

## KṚṢṆA IN THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ: A BEGINNING ONTOLOGY FROM THE GAUḌĪYA PERSPECTIVE\*

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### Introduction

I attempt in this paper to clarify certain essential teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, primarily those focusing on a single point: the nature and status of Kṛṣṇa, God, according to the *Gītā* itself. My strong conviction is that the *Gītā* is a lucid, self-explanatory work, and therefore the occasional practice of commentators to force on it extraneous doctrines often renders the text obscure where it is bright, esoteric where it is literal, and impersonal where it is intensely personal. I am operating here on an ancient principle which holds that certain Vedic<sup>1</sup> texts are *svataḥ-prāmāṇyam*, literally “evident in or by themselves.” As stated in the *Bhaviṣya-purāṇa*, “The *Ṛg Veda*, *Sama Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, *Mahābhārata*, *Pāñcarātra*, and original *Rāmāyaṇa* are all considered by authorities to be Veda. The knowers also know that those Purāṇas dedicated to Lord Viṣṇu enjoy the same status. These literatures are self-evident, and there is nothing at all to speculate about them.”<sup>2</sup>

I should note at once that this principle does not do away with intellectual response to the scriptures. Rather it is a call for sober practices for understanding, in which we first struggle to comprehend a scriptural message on its own terms, through careful study of its internal structures of meaning.

We get some historical flavor of this methodology by turning to a fascinating theological debate that took place almost five hundred years ago in Benares between Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the founder of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, and Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, a leading Śāṅkarite *saṁnyāsī* of

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the time. After hearing Prakāśānanda's interpretation of *Vedānta-sūtra*, Śrī Caitanya replied, "The Veda is evident by itself. It is the crown-jewel of all evidence. When it is interpreted, the self-evident quality is lost."<sup>3</sup>

The quality of self-evidence mentioned here is especially apparent, in my view, in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which is part of the *Mahābhārata*. I have therefore selected five specific areas, vital to the *Bhagavad-gītā*'s message, that are especially prone to misinterpretation, and I have attempted to demonstrate from the *Bhagavad-gītā* itself the consistent, and self-evident view of the speaker, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, especially as He describes Himself.

The first topic is the *Gītā*'s strong monotheism, in which the many gods of the Hindu pantheon are sharply relegated to the status of subordinate servitors to the Supreme Lord. The second topic is that of the separate individuality of Kṛṣṇa as God, distinct from, and transcendental to, the individual entities, who are tiny expansions of the Lord. Third is Kṛṣṇa's standing as the supreme controller. The fourth subject is the delicate issue of monism. I show that despite certain statements in the *Gītā* to the effect that "Kṛṣṇa is everything," there is nothing like a bald monistic doctrine in the *Gītā*. Finally, fifth, I argue from the *Bhagavad-gītā* itself that Kṛṣṇa comes to this world in a spiritual, eternal form, and not a material body, such as those we inhabit.

As mentioned above, these five topics ineluctably lead to a single conclusion: that the real and final topic of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is Kṛṣṇa Himself, who is inseparably related, and yet eternally transcendental, to the individual souls, of whom we are specimens. This doctrine of *acintya bhedābheda-tattva*, or the inconceivable, simultaneous difference and nondifference of the Lord and the individual souls, is Śrī Caitanya's reading of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and Vedic literature in general.

I have included the topic that Kṛṣṇa is the controller to drive home the point that the Godhead being talked about in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is not a vague, wispy Deity whose true ineffable status is but indirectly hinted at by the hierarchical language of mortals. Completely to the contrary, we have in the *Gītā* a full-blown expression of an omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent Supreme Lord, commanding, and even poignantly entreating, the individual souls enmeshed in *māyā* to return to Him in His divine abode.

I call this paper "A Beginning Ontology..." because the constraints of time and space have permitted only an introductory statement about the Godhead as He is conceived in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In fact, the points I

make here are amplified by the rest of the Bhagavad-gītā. At the very least, I hope this paper will stimulate the reader to investigate the Gītā as far as possible on its own terms. There are certainly esoteric passages in religious scriptures, including the Vedic books. But the guiding Vedic principle is that we should interpret only that which is ambiguous, that which plainly calls for explication of hidden meanings. There are many such statements in the Sanskrit scriptures, but the fundamental message, the central theme, is generally clear.

The verses quoted here are all my own translations, unless otherwise indicated, and I have given great stress on literal accuracy in their rendering. I have endeavored to avoid, thereby, unfounded flights of poetic inspiration, and dubious constructions devised to legitimate tentative insights. However, the point of view here is clearly in the tradition of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya, Śrīpāda Rāmānujācārya, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and other illustrious Vaiṣṇava devotees and scholars, who opposed the monistic interpretation of Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya and those in his line. In a sense, one gets here a glimpse of a millennial theological debate in action.

### 1. There is One God

In the Bhagavad-gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa declares Himself to be the Supreme Godhead, and He specifically asserts His supremacy over the well-known gods or demigods of the Vedic and Hindu pantheon. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa is the source of all the other gods that inhabit the cosmos,<sup>4</sup> for He is the source of all that exists.<sup>5</sup> Thus those who worship other gods are ultimately worshipping Kṛṣṇa, the source and sustainer of those gods.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, although the gods may accept offerings from their worshipers, the gods themselves are acting as mere agents of the Supreme God who is the ultimate enjoyer of all types of sacrifice.<sup>7</sup> An ignorant worshiper of the demigods who does not clearly recognize this supremacy of the Godhead falls to a lower status of life.<sup>8</sup>

The demigods cannot award ultimate liberation, since those who attain their worlds fall again to the mortal realm when their pious merit is exhausted.<sup>9</sup> This impermanence holds true not only for the planet of Indra, *surendra-loka* (9.20), or *svarga-loka* (9.21), but indeed for all the worlds within the material cosmos, including that of the creator, Brahmā.<sup>10</sup> It is only in the world of the Supreme God, Kṛṣṇa, that one finds the eternal abode, going to which one never returns to take birth in the material world.<sup>11</sup>

Further evidence of the temporary position of the gods is given in the eleventh chapter of the *Gītā*. The cosmic form, which the Lord therein displays, is revealed to be Kṛṣṇa's form and power of Time<sup>12</sup> and even the hosts of gods are overwhelmed and astonished, and enter within Time's destructive power (11.21–22).

