

Note:- The word ‘Yoga’ used in ‘Bhagavad Gita’ means, consciously linking with the supreme soul i.e. the faceless Brahma who is the creator of this universe by following Karma (action) Yoga, Janan (knowledge) Yoga and Bhakti (devotional) Yoga. The ‘Yoga’ exercises practiced today in public places are meant for keeping one’s mind and body in good health only.

3**GIST OF SHRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA**

Here an effort has been made by the author of this study project to highlight the message of ‘Bhagavad Gita’ in minimum words to help ordinary human being to derive maximum benefit from the teaching of ‘Bhagavad Gita’ during fast moving life in today’s world. To save time, only important messages as explained by Lord Krishna

Himself from each chapter of 'Bhagavad Gita' have been reproduced in the following paragraphs without any changes in the original text, elaboration or interpretations.

The aim of Bhagavad Gita as explained by Lord Krsna, is to remind human being to accept the existence of God or supreme soul responsible for creation, preservation and destruction of this universe and further try to follow the guiding principles laid down by The Lord Himself to regulate one's life to reach the ultimate goal i.e. realization God and salvation from this mother earth to enjoy the truthful life, blessedness and bliss altogether also known as 'Satchitanand'.

As explained by Lord Krsna, the life of all beings is based on each individuals nature i.e. Prakriti which have been defined as Sattavika Guna (mode of goodness), Rajo Guna (mode of passion) and Tamo Guna (mode of ignorance). Lord Krsna Has given necessary guidance for each human being as to how he needs to manage his personal conduct in spite of pulls and pressure of his individual nature.

Sanatana Dharma

Sanatana Dharma means the eternal faith in the supreme God or soul which has the power for creation, preservation and destruction of the material universe and also control over the behavior of human being on the one hand and protect those living being and destroy the evil forces who come in the path of those who follow the path of truth and righteousness. The human beings are expected to follow the path of Karma Yoga, Jannan Yoga and Bhakti Yoga for the realization of God. Yoga means, consciously linking with the supreme soul while practicing Karma, Jannan and Bhakti Yoga.

Karma Yoga for the sake of sacrifice

Your right is to work only, but never to the fruit thereof. Be not instrumental in making your actions bear fruit, nor let your attachment be to inaction. Krsna said to Arjuna, perform your duties established in Yoga, renouncing attachment; and even-tempered in success and failures; evenness of temper is called Yoga. Endowed with equanimity, one sheds in this life both good and evil. Therefore, strive for the practice of this Yoga of equanimity. Skill in action lies in (the practice of this) Yoga. When your intellect, confused by hearing conflicting statements, will rest, study and undistracted (in meditation) on God, you will then attain Yoga. (the lasting union with God). - **(Verse-47 to 53 of Chapter-2 refers)**

Human being is bound by his own action except when it is performed for the sake of sacrifice. Perform your duty efficiently, free from attachment for the sake of sacrifice alone. Krsna said to Arjuna. Foster the gods through this sacrifice and let the gods be gracious to you. Desisting from action, you can not even maintain your body. -**(Verse-6 to 9 of Chapter-3 refers)**

Fostered by sacrifice, the gods will surely bestow on you unasked all the desired enjoyments. He who enjoys the gifts bestowed by them, without giving them in return, is undoubtedly a thief. Know that prescribed action has its origin in the Vedas, and the Vedas proceed from the indestructible (God); hence all-pervading infinite is always in the sacrifices.- **(Verse-10 to 15 Chapter-3 refers)**

Having an eye to maintenance of the world order too, you should take to action. For whatever a great man does, that very thing the other men also do; whatever standard he sets up; the generality of men also follow the same. Arjuna, There is nothing in all the three worlds for me to do, nor is there anything worth attaining unattained by me. Yet I continue to work. Should I not engage in action,

scrupulously at any time, great harm will come to the world. If I cease to act, these worlds will perish; I should not prove to be the cause of confusion and of the destruction of the people.- **(Verse-16 to 24 Chapter-3 refers)**

Those following this teaching of mine are freed from the bondage of all actions. However, those who do not follow this teaching of mine, such ignorant people are deluded and their knowledge is lost. All living creatures follow their tendencies; even the wise man acts according to the tendencies of his own nature. So no external restraint will work. Passion and zealous are rooted in all sense-objects. Man should never allow himself to be swayed by them, because they are the biggest enemy to hinder in this righteous path. **-(Verse-29 to 34 of Chapter-3 refers)**

Karma Yoga and Jannan (Gyan) Yoga

O Bharata, whenever righteousness is on the decline, and unrighteousness is in the ascendent, then I body Myself forth. For the protection of the virtuous, for the extirpation of evil-doers, and the establishment of Dharma (righteousness) on the firm footing. I am born in different Yuga (time) to Yuga. Arjuna, My birth and activities are divine he who knows this in reality is not born on leaving this body, but comes to Me. Completely rid of passion, fear and anger, wholly absorbed in Me, depending on Me and purified by the penance of wisdom; many have become one with Me; even in the past. Arjuna, howsoever human being seek Me; even so do I approach them; all men follow My path in every way.- **(Verse-7 to 11 of Chapter-4 refers)**

In this world of human being; men seeking the fruition of their activities worship the gods; for success born out of actions follow quickly. The four orders of society (the Brahama, the Ksatriya, the Vaishya and the Sudra) were created by Me classifying them according to the mode of Prakriti (nature) in each apportioning corresponding

duties to them; though the author of this creation, know Me, the immortal Lord to be a non doer. Since I have no craving for the fruits of actions; action do not contaminate Me. Even he who thus knows Me in reality is not bound by actions. Having known thus, action was performed even by the ancient seekers of liberation; therefore, you also perform such action as have been performed by the ancients from the beginning of the time. - **(Verse-12 to 15 of Chapter-4 refers)**

The Karmayogi, who is contented with whatever is got unsought, is free from jealousy and has transcended all pairs of opposites, like joy and grief, and is balanced in success and failure, not bound by his action. All his action melt away, who is free from attachment, who has no identification with the body and does not claim it as his own, whose mind is established in the knowledge of Self and who works merely for the sake of sacrifice. -**(Verse-23 Of Chapter-4 refers)**

Arjuna, sacrifice through knowledge is superior to sacrifice performed with material things. Understand the true nature of that knowledge by approaching wise seers of truth, when you have reached enlightenment, ignorance will delude you no more. On earth there is no purifier as great as knowledge, he who has attained purity of heart through a prolonged practice of Karmayoga automatically sees the light of Truth in the self in course of time and immediately attains supreme peace (in the form of God realization). Therefore, Arjuna, slashing to pieces, with the sword of wisdom, this doubt in your heart, born of ignorance, establish yourself in Karmayoga in the shape of even temperedness, and stand up for the fight. -**(Verse-25 to 42 of Chapter-4 refers)**

The seers whose sins have been wiped out, whose doubts have been dispelled by knowledge, whose disciplined mind is firmly established in God and who are actively engaged in the service of all

beings, attain Brahma, who is all peace. To those wise men who are free from lust and anger, who have subdued their mind and have realized God, Brahma, the abode of eternal peace is present all around. **-(Verse-25,26 of Chapter-5 refers)**

Yoga for self control

Lord Krsna said: One should lift himself by one's own efforts and should not degrade oneself because human being is himself his own friend as well as his enemy. Any living soul who has won over his mind, senses and body, he himself is a friend. Whereas a person who has failed to control his mind, senses and body, he becomes his own enemy. A person who remains in peace both in cold and heat, joy and sorrow, honor and dishonor, such person can be said to be living with full knowledge of super soul in this universe. **-(Verse-5,6,7 of Chapter-6 refers)**

Arjuna, this Yoga is neither for him who overeats, nor for him who observes complete fast; it is neither for him who is given too much sleep; nor even for him who is ceaselessly awake. Yoga which rids one of woe, is accomplished only by him who has regulated his diet, recreation, performing actions, sleep and wakefulness. When the mind is controlled and establishes itself in God alone, then the person who is free from yearning for all enjoyments is said to be established in Yoga. As the light does not flicker in a windless place, such is stated to be the picture of the disciplined mind of the Yogi practicing meditation on God. **-(Verse-16 to 19 of Chapter-6 refers)**

Knowledge about absolute formless God

Lord Krsna said to Arjuna: I shall unfold to you in its entirety the wisdom i.e. knowledge of God in His absolute formless aspect. Having known God both with form and without, nothing else remains to be known in this world. Hardly one among thousands of

human being strive to realize Me; of these striving Yogis, again, some rare one totally devoting himself exclusively to Me knows Me in reality.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego – are the eight kind of my lower material nature. Other than this by which the whole universe is sustained, is my higher spiritual nature in the form of Jiva Atma (the life principle) which you have to understand, O Arjuna. - **(Verse-1 to 5 of Chapter-7 refers)**

Arjuna, know that all beings have evolved from this twofold Prakriti (nature), and that I am the source of the entire creation, and into Me again it disappears. There is nothing else besides Me, Arjuna. This whole universe rests upon Me like pearls strung on a thread. O Arjuna, I am the tastefulness (sapidity in water), light of the sun and moon, sacred syllable OM in Vedas, I am the sound in ether, and manliness in Men. -**(Verse-6,7,8 of Chapter-7 refers)**

I am the pure odour in the earth and heat in fire and I am life in all beings and I am the penance in all austerities in men. Arjuna, know Me the eternal seed of all beings. I am the intelligence of the intelligent, the glory of all powerful men. Arjuna, of the mighty I am the might free from passion and desire. I am the sexual desire not conflicting with religious scriptures.- **(Verse-9,10,11 of Chapter-7 refers)**

All the material nature be they of Sattava Guna (mode of goodness), Rajo Guna (mode of passion) and Tamo Guna (mode of ignorance) are manifested by My energy. Know that all are evolved from Me alone. But in reality, neither do I exist in them, nor they in Me. As a result of these modes of material nature Sattava, Rajas and Tamas -the world fails to recognize Me standing apart from these and unperishable. For this most wonderful Maya (veil) of Mine, consisting of three Gunas (mode of nature), is extremely difficult to break through.

Those, however, who constantly adore Me alone are able to cross it. Those whose wisdom has been carried away by Maya (illusion) and who have embraced the demoniac nature, seek such foolish and vile men of evil deeds do not adore Me. **-(Verse-12 to 15 of Chapter-7 refers)**

O Best of Bharatas, Arjuna, four type of devotees worship Me. Devotees of noble deeds, the seekers after worldly possessions, those in distress, the seekers of knowledge and the man of wisdom with exclusive devotion in Me. Because I am extremely dear to wise man who knows Me in reality and he is extremely dear to Me. Indeed all these are noble, but the man of wisdom is My very self; such is My view. For such a devotee, who has his mind and intellect merged in Me, he remains established and attains Me in life. In the very last of all births the enlightened soul worships Me, such great soul is very rare. **-(Verse-16 to 19 of Chapter-7 refers)**

Those whose wisdom has been carried away due to various material desires and due to their nature, they worship other deities as per rules or rituals laid down for each deities. Whatever celestial form a devotee chooses to worship the deity with reverence, I stabilize the faith of that particular devotee in that deity. Endowed with such faith he worship that particular deity and obtains through him without doubt his desired enjoyments of fruits as ordained by Myself. The fruits gained by these people of lesser intelligence, however, is perishable. The worshippers of gods attain the gods, whereas My devotee in whatever manner they may worship Me, eventually come to Me and Me alone. **-(Verse-20 to 23 of Chapter-7 refers)**

Not knowing My unsurpassable and un-decaying supreme nature, the ignorant believe Me, the supreme spirit beyond the reach of mind and senses, the embodiment of truth to have assumed a finite form through birth as an ordinary human being. Veiled by My Yogamaya (

divine potency); ignorant human being fail to recognize Me as unperishable supreme soul who is neither born nor dies. Arjuna, I know all beings, past as well present and even those that are yet to come; but none devoid of faith and reverence knows Me. O valiant Arjuna, because of desire and jealousy leading into delusion of pleasure and pain, all living creatures are falling pray to infatuation. But those men of virtuous deeds whose sins have vanished and are free from passion and hate, only such committed and determined devotees worship Me by all means. **-(Verse-24 to 28 of Chapter-7 refers)**

The human being who have taken refuge in Me through devotional service and strive for deliverance from old age and death, such human being actually know Me as Brahma (the absolute), the supreme soul through spiritualism and fruitive activities. The unmanifest divinity dwelling in the heart of all being even at the hour of death know Me alone with steadfast mind. **-(Verse-29,30 of Chapter-7 refers)**

Brahma Spiritualism Action Matter and Divine intelligence

Sri Krsna said: The supreme indestructible is Brahma; one's own self (the individual soul) is called Adhyatma (spiritualism) and the discharge of spirits which brings forth the existence of beings, is called Karma (deed or action). All perishable objects are Adhibhuta; the shining Purusa (Brahma) is Adhideva; and in this body I Myself dwelling in the heart of every embodied being which is called Adhiyajana.

O Arjuna, he who departs from the body, thinking of Me alone even at the time of death, attains My nature and there is no doubt about. In whatever state one leaves his body at the time of death, the same is absorbed in in his thought for ever. Therefore, Arjuna, think of Me at all times and fight with mind and reason thus set on Me, you will without any doubt come to Me only.

O Partha (Arjuna), he who with his mind disciplined through Yoga in the form of practice of meditation and thinking of nothing else, is constantly engaged in contemplation of God attains the supremely effulgent divine Purusa (God). He who contemplates on the all-wise, ageless Being, the Ruler of all, subtler than the subtle, the universal sustainer possessing a Form beyond human conception, refulgent like the sun and far beyond the darkness of ignorance, should meditate and remember truly the supreme God. - **(Verse-3 to 10 of Chapter-8 refers)**

Realization of God through devotion

Krsna said; Learned persons in Vedas who call supreme soul imperishable, embodiment of truth and striving free from passion and one who practices celibacy, I shall explain you briefly as to how this level of perfection is attained.

Having closed all the doors of the senses, and firmly holding the mind in the cavity of the heart, and then fixing the life breath in the head, and remaining steadfast in Yogic concentration on God, he who leaves the body and departs, uttering the one indestructible Brahma, OM, and dwelling on Me in My absolute aspect, reaches the supreme goal. Great souls who have attained the highest perfection, having come to Me, are no more subjected to rebirth to suffer the sorrow in this planet. O Arjun; from the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode never takes birth again. -**(Verse-11 to 16 of Chapter-8 refers)**

Arjuna, this multitude of beings, being born again and again, is dissolved under compulsion of its nature at the coming of the cosmic night, and rises again at the commencement of the cosmic day. Far beyond even this unmanifest, there is yet another unmanifest existence, that supreme divine person who does not perish even though all being

perish. The same unmanifest which has been spoken of as the Indestructible is also called the supreme Goal; that again is My supreme abode, attaining after which they never return to this mortal world. Arjuna, that unmanifest supreme power in whom all beings reside, and by whom all this is pervaded, is attainable only through exclusive devotion. **-(Verse-17 to 22 of Chapter-8 refers)**

Krsna said: The devotees, however, who loving no one else constantly think of Me, and worship Me in a disinterested spirit, to those ever united in thought with Me I bring full security and personally attend to their needs. Arjuna, even those devotees who endowed with faith worship other gods (with some interested motives) worship Me alone, though with a mistaken approach. For I am the enjoyer and also the Lord of all sacrifices, but they know Me not in reality (as the supreme deity), hence they fall i.e. return to life on earth. **(Verse-22,23,24 of Chapter-8 refers)**

Secret divine power of supreme Lord of the universe

Shri Bhagavan said: O mighty armed Arjuna, listen again My supreme words which I shall speak to you who are so loving and out of solitude for your welfare. Neither the demigods nor the great sages know the secret of My birth i.e. My appearance in human or other garb. I am the prime cause in all respects of gods as well as the great seers. He who knows Me in reality as birthless and without beginning and as the supreme Lord of the universe, he undeluded among other beings is purged of all sins.

Power to make up one's mind, fundamental knowledge, unclouded understanding, forgiveness, truthfulness, control over the mind and senses, joy and sorrow, evolution and dissolution, fear and fearlessness- these diverse traits of creatures emanate from Me alone. The seven great seers, their four elders (Sanaka and others), the fourteen Manus, who are all devoted to Me, were born of My will; from

them all these creatures in the world have descended. He who knows in reality this supreme divine glory and supernatural power of Mine gets established in Me and through unfaltering devotion and there is no doubt in this. I am the source of all creation and everything in the world moves because of Me; knowing this the wise, full of devotion constantly worship Me.

With their mind fixed on Me, and their lives surrounded to Me, enlightening one another about My supreme power and derive great satisfaction and My devotees ever remain contented and take delight in Me. On those ever united through meditation, with Me and worshipping Me with love, I confer that Yoga of wisdom through which they come to Me. O Arjuna in order to shower My grace on them I, dwelling in their heart, dispel the darkness born of ignorance by the shining light of wisdom.- (**Verse-4 to 11 of Chapter-10 refers**)

Divine power and Glories of Lord Krsna

Shri Bhagavan said; Arjuna, now I shall tell you My conspicuous divine glories which are prominent; for there is no limit to My magnitude. Arjuna I am the universal self seated in the heart of all beings; so I am alone the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings.

I am Vishnu among the twelve sons of Aditi, and the radiant sun among the luminaries; I am the glow of Maruts (the forty nine wind gods), and moon among the stars. Among the Vedas, I am Samaveda; among the gods I am Indra; among the senses I am mind; I am consciousness (life-energy) in the living being. Among the eleven Rudras (god of destruction) I am Shiva; and among the Yaksas and Raksasas; I am the Lord of riches (Kubera). Among the eight vasus, I am the god of fire; and among the mountains, I am the Meru. Among the priests, Arjuna, know Me to be their chief, Brahaspati. Among the warrior-chiefs, I am Skanda (the lord of war); and among the water I

am ocean. Among the great seers, I am Bhrigu; among words, I am the sacred syllable OM. Among the offerings, I am the offering of Japa (chanting of holy names) and among the immovables, the Himalayas.

Among all trees I am the Asvattha (the holy fig tree); among the celestial sages ,Narada; among the Gandharvas (celestial musicians) Citraratha; and among the Siddhas, I am the sage Kapila. Among horses, know Me to be the celestial horse Uccaihsrava, be gotten of the churning of the ocean along with nectar among the mighty elephants Airavata (Indra's elephant); and among men I am the king.

Among weapons, I am the thunderbolt; among cows I am the celestial cow Kamadhenu (the cow of plenty), I am the sexual desire which leads to procreation (as enjoined by the scriptures); among serpents I am Vasuki. Among (Naga's (a special class of serpents) I am the serpent-god Ananta; and I am Varuna, the lord of aquatic creatures. Among the manes I am Aryama (the head of Pitars), and among rulers I am Yama (the god of death).

Among the Daityas, I am the great devotee Prahalada; and reckoners, I am the lion; and among birds I am Garuda. Among purifiers, I am the wind; among warriors, I am Shri Rama. Among fishes I am the Shark; and among streams I am Ganges.

Arjuna, I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all creations. Of sciences, I am the science of the soul, or metaphysics; in disputants I am the right type of reasoning. Among the sounds represented by various letters, I am 'A' i.e. AA in Hindi/ Sanskrit and among compounds I am the dual word. I am also inexhaustible time and creators of Brahma and sustainer of this universe with My face on all side.

I am the all destroying Death and the origin of all that shall be born. Among women, I am Kirti, Sri, Vak, Smrti, Medha, Dhrit and

Ksama (the goddess presiding over glory, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, steadfastness and forbearance (patience) respectively. Likewise among the Srutis that can be sung, I am Brhatsama and among the Vedic hymns, I am the hymn known as Gayatri. Among the months I am 'Margaairsa' and the six seasons I am flower bearing spring season. I am gambling among deceitful practices and glory of the glorious. I am the victory of the victorious, the resolve of the resolute and goodness of good being.

Among the descendants of Vrsnis, I am Krsna and among the sons of Pandavas I am Arjuna i.e. you. I am Vyasa among the sages and sage Sukracarya poet among the wise thinkers. I am the power to punish those who suppress and the power to those who seek victory of any things to be kept secret. I am the silent custodian and I am the wisdom of the wise.

Arjuna , I am the cause of birth of all being born because there is no creature moving or inert which exists without Me. Arjuna, there is no limit to My divine manifestation. This is only a brief description by Me of My glory. Every such thing as a glorious, brilliant and powerful, know that to be part of manifestation of My glory. Or , what you gain by knowing all this in detail, Arjuna? Sufficient to say that I stand holding this entire universe by a fraction of My Yogic power. - **(Verse-19 to 42 of Chapter-10 refers)**

Revelation of multifarious divine form of Krsna

After seeing the multifarious divine form of Krsna, Arjun said; You are the supreme indestructible worthy of being known; You are the ultimate refuge of this universe. You are again the protector of the ageless Dharma; I consider You to be eternal imperishable Bing. I see You without beginning, middle or end, possessing unlimited prowess and endowed with numberless arms, having the moon and sun like eyes, mouth like blazing fire and I see you heating the entire

universe by your radiance. O supreme Lord, the space between heaven and earth from all quarters are filled by You alone. Seeing this transcendent, dreadful form of Yours, all the three worlds feel greatly perturbed. Hosts of gods are entering You; some with palms joined out of fair are uttering Your names and glories. Multitude of great sages and seers, saying 'Let their be peace', are extolling You by means of excellent hymns. **(Verse-18 to21 of Chapter-11 refers)**

Sri Bhagavan said: I am inflamed Mahakal (eternal time spirit). I have come here to destroy these people. Therefore, the warriors who are part of forces on the other side will not live. All these people will be exterminated even if you do not fight this war. Therefore, get up to fight and win glory after winning over the enemy and enjoy the fruits of affluent kingdom. These warriors stand already slain by Me; be only an instrument, O Arjuna. **-(Verse-32,33,34 of Chapter-11 refers)**

Arjun said: It is appropriate to say that upon hearing and chanting your name, attributes and glory, this universe feels extremely joyful and demons feel terrified and fleeing in different directions and the Siddhas are bowing to pay respect to You. O great soul, why should they not offer their homage to you? You are the progenitor of Brahma Himself. O infinite Lord of celestials, Abode of the universe You are that which is existent (Sat) and that which is non - existent (Asat), You are invincible true source of highest bliss and knowledge i.e. Satchitananda. **-(Verse-35,36,37 of Chapter-11 refers)**

Sri Bhagavan said: pleased with you I have shown you, through My own power of Yoga, this supreme, effulgent, primal and infinite Cosmic Body which was never seen by any one else in the past. Arjuna, in this mortal world I can not be seen by anyone else than you, either through study of Vedas or of rituals or a gain through charities, actions or austere penances. Seeing such a dreadful Form of Mine as

this, be not perturbed or perplexed; with a fearless and complacent mind, behold once again the same four -armed Form of Mine bearing conch, discus, mace and lotus. **-(Verse-47,48,49 of Chapter- 11 refers)**

Best Yogi as defined by Lord Krsna

Sri Bhagavan said: I consider them to be best Yogi, who endowed with faith, and ever united through meditation and worship Me with the mind centered on Me. Those, however, who fully controlling all their senses and even minded towards all, and devoted to the welfare of all being adore as their very self the unthinkable, omnipresent, indestructible, indefinable, eternal, immovable, unmanifest changeless Brahma , they too come to Me. Of course, the strain is greater for those who have their mind attached to the unmanifest; for atonement with the unmanifest is attained with difficulty by those who are centered in the body.

If, taking recourse to the Yoga of My realization, you are unable to do this, then subduing your mind and intellect etc. relinquish the fruits of all actions. Knowledge is better than practice, meditation on God is superior than knowledge, and renunciation of the fruits of actions is even superior to meditation; peace follows immediately from renunciation.

