rather the prolongation of one process of communication, just as cooking includes all the different associated acts of putting the pan on the fire, lighting the fire, and the like. These two bhāvanās, therefore, mean nothing more than the reasoning of the will and its translation into definite channels of activity, as the performance of the sacrifice, etc., and vidhi here means simply the prompting or the propulsion (vyāpārah preranā-rūpah); and it is such prompting that initiates in the performer the will, which is later on translated into concrete action.

Another Mimāmsā view objects to this theory of dual bhāvanā and asserts that the suffix līn involves the notion of an order to work (preranā), as if the relation of the Vedas to us were one of master and servant, and that the Vedic vidhi as expressed in the līn suffix conveys the command (praśya-praśayoḥ sambandhah). The vidhi goads us to work, and, being goaded by it, we turn to work. It does not physically compel us to act; but the feeling we have from it that we have been ordered to act constitutes the driving power. The knowledge of vidhi thus drives us to our Vedic duties. When a man hears the command, he feels that he has been commanded and then he sets to work. This setting to work is quite a different operation from the relation of the command and the commanded, and comes after it. The essence of a Vedic sentence is this command or niyoga. A man who has formerly tasted the benefits or some of the pleasures they produced naturally intends to have them again; here also there is a peculiar mental experience of eagerness, desire or intention (ākūta), which goads him on to obey the Vedic commands. This ākūta is a purely subjective experience and cannot, therefore, be experienced by others, though one can always infer its existence from the very fact that, unless it were felt in the mind, no one would feel himself goaded to work. Niyoga, or a prompting to work (preranā), is the sense of all vidhis, and this rouses us the intention of working in accordance with the command. The actual performance of an action is a mere counterpart of the intention (ākūta), that is subjectively felt as roused by the niyoga or the


2 Ayam api bhautika-vyāpāra-hetur āṃkātūta-viśeṣa na pramāṇāntara-vedyo bhavati na ca na vedya-te tat-samvedane sati cēṣṭā yadvantam dṛṣṭvā tasyāpi tādyā preranā-vago mo 'numīyate. Ibid. p. 348.
driving power of the *vidhi*. This view differs from the view of Kumārila in this, that it does not suppose that the propulsion of the Vedic command takes effect in a twofold bhāvanā, through the whole process of the conception and the materialization of the action in accordance with the Vedic commands. The force of the command is exhausted in prompting us to action and arousing in us the inward resolution (ākūta) to obey the command. The actual performance of the action comes as a natural consequence (*arthā*). The force of the *vidhi* has a field of application only when our ordinary inclinations do not naturally lead us to the performance of action. *Vidhi*, therefore, operates merely as a law of command which has to be obeyed for the sake of the law alone, and it is this psychological factor of inward resolution to obey the law that leads to the performance of action.

Maṇḍana, in his *Vidhi-viveka*, discusses the diverse views on the significance of *vidhi*. He interprets *vidhi* as a specific kind of prompting (*pravartanā*). He distinguishes the inner volitional intention of attaining an end and its translation into active effort leading to muscular movements of the body. *Pravartanā* here means the inner volitional direction of the mind towards the performance of the action, as well as actual nervous changes which are associated with it. The command of the Vedas naturally brings with it a sense of duty or of “oughtness” (*kartavyatā*), and it is this sense of *kartavyatā* that impels people to action without any reference to the advantages and benefits that may be reaped by such actions. The psychological state associated with such a feeling of “oughtness” is said to be of the nature of instincts (*pratibhā*). It is through an instinctive stimulus to work, proceeding from the sense of “oughtness,” that the action is performed.

The Nyāya doctrine differs from the above view of *vidhi* as a categorically imperative order and holds that the prompting of the Vedic commands derives its force from our desire for the attainment of the benefits that we might reap if we acted in accordance with them. So the ultimate motive of the action is the attainment of pleasure or the avoidance of pain, and it is only with a view to attaining the desired ends that one is prompted to follow the Vedic

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1 Bhāva-dharma eva kalcit samāhita-sādhanaṃ nāguno vyāpāra-pādārthah; tad yathā ātmama buddhy-adhi-janana-pravṛttasya manah-samyoga eva'yam bhāva-dharmaḥ tadvad atrāpi spandasi tad-stūro vā bhāva-dharmaḥ pravṛttī-janana'-nukūlataya vyāpāra-vīteṣāḥ pravartanā. Vācaspati’s Nyāya-kāṇḍa on Vidhi-viveka, pp. 243, 244.
commands and perform the sacrifices. In this view, therefore, the prompting, or prerana, has not in it that self-evident call of the pure imperative or the rousing of the volitional tendency through the influence of the imperative; the prompting felt is due only to the rise of desires for the end.

Most of the above interpretations of vidhi are of much later date than the Gtā. No systematic discussion of the nature of vidhi which can be regarded as contemporaneous with or prior to the date of the Gtā is now available. But even these latter-day explanations are useful in understanding the significance of the force of the notion of the imperative in the Gtā. It is clear from the above discussion that the notion of the imperative of vidhi cannot be called moral in our sense of the term, as has been done in a recent work on Hindu Ethics\(^1\). For the imperative of vidhi is limited to the injunctions of the Vedas, which are by no means coextensive with our general notion of morality. According to the Mīmāṃsā schools just described virtue (dharma) consists in obedience to Vedic injunctions. Whatever may be enjoined by the Vedas is to be considered as virtue, whatever is prohibited by the Vedas is evil and sin, and all other things which are neither enjoined by the Vedas nor prohibited by them are neutral, i.e. neither virtuous nor vicious\(^2\). The term dharma is therefore limited to actions enjoined by the Vedas, even though such actions may in some cases be associated with evil consequences leading to punishments due to the transgression of some other Vedic commands. The categorical imperative here implied is scriptural and therefore wholly external. The virtuous character of actions does not depend on their intrinsic nature, but on the external qualification of being enjoined by the Vedas.

\(^1\) S. K. Maitra’s Hindu Ethics, written under Dr Seal’s close personal supervision and guidance.

\(^2\) Kumārila holds that even those sacrifices which are performed for the killing of one’s enemies are right, because they are also enjoined by the Vedas. Prabhākara, however, contends that, since these are performed only out of the natural evil propensities of men, their performance cannot be regarded as being due to a sense of duty associated with obedience to the injunctions of the Vedas. Kumārila thus contends that, though the Śyena sacrifice is attended with evil consequences, yet, since the performer is only concerned with his duty in connection with the Vedic commands, he is not concerned with the evil consequences; and it is on account of one’s obedience to the Vedic injunctions that it is called right, though the injury to living beings that it may involve will bring about its punishment all the same. Sāṃkhya and some Nyāya writers, however, would condemn the Śyena sacrifice on account of the injury to living beings that it involves.
Whatever is not enjoined in the Vedas or not prohibited in them is simply neutral. It is clear, therefore, that the term *dharma* can be translated as “virtue” only in a technical sense, and the words “moral” and “immoral” in our sense have nothing to do with the concept of *dharma* or *adharma*.

The *Gītā* distinguishes between two kinds of motives for the performance of sacrifices. The first motive is that of greed and self-interest, and the second is a sense of duty. The *Gītā* is aware of that kind of motive for the performance which corresponds to the Nyāya interpretation of Vedic *vidhis* and also to the general Mīmāṃsā interpretation of *vidhi* as engendering a sense of duty. Thus it denounces those fools who follow the Vedic doctrines and do not believe in anything else; they are full of desires and eager to attain Heaven, they take to those actions which lead to rebirth and the enjoyment of mundane pleasures. People who are thus filled with greed and desires, and perform sacrifices for the attainment of earthly goods, move in an inferior plane and are not qualified for the higher scheme of life of devotion to God with right resolution. The Vedas are said to be under the influence of mundane hankerings and desires, and it is through passions and antipathies, through desires and aversions, that people perform the Vedic sacrifices and think that there is nothing greater than these. One should therefore transcend the sphere of Vedic sacrifices performed out of motives of self-interest. But the *Gītā* is not against the performance of Vedic sacrifices, if inspired by a sheer regard for the duty of performing sacrifices. Anyone who looks to his own personal gain and advantages in performing the sacrifices, and is only eager to attain his pleasurable ends, is an inferior type of man; the sacrifices should therefore be performed without any personal attachment, out of regard for the sacred duty of the performance. Prajāpati created sacrifices along with the creation of men and said, “The sacrifices will be for your good—you should help the gods by your sacrifices, and the gods will in their

*Vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhuḥ na vidhyate. Gītā, 11. 44.* The word *samādhuḥ* is explained by Śrīdhara as follows: *samādhiḥ cittaśašānyam, parametāvādabhimukhvatvam iti yāvat; tasmin nīcayātmikā buddhiḥ tu na vidhyate.* *Samādhiḥ* is thus used here to mean one-pointedness of mind to God. But Śaṅkara gives a very curious interpretation of the word *samādhiḥ*, as meaning mind (antahkaranam or buddhiḥ), which is hardly justifiable. Thus he says, *samādhyate 'smin purusopabhogāya sarvam iti samādhir antahkaranam buddhiḥ.* The word *vyavasāyātmikā* is interpreted by commentators on 11. 41 and 11. 44 as meaning *nīcayātmikā* (involving correct decision through proper *pratānaprasa* or proof). I prefer, however, to take the word to mean “right resolution.”
turn help you to grow and prosper. He who lives for himself without offering oblations to the gods and supporting them thereby is misappropriating the share that belongs to the gods."

This view of the Gitā is different from that of the later Mīmāṃsa, which probably had a much earlier tradition. Thus Kumārila held that the final justification of Vedic sacrifices or of dharma was that it satisfied our needs and produced happiness—it was artha. The sacrifices were, no doubt, performed out of regard for the law of Vedic commands; but that represented only the psychological side of the question. The external ground for the performance of Vedic sacrifices was that it produced happiness for the performer and satisfied his desires by securing for him the objects of desire. It was in dependence on such a view that the Nyāya sought to settle the motive of all Vedic sacrifices. The Naiyāyikas believed that the Vedic observances not only secured for us all desired objects, but that this was also the motive for which the sacrifices were performed. The Gitā was well aware of this view, which it denounces. The Gitā admitted that the sacrifices produced the good of the world, but its whole outlook was different; for the Gitā looked upon the sacrifices as being bonds of union between gods and men. The sacrifices improved the mutual good-will, and it was by the sacrifices that the gods were helped, and they in their turn helped men, and so both men and the gods prospered. Through sacrifices there was rain, and by rain the food-grains grew and men lived on the food-grains. So the sacrifices were looked upon as being sources not so much of individual good as of public good. He who looks to the sacrifices as leading to the satisfaction of his selfish interests is surely an inferior person. But those who do not perform the sacrifices are equally wicked. The Vedas have sprung forth from the deathless eternal, and sacrifices spring from the Vedas, and it is thus that the deathless, all-pervading Brahman is established in the sacrifices¹. The implied belief of the Gitā was that the prosperity of the people depended on the fertility of the soil, and that this again depended upon the falling of rains, and that the rains depended on the grace of gods, and that the gods could live prosperously only if the sacrifices were performed; the sacrifices were derived from the Vedas, the Vedas from the all-pervading Brahman, and the Brahman again forms the main content of the

¹ Gitā, III. 15.
Vedas. Thus there was a complete cycle from Brahman to sacrifices, from sacrifices to the good of the gods and from the good of the gods to the good and prosperity of the people. Everyone is bound to continue the process of this cycle, and he who breaks it is a sinful and selfish man, who is not worth the life he leads\(^1\). Thus the ideal of the Gitā is to be distinguished from the ideal of the Mimāṃsa in this, that, while the latter aimed at individual good, the former aimed at common good, and, while the latter conceived the Vedic commands to be the motives of their action, the former valued the ideal of performing the sacrifices in obedience to the law of continuing the process of the cycle of sacrifices, by which the world of gods and of men was maintained in its proper state of prosperity. When a man works for the sacrifices, such works cannot bind him to their fruits; it is only when works are performed from motives of self-interest that they can bind people to their good and bad fruits\(^2\).

The word dharma in the Gitā does not mean what Jaimini understood by the term, viz. a desirable end or good enjoined by the sacrifices (codanā-laksana ‘rtho dharmah). The word seems to be used in the Gitā primarily in the sense of an unalterable customary order of class–duties or caste–duties and the general approved course of conduct for the people, and also in the sense of prescribed schemes of conduct. This meaning of dharma as “old customary order” is probably the oldest meaning of the word, as it is also found in the Atharva-Veda, 18. 3. 1 (dharman purāṇam anupālayanti)\(^3\). Macdonell, in referring to Maitrāyaṇa, IV. 1. 9, Kāthaka, XXXI. 7 and Taittiriya, III. 2. 8. 11, points out that bodily defects (bad nails and discoloured teeth) and marrying a younger daughter while her elder sister is unmarried are coupled with murder, though not treated as equal to it, and that there is no distinction in principle between real crimes and what are now regarded as fanciful bodily defects or infringements of merely conventional practices. In the Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa, Xiv. 4. 2. 26, also we find dharma for a Kṣattriya\(^4\) is illustrated as being the characteristic duties of a Kṣattriya. The central meaning of the word dharma in the Gitā is therefore the oldest Vedic meaning of the word, which is

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1 Gitā, III. 16.  
2 Ibid. III. 9.  
3 dharma, dharman are the regular words, the latter in the Rg-veda and both later, for “law” or “custom.” See Macdonell’s Vedic Index, p. 390.  
a much earlier meaning than the latter-day technical meaning of the word as it is found in Mimāṃsā. Dharma does not in the Gītā mean sacrifices (yajña) or external advantages, as it does in Mimāṃsā, but the order of conventional practices involving specific caste- divisions and caste-duties. Accordingly, the performance of sacrifices is dharma for those whose allotted duties are sacrifices. Adultery is in the Vedas a vice, as being transgression of dharma; and this is also referred to as such (dharme naṣṭe, i. 39) in the Gītā. In the Gītā, ii. 7, Arjuna is said to be puzzled and confused regarding his duty as a Kṣattriya and the sinful course of injuring the lives of his relations (dharma-sammūḍha-cetāh). The confusion of dharma and adharma is also referred to in xviii. 31 and 32. In the Gītā, iv. 7 and 8, the word dharma is used in the sense of the established order of things and conventionally accepted customs and practices. In ii. 40 the way of performing one’s duties without regard to pleasures or sorrows is described as a particular and specific kind of dharma (asya dharmanya), distinguished from dharma in general.

The yajña (sacrifice) is said to be of various kinds, e.g. that in which oblations are offered to the gods is called daiva-yajña; this is distinguished from brahma-yajña, in which one dedicates oneself to Brahman, where Brahman is the offerer, offering and the fire of oblations, and in which, by dedicating oneself to Brahman, one is lost in Brahman1. Then sense-control, again, is described as a kind of yajña, and it is said that in the fire of the senses the sense-objects are offered as libations and the senses themselves are offered as libations in the fire of sense-control; all the sense-functions and vital functions are also offered as libations in the fire of sense-control lighted up by reason. Five kinds of sacrifices (yajña) are distinguished, viz. the yajña with actual materials of libation, called dravya-yajña, the yajña of asceticism or self-control, called tapo-yajña, the yajña of union or communion, called yoga-yajña, the yajña of scriptural studies, called svādhya-yajña, and the yajña of knowledge or wisdom, called jñāna-yajña2. It is easy to see that the extension of the application of the term yajña from the actual material sacrifice to other widely divergent methods of self-advancement is a natural result of the extension of the concept of sacrifice to whatever tended towards self-advancement. The term yajña had high and holy associations, and the

1 Gītā, iv. 24 and 25.  
2 Ibid. iv. 26–28; see also 29 and 30.
newly discovered systems of religious endeavours and endeavours
for self-advancement came to be regarded as but a new kind of
yajña, just as the substitution-meditations (pratikopāsanā) were
also regarded as being but new forms of yajña. Thus, while
thought advanced and newer modes of self-realization began to
develop, the older term of yajña came to be extended to these
new types of religious discipline on account of the high veneration
in which the older institution was held.

But, whatever may be the different senses in which the term
yajña is used in the Gitā, the word dharma has not here the
technical sense of the Mimāmsā. The Gitā recommends the per-
formance of sacrifices to the Brahmins and fighting to the Kṣat-
triyas, and thus aims at continuity of conventional practices which
it regards as dharma. But at the same time it denounces the
performance of actions from desire, or passions or any kind of
selfish interest. A man should regard his customary duties as his
dharma and should perform them without any idea of the fulfil-
ment of any of his own desires. When a man performs karma from
a sense of disinterested duty, his karma is no longer a bondage to
him. The Gitā does not, on the one hand, follow the old karm-
ideal, that one should perform sacrifices in order to secure earthly
and heavenly advantages, nor does it follow, on the other hand,
the ideal of the Vedānta or of other systems of philosophy that
require us to abandon our desires and control our passions with a
view to cleansing the mind entirely of impurities, so as to transcend
the sphere of duties and realize the wisdom of the oneness of the
spirit. The Gitā holds that a man should attain the true wisdom,
purge his mind of all its desires, but at the same time perform
his customary duties and be faithful to his own dharma. There
should be no impelling force other than regard and reverence for
his own inner law of duty with reference to his own dharma of
conventional and customary practices or the duties prescribed by
the sāstra.

Sense-control in the Gitā.

The uncontrollability of the senses was realized in the Kaṭha
Upaniṣad, where the senses are compared with horses. The Gitā
says that, when the mind is led on by fleeting sense-attractions,
the man loses all his wisdom, just as a boat swings to and fro
in deep waters in a strong gale. Even in the case of the wise
man, in spite of his efforts to keep himself steady, the troubled
senses might lead the mind astray. By continually brooding over
sense-objects one becomes attached to them; out of such attach-
ments there arise desires, out of desires there arises anger, out of
anger blindness of passions, through such blindness there is lapse
of memory, by such lapse of memory a man's intelligence is
destroyed, and as a result of that he himself is destroyed. Man
is naturally inclined towards the path of evil, and in spite of
his efforts to restrain himself he tends towards the downward
path. Each particular sense has its own specific attachments and
antipathies, and attachment (rāga) and antipathy are the two
enemies. The Gītā again and again proclaims the evil effects of
desires and attachments (kāma), anger (krodha) and greed (lobha)
as the three gates of Hell, being that which veils wisdom as smoke
veils fire, as impurities sully a mirror or as the foetus is covered
by the womb. Arjuna is made to refer to Kṛṣṇa the difficulty of
controlling the senses. Thus he says, "My mind, O Kṛṣṇa, is
violent, troubled and changeful; it is as difficult to control it as
it is to control the winds." True yoga can never be attained
unless and until the senses are controlled.

The Pāli work Dhamma-pada is also filled with similar ideas
regarding the control of attachments and anger. Thus it says, "He
has abused me, beaten me, worsted me, robbed me—those who
dwell not upon such thoughts are freed from hate. Never does
hatred cease by hating, but hatred ceases by love; this is the
ancient law....As the wind brings down a weak tree, so Mara
overwhelms him who lives looking for pleasures, has his senses
uncontrolled, or is immoderate in his food, slothful and effeminate.
...As rain breaks through an ill-thatched house, so passion will
break through an undisciplined mind." Again, speaking of mind,
it says, "As an arrow-maker levels his arrow, so a wise man levels
his trembling, unsteady mind, which it is difficult to guard and
hold back....Let the wise man guard his mind, incomprehensible,
subtle, capricious though it is. Blessed is the guarded mind." Again,"Not nakedness, nor matted hair, not dirt, nor fastings,
not lying on earth, nor ashes, nor ascetic postures, none of these
things purify a man who is not free from desires." Again, "From

1 Gītā, II. 60, 62, 63. 2 Ibid. III. 34, 37-39; XVI. 21. 3 VI. 34.
4 Dhamma-pada (Poona, 1923), I. 4, 5, 7, 13. 5 Ibid. III. 36, 38.
6 Ibid. X. 141.
attachment (*piyato*) comes grief, from attachment comes fear; he who is free from attachment knows neither grief nor fear. From affection (*pemato*) come grief and fear. He who is free from affection knows neither grief nor fear. From lust (*rati*) come grief and fear. He who is free from lust knows neither grief nor fear. From desire (*tanhā*) come grief and fear. He who is free from desire knows neither grief nor fear.