Lord Kṛṣṇa is also absolutely superior to the gods in cognitive powers. In all respects, Kṛṣṇa is the origin of the gods. Hence they cannot understand Kṛṣṇa's origin.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, He is beginningless. Not only the gods but the entire universe is bewildered by the modes of nature and thus does not recognize or understand Kṛṣṇa, who is beyond those modes.<sup>14</sup> It is only because of the bewildering influence of the material modes upon the conditioned souls that they worship other gods at all.<sup>15</sup>

The omniscience of Kṛṣṇa is superlatively causal, since Kṛṣṇa is the source of everyone's memory, knowledge, and forgetting.<sup>16</sup> Indeed Kṛṣṇa knows the past, present, and future of all beings, but no one, in the material world, knows Him in truth.<sup>17</sup> In fact, so much are the living beings dependent on Kṛṣṇa, that even their faith in other gods must be supplied by Kṛṣṇa.<sup>18</sup> And the results awarded by those gods are actually given by Kṛṣṇa alone, of whom the gods are but agents.<sup>19</sup>

As Kṛṣṇa is prior to the gods and absolutely superior in powers of being and cognition, so too is the result of worshipping Him: eternal life in the Lord's abode, clearly distinguished from the temporary results derived from worshipping all other powerful beings. And this is confirmed in one of the *Gītā*'s most famous verses, "Men of small intelligence worship the demigods, and their fruits are limited and temporary. Those who worship the demigods go to the demigods, but My devotees come to Me."<sup>20</sup> Similarly: "Those sworn to the gods go to the gods; those sworn to the forefathers go to the forefathers; worshipers of ghostly spirits go to such spirits; but those who worship Me go to Me."<sup>21</sup>

In view of this fundamental distinction between Kṛṣṇa and the gods, and their respective powers to reward their worshipers, only those whose intelligence is stolen by lust worship the gods and neglect the Supreme Godhead.<sup>22</sup> And as stated above, even the temporary fruits awarded by the gods are really provided by Kṛṣṇa alone.<sup>23</sup>

Thus there is nothing at all beyond Kṛṣṇa;<sup>24</sup> He is the great Lord of all the worlds;<sup>25</sup> and He is the creator and sustainer of everything.<sup>26</sup> Within the *Gītā*, Arjuna glorifies Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Abode, the Supreme Purifier, the Supreme Divine Person.<sup>27</sup> Kṛṣṇa is the

God of the gods,<sup>28</sup> and He is the origin of the gods.<sup>29</sup> Kṛṣṇa is the primeval Person.<sup>30</sup> Arjuna further affirms that no one is equal to or greater than Kṛṣṇa.<sup>31</sup>

The Lord ends His teaching in the Gītā by urging Arjuna to abandon all other duties (*dharmān*) and take shelter of Kṛṣṇa alone: *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* (18.66). Thus the monotheistic thrust of the Gītā is neither vague nor occasional, and, as shown later in this paper, apparent suggestions of a monistic ontology do not compromise the overwhelming conclusion: the absolute supremacy of Kṛṣṇa.

Arjuna certainly understands Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Lord. When asked if he has understood the Lord's teachings, he replies: "My illusion is gone... I shall execute Your instructions."<sup>32</sup>

## 2. Kṛṣṇa and the individual souls are distinct entities.

As Lord Kṛṣṇa is eternally the Supreme Person, so the individual souls are, of logical necessity, eternally distinct from and subordinate to the Lord: "Never did I not exist, nor you, nor all these kings. Nor shall we not exist, all of us, for ever after."<sup>33</sup>

Here Kṛṣṇa clearly states that "all of us" (*sarve vayam*)—He, Arjuna, and all the assembled kings—will exist forever, just as they always existed at all times in the past. Indeed, never was there a time when we did not exist. In the previous verse, Kṛṣṇa chided Arjuna for taking the body to be the self. Similarly, in the verse immediately following, Kṛṣṇa will describe the soul as *dehī*, the owner of the body, different from *deha*, the body. Indeed the entire first half of the second chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā makes it clear that our real identity is eternal soul and not the body. Thus, having said that a learned person (*pañḍita*) sees the soul, and not the body, as primary, surely Kṛṣṇa is speaking of the real person, the soul, as He begins to explain to Arjuna the fundamental nature of the world. After all, how can the Lord be *apañḍita*, or foolish? Thus it is the real Kṛṣṇa, the eternal Kṛṣṇa, and the real Arjuna, the eternal Arjuna, who have always existed and always will exist. And all of us, says Kṛṣṇa, will continue to exist in the future.

Similarly, later in the Gītā, we find the following:

There are two [classes of] beings in this world, the perishable and the imperishable. All created forms are perishable, but a soul who

stands at the summit is imperishable.

The Supreme Person, however, is another, and He is declared to be the Supersoul. It is that inexhaustible Lord who has entered the three worlds and sustains them.

Because I am beyond the perishable beings, and greater even than the imperishable, I am thus celebrated in this world, and in the Vedas, as the Supreme Person. One who knows Me in this way to be the Supreme Person is a knower of everything, and he worships Me with all his heart. (15.16-19)

These four verses of the Gītā offer many significant lessons. Kṛṣṇa has defined the term *puruṣottama* to mean the Supreme Person who stands beyond the conditioned souls entangled in the snare of *māyā* and even beyond the highest soul (that is, beyond the liberated soul who stands at the highest point of spiritual perfection). Indeed Monier-Williams in his Oxford Sanskrit dictionary describes *kūṭa-sthaḥ* as the pure soul standing on the unchanging, spiritual platform. Since Kṛṣṇa emphatically declares that the *puruṣottama* is beyond even the liberated soul, we can hardly translate *puruṣa* here as “man” or anything indicative of a material position, since this would not even apply to the *kūṭa-stha* or the liberated soul, and what to speak of the Supreme Person who stands far beyond such a pure soul. Kṛṣṇa uses the word *api*, “even” to make explicit that He is “beyond even the liberated soul.” In other words, it is not the Gītā’s philosophy that one becomes Kṛṣṇa, or equal to Kṛṣṇa, by spiritual liberation. A normal reader would not question that Kṛṣṇa is beyond the conditioned soul, but here the Lord emphasizes by the word *api* that He is beyond even the liberated soul who stands at the summit of spiritual perfection.

The finality of this understanding of the supreme personal individuality of Kṛṣṇa is confirmed at 15.19, wherein Kṛṣṇa states that one who understands Him in this way (*evam*) as the Supreme Person (*puruṣottama*) is the knower of everything (*sarva-vit*) and worships the Lord with all his heart.<sup>34</sup> In other words, Kṛṣṇa explicitly rejects the notion that realization of the personal feature of the Lord is a mere prelude to an eventual impersonal understanding.

