

CHAPTER 10

|| THE DIVINE MANIFESTATION ||

Gurudeva, you are adept in imparting a clear knowledge of *Brahman*, in making the lotus of learning bloom and in sporting lovingly with the maiden, in the form of the subtlest inarticulate speech; my salutations to you. You are the sun who destroys the darkness of ignorance in the form of worldly existence. You are a powerful God, who promotes with ease the highest state of the mind in which it becomes one with the Supreme Self, I bow to you. You are the protector of the whole world, the mine of gems in the form of blissful things, the sandalwood tree in the woods in the form of good men. A deity worthy of being worshipped by the devotees, my salutations to you. You are the moon who gives delight to the *Chakora* birds in the form of the discerning men, the prince among the realizers of Self, the ocean of *Vedic* knowledge, the destroyer of the god of love: I bow to you. You are worthy of being worshipped with pure devotion as the destroyer of the temples of the elephant in the form of worldly existence, and the origin of the world, I bow to you (1-5).

When *Ganesha* in the form of your grace bestows his gift, even a child has access to the sanctuary of literary art. When your noble voice gives the pledge of safety, one can dive into the *ambrosial* ocean of the nine literary sentiments (*rasas*). When your loving speech grants its favours, even a dumb person can compete with the preceptor of gods, in literary talent. Not only this, but even an ordinary mortal attains to divine eminence, when your benedictory glance falls upon him or your blissful hand touches his head. How can I describe with the feeble power of my speech, the glorious grace of my Master? Can one besmear the body of the sun with sandalwood paste (6-10)? With what blossoms can one embellish the wish-yielding tree? How can one extend hospitality to the *Milky Ocean*? With what scent can one make *camphor* fragrant? With what kind of perfume can you besmear the sandalwood tree? What dish can you serve to nectar? How is it possible to become higher than the sky? What means can you employ to gauge properly the glory of my master? Therefore, I offer him my mute solutions. Any attempt on the strength of intellect to describe the glorious power of the master is like giving gloss to the pearl. Any words of praise to him, is like silver-plating the gold. I, therefore, think it best to prostrate myself at the feet of my Master, in great humility (11-15).

Shri Jnanadeva added, "O my Master, since you blessed me with your graceful glance out of affection for me, I have become the holy baniyan tree at the confluence of rivers in *Prayaga* in the form of the conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna. When *Upamanyu* begged for milk of yore, *Lord Shankara* placed the cup of *Milky Ocean* before him or when the boy *Dhruba* was sulking because of the ill-treatment of his step-mother, the Lord of *Vaikuntha* humored him by giving him a lollipop in the form of a firm seat at the North Pole. So my Master has bestowed upon me the power to explain in *ovi* verses the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which is the most excellent text among the *Brahman*-lore's and the resting-place for all scriptures. When I was roaming in the forest of words, not a single meaningful word had fallen on my ears, but my speech blossomed into

the creeper of marvelous thought, because of your grace (16-20). Because of it, my intelligence, which had not transcended the consciousness of the body, became the treasure house of Divine bliss. My mind has now become a temple in the *Milky Ocean* in the form of the *Gita* doctrines. This is the incomprehensible deed of my Master. With what words can I describe his infinite power? I seek his forgiveness for daring to sing his glory with inadequate words.

By your grace I have been able so far to explain with great joy the first part of the *Bhagavad-Gita* in short sweet verses (*ovis*). The first chapter describes the despondency of Arjuna at the prospect of a war with his kinsmen. In the second chapter, the Lord has explained clearly the Yoga of action, distinguishing it from the Yoga of knowledge. In the third chapter, the Lord has expanded the single Yoga of action, revealing in the fourth chapter, the relation of action to knowledge. In the fifth chapter, he explains the true intent of Yoga (21-25), of which he gives a clear exposition in the sixth, beginning with postures of body, right up to the union of the Self with the Supreme Spirit. The sixth chapter also contains a clear description of the state of Yoga and the state to which one fallen from the *yogic* path returns. The seventh chapter explains at the start, how one should avoid the temptations of *prakriti* and then goes on to describe the four kinds of devotees of God. The eighth chapter raises some questions and ends it by stating what his remembrance should be at the time of death.

Now the *Mahabharata* contains in its hundred thousand verses the numerous views contained in the *Vedas* (26-30). And all the import of the *Mahabharata* has found its way in the seven hundred verses of the *Gita*, which embodies the conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna. That import is contained in the single ninth chapter. I was, therefore, doubtful whether I shall be able to explain clearly the import of this chapter. Why should I flaunt my ability to do so? For lumps of jaggery and sugar are made from the same sugarcane juice, and yet they have different flavours. Similarly, some chapters describe in clear words the doctrine of *Brahman*; some show the way to the abode of *Brahman* and some, which try to know *Brahman*, lose themselves, along with the knowledge, in the nature of *Brahman*. Such are the chapters of the *Gita*. But the ninth chapter is such that one cannot describe it adequately. O my master, if I have laid open the truth in it, it is entirely due to your grace (31-35). The outer garment of a sage (*Vashishtha*) shed light like the sun; another sage (*Vishvamitra*) created another world; and one (*Shri Ram*) built a bridge of stones and took his army across the sea; one (*Hanuman*), immediately after his birth, seized the sun in his hand, thinking it to be a fruit and sage *Agastya* drank the sea in one sip. In the same way, you made a dumb creature like me speak about the incomprehensible *Brahman*. Just as you cannot compare the war between *Ram* and *Ravana* with any war except itself, so I say that Lord Krishna's talk in the ninth chapter cannot be matched by anything except itself. Only the knowers of truth, who have comprehended the meaning of the *Gita*, can settle the question. I have thus explained to you the nine chapters according to my ability.