It is clear from the above that both the *Gitā* and the *Dhamma-pada* praise sense-control and consider desires, attachments, anger and grief as great enemies. But the treatment of the *Gitā* differs from that of the *Dhamma-pada* in this, that, while in the *Dhamma-pada* there is a course of separate lessons or moral instructions on diverse subjects, the *Gitā* deals with sense-control as a means to the attainment of peace, contentment and desirelessness, which enables a man to dedicate all his actions to God and follow the conventional courses of duties without looking for anything in them for himself. The *Gitā* knows that the senses, mind and intellect are the seats of all attachments and antipathies, and that it is through the senses and the mind that these can stupefy a man and make his knowledge blind. All the sense-affections of cold and heat, pleasure and sorrow, are mere changes of our sensibility, are mere touches of feeling which are transitory and should therefore be quietly borne. It is only by controlling the senses that the demon of desire, which distorts all ordinary and philosophic knowledge, can be destroyed. But it is very hard to stifle this demon of desire, which always appears in new forms. It is only when a man can realize within himself the great being which transcends our intellect that he can control his lower self with his higher self and uproot his desires. The self is its own friend as well as its own foe, and one should always try to uplift oneself and not allow oneself to sink down. The chief aim of all sense-control is to make a man’s thoughts steady, so that he can link himself up in communion with God.

The senses in the *Gitā* are regarded as drawing the mind along with them. The senses are continually changing and fleeting, and they make the mind also changeful and fleeting; and, as a result of

1 *Dhamma-pada*, XVI. 212–216.
3 *Gitā*, III. 40.
4 *Ibid.* II. 61; III. 41, 43; VI. 5, 6.
that, the mind, like a boat at sea before a strong wind, is driven to and fro, and steadiness of thought and wisdom (prajñā) are destroyed. The word prajñā is used in the Gitā in the sense of thought or mental inclinations in general. It is used in a more or less similar sense in the Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad, iv. 4. 21, and in a somewhat different sense in the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, 7. But the sense in which Patañjali uses the word is entirely different from that in which it is used in the Gitā or the Upaniṣads. Patañjali uses the word in the technical sense of a specific type of mystical cognition arising out of the steady fixing of the mind on an object, and speaks of seven stages of such prajñā corresponding to the stages of yoga ascension. Prajñā in the Gitā means, as has just been said, thought or mental inclination. It does not mean jñāna, or ordinary cognition, or vijñāna as higher wisdom; it means knowledge in its volitional aspect. It is not the kriyākhyajñāna, as moral discipline of yama, niyama, etc., of the Pañca-rātra work Jayākhyasamhitā. It means an intellectual outlook, as integrally connected with, and determining, the mental bent or inclination. When the mind follows the mad dance of the senses after their objects, the intellectual background of the mind determining its direction, the prajñā is also upset. Unless the prajñā is fixed, the mind cannot proceed undisturbed in its prescribed fixed course. So the central object of controlling the senses is the securing of the steadiness of this prajñā (vaśe hi yasyendriyāni tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā—II. 57). Prajñā and dhi are two words which seem to be in the Gitā synonymous, and they both mean mental inclination. This mental inclination probably involves both an intellectual outlook, and a corresponding volitional tendency. Sense-control makes this prajñā steady, and the Gitā abounds in praise of the sthita-prajñā and sthita-dhi, i.e. of one who has mental inclination or thoughts fixed and steady. Sense-attachments are formed by continual association with sense-objects, and attachment begets desire, desire begets anger, and so on. Thus all the vices spring from sense-attachments. And the person who indulges in sense-gratifications is rushed along by the passions. So, just as a tortoise collects within itself all its limbs, so the person who restrains his senses from the sense-objects has his mind steady and fixed. The direct result of sense-control is thus steadiness of will, and of mental inclinations or mind (prajñā).

1 II. 54–56.
The person who has his prajñā fixed is not troubled in sorrows and is not eager to gain pleasures, he has no attachment, no fear and no anger\(^1\). He is indifferent in prosperity and in adversity and neither desires anything nor shuns anything\(^2\). He alone can obtain peace who, like the sea receiving all the rivers in it, absorbs all his desires within himself; not so the man who is always busy in satisfying his desires. The man who has given up all his desires and is unattached to anything is not bound to anything, has no vanity and attains true peace. When a man can purge his mind of attachments and antipathies and can take to sense-objects after purifying his senses and keeping them in full control, he attains contentment (prasāda). When such contentment is attained, all sorrows vanish and his mind becomes fixed (buddhiḥ paryavati-ṣṭhate)\(^3\). Thus sense-control, on the one hand, makes the mind unruffled, fixed, at peace with itself and filled with contentment, and on the other hand, by making the mind steady and fixed, it makes communion with God possible. Sense-control is the indispensable precondition of communion with God; when once this has been attained, it is possible to link oneself with God by continued efforts\(^4\). Thus sense-control, by producing steadiness of the will and thought, results in contentment and peace on the one hand, and on the other makes the mind fit for entering into communion with God.

One thing that strikes us in reading the Gītā is that the object of sense-control in the Gītā is not the attainment of a state of emancipated oneness or the absolute cessation of all mental processes, but the more intelligible and common-sense ideal of the attainment of steadiness of mind, contentment and the power of entering into touch with God. This view of the object of self-control is therefore entirely different from that praised in the philosophic systems of Patañjali and others. The Gītā wants us to control our senses and mind and to approach sense-objects with such a controlled mind and senses, because it is by this means alone that we can perform our duties with a peaceful and contented mind and turn to God with a clean and unruffled heart\(^5\). The main emphasis of this sense-control is not on the mere external control of volitional activities and the control of motor propensities

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\(^1\) Gītā, II. 56.  
\(^2\) Ibid. II. 57.  
\(^3\) Ibid. 65; see also II. 58, 64, 68, 70, 71.  
\(^4\) Ibid. vi. 36.  
\(^5\) rāga-dveṣa-vimuktaiś tu viṣayān indriyaiś caran ātma-vahyair vidheyātmā prasādam adhigacchati.  

Ibid. II. 64.
in accordance with the direction of passions and appetites, but on the inner control of the mind behind these active senses. When a person controls only his physical activities, and yet continues to brood over the attractions of sense, he is in reality false in his conduct (mithyācāra). Real self-control does not mean only the cessation of the external operations of the senses, but also the control of the mind. Not only should a man cease from committing actions out of greed and desire for sense-gratification, but his mind should be absolutely clean, absolutely clear of all impurities of sense-desires. Mere suspension of physical action without a corresponding control of mind and cessation from harbouring passions and desires is a vicious course.\(^1\)

The Ethics of the Gītā and the Buddhist Ethics.

The subject of sense-control naturally reminds one of Buddhism. In the Vedic religion performance of sacrifices was considered as the primary duty. Virtue and vice consisted in obedience or disobedience to Vedic injunctions. It has been pointed out that these injunctions implied a sort of categorical imperative and communicated a sense of *vidhi* as law, a command which must be obeyed. But this law was no inner law of the spirit within, but a mere external law, which ought not to be confused with morality in the modern sense of the term. Its sphere was almost wholly ritualistic, and, though it occasionally included such commands as “One should not injure anyone” (mā himsyāt), yet in certain sacrifices which were aimed at injuring one’s enemies operations which would lead to such results would have the imperative of a Vedic command, though the injury to human beings would be attended with its necessary punishment. Again, though in later Sāṃkhya commentaries and compendiums it is said that all kinds of injuries to living beings bring their punishment, yet it is doubtful if the Vedic injunction “Thou shouldst not injure” really applied to all living beings, as there would be but few sacrifices where animals were not killed. The Upaniṣads, however, start an absolutely new line by the substitution of meditations and self-knowledge for sacrificial actions. In the

\(^1\) *Cf. Dhamma-pada*, i. 2. All phenomena have mind as their precursor, are dependent upon mind and are made up of mind. If a man speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness accompanies him, just as a shadow follows a man incessantly.
primary stage of Upaniṣadic thoughts a conviction was growing that instead of the sacrificial performances one could go through a set form of meditations, identifying in thought certain objects with certain other objects (e.g. the dawn as the horse of horse-sacrifice) or even with symbolic syllables, OM and the like. In the more developed stage of Upaniṣadic culture a new conviction arose in the search after the highest and the ultimate truth, and the knowledge of Brahman as the highest essence in man and nature is put forward as the greatest wisdom and the final realization of truth and reality, than which nothing higher could be conceived. There are but few moral precepts in the Upaniṣads, and the whole subject of moral conflict and moral efforts is almost silently dropped or passes unemphasized. In the Taittiriya Upaniṣad, 1. 11, the teacher is supposed to give a course of moral instruction to his pupil after teaching him the Vedas—Tell the truth, be virtuous, do not give up the study of the Vedas; after presenting the teacher with the stipulated honorarium (at the conclusion of his studies) the pupil should (marry and) continue the line of his family. He should not deviate from truth or from virtue (dharma) or from good. He should not cease doing good to others, from study and teaching. He should be respectful to his parents and teachers and perform such actions as are unimpeachable. He should follow only good conduct and not bad. He should make gifts with faith (śraddhā), not with indifference, with dignity, from a sense of shame, through fear and through knowledge. If there should be any doubt regarding his course of duty or conduct, then he should proceed to act in the way in which the wisest Brahmins behaved. But few Upaniṣads give such moral precepts, and there is very little in the Upaniṣads in the way of describing a course of moral behaviour or of emphasizing the fact that man can attain his best only by trying to become great through moral efforts. The Upaniṣads occupy themselves almost wholly with mystic meditations and with the philosophic wisdom of self-knowledge. Yet the ideas of self-control, peace and cessation of desires, endurance and concentration are referred to in Brhadāraṇyaka, IV. 4. 23, as a necessary condition for the realization of the self within us. In Kaṭha, vi. 11, the control of the senses (indriya-dhāraṇa) is referred to as yoga, and in Muṇḍaka, III. 2. 2,

1 iānto dānta uparatas titikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvātmany eva ātmānam pacyati. Brh. iv. 4. 23.
it is said that he who consciously desires the objects of desire is again and again born through desires; but even in this world all desires vanish for him who is self-realized in himself and is self-satisfied. The idea that the path of wisdom is different from the path of desires was also known, and it was felt that he who sought wisdom (vidyābhitpsita) was not drawn by many desires.

The point to be discussed in this connection is whether the central idea of the Gitā, namely, sense-control and more particularly the control of desires and attachments, is derived from the Upaniṣads or from Buddhism. It has been pointed out that the Upaniṣads do not emphasize the subject of moral conflict and moral endeavours so much as the nature of truth and reality as Brahman, the ultimate essence of man and the manifold appearance of the world. Yet the idea of the necessity of sense-control and the control of desires, the settling of the mind in peace and contentment, is the necessary precondition for fitness for Vedic knowledge. Thus Śaṅkara, the celebrated commentator on the Upaniṣads, in commenting on Brāhma-sūtra, 1. 1. 1, says that a man is fit for an enquiry after Brahman only when he knows how to distinguish what is permanent from what is transitory (nityānitya-vastu-viveka), and when he has no attachment to the enjoyment of the fruits of his actions either as mundane pleasures or as heavenly joys (ihāmutra-phala-bhoga-virāga). The necessary qualifications which entitle a man to make such an enquiry are disinclination of the mind for worldly joys (śama), possession of proper control and command over the mind, by which it may be turned to philosophy (dama), power of endurance (vīṣaya-tītikṣā), cessation of all kinds of duties (uparati), and faith in the philosophical conception of truth and reality (tattva-śraddhā). It may be supposed, therefore, that the Upaniṣads presuppose a high degree of moral development in the way of self-control and disinclination to worldly and heavenly joys. Detachment from sense-affections is one of the most dominant ideas of the Gitā, and the idea of Mūndaka, III. 2. 2, referred to above, is re-echoed in the Gitā, 11. 70, where it is said that, just as the waters are absorbed in the calm sea (though poured in continually by the rivers), so the person in whom all desires are absorbed attains peace, and

1 kāmān yaḥ kāmasyate manyamānāḥ sa kāmabhīr jāyate tatra tatra paryāpta-kāmasya kṛtāmanas tu ihaśva sarve pravṛtyanti kāmāḥ. Mūndaka, III. 2. 2.

8 Kaṭha, 11. 4.
not the man who indulges in desires. The Gītā, of course, again and again emphasizes the necessity of uprooting attachments to pleasures and antipathy to pains and of controlling desires (kāma); but, though the Upaniṣads do not emphasize this idea so frequently, yet the idea is there, and it seems very probable that the Gītā drew it from the Upaniṣads. Hindu tradition also refers to the Upaniṣads as the source of the Gītā. Thus the Gītā-māhātmya describes the Upaniṣads as the cows from which Kiṣṇa, the cowherd boy, drew the Gītā as milk.¹

But the similarity of Buddhist ethical ideas to those of the Gītā is also immense, and, had it not been for the fact that ideas which may be regarded as peculiarly Buddhistic are almost entirely absent from the Gītā, it might well have been contended that the Gītā derived its ideas of controlling desires and uprooting attachment from Buddhism. Tachibana collects a long list of Buddhist vices as follows²:

aṅganam, impurity, lust, Sn. 517.
aḥāṅkāro, selfishness, egoism, A. I. 132; M. III. 18, 32.
mamāṅkaro, desire, A. I. 132; M. III. 18, 32.
mamāyitam, selfishness, S.N. 466.
mamattam, grasping, egoism, S.N. 872, 951.
apēkha, desire, longing, affection, S.N. 38; Dh. 345.
icchā, wish, desire, covetousness.
ejā, desire, lust, greed, craving, S.N. 751; It. 92.
āśā, desire, longing, S.N. 634, 794, 864; Dh. 397.
pipāsā, thirst.
esā, esanā, wish, desire, thirst, Dh. 335.
ākāṅkṣā, desire, longing, Tha. 20.
kiṅcanaṁ, attachment, Š.N. 949; Dḥ. 200.
ganṭho, bond, tie, S.N. 798; Dḥ. 211.
āḍāṇa-ganṭha, the tied knot of attachment, S.N. 794.
giddhi, greed, desire, Sn. 328; M. I. 360, 362.
gedho, greed, desire, Sn. 65, 152.
gahanam, entanglement, Dh. 394.
gaho, seizing, attachment.
jalini, snare, desire, lust, Dh. 180; A. II. 211.
parīggha, attachment, Mahānī. 57.
chando, wish, desire, intention, S.N. 171, 203, etc.
jātā, desire, lust, S.N. I. 13; V.M. 1.
jigimṣaṅtā, covetousness, desire for, Viḥanga, 353.
nijigimṣaṅtā, covetousness, V.M. I. 23.
taṇhā, tasinā, lust, unsatisfied desire, passion.

¹ Sarvopaniṣado gāvo dogdā gopāla-nandanaḥ.
² The Ethics of Buddhism, by S. Tachibana, p. 73.
upādānam, clinging, attachment, *Dh.* II. 58, III. 230.

panidhi, wish, aspiration, *Sn.* 801.

pihā, desire, envy, *Tha.* 1218.

pemam, affection, love, *A.* III. 249.

bandho, thong, bondage, attachment, *Sn.* 623; *Dh.* 344.

bandhanam, bond, fetter, attachment, *Sn.* 522, 532; *Dh.* 345.

nibandho, binding, attachment, *S.* II. 17.

vinibandhanam, bondage, desire, *Sn.* 16.

anubandho, bondage, affection, desire, *M.* III. 170; *Jt.* 91.

upanibandho, fastening, attachment, *V.M.* I. 235.

paribandho, Com. on *Thi.* p. 242.

rågo, human passion, evil, desire, lust, *passim.*


rati, lust, attachment, *Dh.* 27.

manoratho, desire, wish (?)

ruci, desire, inclination, *Sn.* 781.

abhilāso, desire, longing, wish, Com. on *Peta-vattu,* 154.

lālasā, ardent desire (?)

ālayo, longing, desire, lust, *Sn.* 535, 635; *Dh.* 411.

lobho, covetousness, desire, cupidity, *Sn.* 367; *Dh.* 248.

lobhanam, greed, *Tha.* 343.

lobhanā, lobhitattam, do. (?)

vanam, desire, lust, *Sn.* 1131; *Dh.* 284, 344.

vanathiho, love, lust, *Dh.* 283, 284.

nivesanam, clinging to, attachment, *Sn.* 470, 801.

sāngo, fetter, bond, attachment, *Sn.* 473, 791; *Dh.* 397.

āsatti, attachment, hanging on, clinging, *Sn.* 777; *Vin.* II. 156; *S.* I. 212.

visattikā, poison, desire, *Sn.* 333; *Dh.* 180.

santhavam, friendship, attachment, *Sn.* 207, 245; *Dh.* 27.

ussado, desire (?) *Sn.* 515, 783, 785.

sneho, sineho, affection, lust, desire, *Sn.* 209, 943; *Dh.* 285.

āsayo, abode, intention, inclination, *V.H.* I. 140.

anusayo, inclination, desire, *A.* I. 132; *Sn.* 14, 369, 545.

sibbani, desire (?) *Sn.* 1040.

kodho, anger, wrath, *Sn.* I. 245, 362, 868, 928; *Dh.* 221–3; *It.* 4, 12, 109.


āghato, anger, ill-will, hatred, malice, *D.* I. 3, 31; *S.* I. 179.


doso, anger, hatred, *passim.*

viddeso, enmity, hatred (?)

dhūmo, anger (?) *Sn.* 460.


vyāpado, wish to injure, hatred, fury, *Sum.* 211; *It.* 111.

anabhiraḍḍhi, anger, wrath, rage, *D.* I. 3.

veram, wrath, anger, hatred, sin, *Sn.* 150; *Dh.* 3–5, 201.

virodho, opposition, enmity (?)
roso, anger (?).
rosanam, anger (?).
vyārośanam, anger, Sn. 148.
aṇāṇam, ignorance, It. 62.
moho, fainting, ignorance, folly, passim.
mohanam, ignorance, S.N. 399, 772.
avijjā, ignorance, error, passion.