Earlier in the fifteenth chapter, Kṛṣṇa states that the living being in this world is eternally a fragmental part (*aṁśa*) of the Lord.<sup>35</sup> The soul is further said to be indivisible,<sup>36</sup> and so the fragmental status is not effectuated in time, but is a pre-eternal, never-ending fact.<sup>37</sup> As Lord Kṛṣṇa simply puts it, God is not one of the ordinary living beings, nor even one of the liberat-

ed souls but, rather, “the Supreme Person is someone else...”<sup>38</sup>

We have already demonstrated that Kṛṣṇa claims to be absolutely cognizant and the source of all other cognition. He makes the same claim in the thirteenth chapter, where He introduces the terms *kṣetra*, “the field” (i.e. the body) and *kṣetra-jñā*, “the knower of the field” (i.e. the soul who is conscious of the body). The Lord concludes this discourse by asserting that although each soul is the knower of his field, i.e. his particular body, “I am the knower of all fields,” meaning all bodies.<sup>39</sup>

In the same thirteenth chapter, Kṛṣṇa describes both the individual soul and the Lord as *puruṣa*—persons—but the contrast is striking. The individual soul is a *puruṣa*, but he is (a) “situated in material nature,” (b) “trying to enjoy the material qualities,” and thus (c) compelled by his attachments to those qualities to take birth in high and low species of bodily engagement.<sup>40</sup>

In the very next verse, the Lord describes Himself also as *puruṣa*, but the difference between the two *puruṣas* could not be more clear, for Kṛṣṇa is said to be the supreme or transcendental *puruṣaḥ* (*puruṣaḥ paraḥ*). The use of the adjective *paraḥ* to denote the supreme *puruṣa* is significant, for this word not only entails the notion of supremacy, but also a strong sense of “the other.” Indeed, *para* is often used in Sanskrit to indicate the opposite of *ātma*- or *sva*-, both of which indicate “self” or “one’s own.” In fact, *ātma* in Sanskrit is the simple reflexive pronoun. In other words, *para* has the unequivocal sense here of the wholly other who is supreme. In this same verse, Lord Kṛṣṇa also uses the term *paramātmā*, describing Himself thus as the “Supreme Soul.”

It should be noted that the adjective *parama* (used with *ātmā* to form *paramātmā*) is almost identical to *para* in conveying supremacy, but that *parama* does not convey the sense of being the “other” in contrast to one’s self. It is this wider term *para* that Kṛṣṇa employs to distinguish Himself, as *puruṣa*, from the ordinary *puruṣa* who is struggling vainly to exploit the Lord’s material creation. Thus the Gītā’s claim that the individual soul is eternally distinct from the Supreme Soul is a strong one, and not a vague or esoteric articulation.

The Lord is also said to be the maintainer of the living beings.<sup>41</sup> It is natural that the Lord maintain the living beings, for they are stated in the Gītā to be the Lord’s own energy: “Besides the material nature, there is another superior energy of Mine. Know it to be the living being...”<sup>42</sup> The living being trapped in the clutches of *māyā*, the Lord’s illusory material

energy, can escape her control only by surrendering to the Lord. He cannot escape by his own autonomous decision or endeavor.<sup>43</sup>

### 3. God Is the Controller

Because God, Kṛṣṇa, is one, and eternally separate from the individual soul, it follows that He is the Lord and controller of all that be. Lord Kṛṣṇa delineates a bipartite notion of causality in which material nature is the cause of the physical workings of the world whereas the living being is the cause of his own enjoyment and suffering.<sup>44</sup> Nature responds to the soul's attempts to exploit the illusory material world by entangling the soul in the web of *māyā*. Perhaps the greatest illusion is the soul's false perception that he is performing those physical events, such as moving of the body, that in fact are done by nature.<sup>45</sup> Nature in turn is directly under the control of the Supreme Lord, and the entire cosmos turns by His command.<sup>46</sup> Thus the causal chain originates in Kṛṣṇa, who states: "I am the Lord of all beings, and I stay in their hearts, causing all beings, who are mounted on the machine (of the body), to wander in this world in illusion."<sup>47</sup>

Kṛṣṇa is a living God who orders, punishes, and reclaims the fallen souls, who are eternally part and parcel of Him. Thus Kṛṣṇa declares, "Those who always faithfully abide by My injunction, without envy, are freed from all karmic acts. But those who are envious and do not abide by My injunction you should know to be mindless and lost, for they are confused about all that is knowledge."<sup>48</sup>

This same point is driven home at the end of the *Gītā*: "If then because of false ego you will not hear, then you will perish."<sup>49</sup> We will understand Kṛṣṇa without doubt and fully, Kṛṣṇa declares, by hearing from Him.<sup>50</sup>

One achieves real peace by recognizing that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the great Lord of all the worlds.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, one who knows that Kṛṣṇa is the great Lord, and that He is unborn and beginningless, is himself unbewildered among mortal beings and is freed of all sins.<sup>52</sup> Arjuna acknowledges Lord Kṛṣṇa to be the "controller of all beings" and the "Lord of the universe."<sup>53</sup>

Finally, the entire eleventh chapter of the *Gītā* demonstrates unforgettably way that the entire universe can be devoured in an instant by Lord Kṛṣṇa. His control is absolute, for all beings exist within Him: "When you have thus learned the truth you will never again fall into illusion, for by that knowledge you will see that all living beings are in the Soul—that is, they are in Me."<sup>54</sup>

#### 4. Kṛṣṇa Is Everything

Lord Kṛṣṇa strongly and repeatedly declares in the Bhagavad-gītā that He is the source of all that be. It follows that God is not only distinct from His creative energies but is also one with them, since they are eternally resting on Him. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu thus stated that the philosophy of the Gītā is, ultimately, *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*, which means that God is inconceivably one with, and simultaneously different from, His creation. We shall survey Kṛṣṇa's statements that He is the source of everything, and then see how this claim is logically linked to the claim that "all things are Kṛṣṇa."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares in the Bhagavad-gītā: "I am the source of everything; from Me everything emanates."<sup>55</sup> Similarly, He states: "I am the origin and the annihilation of the entire cosmos."<sup>56</sup> Kṛṣṇa goes on to say, "There is nothing else beyond Me, O Dhanañjaya. All this world rests on me like pearls strung on a thread."<sup>57</sup> And as previously quoted, "Neither the hosts of gods nor the great sages know My origin, for in all respects I am the origin of the gods and great sages."<sup>58</sup> Kṛṣṇa is the source not only of the living beings, but of their qualities as well: "Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from confusion [and ten other qualities], in their various types, are states of being of the living entities, and they all come from Me."<sup>59</sup> And also, "The seven primordial sages and the four Manus owe their existence to me for they are born of My mind."<sup>60</sup>

Let us now examine the tenth chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā, wherein Lord Kṛṣṇa claims (10.20–38) to be the superlative exemplar in seventy categories. Here is a sample verse from that section: "Of the Ādityas I am Viṣṇu; of lights I am the radiant sun; of the Maruts I am Marīci; of stars I am the moon."<sup>61</sup> To read monism into all of this would be a transparent misreading of the text, for a serious look at the entire chapter makes abundantly clear what Kṛṣṇa is actually saying.

First, we notice that most of Kṛṣṇa's statements, cited above, to the effect that He is the source of everything come from this same tenth chapter, namely verses 10.2, 10.4–5, 10.7, and 10.8. Kṛṣṇa precedes, then, His identification of Himself with the greatest items of this world by emphasizing that He is the source of all these things. Recall that in the seventh chapter Kṛṣṇa stated that all the things of this world are His energy, or *prakṛti* (7.4–6) and that He is therefore the source of all that be.