He who is free from malice, not selfish, friendly and compassionate, rid of 'I' and mine, balance in joy and sorrow, forgiving by nature, ever contented and mentally united with Me, and who has subdued his mind, senses and body, has a firm resolve, and has surrendered his mind and reason to Me, that devotee of Mine is dear to Me. He who is not a source of annoyance to his fellow creatures, and who in his turn does not feel vexed with fellow- creatures and who is free from delight and envy perturbation and fear, is dear to Me.

He who wants nothing, who is both internally and externally pure, is clever impartial, and has risen above all distractions, and who renounces the feelings of doer ship in all undertaking, that devotee of Mine is dear to Me. Those devotees, however, who partake without any motive the nectar of pious wisdom set forth above, endowed with faith and solely devoted to Me, they are extremely dear to Me.- (Verse-2 to 20 of Chapter-12 refers)

Knowledge about the nature of body and soul (Gyan Yoga)

Sri Bhagavan Said: This body, Arjuna, is termed as the Field (ksetra); and he who knows it, the sages discerning the truth about both is referred to as the knower of the Field (Ksetrajana). Know Myself to be the Ksetrajana (individual soul) also in all the Kestra (Field), Arjuna. And it is the knowledge of Ksetra and Ksetrajana i.e. of Matter and its evolutes and the spirit which I consider as wisdom.

The truth about the Ksetra and Ksetrajana has been expounded by the seers in manifold ways; again it has been separately stated in different Vedic chants and also in the conclusive and reasoned texts of the Brahma sutras.

The five elements- the ego, the intellect, the unmanifest (Primordial Matter), the ten organs (of perception and actions), the mind, the five objects of sense (sound, touch, colour, taste and smell). And also desire, aversion, pleasure, pain of the physical body, consciousness, firmness; Thus is the Ksetra with its evolutes, briefly states.

Not to be proud of superiority, keep away from hypocrisy, not to terrify any being, ability to pardon, to be honest in mind and speech, service of the teacher with devotion, to remain internally and externally pure, steadfastness of mind and control over the body and senses. Dispassion towards the objects of enjoyment of

this world and the next, to be free from egoism and repeatedly thinking of the pain and evils of birth, death, old age and disease. Non-attachment to children, wife, home, wealth etc. Not to have affection and to remain even mindedness in pleasant and unpleasant events. Unflinching devotion to Me through exclusive attachment, feeling of living in a solitary and holy places and finding no enjoyment in the company of being with artificial nature. Totally concentrating on the self knowledge through meditation and accepting that realization of God is the true knowledge and opposite of this is ignorance.

Krsna said at length about the creator of the universe which should be known to human being and by knowing that one attains supreme bliss of Brahma who is the lord of the beginningless entities. He is neither Sat (being) nor Asat (non-being). It has hands and feet on all sides, eyes, head and mouth in all directions, and ears all around; for it stands pervading all in the universe. Though perceiving all sense objects, it is devoid of all senses. Not attached, yet He is the sustainer of all. Even though attribute less yet He is the enjoyer of qualities (the three mode of nature). It exists without and within all being and constitutes animate and inanimate creation as well. And reason of subtle, it is incomprehensible; it is close at hand and stand a far too.

Though integral like space undivided, it appears divided as it were in all animate and inanimate beings. And that Godhead which is the object worth knowing, is the sustainer of being as Vishnu, destroyer as Rudra and the creator of all as Brahma. That supreme Brahma is said to be the light of all lights and entirely beyond Maya (illusion). That Godhead is knowledge itself, worth knowing and worth attaining through real wisdom, and is particularly seated in the heart of all.

Prakrti (mode of nature) is said to be responsible for bringing forth evolutes and the instruments; while the individual soul

is known to be the cause of experiencing joys and sorrows. Only the Purusa seated in Prakrti senses objects of nature of three Gunas evolved from Prakrti. And it is contact with these three Gunas that is responsible for the birth of this soul in good and evil wombs. He who thus knows Purusa (spirit) and Prakrti (nature) of the three gunas- even though performing his duties is never born again. Some by meditation behold the supreme spirit in the heart with the help of their refined and sharp intellect. Others realize it through the discipline of knowledge Yoga and yet others attain it through the discipline of Karma Yoga.-(**Verse 1 to 24 of Chapter-13 refers**)

Supreme soul (Paramatma) and embodied soul (Jivatma)

Lord Krsna said: Those wise men who are freed from pride and delusion who have conquered the evil of attachment, who are in eternal union with God, whose cravings have altogether ceased and those who have freed themselves from duality of happiness and distress- they attain the supreme immortal state. Neither the sun nor the moon nor even fire can illumine that supreme self effulgent state, attaining to which they never return to this world. That is My supreme abode. The eternal Jivatma (soul in the body) is a particle of My own being; and it is that alone which draws around itself the mind and five senses which rest in Prakrti or nature.

Even as the wind wafts smell from their seat, so too the Jivatma, which is the controller of the body etc. taking the mind and the body which he leaves behind, migrates to the body which it acquires. It is while dwelling in the senses of hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell, as well as the mind, Jeev Atma enjoys the particular objects of senses.

The ignorant do not know the soul departing from or dwelling in the body, or enjoying the objects of senses i.e. even when it is connected with three mode of nature (Guna); only those endowed with the eye of wisdom are able to realize it. Striving Yogis too are able

to realize this enshrined soul in their heart. The ignorant, however, whose heart has not been purified may not understand this even after making efforts.- (**Verse-5 to 11 of Chapter-15 refers**)

Difference between divine and demoniac nature

Lord Krsna said: A person free from fearlessness, perfect purity of mind, cultivation of spiritual knowledge through constant fixity in the Yoga of meditation, charity in its Sattava form, control over senses, worship of God – deities and spiritual teachers, following the best of actions (Karma), performance of Agnihotra (sacrifice i.e. pouring of oblation into the sacred fire) and other sacred duties, study and teaching of Vedas and sacred books as well as chanting God’s names and praises, suffering hardships for the discharge of one’s sacred obligations and straightness of mind ,body and senses; non-violence in thought word and deed, truthfulness and friendly speech, absence of anger even on provocation, disclaiming doer ship in respect of actions, steady mind free from flickering, abstaining from malicious gossip, kindness towards all human and other beings, absence of attachment to senses even during their contact with senses, mildness a sense of shame in transgressing against the scriptures and abstaining from frivolous pursuits, sublimity, forbearance, fortitude, external purity, bearing enemy to none, absence of self-esteem – these are the attributes of a godly persons born with divine nature.

Lord Krsna said: Men possessing demoniac disposition know not what is right activity and what is right abstinence from activity. Hence they possess neither purity (external or internal) nor good conduct nor truthfulness. Men possessing a demoniac disposition say, this world is without any foundation, false and Godless, the human being is born out of mutual union of male and female and hence conceived in lust; what else than this? Clinging to this false view who have lost their nature, who have no intelligence and who remain

engaged in horrible deeds, such enemies of mankind are only capable of destroying this universe.

These beings cherishing insatiable desires and embracing false doctrines through ignorance which can not be fulfilled- such beings with impure conduct or corrupt practices remain active in this world. Giving themselves up to innumerable cares ending with only death, they remain devoted to enjoyment of sensuous pleasures and in their belief that this is the highest limit of joy. Held in bondage by hundreds of ties of expectations and wholly giving themselves up to lust and anger, they strive to amass by unfair means hoards of money and other objects for the enjoyment of sensuous pleasures.

Intoxicated by wealth and honor, those self conceited and haughty men worship God through nominal sacrifice for ostentation without following the sacred rituals. Given over to egotism, brute force, arrogance, lust and anger etc. and culminating others, they hate Me (the inner controller of all) dwelling in their own bodies as well as in those of others. These haters, sinful, cruel and vilest among men, I cast them again and again into demoniacal wombs in this world. Failing to reach Me, Arjun, these stupid souls are born lif after life in demoniac wombs and again verily sink down deeper into the hell. Desire anger and greed- this triple gate of hell brings about ruination of the soul. Therefore, one should give up all these three and protect the sacred soul.- (**Verse-1 to 21 of Chapter-16 refers**)

Defining Guna or mode of nature

Lord Krsna explained the mode of nature to Arjuna as follows; The untutored innate (acquired by the embodied soul) faith of human being is of three kinds-Sattavika, Rajasika and Tamasika. The faith of all human being conforms to their mental constitution. A living being has a nature of faith which he has truly acquired. Those with Sattavika (mode of goodness) worship gods; those with Rajasika

(mode of passion) temperament worship demigods and others with Tamasika (mode of ignorance) nature worship the spirit of the dead and group of ghosts.

Food also, which is agreeable to different human being according to their innate disposition is also of three kinds. Foods which promote longevity, intelligence, vigor, health, happiness and cheerfulness and which are sweet, bland, substantial and naturally agreeable, are dear to Sattavika type of human being. Foods which are bitter, acid salty, overhot, pungent, dry and burning and which cause suffering, grief and sickness, are dear to Rajasika type of men. Food is half cooked or half ripe, inspid, putrid, stale and polluted and which is impure too, is dear to human being of Tamasika dispositions.

The sacrifice which is offered, as ordained by scriptural injunctions, by human being who expect no reward and who believe that such sacrifices must be performed, is of Sattavika mode of nature. But sacrifices which are offered for the sake of mere show or even an eye to its fruit, know it to be Rajasika mode of nature. A sacrifice which has no respect for scriptural injunctions, in which no food is offered, and no sacrificial fees are paid, which is without sacred chant and devoid of faith, is said to be of Tamasika.

When gift or charity is given as a duty and with this in mind at the right time and right place to a deserving person without expecting any thing in return, is called Sattavika. And charity performed with grudging spirit or with a pbject of getting reward in return is called Rajasika. A gift which is made without grace and in a disdainful spirit out of time and place to undeserving persons, is said to be Tamasika. – **(Verse-1 to22 of Chapter-17 refers)**

All about OM TAT SAT

The three syllables are indicative of the Supreme Absolute Truth i.e. Brahma since the beginning of the creation of the universe. Brahmanas, Vedaic hymns and sacrifices were composed to worship the supreme soul, the creator of this universe. Therefore those who are superior human being while chanting Vedic hymns during sacrifices, charitites and austerities in accordance to spiritual scriptures always start after remembering divine name OM of the supreme soul (Paramatma).

With the belief that all this belongs to God, who is denoted by the appellation TAT, acts of sacrifice, austerity and charity of various kinds are performed by the seekers of blessedness expecting no rewards in return. SAT, the name of God is expressed as truth and goodness in the sense of praiseworthy act . O Arjun, It is said that sacrifices, austerity and charity performed without true faith are all ‘ASAT’ and such rituals are neither fruitful in this life nor in the next life.- (**Verse-23 to 28 of Chapter-17 refers**)

Renunciation and renounced order of life

Lord Krsna explained about renunciation to Arjuna in the following words. Renunciation (Tyaga) are also of three kinds- Sattavika, Rajasika and Tamasika. Acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not to be given up; they must be performed. Indeed all these acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are purifiers of wise persons too. Hence these acts of sacrifice, charity and penance and all other act for duties too must be performed without attachment and hope for reward. This is my considered and supreme opinion. Prohibited acts and that are motivated by desire should no doubt be given up. But it is not advisable to abandon a prescribed duty. Therefore, abandonment of such duties due to ignorance is declared as Tamasika. Should anyone give up his duties for fear of physical strain, thinking that all action is

verily of the nature of discomfort, practicing such Rajasika (mode of passion) form of renunciation, reaps no fruits of renunciation.

It is impossible for an embodied being to give up all activities. Therefore, it is said that he who renounces the fruit of actions is called a man of renunciation. For one who is not renounced, the threefold fruits of action-desirable, undesirable and mixed accrue after death. But those who are in the renounced order of life have no such results or fruits of action after death.- **(Verse-4 to 12 of Chapter-18 refers)**

Last words of Lor Krsna and Arjuna recorded in Gita

Krsna said to Arjuna about the five factors which bring about accomplishment of all actions which have been described in Sankhya philosophy. The five operating towards the accomplishment of actions are: the place of action, the performers, the senses, different kind of efforts one makes to accomplish the action and finally the destiny or divine power. Whatever right or wrong action a man performs by body, mind or speech in accordance to or against prescribed directions in the scriptures, these five factors stated above contribute to accomplishment of the work performed.-**(Verse-13 to 15 of Chapter-18 refers)**

Arjuna, God abides in the heart of all creatures, causing them to revolve according to their Karma by His illusive power, seated as those beings are in the vehicle of the body. Take shelter in Him alone with all your beings. By hHis mere grace you shall attain supreme peace and the eternal state. Thus has this wisdom, more secret than secrecy itself, been imparted to you by Me. Fully pondering over it, do as you like. Here again My supremely secret word, the most esoteric of all truths. You are extremely dear to Me; therefore I shall offer you this salutary advice.-**(Verse-61 to 64 of Chapter-18 refers)**

Give your mind to Me, be devoted to Me and bow to Me. Doing so you will come to Me alone. This secret gospel of Gita should never be imparted to a man who lacks penance, nor to him who is wanting in devotion, nor even to him who lends not a willing ear; and in no case to him who finds faults with Me. He who, offering highest love to Me, preaches the most profound gospel of the Gita among My devotees, shall come to Me alone; there is no doubt about it.- (Verse-65 to 69 of Chapter-18 refers)

Arjun said: Krsna, by Your grace my delusion has fled and wisdom has been gained by me. Now I am firm and free from any doubt and therefore prepared to act according to Your instructions.- (**Verse-73 of Chapter-18 refers**)

(Part-VII of the book ends here)

Part- VIII

LEARNING AND TEACHINGS OF SHRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA

1

BASIC KNOWLEDGE ABOUT BHAGAVAD GITA

I covered comparative and general study of 'Bhagavad Gita' after reading five different Gita with commentaries by different authors. My concern was that beside purport (meaning), interpretation, elaboration of each Shloka (verse) - the translation of Gita into English has not been uniform. Sanskrit is not understood by majority of the educated population today but its translation into more difficult words of English language is not doing any good to promote the teachings of 'Bhagavad Gita' which are equally important for mankind living in any part of this planet earth. So I decided to continue my study and find additional books which could help me to present the exact source of 'Bhagavad Gita' with word by word meaning in Hindi and English language. It was my good fortune that with the divine grace of Lord Krishna, in this age of internet, I was able to get a 'Sanskrit-Hindi-English Dictionary' and another 'Shrimad Bhagavad Gita' in Sanskrit with word by word translation in Hindi and English without any interpretation or elaboration. Beside this I have been listening to recorded spiritual teachings by Jagat Guru Shri Kripalu Maharaj ji for many months which also gave additional knowledge about the existence of God and its power with particular reference to Lord Shri Krishna who was the incarnation of faceless supreme God Brahma (not demigod Vishnu) from the time the universe came into existence. Without qualified spiritual master or Guru it is not easy to understand the teachings of 'Bhagavad Gita' and its value for the survival and salvation of mankind.

Even though every human being remembers almighty God on different occasion on this planet earth, yet he keeps changing his perception about existence of God and His power to control and regulate creation, preservation and destruction of this mother earth. Lord Krishna during the period of Mahabharata war Who Himself was the incarnation of supreme soul also called 'Paramatma' in Hindi language, revealed the system of Yoga (consciously linking your mind with supreme lord) to Arjuna during Mahabharata war which is available today to all human being on this mother earth in the form of 'Bhagavad Gita'. In the Fourth Chapter, Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna that this system of Yoga, the Bhagavad Gita, was first spoken by Him to the sun-god, and sun-god explained it to Manu, and Manu explained it to Iksvaku, and in that way, by disciples in succession, one speaker to another, this Yoga system (practice of consciously linking with supreme soul) has been spreading for ages. But in the course of time, it was forgotten. Consequently the Lord came on this earth planet again to speak this time to Arjuna all about supreme soul during Mahabharata war and other fundamental principles which can be followed by human being for survival and salvation from this material world.

Different spiritual masters (Acharyas) have described Lord Shri Krishna as the supreme soul (Paramatma) or Godhead in this universe. He is accepted as such in the Brahma-Samhita and all the Puranas, especially the Shrimad-Bhagavatam also known as Bhagavata Puran. 'Shrimad Bhagavad Gita' has been translated into several languages, and each translation has been presented in different ways with some variations in its meaning. But the edition of 'Bhagavad Gita' quoted above has its own distinction. It contains the original text serially expressed in Verse (Shloka in Sanskrit) with its translation into Hindi and also in English. Any one anxious to find time and read Bhagavad Gita can draw his own conclusion and use the spiritual knowledge for his own self emancipation and peaceful

life in this mother earth with the blessings of faceless (Nirakaar) supreme soul i.e. Paramatma or embodied Lord Krishna who Himself was the incarnation of the supreme soul.

All the Vedic knowledge which was finally concluded in Upanishads was revealed by the supreme soul i.e. Paramatma or Lord Krishna. It was, therefore, natural that Lord Krishna in the form of human being or incarnation of God could so convincingly talk on every question that was raised by Arjuna during the course of Mahabharata war and subsequently documented in the 'Bhagavad Gita'. In Part-VII of this book, only translated version of each verse of 'Bhagavad Gita', without any comments, interpretation or elaboration in simple English language, have been recorded for the benefit of devotees or students who are keen to know all about the origin of 'Sanatana Dharma' established by the supreme soul Himself and repeated again by Lord Krishna during Mahabharata war in Dvapara Yuga.

Translated version of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita included in Part-VII has some important features which have been adopted for the benefit of readers and devotees in a fast moving life of the human being in the present day world. Firstly, it does not display Verses in Sanskrit language given in the Bhagavad Gita, instead only Chapter heading and serial number of the verses are given in the paragraph headings which is followed by correct translation of the subject matter covered during the dialogue between Lord Krishna, Arjuna and Sanjaya. Secondly, Verses have been grouped together wherever the specific subject matter has been explained in detail by Lord Krishna to maintain continuity of translated version of the subject matter in verses. Thirdly, the existing translation in English referred to by the author of this project were found either shortened or without full translation of the original verse or words because of dictionaries not easily available for words used in Vedic literature in Sanskrit

language . Therefore, special efforts have been made in this book to present the exact translation of all verses containing the dialogue between Sanjaya, Shri Krishna and Arjuna given in Shrimad Bhagavad Gita. Lastly difficult and unknown English word have been replaced by common English word for the convenience of readers and the devotees of God.

The author of this book found that Lord Krishna, Himself being supreme Lord and spiritual master, very systematically and repeatedly explained the most secret knowledge about management of life or art of living for human being in this planet earth and the life after death. Lord Krishna initially explained the basic values and fundamental principles necessary to live peaceful and useful life and later elaborated further and finally concluded his teachings to the entire satisfaction of Arjuna and all other devotees living in this material world and for those who truly believed in the power of supreme soul. Lord can liberate you from all the sins you may have committed and bless you to attain true consciousness and bliss and help you take refuge in Him after salvation.

2

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LIFE AND GOD

Extract from an article by Suyash Saxena of JNU (Centre for Philosophy) published on 12 Jan, 2014 in Hindu news paper is reproduced below to understand the relevance of God for human being forever and that human being has to keep its faith and belief in God for its own existence.

“ Millions of people live by religion and the idea of God. Millions of lives are sustained simply in the hope of justice meted out by some supernatural hand. Millions of thoughts, philosophies, religions and ideologies are pieced together in the name of that other-

worldly contentment. The element of chance is vital in life. Because there is uncertainty in life and no amount of rational knowledge can pre-empt the twists' and turns in life is going to take in future, we inevitably have to resort to the idea of Chance. Had life been completely defined by rationality and reason, we would not have needed ideas of Chance and God.

“Chance and God then become the central idea around which life revolves. But perhaps that is a rash conclusion drawn from an incomplete story. While it true that life is determined only by the existence of Chance, it is equally true that the idea of Chance and God is determined only in the context of life. It is only because human life is possible that God and Chance have a meaning. Had there been no life, God and Chance would have been superfluous concepts. It is the human life that is central, and around it revolves the idea of God and religion. It is thus the human being who has created the idea of God to harmonize the contradictions of life and it may not be other way round.

“The idea of God and promises of the supernatural bliss would be meaningless had it not been in the context any one's life as human being.”

According to Usha Paul Raj, the spirit of God was the prime being who pre-existed the universe. Nothing else was in existence. All was formless, empty and dark, probably a black hole of dense energy. There must have been a tremendous explosion of fire and light. Huge masses of burning material must have flown in every direction, whirling and forming into balls, which became heavenly bodies-stars, big and small. From a number of these whirling stars, burning masses separated and whirled and cooled, probably over millions of years and began to revolve around their body turning into the stars' planets.

God chose one of the planets from a star's family as home for His beloved child, the human being, and began to set it up to be his fitting habitation. The planet -to be named the Earth- had mountains, land and waters. God created plants and trees, grass and flowers appear everywhere. They could produce seeds through which they proliferated. The animal kingdom stepped in. At the end of each phase or day, as the narrator calls it, God paused to check that all that was coming in was good. The creatures were made male and female to form into families and proliferate through sexual reproduction. In the sixth and last phase, God brought in the crown of His creation-man and woman- for whom the heavens and the earth were ready. 'Multiply and fill the earth, rule over it, God said to them. They were physical beings, but they alone could hear God's voice in their spirit and converse with Him as His fellow beings.

Cosmologists today agree that all universe came into existence with a Big Bang. Evolutionists believe in an order of development of life forms that, to a large extent, goes parallel with the order stated in the creation narrative. All that came into existence was planned and created by a loving God who made the universe and everything in it good for his children, human beings with whom he is continuously in touch. The best way for men and women to fully use and enjoy the goodness in and around them would be to know and understand their good and loving creator and by his precepts and guidance.

3

VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY ON GOD AND UNIVERSE

As explained by Hasmukh Adhia, God is suppose to be the creator, controller and destroyer of the world. It is a combination of universal consciousness and body. But the body of God, as per Vedanta philosophy, is the entire body of Universe called Prakriti or

Nature. It is the Prakriti, on which the consciousness of Brahma shines, which controls the manifested creation in an autopilot mode.

Universal consciousness is a non-dual, single element, which is Sat, always present everywhere; Chit, the cause of making the Universe sentient; and Anand, pure bliss. It is, therefore, referred to as Sat-Chit-Anand. In Vedanta, it is referred to as Brahman. The same Brahman is known as atman in the context of an individual. God is not someone running the Universe sitting in heaven. It is an autopilot system set in motion, with clear cut results coming out of specific actions. For example, if you sow a mango seed, mangoes come, and not oranges. It is a perfect rule of Prakriti. That includes the law of Karma, according to which one gets the results or fruits of one's karmas or deeds.

God as Prakriti is difficult to visualize, so we give the divine names like Ram, Krishn, Allah, and Jesus and worship Him in different forms. Since entire Prakriti is manifestation of God, one can pick up any object of nature and worship it. This explains the worshipping of 330 million gods in Hinduism. By nature, God is Nirgun, formless. In fact, God is controlling the world sitting inside each of us and residing in every part of nature in an invisible form. Jagat is a field of experience created by God to help us exhaust our Karmas. The world consists of Nature, flora, fauna and all beings. Some people who have earned good Karmas enjoy in this world, while other suffer. The suffering in the Jagat is not something which God doles out arbitrarily. It is a result of our own Karma, either of this or past birth. A question arises: If an individual's Karmas decide pleasure or pain, what about the natural calamity in which thousands of people suffer? The answer given is that whenever the collective Karmas of all people in that place fructifies then such a calamity happens.

If Karma decides everything in our life, is there any purpose served by praying to God? The answer is, yes. Just as in the case of a democratic set up, after the verdict of the supreme court, the President has power to give reprieve to an offender, similarly God can always forgive us even though we might have committed some bad Karma. So one can trust God and pray for mercy.