Now I begin the second half of the *Gita* (36-40). At the very start Lord Krishna will describe his main and secondary manifestations. I shall tell you that tale, which is full of savour and beauty. With the beauty of this language, the serene sentiment will surpass the amorous sentiment and because of that, these verses will adorn the Marathi Literature. If you will read closely, the original Sanskrit text and its Marathi commentary, you will be at a loss to know which is the original text. When ornaments embellish the beautiful body of a maiden, it is difficult to judge which adorns what. Similarly both the Sanskrit and Marathi languages have come together to explain

the purport of the *Gita*. Listen now, with a serene mind, how they illumine and embellish the truth (41-45). When one wishes to disclose the purport to a text, the sentiments receive a boost, and the literary art shown in that regard becomes an object of admiration. I have, therefore, borrowed the beauty and youth of the Marathi language to elucidate the truths contained in the *Gita*. Now listen to what the Lord of the Universe, the scion of the *Yadus* and giver of marvelous joy to the enlightened souls, said to Arjuna. *Jnanadeva*, the disciple of *Nivritti*, says: *Shri Hari* said, O Arjuna, are you giving full attention to what I am saying?

The blessed Lord said:

1. *Once again, O mighty armed (Arjuna), listen to My Supreme utterance, which, desiring your good, I shall speak to you, who are pleased, with it.*

Now I tried to assess how well you listened to what I told you so far. I am now assured that you gave adequate attention to what I said (46-50). Just as one puts a little water in an earthen pot to see whether it leaks before filling it up, so I made sure that you were attentive to My small talk and now I felt like telling you more. You test a newly appointed servant by seeing whether he picks up things lying about and then put him in charge of the treasury, so you have already become the treasure-house of My knowledge. Even as the cloud swells and overflows after seeing the mountain, so Lord Krishna glanced at Arjuna with great affection. Then lord Krishna, the ocean of mercy, said: O mighty armed Arjuna, I shall repeat My view to you, which I had told you earlier. Even though one reaps an abundant harvest by tilling the soil every year, one should not feel tired of doing so (51-55), or one should purify by heating the gold over and over again, as it improves its luster. Therefore, O *Partha*, I am repeating My talk not to oblige you, but for My own satisfaction. When the child is decorated with ornaments, it does not know it, but the mother enjoys it as a festive occasion. In the same manner, the more you realise your own good, the more it will add to My happiness. But enough of this declamation. In truth, I like you so much that I am not satisfied by this long chat with you (56-60). Therefore, I am repeating to you the same thing over and over again, so hear with concentration. O discerning Arjuna, listen to My excellent talk. These are not mere words, but in this form it is the absolute truth, which has come to hold you in its loving embrace. But you have not yet known My real nature. You see Me here in flesh and blood, but I am really this whole universe.

2. *The host of celestial beings does not know My origin nor do the great seers. I am the origin of the celestial beings and of all the great seers.*

The *Vedas* became confounded trying to know My essence; the mind and vital breath lost their nerve in trying to reach Me and the sun and moon were eclipsed before My splendour, even before the night had set in. As the fetus in the womb cannot gauge its mother's age, so all these gods cannot know Me (61-65). Just as aquatic creatures cannot fathom the sea, or the flies cannot cross over the sky, so the wisdom of the sages cannot penetrate into My being. Many ages have rolled on, in the man's attempts to delve into My mysteries as to who I am, how great, of what origin and My where about. Because, O Arjuna both the gods and the great sages, much less all the living beings find it difficult to know Me, as I am their origin. If water running downhill can rise up to the top or the tree starts spreading downwards and reaches its roots, then alone the world of beings originating from Me can comprehend

Me. If the core of the fig tree could cover up the tree and the forest, or the waves could contain within them the sea or the entire globe could be contained in one single atom (66-70), only then living beings, great sages and gods originating from Me will be able to know Me. Even though it is difficult to know Me, if a person gives up the path of activity and turning away from sensuous enjoyment abandons body-consciousness and sets himself on the crown of the five great elements (i.e. brings them under his control).

3. *He who knows Me as the unborn, beginningless, Supreme Lord of the world, he is undeluded among the mortals and is liberated from all sins.*

And who, in this frame of mind, sees My beginningless nature in the clear light of self-knowledge, he knows that I am the great Lord of all beings, beyond causation (71-75). Like a philosopher's stone among stones, nectar among liquids, he is a part of My Divine essence amongst all mortals. He is the embodiment of knowledge, moving about and talking. His limbs are verily the blossoms of happiness and his assumption of a human body is mere delusion. Just as a diamond found in camphor does not dissolve in water, although he moves about among men like an ignorant person, he is not tainted by *maya* and gets rid of all his sins. Just as a serpent flees from a burning sandalwood tree, so desires leave a person who knows Me (76-80). If the thought has occurred to you, how to know what I am and what the modes of My being are, I shall tell them to you, listen. My manifestations are spread in different beings in this universe, taking form according to their dispositions.