It is interesting to note that three vices, covetousness, hatred and ignorance, and covetousness particularly, appear under different names and their extirpation is again and again emphasized in diverse ways. These three, ignorance, covetousness and hatred or antipathy, are the roots of all evils. There are, of course, simpler commandments, such as not to take life, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to tell a lie, and not to take intoxicating drinks, and of these stealing gold, drinking liquors, dishonouring one’s teacher’s bed, and killing a Brahmin are also prohibited in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, v. 10. 9–10¹. But, while the Chāndogya only prohibits killing Brahmins, the Buddha prohibited taking the life of any living being. But all these vices, and others opposed to the atthāṅga-sīla and dasa-kusala-kamma, are included within covetousness, ignorance and hatred. The Gītā bases its ethics mainly on the necessity of getting rid of attachment and desires from which proceeds greed and frustration of which produces anger. But, while in Buddhism ignorance (avidyā) is considered as the source of all evil, the Gītā does not even mention the word. In the twelvefold chain of causality in Buddhism it is held that out of ignorance (avijjā) come the conformation (sāṅkhāra), out of the conformation consciousness (viññāna), out of consciousness mind and body (nāma-rūpa), out of mind and body come the six fields of contact (āyatana), out of the six fields of contact comes sense-contact, out of sense-contact comes feeling, out of feeling come desires (tanḥā), out of desires comes the holding fast to things (upādāna), out of the holding fast to things comes existence (bhava), out of existence comes birth (jāti), and from birth come old age, decay and death. If ignorance, or avijjā, is stopped,

¹ There is another list of eightfold prohibitions called atthāṅga-stita; these are not to take life, not to take what is not given, to abstain from sex-relations, to abstain from falsehood, from drinking liquors, from eating at forbidden times, from dancing and music and from beautifying one’s body by perfumes, garlands, etc. There is also another list called dasa-kusala-kamma, such as not to take life, not to take what is not given, not to commit adultery, not to tell a lie, not to slander, not to abuse or talk foolishly, not to be covetous, malicious and sceptical.
then the whole cycle stops. But, though in this causal cycle ignorance and desires are far apart, yet psychologically desires proceed immediately from ignorance, and a frustration of desires produces anger, hatred, etc. In the Gītā the start is taken directly from attachment and desires (kāma). The Buddhist word ṭṛṣṇā (tanhā) is seldom mentioned in the Gītā; whereas the Upaniṣadic word kāma takes its place as signifying desires. The Gītā is not a philosophical work which endeavours to search deeply into the causes of attachments, nor does it seek to give any practical course of advice as to how one should get rid of attachment. The Vedānta system of thought, as interpreted by Śaṅkara, traces the origin of the world with all its evils to ignorance or nescience (avidyā), as an indefinable principle; the Yoga traces all our phenomenal experience to five afflictions, ignorance, attachment, antipathy, egoism and self-love, and the last four to the first, which is the fountain-head of all evil afflictions. In the Gītā there is no such attempt to trace attachment, etc. to some other higher principle. The word ajñāna (ignorance) is used in the Gītā about six or eight times in the sense of ignorance; but this “ignorance” does not mean any metaphysical principle or the ultimate starting-point of a causal chain, and is used simply in the sense of false knowledge or ignorance, as opposed to true knowledge of things as they are. Thus in one place it is said that true knowledge of things is obscured by ignorance, and that this is the cause of all delusion¹. Again, it is said that to those who by true knowledge (of God) destroy their own ignorance (ajñāna) true knowledge reveals the highest reality (tat param), like the sun². In another place jñāna and ajñāna are both defined. Jñāna is defined as unvacillating and abiding self-knowledge and true knowledge by which truth and reality are apprehended, and all that is different from this is called ajñāna³. Ajñāna is stated elsewhere to be the result of tamas, and in two other places tamas is said to be the product of ajñāna⁴. In another place it is said that people are blinded by ignorance (ajñāna), thinking, “I am rich, I am an aristocrat, who else is there like me? I shall perform sacrifices make gifts and enjoy⁵.” In another place ignorance is said to

¹ ajñānenāvṛttaṁ jñānāṁ tena muhyanti jantuvaḥ. v. 15.
² jñānena tu tad-ajñānāṁ yasyāṁ nāśitaṁ दिमानह. v. 16.
⁴ Ibid. xiv. 16, 17; x. 11; xiv. 8.
⁵ Ibid. v. 16.
produce doubts (samśaya), and the Gitā lecture of Kṛṣṇa is supposed to dispel the delusion of Arjuna, produced by ignorance. This shows that, though the word ajñāna is used in a variety of contexts, either as ordinary ignorance or ignorance of true and absolute philosophic knowledge, it is never referred to as being the source of attachment or desires. This need not be interpreted to mean that the Gitā was opposed to the view that attachments and desires were produced from ignorance; but it seems at least to imply that the Gitā was not interested to trace the origin of attachments and desires and was satisfied to take their existence for granted and urged the necessity of their extirpation for peace and equanimity of mind. Buddhist Hinayāna ethics and practical discipline are constituted of moral discipline (śila), concentration (samādhi) and wisdom (paññā). The śila consisted in the performance of good conduct (caritā) and desisting (vārītta) from certain other kinds of prohibited action. Śīla means those particular volitions and mental states, etc. by which a man who desists from committing sinful actions maintains himself on the right path. Śīla thus means (1) right volition (cetana), (2) the associated mental states (ceṣatasika), (3) mental control (samvara), and (4) the actual non-transgression (in body and speech) of the course of conduct already in the mind by way of the preceding three silas, called avitikkama. Samvara is spoken of as being of five kinds, viz. (1) pātimokkha-samvara (the control which saves him who abides by it), (2) sati-samvara (the control of mindfulness), (3) naṃsasamvara (the control of knowledge), (4) khandi-samvara (the control of patience) and (5) viriya-samvara (the control of active restraint). Pātimokkha-samvara means all self-control in general. Sati-samvara means the mindfulness by which one can bring in the right and good associations, when using one’s cognitive senses. Even when looking at any tempting object, a man will, by virtue of his mindfulness (sati), control himself from being tempted by not thinking of its tempting side and by thinking on such aspects of it as may lead in the right direction. Khandi-samvara is that by which one can remain unperturbed in heat and cold. By the proper adherence to śīla all our bodily, mental and vocal activities (kamma) are duly systematized, organized and stabilized (samādhānam, upadhāranam, patiṣṭhā). The practice of śīla is for the practice of jhāna (meditation). As a preparatory measure thereto, a man must train himself

1 Gitā, iv. 42; xviii. 72.
continually to view with disgust the appetitive desires for eating and drinking (āhāre paṭikāla-saṁñā) by emphasizing in the mind the various troubles that are associated with seeking food and drink and their ultimate loathsome transformations as various nauseating bodily elements. He must habituate his mind to the idea that all the parts of our body are made up of the four elements, viz. kṣīti (earth), ap (water), etc. He should also think of the good effects of śīla, the making of gifts, of the nature of death and of the deep nature and qualities of the final extinction of all phenomena, and should practise brahma-vihāra, as the fourfold meditation of universal friendship, universal pity, happiness in the prosperity and happiness of all, and indifference to any kind of preferment for himself, his friend, his enemy or a third party.\footnote{See \textit{A History of Indian Philosophy}, by S. N. Dasgupta, vol. 1, p. 103.}

The \textit{Gītā} does not enter into any of these disciplinary measures. It does not make a programme of universal altruism or hold that one should live only for others, as is done in Mahāyāna ethics, or of the virtues of patience, energy for all that is good (vṛtya as kusālotsāha), meditation and true knowledge of the essencelessness of all things. The person who takes the vow of saintly life takes the vow of living for the good of others, for which he should be prepared to sacrifice all that is good for him. His vow does not limit him to doing good to his co-religionists or to any particular sects, but applies to all human beings, irrespective of caste, creed or race, and not only to human beings, but to all living beings. Mahāyāna ethical works like the \textit{Bodhi-caryāvatāra-panjikā} or \textit{Śikṣā-samuccaya} do not deal merely with doctrines or theories, but largely with practical instructions for becoming a Buddhist saint. They treat of the practical difficulties in the path of a saint’s career and give practical advice regarding the way in which he may avoid temptations, keep himself in the straight path of duty, and gradually elevate himself to higher and higher states.

The \textit{Gītā} is neither a practical guide-book of moral efforts nor a philosophical treatise discussing the origin of immoral tendencies and tracing them to certain metaphysical principles as their sources; but, starting from the ordinary frailties of attachment and desires, it tries to show how one can lead a normal life of duties and responsibilities and yet be in peace and contentment in a state of equanimity and in communion with God. The \textit{Gītā}
has its setting in the great battle of the Mahā-bhārata. Kṛṣṇa is represented as being an incarnation of God, and he is also the charioteer of his friend and relation, Arjuna, the great Pāṇḍava hero. The Pāṇḍava hero was a Kṣattriya by birth, and he had come to the great battle-field of Kurukṣetra to fight his cousin and opponent King Duryodhana, who had assembled great warriors, all of whom were relations of Arjuna, leading mighty armies. In the first chapter of the Gitā a description is given of the two armies which faced each other in the holy field (dharma-kṣetra) of Kurukṣetra. In the second chapter Arjuna is represented as feeling dejected at the idea of having to fight with his relations and of eventually killing them. He says that it was better to beg from door to door than to kill his respected relations. Kṛṣṇa strongly objects to this attitude of Arjuna and says that the soul is immortal and it is impossible to kill anyone. But, apart from this metaphysical point of view, even from the ordinary point of view a Kṣattriya ought to fight, because it is his duty to do so, and there is nothing nobler for a Kṣattriya than to fight. The fundamental idea of the Gitā is that a man should always follow his own caste-duties, which are his own proper duties, or sva-dharma. Even if his own proper duties are of an inferior type, it is much better for him to cleave to them than to turn to other people's duties which he could well perform. It is even better to die cleaving to one’s caste-duties, than to turn to the duties fixed for other people, which only do him harm. The caste-duties of Brahmins, Kṣattriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras are fixed in accordance with their natural qualities. Thus sense-control, control over mind, power of endurance, purity, patience, sincerity, knowledge of worldly things and philosophic wisdom are the natural qualities of a Brahmin. Heroism, bravery, patience, skill, not to fly from battle, making of gifts and lordliness are the natural duties of a Kṣattriya. Agriculture, tending of cattle and trade are the natural duties of a Śūdra. A man can attain his highest only by performing the specific duties of his own caste. God pervades this world, and it is He who moves all beings to work. A man can best realize himself by adoring God and by the performance of his own specific caste-duties. No sin can come to a man who performs his own caste-duties. Even if one's caste-duties were sinful or wrong, it would not be wrong.

1 Gitā, iii. 35.
for a man to perform them; for, as there is smoke in every fire, so there is some wrong thing or other in all our actions. Arjuna is thus urged to follow his caste-duty as a Kṣatriya and to fight his enemies in the battle-field. If he killed his enemies, then he would be the master of the kingdom; if he himself was killed, then since he had performed the duties of a Kṣatriya, he would go to Heaven. If he did not engage himself in that fight, which was his duty, he would not only lose his reputation, but would also transgress his own dharma.

Such an instruction naturally evokes the objection that war necessarily implies injury to living beings; but in reply to such an objection Krśna says that the proper way of performing actions is to dissociate one’s mind from attachment; when one can perform an action with a mind free from attachment, greed and selfishness, from a pure sense of duty, the evil effects of such action cannot affect the performer. The evil effects of any action can affect the performer when in performing an action he has a motive of his own to fulfil. But, if he does not seek anything for himself, if he is not overjoyed in pleasures, or miserable in pains, his works cannot affect him. A man should therefore surrender all his desires for selfish ends and dedicate all his actions to God and be in communion with Him, and yet continue to perform the normal duties of his caste and situation of life. So long as we have our bodies, the necessity of our own nature will drive us to work. So it is impossible for us to give up all work. To give up work can be significant only if it means the giving up of all desires for the fruits of such actions. If the fruits of actions are given up, then the actions can no longer bind us to them. That brings us in return peace and contentment, and the saint who has thus attained a perfect equanimity of mind is firm and unshaken in his true wisdom, and nothing can sway him to and fro. One may seek to attain this state either by philosophic wisdom or by devotion to God, and it is the latter path which is easier. God, by His grace, helps the devotee to purge his mind of all impurities, and so by His grace a man can dissociate his mind from all motives of greed and selfishness and be in communion with Him; he can thus perform his duties, as fixed for him by his caste or his custom, without looking forward to any reward or gain.

The Gṛtā ideal of conduct differs from the sacrificial ideal of

1 Gṛtā, xviii. 44–48.
conduct in this, that sacrifices are not to be performed for any ulterior end of heavenly bliss or any other mundane benefits, but merely from a sense of duty, because sacrifices are enjoined in the scriptures to be performed by Brahmins; and they must therefore be performed from a pure sense of duty. The Gitā ideal of ethics differs from that preached in the systems of philosophy like the Vedānta or the Yoga of Patañjali in this, that, while the aim of these systems was to transcend the sphere of actions and duties, to rise to a stage in which one could give up all one’s activities, mental or physical, the ideal of the Gitā was decidedly an ideal of work. The Gitā, as has already been pointed out, does not advocate a course of extremism in anything. However elevated a man may be, he must perform his normal caste-duties and duties of customary morality. The Gitā is absolutely devoid of the note of pessimism which is associated with early Buddhism. The śīla, samādhi and paññā of Buddhism have, no doubt, in the Gitā their counterparts in the training of a man to disinclination for joys and attachments, to concentration on God and the firm and steady fixation of will and intelligence; but the significance of these in the Gitā is entirely different from that which they have in Buddhism. The Gitā does not expound a course of approved conduct and prohibitions, since, so far as these are concerned, one’s actions are to be guided by the code of caste-duties or duties of customary morality. What is required of a man is that he should cleanse his mind from the impurities of attachment, desires and cravings. The samādhi of the Gitā is not a mere concentration of the mind on some object, but communion with God, and the wisdom, or prajñā, of the Gitā is no realization of any philosophic truth, but a fixed and unperturbed state of the mind, where the will and intellect remain unshaken in one’s course of duty, clear of all consequences and free from all attachments, and in a state of equanimity which cannot be shaken or disturbed by pleasures or sorrows.

It may naturally be asked in this connection, what is the general standpoint of Hindu Ethics? The Hindu social system is based on a system of fourfold division of castes. The Gitā says that God Himself created the fourfold division of castes into Brahmans, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, a division based on characteristic

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1 Śāṅkara, of course, is in entire disagreement with this interpretation of the Gitā, as will be discussed in a later section.
qualities and specific duties. Over and above this caste division and its corresponding privileges, duties and responsibilities, there is also a division of the stages of life into that of Brahma-cārin—student, grha-stha—householder, vāna-prastha—retired in a forest, and bhikṣu—mendicant, and each of these had its own prescribed duties. The duties of Hindu ethical life consisted primarily of the prescribed caste-duties and the specific duties of the different stages of life, and this is known as varṇāśrama-dharma. Over and above this there were also certain duties which were common to all, called the sādhāraṇa-dharma. Thus Manu mentions steadiness (dhairya), forgiveness (kṣamā), self-control (dama), non-stealing (cauryābhāva), purity (śauca), sense-control (indriya-nigraha), wisdom (dhi), learning (vidyā), truthfulness (satya) and control of anger (akrodha) as examples of sādhāraṇa-dharma. Praṣastapāda mentions faith in religious duties (dharma-śuddhā), non-injury (ahimsā), doing good to living beings (bhūta-hitatva), truthfulness (satya-vacana), non-stealing (asteya), sex-continence (brahma-carya), sincerity of mind (anupalā), control of anger (krodha-varjana), cleanliness and ablations (abhiśecana), taking of pure food (śuci-dravya-sevana), devotion to Vedic gods (viśiṣṭa-devatā-bhakti), and watchfulness in avoiding transgressions (apramāda). The caste-duties must be distinguished from these common duties. Thus sacrifices, study and gifts are common to all the three higher castes, Brahmins, Ksattriyas and Vaishyas. The specific duties of a Brahmin are acceptance of gifts, teaching, sacrifices and so forth; the specific duties of a Ksattriya are protection of the people, punishing the wicked, not to retreat from battles and other specific tasks; the duties of a Vaishya are buying, selling, agriculture, breeding and rearing of cattle, and the specific duties of a Vaishya. The duties of a Śūdra are to serve the three higher castes.

Regarding the relation between varṇa-dharma and sādhāraṇa-dharma, a modern writer says that “the sādhāraṇa-dharma constitute the foundation of the varṇāśrama-dharma, the limits within which the latter are to be observed and obeyed. For

1 The Gitā, however, counts self-control (śama), control over the mind (dama), purity (śauca), forgiving nature (kṣánti), sincerity (ārjava), knowledge (jñāna), wisdom (viṣṇāna) and faith (āstikya) as the natural qualities of Brahmins. The duties of Ksattriyas are heroism (śauya), smartness (tejas), power of endurance (dhrtya), skill (dākhyena), not to fly in battle (yuddha cápy apalāyangana), making of gifts (dāna) and power of controlling others (tīvara-bhāvam). The natural duties of Vaishyas are agriculture, rearing of cows and trade. Gitā, XVIII. 42-44.
example, the Brahmin in performing religious sacrifice must not
appropriate another's property, non-appropriation being one of
the common and universal duties. In this way he serves his own
community as well as subserves (though in a negative way) the
common good of the community—and so, in an indirect way,
serves the common good of humanity. Thus the individual of a
specific community who observes the duties of his class does
not serve his own community merely, but also and in the same
process all other communities according to their deserts and needs,
and in this way the whole of humanity itself. This, it will be seen,
is also the view of Plato, whose virtue of justice is the common
good which is to be realized by each class through its specific
duties; but this is to be distinguished from the common good
which constitutes the object of the *sūdhāraṇa-dharmas* of the Hindu
classification. The end in these common and universal duties is
not the common well-being, which is being correctly realized in
specific communities, but the common good as the precondition
and foundation of the latter; it is not the good which is common-
in-the-individual, but common-as-the-prius-of-the-individual.
Hence the *sūdhāraṇa* duties are obligatory equally for all indi-
viduals, irrespective of their social position or individual capacity.\(^1\)

The statement that the common good (*sūdhāraṇa-dharma*) could
be regarded as the precondition of the specific caste-duties implies
that, if the latter came into conflict with the former, then the former
should prevail. This is, however, inexact; for there is hardly any
instance where, in case of a conflict, the *sūdhāraṇa-dharma*, or the
common duties, had a greater force. Thus, for example, non-injury
to living beings was a common duty; but sacrifices implied the killing
of animals, and it was the clear duty of the Brahmins to perform
sacrifices. War implied the taking of an immense number of human
lives; but it was the duty of a Kṣatriya not to turn away from a
battle-field, and in pursuance of his obligatory duty as a Kṣatriya
he had to fight. Turning to traditional accounts, we find in the
*Rāmāyana* that Śambūka was a Śūdra saint (*muni*) who was per-
forming ascetic penances in a forest. This was a transgression of
caste-duties; for a Śūdra could not perform *tapas*, which only the
higher caste people were allowed to undertake, and hence the
performance of *tapas* by the Śūdra saint Śambūka was regarded

\(^1\) *Ethics of the Hindus*, by S. K. Maitra under Dr Seal's close personal
supervision and guidance, pp. 3–4.
as adharma (vice); and, as a result of this adharma, there was a calamity in the kingdom of Rāma in the form of the death of an infant son of a Brahmin. King Rāma went out in his chariot and beheaded Śambūka for transgressing his caste-duties. Instances could be multiplied to show that, when there was a conflict between the caste-duties and the common duties, it was the former that had the greater force. The common duties had their force only when they were not in conflict with the caste-duties. The Gitā is itself an example of how the caste-duties had preference over common duties. In spite of the fact that Arjuna was extremely unwilling to take the lives of his near and dear kinsmen in the battle of Kurukṣetra Krṣna tried his best to dissuade him from his disinclination to fight and pointed out to him that it was his clear duty, as a Kṣattriya, to fight. It seems therefore very proper to hold that the common duties had only a general application, and that the specific caste-duties superseded them, whenever the two were in conflict.

The Gitā does not raise the problem of common duties, as its synthesis of nivṛtti (cessation from work) and pravṛtti (tending to work) makes it unnecessary to introduce the advocacy of the common duties; for its instruction to take to work with a mind completely detached from all feelings and motives of self-seeking, pleasure-seeking and self-interest elevates its scheme of work to a higher sphere, which would not be in need of the practice of any select scheme of virtues.