4

REPRODUCTION OF BHAGAVAD GITA

Besides articles containing teaching of Bhagavad-Gita published in various news magazine and books ever since the print media came into existence, I was able to buy five different editions of Bhagavad-Gita along with Ramayana and Mahabharata to be kept as holy books in my family Puja room due to my faith in God and religion as part of my duty. In this Chapter we are only concerned with eternal value and importance of Bhagavad-Gita. The five editions of Bhagavad-Gita which have been studied for the purpose of this book are:

- A. 'Bhagavad-Gita As It Is' by Shri A.C Bhakti Vedanta Swami Prabhupada published by Bhakti Vedanta Book Trust, Mumbai in 1983- contains original Sanskrit text (Shlokas), Roman Translation, English equivalent translation and elaborate purports (meaning) (pp 975)
- B. Shrimad Bhagavad Gita (Sanskrit-Hindi-English) by Ashok Kaushik-1983 (428 pages)
- C. Srimad Bhagavad-Gita by Swami Swarupananda published by Advaita Ashram, Kolkata in 2007 -contains original Sanskrit text, word for word translation, English rendering comments and index – (pp 430)
- D. The Bhagavad-Gita by Shri Parmahansa Yogananda published by Yogoda Satsanga Society of India. Kolkata in 2016 (Vol-I , Vol-II) – (pp 1132)

E. Contains original text of Gita in Sanskrit and nearly correct translation in Hindi which have also been studied for this Part of the book.

For the purpose of this book it was necessary to assess the purpose and aim of publishing of Bhagavad-Gita by various learned religious teachers of Hindu religion both in India and abroad with their own translation and interpretations. For ordinary human being, it is extremely difficult to assimilate the vast supreme divine knowledge given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna during Mahabharata war when Thy self was personally on this planet to protect dharma (righteousness) against adharma (irreligion) for the safety and survival of mankind. Different Chapter headings indicated or designated by the authors of the four editions of Bhagavad-Gita in respect of 18 chapters are given below. No Chapter headings are given in Gita as per serial 'E' above. **Chapter headings of Gita as indicated by four different authors according to their own interpretations, are given below for comparative study.**

1. A. Observing the Armies on the battlefield of Kurukshetra
B. Arjun Vishad Yog
C. The Grief of Arjuna.
D. Despondency of Arjuna
2. A. Content of Gita Summarized.
B. Sankhya Yog
C. The way of Knowledge.
D. Cosmic wisdom and the Method of it's Attainment.
3. A. Karma-Yoga
B. Karm Yoga
C. The way of Action.
D. Karma Yoga: The path of spiritual Action.
4. A. Transcendental knowledge.
B. Gyan Karm Sanyas Yog
C. The way of Renunciation of Action in knowledge.
D. The supreme science of knowing God.
5. A. Karma-Yoga Action in Krishna consciousness.

- B. Karm Sanyas Yog
 C. The way of Renunciation.
 D. Freedom through Inner Renunciation -meditation
6. A. Sankhya-Yoga
 B. Atma Sayam Yog
 C. The way of meditation.
 D. Permanent shelter in Spirit.
7. A. Knowledge of the Absolute
 B. Gyan Vigyan Yog
 C. The way of Knowledge with Realization.
 D. The nature of Spirit and the Spirit Nature
8. A. Attaining of Supreme
 B. Akshar Brahm Yog
 C. The Way of Imperishable Brahma.
 D. The imperishable Absolute.
9. A. The most confidential knowledge
 B. Raj Bidya Raj Guyah Yog
 C. The way of the kingly knowledge and the kingly secret.
 D. The Royal knowledge, The Royal Mystery.
10. A. The Opulence of the Absolute
 B. Bibhuti Yog
 C. The Glimpses of the Divine Glory.
 D. The infinite manifestation of the unmanifested spirit.
11. A. The universal Form.
 B. Vishwa Rup Darshan Yog
 C. The vision of the universal form.
 D. Vision of Visions.
12. A. Devotional Service.
 B. Bhakti Yog
 C. The way of Devotion.
 D. Bhakti Yoga: Union through Devotion.
13. A. Nature, the enjoyer and consciousness
 B. Shetra Shetraj Vibhag Yog
 C. The Discrimination of the Ksetra and the Ksetrajna.
 D. The field and the knower of the field.
14. A. The three modes of material natures.
 B. Guntraya Vibhag Yog
 C. The discrimination of the Three Guna's
 D. Transcending the Gunas
15. A. The Yoga of the Supreme Person.

- B. Purshotam Yog
 C. The way to the Supreme Spirit
 D. Purushottama: The utter most being.
16. A. The Divine and Demonic nature.
 B. Dewasur Sampat Vibhag Yog
 C. The classification of Divine and Non-divine Attributes.
 D. Embracing the Divine and shunning the Demonic.
17. A. The Division of Faith.
 B. Shradhakshay Vibhag Yog
 C. The Enquiry into the Three fold of Shradha.
 D. Three Kinds of Faith.
18. A. Conclusion- The Perfection of Renunciation.
 B. moksha Sanyas Yog
 C. The way of Liberation in Renunciation.
 D. In Truth Do I promise Thee: Thou shalt Attain Me.

Conclusion

It should be noted by the readers and devotees of Bhagavad Gita that it may not be advisable to educated persons or authors without full knowledge of language i.e. Sanskrit, Hindi and English to give Chapter headings to 18 Chapters of Gita according to their own interpretations. However, Chapter headings given in the word by word translation of Bhagavad Gita by the author in English and reproduced in Chppter-2 of Part-VII of this book are also only indicative of the main subject matter it contains. The devotees and others should, therefore, read the full text of Bhagavad Gita and the gist of Bhagavad Gita given in C-3 of Part-VII of this book and derive full benefit of the holy book Bhagavad Gita.

5

MATERIAL NATURE OR GUNA OF HUMAN BEING

All virtues and vices in this world originate from Sattva, Rajas and Tamas which are also connected with Moon, Sun and Earth

respectively. These three Gunas are included in Maya. ‘Sattva’ indicates mode of goodness i.e. love and compassion,’ Rajas’ is the mode of passion i.e. lust, anger and selfishness and ‘Tamas’ is the mode of ignorance. God is exceptionally different from the Maya or divine power wholly beyond and free from the Gunas: that is why he is called pure. God is above Gunas. According to this reasoning the entire world consisting of virtues like truth, compassion, renunciation and discrimination etc. and vices like lust, anger, greed, infatuation etc. is superimposed on God. In other words God may be described as endowed with all Gunas good and bad.

The very essence of Gita summarized in this book is for the benefit of ordinary and ignorant human beings. The original teachings and guidance to regulate meaningful life of human being are available in Vedas and Upanishads etc. Beside four basic goals laid down for human being i.e. purusartha are dharma to follow the religion, arth to ensure economic security, kama to work selflessly and moksha to gain salvation. The modes of material nature i.e. Sattava guna, Rajas (Rajo-guna) and Tamas (Tamo-guna) have also been explained in Vedas. The present day scholars/religious teachers continue to give brief and different meaning of the three modes of material nature (prakriti) which are as follows:

Sattava-guna

1. The mode of goodness of material nature or
2. Signifies everything pure, fine and calm.
3. Representing planet moon – who want knowledge and exemplary life. They worship Saraswati.

Rajas (Rajo-guna)

1. The mode of passion of material nature or
2. Active principles of existence.

3. Representing planet sun – who believes in love, hate and anger and desire for wealth.

Tamas (Tamo – guna)

1. The mode of ignorance of material nature.
2. Signifies laziness, helplessness inaction in general.
3. Representing earth planet.

Note: Srl. 1 -meaning as per glossary of “Bhagavad-Gita as it is” and Srl. 2- meaning are as per glossary of fundamental of Indian philosophy.

Recently I came across an article published in a Hindi newspaper attributed to Shri Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev explaining the importance of ‘Navratra’ festival. In this article Sadguru says that ‘Navratra’ you have won over all guna i.e. Sattava, Rajo and Tamo. This means you have gone through all three gunas, you have participated but never got attached to them. Similarly Shri Jagad Guru Kripalu Maharaj, on the three gunas of mankind, says that if you possess Sattava guna you go to heaven, if you possess Rajo guna you will live on this earth and you possess Tamo guna then you will go to hell only. Jagad Guru further elaborated that one should get detached from all three guna, come to Lord Krishna and free themselves from all kinds of attachment in this world. One cannot change the nature of human being unless he has been blessed with knowledge and last words on this subject are available in Gita. In Verse – 45, Chapter-II, Lord Krishna says that Vedas mainly deal with the subject as three modes of material nature. Rise above these modes, O Arjuna. Be transcendental to all of them. Be free from all dualities and from all anxieties for gain and safety and be established in the self.

According to explanation given by Swami Prabhupada, all material activities involve actions and reactions in the three mode of material nature. They are meant for fruitive results, which cause bondage

in material world. The Vedas deal mostly with fruitive activities to gradually elevate the general public from the field of sense gratification to a position on the transcendental plane. Arjuna, as a student and friend of Lord Krishna, is advised to raise himself to the transcendental position of Vedanta philosophy where in the beginning there is Brahma jnana, or question on the Supreme Transcendence. All the living entities who are in the material world are struggling very hard for existence. For them the Lord after creation of the material world gave the Vedic wisdom advising how to live and get rid of the material entanglement. When the activities of sense gratification and the Karmakanda Chapter are finished, then the chance for spiritual realization is offered in the form of Upanishads, which are part of different Vedas, namely of Mahabharata. The Upanishads mark the beginning of transcendental life. One has to learn tolerance in the face of dualities such as happiness and distress or cold and warmth, and by tolerating such dualities become free from anxieties regarding gain and loss.

Note:-The author of this book feels that knowledge about Guna's (the mode of nature) in Vedas and Bhagavad-Gita are the most relevant subject which needs to be understood with more clarity by human being to control and regulate their life for the good of self, the family and the society. The three 'Gunas' i.e. Sattava-guna, Rajo-guna and Tamo-guna as explained by Lord Krishna in Bhagavad-Gita can be seen in Part-VII of this book.

6

TEACHING FROM GITA IS TO ATTAIN BLESSEDNESS

There is no easier path to the attainment of the ineffable (unspeakable) bliss arising from absorption into Brahma that is Devotion to God. Devotion is easy to talk but difficult to practice. It should not be for outward display but should treasure in the heart and guarded against publicity. Lord Krishna himself unfolds the secret of devotion (Bhakti) to

those who are exclusively devoted to him. He rids them of all fears. Supreme, exclusive and motiveless love for God constitutes what is known as Bhakti (devotion) Shrimad Bhagavad-Gita speaks of this at several places.

For the purpose of this book, I have gone through various editions of Bhagavad-Gita; details of the same are given in at serial -2 of this Part of the book. Each Shloka (Verse) of the Bhagavad-Gita are now available with translation in English also for the benefit of those who do not understand Sanskrit or Hindi. Sanskrit is a difficult language but rich language which conveyed vast and variety of knowledge through Vedas and Upanishads and other sacred books of Vedic civilization for the well being of the mankind in this universe. According to 2011 census only 14,343 people in India have knowledge of Sanskrit and therefore translations are also not available. Ordinary citizen has no choice but to read 'Gita' in whatever form it has been translated for the benefit of devotees. It is observed, such as in Verse-7 of chapter-IV, word by word meaning in two edition of 'Gita' from Sanskrit to English has been given as under:

In addition of simple translation of each verse given in 'Gita', the learned religious teachers have also given lengthy explanation and interpretation of each verse in their own words which does not serve much purpose or does not help ordinary human being to expand their knowledge with limited time and mental strength. Simple translation given in 'Gita' of each verse is otherwise sufficient to understand the direct meaning of the words of Lord Krishna for the protection of religion (right doing) on this planet.

7

DEVOTEES AND BHAGAVAD GITA

There is nothing wrong with pious intention of our learned religious teachers who are always devoted to preach and convey the

knowledge about God, Faith and Religion according to their own understanding of the subject matter. However, ordinary devotees neither have mental strength to understand the lengthy time consuming sermons nor time to read lengthy books to understand and then practice faith in God and religion. It is therefore, recommended that the devotees can achieve their aim by simply following the gist of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita given in Chapter-3 of Part-VII in this book.

The most important Verse – 47 of Chapter – II of the Bhagavad-Gita, which is considered last or final word of Gita for the majority of devotees. The four editions of ‘Bhagvad Gita’ quoted above have given following meaning or translation of the above verse.

- A.** You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but are not entitled to fruits of action. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results.
- B.** rqEgs viuk deZ dRkZO; djus dk vf/kdkj gS fdUrq deZ ds Qyksa ds rqe vf/kdkjh ugh gksA rqe u vius vkidks vius dk;Z ds Qyksa dk dkj.k ekuksa u gh deZ djus esa dHkh vklDRk gksA
- C.** Thy right is to work only; but never to the fruits thereof. Be thou not the producer of the fruits of (thy) action, neither let thy attachment be towards in action.
- D.** Thy human right is for activity only, never for the resultant fruit of actions. Do not consider thy self the creator of the fruits of the activities, neither allows thyself attachment to inactivity.

8

LATEST ON KARMA AND SWADHARMA

An article on the Art of Karma management by Hasmukh Adhia which appeared in a News paper column is reproduced as follows.

“ All human beings are always busy doing something. But very few know the Art of karma. Fascinated by idealism of complete

renunciation, Arjuna wanted to give up his karma as a warrior, believing that it would be a sin to kill his opponents, many of whom were his revered relatives. Should he give up his assigned karma? Krishna says 'no' and explains to him and to all of us the concept of why and how karma should be done.

“Your chosen duty is described as 'swadharma' in the Bhagavad-Gita. Everyone has to carry out their swadharma without carelessness and ego. Also while performing one's chosen duty, our attention should be on the quality of action, rather than being attached only to the fruits of action.

“There are two types of fruits we get out of any activity -- main fruit and subordinate fruit. For instance in a game of sports, the main benefit we get is that of getting physical fitness and the subordinate fruit can be winning. Even if we lose, the main fruit is not going waste. Both winner and loser get physical fitness.

“In life, the main fruit of discharging our duty properly is purity of mind which comes, although we do not notice it until it is pointed out to us. With purity of mind we get peace of mind, harmony and ability to enjoy what we have, independent of all other objects of so-called pleasure which we do not have. Subordinate fruits are wealth, position, rank, name and fame. Even if the latter does not come, the main fruit of purity of intellect is always obtained in any karma yoga.

“Let us take the example of a driver who is engaged by a taxi company for a regular salary. He may be getting tips from some clients, which is his extra income. Suppose he starts thinking only about increasing his extra income, not even remembering that he is being paid fully for his job already, he would give best service only to those clients who give him tips, and neglect all others who do not. In the process, he is risking his main salary also, because there is a possibility of some of his clients complaining

to his boss for his negligence and he may lose his job. Can he be happy this way?

“We also forget, or do not notice that God is giving us the main fruit of being happy and contented, even if other things are not coming in ample measures. God has already given us so much by way of infrastructure of free oxygen, water and sunshine which has been made more and more comfortable by many of our predecessors. Is that not good enough reason for us to feel grateful and in return give our own contribution to make this world a better place still? Can an ungrateful person be ever happy in life?

“This does not mean that we only live on air and sunshine. As per the infallible theory of karma phala, (fruitive action) one will definitely have good results for good work done. That taxi driver can surely hope to get extra income if he continues to give good service to all, whether they give tips or not. But moment we try to be selfish and work only for money or position, we're in trouble. So the Gita's message is: 'Do your best always, do not be utterly selfish and have no ego'. That indeed is the art of karma yoga”-Bhagavad Gita is the final word on Karma Yoga, Gyan Yoga and Bhakti Yoga which is different from physical yoga exercises universally known and practiced by all to maintain good physical and mental health.

Part-IX

OTHER INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS OF INDIA

1

BUDDHISM- THE MIDDLE PATH

Origin of Buddhism

Buddhism is one of the major religions in the world. It began as an offspring of Hinduism in India around 2,500 years ago when Siddhartha Gautama discovered how to bring happiness into the world. His aim was to free man from the cycle of reincarnations as ultimately life means suffering, transitoriness and death. Exact date of birth of Gautama is not known but historians have estimated it to be sometime between 566BC and 560BC.

Siddhartha Gautam was born in Lumbini in a small Kingdom of Kapilavastu (Nepal). His father King Sddhodana, king of Shakya tribe, and his mother was Queen Maya. Gautam Buddha's mother died at childbirth and he was brought up by his mother's sister Prajapati Gotami. Soon after Prince Siddhartha was born, the wise men predicted that he would become a Buddha. When the King heard this, he was deeply disturbed, for he wanted his son to become a mighty ruler. He told Queen Maya, "I will make life in the palace so pleasant that our son will never want to leave."

When the people were suffering, Siddhartha became interested to find the problems of the people and set about finding new ways of solving it. He made four trips outside the palace and saw four things that changed his life. During his first three trips, he saw sickness, old age and death. He asked himself, "How can I enjoy a life of pleasure when there is so much suffering in the world!" On the fourth trip, he saw a wandering monk who

had given up every thing he owned to seek an end to suffering. “I shall be like him.” Siddhartha thought.

At the age of 29 Siddharth left the palace and became a wandering monk. He studied Hindu scriptures with the help of wisest teachers but became disillusioned with the teaching of Hinduism. He devoted to extreme asceticism, stayed in the forest but realized that it merely weakened the mind and body. After six years Gautam eventually turned to meditation. While in deep meditation under a Bodhi tree (tree of wisdom) in the city of Bodhgaya in Bihar (India), Here Gautam experienced enlightenment and highest degree of God consciousness which meant freedom from the cycle of rebirth and suffering. Thereafter Gautam became Buddha, the enlightened one. For 45 years Buddha spread his message of a spiritual life with 8-fold path to reach salvation. Buddha died at the age of 80 years.

The three Universal Truths

During his enlightenment Buddha discovered three great truths and explained in simple language as follows.

Nothing is lost in this universe. Matters turns into inergy, energy turns into matter A dead leaf turns into soil. A seed sprouts and becomes a new plant. Old solar systems disintegrate and turns into cosmic rays. We are born of our parents, our children are born out of us. If we destroy something around us , we destroy ourselves. If we cheat another, we cheat ourselves. Understanding this truth, the Buddha and disciples never killed any animal.

Every thing changes: According to Buddha life is like a river which is always flowing smoothly but later on some rocks or snag may crop from no where. Once dinosaurs, mammoths and saber toothed tigers who later disappeared. Later smaller mammals appeared, and eventually human being. Therefore our ideas about life also change.

Law of cause and effect: The law of cause and effect is known as Karma. Nothing can happen to us unless we deserve it. We receive exactly what we earn, whether it is good or bad. Our thoughts and actions determine the kind of life we can have. Every moment we create new Karma by what we say, do and think.

Noble eight fold path: Buddha selected beautiful symbol of the wheel with its eight spokes to represent the ‘ Noble eight fold path’. Just as every spoke is needed for the wheel to keep turning, we need to follow each step of the path shown by Buddha. 1. Right understanding 2. Right thought 3. Right speech 4. Right conduct 5. Right livelihood 6. Right effort 7. Right mindfulness 8. Right meditation.

Five precepts for Buddhist

In Buddhism there are five precepts or conduct rules which include 1. Not to deprive a living thing of life 2. Not to take what is not given to you 3. Not to engage in illicit sexual conduct 4. Not to consume intoxicating drinks.

Buddhism- The middle Path

Buddhism is a path of practical and spiritual development leading to one's insight into the true nature of life. Buddhist practices such as meditation are means of changing oneself in order to develop the qualities of awareness, kindness and wisdom. Buddhism is not about teaching or learning but it is all about experiencing. Buddhist ideology does not advocate the practice of worshipping a creator God. It teaches practical methods such as meditation which enable people to realise and utilize its teachings in order to transform their experience, to be fully responsible for their lives and to develop the qualities of wisdom and compassion.

Buddhism in the world

There are 360 million Buddhist followers all over the world. Buddhism was first introduced in Sri Lanka from India in the 3rd century BC by Mahinda, the son of King Ashoka. Buddhism is popular and flourishing in Sri Lanka even today. In the beginning of 1st century AD, Buddhism was taken to Southeast Asia by merchants and missionaries. The great monuments like Borobudur in Indonesia and Angkor Thom in Cambodia are evidence of Buddhism and its followers living there. In the 1st century AD, Buddhism reached China and in the 4th century AD to Korea and Japan. Today there are numerous Buddhist centers spread across Europe and North and South America. While about 80 crore of Buddhist are living in China, in India only about 80 lakh Buddhist were living as per 2001 census.

Places of pilgrimage

Principle Buddhist pilgrimage site in India are: Lumbini, Bodhgaya, The Mahabodhi Temple, Sarnath, Shravasti, Sankashaya, Nalanda, Rajgir which are all located in and around the state of Bihar in India.

Places of worship

Stupas are mounds that were built to hold relics of the Buddha or his chief disciples. They were also built to mark important events of the Buddha's life or lives of his disciples. King Ashoka is said to have built 84,000 stupas all over India, from the original relics of the Buddha. In Sri Lanka stupas are called dagobas; in Burma, Thailand and China they are known as pagodas and in Tibet they are called chortens. Temple is a place where monks or nuns live and Buddhist ceremonies are held. A large temple is called a monastery. Most temple also have a stupa and a Bodhi tree. Or columns. Among other symbols made to remember the Buddha were stone pillars. Most of stone pillars were erected by king Ashoka which includes

stone pillars at Lumbini. Ashoka's columns has a Four-lion capital which symbolizes both imperial rule and the kingship of the Buddha.

Customs and traditions

For wedding, Buddhist follow their own traditions and customs but also follow the rules of astrology and horoscope as per u traditions. Funeral rites for the dead are also followed on the line of Hindu traditions i.e. dead body is cremated wherever a Buddhist dies in this world.

2

JAINISM-FOR UNIVERSAL LOVE

Lord Mahavir

Jainism is one of the oldest religions of the world in India that originated 2600 years ago with the birth of Mahavir or Vardhaman (599BC-527BC). He was the twentieth fourth and the last 'Tirthankara' of this era who revived the Jain philosophy previously preached by his predecessor Lord Parshva (950BC-850BC) in India. He expanded the code of conduct and implemented daily rites for his followers. He felt that such changes are essential for proper religious practice. The Jain scriptures reflect only his teachings.

Mahavir was born in 599BC in a royal family of King Siddharth and Queen Trishala in the border region of India and Nepal about 50 kilometers of present city Patna in Bihar (India). Buddha was also born in the same region about 35 years later. Mahavira's parents were followers of Pashva who lived about 250 years earlier in Varanasi. Mahavira carried forward the mission and teaching of Jain traditions. After his birth wealth, prosperity and influence of the family increased and therefore his parents named him Vardhaman.

Although a born prince, Mahavir showed indifference towards worldly pleasures from his early age. At the age of thirty, he renounced the world, adopted the lifestyle in harmony with nature and remained engaged in meditation. He spent the next twelve years in deep silence and meditation to conquer his desires, feelings and attachments. He carefully avoided harming other living beings including animals, birds, insects and plants. He also went without food for long periods of time. He was calm and peaceful against all unbearable hardships. During this period, his spiritual powers had fully developed. At the age of 42, he realized perfect perception, knowledge, power and total bliss. This realization is known as 'Keval-jnana' or perfect enlightenment.

Mahavir spent the next thirty years travelling barefoot around India preaching eternal truth he realized. The ultimate objective of his teaching is how one can attain total freedom from the cycle of birth, life, pain, misery, death and achieve the permanent blissful state of one's self. This is also known as *liberation, Nirvana, absolute freedom or Moksha*. Lord Mahavir organized his followers into a four categories namely Sadhu (monk), Sadhvi (nun), Shravak (layman) and Shravika (laywomen) who are all known as Jains. At the age of 72 Lord Mahavir attained nirvana (death), his purified soul left his body and he became a Siddha, a pure consciousness, a liberated soul living forever in a state of complete bliss. The day of his nirvana is celebrated as Festival of Light (Depavali) in his honor.