4. *Intelligence, knowledge, freedom from delusion, forbearance, truthfulness, self-control, serenity, happiness, sorrow, birth and death and fear as also fearlessness,*
5. *Non-violence, even-mindedness, contentment, austerity, charity, fame and infamy - these different modes of beings spring from Me alone.*

Intelligence is the first of My modes. Thereafter unlimited knowledge, absence of delusion, forbearance, forgiveness and truth followed by self-control and sense-restraint and O Arjuna, the pleasure and pain in this world, as well as birth and deaths are the modes of My being. So are, O Son of Pandu, fear, fearlessness, non-violence, equality, contentment and austerities (81-85). Similarly charity, success and infamy, which one comes across everywhere, are produced in the beings by Me alone. Just as living beings are different, so are My modes different. Some of these modes have knowledge of My Divine being; others are ignorant of it. Light bursts at sunrise, darkness spreads at sunset, both arise from the sun. So to know Me and not to know Me are the result of actions in previous births and so modes differ in different created beings. Thus O Arjuna, this universe of living beings is pervaded by My modes (86-90). Now I shall tell you about the guardians of creation who are My eleven projections, under whose command all created beings deport themselves.

6. *The seven great seers of old as also the four manus, from whom, the human race has sprung, are of My very essence, born of My mind.*

Then there are seven famous seers such as *Kashyapa*, who are endowed with all virtues and are perfect in wisdom among all sages. Besides these, there are also four *Manus*, beginning with the self-existent (*Svayambhuva*). O wielder of the bow, these are My eleven projections, emanating from My mind, to undertake creation of the Universe. Before they came into

existence, the universe was yet to be created, the three worlds were not properly arranged and the five gross elements had remained functionless (91-95). Then came these eleven projections of Mine, which formed the worlds and created guardians to protect them. In this way these eleven beings are the rulers of the world, with all the people therein as their subjects. Know that this expanse of the universe has come out of My very being. Behold, there is at the start only a germ, which bursts into a stem, which then grows into shoots and branches. From the branches come out twigs which bear leaves and tender foliage, from which blossom flowers and fruits. Thus grows a tree, but if you think over it, it is the single germ, which has spread out as a tree (96-100). So I was alone at the beginning; from Me the mind was born, and from the mind came into being the seven sages and the four *Manus*. They created the guardian deities to preside over the world, from whom sprang the three worlds and all living beings. So this entire universe has expanded from My being and so only those who realise that all these projections have their origin from Me, are blessed with true insight.

7. *He, who knows truly this creative power and manifestation of Mine, becomes united with unshakable Yoga; of this there is no doubt.*

So, My modes and manifestations pervade O Arjuna, this universe. Hence, from *Brahma* to an ant, there is nothing but My Divine Self (101-105). He, who knows this well, is truly awakened, and he does not suffer from the dream of distinctions among living beings as good and bad. Whoever realises through Yoga that I am not different from My manifestations and the living beings born of these manifestations becomes one with Me, heart and soul. O Arjuna, whoever worships Me with this vision of unity, I become his servant by reason of this worship. Therefore, I have taught you this Yoga of devotion, consisting of knowledge of unity, which continues without interruption. Even if one meets his death while practicing this devotion, it is all to the good. This is what I told you in the sixth chapter (106-110). If you wish to know this devotional Yoga of God's unity, listen to these words of Mine.

8. *Knowing that I am the source of all, and that everything proceeds from Me, the wise worships Me full of rapturous devotion.*

O Arjuna, I am the source from which this universe takes its birth and sustenance. Just as waves arise in water, take shelter in water and have their being in water, and is nothing but water, so there is nothing in this world without Me. The knowers of Self, who realise this all-pervasive nature of Mine and worship Me with true devotion and love (111-115), and know that I am not separate from place, time and circumstance, recollect Me in their mind and happily sport in the three worlds, just as the wind, taking the form of *akash*, moves in the *akash*. They also regard that every being that they see is of Divine nature. Know that this is My true Yoga of devotion.

9. *With their mind and life centered on Me, extolling Me to one another, and constantly conversing about Me, they find solace and rejoice.*

Those who have become united with Me heart and soul, and become thoroughly contented, have become forgetful of birth and death in their passionate zeal for self-knowledge. Then they begin to dance, in sheer ecstasy, with the joy of conversation, exchanging their thoughts and experiences of self-knowledge (116-120). When two close-lying lakes in spate overflow

into each other, their waters mingle and their waves rise into spirals, so in the union of self-realised devotees, the ripples of their ecstatic joy get woven into a braid and the grandeur of self-knowledge of one displays itself, in harmony with the self-knowledge of the other. As if the sun should wave a light before another sun or the moon should embrace another moon, or two streams of equal flow should mingle with one another, so when such blessed souls come together, they form a confluence of sacred streams of Divine life, throwing up on its surface pure sentiments (*sattvic bhavas*). Then the devotees become as it were presiding deities on the high way in the form of a dialogue. Overflowing with this Supreme bliss, they forget their body-consciousness and proclaim loudly their rapturous joy at having attained union with Me (121-125). They declare to the whole world in a sonorous voice like that of clouds the secret and mystic *mantra*, which the master discloses in solitude to his disciple. Just as when a lotus blossoms, it is unable to contain its sweet smell within itself, and wafts it equally to prince and pauper, so these devotees, while singing My glory, become so absorbed in the soul's joy that they become oblivious of everything and thereby lose their body-consciousness. Utterly oblivious of the time's flow by day and night in this overflowing love for god, they remain settled in the enjoyment of their blissful union with Me.