The theory of the Gitā that, if actions are performed with an unattached mind, then their defects cannot touch the performer, distinctly implies that the goodness or badness of an action does not depend upon the external effects of the action, but upon the inner motive of action. If there is no motive of pleasure or self-gain, then the action performed cannot bind the performer; for it is only the bond of desires and self-love that really makes an action one’s own and makes one reap its good or bad fruits. Morality from this point of view becomes wholly subjective, and the special feature of the Gitā is that it tends to make all actions non-moral by cutting away the bonds that connect an action with its performer. In such circumstances the more logical course would be that of Śankara, who would hold a man who is free from desires and attachment to be above morality, above duties and above responsibilities. The Gitā, however, would not advocate
the objective *niyrtti*, or cessation of work; its whole aim is to effect subjective *niyrtti*, or detachment from desires. It would not allow anyone to desist from his prescribed objective duties; but, whatever might be the nature of these duties, since they were performed without any motive of gain, pleasure or self-interest, they would be absolutely without fruit for the performer, who, in his perfect equanimity of mind, would transcend all his actions and their effects. If Arjuna fought and killed hundreds of his kinsmen out of a sense of his caste-duty, then, howsoever harmful his actions might be, they would not affect him. Yudhiṣṭhira, however, contemplated an expiation of the sin of killing his kinsmen by repentance, gifts, asceticism, pilgrimage, etc., which shows the other view, which was prevalent in the *Mahā-bhārata* period, that, when the performance of caste-duties led to such an injury to human lives, the sinful effects of such actions could be expiated by such means. Yudhiṣṭhira maintained that of asceticism (*tapas*), the giving up of all duties (*tyāga*), and the final knowledge of the ultimate truth (*avatāra*), the second is better than the first and the third is better than the second. He therefore thought that the best course was to take to an ascetic life and give up all duties and responsibilities, whereas Arjuna held that the best course for a king would be to take upon himself the normal responsibilities of a kingly life and at the same time remain unattached to the pleasures of such a life. Regarding also the practice of the virtues of non-injury, etc., Arjuna maintains that it is wrong to carry these virtues to extremes. Howsoever a man may live, whether as an ascetic or as a forester, it is impossible for him to practise non-injury to all living beings in any extreme degree. Even in the water that one drinks and the fruits that one eats, even in breathing and winking many fine and invisible insects are killed. So the virtue of non-injury, or, for the matter of that, all kinds of virtue, can be practised only in moderation, and their injunctions always imply that they can be practised only within the bounds of a commonsense view of things. Non-injury may

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1 *Mahā-bhārata*, xii. 7. 36 and 37.
2 Thus Arjuna says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{asaktaḥ lakṣāvad gacchan niṁsango mukta-bandhanaḥ} \\
\text{samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca sa vai mukto maṁpate;}
\end{align*}
\]

to which Yudhiṣṭhira replies:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tapas tyāga 'vadhir iti niścayasy tu esa dhitmatām} \\
\text{parasparam jyāya esāṁ yeśāṁ najāhrayaṁ maṁtiḥ.}
\end{align*}
\]

be good; but there are cases where non-injury would mean doing injury. If a tiger enters into a cattle-shed, not to kill the tiger would amount to killing the cows. So all religious injunctions are made from the point of view of a practical and well-ordered maintenance of society and must therefore be obeyed with an eye to the results that may follow in their practical application. Our principal object is to maintain properly the process of the social order and the well-being of the people. It seems clear, then, that, when the Gītā urges again and again that there is no meaning in giving up our normal duties, vocation and place in life and its responsibilities, and that what is expected of us is that we should make our minds unattached, it refers to the view which Yudhiṣṭhira expresses, that we must give up all our works. The Gītā therefore repeatedly urges that tyāga does not mean the giving up of all works, but the mental giving up of the fruits of all actions.

Though the practice of detachment of mind from all desires and motives of pleasure and enjoyment would necessarily involve the removal of all vices and a natural elevation of the mind to all that is high and noble, yet the Gītā sometimes denounces certain types of conduct in very strong terms. Thus, in the sixteenth chapter, it is said that people who hold a false philosophy and think that the world is false and, without any basis, deny the existence of God and hold that there is no other deeper cause of the origin of life than mere sex-attraction and sex-union, destroy themselves by their foolishness and indulgence in all kinds of cruel deeds, and would by their mischievous actions turn the world to the path of ruin. In their insatiable desires, filled with pride, vanity and ignorance, they take to wrong and impure courses of action. They argue too much and think that there is nothing greater than this world that we live in, and, thinking so, they indulge in all kinds of pleasures and enjoyments. Tied with bonds of desire, urged by passions and anger, they accumulate money in a wrongful manner for the gratification of their sense-desires. "I have got this to-day," they think, "and enjoy myself; I have so much hoarded money and I shall have more later on"; "that enemy has been killed by me, I shall kill other enemies also, I am

\[\text{Loka-yātrārtham evaṁ dharmā-pravacanāṁ kṛtam} \\
\text{ahimśā sādhu hiṁseti śreyān dharmā-parigratāḥ} \\
\text{nātyantam guṇavat kiṁcī na cāpy atyanta-mirgūnam} \\
\text{ubhayāṁ sarva-kāryeṣu dṛṣyate sādhu asādhu vā.} \\
\text{Mahā-bhārata, xii. 15. 49 and 50.}\]
a lord, I enjoy myself, I am successful, powerful and happy, I am rich, I have a noble lineage, there is no one like me, I perform sacrifices, make gifts and enjoy.” They get distracted by various kinds of ideas and desires and, surrounded by nets of ignorance and delusion and full of attachment for sense-gratifications, they naturally fall into hell. Proud, arrogant and filled with the vanity of wealth, they perform improperly the so-called sacrifices, as a demonstration of their pomp and pride. In their egoism, power, pride, desires and anger they always ignore God, both in themselves and in others¹. The main vices that one should try to get rid of are thus egoism, too many desires, greed, anger, pride and vanity, and of these desire and anger are again and again mentioned as being like the gates of hell².

Among the principal virtues called the divine equipment (daivi sampat) the Gitā counts fearlessness (abhaya), purity of heart (sattva-samsuddhi), knowledge of things and proper action in accordance with it, giving, control of mind, sacrifice, study, tapas, sincerity (ārjava), non-injury (ahimsā), truthfulness (satya), control of anger (akrodha), renunciation (tyāga), peacefulness of mind (śānti), not to backbite (apaiśuna), kindness to the suffering (bhūtesu dayā), not to be greedy (alolupatva), tenderness (mārdava), a feeling of shame before people in general when a wrong action is done (hri), steadiness (acapala), energy (te'as), a forgiving spirit (kṣānti), patience (dhrti), purity (sauca), not to think ill of others (adroha), and not to be vain. It is these virtues which liberate our spirits, whereas vanity, pride, conceit, anger, cruelty and ignorance are vices which bind and enslave us³. The man who loves God should not hurt any living beings, should be friendly and sympathetic towards them, and should yet be unattached to all things, should have no egoism, be the same in sorrows and pleasures and full of forgivingness for all. He should be firm, self-controlled and always contented. He should be pure, unattached, the same to all, should not take to actions from any personal motives, and he has nothing to fear. He is the same to friends and enemies, in appreciation and denunciation; he is the same in heat and cold, pleasure and pain; he is the same in praise and blame, homeless and always satisfied with anything and everything; he is always unperturbed and absolutely unattached to all things⁴. If one carefully goes through

¹ Gitā, xvi. 8-18.  
² Ibid. xvi. 21.  
³ Ibid. xvi. 1-5.  
⁴ Ibid. xii. 13-19; see also ibid. xiii. 8-11.
the above list of virtues, it appears that the virtues are pre-
eminently of a negative character—one should not be angry, hurt-
ful to others, egoistic, proud or vain, should not do anything with
selfish motives, should not be ruffled by pleasure and pain, heat
and cold and should be absolutely unattached. Of the few positive
virtues, sincerity and purity of heart, a forgiving spirit, tenderness,
friendliness, kindness, alertness and sympathy seem to be most
prominent. The terms maitra (friendliness) and karunā (com-
passion) might naturally suggest the Buddhist virtues so named,
since they do not occur in the Upaniṣads. But in the Gītā also they
are mentioned only once, and the general context of the passage
shows that no special emphasis is put on these two virtues. They
do not imply any special kind of meditation of universal friendship
or universal piety or the active performance of friendly and sympa-
thetic deeds for the good of humanity or for the good of living
beings in general. They seem to imply simply the positive friendly
state of the mind that must accompany all successful practice of
non-injury to fellow-beings. The Gītā does not advocate the active
performance of friendliness, but encourages a friendly spirit as a
means of discouraging the tendency to do harm to others. The
life that is most admired in the Gītā is a life of unattachedness,
a life of peace, contentment and perfect equanimity and unperturbedness in joys and sorrows. The vices that are denounced are
generally those that proceed from attachment and desires, such as
egoism, pride, vanity, anger, greediness, etc. There is another class
of virtues which are often praised, namely those which imply
purity, sincerity and alertness of mind and straightness of conduct.
The negative virtue of sense-control, with its positive counterpart,
the acquirement of the power of directing one’s mind in a right
direction, forms the bed-rock of the entire superstructure of the
Gītā code of moral and virtuous conduct.

The virtue of sameness (samatva), however, seems to be the
great ideal which the Gītā is never tired of emphasizing again and
again. This sameness can be attained in three different stages:
subjective sameness, or equanimity of mind, or the sameness in
joys and sorrows, praise and blame and in all situations of life;
objective sameness, as regarding all people, good, bad or in-
different, a friend or an enemy, with equal eyes and in the same

1 The term maitra occurs only once in the Mukti-kopaniṣat, II. 34, and the
Muktika is in all probability one of the later Upaniṣads.
impartial spirit; and the final stage of the achievement of this equanimity is the self-realized state when one is absolutely unperturbed by all worldly things—a state of transcendence called gunātīta. Thus in the Gitā, II. 15, it is said that he whom sense-affections and physical troubles cannot affect in any way, who is unperturbed and the same in joys and sorrows, attains immortality. In II. 38 Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to think of joys and sorrows, gain and loss, victory and defeat as being the same, and to engage himself in the fight with such a mind; for, if he did so, no sin would touch him. In II. 47 Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that his business is only to perform his duties and not to look for the effects of his deeds; it is wrong to look for the fruits of deeds or to desist from performing one’s duties. In II. 48 this sameness in joys and sorrows is described as yoga, and it is again urged that one should be unperturbed whether in success or in failure. The same idea is repeated in II. 55, 56 and 57, where it is said that a true saint should not be damped in sorrow or elated in joy, and that he should not be attached to anything and should take happiness or misery indifferently, without particularly welcoming the former or regretting the latter. Such a man is absolutely limited to his own self and is self-satisfied. He is not interested in achieving anything or in not achieving anything; there is no personal object for him to attain in the world. To such a man gold and stones, desirables and undesirables, praise and blame, appreciation and denunciation, friends and foes are all alike. Such a man makes no distinction whether between a friend and foe, or between a sinner and a virtuous man. Such a man knows that pleasures and pains are welcomed and hated by all and, thinking so, he desires the good of all and looks upon all as he would upon himself—on a learned Brahmin of an elevated character, on a cow, an elephant, a dog or a caṇḍāla; and the wise behave in the same way. He sees God in all beings and knows the indestructible and the immortal in all that is destructible. He who knows that all beings are pervaded by all, and thus regards them all with an equal eye, does not hurt his own spiritual nature and thus attains his highest. As the culmination of this development, there is the state in which a man transcends all the corporeal and mundane characteristics of the threefold guṇas, and, being freed from birth, death, old age and

1 Gitā, III. 17, 18.  
2 Ibid. xiv. 24, 25.  
3 Ibid. vi. 9.  
4 Ibid. vi. 31; also v. 18.  
5 Ibid. xiii. 28.
sorrow, attains immortality. He knows that the worldly qualities of things, the *gunaś*, are extraneous to his own spiritual nature, and by such thoughts he transcends the sphere of all worldly qualities and attains Brahmahood\(^1\).

Apart from the caste-duties and other deeds that are to be performed without any attachment, the *Gita* speaks again and again of sacrifices, *tapas* and gifts, as duties which cannot be ignored at any stage of our spiritual development. It is well worth pointing out that the *Gita* blames the performance of sacrifices either for the attainment of selfish ends or for making a display of pomp or pride. The sacrifices are to be performed from a sense of duty and of public good, since it is only by the help of the sacrifices that the gods may be expected to bring down heavy showers, through which crops may grow in plenty. Physical *tapas* is described as the adoration of gods, Brahmins, teachers and wise men, as purity, sincerity, sex-continence and non-injury; *tapas* in speech is described as truthful and unoffending speech, which is both sweet to hear and for the good of all, and also study; mental *tapas* is described as serenity of mind (*manah-prasāda*), happy temper (*saumyatva*), thoughtfulness (*mauna*), self-control (*ātma-vini-graha*) and sincerity of mind; and the higher kind of *tapas* is to be performed without any idea of gain or the fulfilment of any ulterior end\(^2\). Gifts are to be made to good Brahmins in a holy place and at an auspicious time, merely from a sense of duty. This idea that gifts are properly made only when they are made to good Brahmins at a holy time or place is very much more limited and restricted than the Mahāyāna idea of making gifts for the good of all, without the slightest restriction of any kind. Thus it is said in the *Śikṣā-samuccaya* that a Bodhisattva need not be afraid among tigers and other wild animals in a wild forest, since the Bodhisattva has given his all for the good of all beings. He has therefore to think that, if the wild animals should eat him, this would only mean the giving his body to them, which would be the fulfilment of his virtue of universal charity. The Bodhisattvas take the vow of giving away their all in universal charity\(^3\).

Thus the fundamental teaching of the *Gita* is to follow caste-duties without any motive of self-interest or the gratification of sense-desires. The other general duties of sacrifices, *tapas* and

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\(^1\) *Gita*, xiv. 20, 23, 26.  
\(^2\) *Ibid.* xvi. 11-17.  
\(^3\) *Śikṣā-samuccaya*, ch. xix, p. 349.
gifts are also to be practised by all and may hence be regarded in some sense as being equivalent to the sādhāraṇa-dharmas of the Vaiśeṣika and Smṛti literature. But, if caste-duties or customary duties come into conflict with the special duties of non-injury (ahimsā), then the caste-duties are to be followed in preference. It does not seem that any of the other special duties or virtues which are enjoined can come into conflict with the general caste-duties; for most of these are for the inner moral development, with which probably no caste-duties can come into conflict. But, though there is no express mandate of the Gītā on the point, yet it may be presumed that, should a Śūdra think of performing sacrifices, tapas or gifts or the study of the Vedas, this would most certainly be opposed by the Gītā, as it would be against the prescribed caste-duties. So, though non-injury is one of the special virtues enjoined by the Gītā, yet, when a Kṣatriya kills his enemies in open and free fight, that fight is itself to be regarded as virtuous (dharmya) and there is for the Kṣatriya no sin in the killing of his enemies. If a person dedicates all his actions to Brahman and performs his duties without attachment, then sinfulness in his actions cannot cleave to him, just as water cannot cleave to the leaves of a lotus plant'. On the one hand the Gītā keeps clear of the ethics of the absolutist and metaphysical systems by urging the necessity of the performance of caste and customary duties, and yet enjoins the cultivation of the great virtues of renunciation, purity, sincerity, non-injury, self-control, sense-control and want of attachment as much as the absolutist systems would desire to do; on the other hand, it does not adopt any of the extreme and rigorous forms of self-discipline, as the Yoga does, or the practice of the virtues on an unlimited and universalist scale, as the Buddhists did. It follows the middle course, strongly emphasizing the necessity of self-control, sense-control and detachment from all selfish ends and desires along with the performance of the normal duties. This detachment from sense-pleasures is to be attained either through wisdom or, preferably, through devotion to God.

1 Gītā, v. 10.
Analysis of Action.

The consideration of the Gitā ethics naturally brings in the problem of the analysis of the nature of action, volition and agent. The principal analysis of volition in Hindu Philosophy is to be found in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika works. Praśastapāda divides animal activities into two classes, firstly, those that are of a reflex nature and originate automatically from life-functions (jivana-pūrvaka) and subserve useful ends (kām api artha-kriyām) for the organism, and, secondly, those conscious and voluntary actions that proceed out of desire or aversion, for the attainment of desirable ends and the avoidance of undesirable ones. Prabhākara holds that volitional actions depend on several factors, firstly, a general notion that something has to be done (kāryatā-jñāna), which Gangabhaṭṭa in his Bhāṭṭa-cintāmani explains as meaning not merely a general notion that a particular work can be done by the agent, but also the specific notion that an action must be done by him—a sense which can proceed only from a belief that the action would be useful to him and would not be sufficiently harmful to him to dissuade him from it. Secondly, there must be the belief that the agent has the power or capacity of performing the action (kṛti-sādhyatā-jñāna). This belief of kṛti-sādhyatā-jñāna leads to desire (cikīrṣā). The Prabhākaras do not introduce here the important factor that an action can be desired only if it is conducive to the good of the agent. Instead of this element they suppose that actions are desired when the agent identifies himself with the action as one to be accomplished by him—an action is desired only as a kind of self-realization. The Nyāya, however, thinks that the fact that an action is conducive to good and not productive of serious mischief is an essential condition of its performance.

The Gitā seems to hold that everywhere actions are always being performed by the guṇas or characteristic qualities of prakṛti, the primal matter. It is through ignorance and false pride that one thinks himself to be the agent. In another place it is said that for the occurrence of an action there are five causes, viz. the body, the agent, the various sense-organs, the various life-functions and biomotor activities, and the unknown objective causal elements or the all-controlling power of God (daiva). All actions

1 Gitā, III. 27; XIII. 29.
2 adhiṣṭhānam tathā kartā karānaṃ ca pṛthag-vidham vividhāī ca pṛthak cēṣṭā daivaṃ caivaśtra paścām. Ibid. XVIII. 14.
being due to the combined operation of these five elements, it
would be wrong to think the self or the agent to be the only per-
former of actions. Thus it is said that, this being so, he who thinks
the self alone to be the agent of actions, this wicked-minded person
through his misapplied intelligence does not see things properly1.
Whatever actions are performed, right or wrong, whether in body,
speech or mind, have these five factors as their causes2. The
philosophy that underlies the ethical position of the Gītā consists
in the fact that, in reality, actions are made to happen primarily
through the movement of the characteristic qualities of prakṛti,
and secondarily, through the collocation of the five factors men-
tioned, among which the self is but one factor only. It is, therefore,
sheer egoism to think that one can, at his own sweet will, undertake
a work or cease from doing works. For the prakṛti, or primal
matter, through its later evolutes, the collocation of causes, would
of itself move us to act, and even in spite of the opposition of our
will we are led to perform the very action which we did not want
to perform. So Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that the egoism through
which you would say that you would not fight is mere false
vanity, since the prakṛti is bound to lead you to action3. A man
is bound by the active tendencies or actions which necessarily
follow directly from his own nature, and there is no escape.
He has to work in spite of the opposition of his will. Prakṛti,
or the collocation of the five factors, moves us to work. That
being so, no one can renounce all actions. If renouncing actions
is an impossibility, and if one is bound to act, it is but proper
that one should perform one's normal duties. There are no duties
and no actions which are absolutely faultless, absolutely above all
criticism; so the proper way in which a man should purify his
actions is by purging his mind of all imperfections and impurities
of desires and attachment. But a question may arise—how, if all
actions follow necessarily as the product of the five-fold colloca-
tion, a person can determine his actions? The general implication
of the Gītā seems to be that, though the action follows necessarily
as the product of the fivefold collocation, yet the self can give a
direction to these actions; if a man wishes to dissociate himself
from all attachments and desires by dedicating the fruits of all
his actions to God and clings to God with such a purpose, God
helps him to attain his noble aim.