Lord Mahavir's Message

Lord Mahavir's message reflects freedom and the spiritual joy of the living being. Mahavir emphasized that all living beings irrespective of their size, shape, form, spiritually developed or undeveloped are equal and we should love and respect them. Thus his message was for universal love. Lord Mahavir rejected the concept of God as creator, a protector and a destroyer of the universe. He was also against worshipping

of god and goddesses as a means for material gains and personal benefits. In the matters of spiritual advancement he treated both men and women as equal. As a result of that many women also renounced the world in search of ultimate happiness.

Tirthankara also known Arihants or Jinas are the Gods for the followers of Jain religion. Jina is one who conquers his inner enemies like anger, greed, passion, ego, love and hate, pleasure and pain, attachment and aversion and has thereby freed his soul from the *Karmas* .

Tenets and teachings

One of the tenets of Jainism is that all living being desire life and not death. Therefore no one has the right to take away the life of any other being. Life is dear to every one and we must have respect for life. Principle features of Jainism are: religious tolerance, ethical purity, harmony between self and environment and spiritual contentment. The three jewels or ratna-traya of Jainism are: right perception, right knowledge and right conduct.

Twelve vows laid down for Jainism

Non-violence Anuvrat, Truthfulness Anuvrat , Non-stealing Anuvrat, Chastity, Non-possession/non-attachment, limited area of activity, limited use of consumable/non-consumable items, avoidance of purposeless sins vow, limited meditation vow, limited duration of activity vow, limited ascetic's life vow and limited charity vow. There are also rules laid down for good conduct and rules for avoidance of misconduct.

SIKHISM-FOR SERVICE AND SACRIFICE

Sikhism and Guru Nank Dev

Sikhism, the youngest of the major religions of the world was founded by Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539) in the second half of the 15th century. Based on divine philosophy of Guru Nanak, Sikhism evolved through a succession of nine Gurus reaching its glory and acquiring a distinct identity under the tenth Guru, Guru Govind Singh in the year 1699 A D. After Guru Govind Singh's death in 1708, personal Guruship ended and Granth Sahib, the holy scripture containing the hymns composed by Sikh Gurus was installed and has since been, the Guru of the Sikhs. Sikhism which has a following of over 23 million people world wide, preaches a message of devotion and remembrance of God, truthful living, equality of mankind and denounces superstitions and blind rituals. It stands for love, harmony, tolerance, service, sacrifice and charity.

Before the advent of Guru Nanak, Islam was the ruling religion in North India and the rulers had become utterly intolerant, tyrannical and had denied the very right of existence to those who did not believe in their religion. As many as 60 invasions of India had taken place between the 11th century and the birth of Guru Nanak. More than conquering the country to rule over, the Muslim invaders concentrated on loot and plunder. They were ruthless, massacring non-Muslims without mercy, demolishing temples and converting Hindus to Islam at the point of sword.

Hindus were living under inhuman conditions and were facing repression of the worst order. They were persecuted systematically and those who resisted were butchered. The honour their women was not safe. They were treated as second class citizens in their own country. They could not build temples nor repair the old ones. Such was the havoc the successive invaders inflicted on the psyche of Hindus. The once highly

spiritual character of Hinduism, to which most of the Indians had deeply rooted faith, had become too obsessed with ostentatious paraphernalia and rituals. The rigid caste distinctions with superstitions associated with it divided the Hindu community into water-tight compartments. Section of fellow Hindu population was treated as untouchables.

Condition of Hindu women was pitiable. Muslims had confined their women within the four walls of the house and did not allow them to move about without 'Burqa'. The condition of Hindu women was worse. Widows were not allowed to remarry and quite often they immolated themselves along with their dead husbands on their funeral pyre.

Hindu and Muslims both had forgotten their holy book and indulged in evil, repression and cruel treatment towards fellow human beings. Guru Nanak, after having seen the state of the society, declared that there is no Hindu and no Muslim. He urged both the Mohammedans and the Hindus to observe the noblest of all principles which inculcate devotion to God, peace and love towards mankind in general. He set upon restoring the faith of the people in God. His missionary activities took him to all directions in India and he subsequently visited Sri Lanka, Tibet, Iraq, Mecca and Medina. Guru Nanak believed in one formless God and in total surrender to the will of God. He preached a philosophy which was to illuminate lives with complete equality of mankind for love, service and sacrifice.

The main principles of life enunciated by Guru Nanak were 1. Earning a living by honest labor (Kirt Karna) 2. Meditating on the name of Lord (Naam Japna) 3. Sharing one's earnings with the needy (Vand Chhakna). He exhorted his followers to the path of truth in thought, word and deed. He asked his followers to shed ritualism and said that service of the people was worship of the Lord.

Guru Nanak gave equal status to women and men. He asked as to how one can call a woman inferior when she gives birth to Kings also. He

demolished divisions between Hindus and Muslims. Guru Nanak chose two companions for his missionary tours, one was a Muslim and other was a Hindu. Charity moved with Guru Nanak. He stayed with the poor and distributed whatever he had because he believed that to serve God is to serve his creation. At the end Guru Nanak settled down as farmer, did farming with his own hands and kept an open kitchen for all, thus emphasizing the dignity of labour and importance of sharing one's income. Sangat (congregation of good persons for spiritual pursuits) and Pangat sitting in row for food were two of the most valuable legacies left behind by Guru Nanak.

The Name of Ten Gurus and Period of Guruship 1. Guru Nanak (1469-1539) 1490, Sultanpur 2. Guru Angad (1504-1552) 1539, Kartarpur 3. Guru Amar Das (1479-1574) 1552, Khadur 4. Guru Ram Das (1534-1581) 1574, Goindwal 5. Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606) 1581, Goindwal 6. Guru Har Govind (1595-1644) 1606, Amritsar 7. Guru Har Rai (1630-1661) 1644, Kiratpur 8. Guru Har Krishan (1656-1664) 1661, Kiratpur 9. Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675) 1664, Baba Bakala 10. Guru Govind Singh (1666-1708) 1675, Anandpur

All the nine Gurus surrendered to the teachings of Guru Nanak and carried forward his mission which finally led to a well defined and organized Sikh religion known world over today with their own guard known as Khalsa, language Gurumukhi and Gurudwaras for prayers. All the Gurus have to fight relentlessly against the forces of evil, exploitation and repression by the Mughal rulers in Delhi ruling north India.

Guru Angad Dev had an encounter with Humayun who had come to seek blessing when he was over-powered by Sher Shah. Guru Angad Dev turned normal family kitchen into community kitchen called 'Langar' with the combined contribution of the community where people from all caste or creed could sit and eat together as brothers and sisters.

Guru Amar Das introduced simple ceremonies for the occasions of birth, marriage and death. He asked his followers not to cry in the hour of loss and not to forget the divine power who has given life to us. Guru Amar Das prepared two volumes of composition of Guru Nanak, Guru Angad and himself. In these volumes compositions of Kabir and Namdev which proved the Guru's approach towards other religion.

Guru Ram Das carried forward his predecessor's mission to rid Hindu society of meaningless rituals, superstitions and the stranglehold of priestly class. He advised his followers not to resort to retaliation but have faith in God and serve the poor.

Guru Arjan Dev was held in high esteem by Mughal Emperor Akbar but his successor Jehangir was different. Jehangir asked the Guru to revise the holy Granth by deleting all references to Islam and Hinduism. The Guru refused. He maintained that hymns in the Holy Granth were in praise of God and no one dare alter them. Under the orders Guru Arjan Dev was arrested and tortured. He died a martyr's death with God's name in his lips. He became the first Sikh martyr who gave his life to uphold the sanctity and sovereignty of the Sikh scriptures.

Guru Hargovind organized and strengthened the forces of good to fight against the forces of evil and tyranny. He believed in justice to poor and instilled in women a spirit of duty. He was equally a man of action and never compromised with evil. He was also detained for sometime by Emperor Jehangir but later was released to pursue his spiritual and temporal activities.

Guru Har Rai succeeded Guru Hargovind as seventh Guru during Aurangzeb who was more aggressive and intolerant towards Hindus and Sikhs. Guru was summoned by the Emperor but he vowed never to his face in protest against tyrannies of Aurangzeb. He was a simple man of God who lived a simple life and valued simple living and devotion among his followers.

Guru Har Krishan was the eighth Guru who was the younger son of Guru Har Rai. He was appointed Guru at the age of five by Guru Har Rai before his death in 1661. Guru Har Rai had told his son Guru Har Kishan never to meet Emperor Aurangzeb. Even at that early age, Guru Har Kishan remembered great many hymns of his predecessors and recited with amazing appropriateness. At that time small -pox had broken out in Delhi. The Guru and disciples engaged themselves in the care and cure of the sick. In that course of missionary work, Guru Har Krishna himself fell a pray to small-pox and died in 1664. Before his death , Guru had nominated his grand father's brother , Teg Bahadur, as his successor.

Guru Teg Bahadur toured the whole of East and North India to establish contacts with Sikhs settled there and reassure them of his concern and encouraged the people to stand up for their rights and protest against injustice. The Sikh congregations rallied behind the Guru and strengthened his hands with valuable gifts in cash and kind. On the other side Aurangzeb intensified his policy of persecution of Hindus and use of force for their conversion to Islam. Guru Tegh Bahadur resisted the conversion of Kashmiri Brahmins to Islam. Guru was arrested and brought to Delhi.. He was asked to embrace Islam which he refused. On his persistent refusal, he was beheaded with sword in Chandni Chowk. Guru Teg Bahadur made supreme sacrifice not in the cause of his own faith but also in the defense of freedom of conscience in general and Kashmiri Brahmins in particular.

Guru Govind Singh had been Growing appointed to be 10th Guru by his father Guru Teg Bahadur in anticipation of the coming events. Growing in the manhood, Guru Govind Singh received literary and religious education and became a scholar in Persian and Sanskrit. He laid down the principles of 'Dharma Yudha'- war for justice and righteousness. Guru Govind Singh decided to raise a force of committed followers who would join him and stand by him in the war against tyranny. On the Baisakhi day of 1699 he unfolded his plan and invited those who were

ready to lay down their life for their Guru. Five devoted Sikhs stood who were baptized with 'Amrit' by the Guru and came to be known as 'Panj Piaras'- the five beloved ones of the Lord. Guru baptizing the followers of Sikh religion became the emblems of power and self respect. Thereafter, Sikhs also came to be known as 'Khalsa'- the pure, who were equipped with sword and other distinctive features which became the emblems of power and respect.

Guru Govind Singh continued his fight against evil, exploitation and repression against Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb with the help of his Army of saints and soldiers. In 1704 his two elder sons Ajit Singh (18) and Jujhar Singh (14) and his personal guard were killed while fighting Mughal troops at Chamkaur. Later, his mother and two younger sons Zorawar Singh (9) and Fateh Singh (7) were also killed because they refused to convert to Islam. Despite having lost his entire family Guru stood unshaken in his resolve. Aurangzeb died in 1707. Guru was invited by Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah for reconciliation which did not materialize and Guru Govind Singh was stabbed and wounded by deceit. When the end came, Guru addressed Sikhs which was as follows- "As ordained by God, the Lord Eternal, A new way of life is evolved. All the Sikhs are asked to accept the Holy Granth as Guru. Guru Granth should be accepted As the living God. Those who wish to meet God will find Him in the Word." **Guru Gobind Singh** brought about a revolutionary transformation among his followers and made them fearless. He brought about equality between all the four castes among Hindus who started eating and drinking out of the same vessel. 'Panj Piaras' came out of all caste of Hindus.

Guru Granth Sahib

Guru Granth Sahib is the Holy Book of Sikhs upon which 'Guruship' was bestowed by the Tenth Guru, Guru Govind Singh, before his death in 1708. Adi Granth, by which name Granth Sahib was known

before 'Guruship' was bestowed upon it, was compiled by the Fifth Sikh Guru Arjan Dev and installed in the Harmandir Sahib Amritsar on 1 September, 1604. Baba Buddha was appointed as its First Granthi. In course of time the Adi Granth passed into the custody of Bhai Dhirmal, grandson of Guru Hargovind, who refused to give it back. When the original Granth could not be taken back from the descendants of Bhai Dhirmal, Guru Govind Singh dictated the whole Granth once again to his devoted follower Bhai Mani Singh in the year 1706. He also included in it the hymns composed by the ninth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur including his last words addressed to the Sikh community before his death in 1708. Beside the compositions of six Gurus, Guru Granth Sahib contains the compositions of fifteen 'Bhagats'(saints and holy man) from other religions and caste coming from all parts of India. Guru Govind Singh chose not to include his own compositions in the Granth Sahib. These were included in a separate volume called Dasam Granth.

Guru Granth Sahib contains 1430 pages. It invokes the name of Hari-8344 times, Ram-2533 times, Prabhu-1371 times, Gopal-491 times, Govind -475 times, Parmeshwar-139 times, Narain-85 times, Murari-97 times, Allah-46 times, Bhagwan-30 times, Maadho-27 times and Banwari -15 times. Guru Granth Sahib is perhaps the only scripture which has been composed and edited by the founders of the religion themselves. It is also the only scripture which contains the compositions of holy men of other religions.

Tenets and Traditions

Like other religions, Sikhism has also laid down tenets and traditions for the Sikh community which are briefly given below.

Akhand Path: Is the non-stop reading of the holy book ' Granth Sahib' in Gurudwara or at home depending upon the convenience or wishes of the individual on special occasions like birth days, weddings or at the start or successful conclusion of any project.

Golden Temple (Harmandir Sahib) : Is a temple dedicated to God was completed in 1601 and 'Adi Granth' was installed in Harmandir Sahib on 1st September, 1604. Temple itself is 40.5 Sq Ft. It has a door each on the east, west, north and south which are symbolic of the Sikh philosophy meaning that their temple is open to all irrespective of cast, creed or sex.

Mool Mantra of Gurubani: The essence of Granth Sahib is in 'Japji Sahib', the first chapter of the Granth, composed by Guru Nanak which means- God is one; the Eternal truth; He is the supreme creator; He knows no fear and has no enemy with any one; He is immortal; He is beyond incarnation; He is self existent. He is realized through the grace of the True Guru.

Japji-The Sikh morning prayer: The opening chapter of Guru Granth Sahib is the prayer of Sikhs composed by Guru Nanak for meditation in the morning. The says that, One must submit to the will of the God. One must recite His name, listen to His words to attain salvation.

Ardaas (Prayer): Ardaas is a prayer offered by Sikhs before or after any function, activity or occasion (happy or sad). While offering Ardaas, Sikh seek God's blessing not only for the one who organizes the function but the good of every creature in this world.

Birth of Khalsa: Guru Govind Singh had issued a special invitation to his Sikhs all over to visit Anandpur on the morning of the Baisakhi day of 1699. Thousands turned up. The five faithful Sikhs were asked to recite hymns from the sacred scriptures while the Guru stirred the water with a double edged dagger. The Guru prepared 'Amrit'-nectar to baptize the five faithful Sikhs to turn them into Khalsa- the pure. After the Sikhs had been thus baptized, the Guru stood before them with hands folded and prayed to them to baptize him in return. The moment he had the sip of 'Amrit', from Guru Govind Rai, he became Guru Govind Singh. This was the birth of 'Khalsa'. Every Sikh became a Singh, a lion. The Guru

enjoined upon his devotees also called five 'K's (Panj Kakke) i.e. to keep 'Kesh' long uncut hair and unsaved beard, wear a steel Karra (a bangle), 'Kachha'(short pants worn by soldiers), 'Kanga' (a comb and maintain the hair) and carry a 'Kirpan'(a sword) to be used in self isdefense and to uphold justice. At the end of the function, the Guru hailed his followers with new form of greeting: ' Waheguru ji ka Khalsa; Waheguru ji ki Fateh' (Hail the Khalsa who belongs to God. Hail the God to whom belongs the victory). Baisakhi of 1699 thus became immortal and part of Sikh history and is celebrated with great fervor every year.

Major Sikh Festivals: Sikh festivals are generally called Gurupurabs connected with the birth and death anniversaries of the Gurus or special historical events. The most important festivals are: Guru Nanak's Birthday, Guru Govind Singh's Birthday, Baisakhi, Diwali, Holla Mohalla and other Gurupurabs. **Sikh Population:** The total population of Sikhs in the world in 2002 was approximately 23 million (2.3 crore) and 19 million (1.9 crore) are in India.However, and they are spread in almost all the important countries of the world . Sikhs have their own Gurudwaras in 49 countries in the world.

Part-X**MEDITATION MADE EASY FOR PEACE AND
DEVOTION****1****INTRODUCTION**

Meditation means to remember God with devotion which can most easily be achieved by hearing and chanting His glories (like His holy names). This process (e.g. sravanam- kirtanam) leads to remembering God (smaranam). Prayer is another process that invokes smaranam. For example, if you hear about Krishna, chant his glories and pray to him then you will automatically remember him.

It is the nature of mind to wander. The purpose of pranayana and meditation is to bring the mind under control. To start with, you could meditate for about 10 minutes a day focusing on your breath. The best time is early in the morning. Sit in an easy posture, keep your eyes half-closed, and focus lightly on the tip of your nose. Breathe naturally, without straining, try to breathe into your belly (chest-breathing is shallow). Don't strain while you breathe, stay relaxed. If the mind tends to wander, bring it back to focus on your breath. This is an excellent way to quell a restless mind.

2**MEDITATION MADE EASY**

“The Power of the mind to concentrate develops through steady practice. Judicious practice is the secret. The power of attachment and detachment are both needed for this the first prerequisite is self control, which is possible when one can shed anger, jealousy, hatred, ego and pride?

The next step is to progressively lessen the thought of the body for, it is the body that drags us down and makes our life miserable. Whether we call it meditation, yoga, religious pursuit, prayer or spirituality the purpose – of one or the other or of a combination of them – is for us to withdraw the mind from mundane things and direct it to a unified-direction of the Self within.

“Choose a secluded place, with adequate circulation of fresh air, and a firm seat to sit on, preferably facing the East in the morning and the West in the evening. It need not be away from your home, office, and workplace. Just ensure that the disturbance is minimal. Breathe slowly and relax for a while. Sit with your spine erect. You may sit on a carpet, mattress or in a chair with a comfortable back. Relax your hands, legs, limbs, neck and joints of the body, as though they are hanging loosely. Close your eyes gently. Recall in your mind’s eye a pleasant sight. If you prefer, chanting a mantra or word – such as Om Rama, Krishna, Jesus or Allah – also works, if you can, focus your mind on the space between the eye-brows of the tip of the nose.

“Through the regular practice of meditation, one can master oneself and be free from stress, tension and disease. One attains vital energy and increased power of concentration. Since you flow in harmony with the cosmos, the body becomes perfect, the mind calm and controlled, and the spirit blissful.

Beginner’s guide to freeing the mind

Do not try to concentrate or control the mind (In one direction). Let it roam and gently bring it back. Do not resist thoughts – good or bad. Do not indulge in excesses- food, drinks, smoking or sex. While meditating, do not try to remain alert. It’s all right to fall asleep initially, meditate for 20-30 minutes once a day whenever it is convenient for you. Early mornings or late evenings are, however, advisable. If you develop a headache, stop for a day or two. Relax your muscles, body and mind before

starting again. Start an hour after you have eaten; meditate when you're not feeling too full.—(*Adapted from an article by T.R. Seshadri*)

3

CONTROL YOUR MIND AND ENVIRONMENT

“Today there is a lot of talk about the environment. Environmentalists are at work everywhere you see. There is talk about protecting the forest, bringing up more greenery, recycling of things, materials, plastics and use of more natural and organic substances. A few years ago, this was not an issue at all, wasn't it? Now all nations are coming to an agreement to save planet earth. Like we pollute the earth, we pollute the water, we also pollute the subtle environment of feelings and emotions.

“Man has become a victim of his environment. He is not in control of his mind but a victim of the environment. We pollute our environment in a very subtle way through our negative emotions. But it takes quite some time to clear the environment of this. It is inevitable that sometimes you feel stressed, sometimes you feel negative, sometimes you feel doubt, sometimes you get into all sorts of moods — it is inevitable. It happens. Nobody wants it. But when it happens how do we handle them? We hear a lot about other things in life but we spend very little time to hear about ourselves; how to handle our mind? How to be in the present moment? How to be happy and grateful? This we have not learnt. This is the most unfortunate thing. Then what is the solution? This is where we miss a very fundamental principle that governs our environment, our mind our emotions and our life in general. Our body has the capacity to sustain much longer the vibrations of bliss and peace than it does negative emotions because positivity is in the center of our existence. Just like in the structure of the atom, protons and neutrons are in the center of the atom and electrons are only the periphery, same is with our lives; the center core of our existence is bliss, positivity and joy but it is surrounded by a cloud of negative emotions. Through the help of the breath we can easily get over

our negative emotions in a short period of time. Through meditation and certain breathing techniques you can clear this negative cloud.

“In future, I think the rule will come — anybody who feels depressed, will be fined! Ten thousand rupees fine for getting depressed! Then you will be asked to go and breathe and meditate and get rid of all your depression without swallowing any tablets. What is there for you to get depressed? You are here for a few years anyway; just a few years on this planet. And as long as you are here, you can as well, be happy. This life has so much to offer to you. You can see this once you take some time off, rejuvenating the soul. Your soul is hungry for a smile from you. If you could give this, you feel energized the whole year and nothing whatsoever can take the smile from you.

“Everyone wants to be successful in life. But without knowing what success is, you want to be successful. What are the signs of success? Just having a lot of money, is that success? Why do you think money means success? Because money gives you freedom so that you can do whatever you want. You may have a big bank balance but, you have stomach aches, ulcers, you may have to go for bypass surgery; can't eat this, can't do this, can't do that. We spend half our health to gain wealth and spend half our wealth to gain back the health. Isn't that funny? Is this success? It is very bad mathematics.

Look at all those who claim to be successful — are they successful? No, they are miserable. Then, what is the sign of success? It is confidence, compassion, generosity and a smile that none can snatch away, being really happy and being able to be free. These are the signs of a successful person. Take some time off to look a little deep into oneself and calm the mind down. Thus erasing all the impressions that we are carrying in our minds and experience the presence, the divine that is the very core of our existence. This is feeling the presence! - *(Adapted from an article by Sri Ravi Shankar)*

LAW OF NATURE AND SHOCK TREATMENT IN HUMAN LIFE

You Need Shock Treatment

“When Isaac Newton was sitting beneath a tree, it is said that an apple hit him on the head, and through pondering over this phenomenon he discovered the Universal Law of Gravitation. This was like a shock treatment administered by nature. This event triggered a train of thought in Newton’s mind. He started thinking about why, when an apple fell, it came down and did not go up. This thought led to the discovery of the Law of Gravitation. This law had always been there, but no one had discovered it before. Then, after a long time, nature hit man on the head and told him in the language of hammering: O Man, discover the law that has remained undiscovered till this date.

“This was like shock treatment. Shock treatment is a law of nature. This shock treatment can be called a challenge. Every human being faces this kind of challenge in some way or the other. This shock treatment is a blessing in disguise, for it always acts for the betterment of the person in question. And perhaps for all others as well. If you are facing some problem in your life, in your job, business or family, don’t be negative. Take it as a positive phenomenon. If you turn negative, you cannot avail of the opportunity it presents. But if you are positive, you will try to understand the real message behind the challenge and very soon you will find that the challenge was nothing but a stepping stone in your life to better things.

“ Shock treatment is the language of nature. Nature always tries to give you a lesson, shows you the right direction and tries to unfold your potential. It tries to make you aware of opportunities which present

themselves all around you. Don't ignore such warnings, take them seriously. They will give you right guidance and turn your failure into success. Nature is the best guide. But nature always speaks in the language of hammering, that is, challenge. A challenge is not an accidental event. Challenge always comes from nature. In this way nature tries to awaken your mind, it tries to initiate a process of rethinking.