10. *To those, who ever absorbed in Yoga worship Me with love, I give the Yoga of wisdom by which they come unto Me.*

O Arjuna, of whatever gifts I wish to give them, they have already picked up the choicest one (126-130). Considering the highway, which they have started to tread to come to Me, heaven and liberation seem like by-lanes. The devotion, which they bear Me, is My gift to them. Whatever I wished to give them, they have already appropriated it. My only wish now is that this devotional love of theirs should go on increasing and the malignant glance of time should not fall on it. Just as doting mother follows its child at play wherever it goes and provides it with whatever toys it asks for, so it is My pleasure to increase the status of devotion (131-135). I wish to increase especially those methods of worship by practicing which My devotees will find it easy to come to Me. Since my devotees are attracted to Me, I am also drawn to them because of their single-minded devotion; for loving devotees are rare in My abode. See, for the comfort of ordinary devotees, I have earmarked the well-trodden paths of paradise and liberation and I have allotted to them even My person with goddess *Lakshmi*, but I have set apart for My intimate devotees, the Supreme bliss of self-knowledge. O Arjuna, this way I love and keep My loving devotees close to Me. But it is beyond the power of words to describe this love (136-140).

11. *Out of pure compassion for them, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy the darkness born of ignorance with the shining lamp of wisdom.*

For those who have taken refuge in Me and regard all else as trash through devotion, O great warrior, I light the torch of *camphor* and walk in front of them as their torch-bearer even in broad daylight. For these devotees, I dispel the darkness of the night of primeval ignorance and bring them the dawning light of wisdom. When the Supreme person beloved of his devotees, spoke thus, Arjuna said, "Now all my desires are fulfilled. O Lord, you have swept away the dust of worldly existence and freed me from the cycle of birth and death (141-145). O God, I have seen with my own eyes the meaning of my birth, and I feel as if

I have acquired now the art of living. O Lord, I received the grace to hear from your own mouth your sacred utterance and so have achieved the purpose of my life. Fortune has dawned upon me, and with the darkness of ignorance gone in the light of your utterance, I have received the true vision of your being."

Arjuna said:

12. *You are the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme abode, the ultimate, the all-holy, the eternal Divine being, the perennial God, birthless, all-pervading.*

O Lord of the universe, you are the Supreme *Brahman*, the haven of rest for all the gross elements, the holiest of the holy. You are the Supreme deity of the triad of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesha*, the *Purusha*, the twenty-fifth principle and also the being who is beyond *Maya* (145-150). O Lord, I know now that you are existent since eternity and you are without such qualities as birth and decay. You are the Supreme Being who pulls the strings of the past, present and future times, the guardian deity of the individual selves and the support of the universe.

13. *So say all the seers, as also Narada, the Divine sage, Asita, Devala, Vyasa, and you too tell me so.*

And in another way also, I have come to know the truth of all this. Sages in the past too had told us such stories about you, but the truth of what they said has come home to me now. O God, this is all due to your grace. The Divine sage *Narada* used to visit our home and sing your glories; but we used to appreciate his sweet music and not its deeper meaning (151-155). The sun shines in the house of the blind, they only feel its warmth, but how could they see its light? So when the Divine sage used to give us instruction in the doctrine of the Self, his musical notes only used to touch the chords of our hearts. I used to hear *Asita* and *Devala* also extol your Divine glory, but at that time my mind was filled with the poison of sensuous pleasures. So deadly is the poison that the Absolute Truth, which is really sweet tastes bitter, while the sensuous pleasures, although bitter, tastes sweet. Why talk of others? Even sage *Vyasa* used to come to our place and describe your glorious life (156-160). But then I was like a person, who, stumbling upon a philosopher's stone (*chintamani*) in the dark, paid no attention to it, until he recognized its true value after the day dawned. So although the talks of *Vyasa* and others were veritable mines of gems of knowledge, I brushed them aside, until I saw their worth in the light of your instruction.

14. *All this what you say, O Keshava, I believe to be true. Neither the gods nor the demons know your true manifestation, O Lord.*

Now the rays of your words have entered my heart and removed the ignorance about the paths taught by the sages. O Lord, their teachings were veritable seeds of knowledge, and they had gone deep into the soil in the form of my heart. These seeds, moistened by your grace, have borne fruit in the form of your Divine discourse. O infinite Lord, I have become as it were, the sea of your blissful discourse, into which have flowed the teachings of sages like *Narada* in the form of river streams (161-165). O, my Master, you brought about what meritorious actions performed by me in many previous births could not achieve. For I had heard my elders extol your greatness on many occasions, but I could make neither head nor

tail out of it, until I received your grace. When fortune smiles upon one, one's efforts bear fruit. Likewise, with the grace of the *Guru*, one realises the truth of what one has heard and studied. The gardener tends the garden, toiling and sweating, by watering the fruit trees, but the trees bear fruit only on the advent of the spring. A patient can relish dainty dishes only when the fever subsides. The medicine does not taste sweet until it cures the disease and restores health (166-170). The senses, speech and the vital breath achieve their purpose, only when they are moved by the spirit. Thus, it is only when a disciple receives the grace of his Master that he reaps the benefit of his *Vedic* studies or spiritual practices. This conviction dispelled all doubts of Arjuna and made him dance with joy. He said, "O God, your words have convinced me. O Deliverer, I know now that you are obscure even to the gods and the demons. I now realise that no one who ventures upon knowing you solely relying on his intellect, will gain any knowledge of you without being initiated by you (171-175)."