That Kṛṣṇa is referring to the same ontological state of affairs becomes

clear when we notice the repeated use here of the word *vibhūti*, which indicates the following: glory, expansion, great power, manifestation of might, and so on. Arjuna introduces this term when he says to Kṛṣṇa: “You should speak about Your own divine glories, those by which You pervade these worlds and abide in them.”<sup>62</sup> The word for “glories” here is *vibhūṭayaḥ*, the plural form of *vibhūti*. But that is just the beginning of this word’s career in the tenth chapter of the *Gītā*. Arjuna then says, “O Janārdana [Kṛṣṇa], please describe again, and extensively, Your mystic power and might, for as I listen to this ambrosia, I find no satiation.”<sup>63</sup> Again, the word for “might” is *vibhūtim*. Lord Kṛṣṇa then answers, agreeing to explain His own divine opulences, and again the word used (10.19) is *vibhūṭayaḥ*, the plural of *vibhūti*. In the very next *śloka*, the Lord begins His identification of Himself with the seventy categories mentioned above. At the end of the narration, Kṛṣṇa says, “O burner of the foe, there is no end to My divine powers, and so I have given some example of the extension of My glory.”<sup>64</sup> Predictably the word *vibhūti* is used twice in this verse, and it is repeated in the following verse, wherein Lord Kṛṣṇa says: “Whatever glorious, beautiful, or mighty being there may be, understand that it is born of but a spark of My splendor.”<sup>65</sup> Here the word *vibhūti-mat* means “that which possesses *vibhūti*—that is: power, glory, etc.

By using the word *vibhūti* no less than six times, Lord Kṛṣṇa makes clear that He is talking about *His powers*, *His properties*, *His opulences*, and so on. In the seventh chapter, there are three “identification verses” (7.9–11) which exactly resemble in meter, language, and content the “identification verses” of the tenth chapter (10.20–38). These three verses, as in the tenth chapter, are preceded by an elaborate analysis of how Lord Kṛṣṇa is the source of all, matter and spirit being His inferior and superior potencies respectively. At the conclusion of 7.9–11, Kṛṣṇa declares that all these opulences with which He has identified Himself come in fact from Him, and are resting in Him, but He is not in them.<sup>66</sup>

It also bears mentioning that one who rightly understands the sense in which Kṛṣṇa is the source of everything does not then consider all beings to be God, but rather worships the real God with wholehearted devotion: “I am the source of all. From Me all proceeds. Knowing this, the wise worship Me with all their being.”<sup>67</sup>

The purpose of the identification verses is to nourish the devoted theists, as Kṛṣṇa explains in the verse that follows the one cited above: “Their minds in Me, their lives dedicated to Me, the devotees enlighten one

another, always speaking about Me, and thus they are satisfied and rejoice."<sup>68</sup> Further, Arjuna explicitly states that it is just to help such meditation on the Lord that he is requesting Kṛṣṇa to describe His glories: "Always thinking of You, O Yogin, how can I know You? In which various forms, my Lord, am I to think about You? Describe to me at length Your glories...etc."<sup>69</sup> There is hardly a doctrine of pantheism in the Bhagavad-gītā. The real message is quite clear: surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Kṛṣṇa says that after many births, one in knowledge surrenders to the Lord, realizing that "Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) is everything."<sup>70</sup> Arjuna tells Kṛṣṇa, "You cover everything and thus You are everything."<sup>71</sup> These verses offer devastating evidence against the impersonal, monistic interpretation of the Gītā.

In the first instance, Lord Kṛṣṇa's statement comes in the midst of a discussion of four types of people who do not surrender to God, and four types who do. Kṛṣṇa's point in the verse we have cited (7.19) is that surrender to Kṛṣṇa is the sign that one is actually in knowledge, after many lifetimes of seeking the truth. In fact, the learned one who realizes that Kṛṣṇa is everything belongs to one of the four classes of men who surrender to the Lord.

We have already explained at length the many verses in chapter seven, preceding 7.19, which claim that Kṛṣṇa is the source of everything, and that He is identical with the opulent features of this world in the sense that such items, composed of the inferior modes of nature (*sattva, rajas, tamas*), are but expansions of the Lord's power. And the verses following 7.19 emphasize that it is Kṛṣṇa alone who is to be worshiped, and not other gods. In other words, the topic under discussion is nothing but surrender to Kṛṣṇa, and an elaborate ontological explanation in this very chapter has clarified that Kṛṣṇa is to be identified with the wonderful things of this world only in the sense that such items rest on Him. It was explicitly stated that Kṛṣṇa is simultaneously aloof, that He is "not in them."<sup>72</sup>

Similarly, Arjuna declares to Kṛṣṇa: "You are everything because You entirely possess everything."<sup>73</sup> Arjuna's statement is in response to the cosmic vision of God, in which Kṛṣṇa devours all the universe, and all beings are subdued by the Lord's omnipotent feature of time. That is, it is in the context of God's absolute domination of the subordinate living beings that Arjuna utters His prayer, "You are everything!"

Still, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the somewhat complex

ontology operating here, and Kṛṣṇa Himself provides us such a focused metaphysical analysis in the ninth chapter (4–10), where He intentionally speaks in apparently contradictory language: “By Me in My unmanifested form, this whole universe is pervaded. All beings are situated in Me, but I am not situated in them. The beings are also not situated in Me. Behold My mystic power. I am the maintainer of all beings; I am also not situated in them. My self is the source of the beings. Understand that just as the great wind, which goes everywhere, is situated in the sky, so all beings are situated in Me.”<sup>74</sup>

Lord Kṛṣṇa here makes several ontological distinctions between Himself, God, and the many living beings like us:

1. Kṛṣṇa states that He individually pervades the entire universe. There is no similar claim for any of the individual living beings. (9.4)
2. All beings are situated in Kṛṣṇa, but He is not in them. (9.4)
3. Kṛṣṇa is the maintainer of all beings, but not they of Him. (9.5)
4. Kṛṣṇa is the source (*bhāvana*) of all beings, but not they of Him. (9.5)
5. Lord Kṛṣṇa compares Himself to the sky, and the living beings to the air, which moves within the sky but does not mix with it. (9.6)

This metaphor [in Number 5] is further developed at 13.3, wherein Kṛṣṇa compares the sky to the soul, which does not mix with the body. Kṛṣṇa states at 13.3 that although the sky extends everywhere (*sarva-gatam*), because of its subtlety (*saukṣmatvāt*) it does not mix with anything, and hence nothing can taint it (*nopalīpyate*).

At 9.6, then, Kṛṣṇa means to state that although the great winds blow throughout space or the sky, the sky is never covered by the air. By analogy, then, although God contains all living beings within His existence, because of His being superior He cannot be affected by the inferior qualities of the beings He contains. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa states that in an unmanifest form (*avyakta-mūrtinā*) He pervades the universe. Here the term *avyakta*, “unmanifest,” is clearly related to the concept of subtlety in 13.33. This sense of subtlety as a cause or condition of imperceptibility is explicitly given at 13.6, where it is said that the Absolute “is incomprehensible because of its subtlety.”<sup>75</sup> This very word *sūkṣmatvāt* is given at 13.33 to mean “because of its subtlety.”