“At first nature tries to give advice in simple language, but when you fail to take that advice, it uses the method of shock treatment. This is like awakening a person who is not ready to wake up with a simple call. All the challenges in life are positive challenges. When you face any challenge, take it in a positive manner; try to understand the lesson hidden in it. The falling of an apple on one's head is a very common phenomenon. Every person faces this experience, although not in the form of an “apple”, but in the form of shock. These experiences are not accidental; they are part of divine planning. They act as booster. If you have this kind of experience, don't let your mind get disturbed. Take it as a positive sign. Try to find out the message behind this event, and very soon you will find that it was just like the fall of an apple, the sole purpose of which was to enable you to discover a great law of life. There are numerous people in history who failed in the first chance. But then they thought about their problem afresh and consequently achieved great success. Sometimes people make a wrong choice; then nature hits them with an apple and gives them a silent lesson: Those who listen to this silent voice of nature are destined to emerge as super-achievers. (Adapted from an article by *Maulana Wahiduddin Khan*)

Are we to blame for these disasters

The opening Shloka of the Shanti Sukta from the Atharva Veda is beautiful:

“May peace prevail in the skies- May peace prevail on earth- May peace prevail in vast space- May peace prevail in the flowing river, and in plants and trees.”

“Are we at one with the invocation of the rishis? Are we, today, at peace with Nature? No, we are not! We can see it in the way we treat the soil; the way we have destroyed the habitat of wild animals; we can see it in the pollution of our waterways, the degradation of our environment, depletion of the ozone layer and the complete and utter waste of Mother Nature’s resources. Although I said “Mother Nature”, I doubt if we have the right to call ourselves her children anymore! We are actually a vital component of nature, and it is our sacred obligation to preserve and protect the planet that God has given to us as habitat.

“I am aware that the fashionable, trendy words to use today are ‘ecology’ or ‘environment’. But I choose the word nature, deliberately, because it is close to my heart. It is a term associated with peace, purity, serenity, beauty, tranquility and the transcendental spirit of the Universe . It recalls to my mind the *pancha tattwa*, the five elements –earth, water, fire, air and space- of which our universe is composed. It encompasses these myriad aspects of creation, hundreds of thousands of living beings and organisms, those stunningly beautiful landscapes, mountains, rivers, seas, forests, deserts, mangroves, lakes and plains that man could not have made -- but alas, which he seems to be destroying irrationally!

“How can the world be at peace, when we are threatened by natural disasters- which are in fact, perpetuated by man’s negligence and greed? When I say that we have brought these disasters upon ourselves, some of my friends protest politely. “This is not our doing,” they tell me. “Such natural disasters have occurred since the dawn of creation, starting with the melting of the Ice Age. How can man be held responsible for the unbridled fury of nature?” Mother Nature cannot be blamed altogether. The *degree* and *level* of destruction are the results of human negligence and human greed and human selfishness. Let us not forget that transgressing the laws of Nature brings these disasters upon us.

“Indiscriminate economic development and ecologically destructive policies have left us more vulnerable to natural disasters,” says World watch Institute, an environmental group in Washington. Thus the problem of human actions, human errors cannot be overlooked. Rampant, unsustainable development compounds the effect natural disasters, making their impact far worse! Nature is truly the environment of the atman -- the eternal soul within each human being. I remember as a young boy, I was out on a walk with Sadhu Vaswani one day. On my way a midsize stone lay on the pavement, across our path. Anxious that it should not obstruct the Masters steps, I hastily kicked the stone aside. Sadhu Vaswani was deeply pained - and I was puzzled. Why should he be hurt that I had put aside a stone? After all, it was only a stone! I got my answer, in words that I can never forget: "If God is in the scripture, is He not in the stone?" the Master said. God dwells in all nature - therefore let us cultivate reverence for Nature!- *(Adapted from an article by Dada J.P. Vaswani)*

Part-XI

ALTERNATIVE PATH TO PRACTICE RELIGION AND SERVICE TO MANKIND

1

ADI SHANKARA

(Adapted from a book titled “Why I am a Hindu”)

“This was Adi Shankara, whose Advaita Vedanta was the philosophically robust response to that area of confusion , integrating diverse thoughts and Hindu practices into a philosophy based on the Vedic dictum of ‘ One Truth , Many Expositions’. Advaita Vedanta is only one- and arguably the last- of the six schools known as the ‘six systems’ (Shad Darshanas) of mainstream Hindu philosophy, but it has proved the most enduring. Shankara emphasized the importance of pramanas or methods of

reasoning, tempered by anubhava or intuitive experience, which empower the seeker to gain the spiritual knowledge adumbrated by the sacred texts. He focused on selected texts- the Bhagavad Gita, the Brahma Sutras and ten of the 108 Upanishads- as the key reference works of Hindu dharma, illuminating them through his bhashyas (commentaries). Reasoning is essential to clarify the truth, according to Advaita School, and Shankara was a famous debater of his time, challenging and being challenged by those of different philosophical persuasions and triumphing always through the power of his reasoning and the force of his arguments. His bhashyas are all written in prose, not verse, with lucidity and sharpness, and employ the Upanishadic question-and-answer format that the West calls 'Socratic'.

“Adi Shankara also authored the Vivekachudamani, 581 verses spelling out the qualifications required in a student of Vedanta: to be able to discriminate between the real and the unreal; to be able to maintain a spirit of detachment from this world; to have the capacity to control sensory perceptions; and to feel an intense desire to attain self-realization and moksha. The Vivekachudmani reviews the entire range of Hindu philosophical thought and argument, from the Upanishad to the Bhagavad Gita. More accessibility, and as part of his effort to popularize the faith, Adi Shankara also authored a hundred stotrams, verses that can be sung as bhajans by the worshippers (or bhakt)- many fairly brief but some quite long, like his most famous bhajan, the Bhaja Govindam. Most of stotrams relate to the worship of the major Puranic gods, though some are devoted to spiritual themes and others are sung in praise of sacred rivers or the holy city of Kashi (Varanasi). To Adi Shankara, bhakti yuga (the practice of worship) was an important step towards jnana yoga (the cultivation of knowledge). The sage was very conscious of the need to revive the faith of which such a master. In verse-7 of his Bhaja Govindam, he laments the fact that children are interested in play and young men in pretty girls, but the worry since no one is interested in the Absolute.

“Adi Shankara was not merely a philosophical thinker who reconciled the doctrines and traditions of the ancients with the robust interpretation for the future; he was also a practical reformer. He purified the worship of the Goddess, which had become somewhat questionable thanks to dubious practices introduced by the tantrics, and introduced the samayachara form of Devi worship, involving hymns of exquisite beauty like the Soundarya Lahari or the waves of beauty, composed by himself. His ready acceptance of many Buddhist principles and practices so narrowed the gap between the two faiths as to make the absorption of Buddhism by the parent inevitable in India.

“Adi Shankara’s extraordinary travels- which began when he was just eight year old and continued till his death at the age of thirty-two and took him to every corner of the country, from Rameswaram in the extreme south to Srinagar in the Kashmir Valley in the extreme north, from Dwarka in the west to Kamarupa in Assam in the north-east, and various points in between. He established temples almost everywhere he halted, all of which have remained in continuous use since and left behind five major Mutths headed by successor of Shankaracharyas to this day: Jyotirmath near Badrinath (Uttarakhand), Govardhan Mutth in Puri (Odisha), Kalika Mutth in Dwarka(Gujarat), and two in the south , the Sarada Peetham in Sringeri(Karnataka) and the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham in Kanchipuram (Tamilnadu).

“Shankara also asserted that the realization of self knowledge required the mind to be purified by an ethical life that observed essential precepts or Yamas such as ahimsa(non-injury, non-violence to others in body, mind and thoughts), satya (respect for truth, abstinence from falsehood, asteya (rejection of theft), aparigraha (abstaining from craving possessions) and simple life of meditation and reflection. These ideas were to have a profound and lasting impact on Mahatma Gandhi twelve centuries later. (Of ahimsa, Gandhi wrote: Nonviolence is common to all religions, but it has found the highest expression and application in Hinduism.)

“ From the ancient texts, Advaita Vedanta accepted the idea of the Purusharthas, the four goals of human life. These, as we have seen earlier, are dharma, the right conduct of the individual in accordance with his duties and obligations; artha, the material possessions required to sustain the individual and those dependent upon him; kama - the pursuit of pleasure and comfort, and moksha- the individual’s ultimate salvation, his liberation from earthly bonds and his realization of union with the divine spirit. This last involves a state of full awareness of the ultimate oneness of the soul, atman and Brahman; the Hindu realizes the Divine within himself, and perceives the Divine in other beings, and accepts the Brahman is in everything, and everything is Brahman. Shankara’s liberated individual understands and practices the ethics of non-discrimination, since the high- born and the low are all part of the same Oneness. This was all the more significant in religion on which the pernicious practice of caste discrimination had begun to cast a blight. The Advaita Vedantist recognized all living beings as essentially one, and therefore essentially equal.

“However, there was the dawning realization, among many of those who followed in his footsteps in the centuries following Adi Shankar’s death in the mountain temple of Kedarnath at the young age of thirty-two, that there was a great need to make his breakthroughs intelligible to the common man. There were other more compelling reasons for the faith to change and evolve.”

2

GURU NANAK DEV AND HIS TEACHINGS

Historical Background

Nanak was an extra-ordinary and different child in many ways. God provided him with contemplative mind and rational thinking. At the age of seven, he learnt Hindi and Sanskrit. He surprised his teachers with the sublimity of his extra-ordinary knowledge about divine things.

After the age of thirteen, he learned Persian and Sanskrit and at the age of sixteen he was the most learned man in the region. He was married to Mata Sulakhni ji, who gave birth to two sons: Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das. In November 1504,

At the age of 38, in August 1507, Guru Nanak Sahib heard God's call to dedicate himself to the service of humanity after bathing in 'Vain Nadi', a small river near Sultanpur Lodhi. He now undertook long travels to preach his unique and divine doctrine (Sikhism). After visiting different places in Punjab, he decided to proceed on four long tours covering different religious places in India and abroad. These tours are called Char Udasis of Guru Nanak Sahib. During the four journeys, Guru Nanak Sahib visited different religious places preaching Sikhism. He went to Kurukshetra, Haridwar, Joshi Math, Ratha Sahib, Gorakh Matta (Nanak Matta), Audhya, Prayag, Varanasi, Gaya, Patna, Dhubri and Gauhati in Assam, Dacca, Puri, Cuttock, Rameshwaram, Cylon, Bidar, Baroach, Somnath, Dwarka, Janagarh, Ujjain, Ajmer, Mathura, Pakpattan, Talwandi, Lahore, Sultanpur, Bilaspur, Rawalsar, Jawalaji, Spiti Valley, Tibet, Ladakh, Kargil, Amarnath, Srinagar and Baramula. Guru Nanak Sahib also paid visit to Muslim holy places. In this regard he went to Mecca, Medina, Baghdad via Multan, Peshawar Sakhar, Son Maini, Hinglaj etc. Some account say that Guru Nanak Sahib reached Mecca by sea route. Guru Nanak Sahib also visited Syrea, Turkey and Tehran (the present capital of Iran). From Tehran Guru Sahib set out on the caravan route and covered Kabul, Kandhar and Jalalabad.

The real aim of the tour was awakening the people to realize the truth about God and to introduce Sikhism. He established a network of preaching centers of Sikhism which were called 'Manjis'. He appointed able and committed followers as its head for preaching Sikhism. In the year 1520, Babar attacked India. His troops slaughtered thousands of innocent civilians of all walks of life. Women and children were made captives and all their property looted at Amiabad. Guru Nanak Sahib challenged this act

of barbarity in strong words. He was arrested and released and shortly after Babar realized his blunder. All the prisoners were also released.

Guru Nanak rejected the path of renunciation Tyaga or Yoga, the authority of Vedas and the Hindu caste system. Guru Nanak Sahib emphasized the leading the householder's life (Grihsta), unattached to gross materialism. The services of mankind Sewa, Kirtan, Satsang and faith in' one omnipresent God are the basic concepts of Sikhism established by Guru Nanak Sahib. Thus he laid the foundation of Sikhism He preached new idea of God as supreme, universal, all-powerful and truthful. God is Formless (Nirankar), the Sole, the creator, the self existent, the incomprehensible and ever-lasting and the creator of all thing (Karta Purakh). God is infinite, all knowing, true, all giver, Nirvair and omnipotent. He is Satnam, the eternal and absolute truth.'

As a social reformer Guru Nanak Sahib upheld the cause of women, downtrodden and the poor. He attacked the citadel of caste system of Hindus and theocracy of Muslim rulers. He was a born poet. He wrote 947 hymns comprising Japji Sahib, Asa-Di-Var, Bara-Mah, Sidh-Gosht, Onkar (Dakhani) and these were included in Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Arjan Sahib. He was also a perfect musician. He with the company of Bhai Mardana composed such tunes in various Indian classical Ragas that charmed and tamed wild creatures like Babar, subdued saging kings, raved bigots and tyrants, made thugs and robbers saints.

Guru Nanak Sahib settled down at Kartarpur city (now in Pakistan) which was founded by him in 1522 and spent the rest of his life there(1522-1539). There was daily Kirtan and the institution of Langar(free kitchen) was introduced Knowing that the end was drawing, Guru Nanak Sahib, after testing his two sons and some followers, installed Bhai Lehna ji(Guru Angad Sahib) as a second Nanak in 1539 and after a few days passed into Sachkhand on 22nd September,1539. Thus ended the wordly journey of this god-gifted Master (Guru) of mankind.

Guarding the Truth

The founder and first Guru of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev, stands as an epitome of love, humility and tolerance. Ek Onkar or one God, holds true to this day and its relevance spreads over the past, present and future. In today's world of increased differences in almost all aspects of lives, the revered master remains the propagator of equality and tolerance. 'I am neither Hindu nor Muslim; I am a follower of God', was how he dispelled his thoughts and thus, created the concept of supreme power. All the ten gurus of Sikhism, thus, are believed to have spread this eternal truth of Ek Onkar. To the first guru, the sacred path of attaining salvation was the end of the five common evils i.e. ego, anger, greed, attachment and lust. Nanak Dev had shown the path of 'seva' and 'simran' to his followers. Be it seva at the Gurudwaras, the langars or during calamities- the Sikh community is seen religiously following the path shown by Guru Nanak Dev ji.

Celebrating Guru Nanak's Birth Day

Guru Nanak's birthday is celebrated on the full moon day of Kartik (October-November). Guru Nanak was born in 1469 at Talwandi, 50 kilometers from Lahore. The festivities in the Sikh religion revolve around the anniversaries of the 10 Sikh Gurus. These gurus were responsible for shaping the beliefs of the Sikhs. Their birthdays known as Guru Purabs, are occasions for celebration and prayer among the Sikhs. The most important Gurupurab is that of Guru Nanak Dev, founder of the Sikh religion.

The religion of Sikhism preaches that there is one God but he is formless. That is why the Sikh do not worship idols. Two days before the anniversary, the holy book of Sikhs, Guru Granth Sahib, is taken up for reading without any break till the day of the festival. On the day of the

festival, the Granth Sahib is also carried in a procession on a float, decorated with flowers, throughout a village or city. Five armed guards, who represent the Panj Pyares, lead the procession carrying Nishan Sahibs (the Sikh flag). Local bands playing religious music accompanied by women and children form part of the procession which finally ends at the Gurudwara where a special langar or community lunch is organized for all attending the celebration. All the people who visit Gurudwaras, irrespective of caste or religion, sit together and share the meal with the traditional 'Karah Prasad'.

3

VIVEKANANDA AND HIS TEACHINGS

(A Humanism that Embraces All-Adapted from an article by Rafiq Zakaria)

“ I have always been attracted to the concept of Hindu-Muslim unity, which is why I joined the Congress in the 1940s and opposed Jinnah’s two-nation theory and the resulting Partition, which raised permanent barriers between Hindus and Muslims. These need to be removed, however difficult the task. . My study of the teachings of the great Swami shows him as a champion of Hindu-Muslim unity. He was more a unifier than a divider. Mahatma Gandhi, after going through Vivekananda works, said: The love I had for my country became a thousandfold. Indeed, Vivekananda was a proponent of a broad humanism that both he and Gandhi believed to be the basis of Hinduism. In November 1993, the London School of Oriental Studies organized a workshop that coincided with the centenary celebrations of Vivekananda’s address in 1893 to the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. The workshop came to the unanimous conclusion that any attempt to project Vivekananda as a Hindu revivalist or fundamentalist grossly contradicted evidence. According to Tappan Raychaudhuri of Oxford University, the Swami was among the earliest thinkers to claim the Indo-Islamic period as part of Indian heritage. Sister Nivedita, his earliest and closest disciple, has recorded Vivekananda

intense pride in the artistic inheritance of the Mughal era and his admiration for the Mughal policy of taking Hindu brides so that rulers of India had Muslim fathers and Hindu mothers. Equality of all, irrespective of caste or creed, was an important feature of Vivekananda vision of an ideal society. But this by no means implied the equalization of all human being.

“ He explained that human beings were not and could not be equal. Indeed, to entirely do away with the differences would bring about death and annihilation. And yet Vivekananda struggled for abolition of privileges of any one nation, community, and sect, individual over another. The idea that one man is born superior to another has no meaning in Vedanta he wrote. Vedanta, according to him, applauded a variety of religions and faiths: Whether you are a Christian or a Buddhist, or a Jew or a Hindu, whatever mythology you believe in, whether you owe allegiance to the prophet of Nazareth, or of Mecca, or of India, or of anywhere else, whether you yourself are a prophet...it (Vedanta) preaches the principle which is the background of every religion and of which all prophets and saints and seers are but illustrations and manifestations. He told his followers: Never judge the customs of other people by your own standard . Nor was he particularly enamored of his own customs or rituals. He did not accept, for instance, that bathing in the Ganga would negate sins; if this was so, he said, fish would be the purest of all beings. The Swami once asked his disciples: Who has given you the right to say that truth exists nowhere else but in the Vedas?

“ He told Hindus not to talk of the superiority of one religion over another. Even toleration of other faiths was not right; it smacked of blasphemy. He said : ‘ Why should I tolerate? Toleration means that you are wrong and I am just allowing you.’ He pointed out that his guru, Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, had accepted all religions as true. Vivekananda would often talk feelingly of a Muslim fakir, Zulfikar Ali, who once saved his life. Vivekananda had several intellectual encounters with Muslim theologians and confessed to these having widened his spiritual horizons.

He was impressed by the fact that the Quran had retained its pristine purity despite the lapse of more than a thousand years. Another time, Vivekananda accepted a Maulvi's invitation to a meal, while telling him not to bother to make any special arrangements for him. Likewise at Mount Abu, he agreed to live in the home of a Muslim lawyer, on the condition that he treated him as a member of the family. This was frowned upon by orthodox Hindus; their anger, however, had no effect on Vivekananda. He told I am above your social conventions, I am not afraid of you and your society. You know nothing of God and the scriptures while travelling the length and breadth of India, Vivekananda observed with keen interest the goodwill that prevailed between Hindus and Muslims. In this he saw the real unity of India. He said that the piety of the Hindus on the banks of the Ganga was no different than the piety of Muslims offering their namaz in the mosque. The Swami was a great proponent of free will and freedom of choice. A brother monk. Who had given shelter to a Muslim orphan, asked Vivekananda as to how he should bring him up. Vivekananda replied; Look after him as your own but do not interfere with his religion Because of his transparent love for all, without a trace of prejudice, the Swami was warmly welcomed by the followers of all religions wherever he went.

“ The Swami was responsible for easing tensions between the Arya Samajists and Muslims. He told them that true religion was meant to unite and not divide people. In his letter to Sarfaraz Husain, Vivekananda wrote that love was the motivating force behind all religion. He remarked that without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam- Vedanta brain and Islam body is the only hope Vivekananda told the detractors of Muslim rule. The Mohammedan conquest of India came as a salvation to the downtrodden, to the poor. That is why one-fifth of our people have become Mohammedans. He denied that it was all the work of sword and fire and said that to call it so was the height of madness. Strong words, which indicated his conviction. The Swami was

undoubtedly critical of some features of Islam but so was he of Hinduism. He was never dogmatic and always looked at the better side of every faith. He was humanist to the core, believing in eternal values that unite all sections of humanity and emphasizing that only through love and compassion can salvation be attained.”

The Making of an Ideal Human Being

According to Swami Vivekananda, man is essentially enlightened and is by nature divine. All men are ‘heirs of immortal bliss’. But, because of wrong education and theories he forgets his divinity and essential goodness. He starts believing that he is a sinner. So he starts worshipping and pursuing external matter and forgets spirituality within. Swami persuaded those who strayed from their true nature to come out of the delusion and understand that ‘they are not matter, they are not bodies’. They have to realize that ‘matter is their servant, not they the servant of matter’. For this purpose, he set for himself the goal of making them aware of their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life’. Right type of education has as its foundation the maxim: ‘There is no sin in thee, there is no misery in thee; thou art the reservoir of omnipotent power. Arise, awake and manifest the Divinity within.’ Swamiji’s teaching helps us realize that those who call us sinners are wrong. ‘It is foolishness, wickedness, downright rascality to say that you are sinners. You are all God.’

Such an education could result in enabling persons to respect others – their neighbors, fellow citizens, immediate surroundings and their overall environment. An enlightened person has ten characteristics. These are: Contentment, forbearance, gentleness, and respect for others property, purity, self control, knowledge, philosophic wisdom, veracity and patience.’ The aim of an enlightened being is to live according to his svadharma – his true nature - and learn to control his appetite. He takes from society as little as is essential for his survival, and gives to it as much

as he can. His action is not motivated by any self-interest. Tyaga, renunciation and seva, service are his ideals. There is no selfishness in him. He synthesizes the opposites – materialism and idealism; the sensual and spiritual; abhyudaya and nihshreyas; preya and shreya. He does not live for himself alone; rather he lives for the welfare of his fellow beings.

In a letter to the Maharaja of Mysore, Vivekananda, explaining the notion of enlightened men, wrote, ‘My noble prince, this life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive!’ He wrote this, because he believed that not exclusion but inclusion is the right policy. According to him, “all expansion is life, and all contraction is death”.

We ought to love and serve others and not hate or exploit them because loving and serving others is expansion and hating and exploiting them is contraction. Expansion comes from a firm faith in the Kathopanisad dictum which says, “The infinite Atman is present in every being, but lies hidden and therefore is not manifest; but it can be realized by the subtle and penetrating reason of those who are trained to perceive subtler and subtler truths”. An enlightened person, according to Vivekananda, by virtue of his training and education, is able to see the same Atman in every being and therefore treats them at par, even identical with himself. He, like Vivekananda, wishes, ‘May I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls of all races and all species.’

MAHATMA GANDHI AND HIS TEACHINGS

(Adapted from an article by Firoj Bakht Ahmed)

Gandhi was truly a citizen of the world and he worked for the freedom of the country from foreign yoke though a Brahmin by birth humanity was his religion. He believed that for victory, war was the bluntest weapon and the sharpest one was obviously non-violence ‘. My religion has no geographical boundaries.’ He explained to Kakasaheb Kalekar once. ‘If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself,’ said Gandhi. It was that brand of religion that taught to believe absolutely in the soul and rely solely on soul force for fighting all the ills in human hearts or human society. Truth for him was God. And non-violence or soul force, his only means to fighting the ills of life. He was not a nationalist in the narrow parochial sense in which the word is used.

Gandhi was at pains to explain to the American writer Jeanette Eaton that his nationalism in reality is intense internationalism. ‘Our nationalism can be no peril to other nations in as much as we will exploit none, just as we allow none to exploit us.’ In her ‘Gandhi Fighter Without a Sword’ Eaton narrates that greatest influence of Gandhi on her was Gandhi’s notions on oneness of the world. Gandhi told C.R. Das once, ‘How heartening it is to imagine that when there is One World and no militarized boundaries and all the natural and human resources, all the sciences and technology which are today marshalled and arrayed for destructive purposes, will be used for the elimination of poverty, ill-health and ignorance. Though this rosy picture is today the privilege only of the poets and the utopian dream of idealists, there is no doubt that this is the cherished hope of everyone who strives for harmony.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his ‘India Wins Freedom’ states that Gandhi is universally acknowledged as the greatest man of his age

simply for the reason that despite affecting the destiny of the whole subcontinent, he held no high office nor was he a statesman ruling the destinies of countries. By sacrificing political gains, he bought peace of all true thinkers and philosophers. He was above all the frivolities of political life as he drew his strength from what he termed 'soul force,' an inner strength that comes only when one believes in non-violence truth and has an abiding faith in the innate goodness lurking in all fellow beings. It was this quality of Gandhi that made him a leader of the world leaders.