15. *You yourself alone know Yourself, O Supreme Person, the cause and the Lord of creatures, O God of Gods, the ruler of the world.*

Just as the sky knows its own expanse, or the earth its own mass, so you yourself, O Lord of *Lakshmi*, know your infinite power. The *Vedas*, *Shastras* and the *Puranas* boast in vein, of their knowledge of you. O Lord, who can surpass the mind in speed? How can anyone clasp the wind in his arms? How can anyone swim across the river of *Maya* with unaided arms? It is equally hard to know you; indeed no mortal can do so without help. You alone know your real Self and you yourself are capable of making others, by your spoken word, to realise you (176-180). O, you, creator of the universe, O you, the lion who destroys the elephant of worldly existence, O you, the Providence who is the only object of worship to all gods, do you hear me? Knowing your glory as I do, I am not even fit to stand in your presence. If I were to flinch now because of my unworthiness, from beseeching a favor from you, then there is no other way to attain you. Even if the rivers and the seas are overfilling in all ways, of what use are they to the *Chataka* birds? It is only when the clouds shed a few drops of water, they will have water to drink. In the same way, O Lord Krishna, although there are many Masters in the world, You are all in all to us. This is enough! Now tell me about your manifestations.

16. *Pray tell me in full your Divine manifestations, by which manifestations you remain pervading this world.*

O Lord, show me some of your Divine, all-pervasive and patent manifestations (181-185). O Infinite God, tell me some of your well-known and principal manifestations, by which you have remained pervading this world.

17. *How may I know you, O Yogi, constantly meditating upon you? In what particular aspects are you to be meditated upon, O blessed Lord?*

O Lord, How do I know you and meditate upon you? If it is said you dwell everywhere, then no meditation is possible. Therefore, whatever manifestations you had talked about before, repeat them to me in greater detail. Explain your Yoga very clearly so that I can mediate upon it without effort.

18. *Tell me again in detail, your creative power (Yoga) and your manifestations, O oppressor of foes. For while hearing your ambrocial words, I feel no satiety.*

O Lord of all beings, tell me about your manifestations, about which I have asked. If you say why you should tell the same things over and over again (186-190), please do not entertain this doubt even for a moment, O oppressor of foes. For even an ordinary person is not satiated by the drink of nectar which is offered to him every now and then. This nectar is, however, the brother of poison, and even though the gods drank it out of fear of death, fourteen *Indras* rise and fall during the span of *Brahma's Day*. This nectar, which was recovered from the churning of the *Milky Sea*, has received without any apparent reason the name of 'giver of immortality'. But no one is sated with this sweet drink and cries 'enough of it'. If such a trivial drink is held in high regard, then your talk is truly an *ambrosial* drink of wisdom. It has not been obtained by churning the *Sea of Milk* by using the *Mandara* Mountain as the churning rod, it is naturally without beginning and self-existent (191-195). It does not drip, is neither thin nor thick, and no one can know its sweetness or its smell, but one realizes it, who yearns for it. No sooner your sweet words fall on the ears, than the worldly existence appears illusory and the *yogi* attains to uninterrupted eternal life. Because of it, birth and death subside without a trace and the Supreme bliss of self-realization pervades him in and out. If this drink becomes available to a person by good luck, it unites him with the Supreme Self. You are giving me such *ambrosial* drink of wisdom, that I cannot say I have had enough of it. O God, I like your name, I have also met you and enjoyed your company and on top of it you are joyously chatting with me (196-200). I do not know how to describe this happiness flowing from your talk, but it gives me great joy. I, therefore, feel that I should hear it from your mouth again. O Lord, does the sunlight ever become stale? Can one call the fire impure? Or will the ever-flowing water of the river Ganges ever become unclean? When I heard your words of wisdom, I felt as if I was hearing the word of God incarnate and was smelling the flower of sandalwood. Hearing this speech of Arjuna, Lord Krishna started reeling with great joy and said, 'This Partha, has verily become the repository of both knowledge and devotion'. Delighted by Arjuna's speech, the Lord experienced the exhilaration of love for him, but collecting himself with great difficulty, he began to speak (201-205).

The blessed Lord said:

19. Well then, I shall recount to you My Divine manifestations, but only the chief ones, O best of Kurus, for there is no limit to My expanse.