Thus the analogy of the sky and the air (9.6) is meant to explicate the same message given at 9.4–5: Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is all-pervading, and al-

though all beings live and exist within His existence, He is always distinct and superior, and is never affected by the inferior qualities of the living beings He contains. Thus it is very difficult to mount anything like a serious argument for monism from the statements of the Bhagavad-gītā.

### 5. Kṛṣṇa has spiritual form

In the Bhagavad-gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa stresses the personality of Godhead as the highest feature of the Absolute Truth and therefore the goal of the yoga process. For example, at 8.8–10, Kṛṣṇa states:

One who is engaged in the practice of yoga, meditating with undeviating consciousness on the Supreme Divine Person, goes to that Supreme Person. One who constantly remembers Him as the primeval scholar, the steady ruler, smaller than the smallest, the creator of everything, as He whose inconceivable form is luminous like the sun and beyond darkness...one who remembers Him thus attains to that Supreme Divine Person.<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, Arjuna declares Kṛṣṇa to be the “eternal divine person,”<sup>77</sup> and later Arjuna says, “I consider You the eternal Person.”<sup>78</sup> At this point it is good to recall the strict ontological rule that Kṛṣṇa enunciated at the very beginning of His teaching: “Of the temporary there is no real existence, and of the eternal there is no cessation.”<sup>79</sup> Thus when Arjuna declares Kṛṣṇa the eternal person, it is understood that Kṛṣṇa’s personality has no beginning or end. Indeed Arjuna states that Kṛṣṇa is *ajam*, “unborn” (10.12). It is significant that Kṛṣṇa states that not only He Himself but in fact individual souls in general are beginningless: “Know that both material nature and the individual person [*puruṣa*] are beginningless. It is the accidental qualities and transformations of *prakṛti* that come into being.”<sup>80</sup> So the *sanātana-puruṣa*, the “eternal person,” cannot refer to a material form.

Since Kṛṣṇa is an eternal, supreme, divine person, it is natural that He has an abode, and that is also described within the Gītā: “The sun does not brighten it, nor the moon, nor fire. Having gone to it, they never return—that is My supreme abode.”<sup>81</sup> Similarly: “It is said to be unmanifest and indestructible, and they call it the supreme destination. Having achieved it, they never return from My supreme abode.”<sup>82</sup>

### Spiritually Tangible Form

According to the Bhagavad-gītā, the supreme personality of the Godhead is not merely myth, poetry, or symbol, but rather spiritually tangible form and being, which is *avyakta*, unmanifest, only to the materially conditioned soul. Thus in the seventh chapter of the Gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa says, “The unintelligent think that I am unmanifest, but that I have become a manifest, visible person, for they do not know My supreme nature, which is inexhaustible and of incomparable excellence.”<sup>83</sup>

So important is this verse that we shall examine its key terms in detail. Lord Kṛṣṇa says that “the unintelligent [*abuddhayaḥ*, plural of *abuddhi*, literally “those without intelligence”] think [*manyante*] that I am *avyaktam*, unmanifest, but that I have become *vyaktim*, a manifest person.” The term *avyaktam* contrasts with the term *vyaktim* not only in the sense of the invisible versus the visible, but also in contrasting a type of impersonal existence with a personal, individual reality. This sense of *avyakta* as impersonal, in contrast to the personal, is clearly evident at 12.1 and 12.3, and is also strengthened by the fact that here at 7.24 Lord Kṛṣṇa contrasts *avyaktam* not with its immediate antonym *vyaktam*, “the manifest,” but with the cognate *vyaktim*, which more specifically indicates a manifest, individual person.

Kṛṣṇa says, then, “The unintelligent think that I am impersonal and unmanifest but that I have become a distinct, visible, individual person. They think this because they do not know my supreme, transcendental nature [*param bhāvam*]...” The *param bhāvam*, or “supreme nature,” mentioned here is clearly the transcendental nature of the *vyakti*, or visible personal identity of Kṛṣṇa. It is difficult to find another straightforward reading of this simple Sanskrit sentence.

Lord Kṛṣṇa’s statement at 7.24 contrasts in a curious way with another use of the terms *avyakta* and *vyakti* at 8.18. There the Lord says, “On the coming of the day [of Brahmā] all the individual beings come forth from the unmanifest, and on the coming of the night [of Brahmā] they are merged into the very place called the *avyakta*.”<sup>84</sup>

There are several significant features of this statement. Kṛṣṇa uses the term *vyaktayah*, the plural nominative form of *vyaktiḥ*, and He says that all these *vyaktis* (my translation: “all the individual beings”) come forth from the unmanifest, *avyakta*, during the day of Brahmā. Since there is clearly a plurality of living beings mentioned here (and everywhere else in the

Gītā), and since the term *vyakti* is here used to describe the beings at their specific stage of manifestation, coming forth with Brahmā's day, it is clear in this context also that the term *vyakti* refers to an individual, manifest person, active within the world.

Because one might tend to associate the term *vyakti* with the conditioned souls visible in this world, Kṛṣṇa takes care to emphasize, when using the word to refer to Himself, that He does not, as do the conditioned souls, acquire a visible form upon coming to this world. Indeed the entire argument at 7.24 is that Lord Kṛṣṇa does not *assume* His visible, personal form at all, but that His personal form is His superior nature, *paraṁ bhāvam*. In fact, Kṛṣṇa explains almost immediately after this, at 8.20, that the *paraṁ bhāvam* [inflected here as *para bhāvaḥ* since it shifts to the nominative from the accusative] is beyond the *avyakta*, the unmanifest from which the ordinary souls come forth on the coming of Brahmā's day.

Although Lord Kṛṣṇa describes that *para bhāvaḥ* as being a superior *avyakta* or unmanifest realm, we find at 8.21 that here the *para bhāvaḥ* actually refers to the Lord's supreme abode. In other words, although to ordinary persons His supreme abode is not manifest, Kṛṣṇa descends from His abode so that we can see Him as He is. This is the highest sense of *avatāra*.

The same term *para bhāvaḥ* has been used at 7.24 to indicate the spiritual nature of Kṛṣṇa's personality, and at 8.20 the term is used specifically to describe the spiritual quality of the Lord's abode, but in either case it is clear that the *para bhāvaḥ* at 8.20, or indeed the *paraṁ bhāvam* mentioned at 7.24, is beyond the *avyakta* mentioned at 8.18 as the status from which conditioned souls, also called *vyaktis*, come forth to manifest in this world.