1 Gītā, xviii. 16.  
2 Ibid. xviii. 15.  
3 Ibid. xviii. 59.
Eschatology.

The Gitā is probably the earliest document where a definite statement is made regarding the imperishable nature of existent things and the impossibility of that which is non-existent coming into being. It says that what is non-existent cannot come into being, and that what exists cannot cease to be. In modern times we hear of the principle of the conservation of energy and also of the principle of the conservation of mass. The principle of the conservation of energy is distinctly referred to in the Vyāsa-bhāṣya on Patañjali-sūtra, iv. 3, but the idea of the conservation of mass does not seem to have been mentioned definitely anywhere. Both the Vedāntist and the Sāmkhyaist seem to base their philosophies on an ontological principle known as sat-kārya-vāda, which holds that the effect is already existent in the cause. The Vedānta holds that the effect as such is a mere appearance and has no true existence; the cause alone is truly existent. The Sāmkhya, on the other hand, holds that the effect is but a modification of the causal substance, and, as such, is not non-existent, but has no existence separate from the cause; the effect may therefore be said to exist in the cause before the starting of the causal operation (kāraṇa-vyāpāra). Both these systems strongly object to the Buddhist and Nyāya view that the effect came into being out of non-existence, a doctrine known as a-sat-kārya-vāda. Both the Sāmkhya and the Vedānta tried to prove their theses, but neither of them seems to have realized that their doctrines are based upon an a priori proposition which is the basic principle underlying the principle of the conservation of energy and the conservation of mass, but which is difficult to be proved by reference to a posteriori illustration. Thus, the Sāmkhya says that the effect exists in the cause, since, had it not been so, there would be no reason why certain kinds of effects, e.g. oil, can be produced only from certain kinds of causes, e.g. sesamum. That certain kinds of effects are produced only from certain kinds of causes does not really prove the doctrine of sat-kārya-vāda, but only implies it; for the doctrine of sat-kārya-vāda rests on an a priori principle such as that formulated in the Gitā—that what exists cannot perish, and that what does not exist cannot come into being¹. The Gitā does not try to prove this proposition, but takes it as a self-evident principle which no one could

¹ nāsate vidyate bhāvo nābhave vidyate sataḥ. Gitā, ii. 16.
challenge. It does not, however, think of applying this principle, which underlies the ontological position of the Sāṃkhya and the Vedānta, in a general way. It seems to apply the principle only to the nature of self (ātman). Thus it says, "O Arjuna, that principle by which everything is pervaded is to be regarded as deathless; no one can destroy this imperishable one. The bodies that perish belong to the deathless eternal and unknowable self; therefore thou shouldst fight. He who thinks the self to be destructible, and he who thinks it to be the destroyer, do not know that it can neither destroy nor be destroyed. It is neither born nor does it die, nor, being once what it is, would it ever be again…. Weapons cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot dissolve it and air cannot dry it." The immortality of self preached in the Gitā seems to have been directly borrowed from the Upaniṣads, and the passages that describe it seem to breathe the spirit of the Upaniṣads not only in idea, but also in the modes and expressions. The ontological principle that what exists cannot die and that what is not cannot come into being does not seem to have been formulated in the Upaniṣads. Its formulation in the Gitā in support of the principle of immortality seems, therefore, to be a distinct advance on the Upaniṣadic philosophy in this direction.

The first argument urged by Kṛṣṇa to persuade Arjuna to fight was that the self was immortal and that it was the body only that could be injured or killed, and that therefore Arjuna need not feel troubled because he was going to kill his kinsmen in the battle of Kurukṣetra. Upon the death of one body the self only changed to another, in which it was reborn, just as a man changed his old clothes for new ones. The body is always changing, and even in youth, middle age and old age, does not remain the same. The change at death is also a change of body, and so there is no intrinsic difference between the changes of the body at different stages of life and the ultimate change that is effected at death, when the old body is forsaken by the spirit and a new body is accepted. Our bodies are always changing, and, though the different stages in this growth in childhood, youth and old age represent comparatively small degrees of change, yet these ought to prepare our minds to realize the fact that death is also a similar change of body only and cannot, therefore, affect the unperturbed nature of the self, which, in spite of all changes of body at successive
births and rebirths, remains unchanged in itself. When one is born one must die, and when one dies one must be reborn. Birth necessarily implies death, and death necessarily implies rebirth. There is no escape from this continually revolving cycle of birth and death. From Brahmā down to all living creatures there is a continuous rotation of birth, death and rebirth. In reply to Arjuna’s questions as to what becomes of the man who, after proceeding a long way on the path of yoga, is somehow through his failings dislodged from it and dies, Kṛṣṇa replies that no good work can be lost and a man who has been once on the path of right cannot suffer; so, when a man who was proceeding on the path of yoga is snatched away by the hand of death, he is born again in a family of pure and prosperous people or in a family of wise yogins; and in this new birth he is associated with his achievements in his last birth and begins anew his onward course of advancement, and the old practice of the previous birth carries him onward, without any effort on his part, in his new line of progress. By his continual efforts through many lives and the cumulative effects of the right endeavours of each life the yogin attains his final realization. Ordinarily the life of a man in each new birth depends upon the desires and ideas that he fixes upon at the time of his death. But those that think of God, the oldest instructor, the seer, the smallest of the small, the upholder of all, shining like the sun beyond all darkness, and fix their life-forces between their eyebrows, and control all the gates of their senses and their mind in their hearts, ultimately attain their highest realization in God. From the great Lord, the great unmanifested and incomprehensible Lord, proceeds the unmanifested (avyakta), from which come out all manifested things (vyaktayah sarvāḥ), and in time again return to it and again evolve out of it. Thus there are two forms of the unmanifested (avyakta), the unmanifested out of which all the manifested things come, and the unmanifested which is the nature of the eternal Lord from whom the former come. The ideas of deva-yāna and pitṛ-yāna, daksināyana and uttarāyana, the black and the white courses as mentioned in the Upaniṣads, are also referred to in the Gītā. Those who go through smoke in the new-moon fortnight and the later six months (when the sun is on the south of the equator), and thus take the black course, return again; but those who take the white course of fire

1 Gītā, viii. 16–23.
in the full-moon fortnight and the former six months (when the sun is on the north of the equator) do not return again\(^1\). No very significant meaning can be made out of these doctrines. They seem to be but the perpetuation of the traditional faiths regarding the future courses of the dead, as referred to in the \textit{Chāndogya Upaniṣad}. The \textit{Gītā}, again, speaking of others, says that those who follow the sacrificial duties of the Vedas enjoy heavenly pleasures in heaven, and, when their merits are exhausted by the enjoyments of the good fruits of their actions, they come back to earth. Those who follow the path of desires and take to religious duties for the attainment of pleasures must always go to heaven and come back again—they cannot escape this cycle of going and coming. Again, in the \textit{Gītā}, xvi. 19, Kṛṣṇa says, "I make cruel vicious persons again and again take birth as ferocious animals."

The above summary of the eschatological views of the \textit{Gītā} shows that it collects together the various traditionally accepted views regarding life after death without trying to harmonize them properly. Firstly, it may be noted that the \textit{Gītā} believes in the doctrine of \textit{karma}. Thus in xv. 2 and in iv. 9 it is said that the world has grown on the basis of \textit{karma}, and the \textit{Gītā} believes that it is the bondage of \textit{karma} that binds us to this world. The bondage of \textit{karma} is due to the existence of attachment, passions and desires. But what does the bondage of \textit{karma} lead to? The reply to such a question, as given by the \textit{Gītā}, is that it leads to rebirth. When one performs actions in accordance with the Vedic injunctions for the attainment of beneficial fruits, desire for such fruits and attachment to these desirable fruits is the bondage of \textit{karma}, which naturally leads to rebirth. The proposition definitely pronounced in the \textit{Gītā}, that birth necessarily means death and death necessarily means birth, reminds us of the first part of the twelfold causal chain of the Buddha—"What being, is there death? Birth being, there is death." It has already been noticed that the attitude of the \textit{Gītā} towards Vedic performances is merely one of toleration and not one of encouragement. These are actions which are prompted by desires and, like all other actions similarly prompted, they entail with them the bonds of \textit{karma}; and, as soon as the happy effects produced by the merits of these actions are enjoyed and lived through, the performers of these actions come down from heaven to the earth and

\(^1\text{Gītā, viii. 24–26.}\)
are reborn and have to pass through the old ordeal of life. The idea that, there being birth, there is death, and that, if there is death there is also rebirth, is the same in the Gītā as in Buddhism; but the Gītā form seems to be very much earlier than the Buddhistic form; for the Buddhistic form relates birth and death through a number of other causal links intimately connected together in an interdependent cycle, of which the Gītā seems to be entirely ignorant. The Gītā does not speak of any causal chain, such as could be conceived to be borrowed from Buddhism. It, of course, knows that attachment is the root of all vice; but it is only by implication that we can know that attachment leads to the bondage of karma and the bondage of karma to rebirth. The main purpose of the Gītā is not to find out how one can tear asunder the bonds of karma and stop rebirth, but to prescribe the true rule of the performance of one's duties. It speaks sometimes, no doubt, about cutting asunder the bonds of karma and attaining one's highest; but instruction as regards the attainment of liberation or a description of the evils of this worldly life does not form any part of the content of the Gītā. The Gītā has no pessimistic tendency. It speaks of the necessary connection of birth and death not in order to show that life is sorrowful and not worth living, but to show that there is no cause of regret in such universal happenings as birth and death. The principal ideas are, no doubt, those of attachment, karma, birth, death and rebirth; but the idea of Buddhism is more complex and more systematized, and is therefore probably a later development at a time when the Gītā discussions on the subject were known. The Buddhist doctrine that there is no self and no individual anywhere is just the opposite of the Gītā doctrine of the immortality of the self.

But the Gītā speaks not only of rebirth, but also of the two courses, the path of smoke and the path of light, which are referred to in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad\(^1\). The only difference between the Upaniṣad account and that of the Gītā is that there are more details in the Upaniṣad than in the Gītā. But the ideas of deva-yāna and pitr-yāna do not seem to fit in quite consistently with the idea of rebirth on earth. The Gītā, however, combines the idea of rebirth on earth with the deva-yāna-pitr-yāna idea and also with the idea of ascent to heaven as an effect of the merits

\(^1\) Chāndogya Upaniṣad, v. 10.
accruing from sacrificial performances. Thus the Gitā combines the different trains of ideas just as it finds them traditionally accepted, without trying to harmonize them properly. It does not attempt to discuss the point regarding the power of karma in determining the nature of rebirths, enjoyments and sufferings. From some passages (iv. 9 or vi. 40-45) it might appear that the bonds of karma produced their effects independently by their own powers, and that the arrangement of the world is due to the effect of karma. But there are other passages (xvi. 19) which indicate that karma does not produce its effects by itself, but that God rewards or punishes good and bad deeds by arranging good and bad births associated with joys and sorrows. In the Gitā, v. 15, it is said that the idea of sins and virtues is due to ignorance, whereas, if we judge rightly, God does not take cognizance either of vices or of virtues. Here again there are two contradictory views of karma: one view in which karma is regarded as the cause which brings about all inequalities in life, and another view which does not attribute any value to good or bad actions. The only way in which the two views can be reconciled in accordance with the spirit of the Gitā is by holding that the Gitā does not believe in the objective truth of virtue or vice (punya or pāpa). There is nothing good or bad in the actions themselves. It is only ignorance and foolishness that regards them as good or bad; it is only our desires and attachments which make the actions produce their bad effects with reference to us, and which render them sinful for us. Since the actions themselves are neither good nor bad, the performance of even apparently sinful actions, such as the killing of one’s kinsmen on the battle-field, cannot be regarded as sinful, if they are done from a sense of duty; but the same actions would be regarded as sinful, if they were performed through attachments or desires. Looked at from this point of view, the idea of morality in the Gitā is essentially of a subjective character. But though morality, virtue and vice, can be regarded from this point of view as subjective, it is not wholly subjective. For morality does not depend upon mere subjective conscience or the subjective notions of good and bad. The caste-duties and other duties of customary morality are definitely fixed, and no one should transgress them. The subjectivity of virtue and vice consists in the fact that they depend entirely on our good or bad actions. If actions are performed from a sense of obedience to scriptural commands, caste-
duties or duties of customary morality, then such actions, in spite of their bad consequences, would not be regarded as bad.

Apart from these courses of rebirth and ascent to heaven, the last and best and ultimate course is described as being liberation, which transcends all that can be achieved by all kinds of merits attained by sacrifices, gifts or tapas. He who attains this highest achievement lives in God and is never born again\(^1\). The highest realization thus consists in being one with God, by which one escapes all sorrows. In the Gītā liberation (mokṣa) means liberation from old age and death. This liberation can be attained by true philosophic knowledge of the nature of kṣetra, or the mind-body whole, and the kṣetra-jīva, the perceiving selves, or the nature of what is truly spiritual and what is non-spiritual, and by clinging to God as one’s nearest and dearest\(^2\). This liberation from old age and death also means liberation from the ties of karma associated with us through the bonds of attachment, desires, etc. It does not come of itself, as the natural result of philosophic knowledge or of devotion to God; but God, as the liberator, grants it to the wise and to those who cling to Him through devotion\(^3\). But whether it be achieved as the result of philosophic knowledge or as the result of devotion to God, the moral elevation, consisting of dissociation from attachment and the right performance of duties in an unattached manner, is indispensable.

**God and Man.**

The earliest and most recondite treatment regarding the nature and existence of God and His relation to man is to be found in the Gītā. The starting-point of the Gītā theism may be traced as far back as the Puruṣa-sūkta, where it is said that the one quarter of the puruṣa has spread out as the cosmic universe and its living beings, while its other three-quarters are in the immortal heavens\(^4\). This passage is repeated in Chāndogya, III. 12. 6 and in Maitrāyaṇi, vi. 4, where it is said that the three-quarter Brahman sits root upward above (urdhva-mālam tripād Brahma). This idea, in a slightly modified form, appears in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad, vi. 1, where it is said that this universe is the eternal Āsvattha

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1 Gītā, viii. 28; ix. 4.  
2 Ibid. vii. 29; xiii. 34.  
3 Ibid. xviii. 66.  
4 pado 'tva vīkṣaḥ bhūtāni tripād asyāmyṛtaḥ dvi. Puruṣa-sūkta.
tree which has its root high up and its branches downwards (ürdhva-mūlo 'vāk-sākhaḥ). The Gitā borrows this idea and says, "This is called the eternal Āsvatthā (pipul tree) with its roots high up and branches downwards, the leaves of which are the Vedas; and he who knows this, he knows the Vedas" (xv. 1). Again it is said, "Its branches spread high and low, its leaves of sense-objects are nourished by the guṇas, its roots are spread downwards, tied with the knots of karma, the human world" (xv. 2); and in the next verse, it is said, "In this world its true nature is not perceived; its beginning, its end, and the nature of its subsistence, remain unknown; it is only by cutting this firmly rooted Āsvatthā tree with the strong axe of unattachment (asaṅga-śastrena) that one has to seek that state from which, when once achieved, no one returns." It is clear from the above three passages that the Gitā has elaborated here the simile of the Āsvatthā tree of the Kaṭha Upaniṣad. The Gitā accepts this simile of God, but elaborates it by supposing that these branches have further leaves and other roots, which take their sap from the ground of human beings, to which they are attached by the knots of karma. This means a duplication of the Āsvatthā tree, the main and the subsidiary. The subsidiary one is an overgrowth, which has proceeded out of the main one and has to be cut into pieces before one can reach that. The principal idea underlying this simile throws a flood of light on the Gitā conception of God, which is an elaboration of the idea of the Puruṣa-sūkta passage already referred to. God is not only immanent, but transcendent as well. The immanent part, which forms the cosmic universe, is no illusion or māyā: it is an emanation, a development, from God. The good and the evil, the moral and the immoral of this world, are all from Him and in Him. The stuff of this world and its manifestations have their basis, an essence, in Him, and are upheld by Him. The transcendent part, which may be said to be the root high up, and the basis of all that has grown in this lower world, is itself the differenceless reality—the Brahman. But, though the Brahman is again and again referred to as the highest abode and the ultimate realization, the absolute essence, yet God in His super-personality transcends even Brahman, in the sense that Brahman, however great it may be, is only a constitutive essence in the complex personality of God. The cosmic universe, the guṇas, the puruṣas, the mind-structure composed of buddhi, ahamkāra, etc., and the Brahman,
are all constituents of God, having their separate functions and mental relations; but God in His super-personality transcends them all and upholds them all. There is, however, one important point in which the Gitā differs from the Upaniṣads—this is, its introduction of the idea that God takes birth on earth as man. Thus in the Gitā, iv. 6 and iv. 7, it is said that "whenever there is a disturbance of dharma and the rise of adharma, I create myself; though I am unborn, of immortal self and the lord of all beings, yet by virtue of my own nature (prakṛti) I take birth through my own māyā (blinding power of the guṇas)." This doctrine of the incarnation of God, though not dealt with in any of the purely speculative systems, yet forms the corner-stone of most systems of religious philosophy and religion, and the Gitā is probably the earliest work available to us in which this doctrine is found. The effect of its introduction and of the dialogue form of the Gitā, in which the man-god Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna in the philosophy of life and conduct, is that the instruction regarding the personality of God becomes concrete and living. As will be evident in the course of this section, the Gitā is not a treatise of systematic philosophy, but a practical course of introduction to life and conduct, conveyed by God Himself in the form of Kṛṣṇa to His devotee, Arjuna. In the Gitā abstract philosophy melts down to an insight into the nature of practical life and conduct, as discussed with all the intimacy of the personal relation between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, which suggests a similar personal relation between God and man. For the God in the Gitā is not a God of abstract philosophy or theology, but a God who could be a man and be capable of all personal relations.

The all-pervasive nature of God and the fact that He is the essence and upholder of all things in the world is again and again in various ways emphasized in the Gitā. Thus Kṛṣṇa says, "There is nothing greater than I, all things are held in me, like pearls in the thread of a pearl garland; I am the liquidity in water, the light of the sun and the moon, manhood (pauruṣa) in man; good smell in earth, the heat of the sun, intelligence in the intelligent, heroism in the heroes, strength in the strong, and I am also the desires which do not transgress the path of virtue¹." Again, it is said that "in my unmanifested (avyakta) form I pervade the whole world; all beings exist completely in me, but

¹ Gitā, vii. 7–11.
I am not exhausted in them; yet so do I transcend them that none of the beings exist in me—"I am the upholder of all beings, I do not exist in them and yet I am their procreator." In both these passages the riddle of God's relation with man, by which He exists in us and yet does not exist in us and is not limited by us, is explained by the fact of the threefold nature of God; there is a part of Him which has been manifested as inanimate nature and also as the animate world of living beings. It is with reference to this all-pervasive nature of God that it is said that "as the air in the sky pervades the whole world, so are all beings in 'me' (God). At the end of each cycle (kalpa) all beings enter into my nature (prakṛtim yānti māmikām), and again at the beginning of a cycle I create them. I create again and again through my nature (prakṛti); the totality of all living beings is helplessly dependent on prakṛti." The three prakṛtis have already been referred to in the previous sections—prakṛti of God as cosmic matter, prakṛti as the nature of God from which all life and spirit have emanated, and prakṛti as māyā, or the power of God from which the three guṇas have emanated. It is with reference to the operation of these prakṛtis that the cosmic world and the world of life and spirit may be said to be existent in God. But there is the other form of God, as the transcendent Brahman, and, so far as this form is concerned, God transcends the sphere of the universe of matter and life. But in another aspect of God, in His totality and superpersonality, He remains unexhausted in all, and the creator and upholder of all, though it is out of a part of Him that the world has come into being. The aspect of God's identity with, and the aspect of His transcendence and nature as the father, mother and supporter of the universe, are not separated in the Gītā, and both the aspects are described often in one and the same passage. Thus it is said, "I am the father, mother, upholder and grandfather of this world, and I am the sacred syllable OM, the three Vedas, Ṛk, Sāman and Yajus; I am the sacrifice, the oblations and the fire, and yet I am the master and the enjoyer of all sacrifices. I am the final destiny, upholder, matter, the passive illuminator, the rest, support, friend, the origin, the final dissolution, the place, the receptacle and the immortal seed. I produce heat and shower, I destroy and create, I am both death and the deathless, the good and the bad." With reference to His transcendent part it is

1 Gītā, ix. 3–5.  
2 Ibid. ix. 6–8.  
3 Ibid. ix. 16–19, 24.
said, "The sun, the moon and fire do not illuminate it—it is my final abode, from which, when once achieved, no one returns."