Forgetting that he was the father of *Brahma* the creator, Lord Krishna said to Arjuna, 'Ba Arjuna, you have spoken well'. But you should not feel any surprise that the Lord called Arjuna, 'Ba' (Father), because had he not become himself the son of *Nanda*? When there is excess of love, such things happen. Then the Lord said, "O archer, listen to what I am going to say. My manifestations, about which you asked, are unlimited in number. So even though they are My manifestations, they are beyond the comprehension of My intellect. Just as no one can count the number of hair on one's body, I cannot count My manifestations (206-210). Even otherwise, I am Myself not aware of what I am and how great. Therefore, I shall tell you My foremost manifestations. If you comprehend them, you will come to know the other manifestations too. Just as one becomes possessed of the tree if he has its seed, or if one owns the garden, one becomes possessed of its flowers and fruits, so by knowing My manifestation, you will grasp the whole universe. O Partha, there is no end to My expanse, since even things as big as the vault of heaven, are contained in me."

20. *I am the Self, O Gudakesha (Arjuna) that dwells in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle, and also the end of all beings.*

Hear you, O Arjuna, who have curly hair on your head and who are like *Lord Shiva* in the science of archery, I dwell as the Self in every living being (211-215). I abide in the heart of all beings and pervade the outer space also. I am the beginning, the end and the middle of existence. The sky remains up and down, inside and outside of the clouds, which are born in the sky, stay in the sky and when they dissolve, remain in the sky, even so I am the origin, the support, the destroyer and the final goal of all living beings. You will come to know My boundless expanse and pervasive quality through these manifestations. Therefore, listen, being all ears with the soul in it. Now hear about My foremost manifestations. I wanted to tell them to you, but they remained to be told (216-220).

21. *Of the Adityas, I am Vishnu; of the luminaries I am the rising sun; I am Marichi of the Maruts; of the asterisms I am the moon.*

With these words the gracious Lord said: Among the twelve *Aditya's*, I am *Vishnu*. Among the lustrous things, I am the sun with resplendent rays. I am the *Marichi* among fifty *Maruts* and the moon among the stars in the sky.

22. *Of the Vedas I am the Samaveda; of the celestials I am Indra; of the senses I am the mind; of the creatures, consciousness.*

Shri Gobinda said further: I am *Samaveda* among the *Vedas*. Among the gods I am *Indra*, the friend of *Maruts*. Among the senses, I am the eleventh sense, the mind. I am also the consciousness among all the living beings.

23. *Of the Rudras I am Shiva, and the god of wealth of Yakshas and demons; of the Vasus, I am Agni (fire), and Meru of the mountains.*

Among the *Rudras*, I am *Shri Shakara*, the enemy of the god of love. Have no doubt about this (221-225). Among the *Yakshas* and demons, I am wealthy *Kubera*, the friend of *Shri Shankara*, so said *Shri Ananta*. I am fire among the eight *Vasus* and *Meru* the highest among the mountains with peaks.

24. *Know me, O Partha, as Brihaspati, the chief among house priests. Of the generals I am Skanda, and of the water, I am the ocean.*

25. *Of the great seers, I am Bhrigu; of words, I am the single syllable (**Om**). Of sacrifices, I am the muttered prayer; of stationery things, the Himalayas.*

I am *Brihaspati*, who is the support of *Indra's* throne, the ancient seat of learning and the chief of priests. O Arjuna, I am *Kartikaswami*, the chief among generals of the three worlds, who was born in the womb of *Krittika* from the seed of *Lord Shiva* through the medium of fire. I am the ocean of waters among the lakes. I am the great ascetic *Bhrigu* among the great seers (226-230). I am that single syllable *Om*, which manifests Truth prominently in speech, and of all the sacrifices, I am the muttered prayer, in which the repetition of a *mantra* such as *Om* preceded by the relinquishment of the fruit of action culminates. For that repetition of God's name, which itself is a great sacrifice and does not require such acts as bath etc.,

sanctifies both pious and impious acts and is known to the *Vedas* as the Supreme *Brahman*. I am the Himalayas, the treasure of auspiciousness, among the immovables of the earth, so said the husband of goddess *Lakshmi*.

26. *Of all the trees, I am Ashvattha, of Divine seers, Narada, of the celestial singers, Chitraratha, and of the Siddhas, the sage Kapila.*
27. *Know Me to be of the horses, the nectar-born Uchchaishravas, of Lordly elephants, Airavata and of men, the monarch.*

The wish-yielding tree, the coral tree and the sandalwood tree are all famous for their qualities, I am the holy fig-tree among the trees (231-235). O Arjuna, know Me to be *Narada* among the Divine seers. I am *Uchchaishravas*, among the famous horses and am *Airavata* among the elephants, the glory of Kings. I am the nectar, which the gods took out from the *Milky Sea* after churning it. The monarch, who is served by all his subjects, is My special manifestation among all men.

28. *Of weapons, I am the thunderbolt, of the cows, the wish-yielding cow; I am cupid, the progenitor; of the serpents, I am Vasuki.*
29. *I am Ananta (Shesha) of snakes, and Varuna of aquatic creatures; of the ancestors, I am Aryaman, and Yama of those who curb.*

O Partha, I am the thunderbolt in the hand of *Indra*, the performer of hundred sacrifices, which is the foremost among weapons (236-240). Among the cows, I am the wish-yielding cow, so said Lord Krishna, I am the god of love, who is responsible for procreation. I am *Vasuki*, the chief among the serpents and the *Shesha* among the snakes. Shri Krishna said, I am *Varuna* among the aquatic deities, the guardian of the west. I am also the deity *Aryaman* of the *Manes*. I am telling this truth to you that among the restrainers, I am *Yama*, the judge of all actions (241-245), who taking stock of men's good and evil actions and judging their motives dispenses to all, the fruits of their actions strictly according to their deserts.