“Maulana Abdul Waheed Siddiqui a noted Islamic theologian and the founder editor of *Nai Duniya* Urdu weekly writes in the Gandhi Number issue of October 2, 1953 on the importance that Gandhi laid on Hindu-Muslim unity. Gandhi in a meeting with Siddiqui expressed that India could never reach her goal if she were bent by Hindu-Muslim hostility. He threw himself in the struggle to heal the breach between the two communities. He supported the Muslims in the Khilafat campaign and agitated for the release from the prison of the Ali Brothers. Because he possessed such an enlightened and secular world-view, he unhesitatingly advocated the causes of Hindu-Muslim unity, social progress, religious tolerance, spread of modern knowledge, individual liberty and above all, educational reforms.

Duty to Gandhi was of paramount importance. He said, 'Duties to self, to the family, to the country and to the world are not independent of one another. One cannot do good to the country by injuring the world at large. In the final analysis, we must die that the family may live, the family must die that the country may live and the country must die that the world may live. Therefore, self-purification is the first step. When the heart is there, we at once realize what is our duty a every moment.' Gandhi and his companions Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad were truly, simple and principled people as to them politics was a noble job. Compare it to the lavish freestyle of our politicians today and the way they pile up assets and mint currency.

According to Shashi Tharoor, Gandhiji's objective was to create an ethical Indian state founded on ahimsa and satya, non-violence and truth, principles he found in Advaita philosophy. The national motto of independent India- Satyameva Jayate, truth alone triumphs- is from Mundaka Upanishad, chosen by Mahatma Gandhi as his guiding credo. His own translation of Bhagavad Gita portrays the text as a philosophy of Anashakti Yoga, meant for votaries of ahimsa. The teaching of Gandhi still relevant today, will remain for posterity and his wider significance to a world torn with violence.

5

THE PATH SHOWN BY RADHA SOAMI SATSANG

It is the experience of all Saints and perfect Masters that the Lord is one. He is the common heritage of Hindus, Muslim, Sikhs, Christians and Others; he is the one and same Lord for all. Guru Nanak says, 'There is one Lord and we are all children' And again, 'All creatures have same one father.' Sheikh Saadi says, 'All man are born of the same one essence and are brothers to each others.'

Whatever we see around us in the world is created by the one and only God. Muslims call Him. 'Rab-UI-Almin', meaning the Lord of the entire universe. He is eternal and everlasting. He was in existence before this world was created, He is in existence now, and he will be in existence hereafter. There is no question of one God before and another God later on. Guru Nanak says: 'The one who gives life to the entire universe, Is immortal: He is one Lord of all. The one who is giving life to the entire universe is the one God of all. He is imperishable. He is birthless and deathless. In the Japji Sahib, Gura Nanak has given a vivid description of this one Lord: One Supreme Being, the Eternal, The All – pervading Purusha, the creator. Primordial Truth, through aim Truth; Such is it now and such forever shall it be.'

“As a result of my long experience, Guru Nanak says. I have discovered within one a power that is unique and eternal, that never lessens nor ceases that was, is and will be at times. This power is that of God whom devotees in their love call by thousands of names. Whatever we see except only Him is subject to change, decay and death. Change is inherent in everything. There is nothing that is lasting. Guru Nanak says:

“These three alone do not change: Narayan the Lord, the Guru and the Truth contemplation gained. Elsewhere he writes: Even this body of ours is transient. And every object of this world we wish to own while in this body is also ephemeral. Thus, there is nothing in this world that is worth our friendship and love except the one Lord who alone is permanent.”
 - (Extract from ‘ Path’ by Maharaj Charan Singh)

6

ALTERNATIVE PATH TO DEVOTION SHOWN BY LORD KRISHNA

Lord Krishna gives as many as five different paths of devotion to follow – in the Bhagavad-Gita’s twelfth Chapter - giving seekers the option to choose from any one of them. The wide spectrum of choice is given keeping in mind the differences in preferences of people and their disposition.

First is the Path of Meditation on formless consciousness. Also called Brahman, consciousness is omnipresent, formless, and is the same as ‘satchitanand’ Atman. It is because of the presence of formless consciousness that all objects of nature exist. Seeing Brahman in self is the best form of meditation, called nirguna upasana. This path, by Krishna’s own admission, is difficult for people who have not renounced everything, and who still live in body-consciousness So he suggests four other paths of devotion. Next comes the path of seeing God in every aspect of creation. God is present in pure consciousness in all created objects. There is nothing

in the world that is not of divine origin. With this perspective, there would be love, kindness to all and no conflict. To see entire creation and all beings as divine, is the second-best meditation.

Another option is to meditate on any particular form of Brahman – sculpture, picture or word, for example one can see God’s presence in a particular form. That form can be chosen by us based on our own sanskara or preference. Since entire creation is divine, worshipping God in any form is fine. That explains the 330 million devtas (god and goddesses) in Hindu tradition. Virtually every single form is divine. This kind of meditation on a form is called saguna upasana. This method is very popular.

Some people are so action-oriented that they cannot do any meditation --neither saguna nor nirguna. For them, there are the fourth and fifth options. The fourth option is to dedicate all actions to God, performed only in divine service of God or in service of the world, abandoning desire for selfish gains. Some people devote their life to temples; others, to certain social organizations. Any selfless service is devotional in nature.

If this is also difficult to do, the fifth and the last option of karma yoga is given. One can continue to do what one is doing but the fruits of karma can be dedicated to God and accepted as Prasad only to take care of our needs, not greed. If we accept salary or profit as Prasad, we can’t consume it entirely. Prasad has to be shared. So we must share our gains with those in need. Also, karma has to be performed with greatest efficiency, since we are offering it to God; we should have no ego in performing it or in achieving some good results out of it. The credit for any superior output should go to God, so we can be humble. Karma performed with this attitude is karma yoga. The short definition of karma yoga can be this. It is performance of one’s chosen duty without carelessness, without selfishness and without ego.

These are the five different paths of devotion given by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. The choice of path is left to us. We can choose what appeals to us most. Any one path will gradually lead to the next better path and eventually to lasting happiness and peace. (Adapted from an article by Hasmukh Adhia)

Part-XII

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF OTHER RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

1

CHRISTIANITY

Origin of Christianity

Christianity is a religion founded roughly 2000 years ago and is practiced by nearly 2000 million people worldwide. Christianity started as a breakaway sect of Judaism. It originated in Judea (present day Israel) in the first century A.D. and is based on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth who became known as Jesus Christ (the anointed one), thus the root of the name Christian.

Since Christianity and Judaism share the same history up to the time of Jesus Christ, they are very similar in many of their core beliefs. There are two basic differences. One is that Christians believe in original sin and that Jesus died in our place to save us from that sin. The other is that Jesus was fully human and fully God and as the Son of God is part of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, His Son, and the Holy Spirit. All Christians believe in heaven and that those who sincerely repent their sins before God will be saved and join Him in heaven.

During this period, Judea was a cross-cultural mecca of bustling cities and farms. The emperor of Rome was the ruler. The Jews at that time hated Roman rule. It was but another reminder of the historical oppression they faced as a people. The polytheistic cultural beliefs of Rome were also pagan in intrusive to Jewish life. Some Jews saw that their only hope was to conform to this change. Others became religious zealots who formed pockets of guerilla resistance against Rome. Still others withdrew themselves into the Judean wilderness to study the Jewish law and wait for the eventual coming of their promised Messiah (savior).

Nearly that is known about the life of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, is contained in the four Gospels of the New Testament, particularly those of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John Evangelist, of which John and Matthew were Apostles. They differ in some details but agree in all essentials. Jesus himself left no writings. Modern civilization marks his birth by dividing time B.C.(before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini-or the year of our Lord).There is no record of the exact date of Jesus' birth. Joseph was the legal father of Jesus, but according to Biblical accounts, an angel appeared to Mary, a virgin, and told her that she would bear a child who would be the Son of God.

John the Baptist, Jesus Christ's cousin, baptized his followers . When Jesus came for baptism John recognized him the Messiah whose coming had been foretold. After Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan, and he came out of the water, a voice from heaven said: This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. Jesus to reali challenged the established religious authorities to repent from their selfrighteousness and hypocrisy and realize that the Kingdom of God is rooted in service and love. Jesus helped people from all walks of life to see that mankind is bound to the pain and futility of life as a result of sin. Due to sin, mankind lost its relationship with God. Jesus travelled the country along with his followers preaching forgiveness and love with God.

History after Jesus

It is only after Jesus' ascension to heaven that the faith which he preached was called Christianity and his followers came to be called Christians. The early Christians were persecuted by the Romans until the fourth century. Paul of Tarsus who had been converted by the vision of Christ on the road to Damascus was primarily responsible for expanding the message of Jesus outside the Jewish community. Thus, from a small group of ordinary men that lived in a small province in Judea about 2000 year ago, the history of Christian Church began, and the Christian Faith has since spread to the rest of the world.

Splits and Reform within Christianity

Due to differences of opinion between the Pope and the rulers and when each leader excommunicated the other, formal split within Christianity came into being as Roman Catholic and Orthodox in 1054 A.D. With the rise of Islam from 7th century, Orthodox Christianity diminished. It lost nearly all of its Middle Eastern churches and was forced to move through Eastern Europe and into Russia. In contrast, the Roman Catholicism continued to flourish in the absence of political leadership. Reformation and counter reformation continued. In 1529, King Henry VIII of England challenged the supreme authority of Pope and separated from Rome. In 1558, Queen Elizabeth established the Church of England with Christians following both Catholic and Protestant traditions.

Roman Catholic Church: Roman Catholic Church, with over a billion members, is the largest Christian church in the world. It believes in the primacy and authority of the Bishop of Rome (the Pope), who is traditionally regarded as Christ's representative on earth.

Eastern Orthodox Church: Eastern orthodox Church began its split from the Roman Catholic Church in the fifth century and the break was finalized in 1054. The split with the western church came about

because of conflict over the Pope's claim to supreme authority'. Orthodox Churches are largely national associated with a particular country. Orthodox Church has two sources of authority i.e. Holy Scriptures and Holy Traditions. Orthodox priests may marry before they are ordained. There are 214 million Orthodox Christian today.

Protestant Church: The name was first given to those who followed Martin Luther and who protested against certain practices and doctrines of the Catholic Church. They believe in the acceptance of individual responsibility of Christians directly to God and not to the Church. The Protestants display the cross, it is usually without the body of Christ. Most Protestants share faith in the divine Trinity-God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Aside from the main split from the Catholic Church, with the passage of time, Protestants themselves divided into many denominations which arose in response to disputes over doctrine, theology, or religious practices. There are nearly 500 million members of Protestant Church.

Note: According to some authors there are large number of separate Christian groups in the world which can be categorized as follows:

- 1.Three meta-groups (Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism)
- 2.Three wings (conservative, mainline and liberal)
3. Fifteen Religious families (Adventist, Baptist, Lutheran, Reformist etc.)
4. Dozens of denominations (from Amish to The Way and 4.' Many systems of belief (Arminianism, British Israelism, Calvinism etc.)

An overview of Bible

The ' Bible' is the most sacred book , the 'Word of God', for the Christians. Its theme is salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. It contains two main parts, The Old and New Testament. Testament means, in the sense it is used in the Bible, last will or will of the God. Both the testaments are left by God for mankind. They enable mankind to enter into

covenant (solemn agreement) relationship with Him. One of the central blessings of this covenant relationship is salvation.

The Old Testament chronicles the lives of Jews and others who lived before Jesus, who had been promised a savior by God, and were waiting for him. The Old Testament prophets hundreds of years before, foretold the coming of the second covenant. It is made of 66 books, written by 40 authors, covering a period of more than 1500 years. This contains many stories about people demonstrating faith in God and also provides historical information about the era. The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew, with a few short passages in Aramaic. The entire Old Testament was translated into Greek about a 100 years before the death of Christ.

The New Testament is Christ's last will and testament. It is a covenant, a divine agreement extended by God, a promise from God that He will save mankind if it obeys His Testament. The New Testament contains 27 books originally written in Greek which was language of educated men at the beginning of Christian era. It was later translated into Latin, German and other languages. Gospels written by evangelists tell of the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus from its authors point of view. Acts describe the story after resurrection of Jesus and development of Christianity. Epistles are 21 underlying the Christian faith for early Christians. Revelation is the final book of the New Testament. It gives a description of the series of visions, viz., the lamb of God and the heavenly city. New Testament is the history for the Christian Church- just Old Testament is the history for the Jewish religion.

Christianity in a Nutshell

To be a Christian is to have complete trust in Jesus and accept the following: -'I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell; The third day he rose

again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sixtieth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, The Resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.”

On the list of all qualities expected of a good Christian, the following prayer is explicit: ‘Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the kingdom of heaven belongs to them? Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them! Happy are those who are humble; they will receive what God has promised; Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully! Happy are those who are merciful to others; God will be merciful to them! Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God! Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the kingdom of heaven belongs to them! Happy are you when people insult you and persecute you and tell and kinds of glad for a great reward is kept for you in heaven. The Christians in India believe that the religion came to Kerala in the South in the First century A.D. through one of the Jesus original disciples (one of his twelve apostles), Thomas, who is buried near Chena (Madras). The Syrians Christians are thus of south able to date their conversion back to be very beginning of Christianity. The projected population of Christian in the world was about 2.1 billion in 2000. In India the Christian population was 24 million as per 2001 census i.e. 2.33 % of Indian population.

2

ISLAM GOD AND RELIGION

Historical Background of Islam

Islam was born in a time of ignorance, paganism superstition, idolatry, arrogant oppression of orphans, and disregard for the poor and scorn for the weak. The Arabs were divided into tribes which each had their

own gods whose idols they worshipped and who were constantly at war with each other. It was Mohammed and his uniting monotheistic religion which united Arabs and made them into a world force.

Mohammed (571-682 AD) was born into an important Quraish tribal family. Even in his youth when he was a shepherd, he was recognized as being especially virtuous. He was not like others of his age and has an inclination to seek solitude. Once when he was in solitude on Mount Hira the Angel Gabriel appeared before him and told him that Allah (God) has chosen him to receive and spread his divine knowledge. This news was not received kindly in Mecca and he and his followers were ostracized. Some of his followers sought refuge in Abyssinia and Mohammed himself along with many followers had to move to Medina.

Islam means “the peaceful submission, without resistance, to God’s will.” The very name of the Islam comes from the same root word as ‘Salam’ which means peace. The very name of the religion ‘Al Salam’ in Arabic means at once submission and peace to God’s will in this world hereafter. Islam is the religion which has been revealed by God’s messengers from the time of Noah. Islam is the revelation which was made over the ages, the final and complete revelation being made by the last of Prophets Mohammed. The divine knowledge which Mohammed received was revealed to him in stages over a period of twenty three years. This message in its oral form in the Koran and its written form is known as the Kitab (Book). The state which Mohammed laid the foundation of in Medina was essentially a religious one and yet it guaranteed to defend the freedom of religion. It also guaranteed equality of rights, as well as duties for all citizens regardless of race, color, language or creed “Do good to others as you would like others to do good to you” was the advice to his followers.

As in the other religions man must fight on the side of good against forces of evil. The forces of evil in Islam are, as in the Bible, represented by Satan. We can thus see that the forces of evil, while at lower

level and subordinate to God, are bent upon tempting man to do evil. A true Muslim is concerned primarily with belief in God, belief in his message addressed to humanity and belief in the Day of Judgment. It is this belief in the final judgment which makes every man and woman morally responsible for his or her own conduct. Islam, the religion that was originally rejected in Mecca, spread over the centuries in Africa, the Middle East, Spain, Sicily, Pakistan, India, Indonesia and China. Islam has no ordained clergy or religious hierarchy. At Mecca all stand as equals, be they paupers or princes, scholars or illiterate.

Prophet Muhammad's Last Sermon

This sermon was delivered on the ninth day of Dhul- Hijjah 10 A.H. in the Uranah valley of Mount Arafat in Mecca. Translated version of the same as quoted on page 61-62 of the book titled ' Major Religions in India' is as follows.

“After praising and thanking Allah (Almighty God), Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him- pbuh) said: O people , lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.

“ O people, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so you regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that he will indeed reckon your deeds. Allah has forbidden you to take ‘interest’, therefore all ‘interest’ obligations shall henceforth be waived. Your capital is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. Allah has judged that there shall be no ‘ interest’ and that all the ‘ interest’ due to Abbas ibn Abdal Muttalib (the prophets uncle) be waived

“ Every right arising out of homicide in preislamic days is henceforth waived and the first such right that I waive is that arising from the murder of Rabiah ibn al Harithibn. O People, the unbelievers indulge in tampering with the calendar in order to make permissible that which Allah forbade, and to forbid that which Allah has made permissible. With Allah the months are twelve in number. Four of them are holy, three of these are successive and one occurs singly between the months of Jumada and Shaban. Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope of that he will be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

“O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah’s trust and with his permission. If they abide by your right, then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with anyone of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste. O People, listen to me in earnest, worship Allah, say your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadhan, and give your wealth in Zakat. Perform Hajj if you can afford to.

“ All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non- Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white- except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not therefore do injustice to yourselves. Remember one day you will meet Allah and answer your deeds. So beware: do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

“O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me, and no new faith will take birth. Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand my words which I convey to you. I leave behind me to things, the Quran and my Sunnah and you follow these you never go astray. All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O Allah, that I have conveyed your message to your people.”

Tenets and Traditions of Islam

Islamic Law- The Sharia: The Qur’an is the principal source of Islamic law, the Sharia. It contains the rules by which the Muslim world is governed (or should govern itself) and forms the basis for relations between man and God, between individuals, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, as well as between man and things which are part of creation. The Sharia contains the rules by which a Muslim society is organized and governed, and it provides the means to resolve conflicts among individual and the state.

The Commandments or Prohibitions in Islam: Islam commands its followers to avoid many things (38) because they are immoral, unethical, unhealthy or because they represent disobedience to the devotional duties. One of the prohibition says- to deny any of the prophets who are recognized by the Quran, such as Jesus, Moses, Abraham and Noah. The denial of the revelation or any of the recognized prophets is a denial of Islam. Beside day to day prohibitions the last five important for a Muslim are- Not to neglect any of the five daily prayers. Not to break fasting in the days Ramadan without legitimate excuse. Not to withhold the ‘Zakah’ which is the share of the poor in the self supporting person’s wealth. Not to neglect the duty of pilgrimage to Mecca which has to be done once in a lifetime by every person who physically and financially able to

make it. Not to neglect the duty of advising the people to do good and avoid evil when such an advice is needed and likely to be effective.

Islamic Laws regarding food and drinks: Islam has provided detailed rules and regulations regarding food and drinks. Islam has allowed meat of certain animals and prohibited meat of certain other animals depending upon the laid down rules with regard to conditions under which it is killed or slaughtered in accordance to Islamic Law. Separate rules are laid down for consumption of fish and animals of water.

Islamic Dress Code: Islam emphasizes modesty. No person should be perceived as a sex object. There are certain guidelines for men and women. Their dresses should neither be too thin nor too tight to reveal body forms. For men, they must at least cover the body from knee to navel. For women, their dress should cover body properly veiled. For women, acting and dressing modestly called 'hijab'. It includes covering the head, arms and legs but the interpretation varies. Some women wear veil to cover the lower part of the face. Some wear 'Burqah' which covers whole body except eyes.

Kaaba(Bait-U l- Allah) House of Allah on Earth

Literally, Kaaba in Arabic means a high place with respect and prestige. The very first construction of the 'Kaaba' was done by Prophet Adam. Allah says in the' Quran' it was the first house that was built for humanity to worship Allah. ' Kabba' is the building towards which Muslims face five times a day during prayer. This has been followed since the time of Muhammad (pbuh) over 1400 years ago. Kaaba is an ablong stone building located approximately in the center of the quadrangle of the Grand Mosque in the holy city of Mecca. The front and back wall are 40 feet in length, the side wall are 40 feet long and the height of the wall is 50 feet. Set in the silver surround in the east corner of the' Kaaba', some four feet above ground level, is the 'Black Stone'. This sacred stone, the focal

point of the 'Hajj' , is the only remnant of the shrine which Abraham built when it was given to Abraham by the angel Gabriel.

Muslim Population in the World Today

Muslim population in the world today has been estimated to be about 25%. The proportion of Muslim population living in various countries in 2002 was- Turkey (99.8%), Iran(99%), Pakistan (97%), Egypt (94%), Indonesia (88%), Bangladesh (83%), Nigeria (75%), India (13.4%) and China (6%).

3

THE BAHAI'S FAITH

This religion was born in Iran in the 19th century and is based on the teaching of Mirza Ali Mohammed (1820-1850) who is known as Bab (Gate)and Mirza Hurai Ali (1817-1892) known as Baha' Ulla (Glory of God). These visionaries of Muslim descent accept Adam, Moses, Krishna, Buddha and Zarathustra, Christ and Mohammed as the earlier prophets. The Bahai's believe that after Mohammed the next prophet was the Baha-u-Ulla and that he in turn will be followed by others.

This religion is essentially a moral religion which aims at peace and unity of all mankind. It believes that with a moral reawakening and the resulting righteousness, all human being will eventually be united in the kingdom of God on earth. It believes that the human being will change for the better and a more harmonious society will emerge in the kingdom of heaven on earth for the followers of all faith.

It is probably because of the persecution that its followers spread to other parts of the world. Today there are aver 70000 Bahai temples worldwide, and one of the most prominent being Lotus temple in New Delhi.

ZOROASTRIANISM (PARSIS)

Zoroastrianism believe that the Prophet Spitama Zorathrustra of the Golden Light lived in about 300 BC. They base their evidence on the languages of the Aresta, and dismiss references to people of the same name between 4000 BC. and 550 BC as being persons unconnected with their religion. The founder of this religion was Zoroaster or Zorathrustra Spitama or “the Golden Light” who was descendent of the original Aryan branch that migrated to Iran (Persia). He is the only prophet to have belonged to the priestly class. The fire priests believed in Ahuras (spirits) having creative powers being referred to as Mazda. He proclaimed Ahuramazda as the supreme creator, the creator of the earthly and spiritual life, the Lord of the whole universe, in whose hands are all the creatures.”

It was full ten years before Zarathushtra made his first convert. From these beginnings, Zoroastrianism was to grow till one day it became the court religion of Persia, which became the largest empire in the world and extended over a substantial part of the world for over thousand years. Zoroastrianism reached its greatest popularity under the Parthian kings and it was then, in the 2nd century BC, that an attempt was made to complete the holy book or ‘Aresta.’ The language of the Aresta is similar to Sanskrit and the language of the Zind is Pahalvi (ancient Persian). Zoroastrians also believe in twin spirit i.e. evil spirit and holy spirit. Reward for the good and punishment for the evil action is reserved for the next life.

Zoroastrian religion requires its followers to not merely read the scriptures but to live their religion. He is merely a trustee of his possessions which he must share with others and when he makes other happy, God will make him happy. Zoroastrian are not fire worshippers but they believe in one Pure God and fire is a symbol of his purity and strength. Balance is to be maintained not at a personal level but with all creations. God has given us the fire, the air, the water, and the earth free for own use.

They are the most precious asset in our life. We may use them but we should not abuse them- at no time defile or pollute them. If we do so, in time nature will wreak a vengeance and life will become unbearable on this earth.

The fortune of the Zoroastrian underwent a sea change in the 7th century AD when the Arabs, newly converted to Islam, conquered Iran. The Zoroastrian religion was not just banished from the court but suffered extreme persecution and remained alive only in mountain region. The upward swing in Parsi fortunes came with the opportunities offered by the British in Bombay. The British were keen to establish a trading city there and offered equal justice and freedom of religion apart from lucrative business opportunities.