The conclusion is that the Gītā affirms the spiritual personality of the Lord, which is not a mere symbol of, incarnation of, or way of getting at, etc., an unmanifest impersonal Absolute Truth. Rather Kṛṣṇa *is* a person. Indeed, according to the Gītā, He is the supreme, eternal, and divine person to whom we are to surrender. And this, in a nutshell, is the essential teaching of Bhagavad-gītā as a whole. But—and this is important—the personal form of the Lord is not to be known by mental speculation. Thus the term *vyaktim* is used also at 10.14 when Arjuna says to Kṛṣṇa, “Neither the gods nor the demons, O blessed Lord, know Thy personality [*vyaktim*].”<sup>85</sup> Rather, “It is by devotion that one knows Me in truth, as I actually am.”<sup>86</sup>

### Kṛṣṇa's Humanlike Body

That Lord Kṛṣṇa is ultimately to be known as the Supreme Person is made even more explicit at the beginning of the twelfth chapter. Arjuna asks the Lord, “Who are the greatest knowers of yoga—those who are Your devotees, always engaged in worshipping You, or those who worship the unperishing unmanifest?”<sup>87</sup> Here Arjuna places personal devotion to Kṛṣṇa and worship of the *avyakta*, the unmanifest feature of the Absolute, in direct competition. Kṛṣṇa at once replies, “Always engaged in fixing their minds on Me, those who worship Me with transcendental faith I consider to be most intimately united with Me in yoga.”<sup>88</sup> Both in Arjuna's original question (12.1) and in Lord Kṛṣṇa's reply, the personal pronoun indicating Kṛṣṇa (Arjuna's *tvām*, “You,” and Kṛṣṇa's *mām*, “Me”) is used to indicate the personal concept of God, in contrast to the impersonal unmanifest.

The artificiality of the impersonal path for the eternal individual soul is made clear at 12.5, wherein Lord Kṛṣṇa says that in contrast to the path of bhakti, which is *susukham kartum*, “very joyful to perform” (9.2), the path of meditation on the unmanifest, the ineffable, all-pervading Absolute is just the opposite. It is *duḥkham*, or miserable to perform. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa calls the impersonal path *kleśo 'dhikataras*, or “exceedingly troublesome” (12.5).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa also states: “Because I inhere in a humanlike body, foolish people disrespect Me, for they do not understand My transcendental nature.”<sup>89</sup> It is certainly noteworthy here that Lord Kṛṣṇa repeats exactly the same words as in 7.24—“not knowing My transcendental nature” (*param bhāvam ajānanto...7.24, 9.11*). Thus the unintelligent (*abuddhayaḥ*) who think that Kṛṣṇa has assumed His personal form are compared to the foolish (*mūḍhāḥ*) who disrespect Kṛṣṇa because He appears in a humanlike body.

Kṛṣṇa states at 9.11 that He inheres in a humanlike body. The Sanskrit phrase is *mānuṣīm* (human) *tanum* (a body) *āśritam* (I have inherited in). That which is inherent is essential and intrinsic, and this notion that the Lord originally manifests in a spiritual form is also indicated elsewhere in the Gītā. Let us turn to chapter four of the Gītā, wherein Lord Kṛṣṇa elaborately describes His descent into this world. Lord Kṛṣṇa states:

Although I am unborn and My Self never deteriorates, and although I am the Lord of all beings, utilizing My own energy I appear by My own potency. Whenever there is a decline of dharma, O Bhārata, and a

prominent rise of *adharma* [irreligion], at that time I manifest My Self. To deliver the pious, to destroy the evil-doers, and to establish *dharma*, I appear in every age.<sup>90</sup>

### Indological Problems

Many of the above points should be clear upon a careful reading of Bhagavad-gītā, and yet for many they are not. The reasons for this are numerous and can largely be attributed to modern Indological methods. If we look at just one scholar's work as representative of the rest, we can see why confusion persists in the academic study of the Gītā. Here is an example in which one scholar has paraphrased the above verses, and then translated the last of the three, in a well-known textbook on Hinduism:

In reality he is apart from the world as the Lord of all beings, but whenever worldly righteousness declines he creates a form for himself out of Prakṛti by his mysterious power [*māyā*] and manifests himself among men:

For the preservation of the righteous, the destruction of the wicked,  
And the establishment of dharma, I come into being from age to age.  
(Bhagavad Gītā 4.8)

There are two serious problems with this "translation": First, the scholar inserts the foreign notion that Kṛṣṇa "creates a form for himself out of Prakṛti by his mysterious power." The view that Kṛṣṇa is different from His personal form, a form presumed here to be made of matter, is not in accord with what Kṛṣṇa says. Indeed He says the opposite.

At 4.6 Kṛṣṇa says that He is "unborn" and that His self "never deteriorates." The word for "self" is the standard term *ātmā*, and *avyaya* means "unperishing, undecaying." The term *avyaya-ātmā* is hard to construe as designating anything different from the personal form of Kṛṣṇa, because in the very next verse Kṛṣṇa states that when He descends He does so by manifesting that same *ātmā* (*tadā ātmānam śjāmy aham* 4.7). In other words, the form Kṛṣṇa sends forth to this world is eternal.

In English syntax, Kṛṣṇa simply says, *tadā aham śjāmi ātmānam*: "Then I manifest [My] Self." The verb here is *śj*: to let go, release, discharge, send forth; also: to create, beget, procreate, etc.

We cannot apply here the latter sense—creating, begetting, etc. After all, Lord Kṛṣṇa has just stated that His *ātmā* is *avyaya*, imperishable, and the

Gītā has clearly said from the outset that things which arise in time also end in time: “For that which is born, death is certain.” [*jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur* 2.27] Thus within the clear ontology of the Gītā there is no way in which anything, much less a divine “self,” can come into being and then last forever. There is no such entity in the Bhagavad-gītā.

If we then accept the verb *syj* in the alternative sense—to release, discharge, send forth, etc.—we still have nothing like the scholar’s “he creates a form for himself.” Kṛṣṇa appears to be saying something quite different, and quite simple and straightforward: “I send Myself forth to this world.” After all, who else but Kṛṣṇa could order the descent of Kṛṣṇa, the supreme authority by whose order (9.10) all the universe turns?

The other problem with the scholar’s translation is that the phrase “I come into being” makes no sense. Lord Kṛṣṇa has explained that He has always existed (*na tv evāhaṁ jātu nāsam* 2.12); in fact (2.12, 13.20), according to the Gītā, not only Kṛṣṇa but all living entities are beginningless.

The verb the scholar has translated as “I come into being” is *sambhavāmi*, the present tense, first person singular, of *sam-bhū*, which means, first, “to be or come together.” Thus we should understand that Lord Kṛṣṇa is simply stating that by His descent (*avatāra*) He comes together with the souls of this world for their eternal benefit. As Kṛṣṇa has stated twice in the Gītā (9.17, 14.4), He is the father of all living beings, and thus (5.29) He is the well-wishing friend of all.

An additional sense of *sam-bhū* is “to be born or produced from.” But this sense normally requires an ablative noun—the subject of the verb must be born or produced *from* something. In the verse the scholar is translating, such an ablative word is conspicuously absent, and, as explained above, that meaning is anyway theologically impossible.

A third sense of the verb is “to arise, spring up, develop.” This inapplicable sense may be the one the scholar has in mind. But in that case, we may say that Kṛṣṇa arises in this world as the sun rises in the eastern horizon. Surely we would not say that the sun “comes into being” daily.

A fourth sense of the verb, which like the first clearly does apply, is “to prevail, be effective.”