30. *I am Prahlada among the demons, Time among the reckoners. Of wild beasts I am the lion (mrigendra) and the eagle-god of birds.*

O Partha, bear in mind that I am *Prahlada*, born in the race of demons. He was, therefore, not defiled by the demoniacal nature. Lord Krishna said, I am the *Mahakala*, the Time, of those who wear out and destroy things and the tiger among fierce beasts. O Arjuna, listen, I am the eagle-god among the birds, because of which he is able to carry Me on his back.

31. *I am the wind among those who move fast, I am Ram among the wielders of weapons. Of fishes I am the crocodile (makara), of the rivers, I am the Ganges.*

O wielder of the bow, among those who move fast, I am the wind that circumambulates round the earth and the seven oceans with one bounce in less than half an hour (246-250). Among the wielders of weapons, I am *Rama*, who, finding the religion in peril in the *Tretayuga*, espoused its cause and turned the face of victory towards him. Then standing on the top of the *Suveli* Mountain, he cut off the heads of *Ravana*, the mighty Lord of Lanka and offered them as oblations to the spirits, who were hailing his victory in the sky. He preserved the

dignity of gods, restored the religion to its former glory and became another sun born in the solar race (251-255). I am indeed, that *Rama*, husband of *Sita*, among the bearers of weapons. Crocodile I am, among the aquatic animals with tails (251-255). Know that among the flowing rivers, I am the Ganges (*Jahnavi*), whom *Jahnu* gulped, while she was being brought to earth by *Bhagiratha* and took her out of his thigh. If I were to describe My different manifestations in this world, I will not be able to describe even half of them in thousand births.

32. *Of the creations, I am the beginning, middle and the end, O Arjuna. I am Self-knowledge among knowledges; I am the debate of disputants.*
33. *Of the syllables, I am the syllable **a**, and dvandva among the compounds; I am also time eternal; I am the supporter with faces everywhere.*

Just as one wishing to pick up the stars will have to tie up the sky in one's bag or if one wishes to count the atoms of the earth, one must hold the globe in one's armpit, so one must know Me in order to perceive My expanse (256-260). Just as a person wishing to gather in a bundle the branches, flowers and fruits, has to uproot the tree, one must understand My flawless nature in order to know all My special manifestations. Otherwise, O Arjuna, how long would you hear about My different manifestations? Therefore, try to understand that I am also, O Arjuna, the origin, the middle and the end of this created world. Just as the thread fills the warp and woof of cloth, know that I pervade this whole universe. Once you know this, then you will not find it necessary to understand all My manifestations. This however is still beyond your capacity, and so leave it alone (261-265). Since you have asked Me about the manifestations, O Arjuna, listen to Me, I am the knowledge of the self, which I have told you, among all lore's. I am the debate among those who love to argue. This debate never comes to an end, as the *shastras* do, nor reach a consensus. But the debate increases with the presentation of their doctrines, resulting in forceful arguments and giving greater scope to eloquent orations. I am that debate in which the disputants try to establish their own doctrines, so said *Shri Gobinda*. I am clearly the letter **a** among the alphabets, and know that I am the copulative compound among the compounds. I am also the Time (*Kala*) which devours all, from the mosquito to God *Brahma* (266-270). I am that unlimited Time, who at the time of dissolution destroys the whole world along with the mountain including *Meru*, who absorbs then and there the waters inundating the world, who clasps the fire to his bosom, devours the wind and also contains the *akasha* within his belly, so said the husband of goddess *Lakshmi*. He further added, 'I am also the creator of this world at the beginning of the cycle'.

34. *I am the all-devouring Death, and the origin of things to come; of the feminine virtues, I am fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, fortitude and forgiveness.*

Know that I create all beings, I am also their support and I am their all-devouring death too. I have also seven female manifestations which I shall tell you with delight (271-275). O Arjuna, fame, which is ever fresh, is the very image of My Divine being. Know that I am also wealth which is joined to generosity. I am also the speech which is enthroned on the seat of reason and treads along the path of discriminating knowledge. I am also the power of recollection, by which a person after seeing a thing, remembers Me as its creator. I am also the intelligence, which brings about one's well being in this world and am also fortitude (that makes men endure hardships) and forgiveness. I am, therefore, these seven female powers, so said the

Lord, the lion who destroys the elephant in the form of worldly existence (276-280).

35. *likewise, I am Brihatsama of hymns, and Gayatri of the meters. Of the months I am Margashirsha, of seasons the spring.*

The Lord of *Lakshmi* said, O My dearest friend, know without doubt that I am the *Brihatsama* of the *Samaveda* in the *Vedas* and the meter known as *Gayatri* of the meters. The Lord added, I am the *Margashirsha* month of all months and the flowering spring among the seasons.