The Parsi's were progressive and soon became invaluable to the British who referred to them as Dubash (do bhasha). The building for the fortification was entrusted to Cursetji Pochaji and the master builder of the Bombay dockyard was Lorji Nusserwanji Wadia. It was not long before the Wadia, Godrej, Tata and other Parsi families proposed and in keeping with their faith set up some of India's largest charitable trusts aimed at education, medical relief and housing. Talking about the freedom struggle and the Indian National Congress in 1885 Nehru said, 'One name towers above all others – that of Dadabhai Naoroji, who became the Grand old Man of India and who first used the word Swaraj for India's goal.' Parsi population in India today is only around .25 percent of the total population but their contribution is commendable.

5

JUDAISM

As Hinduism is the parent of Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism, Judaism is the parent of Christianity and Islam. The father of the Jewish people, who was called Hebrews, was Abraham. His grand son Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, is considered the common ancestor of

all Jews. And it was Moses who is considered responsible for the religious unification of the Jewish people.

Judaism proclaim the one and only God who has revealed his Torah (law) to the chosen people, the Jews or the Israelis, who are to show the way to all the people. God told Abraham, “Go from your country..... to the land that I will show you, and I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you..... and by you shall do all the families in Earth be blessed.” The Jews are expected to obey the Torah, which is recorded in the first five books of the Bible. This is the record of the 613 commandments imparted by God or Moses at Mt. 3000 years ago. These commandments have been summarized as the 10 commandments. The essence of the commandments are as follows.

‘I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other Gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the water below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord God, am the jealous God punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third or fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to thousands who love me and keep my commandments. For six days the Lord made the heavens, earth and the sea but he rested on seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed Sabbath day and made it holy. Honor your father and mother, commit no murder, adultery, theft, false testimony and covet your neighbors house- family member-servant’s -animals on anything that belong to your neighbor.

Judaism lays stress on justice and righteousness as man is created in the image of God and all human life is sacred. It lays stress on charity and on compassion and that the individual shapes his own destiny. About half of the world’s Jews live in America, a quarter in Israel and the balance elsewhere including small Jewish community in India. The Jews

pray at the synagogue (meeting place) on Saturdays and the most sacred item in the synagogue is 'ark' containing the scrolls of the Torah.

Christians believe this Messiah was Jesus and Muslim believes it was Mohammed. The Jews reject both and say the Messiah in yet to come. The Christians, however, have adapted the Jewish ideas of religious congregation when the scriptures are read and prayers are offered. Muslim have adapted the Jewish ideas of strict monotheism, its opposition to idol worship, practice of facing something holy, regular fasting, the avoidance of pork and observance of a weekly holy day. Muslims observe the holy day on Friday. The Jews on Saturday and the Christians on Sunday.

Part-XIII

LESSONS LEARNT ABOUT GOD FAITH AND RELIGION

1

MESSAGE OF ALL PROPHETS COME FROM ONE SOURCE

(Words spoken by Baba Virsa Singh-www.govindsadan.org)

“God is infinite. He has neither beginning nor end. However, the number of people who have complete faith in God and who love Him unconditionally is declining. People forget; their minds become impure and they do not listen to a Power they can not see. Then God, who is both manifest and unmanifest , appears in the physical form of a Prophet, for people will only follow someone whom they can see and hear. With God's blessings, grace and mercy, this person begins to realize God, and divine power and light start working through him. God chooses prophets and when

the right time comes, gives them Gyan or knowledge. The chosen ones become receivers of divine revelations. After God begins using a person as His Messenger, that person no longer works from his own mind or his own heart. It is all God's work.

“All prophets have come from the same light; they all give the same basic messages. None have come to change the older revealed scriptures; they have come to remind people of the earlier prophets' messages which the people have forgotten. We have made our separate religions into fortress, each claiming one of the prophets as its own. But the Light of God cannot be confined to manmade structures. It radiates throughout all Creation. No prophet belongs to just one caste, creed or nation. Jesus is not confined to Christianity; Moses is not only a Jew; Prophet Mohammed is not only a Muslim; Guru Nanak is not only a Sikh. They have not come to establish institutionalized, sectarian religions. Those divisions are created by humans and reflect their own policies. By contrast, prophets come into the world with a message from God. They come to remind people of divine teachings, making them fresh and new again; they come to teach love, to encourage service to humanity, to remove ignorance by enlightening people with the knowledge of God. They come to change our consciousness; they come to show us how to live.

“As human beings we do have spiritual wisdom deep within us; the One who creates the world is already present in us. But it is only when a prophet comes down and starts speaking with divine wisdom that it awakens this knowledge in us. I have nothing to prove. You may want to see a miracle for your faith. I have lived my faith and so need nothing. If you want a miracle, you do it. I have done mine. I have transformed all of you into warriors for Truth. I've made heroes out of cowards, and the story has not even begun.

“You will see such Light and happenings that you could never have believed. I will work even greater deeds through you. All will join you

in this mission. Do not despair. I am always with you to bring joy. Let there be no sadness. The pain of separation is for those attached to a body. My spirit has always been and will always be with all of you. Recite Naam. Do Jaap Sahib. Love each other, and welcome all who come in my name. Don't waste a moment. As soon as you start meditating, reciting Naam and seeking God's light within yourself, your life will change. As more and more people do so, the world will change.”

2

REMEMBER AND HAVE FAITH IN GOD

When you take a break, you remember God.

“In popular parlance the word Sabbath denotes holiday. We often hear of people taking ‘Sabbatical’ meaning an extended period of leave from work. In Judaism the word has great religious significance. Sabbath is the day of rest and spiritual regeneration for the Jews, each week, after six days of work. It begins from twilight on Friday and continues until sundown on Saturday.

“ In the Biblical narrative, God rested on the seventh day after Creation and thereby sanctified and blessed this day. The Jewish scripture Exodus says, ‘For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day and hallowed it.’ Sabbath incorporates two distinct concepts ‘remember’ and ‘observe’. Jews are commanded to remember Sabbath as a commemoration of Creation, and to observe the law of cessation from work. Torah, the central spiritual text of the Jews says, ‘Six days you shall work, and the seventh day is Sabbath to the Lord your God. (On that day) you shall do not work.’ This is reinforced, And the seventh day you shall rest.’

“Why is there a need for a second positive action commanding the people to rest? Aren’t the two ideas similar? A deeper

reading of Torah suggests that refraining from work entails something other than what is commonly understood, something that goes beyond the natural outcome of not working. In the course of living, human beings tend to look at the world egoistically. We begin to think that we are the center of the universe and in complete control of our lives. Sabbath is a way to understand the true nature of our being. Refraining from work is the first step towards accomplishing that goal. God gave human beings the power to manipulate and manage the world. Embroiled in our successes in altering the world around us as we please we often side into deceptive reasoning that we control the world and our destiny.

“Once in seven days, on Sabbath, we step back from the world, symbolically and accept that the world is God’s creation and not ours, that we are not its real masters. When we have drawn ourselves out of the fallacy of our power, we are free to realize the primary goal of Sabbath experiencing God. If the observance of Sabbath means ‘refraining from work,’ how is work understood? Torah prohibits *melachah*, the kind of work that is ‘creative.’ The quintessential example of *melachah* is the work of creating the universe. God did not require a great deal of physical effort. He spoke and it was done. Hence work does not mean physical effort. Moving heavy objects, for example, does involve physical labor but it is not creative, as is writing a letter or lighting a fire (since the ability to make fire was man’s great step towards civilization). By refraining on Sabbath from creative manipulation of the world, people demonstrate that they enjoy their talent as gift from God. They are theirs not by right but by permission. People have a stewardship for which God will call them to account.. *(Adapted from an article by Sujata Aishwarya Cheema)*

Have faith in God, he wants to help you

“Jesus Christ came to earth carrying the message of God: faith, love and compassion. And He gave up his earthly life to drive home that message. He was thirty years old when he started his ministry. In the

next three years he enacted many powerful, wonderful and amazing events, perhaps none the more momentous than his death, burial and resurrection. Jesus bore our sorrows and afflictions, He was wounded for our transgressions and buried for our inequities. But His resurrection carries the message of God's power and authority over death, the heavens and the earth. And he became the source of our faith in God, the fact of his death and resurrection the foundation for our believing.

“He conveyed his message in a simple manner, communicating in parables and miracles. Despite his obvious power, his mighty work did not harm even his enemies. As the apostle John says of him, ‘I did not come to judge the world, but to save it.(12.47) To drive home the message of faith, Jesus used the allegory of Nature.’ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?’ (Mathew6.26) ‘Faith pleases God, says (Hebrews11.6). But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

“Similarly, miracles were examples of God's power and kindness. He told the woman who touched His garment and was healed: ‘Your faith has made you well.’ Through all his miracles, parables, words and actions he revealed the might and the kindness of God to the people. Jesus did not heal every ill person in the world- but he did heal every case of every kind of illness brought to his attention. He proved God's power to help every person who comes to him with faith. He used the healing of man's diseased body to prove that he could also heal man's sinful spirit.

“His miracles were sufficient to make his messages of faith clear. Faith is taking God seriously. Faith is firm conviction, not wishy-washy longing. God wants us to know who He is and what He will do. So place your faith in God. He has the desire and power to help each of us that comes to him. He wants to love us, teach us, guide us, instruct us

and use us in a variety of ways. It is part of nature and character. And when we come to know Him fully the life becomes a spring of joy. You feel secure, become strong, bold and courageous and then we are able to approach him in faith and conviction. “Trust in the Lord and in his mighty power- take up the protective shield of faith which you can repel all the flaming arrow’s of evil.”- (*Adapted from an article by Manorama Lukose, YMCA, Delhi*)

3

CHARITY WITHOUT SELFLESSNESS IS USELESS

(Adapted from an article by Anup Mitra)

“Human requirements are many. Wanting much more than what you require is called greed. Further, greed begets greed. If all this has to be satisfied, even unlimited time will be inadequate. Given that we have limited time and resources the biggest challenge is, how we lay our focus on what life is after all meant for. Is salvation to be attained only through satiety? Ramakrishna suggested the path of nibritti. This does not mean denial of every little harmless desire. He rather reinforces Buddha’s middle path. Desires such as consuming a special type of sweet may immediately be satisfied and then the individual may resume his search for the ultimate. If the desire remains in the mind for long it will obviously distract the mind. At the same time unending desires cannot be satisfied in full. Moreover there are desires which take us away from the main path of seeking, for a considerably long period of time. So rationality is important. In Ramakrishna’s counsel it is called Vichar.

Navigating Choices

“Knowledge helps us do the vichar or pondering over it: what is intoxicating and what is not, what is distracting and what is not, similarly, with regard to certain desires one may rationalize by asking oneself, what is that which will receive satisfaction, what is that which

I am presuming will give me satisfaction. When it comes to bodily pleasure one may look at it clinically: ‘a bunch of bones, flesh and blood and that is what I am looking for’! People talk about money. But how far can it take us? We need food, clothing, and shelter for our survival. But once that is done why can’t we think of distributing the surplus among those who have practically nothing? The mind always says to itself, “let me acquire this and then I will turn to what life is meant for”. But that stage never comes. If butter has been extracted from the milk and it is placed in water, there is no fear of having it mixed up. But if milk is directly added to water there will remain no distinction between the two, and it may get impossible to separate the milk from the water.

What You Attain?

“ The spiritual attainment is of so much importance that without it selfless action is not possible. One may remain engrossed in charitable activities but ultimately the desire for fame can be seen as the driving force. And if that is the case, the action is certainly not selfless. Spiritual attainment helps one free his mind from the desire for fame and then what he pursues is divine and beneficial for the world. Karma that does not have the backing of knowledge and bhakti can be beneficial neither for the doer nor for whom it is done. Even parental duties, which are said to be pure in relative sense in the realm of worldly affairs, at times involve gross expectations and thus, end up in outcomes that hurt both the parties.

Aim for Purity

“ After attainment what one does or says becomes absolutely pure because it is selfless in the absolute sense. The doors and windows of a chamber are kept wide open for the fresh air and light to enter. How can then remain an iota of darkness or delusion? What one pursues then becomes beneficial for all.”

4

FACTIONALISM IS NEITHER GOOD FOR FAITH NOR RELIGION

Because of changing time and socio-economic developments in the society, the human being also take initiative to protect the various groups of the society from discrimination on the basis of caste, sex, religious practices or backwardness. This has been happening in all religion or in the world. In case of Christianity many modern society of religion came into existence which include Christian science, seventh day Adventism, Jehovah's witnesses spiritualism, chritadelphianism, Mormonism, Theosophy and Sweden borgianism. Each new school create new philosophy professing to attain intimate knowledge of God by spiritual ecstasy.

Similarly within Hindu religion –Brahmon Sabha was created by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Brahmo Samaj by Devendra Nath Tagore, Prathana Samaj by M.G Ranede and R.D Bhanardarkar, Theosophical society by Annie Beasant and Arya Samaj by Swami Dayanand Saraswati. In due course of time, these social reform group may also turn into sect. It is the demand of the time that all religion may like to follow common program i.e. non-violent tradition of Buddhism, spiritual victory of Jainism, Christian's commitment to charity and service for high moral standard, Jorastrinism for tradition of brotherhood and sacrifice, Sikhism, for free and fearless enquiry and Hinduism which treats mankind in this universe as one family.

5

INVOKING THE GLORY OF BHARAT

(Adapted from an article by Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev)

Nations are generally made and held together on the basis of race, religion, language or ethnicity. Sameness is the formula of nation-

building, but India stands in defiance of this mediocrity. “Bharatvarsha” lived for thousands of years, a union of over two hundred kingdoms. King Bharata extended the boundaries of his empire, more through inclusion than conquest. The word “Bharata,” literally means: “bha” for bhava, “ra” for raga, and “ta” for tala – the fundamentals of music and dance. The arts evolved phenomenally in this land. A few thousand years ago when the rest of the world was striving and struggling in nomadic groups for survival, India saw the heights of music, mathematics, astronomy and scientific development. We took pride in building the nation not on the sameness of people but on their diversity. Every fifty kilometers of travel, you found people with different languages and lifestyles. Bharat was recognised as a human being – Bharat Mata, where all these different parts were part of one body. We do not expect the little finger and nose to function the same way, but they are together. There was an organic unity which this culture nurtured very carefully, tied together with a strong spiritual thread.

The fundamental aspect of living in India is that whether you are a king, businessman or householder, your highest goal is mukti or liberation. It was not even God or heaven – God is just a stepping stone for us. This country is the only ‘god-less’ country on the planet because here, we know that God is of our making. We developed a whole science of “god-making” through which you can create your very own god – your ishtadevta (family deity) This is a land of an estimated to 330 million gods and goddesses!

India never had any belief system or established morality. There was only vibrant spirituality, and that has always been the guiding force. Right now, India is facing a certain danger because this spiritual thread is being systematically hacked at and there is no moral structure to fall back on. If spirituality is lost, this is the most immoral country, because we have no guilt problems like in the West. If we hack

this one thing down with beliefs and other identities, after twenty-five years, we will wonder why we are one nation and we will break. The leadership in the nation needs to grasp what truly holds us together. The glory of this nation's past is rooted in its spiritual possibilities and accomplishments.

The Indic region has mastered the laws that govern inner wellbeing. In the modern world, nations of great affluence are suffering from a terrible sense of disenchantment within. We have the know-how and scientific methods that could lead to wellbeing of all. Before individuals step out towards external accomplishments, they must arrive at a sense of inner wellbeing. It is only in this that individual human beings can go beyond personal ambition and strive for a larger vision. This is of utmost importance now, because for the very first time, we as a generation have reached a place where we have all the necessary resources, capability and technology to address every human problem on the planet. Only an inclusive consciousness is missing. The very basis of what we refer to as Bharat is this inclusiveness. It is time we reap the benefits of this profound tradition in its full glory. We are a nation of great possibility. Let us make it happen!

6

LESSONS LEARNT BY GODMEN

His Holiness The XIV Dalai Lama

A Precious Human Life: Every day, think as you wake up, Today I am fortunate to have woken up. I am alive. I have a precious human life. I am not going to waste it. I am going to use all my energies to develop myself, to expand my heart out to others, to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. I am going to have kind

thoughts towards others. I am not going to get angry or think badly about others as much as I can.

Shirdi Sai Baba

Shirdi Sai Baba repeatedly taught that worshipping God is just one form was to deny the truth that his divine love and power are available in all places. Some of Shirdi Sai Baba's devotees learned this lesson. To them, God and the healing power of God could be evoked in any thing. They also saw that the call to act could come any time. He wanted his students to serve humanity by realizing that they could channel the same divine love as he did. Following his teaching, many devotees invoked Sai Baba's aid and thus miraculous power of healing could be drawn into anything by the faith of the devotees. Many devotees simply take some ash from incense sticks, place near Sai Baba's picture, pray and get rid of the pain or sickness that may have fallen on any one in the family.

Shri Satya Sai Baba

Satya is truth; it is that intellectual clarity which enables us to see beyond all the shams, falsities, illusions, right to the heart of things. Through Satya we know the truth of our own being, of God and of the universe. **Dharma** is the law of living. It is the executive power of carrying out Satya, the basic truth, in the circumstances under which we are placed. Some times dharma will demand that we act one way, sometimes the unalterable, immortal law of spirit. Through dharma we live the truth; dharma is satya in acti **Santi** is the great peace that comes to men through satya and dharma, through knowing and the truth. It is that peace that passes understanding, abiding in the hearts of those who live in the eternal. **Prema** is the divine love which in great religions is named as highest expression of God on earth. Christ said that God is love and we must love our neighbors as ourselves. The Sanatana

Dharma gives the reason for this; that through our real selves, the Atma, we are actually one with each other, with all men, and with God.

Paramahansa Yogananda

“ God gave you a family so that you may learn how to love others, and then give that kind of love to all. So we can all start right in your homes.”

Srila Prabhupada

According to Srila Prabhupada, whose 125 birth anniversary was celebrated on September 1, 2021, Krishna consciousness means when one becomes interested in knowing God Krishna, his connection with God and the aim of his life. There are four classes of men- the karmis, the jnanis, the yogis, and the bhaktas- and each achieves a different goal. The karmis work for some material profit. A jnani is a person who thinks, ‘Why am I working so hard? The birds, bees, elephants, and creatures have no profession, yet they are all eating. Jnanis try to become immortal. And yogis try to acquire some mystic power to exhibit a wonderful show- But the bhakta- the devotee- doesn’t want any thing for himself. He simply want to serve God out of love, just as mother serves her child. When you come to this stage of loving God, that is perfection. As Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita 18:55, ‘ Bhaktya mam abhijanati’- Only through the process of bhakti (devotion) one can understand God.

(Part-XIII ends here)

Annexure- I

VEDIC WORDS WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES

Abhijit: Twenty second Nakshatra in Hindu calendar. The Hindu year begins with new moon of Chaitra and takes its name from the fourteenth Nakshatra called Chitra.

Adharma: Since Hinduism has no word for sin or evil except ‘Paap’ which suggests crime, misdeed and ill behaviour, adharma serves as a blanket term for any form of unrighteousness or violation of the moral laws. During Vedic period any behavior contrary to the Sruti or Smirti or religious or legal institutions was treated as adharma.

Adhyatma: It is a on the technical phrase used for soul in ‘Sankhya philosophy’ which controls various actions of the body which include- to believe, to resolve, to hear, to touch, to see, to taste, to smell, to speak, to grasp, to be gone over, to excrete and to enjoy.

Adi: First name given to the Brahma Purana containing ten thousand stanzas.

Aditya: The sun or Surya was the chief of the gods at a very early period. The twelve solar dynasties, or personifications of the sun under a different name and sign of the Zodiac in each month of the year, are called Adityas. They belong to the period before the time of Vedas, when the worship of the elements, particularly of the sun, was first enriched and extended by fancy. Vishnu is called chief of the Adityas.

Agni: The deity of fire, one of the most ancient and most sacred objects of Hindu worship. As such, Agni is considered as a mediator between human being and gods, as protector of mankind and their home, and as witness of their actions; hence his invocation in all solemn occasions, at a nuptial ceremony etc.

Aryan: The Sanskrit root of the word Aryan is *arya* i.e ‘worthy, holy and noble. The ancient name for India is *Aryavarta* , literally means “ abode of the Aryans”- the noble, holy and excellent ones. The later ethnological misuse of Aryan to signify not spiritual, physical characteristics- brought forth by renowned orientalist Max Muller, has been described as a sin by many including by Sri Paramhansa Yogananda in the *Bhagavad Gita*. (Vol-I page 173 refers)

Atma: A name of Vishnu, who has many appellations. Soul, living soul, animating nature and existing before it. “The highest object of their religion was to restore that bond by which their own self (*atma*) was linked to the eternal self (*parmatman*) to recover that unity which has been clouded and obscured by the magical illusion of reality; by the so called *Maya* of creation.”- Max Muller.

Avatara: (Incarnation of God) According to ‘The Mahabharata of Vyas’ by P. Lal, *avatara* literally means ‘descent’. An incarnation of God (*Vishnu*). The pre-serving aspect of Hindu Trinity (*Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva*) has had nine incarnation (*avataras*) so far, and order of their appearance suggests an evolutionary development: *Matsya* (Fish), *Kurma* (Tortoise), *Varaha* (Boar), *Narsimha* (Man-lion), *Vamana* (Dwarf), *Parasu-Rama* (Axe armed Rama), *Rama*, *Krishna*, *Buddha* and the tenth *Kalki*, the white horse predicted to appear at the end of *Kali yuga*.

Author’s comment: According to mythology each of the first six incarnation of God has a story behind incarnation and subsequent role played by God. Incarnation of Lord Rama, Krishna and Buddha, which are well known in the world, have already been included in this book. There appears to be no relationship between *yuga* and incarnation of God. The message of Lord Krishna in *Gita* is very clear that as and when there is *adharma* (wrong doings) are on the increase, the Lord

Himself descends on the earth to restore dharma (righteousness) and save the mankind.

Brahma: First person singular of Brahman, God the creator, born from the primal cosmic egg. His creation lasts one Brahma day or 2,160,000,000 years; and then dissolved, and recreated. He is red-skinned, and has five heads (but is shown often with four, one having been burnt to ashes by Shiva, whom he had insulted). In his four hands he holds a scepter, a spoon, a string of beads (or a bow), and the Vedas. His consort is the goddess of learning- Saraswati; his vehicle is swan. Also called Chatur-mukha (Four- faced), Hamsa- Vahana (Swan – rider), and Prajapati (Lord of creatures).

Bhagavata Purana: (ancient divine history) One of the most referred religious scripture of the Hindu society. The scripture containing 18000 shlokas is divided in twelve parts. Tenth part of the scripture includes all about Lord Krishna.

Bharata: Son of Dushyanta (of the Puru dynasty) and Shakuntala of Mahabharata period.

Dharma: Means virtue, religion ,duty, law, moral and religious truth according to law and Vedas. Any peculiar prescribed practice or duty; thus giving alms, is the dharma of a King; piety is the dharma of a Brahmin; courage is the dharma of a Kshatriya.

Dharma Shastra: A law book; the three principal topics of all such are achara (rules of conduct), vyavahara (Judicature), prayaschitta (penance). The code of Yajjnawalka is termed Dharmasastra; as is also code of Manu.

Gayatri Mantra: The most sacred verse in the Vedas. It is considered so holy that copyists refrain from transcribing it. Wilson translates it

as,- ‘ We mediate on the excellent light of the divine sun: may he illuminate our minds’.

Karma:Is the entire complex of cause and effect, action and reaction which govern deeds, thought and feelings in Hindu philosophy it also used to explain the chain of birth and rebirth, ‘Because of Karma we are eternally bound in the wheel of birth, death and rebirth. Karma is thus seen to be cosmic law for debit and credit and for good or evil. In Bhagvad Gita lord Krishna explained the meaning of Karma as his duty. Krishna told Arjuna that quitting the battle was not his dharma. Arjuna was a kshatriya and it is his job to do his duty and not think of consequences. Karma goes hand in hand with dharma or a job in hand. Good Karma in this life will whittle away bad Karmas of past lives.