And again, immediately after, it is said, "It is my part that forms the eternal soul-principle (jīva-bhūta) in the living, which attracts the five senses and the manas which lie buried in prakṛti, and which takes the body and goes out of it with the six senses, just as air takes out fragrance from the flowers." And then God is said to be the controlling agent of all operations in this world. Thus it is said, "By my energy I uphold the world and all living beings and fill all crops with their specific juices; as fire in the bodies of living beings, and aided by the biomotor pṛāṇa functions, I digest the four kinds of food; I am the light in the sun, the moon and fire." Again it is said, "I reside in the hearts of all; knowledge, forgetfulness and memory all come from me; I alone am to be known by the Vedas; I alone know the Vedas, and I alone am the author of the Vedānta." From these examples it is evident that the Gitā does not know that pantheism and deism and theism cannot well be jumbled up into one as a consistent philosophic creed. And it does not attempt to answer any objections that may be made against the combination of such opposite views. The Gitā not only asserts that all is God, but it also again and again repeats that God transcends all and is simultaneously transcendent and immanent in the world. The answer apparently implied in the Gitā to all objections to the apparently different views of the nature of God is that transcendentalism, immanentism and pantheism lose their distinctive and opposite characters in the melting whole of the super-personality of God. Sometimes in the same passage, and sometimes in passages of the same context, the Gitā talks in a pantheistic, a transcendental or a theistic vein, and this seems to imply that there is no contradiction in the different aspects of God as preserver and controller of the world, as the substance of the world, life and soul, and as the transcendent substratum underlying them all. In order to emphasize the fact that all that exists and all that is worthy of existence or all that has a superlative existence in good or bad are God's manifestation, the Gitā is never tired of repeating that whatever is highest, best or even worst in things is God or

1 Gitā, xv. 6.
2 Ibid. xv. 7 and 8. It is curious that here the word Īśvara is used as an epithet of jīva.
3 Ibid. xv. 8, 12, 13, 14, 15.
God's manifestation. Thus it is said, 'I am the gambling of dice in all deceptive operations, I am victory in all endeavours, heroism of the heroes and the moral qualities (sattva) of all moral men (sattvavatām)'; and after enumerating a number of such instances Kṛṣṇa says that, wherever there are special gifts or powers or excellence of any kind, they are to be regarded as the special manifestation of God. The idea that God holds within Himself the entire manifold universe is graphically emphasized in a fabulous form, when Kṛṣṇa gives Arjuna the divine eye of wisdom and Arjuna sees Kṛṣṇa in his resplendent divine form, shining as thousands of suns burning together, with thousands of eyes, faces and ornaments, pervading the heavens and the earth, with neither beginning nor end, as the great cosmic person into whose mouths all the great heroes of Kurukṣetra field had entered, like rivers into the ocean. Kṛṣṇa, after showing Arjuna his universal form, says, "I am time (kāla), the great destroyer of the world, and I am engaged in collecting the harvest of human lives, and all that will die in this great battle of Kurukṣetra have already been killed by me; you will be merely an instrument in this great destruction of the mighty battle of Kurukṣetra. So you can fight, destroy your enemies, attain fame and enjoy the sovereignty without any compunction that you have destroyed the lives of your kinsmen."

The main purport of the Gītā view of God seems to be that ultimately there is no responsibility for good or evil and that good and evil, high and low, great and small have all emerged from God and are upheld in Him. When a man understands the nature and reality of his own self and its agency, and his relation with God, both in his transcendent and cosmic nature, and the universe around him and the guṇas of attachment, etc., which bind him to his worldly desires, he is said to have the true knowledge. There is no opposition between the path of this true knowledge (jñāna-yoga) and the path of duties; for true knowledge supports and is supported by right performance of duties. The path of knowledge is praised in the Gītā in several passages. Thus it is said, that just as fire burns up the wood, so does knowledge reduce all actions to ashes. There is nothing so pure as knowledge. He who has true faith is attached to God, and he who has controlled his senses, attains knowledge, and having attained it, secures peace. He who

1 Gītā, x. 36-41.
is foolish, an unbeliever, and full of doubts, is destroyed. He who is always doubting has neither this world, nor the other, nor does he enjoy any happiness. Even the worst sinner can hope to cross the sea of sins in the boat of knowledge. In the Gītā, iv. 42, Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, "Therefore, having destroyed the ignorance of your heart by the sword of knowledge, and having cut asunder all doubts, raise yourself up." But what is this knowledge? In the Gītā, iv. 36, in the same context, this knowledge is defined to be that view of things by which all beings are perceived in this self or God. The true knowledge of God destroys all karma in the sense that he who has perceived and realized the true nature of all things in God cannot be attached to his passions and desires as an ignorant man would be. In another passage, already referred to, it is said that the roots of the worldly Aśvattha tree are to be cut by the sword of unattachment. The confusion into which Arjuna falls in the Gītā, III. 1 and 2, regarding the relative excellence of the path of karma and the path of knowledge is wholly unfounded. Kṛṣṇa points out in the Gītā, III. 3, that there are two paths, the path of knowledge and the path of duties (jñāna-yoga and karma-yoga). The confusion had arisen from the fact that Kṛṣṇa had described the immortality of soul and the undesirability of Vedic actions done with a motive, and had also asked Arjuna to fight and yet remain unattached and perform his duty for the sake of duty. The purpose of the Gītā was to bring about a reconciliation between these two paths, and to show that the path of knowledge leads to the path of duties by Liberating it from the bonds of attachment; for all attachment is due to ignorance, and ignorance is removed by true knowledge. But the true knowledge of God may be of a twofold nature. One may attain a knowledge of God in His transcendence as Brahman, and attain the philosophic wisdom of the foundation of all things in Brahman as the ultimate substance and source of all manifestation and appearance. There is another way of clinging to God as a super-person, in a personal relation of intimacy, friendship and dependence. The Gītā admits that both these ways may lead us to the attainment of our highest realization. But it is the latter which the Gītā prefers and considers easier. Thus the Gītā says (xii. 3–5) that those who adore the indefinable, unchangeable, omnipresent, unthinkable, and the unmanifested, controlling all their senses, with equal eyes for all

1 Gītā, iv. 37–41.
and engaged in the good of all, by this course attain Him. Those who fix their mind on the unmanifested (avyakta) find this course very hard. But those who dedicate all their actions to God and, clinging to Him as their only support, are devoted to Him in constant communion, them He saves soon from the sea of death and rebirth.\(^1\)

The most important point in which the \textit{Gitā} differs from the Upaniṣads is that the \textit{Gitā} very strongly emphasizes the fact that the best course for attaining our highest realization is to dedicate all our actions to God, to cling to Him as our nearest and dearest, and always to be in communion with Him. The \textit{Gitā} draws many of its ideas from the Upaniṣads and looks to them with respect. It accepts the idea of Brahman as a part of the essence of God, and agrees that those who fix their mind on Brahman as their ideal also attain the high ideal of realizing God. But this is only a compromise; for the \textit{Gitā} emphasizes the necessity of a personal relation with God, whom we can love and adore. The beginning of our association with God must be made by dedicating the fruits of all our actions to God, by being a friend of all and sympathetic to all, by being self-controlled, the same in sorrow or happiness, self-contented, and in a state of perfect equanimity and equilibrium. It is through such a moral elevation that a man becomes apt in steadying his mind on God and ultimately in fixing his mind on God. In the \textit{Gitā} Kṛṣṇa as God asks Arjuna to give up all ceremonials or religious courses and to cling to God as the only protector, and He promises that because of that God will liberate him.\(^2\) Again, it is said that it is by devotion that a man knows what God is in reality and, thus knowing Him truly as He is, enters into Him. It is by seeking entire protection in God that one can attain his eternal state.\(^3\)

But, though in order to attain the height at which it is possible to fix one’s mind on God, one should first acquire the preliminary qualification of detaching oneself from the bonds of passions and desires, yet it is sometimes possible to reverse the situation. The \textit{Gitā} thus holds that those whose minds and souls are full of God’s love, who delight in constantly talking and thinking of God and always adore God with love, are dear to Him, and God, through His great mercy and kindness, grants them the proper wisdom and destroys the darkness of their ignorance by the light of knowledge.\(^4\)

\(^1\) \textit{Gitā}, xi. 6, 7. \(^2\) \textit{Ibid. xviii. 66.} \(^3\) \textit{Ibid. xviii. 55, 62.} \(^4\) \textit{Ibid. x. 9–11.}
In the *Gitā*, xviii. 57–58, Kṛṣṇa as God asks Arjuna to leave all fruits of actions to God and to fill his mind with God, and He assures him that He will then, by His divine grace, save him from all sorrows, troubles or difficulties. Again, in ix. 30–32 it is said that, even if a man is extremely wicked, if he adores God devotedly, he becomes a saint; for he has adopted the right course, and he soon becomes religious and attains eternal peace of mind. Even sinners, women, Vaiśyas and Śūdras who cling to God for support, are emancipated. Kṛṣṇa as God assures Arjuna that a devotee (*bhakta*) of God can never be lost¹. If a man clings to God, no matter whether he has understood Him rightly or not, no matter whether he has taken the right course of approaching Him or not, God accepts him in whichever way he clings to Him. No one can be lost. In whichever way one may be seeking God, one is always in God's path². If a man, prompted by diverse desires, takes to wrong gods, then even unto those gods God grants him true devotion, with which he follows his worship of those gods, and, even through such worship, grants him his desires³. God is the Lord of all and the friend of all beings. It is only great-souled men who with complete constancy of mind worship God, and with firm devotion repeat the name of God, and, being always in communion with Him, adore Him with devotion. God is easily accessible to those who always think of God with inalienable attachment⁴. In another passage (vii. 16, 17) it is said that there are four classes of people who adore God: those who are enquiring, those who are in trouble, those who wish to attain some desired things, and those who are wise. Of these the wise (*jñānī*), who are always in communion with Him and who are devoted to Him alone, are superior; the wise are dear to Him and He is dear to them. In this passage it has been suggested that true wisdom consists in the habit of living in communion with God and in being in constant devotion to God. The path of *bhakti*, or devotion, is thus praised in the *Gitā* as being the best. For the *Gitā* holds that, even if a man cannot proceed in the normal path of self-elevation and detach himself from passions and desires and establish himself in equanimity, he may still, simply by clinging to God and by firm devotion to Him, bring himself within the sphere of His grace, and by grace alone acquire true wisdom and

¹ *Gitā*, ix. 30–32.  
achieve that moral elevation, with little or no struggle, which is attained with so much difficulty by others. The path of bhakti is thus introduced in the Gītā, for the first time, as an independent path side by side with the path of wisdom and knowledge of the Upaniṣads and with the path of austere self-discipline. Moral elevation, self-control, etc. are indeed regarded as an indispensable preliminary to any kind of true self-realization. But the advantage of the path of devotion (bhakti) consists in this, that, while some seekers have to work hard on the path of self-control and austere self-discipline, either by constant practice or by the aid of philosophic wisdom, the devotee makes an easy ascent to a high elevation—not because he is more energetic and better equipped than his fellow-workers in other paths, but because he has resigned himself completely to God; and God, being pleased with his devotees who cling fast to Him and know nothing else, grants them wisdom and raises them up through higher and higher stages of self-elevation, self-realization and bliss. Arjuna treated Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation of God on earth, as his friend, and Kṛṣṇa in the rôle of God exhorted him to depend entirely on Him and assured him that He would liberate him—He was asking him to give up everything else and cling to Him as his only support. The Gītā lays down for the first time the corner-stone of the teachings of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa and of the later systems of Vaiṣṇava thought, which elaborated the theory of bhakti and described it as the principal method of self-elevation and self-realization.

Another important feature of the Gītā doctrine of devotion consists in the fact that, as, on the one hand, God is contemplated by His devotees in the intimate personal relation of a father, teacher, master and friend, with a full consciousness of His divinity and His nature as the substratum and the upholder of the entire animate and inanimate cosmic universe, so, on the other hand, the transcendent personality of God is realized not only as the culmination of spiritual greatness and the ultimate reconciliation of all relative differences, of high and low, good and bad, but as the great deity, with a physical, adorable form, whom the devotee can worship not only mentally and spiritually, but also externally, with holy offerings of flowers and leaves. The transcendent God is not only immanent in the universe, but also present before the devotee in the form of a great deity resplendent with brightness, or in the personal form of the man-god Kṛṣṇa, in whom
God incarnated Himself. The Gitā combines together different conceptions of God without feeling the necessity of reconciling the oppositions or contradictions involved in them. It does not seem to be aware of the philosophical difficulty of combining the concept of God as the unmanifested, differenceless entity with the notion of Him as the super-person Who incarnates Himself on earth in the human form and behaves in the human manner. It is not aware of the difficulty that, if all good and evil should have emanated from God, and if there be ultimately no moral responsibility, and if everything in the world should have the same place in God, there is no reason why God should trouble to incarnate Himself as man, when there is a disturbance of the Vedic dharma. If God is impartial to all, and if He is absolutely unperturbed, why should He favour the man who clings to Him, and why, for his sake, overrule the world-order of events and in his favour suspend the law of karma? It is only by constant endeavours and practice that one can cut asunder the bonds of karma. Why should it be made so easy for even a wicked man who clings to God to release himself from the bonds of attachment and karma, without any effort on his part? Again, the Gitā does not attempt to reconcile the disparate parts which constitute the complex super-personality of God. How are the unmanifested or avyakta part as Brahman, the avyakta part as the cosmic substratum of the universe, the prakṛti part as the producer of the guṇas, and the prakṛti part as the jīvas or individual selves, to be combined and melted together to form a complex personality? If the unmanifested nature is the ultimate abode (paramādhama) of God, how can God as a person, who cannot be regarded as a manifestation of this ultimate reality, be considered to be transcendent? How can there be a relation between God as a person and His diverse nature as the cosmic universe, jīva and the guṇas? In a system like that of Śaṅkara Brahman and Iśvara, one and the many could be combined together in one scheme, by holding Brahman as real and Iśvara and the many as unreal and illusory, produced by reflection of Brahman in the māyā, the principle of illusoriness. But, howsoever Śaṅkara might interpret the Gitā, it does not seem that it considered Iśvara or the world as in the least degree illusory. In the Upaniṣads also the notion of Iśvara and the notion of Brahman are sometimes found side by side. As regards God as Iśvara, the Gitā not only does not think him to be
illusory, but considers him the highest truth and reality. Thus there is no way of escaping from any of the categories of reality—the two acyuktas, prakṛti, jīva and the super-personality of Īśvara comprehending and transcending them all. The concepts of Brahman, jīva, the unmanifested category from which the world proceeds, and the guṇas are all found in the Upaniṣads in passages which are probably mostly unrelated. But the Gitā seems to take them all together, and to consider them as constituents of Īśvara, which are also upheld by Him in His superior form, in which He transcends and controls them all. In the Upaniṣads the doctrine of bhakti can hardly be found, though here and there faint traces of it may be perceived. If the Upaniṣads ever speak of Īśvara, it is only to show His great majesty, power and glory, as the controller and upholder of all. But the Gitā is steeped in the mystic consciousness of an intimate personal relation with God, not only as the majestic super-person, but as a friend who incarnates Himself for the good of man and shares his joys and sorrows with him, and to whom a man could cling for support in troubles and difficulties and even appeal for earthly goods. He is the great teacher, with whom one can associate oneself for acquisition of wisdom and the light of knowledge. But He could be more than all this. He could be the dearest of the dear and the nearest of the near, and could be felt as being so intimate, that a man could live simply for the joy of his love for Him; he could cling to Him as the one dear friend, his highest goal, and leave everything else for Him; he could consider, in his deep love for Him, all his other religious duties and works of life as being relatively unimportant; he could thus constantly talk of Him, think of Him, and live in Him. This is the path of bhakti or devotion, and the Gitā assures us that, whatever may be the hindrances and whatever may be the difficulties, the bhakta (devotee) of God cannot be lost. It is from the point of view of this mystic consciousness that the Gitā seems to reconcile the apparently philosophically irreconcilable elements. The Gitā was probably written at a time when philosophical views had not definitely crystallized into hard-and-fast systems of thought, and when the distinguishing philosophical niceties, scholarly disputation, the dictates of argument, had not come into fashion. The Gitā, therefore, is not to be looked upon as a properly schemed system of philosophy, but as a manual of right conduct and right perspective of things in the light of a mystical approach to God in self-resignation, devotion, friendship and humility.
Viṣṇu, Vāsudeva and Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣṇu, Bhagavat, Nārāyaṇa, Hari and Kṛṣṇa are often used in a large section of Indian religious literature as synonymous names of the supreme lord. Of these Viṣṇu is an important god of the Rg-Veda, who is one of the ādityas and who makes three strides in the sky, probably as he manifests himself in the eastern horizon, as he rises to the zenith and as he sets in the west. He is also represented in the Rg-Veda as a great fighter and an ally of Indra. It is further said that he has two earthly steps and another higher step which is known only to himself. But in the Rg-Veda Viṣṇu is certainly inferior to Indra, with whom he was often associated, as is evident from such names as Indrā-viṣṇu (R.V. iv. 55. 4; vii. 99. 5; viii. 10. 2, etc.). According to later tradition Viṣṇu was the youngest, the twelfth of the ādityas, though he was superior to them all in good qualities. His three steps in the Rg-Vedic allusion have been explained in the Nirukta as referring to the three stages of the sun’s progress in the morning, at midday and at evening. One of the names of Viṣṇu in the Rg-Veda is Śipiviṣṭa, which Durgācārya explains as “surrounded with the early rays” (śi-pi-samjñair bāla-raśmibhir āviṣṭa). Again, the sage praises Viṣṇu in the Rg-Veda in the following terms: “I, a master of hymns and knowing the sacred customs, to-day praise that name of thine, Śipiviṣṭa. I, who am weak, glorify thee, who art mighty and dwellest beyond this world.” All this shows that Viṣṇu was regarded as the sun, or endowed with the qualities of the sun. The fact that Viṣṇu was regarded as dwelling beyond this world is probably one of the earliest signs of his gradually increasing superiority. For the next stage one must turn to the Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa. In i. 2. 4 of that work it is said that the demons (asura) and the gods were vying with one another; the gods were falling behind, and the demons were trying to distribute the world among themselves; the gods followed them, making Viṣṇu the sacrifice as their leader (te yajñam eva Viṣṇum puraskṛtyeyuh), and desired their own shares; the demons felt jealous and said that they could give only so much ground as would

1. Ekhādais tathā Tvaśṭā dvādaśa Viṣṇur ucyate jaghanyajas tu sarveśām ādityāṇāṁ gunādhikah.
4. Rg-Veda, vii. 100. 5, translated by Dr L. Sarup, quoted in Nirukta, v. 8.
be occupied by Viṣṇu when he lay down, Viṣṇu being a dwarf (vāmano ha Viṣṇur āsa). The gods felt dissatisfied at this, and they approached him with various mantras and in consequence attained the whole world. Again, in xiv. 1 of the same work, Kurukṣetra is referred to as being the place of the sacrificial performances of the gods, and it is said there that in industry, rigorism (tapas), faith, etc. Viṣṇu was the best of all gods and was regarded as being superior to them all (tasmād āhur Viṣṇur devānām īrṣṭhaḥ), and was himself the sacrifice. Again, in Taittiriya-saṁhitā, i. 7. 5. 4, in Vājasaneyi-saṁhitā, i. 30; ii. 6. 8; v. 21, in Atharva-Veda, v. 26. 7; viii. 5. 10, etc., Viṣṇu is referred to as the chief of the gods (Viṣṇu-mukhā devā). Again, Viṣṇu as sacrifice attained unlimited fame. Once he was resting his head on the end of his bow; and, when some ants, perceiving that, said, “How should we be rewarded, if we could gnaw the strings of the bow,” the gods said that they would then be rewarded with food; and so the ants gnawed away the strings, and, as the two ends of the bow sprang apart, Viṣṇu’s head was torn from his body and became the sun\(^1\). This story not only shows the connection of Viṣṇu with the sun, but also suggests that the later story of Kṛṣṇa’s being shot with an arrow by an archer originated from the legend of Viṣṇu’s being killed by the flying ends of his bow. The place of Viṣṇu (Viṣṇu-pada) means the zenith, as the highest place of the sun, and it is probable that the idea of the zenith being the place of Viṣṇu led also to the idea that Viṣṇu had a superior place transcending everything, which was, however, clearly perceived by the wise. Thus, at the beginning of the daily prayer-hymns of the Brahmans, known as sandhyā, it is said that the wise see always that superior place of Viṣṇu, like an open eye in the sky\(^2\). The word vaiṣṇava is used in the literal sense of “belonging to Viṣṇu” in the Vājasaneyi-saṁhitā, v. 21, 23, 25, Taittiriya-saṁhitā, v. 6. 9. 2. 3, Aitareya-brāhmaṇa, iii. 38, Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa, i. 1. 4. 9; iii. 5. 3. 2, etc.; but the use of the word in the sense of a sect of religion is not to be found anywhere in the earlier literature. Even the Gitā does not use the word, and it is not found in any of the earlier Upaṇiṣads; it can be traced only in the later parts of the Mahā-bhārata.