The verb has yet other senses, but the first and fourth, for various contextual and grammatical reasons, are the likely candidates.

Kṛṣṇa concludes the topic of His descent into this world at 4.9: “One who thus understands, in truth, My divine birth and activities does not, upon leaving the body, go to another birth. He goes to Me, O Arjuna.”<sup>91</sup>

Kṛṣṇa says that His birth and activities are divine, *divya*, and of course this is the same adjective we have seen used many times to describe Kṛṣṇa as the supreme divine person. Kṛṣṇa stresses that one must understand His birth in truth (*tattvataḥ*). But if, as some scholars claim, Kṛṣṇa's birth was merely the assuming of an ordinary material form, why would this word of caution be used? And how would mere understanding of His birth be enough to guarantee liberation? The text forces us to look at the position of Kṛṣṇa more seriously.

### ENDNOTES

1. I use Vedic here in the widespread Indian sense to mean the original Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, and Upaniṣads, as well as the religiously authoritative classic literature such as the Purāṇas, Itihāsas, etc.

2. *ṛg-yajur-sāmārtharvās ca  
bhārataṁ pañca-rātrakam  
mūla-rāmāyaṇaṁ caiva  
veda ity eva śabditāḥ*

*purāṇāni ca yāniha  
vaiṣṇavāni vido viduḥ  
svataḥ-pramāṇyam eteṣāṁ  
nātra kiñcid vicāryate*

3. *svataḥ-pramāṇa veda—pramāṇa-śiromaṇi  
lakṣaṇā karile svataḥ-pramāṇatā-hāni  
(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā, 7.132)*

4. *aham ādir hi devānām (10.2)*

5. *ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavaḥ (10.8)*

6. *ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktāḥ...yajanti mām avidhi-pūrvakam (9.23)*

7. *ahaṁ hi sarva-yajñānām  
bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca (9.24)*

8. *na tu mām abhijñānti  
tattvenātas cyavanti te (9.24)*

9. *te taṁ bhuktvā svarga-lokaṁ viśālaṁ  
kṣiṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśanti* (9.21)
10. *ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ  
punar-āvartino 'rjuna* (8.16)
11. *yad gatvā na nivartante  
tad dhāma paramam mama* (15.6)
- yaṁ prāpya na nivartante  
tad dhāma paramaṁ mama* (8.21)
- mām upetya tu kaunteya  
punar janma na vidyate* (8.16)
12. *kālo 'smi* (11.32)
13. *na me viduḥ sura-gaṇāḥ  
prabhavaṁ na maharṣayaḥ  
aham ādir hi devānāṁ  
maharṣiṇāṁ ca sarvaśaḥ* (10.2)
14. *tribhir guṇa-mayair bhāvair  
ebhiḥ sarvaṁ idaṁ jagat  
mohitaṁ nābhijānāti  
mām ebhyaḥ param avyayam* (7.13)
15. *yajante sātṭvikā devān  
yakṣa-rakṣāṁsi rājasāḥ  
pretān bhūta-gaṇāṁś cānye  
yajante tāmasā janāḥ* (17.4)
16. *sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo  
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṁ ca* (15.15)
17. *vedāhaṁ samatītāni  
vartamānāni cārjuna  
bhaviṣyāni ca bhūtāni  
mām tu veda na kaścana* (7.26)
18. *yo yo yām yām tanuṁ bhaktāḥ  
śraddhāyārcitum ihate*

*tasya tasyācalaṁ śraddhām  
tām eva vidadhāmy aham (7.21)*

19. *labhate ca tataḥ kāmām  
mayaiva vihītān hi tān (7.22)*
20. *antavat tu phalaṁ teṣām  
tad bhavaty alpa-medhasām  
devān deva-yajo yānti  
mad-bhaktā yānti mām api (7.23)*
21. *yānti deva-vratā devān  
pitr̥n yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ  
bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā  
yānti mad-yājino 'pi mām (9.25)*
22. *kāmais tais tair hṛta-jñānāḥ  
prapadyante 'nya-devatāḥ (7.20)*
23. *labhate ca tataḥ kāmām  
mayaiva vihītān hi tān (7.22)*
24. *mattaḥ parataram nānyat  
kiñcid asti dhanañjaya (7.7)*
25. *sarva-loka-maheśvaram (5.29)*
26. *sarvasya dhātāram (8.9)*
27. *paraṁ brahma paraṁ dhāma  
pavitram paramaṁ bhavān  
puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyam ... (10.12)*
28. *deva-deva (10.14)*
29. *ādi-deva (10.12)  
tvam ādi-devaḥ (11.38)*
30. *puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ (11.38)*
31. *na tvat-samo 'sty abhaydhikaḥ kuto 'nyaḥ (11.43)*

32. *naṣṭo mohaḥ...kariṣye vacanaṁ tava* (18.73)
33. *na tv evāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ  
na tvam neme janādhipāḥ  
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ  
sarve vayam ataḥ param* (2.12)
34. *...bhajati mām  
sarva-bhāvena bhārata* (15.19)
35. *mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke  
jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ* (15.7)
36. *acchedyo 'yam* (2.24)
37. *na tvevāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ  
na tvam neme janādhipāḥ  
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ  
sarve vayam ataḥ param* (2.12)
38. *uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyah* (15.17)
39. *kṣetra-jñāṁ cāpi mām viddhi  
sarva-kṣetreṣu bhārata* (13.3)
40. *puruṣaḥ prakṛti-stho hi  
bhūṅkte prakṛti-jān guṇān  
kāraṇaṁ guṇa-saṅgo 'ya  
sad-asad-yoni-janmasu* (13.22)
41. *sarva-bhṛc caiva* (13.5)
42. *apareyam itas tv anyāṁ  
prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parāṁ  
jīva-bhūtām...* (7.5)
43. *daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī  
mama māyā duratyayā  
mām eva ye ṣṭapadyante  
māyām etāṁ taranti te* (7.14)
44. *kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛtve*

*hetur prakṛtir ucyate  
puruṣaḥ sukha-duḥkhānām  
bhoktṛtve hetur ucyate (13.21)*

45. *prakṛteḥ kriyamānāni  
guṇaiḥ karmāni sarvaśaḥ  
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātā  
kartāham iti manyate (3.27)*

46. *mayādhyakṣena prakṛtiḥ...  
hetunānena kaunteya  
jagad viparivartate (9.10)*

47. *īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām  
hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati  
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni  
yantrārūḍhāni māyayā (18.61)*

48. *ye me matam idaṁ nityam  
anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ  
śraddhāvanto 'nasūyanto  
mucyante te 'pi karmabhiḥ (3.31)*

*ye tv etad abhyasūyanto  
nānutiṣṭhanti me matam  
sarva-jñāna-vimūḍhāns tān  
viddhi naṣṭān acestasaḥ (3.32)*