Kuru: Kuru was the ancestor of both the Pandavas and the Kauravas, thus Arjun is referred to as Kurunandana, descendent of Kuru; nandana also has the connotation of something that causes rejoicing- thus Krishna encourages Arjuna by addressing him as, ‘ the pride or choice son of Kuru dynasty.’ (page273 of Bhagavad Gita by Sri Paramahansa Yogananda refers)

Manu:The laws of Manu (in Sanskrit, the Manava dharmasastra or Manusmriti and informally known as Manu) consists of 2685 verses on topics as apparently varied- but actually intimately interrelated in Hindu thought- as social obligations and duties of various castes and of individuals in different stages of life, the proper way for a righteous king to rule, and punish transgressors in his kingdom; to appropriate social relations between men and women of different castes, and of husbands and wives in the privacy of the home; birth, death and taxes; cosmogony, Karma, and rebirth; ritual practices; error and restoration or redemption; and such details of every day life as the procedure of settling traffic accidents, adjudicating disputes with boatmen, and the

penance for sexual improprieties with ones teacher's wife. The text is, in sum, an encompassing representation of life in the world- how it is, and how it should be lived. It is about dharma, which subsumes the concepts of religion, duty, law, justice, practice and principles. No modern study of Hindu family life - psychology, concepts of the body, sex, relationship between humans and animals, attitudes to money and material possessions, politics, law, caste, purification and pollution, ritual, social practice and ideals, and world- renunciation and worldly goals- can ignore Manu.(The Laws of Manu by Wendy Doniger and Brian K. Smith refers)

Mahayuga: The aggregate of four Yuga is called Mahayuga. The total period in terms of years has been indicated as follows:

Yuga	Divine Years	Sandhya	Sandhyansa	Total
Kriti Yuga	4000	400	400	4800
Treta Yuga	3000	300	300	3600
Davapara Yuga	2000	200	200	2400
Kali Yuga	1000	100	100	1200

If these divine years are converted into years of mortals by multiplying by 360, a year of men being a day of the gods, we obtain the years of which the years of mortals are respectively said to consist:

$$4800 \times 360 = 1728000$$

$$3600 \times 360 = 1296000$$

$$2400 \times 360 = 864000$$

$$1200 \times 360 = 432000 \text{ - Total Mahayuga - } 4320000$$

So that these periods resolve themselves into very simple elements; the notion of four ages in a deteriorating series expressed by descending arithmetical progression, as 4,3,2,1; the conversion of units into thousands; and the mythological fiction that these were divine years, each composed of 360 years of men.

Moksha: Absorption into deity. The Hindu idea of supreme blessedness. It is only those who attain full knowledge of the nature of the deity, the soul, the intellect etc. derived from meditation, the teaching of the guru, experience, penance etc. or the exalted ascetic, who by austerities is said to have annihilated his passions, and freed his soul from earthly desire, that is considered ripe for the final emancipation or Moksha.

Om or Omkara: A combination of letters invested by Hindu mysticism with peculiar sanctity. In the Vedas it is said to comprehend all the gods; and in the Puranas it is directed to be prefixed to many sacred formulas. The syllable ‘Om’, says Padma Purana, is the leader of all prayers; and to be employed in the beginning of all the prayers. A whole chapter of Vayu Puran is devoted to this term, even though the researchers continue to search for correct meaning of ‘Om’. According to some other ‘Om’ is much more ancient trinity i.e Agni or fire, Varuna or water and Marut or air and there after Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva to whom the prayer is offered.

Purana: Literally means ‘old’. Puranas are the collection of myth, legend and folklore dealing with the lives and exploits of Hindu divinities. Each Purana has five sections. 1. The creation of universe 2. Its dissolution and recreation 3. Geneology of gods and Prajapatis 4. The life stories of the Manus and their yuga known as manavantaras 5. The history of Solar and Lunar royal dynasties. There are eighteen Puranas and eighteen Upa- puranas or minor puranas. Six Puranas are classified as those with sattva (purity) which include Vishnu, Naradiya, Bhagvata, Garuda, Padma, Varsha and are also known as Vaishnavite Puranas. Then come six Brahmic Puranas in which rajas or energy is dominant and include – Brahma, Brahmanda, Brahmavaivarta, Markandeya, Bhavishya and Varaha. The six Shaivite Puranas with ‘tamas’, quality of gloom and ignorance are : Malsya, Kurma, Linga, Shiva, Skanda, and Agni The longest Purana is the Skanda with over

eighty thousand shlokas and the shortest is Vamana with about ten thousand shlokas.

Vedas: Literally means ‘revealed wisdom’, the most ancient scriptures of Hinduism consisting of four Vedas i.e Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samveda and Athara- Veda believed to have been orally transmitted by Brahma to mankind. Each Veda is divided in two parts. First part of the Veda contain hymns or mantras which express the wants and aspirations of the worshippers and the mankind and second part contains ritualistic practices like rites and ceremonies. Vedas belong to the history of the world and history of India. In the history of the world Vedas fill gap which no literary work in any other language could fill. It takes us back to ancient period of human history when no means to document the events existed. The simple patriarchal life of the Aryans is indicated in the vedic hymns which continued during Mahabharata and Ramayana period and thereafter. According to Vedas the following gods were identified and worshipped for the survival of human being:

For rain: Indra –god of firmament, Varuna- god of water.**For fire:** Agni – god of fire, Surya (the sun), Soma or Chandra (the moon). **For air:** Vayu- the god of wind, Maruts- thr breezes attended upon Indra.**Yama**, the god of death is also stated in the Vedas .In the vedic period the Brahmins were not known as a separate class because the caste system had not been introduced and the gods who were worshipped were subsequently superseded by deities of other names and forms.

Shakti: Literally means power or energy. Mythologically Shakti is female power or consort of the deity. Accordingly Saraswati is the Shakti of Brahma, Lakshmi is th e Shakti of Vishnu and Parvati is the Shakti of Shiva. Shakti is believed to have first originated in God and

thereafter, as a result of rebirth or incarnation, are worshipped as nine goddesses in different form during Durga puja etc.

Tantra: The principal rites formulae connected with the adoration of nature or prakriti are known as Tantra. The followers of Tantras profess to consider them as fifth veda and attribute to them equal antiquity and superior authority. Some still believe that Tantric was the grandest religion of all, only it was beyond human nature to carry it out; for it is based on the idea that we should practice every kind of excess to the utmost, and yet carry our mind fixed on the supreme being in the midst of it all.

Trimurti: It implies the unity of three principles of creation, preservation and destruction represented by Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Trimurti is one boby with three heads; Brahma in the middle, Vishnu at its right and Shiva at its left.

Upanishad: It is the name of those Sanskrit work belonging to the Vedic literature which contains the mystical doctrine of the Hindus on the nature of a supreme being, its relation to human soul, and the process of creation. The origin of the Upanishad comes from Sanskrit language which has been explained by Sankara as ‘science of Brahma’ or the understanding of the identity of Brahma and the soul or the relationship between Atma (soul) and Parmatma (God).

Vedanta: Literally means the end or the ultimate aim of Vedas. The object matter of the Vedanta is the proof – that the emanates in a successive development from a supreme spirit or soul, which is called Brahma, or Paramatma, that the human soul is therefore identical in origin with Brahma, that the worldly existence of the human soul is merely the result of its ignorance of the sameness between itself and the supreme spirit and its final liberation or freedom from transmigration is attained by a removal of this ignorance, that is by a proper understanding of the truth of the Vedanta doctrine. The soul is

therefore, neither born nor does it die. It is of divine substance, and as such, infinite, immortal, intelligent, sentient and true. Thus, the student of Vedanta is told not to hurt a sentient being, to speak the truth, not to steal, to practice continence, and not to accept gifts; to remain pure and content, to do penance, and to study Vedas.

Note:- The meaning and explanatory note of ancient Vedic words, generally accepted, have been adapted from Classical Dictionary of India and comments or interpretations not relevant, have been excluded.

Annexure-II

Glossary of Vedic words

Aditi- The first mother of demigods.

Advaita- Non-dual (while referring to the Lord, no difference between His body and He Himself.

Agni- Demigod who controls fire or the Vedic god of fire.

Ananda- Transcendental bliss.

Aryan- One who knows the value of life and has civilization based on spiritual realization.

Asura- Demon who does not follow the principle of scriptures.

Asuram Bhavah- Persons who are openly atheistic.

Atma- Body soul or senses, the inner most which is eternal, homeless and formless.

Bhagvan or Bhagawan- The possessor of all opulence which are generally six-wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation. (An epithet of supreme person).

Bhakti Yoga- The system of cultivation of Bhakti or pure devotional service, which is untinged by sense gratification or philosophical speculation.

Bhava- Preliminary stage of transcendental love of Godhead.

Brahma- The first godhead who was bestowed with power to create the universe.

Brahmana- The intelligent class of men according to social system who have the capacity to acquire and practice knowledge of scriptures.

Brahma Samhita- The very ancient Sanskrit scriptures of prayers of Brahma to Govinda, recovered from a temple in south India by lord Caitanya.

Caitanya Maha Prabhu- An incarnation of Krsna Himself who appeared in the 15th century at Mavadvipa in Bengal who was a perfect example of the practice of the teaching of ‘Bhagavad Gita’.

Deva- Demigods.

Dharma- The capacity to render service, which is the essential duty of the human being.

Gandharvas- The celestial singers of the heavenly planets.

Gayatri- A transcendental vibration chanted by the duly qualified twice born classes for spiritual realization.

Guna- The material nature of human being.

Guru- Spiritual master.

Hath Yoga- A system of bodily exercises to help control the senses.

Japa- Soft chanting of holy names of God performed with the aid of 108 prayer beads.

Jiva or Jivatma- Soul of living entity.

Jnana Yoga- A division of Vedas which deals with consciously linking with the supreme soul through knowledge.

Kali- A demigoddess to whom worshippers may offer meat.

Karma Yoga- A division of Vedas which deals with consciously linking with supreme soul through material action performed without any self interest.

Ksatriya- A class of human being engaged in administrative or protective occupation.

Ksetra- Field of activities.

Lakshmi- The goddess of fortune and consort of supreme Lord Vishnu.

Mahabhuta -The five great material elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether i.e. a substance present throughout space providing a means of waves of light etc.

Mahatma- A great soul.

Mahat Tattva- The total material energy.

Manu-Administrative demigod and father of mankind.

Maya- Cosmic illusion, cosmic ignorance, the power of Brahma by which Brahma manifests Himself on the phenomenal world.

Mukti- Liberation, freedom from material consciousness.

Muni – A sage of self realized soul.

Niti- Policy

Nyaya-Justice

OM TAT SAT- The three transcendent syllables used by Brahmans in honor of the supreme soul when chanting Vedic Hymns.

Prakriti- Nature of human being i.e. material or spiritual.

Pranayama- Control of breathing power.

Purusha- Supreme enjoyer.

Rajo Guna- The mode of passion of material nature.

Sadhu- Holy man or saint.

Samadhi- Absorption in consciousness of God.

Sanatan Dharma- The eternal religion of the living being to render service to supreme Lord.

Satto Guna- The mode of goodness of material nature.

Shastra- The revealed scriptures

Smriti- The scriptures compiled by remembering the words of God.

Sruti- The scriptures compiled by directly hearing the words of God.

Shankaracharya- An incarnation of Lord Shiva who appeared in the 8th century to propagate an impersonal philosophy with the aim of erasing Buddhism from India and establishing the authority of Vedas.

Swami- One who can control his mind and senses.

Vaishya- A class of human being involved in business and farming.

Yajna- Sacrifice.

Yog maya- Internal potency of Lord which hides him from non-devotees.

Yogeshwara- The master of all mystic power.

Annexure-III

GLOSSARY

(Meaning of words in English/Hindi used for translation of Gita)

A

- Action- Deed or performance (*Karma*)
 Adorable- Worship able (*Puja Yogyā*)
 Appellation- Specific name or title (*Vishisht Nam*)
 Animate or inanimate- Life giving with or without (*Jeewan*)
 Anger-Rage (*Krodh*)
 Aquatic- Living in water (*Jal me Jeewan*)
 Ascetics- Strict hermit (*Tapaswi*)
 Attribute less-without qualities (*Nirguni*)
 Austerities- Self discipline (*Atma Sayam*)

B

Bonhomie -Happy-good natural friendliness

C

- Celestial-Heavenly, beautiful (*Divya*)
 Chant- To sing musically (*Sangeet ke sath sath Gayan*)
 Contemplation-Meditation (*Dhayan*)
 Continence - Restraint (*Sayam*)
 Cosmic down- Rising and setting with sun (*Pralay Kal*)
 Covet- Greedy (*Lobhi*)
 Craving- Longing (*Lalsa*)
 Cupidity- Geed of gain (*Kamukta*)

D

- Deluded-Deceived (*Dhoka Dena*)
 Delusion- False impression (*Bhrahm Jal*)
 Deliverence- Rescue (*Mukti Dena*)
 Devlish- Like a devil (*Bhoot ki tarah*)

Demoniac-Belief in demons (*Bhoot par Vishwas*)
 Devoid- Empty (*Soonya*)
 Despise- To consider beneath one's notice or low respect (*Ghrina karana*)
 Divine- Belonging to or proceeding from God (*Divya Samarpan*)
 Diligently- By hard work (*Parishram Se*)
 Disputants- One who disputes (*Tark dene wala*)
 Disinterest- Free from selfish motives (*Swarth Rahit*)
 Discernment- Ability to judge (*Durdrishti*)

E

Effulgent- Brightly shining (*Chamakta Hua*)
 Egotism-Self praise (*Ahankar*)
 Emaciate- To make weak (*Durbal Karna*)
 Embodied- To give concrete form (*Sakar Banana*)
 Endowment- To give away wealth (*Dhan Samarpan*)
 Equanimity- Evenness of mind (*Swabhav ki Sthirta*)
 Esoteric-Confidential (*Gupt*)
 Ethereal world- Celestial (*Akash Sambandhi*)
 Expounded-To explain (*Samjhana*)
 Extirpation-The act of rooting out (*Nash Karna*)
 Extol-To praise highly (*Prashansha Karna*)

F

Fidelity-Faithful to husband (*Pati Bhakti*)
 Fidelity- Faithfulness (*Satya ke Prati Nishtha*)
 Flaring-Glaring (*Jagmagata Hua*)
 Flickering- Unsteady (*Chanchal*)
 Forbearance- To be patient (*Akshma Karna*)
 Formless- Without form (*Nirakar*)
 Fortitude- Courage in adversity (*Dhairya Rakhna*)
 Foster- To promote growth (*Utsahit Karna*)
 Fructify- To make fruitful
 Frivolity- Futile (*Nirarthak*)

G

Greedy- Intensely desirous (*Lobhi*)
Great soul- Referred to God (*Mahatma*)

H

Honorable- Respectful (*Arya*)
Hymns-A song of praise to God (*Bhajan*)
Hypocrisy-Concealment of true self (*Pakhand*)
Hypocrite- Pretender (*Pakhand*)

I

Ignominy- Dishonor (*Apman*)
Illumine- To brighten (*Prakash Dena*)
Illusion- Deception (*Yog Maya*)
Immaculate- Faultless, clear or tidy (*Bedag*)
Immutable- Unchangeable (*Achal*)
Indestructible- That can not be destroyed (*Abinashi*)
Indolence- Habitual laziness (*Aalshi*)
Inanimate- Without life (*Pranheen*)
Inert- Lazy (*Aalshi*)
Inexhaustible- Can not be exhausted (*Anant*)
Infatuation-Foolishness (*Moh*)
Insatiable- Very greedy (*Asantusht*)
Inspid- Tasteless

L

Ladle- Large spoon (*Bari Chamach*)
Lord of Yoga – Ruler or God (*Yogeshwar*)
Lust- Desire for sexual indulgence (*Kama*)
Lustre- Brightness of the moon (*Chand ki chamak*)

M

Manes- Soul of departed ancestors (*Pitron ki Atma*)
Mansion- Royal house (*Mahal*)
Mesh-Hole in the net (*Zali me chhed*)
Metaphysics- The philosophy of knowing self (*Atma Tatwa Gyan*)

Mysticism- Spiritual secret knowledge (*Goodh Vidya*)

Mysterious- Hidden manner (*Gupta reeti se*)

O

Obeisance- Salute by bowing (*Namaskar or Pranam*)

Obstinate- Stubborn (*Hatti*)

O dour- pleasant or unpleasant smell (*Sugandh*)

Oblation- Any thing offered to God (*Bhagvan ko Aahuti ya Bali Dena*)

Obtuseness-Dull or bluntness (*Mand Bhudhi*)

Opulence- Riches (*Dhanwan*)

Ordained- Appoint to destine (*Niyukti Karna*)

P

Partaking-Sharing (*Bantna*)

Pariah- Dog eater (*Chandal*)

Pervading – To spread (*Failana*)

Perversity- To turn from the right course (*Ulatna*)

Placidity-Calmness (*Shanti*)

Primeval- Ancient (*Pahla*)

Premonish- Forewarn (*Pahle se suchit karna*)

Premordial- Existing beginning of time or the world

Procrastinating- To postpone or delay (*Der karna*)

Prowess- Valor (*Veerta*)

Primal- Original or fundamental (*Poova se*)

Preponderance- The act of inclining to one side (*Prabhavit karna*)

Supreme enjoyer -Spirit (*Purusa*)

Putrid- Rotten (*Sada Hua*)

R

Recoils-To retreat (*Peechhe Hatna*)

Refulgent- Bright (*Chamkeela*)

Repository- Things stored for safety (*Surakshit Bhandar*)

Ruth- Feel pity (*Daya karna*)

Ruthless- Pity less (*Nirdayee*)

Reverence- Act with respect (*Shradhayukta*)

S

- Sacrifice- Offering to deity (*Yagya*)
 Sage-A wise and virtuous person (*Rishi*)
 Saint-Holy person (*Sant*)
 Sap- Juice of plants (*Poudhe ka ras*)
 Sapidity-A pleasant flavour
 Satiety-Fully satisfied (*Santushta*)
 Scrupulously- With total attention (*Savdhani*)
 Seer-A person who sees vision or a prophet (*Bhawishya gyata*)
 Sloth- Laziness (*Alashya*)
 Solidified- To become solid (*Kathor Banana*)
 Solitude- Secluded from society (*Ekant*)
 Sorrow- Grief (*Dukh Manana*)
 Spiritual-Doctrine that all exists in spirit or soul (*Dharmic Nishtha*)
 Siritual discipline- (*Sadhana*)
 Spiritual master- Religious teacher (*Acharya*)
 Splendor -Brightness (*Tej Pratap*)
 Stupor-Helpless state (*Moorchhit*)
 Sublimity- Impressive (*Pratishtha*)

T

- Tenacious- Holding fast (*Dridh Sankalp*)
 Tranquility-Peaceful (*Shanti*)
 Transcendental-Excellent knowledge surpassing others in spirituality and religion (*Sreshht*)
 Transcendent- Most excellent (*Ati Sreshht*)
 Turbulent- Disturbed (*Ashanti*)

U

- Un carping spirit- Not to find fault (*Dosh Rahit*)

V

- Vain or Vilest- Worthless (*Byarth*)
 Veil- To cover face (*Awaran or Maya*)
 Verily- certainly (*Wastava men*)

Vile- Wicked (*Dusht*)

Virtuous- Morally good (*Gunee*)

W

Wield- To manage with power (*Prabandh Karna*)

Wisdom- Perfect knowledge (*Budhimata*)

Wisdom sacrifice- Sacrifice in the name of God (*Gyan Yagya*)

Wonderful- Miracle (*Ashcharya*)

Y

Yajana- Sacrifice (*Hawan*)

Yearning- Longing desire (*Eechha Batana*) Chetna

Yoga- Consciously linking with supreme soul (*Bhagawan se Atma ka Judna*)

Yog Maya- Divine potency (*Ishwar ka Bardan*)

Z

Zealous- Enthusiastic (*Utsahit*)

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Year	Name of the book	Name of the author
1918	Vivekanand (The man and his message)	-Advaita Ashram Kolkata(India)
1922	Bhagavad Gita in Hindi	- Gita Press Gorakhpur (India)
1945	Gems of Truth -Jayadayal Goyandka-	Gita Press Gorakhpur(India)
1946	Discovery of India	- Jawahar Lal Nehru
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1. Sanatan Dharma (An advanced text book of Hindu religion and ethics published by the Trustees, Central Hindu College Benares in1904)-The book was digitized in 2007 by the University of CaliforniaSanDiega.<http://www.archive.org/details/sanatanadharmarOObenaila>.
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**AUTHOR'S OWN OPINION ABOUT THE REVISED AND
ENLARGED FIRST EDITION OF THE BOOK
AS ON 15 JUNE, 2024**

I am neither a preacher nor a religious teacher but only a committed and dedicated research scholar with faith in God and His divine power as creator, sustainer and destroyer of this material world. After completing my lifetime empirical study supported by historical record and views expressed by various learned scholars, religious and spiritual masters about 'God Faith and Religion' from time to time, I felt fully satisfied to understand and write all about 'God Faith and Religion' as perceived by the human being following different religions in this world and documented the outcome of the same in about 300 pages of this book in simple language by the grace of God only.

For the purpose of the book, I have studied broadly the origin, history, philosophy, tenet, faith of all religions and their belief in God. More than twenty five thousand year old mythological and recorded history of Hinduism and Sanatana Dharma which is the oldest indigenous religion of the world including Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism born out of Hinduism, have been studied in depth to complete the book. Beside Sanatana Dharma and Hinduism-historical background, philosophy and essence of all other religions of the world i.e. Christianity, Islam, The Bahai's Faith, Zoroastrianism and Judaism have also been studied and the outcome of the same has been recorded in this book in a nutshell for the benefit of mankind following different religion in this world.

The book will definitely help every one to gain basic knowledge about the ancient Vedic (Aryan) civilization of India, the origin of the oldest eternal religion 'Sanatana Dharma', Hinduism and the teachings of holy book 'Shrimad Bhagavad Gita' which has been reproduced in Part-VII of this book i.e. word by word translation of 700 verses in

Sanskrit into English prose by the original translator. Gist of ‘Shrimad Bhagavad Gita’ has also been added in Part-VII of the book in original without any elaboration or interpretation for the benefit of readers.

The study of the subject matter brings out that there is no basic difference between various religions with regard to existence of God or faith in God. However, origin of every religion has a historical background and the religious masters of that religion have laid down certain tenets and traditions which needs to be observed by the followers of the religion concerned. The teachings of all religions are aimed at only for the well being of the mankind and for their protection from the evil forces in this planet earth.

To disseminate basic knowledge about ‘God Faith and Religion’ to ordinary human being in simple international English language was necessary instead of complex English or native language which has been traditionally used to sermonize the importance of ‘God Faith and Religion’ with lengthy explanation, different interpretations and elaboration which does not sink in the minds of ordinary human being. Ordinary human being, irrespective of educational background, in today’s world remains preoccupied with his job for food, shelter, clothing, health of the family and education of his children.

In a situation like this, the simple message of Lord Krishna given in Chapter-2, Verse-47 of Bhagavad Gita i.e. ‘Your right is to work only, but never to the fruit thereof. Be not instrumental in making your actions bear fruit, nor let your attachment be to inaction.’ This is good enough for the survival of mankind in this earth planet which is facing the biggest ever threat of climate change, pandemic and military conflicts which will continue to flare up in the near future also.

It is my belief that the book, if distributed in schools, colleges and public libraries, will definitely promote universal brotherhood, religious harmony and tolerance among the followers of all religions

in this earth planet. It will also help mankind to understand and respect each other's social system. The book will also help different sects and communities within all religions to respect each others faith in the larger interest of their own religion and humanity. All religions preach to render selfless service to the needy in this world.

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