\(^1\) Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa, xiv. 1.

\(^2\) tad Viṣṇoh paramāṃ padaṃ sadā pātyanti sūrayaḥ divaṣa caktur ātataṃ. Aćamana-mantra of the daily sandhyā prayer-hymn.
Again, it is well known that the supreme man, or puruṣa, is praised in very high terms in the man-hymn (Puruṣa-sūkta) of the Rg-Veda, x. 90, where it is said that puruṣa is all that we see, what is past and what is future, and that everything has come out of him; the gods performed sacrifice with him with the oblations of the seasons, and out of this sacrifice puruṣa was first born, and then the gods and all living beings; the various castes were born out of him; the sky, the heavens and the earth have all come out of him; he is the creator and upholder of all; it is by knowing him that one attains immortality; there is no other way of salvation. It is curious that there should be a word nārāyaṇa, similar in meaning (etymologically nara + phak, born in the race or lineage of man) to puruṣa, which was also used to mean the supreme being and identified with puruṣa and Viṣṇu. In Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa, xiv. 3. 4, puruṣa is identified with nārāyaṇa (purusaṁ ha nārāyaṇaṁ Prajāpatir uvāca). Again, in Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa, xiii. 6. 1, the idea of the puruṣa-sūkta is further extended, and the puruṣa nārāyaṇa is said to have performed the pañca-rātra sacrifice (pañcarātram yajña-kratum) and thereby transcended everything and become everything. This pañca-rātra sacrifice involves the (spiritual) sacrifice of puruṣa (puṣuṣa-medho yajña-kratur bhavati, xiii. 6. 7). The five kinds of sacrifice, five kinds of animals, the year with the five kinds of seasons, the five kinds of indwelling entities (pañca-vidham adhyātmam) can all be attained by the pañca-rātra sacrifices. The sacrifice was continued for five days, and the Vedic habit of figurative thinking associated each of the days of the sacrifice with various kinds of desirable things, so that the five-day sacrifice was considered to lead to many things which are fivefold in their nature. The reference to the five kinds of indwelling entities soon produced the pañca-rātra doctrine of the manifestation of God in various modes as the external deity of worship (arca), inner controller (antar-yāmin), as various manifestations of His lordly power (vibhava), as successive deity-forms in intimate association as vyūha and as the highest God (para). This idea is also found in the later Pānca-rātra scriptures, such as Ahirbudhnya-samhitā (1. 1) and the like, where God is described as having his highest form along with the vyūha forms. Puruṣa is thus identified with nārāyaṇa, who, by sacrifice of puruṣa (puṣuṣa-medha), became all this world. The etymological definition of nārāyaṇa as “one who has descended from man (nara),” as herein suggested in accordance
with Pāṇini, iv. i. 99, is not, however, accepted everywhere. Thus Manu, i. 10, derives nārāyaṇa from nāra, meaning “water,” and ayana, meaning “abode,” and nāra (water), again, is explained as “that which has descended from nara,” or supreme man\(^1\). The Mahā-bhārata, iii. 12,952 and 15,819 and xii. 13,168, accepts Manu’s derivation; but in v. 2568 it says that the supreme God is called nārāyaṇa because he is also the refuge of men\(^2\). The Taittiriya-Āranyaka, x. i. 6, identifies nārāyaṇa with Vāsudeva and Viṣṇu\(^3\). It may be suggested in this connection that even the Upaniṣad doctrine of the self as the supreme reality is probably a development of this type of ideas which regarded man as supreme God. The word puruṣa is very frequently used in the Upaniṣads in the sense of man, as well as in that of the highest being or supreme reality. In the Mahā-bhārata nara and nārāyaṇa are referred to as being the forms of the supreme lord. Thus it is said, “The four-faced Brahmā, capable of being understood only with the aid of the nīrūktas, joined his hands and, addressing Rudra, said, “Let good happen to the three worlds. Throw down thy weapons, O lord of the universe, from desire of benefiting the universe. That which is indestructible, immutable, supreme, the origin of the universe, uniform and the supreme actor, that which transcends all pairs of opposites and is inactive, has, choosing to be displayed, been pleased to assume this one blessed form (for, though double, the two represent but one and the same form). This nara and nārāyaṇa (the displayed forms of supreme Brahmā) have taken birth in the race of dharma. The foremost of all deities, these two are observers of the highest vows and endued with the severest penances. Through some reason best known to Him I myself have sprung from the attribute of His Grace Eternal, as thou hast; for, though thou hast ever existed since all the pure creations, thou too hast sprung from His Wrath. With myself then, these deities and all the great Rṣis, do thou adore this displayed form of Brahmā and let there be peace unto all

\(^1\) āpo nārā iti proktā āpo vau nara-sūnavaḥ
tā yad asāyaṇam pūrvam tena nārāyaṇaḥ smṛtah. Manu, i. 10.
Water is called nāra; water is produced from man, and, since he rested in water in the beginning, he is called nārāyaṇa. Kullūka, in explaining this, says that nara, or man, here means the supreme self, or Brahmā.

\(^2\) Narāyaṇaḥ ayaṇar cāpi tato nārāyaṇah smṛtah. Mahā-bhārata, v. 2568.

\(^3\) Nārāyaṇāya vidmahe vāsudevāya dhīmaḥ tān na Viṣṇuh pracodayāt.
Taittiriya Āranyaka, p. 700. Ānandāśrama Press, Poona, 1898.
the worlds without any delay. In the succeeding chapter (i.e. Mahā-bhārata, Sānti-parva, 343) nara and nārāyaṇa are described as being two foremost of sages (ṛṣi) and two ancient deities engaged in the practice of penances, observing high vows and depending upon their own selves and transcending the very sun in energy.

The word bhagavat in the sense of blissful and happy is a very old one and is used in the Rg-Veda, I. 164. 40; VII. 41. 4; X. 60. 12 and in the Atharva-Veda, II. 10. 2; V. 31. 11, etc. But in the Mahā-bhārata and other such early literature it came to denote Viṣṇu or Vāsudeva, and the word bhāgavata denoted the religious sect which regarded Viṣṇu as Nārāyaṇa or Vāsudeva as their supreme god. The Pali canonical work Niddesa refers to various superstitious religious sects, among which it mentions the followers of Vāsudeva, Baladeva, Puṇṇabhadda, Maṇibhadda, Aggi, Nāga, Suparnā, Yakkha, Asura, Gandhabba, Mahārāja, Canda, Suriya, Inda, Brahma, dog, crow, cow, etc. It is easy to understand why a Buddhist work should regard the worship of Vāsudeva as being of a very low type; but at any rate it proves that the worship of Vāsudeva was prevalent during the period when the Niddesa was codified. Again, in commenting upon Pāṇini, iv. 3. 98 (Vāsudevā- junaḥhyāṃ vun), Patañjali points out that the word Vāsudeva here does not denote the Vāsudeva who was the son of Vāsudeva of the Kṣattriya race of Vṛṣṇis, since, had it been so, the suffix vun, which is absolutely equivalent to vun, could well be by Pāṇini, iv. 3. 99 (gotra-kṣattriyakhyebhya bahulam vun), by which vun is suffixed to names of Kṣattriya race. Patañjali thus holds that the word Vāsudeva is in this rule not used to refer to any Kṣattriya race, but is a name of the Lord (sāmjñaisa tatra bhāgavataḥ). If Patañjali’s interpretation is to be trusted, for which there is every reason, Vāsudeva as God is to be distinguished from the Kṣattriya Vāsudeva, the son of Vāsudeva of the race of Vṛṣṇis. It was well established in Pāṇini’s time that Vāsudeva was God, and that His followers were called Vāsudevaka, for the formation of which word by the vun suffix Pāṇini had to make the rule (iv. 3. 98). Again, the Ghosuṇḍi inscription in Rajputana, which is written in Brāhmī, an early form of about 200–150 B.C., contains a reference to the building of a wall round the temple of Vāsudeva and Saṃkarṣaṇa. In the Besnagar inscription of about 100 B.C.

Heliodorus, son of Diya, describes himself as a great devotee of Bhagavat (parama-bhāgavata), who had erected a pillar bearing an image of Garuḍa. In the Nānāghāṭ inscription of 100 B.C. Vāsudeva and Saṃkarsaṇa appear together as deities to whom adorations are addressed along with other gods. If the testimony of Patañjali is accepted, the religious sect of Vāsudevas existed before Pāṇini. It is generally believed that Patañjali lived in 150 B.C., since in course of interpreting a grammatical rule which allowed the use of the past tense in reference to famous contemporary events not witnessed by the speaker he illustrates it by using a past tense in referring to the Greek invasion of the city of Sāketa (arunad Yavanaḥ Sāketam); as this event took place in 150 B.C., it is regarded as a famous contemporary event not witnessed by Patañjali. Patañjali was the second commentator of Pāṇini, the first being Kātyāyana. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar points out that Patañjali notices variant readings in Kātyāyana’s Vārttikas, as found in the texts used by the schools of Bhāradvājīyas, Saunāgas and others, some of which might be considered as emendations of the Vārttikas, though Patañjali’s introduction of them by the verb paṭhanti, “they read,” is an indication that he regarded them as different readings. From this Sir R. G. Bhandarkar argues that between Kātyāyana and Patañjali a considerable time must have elapsed, which alone can explain the existence of the variant readings of Kātyāyana’s text in Patañjali’s time. He therefore agrees with the popular tradition in regarding Pāṇini as a contemporary of the Nandas, who preceded the Mauryas. Kātyāyana thus flourished in the first half of the 5th century B.C. But, as both Goldstücker and Sir R.G. Bhandarkar have pointed out, the Vārttika of Kātyāyana notices many grammatical forms which are not noticed by Pāṇini, and this, considering the great accuracy of Pāṇini as a grammarian, naturally leads to the supposition that those forms did not exist in his time. Goldstücker gives a list of words admitted into Pāṇini’s sūtras which had gone out of use by Kātyāyana’s time, and he also shows that some words which probably did not exist in Pāṇini’s time had come to be used later and are referred to by Kātyāyana. All this implies that Pāṇini must have flourished at least two or three hundred years before Kātyāyana. The reference to the Vāsudeva sect in Pāṇini’s sūtras naturally suggests its existence before his time. The allusions

to Vāsudeva in the inscriptions referred to above can be regarded as corroborative evidence pointing to the early existence of the Vāsudeva sect, who worshipped Vāsudeva or Bhagavat as the supreme Lord.

Turning to literary references to Vāsudeva and Kṛṣṇa, we find the story of Vāsudeva, who is also called by his family name Kanha and Keśava (probably on account of his bunch of hair), in the Ghaṭa-jātaka. The story agrees in some important details with the usual accounts of Kṛṣṇa, though there are some new deviations. A reference to the Vṛṣṇi race of Kṣattriyas is found in Pāṇini, iv. 1. 114 (ṛṣy-andhaka-vṛṣṇi-kurubhyās ca). The word is formed by an unādi suffix, and it literally means “powerful” or “a great leader.” It also means “heretic” (pāśaṇḍa) and one who is passionately angry (canda). It is further used to denote the Yādava race, and Kṛṣṇa is often addressed as Vārṇeya, and in the Gītā, x. 37, Kṛṣṇa says, “Of the Vṛṣṇis I am Vāsudeva.” The Vṛṣṇis are referred to in Kauṭilya’s Artha-śāstra, where the group of Vṛṣṇis (vṛṣṇi-sāṅgha) is said to have attacked Dvaipāyana. The Ghaṭa-jātaka also has the story of the curse of Kanha Dvaipāyana as the cause of the destruction of the Vṛṣṇis. But the Mahā-bhārata (xvi. 1) holds that the curse was pronounced by Viśvāmitra, Kaṇva and Nārada upon Śamba, the son of Kṛṣṇa. Two Vāsudevas are mentioned in the Mahā-bhārata: Vāsudeva, the king of the Pauṇḍras, and Vāsudeva or Kṛṣṇa, the brother of Saṃkarṣaṇa, and both of them are mentioned as being present in the great assemblage of kings at the house of King Drupada for the marriage of Draupadi; it is the latter Vāsudeva who is regarded as God. It is very probable that Vāsudeva originally was a name of the sun and thus became associated with Viśnu, who with his three steps traversed the heavens; and a similarity of Kṛṣṇa or Vāsudeva to the sun is actually suggested in the Mahā-bhārata, xii. 341. 41, where Nārāyaṇa says, “Being like the sun, I cover the whole world with my rays, and I am also the sustainer of all beings and am hence called Vāsudeva.”

Again, the word Sātvata also is used as a synonym of Vāsudeva or Bhāgavata. The word Sātvata in the plural form is a name of a tribe of the Yādavas, and in the Mahā-bhārata, vii. 7662, the phrase Satvatām varah is used to denote Śāyaki, a member of the Yādava race, though this appellation is applied to Kṛṣṇa in a

1 Yāthena vṛṣṇir ejati, Rg-Veda, 1. 10. 2.
large number of places in the *Mahā-bhārata*. In the later *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* (ix. 9. 50) it is said that the Sātvatas worship Brahma as Bhagavān and as Vāsudeva. In the *Mahā-bhārata*, vi. 66. 41, Saṃkaraśaṇa is said to have introduced the sātvata rites in worshipping Vāsudeva. If Sātvata was the name of a race, it is easy to imagine that the persons may have had special rites in worshipping Vāsudeva. Yāmunācārya, the great teacher of Rāmānuja in the tenth century A.D., says that those who adore God (bhagavat), the supreme person, with purity (sattva), are called bhāgavata and sātvata. Yāmana strongly urges that Sātvatas are Brāhmaṇas by caste, but are attached to Bhagavat as the supreme lord. Yāmana, however, seems to urge this in strong opposition to the current view that Sātvatas were a low-caste people, who had not the initiation with the holy thread and were an outcast people originated from the Vaiśyas. The Sātvatas are said to be the fifth low-caste people, who worship in the temples of Viṣṇu by the orders of the king, and are also called Bhāgavatas. The Sātvatas and Bhāgavatas are those who make their living by worshipping images and are hence low and disreputable. Yāmana urges that this popular view about the Bhāgavatas and the Sātvatas is all incorrect; for, though there are many Sātvatas who make a living by worshipping images, not all Sātvatas and Bhāgavatas do so; and there are many among them who worship Bhagavat, as the supreme person, solely by personal devotion and attachment.

From Patañjali’s remarks in commenting on Pāṇini, iv. 3. 98, it is seen that he believed in the existence of two Vāsudevas, one a leader of the Vṛṣṇi race and the other God as Bhagavat. It has already been pointed out that the name Vāsudeva occurs also in the *Ghaṭa-jātaka*. It may therefore be argued that the name Vāsudeva was an old name, and the evidence of the passage of the *Nīddesa*, as well as that of Patañjali, shows that it was a name of God or Bhagavat. The later explanation of Vāsudeva as “the son of Vasudeva” may therefore be regarded as an

1 *Mahā-bhārata*, v. 2581, 3041, 3334, 3360, 4370; ix. 2532, 3502; x. 726; xii. 1502, 1614, 7533.

2 tataś ca sattvāḍ bhagavān bhajyate yaīh paraḥ pumān
   te sātvatā bhāgavatā sty ucyante dvijottamaḥ.
   Yāmana’s *Āgama-prāmadhyā*, p. 7. 6.

3 Thus Manu (x. 23) says:
   vaivyāt tu jāyate vaśyāt sudhamvācārya eva ca
   kāraṇaiś ca vijamānai ca maitras sātvato eva ca.
   pañcamah sātvato nāma Viṣṇor dyutanaṁ hi saḥ
unauthorized surmise. It is very probable that Vāsudeva was worshipped by the race of Yādavas as a tribal hero according to their own tribal rites and that he was believed to be an incarnation of Viṣṇu, who was in his turn associated with the sun. Megas-thenes, in his account of India as he saw it, speaks of the Sourasenoi—an Indian nation in whose land are two great cities, Methora and Kleisobora, through which flows the navigable river Jobares—as worshipping Heracles. “Methora” in all probability means Mathura and “Jobares” Jumna. It is probable that Heracles is Hari, which again is a name of Vāsudeva. Again in the Mahā-bhārata, vi. 65, Bīśma says that he was told by the ancient sages that formerly the great supreme person appeared before the assembly of gods and sages, and Brahmā began to adore Him with folded hands. This great Being, who is there adored as Vāsudeva, had first created out of Himself Saṃkarsana, and then Pradyumna, and from Pradyumna Aniruddha, and it was from Aniruddha that Brahmā was created. This great Being, Vāsudeva, incarnated Himself as the two sages, Nara and Nārāyaṇa. He Himself says in the Mahā-bhārata, vi. 66, that “as Vāsudeva I should be adored by all and no one should ignore me in my human body”; in both these chapters Kṛṣṇa and Vāsudeva are identical, and in the Gītā Kṛṣṇa says that “of the Vṛṣṇis I am Vāsudeva.” It has also been pointed out that Vāsudeva belonged to the Kanhāyana gotra. As Sir R. G. Bhandarkar says, “It is very probable that the identification of Kṛṣṇa with Vāsudeva was due to the similarity of the gotra name with the name of Kṛṣṇa¹.” From the frequent allusions to Vāsudeva in Patañjali’s commentary and in the Mahā-bhārata, where he is referred to as the supreme person, it is very reasonable to suppose that the word is a proper noun, as the name of a person worshipped as God, and not a mere patronymic name indicating an origin from a father Vasudeva. Kṛṣṇa, Janārdana, Keśava, Hari, etc. are not Vṛṣṇi names, but were used as personal appellations of Vāsudeva. Patañjali in his commentary on Pāṇini, iv. 3. 98, notes that Vāsudeva, as the name of a Kṣatriya king of the race of Vṛṣṇis, is to be distinguished from Vāsudeva as the name of God. This God, worshipped by the Sātvatas according to their family rites, probably came to be identified with a Vṛṣṇi king Vāsudeva, and some of the personal characteristics of this king became also personal

¹ Sir R. G. Bhandarkar’s Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism, pp. 11–12.
characteristics of the god Vāsudeva. The word Kṛṣṇa occurs several times in the older literature. Thus Kṛṣṇa appears as a Vedic rṣi, as the composer of Rg-Veda, viii. 74. In the Mahā-bhārata Anukramanī Kṛṣṇa is said to have descended from Aṅgiras. Kṛṣṇa appears in the Chāndogya Upaniśad (iii. 17) as the son of Devaki, as in the Ghaṭa-jātaka. It is therefore probable that Vāsudeva came to be identified with Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī. The older conception of Kṛṣṇa’s being aṛtvij is found in the Mahā-bhārata, and Bhīṣma in the Sabhā-parva speaks of him as being aṛtvij and well-versed in the accessory literature of the Vedas (vedāṅga). It is very probable, as Dr Ray Chaudhury points out, that Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, was the same as Vāsudeva, the founder of the Bhāgavata system; for he is referred to in the Ghaṭa-jātaka as being Kanhāyana, or Kanha, which is the same as Kṛṣṇa, and as Devaki-putra, and in the Chāndogya Upaniśad, iii. 17. 6, also he is referred to as being Devaki-putra. In the Ghaṭa-jātaka Kṛṣṇa is spoken of as being a warrior, whereas in the Chāndogya Upaniśad he is a pupil of Ghora Aṅgiras, who taught him a symbolic sacrifice, in which penances (tapas), gifts (dāna), sincerity (ārjāva), non-injury (ahimsā) and truthfulness (satya-vacana) may be regarded as sacrificial fees (dakṣinā). The Mahā-bhārata, ii. 317, describes Kṛṣṇa both as a sage who performed long courses of asceticism in Gandhamādana, Puṣkara and Badarī, and as a great warrior. He is also described in the Mahā-bhārata as Vāsudeva, Devakī-putra and as the chief of the Sātvatas, and his divinity is everywhere acknowledged there. But it is not possible to assert definitely that Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa the warrior and Kṛṣṇa the sage were not three different persons, who in the Mahā-bhārata were unified and identified, though it is quite probable that all the different strands of legends refer to one identical person.