49. *atha cet tvam ahaṅ-kārān  
na śroṣyasi vinaṅkṣyasi (18.58)*

50. *asaṁśayaṁ samagraṁ mām  
yathā jñāsyasi tac chṛṇu (7.1)*

51. *sarva-loka-maheśvaram...  
jñātvā mām śāntim ṛchati (5.29)*

52. *yo mām ajam anādiṁ ca  
vetti loka-maheśvaram  
asammūḍhaḥ sa martyeṣu  
sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate (10.3)*

53. *bhūteṣa... jagat-pate* (10.15)
54. *yaj jñātvā na punar moham  
evam yāsyasi pañḍava  
yena bhūtāni aśeṣāṇi  
drakṣyasi ātmany atho mayi* (4.35)
55. *aham sarvasya prabhavaḥ  
mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate* (10.8)
56. *aham kṛtsnasya jagataḥ  
prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā* (7.6)
57. *mattaḥ parataraṁ nānyat  
kiñcid asti dhanañjaya  
mayi sarvaṁ idaṁ protaṁ  
sūtre mañi-gaṇā iva* (7.7)
58. *ne me viduḥ sura-gaṇāḥ  
prabhavaṁ na mararṣayaḥ  
aham ādir hi devānāṁ  
maharṣiṇāṁ ca sarvaśaḥ* (10.2)
59. *buddhir jñānam asammoḥaḥ ...  
bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānāṁ  
matta eva pṛthag-vidhāḥ* (10.4–5)
60. *maharṣayaḥ sapta pūrve  
catvāro manavas tathā  
mad-bhāvā mānasā jātā ...* (10.6)
61. *ādityānāṁ aham viṣṇur  
jyotiṣāṁ ravir amśumān  
marīcīr marutāṁ asmi  
nakṣatrāṇāṁ aham śaśī* (10.21)
62. *vaktum arhasy aśeṣeṇa  
divyā hy ātma-vibhūtayaḥ  
yābhīr vibhūtibhīr lokān  
imāṁs tvaṁ vyāpya tiṣṭhasi* (10.16)
63. *vistareṇātmano yogam*

*vibhūtiṁ ca janāradana  
bhūyaḥ kathaya tṛptir hi  
śṛṇvato nāṣti me 'mṛtam* (10.18)

64. *nānto 'sti mama divyānām  
vibhūtinām parantapa  
eṣa tūddeśataḥ prokto  
vibhūter vistaro mayā* (10.40)
65. *yad yad vibhūtimat sattvaṁ  
śrīmad ūrjitam eva vā  
tat tad evāvagaccha tvam  
mama tejo-'mśa-sambhavam* (10.41)
66. *matta-evaṁ tān viddhi  
na tv ahaṁ teṣu te mayi* (7.12)
67. *ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo  
mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate  
iti matvā bhajante mām  
budhāḥ bhāva-samanvitāḥ* (10.8)
68. *mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā  
bodhayantaḥ parasparam  
kathayantaś ca mām nityam  
tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca* (10.9)
69. *kathaṁ vidyām ahaṁ yogiṁś  
tvām sadā paricintayan  
keṣu keṣu ca bhāveṣu  
cintyo 'si bhagavan mayā* (10.17)
- vistareṇātmano yogam  
vibhūtiṁ ca janārdana  
bhūyaḥ kathaya ...* (10.18)
70. *bahūnām janmanām ante  
jñānavān mām prapadyate  
vāsudevaḥ sarvaṁ iti . . .* (7.19)
71. *sarvaṁ samāpnoṣi tato 'si sarvaḥ* (11.40)

72. *na tv ahaṁ teṣu te mayi* (7.12)
73. *sarvaṁ samāpnoṣi tato 'si sarvaṁ* (11.40)
74. *mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ  
jagad avyakta-mūrtinā  
mat-sthāhi sarva-bhūtāni  
na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ* (9.4)
- na ca mat-sthāni bhūtāni  
paśya yogam aiśvaram  
bhūta-bhṛṇ na ca bhūta-stho  
mamātmā bhūta-bhāvanaḥ* (9.5)
- yathākāśa-sthito nityaṁ  
vāyuh sarvatra-go mahān  
tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni  
mat-sthānīty upadhāraya* (9.6)
75. *sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyam* (13.6)
76. *abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena  
cetasā nānya-gāminā  
paramaṁ puruṣaṁ divyaṁ  
yāti pārthānucintayan*
- kaviṁ purāṇam anuśāsītāram  
aṇor aṇiyāṁsam anusmared yaḥ  
sarvasya dhātāram acintya-rūpam  
āditya-varṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt*
- prayāṇa-kāle manasācalena  
bhaktyā yukto yoga-balena caiva  
bhruvor madhye prāṇam āveśya samyak  
sa taṁ paraṁ puruṣam upaiti divyam* (8.8–10)
77. *puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyam* (10.12)
78. *sanātanas tvaṁ puruṣo mato me* (11.18)
79. *nāsato vidyate bhāvo  
nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ* (2.16)

80. *prakṛtiṃ puruṣaṃ caiva  
viddhy anādī ubhāv api  
vikārāṅś ca guṇāṅś caiva  
viddhi prakṛti-sambhavān* (13.20)
81. *na tad bhāsayate sūryo  
na śaśāṅka na pāvakaḥ  
yad gatvā na nivartante  
tad dhāma paramaṃ mama* (15.6)
82. *avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas  
tam āhuḥ paramaṃ gatim  
yaṃ prāpya na nivartante  
tad dhāma paramaṃ mama* (8.21)
83. *avyaktaṃ vyaktim āpannaṃ  
manyante mām abuddhayaḥ  
paraṃ bhāvam ajānanto  
mamāvayam anuttamam* (7.24)
84. *avyaktād vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ  
prabhavanty ahar-āgame  
rātry-āgame praliyante  
tatraivāvyakta-sañjñake* (8.18)
85. *na hi te bhagavan vyaktim  
vidur devā na dānavāḥ* (10.14)
86. *bhaktiyā mām abhijānāti  
yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ* (18.55)
87. *evaṃ satata-yuktā ye  
bhaktāś tvāṃ paryupāsate  
ye cāpy akṣāram avyaktaṃ  
teṣāṃ ke yoga-vittamāḥ* (12.1)
88. *mayy āveśya mano ye mām  
nitya-yuktā upāsate  
śraddhayā parayopetās  
te me yuktamatamā matāḥ* (12.2)
89. *avajānanti mām mūḍhāḥ*

*mānuṣīm tanum āśritam  
paraṁ bhāvam ajānanto...* (9.11)

90. *ajo 'pi sann avyayātmā  
bhūtānām īśvaro 'pi san  
prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya  
sambhavāmy ātma-māyayā*

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya  
glānir bhavati bhārata  
abhyuthānam adharmasya  
tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmy aham*

*paritrāṇāya sādhnūnām  
viāśāya ca duṣkṛtam  
dharmā-saṁsthāpanārthāya  
sambhavāmi yuge yuge* (4.6–8)

91. *janma karma ca me divyam  
evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ  
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma  
naiti mām eti so 'rjuna* (4.9)