If the three Kṛṣnas refer to one individual Kṛṣṇā, he must have lived long before Buddha, as he is alluded to in the Chāndogya, and his guru Ghora Aṅgiras is also alluded to in the Kaustitaki-brāhmaṇa, xxx. 6 and the Kāṭhaka-samhitā, i. 1, which are pre-Buddhistic works. Jaina tradition refers to Kṛṣṇa as being anterior to Pārśvanātha (817 B.C.), and on this evidence Dr Ray Chaudhury thinks that he must have lived long before the closing years of the ninth century B.C.1

1 Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Sect, p. 39.
Bhāgavata and the Bhagavad-gītā.

The Mahā-bhārata (xii. 348) associates the Bhagavad-gītā with the doctrines of the Ekānti-Vaiṣṇavas. It is said there that the God Hari (bhagavān Hari) always blesses those that are devoted to God without any idea of gain (ekāntin) and accepts their adorations, offered in accordance with proper rites (vidhi-prayukta)\(^1\). This ekānta religion (ekānta-dharma) is dear to Nārāyaṇa, and those who adhere to it attain to Hari, as Nilakanṭha, the commentator on the Mahā-bhārata, points out, without passing through the three stages of Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Saṃkarṣana. The ekāntin faith leads to much higher goals than the paths of those that know the Vedas and lead the lives of ascetics. The principles of this ekāntin faith were enunciated by the Bhagavat himself in the battle of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kurus, when Arjuna felt disinclined to fight. This faith can be traced originally to the Sāma-veda. It is said that, when Nārāyaṇa created Brahmā, he gave him this sātvata faith, and from that time forth, as the Mahā-bhārata states, there has been a host of persons who were instructed in this faith and followed it. It was at a much later stage briefly described in the Hari-gītā\(^2\). This faith is very obscure and very difficult to be practised, and its chief feature is cessation from all kinds of injury. In some places it is said to recognize one vyūha: in other places two, and in others three, vyūhas are mentioned. Hari, however, is the final and absolute reality; he is both the agent, the action and the cause, as well as the absolute beyond action (akartā). There are, however, but few ekāntins in the world: had the world been filled with ekāntins, who never injured anyone, were always engaged in doing good to others and attained self-know-

\(^1\) Ekāntino nishāma-bhaktāḥ, Nilakanṭha’s commentary on the Mahā-bhārata, xii. 348. 3.

\(^2\) kathāv hari-gītāsū samāsā-vidhi-kalpitah, Hari-gītā. 53. The traditional teaching of the Gītā doctrines is represented as ancient in the Gītā itself (iv. 1–3), where it is said that Bhagavān declared it to Vivasvān, and he related it to Manu, and Manu to Ikṣvāku, and so on, until after a long time it was lost; it was again revived by Kṛṣṇa in the form of the Bhagavad-gītā. In the Mahā-bhārata, xii. 348, it is said that Sanatkumāra learned this doctrine from Nārāyaṇa, from him Prajāpati, from him Raibhya and from him Kuṣṇa. It was then lost. Then again Brahmā learned it from Nārāyaṇa, and from him the Barhiṣāda sages learned it, and from them Yēṣṭha. Then again it was lost; then again Brahmā learned it from Nārāyaṇa, and from him Dakṣa learned it, and from him Vivasvān, and from Vivasvān Manu, and from Manu Ikṣvāku. Thus the tradition of the Bhagavad-gītā, as given in the poem itself, tallies with the Mahā-bhārata account.
ledge, then the golden age, kṛta yuga, would have come again. This ekānta religion is a faith parallel to that of the Sāmkhya-yoga, and the devotee who follows it attains Nārāyana as his ultimate state of liberation. From this description in the Mahā-bhārata it seems that the doctrine of the Gitā was believed to be the ekāntin doctrine originally taught by Nārāyana to Brahmā, Nārada and others long before the recital of the Gitā by Kṛṣṇa in the Mahā-bhārata battle. It is further known that it had at least four or five different schools or variant forms, viz. eka-vyūha, dwīvyūha, tri-vyūha, catur-vyūha and ekānta, and that it was known as the Sātvata religion.

Yāmunācārya in his Āgama-prāmāṇya tries to combat a number of views in which the Bhāgavatas were regarded as being inferior to Brahmins, not being allowed to sit and dine with them. The Sātvatas, again, are counted by Manu as a low-caste people, born from outcast Vaiṣyas and not entitled to the holy thread. The Sātvatas were, of course, regarded as the same as Bhāgavatas, and their chief duties consisted in worshipping for their living in Viṣṇu temples by the order of the king. They also repaired or constructed temples and images for their living, and were therefore regarded as outcasts. That the Bhāgavatas did in later times worship images and build images and temples is also evident from the fact that most of the available Pañca-rātra works are full of details about image-building and image-worship. The Gitā (ix. 26) also speaks of adoration with water, flowers and leaves, which undoubtedly refers to image-worship. Saṁkarṣaṇa, as the brother or companion of Kṛṣṇa, is mentioned in Patañjali's Mahā-bhāṣya (ii. 2. 24) in a verse quoted by him, and in ii. 2. 34 he seems to quote another passage, in which it is related that different kinds of musical instruments were played in the temple of Dhana-pati, Rāma and Keśava, meaning Balarāma, Saṁkarṣaṇa and Kṛṣṇa.

As Yāmuna points out, the opponents of the Bhāgavata school urge that, since the ordinary Brahminic initiation is not deemed

\[1\] vaiśyāt tu jāyate vrātyāt sudhamvācārya eva ca kāriṣṭa ca vijanma ca maitraḥ satvata eva ca. Āgama-prāmāṇya, p. 8.

\[2\] pañcamah sātvato nāma Viṣṇor āyatanām hi sa pījayed ājñayā rājām sa tu bhāgavataṁ smṛtāṁ. Ibid.

\[3\] Saṁkarṣaṇa-duśṭīyasya balaṁ Kṛṣṇasya ardhitam. Mahā-bhāṣya, ii. 2. 27.

\[4\] myṛdaṅga-inoṁha-paravāḥ pythān nadanti saṁsadi prāśāde dhana-pati-rāma-keśavānām. Ibid. ii. 2. 34.
a sufficient qualification for undertaking the worship of Viṣṇu, and since special and peculiar forms of initiation and ceremonial performances are necessary, it is clear that the Bhāgavata forms of worship are not Vedic in their origin. The fourteen Hindu sciences, viz. the six vedāṅgas on Vedic pronunciation (śikṣā), ritual (kalpa), grammar (vyākaraṇa), metre (chandas), astronomy (jyotiṣa), lexicography (nirukta), the four Vedas, Mīmāṁsā, argumentative works or philosophy (nyāya-vistarā), the mythologies (purāṇa) and rules of conduct (dharma-śāstra), do not refer to the Pañca-rātra scriptures as being counted in their number. So the Bhāgavata or the Pañca-rātra scriptures are of non-Vedic origin. But Yāmuna contends that, since Nārāyaṇa is the supreme god, the Bhāgavata literature, which deals with his worship, must be regarded as having the same sources as the Vedas; the Bhāgavatas also have the same kind of outer dress as the Brahmins and the same kinds of lineage. He further contends that, though sātvata means an outcast, yet sātvata is a different word from sātvata, which means a devotee of Viṣṇu. Moreover, not all Bhāgavatas take to professional priestly duties and the worshipping of images for their livelihood; for there are many who worship the images through pure devotion. It is very easy to see that the above defence of the Bhāgavatas, as put forward by one of their best advocates, Yāmunācārya, is very tame and tends to suggest very strongly that the Bhāgavata sect was non-Vedic in its origin and that image-worship, image-making, image-repairing and temple-building had their origin in that particular sect. Yet throughout the entire scriptures of the Pañca-rātra school there is the universal and uncontested tradition that it is based on the Vedas. But its difference from the Vedic path is well known. Yāmuna himself refers to a passage (Agaṁa-prāmāṇya, p. 51) where it is said that Śāṅḍilya, not being able to find his desired end (puruṣārtha) in all the four Vedas, produced this scripture. The Gitā itself often describes the selfish aims of sacrifices, and Kṛṣṇa urges Arjuna to rise above the level of the Vedas. It seems, therefore, that the real connection of the Pañca-rātra literature is to be found in the fact that it originated from Vāsudeva or Viṣṇu, who is the supreme God from whom the Vedas themselves were produced. Thus theĪśvara-saṁhitā (1. 24–26) explains the matter, and states that the Bhāgavata literature is the great root of the Veda tree, and the Vedas themselves are but trunks of it, and the followers of Yoga are but its branches. Its
The main purpose is to propound the superiority of Vāsudeva, who is the root of the universe and identical with the Vedas. The affinity of this school of thought to the Upaniṣad school becomes apparent when it is considered that Vāsudeva was regarded in this system as the highest Brahman. The three other vyāhas were but subordinate manifestations of him, after the analogy of prajñā, virāt, viśva and tāijasa in monistic Vedānta. Patañjali’s Mahā-bhāṣya does not seem to know of the four vyāhas, as it mentions only Vāsudeva and Śaṅkarāṇa; and the Gitā knows only Vāsudeva. It seems, therefore, that the vyāha doctrine did not exist at the time of the Gitā and that it evolved gradually in later times. It is seen from a passage of the Mahā-bhārata, already referred to, that there were different variations of the doctrine and that some accepted one vyāha, others two, others three and others four. It is very improbable that, if the vyāha doctrine was known at the time of the Gitā, it should not have been mentioned therein. For the Gitā was in all probability the earliest work of the ekāntin school of the Bhāgavatas. It is also interesting in this connection to note that the name Nārāyaṇa is never mentioned in the Gitā, and Vāsudeva is only identified with Viṣṇu, the chief of the ādityas. Thus Sir R. G. Bhandarkar says, “It will be seen that the date of the Bhagavad-gitā, which contains

1 mahato veda-tyāksasya mūlā-bhūto mahān ayaṇi
skandha-bhūtā rg-ādyās te sākhā-bhūtās ca yoginaḥ
jagat-mūlasya vedasya Vāsudevasya mukhyataḥ
prajñaptakātā siddhā mūla-vedākhyataḥ dvijāh.

2 yasmāt sanyāk param brahma Vāsudevākhyam uttaram
asmād avāpyate śāstrī jñāna-pūrvena karmanā.
Pauṣkarāgama, as quoted in Rāmānuja-bhāṣya, 11. 2. 42.

The Chāndogya Upaniṣad (vii. 1. 2) refers also to the study of ekāyana, as in the passage vāko-vākyam ekāyanaṁ; ekāyana is also described as being itself a Veda in Śrīprāsaṇa-samhitā, ii. 38, 39:
vedam ekāyanaṁ nāma vedānāṁ śirasi sthitam
 tad-arthakam paṇca-rātram mokṣa-daṁ tat-kriyāvatām
 yasmān eva mokṣā-margo vede proktaḥ sanditanah
 mad-ārādhana-rūpena tasmād ekāyanaṁ bhavet.

See also the article “The Pañcarātras or Bhāgavata-sāstra,” by Govindācārya Svāmin, J.R.A.S. 1911.

3 That the ekāntin faith is the same as the Sātvata or the Pañcarātra faith is evident from the following quotation from the Pādma-tantra, iv. 2. 88:
sūris suhṛt bhāgavataśa sātvataḥ paṇca-kāla-vit
ekāntikas tan-mayaś ca paṇca-rāтриka ity api.

This faith is also called ekāyana, or the path of the One, as is seen from the following passage from the Īśvara-samhitā, i. 18:
mokṣāyanāya vai pañthā etad-anyo na vidyate
 tasmād ekāyanaṁ nāma pravadantī mantāṇaḥ.
no mention of the vyūhas or personified forms, is much earlier than those of the inscriptions, the Niddesa and Patañjali, i.e. it was composed not later than the beginning of the fourth century before the Christian era; how much earlier it is difficult to say. At the time when the Gitā was conceived and composed the identification of Vāsudeva with Nārāyaṇa had not yet taken place, nor had the fact of his being an incarnation of Viṣṇu come to be acknowledged, as appears from the work itself....Viṣṇu is alluded to as the chief of the Ādityas and not as the supreme being, and Vāsudeva was Viṣṇu in this sense, as mentioned in chapter x, because the best thing of a group or class is represented to be his vibhūti or special manifestation."

The date of the Gitā has been the subject of long discussions among scholars, and it is inconvenient for our present purposes to enter into an elaborate controversy. One of the most extreme views on the subject is that of Dr Lorinser, who holds that it was composed after Buddha, and several centuries after the commencement of the Christian era, under the influence of the New Testament. Mr Telang in the introduction to his translation of the Bhagavad-gitā points out—as has been shown above—that the Bhagavad-gitā does not know anything that is peculiarly Buddhistic. Attempt has also been made to prove that the Gitā not only does not know anything Buddhistic, but that it also knows neither the accepted Sāmkhya philosophy nor the Yoga of Patañjali's Yoga-sūtra. This, together with some other secondary considerations noted above, such as the non-identification of Vāsudeva with Nārāyaṇa and the non-appearance of the vyūha doctrine, seems to be a very strong reason for holding the Gitā to be in its general structure pre-Buddhistic. The looseness of its composition, however, always made it easy to interpolate occasional verses. Since there is no other consideration which might lead us to think that the Gitā was written after the Brahma-sūtras, the verse Brahma-sūtra-padāś caiva hetumadbhir viniścitaḥ has to be either treated as an interpolation or interpreted differently. Śaṅkara also thought that the Brahma-sūtra referred to the Gitā as an old sacred writing (smṛti), and this tallies with our other considerations regarding the antiquity of the Gitā. The view of Dr Lorinser, that the Bhagavad-gitā must have borrowed at least some of its materials from Christianity, has been pretty successfully refuted by

1 Vaiṣṇavism and Saivism, p. 13.
Mr Telang in the introduction to his translation, and it therefore need not be here again combated. Dr Ray Chaudhury also has discussed the problem of the relation of Bhāgavatism to Christianity, and in the discussion nothing has come out which can definitely make it seem probable that the Bhāgavata cult was indebted to Christianity at any stage of its development; the possibility of the Gitā being indebted to Christianity may be held to be a mere fancy. It is not necessary here to enter into any long discussion in refuting Garbe's view that the Gitā was originally a work on Śāmkhya lines (written in the first half of the second century B.C.), which was revised on Vedāntic lines and brought to its present form in the second century A.D.; for I suppose it has been amply proved that, in the light of the uncontradicted tradition of the Mahā-bhārata and the Paṇaṣa-rātra literature, the Gitā is to be regarded as a work of the Bhāgavata school, and an internal analysis of the work also shows that the Gitā is neither an ordinary Śāmkhya nor a Vedānta work, but represents some older system wherein the views of an earlier school of Śāmkhya are mixed up with Vedāntic ideas different from the Vedānta as interpreted by Śaṅkara. The arbitrary and dogmatic assertion of Garbe, that he could clearly separate the original part of the Gitā from the later additions, need not, to my mind, be taken seriously. The antiquity of the Bhāgavata religion is, as pointed out by Tilak, acknowledged by Senart (The Indian Interpreter, October 1909 and January 1910) and Bühler (Indian Antiquary, 1894), and the latter says, "The ancient Bhāgavata, Sātavata or Paṇaṣa-rātra sect, devoted to the worship of Nārāyaṇa and his deified teacher Kṛṣṇa Devaki-putra, dates from a period long anterior to the rise of the Jainas in the eighth century B.C."

And assuredly the Gitā is the earliest available literature of this school. As regards external evidence, it may be pointed out that the Gitā is alluded to not only by Kālidāsa and Bāna, but also by Bhāsa in his play Karna-bhāra. Tilak also refers to an article by T. G. Kale in the Vedic Magazine, vii. pp. 528-532, where he points out that the Bodhāyana-Grhya-sūtra, ii. 22. 9, quotes the Gitā, ix. 26,

1 Tilak quotes this passage on page 574 of his Bhagavad-gitā-rāhasya (Bengali translation of his Marathi work) as follows:

\[ \text{hato 'pi labhate svargam jītvā tu labhate yātaḥ} \\
\text{ubhe bahumate loke nāṣti nīphaḷatā rāne}, \]

which repeats the first two lines of the Gitā, 11. 37.
and the Bodhāyana-Pitr-medha-sūtra, at the beginning of the third praśna, quotes another passage of the Gitā\(^1\). Incidentally it may also be mentioned that the style of the Gitā is very archaic; it is itself called an Upaniṣad, and there are many passages in it which are found in the Īṣa (Īṣa, 5, cf. the Bhagavad-gitā, XIII. 15 and VI. 29), Mundaka (Mund. II. 1. 2, cf. the Gitā, XIII. 15), Kāthaka (II. 15, II. 18 and 19 and II. 7, cf. the Gitā, VIII. 11; II. 20 and 29) and other Upaniṣads. We are thus led to assign to the Gitā a very early date, and, since there is no definite evidence to show that it was post-Buddhistic, and since also the Gitā does not contain the slightest reference to anything Buddhistic, I venture to suggest that it is pre-Buddhistic, however unfashionable such a view may appear. An examination of the Gitā from the point of view of language also shows that it is archaic and largely un-Pāṇinean. Thus from the root yudh we have yudhya (VIII. 7) for yudhyasva; yat, which is ātmane-pada in Pāṇinean Sanskrit, is used in parasmai-pada also, as in VI. 36, VII. 3, IX. 14 and XV. 11; ram is also used in parasmai-pada in X. 9. The roots kāṅkṣ, vraj, vis and inō are used in Pāṇinean Sanskrit in parasmai-pada, but in the Gitā they are all used in ātmane-pada as well—kāṅkṣ in I. 31, vraj in II. 54, vis in XXIII. 55 and inō in VI. 19 and XIV. 23. Again, the verb ud-vij, which is generally used in ātmane-pada, is used in parasmai-pada in V. 20; nivasāsya is used in XII. 8 for nivatsasā, mā sucaḥ for mā socih in XVI. 5; and the usage of prasaviyadhvam in III. 10 is quite ungrammatical. So yamaḥ samyamatām in X. 29 should be yamaḥ samyacchatām, he sakheti in XI. 41 is an instance of wrong sandhi, priyāyārhasi in XI. 44 is used for priyāyāḥ arhasi, senānīnām in X. 24 is used for senānīyām\(^2\).

These linguistic irregularities, though they may not themselves be regarded as determining anything definitely, may yet be regarded

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\(^1\) Bodhāyana-Gṛhya-iṣṭa-sūtra: 

\[ 
\text{tad āha bhagavān,} 
\text{patram puṣpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati} 
\text{tad āham bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayatātmanah.} 
\]

Also Bodhāyana-Pitr-medha-sūtra: yatasya vai naṁṣyaṁ dhrvam maraṇam 

\[ 
\text{iti vijñāyā tasmin jāte na prahṛṣyaṁ mṛte ca na viṣṭēta.} 
\]

Compare the Gitā, jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyuḥ, etc.

N.B. These references are all taken from Tilak’s Bhagavad-gitā-rāhasya pp. 574, etc.

\(^2\) For enumeration of more errors of this character see Mr V. K. Rajwade’s article in the Bhandarkar commemoration volume, from which these have been collected.
as contributory evidence in favour of the high antiquity of the Gitā. The Gitā may have been a work of the Bhāgavata school written long before the composition of the Mahā-bhārata, and may have been written on the basis of the Bhārata legend, on which the Mahā-bhārata was based. It is not improbable that the Gitā, which summarized the older teachings of the Bhāgavata school, was incorporated into the Mahā-bhārata, during one of its revisions, by reason of the sacredness that it had attained at the time.