36. *I am the gambling of the cheats, the splendour of the splendid, I am victory, the resolve, and the goodness of the good.*
37. *I am Vasudeva of the Vrishnis, and Dhananjaya Of the Pandavas. Of the sages, I am Vyasa, and the poet Ushanas (Shukra) of the wise.*

O clever Arjuna, I am the gamble among the deceitful arts and so the victim of gambling on the highway cannot be saved. O Partha, know fully well that I am the splendour among all splendid things. I am also the success which crowns effort in all undertakings (281-285). I am also the profession which adopts the moral path in any undertaking, so said the Lord of all gods. The Lord said further: I am the goodness of the good, and also the most glorious among the *Yadavas*. Born of *Vasudeva* and *Devaki*, I was removed to *Gokula* to take the place of the daughter of *Yashoda*. When *Putana* came to poison Me, I sucked her to death. Even when the bud of My childhood had not fully blossomed, I made the earth free from demons. I held the *Govardhana* Mountain on the palm of My hand and brought down the prestige of *Indra*. I pulled out the cobra *kalia*, who was a thorn in the bosom of the river *Yamuna* and saved the entire *Gokula* by swallowing its burning flames. When God *Brahma* lifted the calves of *Gokula*, I created exactly similar calves and outwitted him (286-290). In my childhood, I destroyed such formidable foes as *Kamsa* and *Chanura*. Why should I tell you all this? You have heard and seen many such events yourself. I am, therefore, *Vasudeva* among the *Yadavas*. I am also Arjuna amongst you *Pandavas*, born of the lunar race and therefore, our mutual love does not suffer any breach. In the guise of an ascetic, you kidnapped My sister *Subhadra*, but I did not entertain any grudge towards you, for we have one soul in two bodies. I am also *Vyasa*, the foremost among sages and I am also *Shukracharya*, the eminent among wise men, so said Lord Krishna, the king of *Yadavas* (291-295).

38. *I am the rod of those that chastise, and the statesmanship of those that seek victory. I am the silence too of the mysteries and the wisdom of the wise.*

O Partha, among those who chastise, I am that inexorable scepter which chastens all beings from an ant to God *Brahma*. I am ethics among all sciences, which discriminates between good and evil and sides with truth and wisdom. I am silence, O brave Arjuna, the greatest among mysteries and therefore, even God *Brahma* seems ignorant before one who observes silence. Know that I am the wisdom in the wise. Enough of all this, because there is no end to these manifestations.

39. *Whatever is the seed of all creatures, I am that, O Arjuna. There is not a thing, moving or stationary, which can exist without Me.*
40. *There is no end to My Divine manifestations, O scorcher of foes. However, I have said this to illustrate the full extent of My glory.*

O Arjuna can anyone count the showers of rain or the blades of grass on the earth (296-300)? Just as no one can state definitely the number of waves on the sea, so no one can measure My special characteristics. Even then, O Arjuna, I have described to you seventy-five manifestations, which are the chief ones among those I possess. But I think that the purpose with which you asked about My manifestations has not been served. The extent of My other manifestations is limitless. How many of them can I tell you and how many of them will you hear? Therefore, I shall speak to you of My deepest secret, that I am the primary seed from which sprout forth all created beings. Therefore, do not regard anything as small or great, give up all distinctions of high and low, but know for certain I am all this universe (301-305). But over and above this, I shall tell you, O Arjuna, a general characteristic by which you will be able to recognise My manifestations.

41. *Whatever being is majestic, excellent or mighty, know that to have sprung from a fragment of My splendour.*

O winner of wealth, whoever possesses wealth and compassion, know that to be My manifestation.

42. *Or what is the use of your knowing all these details, O Arjuna? Pervading this whole Universe, I abide in it with a fragment of Myself.*

But the sun's disc exists in the sky, yet its light fills the entire universe. In the same way, he is neither alone nor destitute, whose command is obeyed all over the world. Does the wish-yielding cow have to gather materials to fulfill the desires of others? No, she gives to anyone whatever he desires all at once. So every manifestation of Mine possesses abundant majesty (306-310). Know that this is the one characteristic by which one can recognise My manifestations. Those manifestations before whom the whole world prostrates itself, obeying their orders, are My incarnations. But it is a great error to distinguish between My manifestations as high and low, as I am this whole universe. Why should you therefore, debase your reason by imagining distinctions in My manifestations as common and extraordinary? Why should one churn clarified butter unnecessarily or boil nectar and lose half of it? Does the wind have right and left? If one were to see the front and the rear of the sun, he will only lose his sight. So there are no gradations of high and low in My Divine being (311-315). O Arjuna, I have innumerable manifestations of different kinds; how can you count them? So give up this effort to know Me. As I have pervaded this world with a fraction of My Divine being, give up the notions of distinctions and worship My different manifestations with the same consideration.

Thus spoke the Lord of Divine majesty, who is the very spring, which delights the forest in the form of men of wisdom and keeps company with the ascetics. Then Arjuna said, "O Lord, you seem to have said all this without proper thought. You said that we should give up all distinctions. But does the sun ever say to the world to drive away darkness? It would indeed be rash on my part to call you thoughtless (316-320). O Lord, if a person utters your name with his lips or hears it with his ears, he will get rid of all notions of distinctions. Now that, with my great good luck, I have attained to you, how can these distinctions survive? O Lord, can anyone enter the moon's disc and be affected with heat? Only you with all your greatness can afford to talk like this." After hearing these words of Arjuna, the Lord was overjoyed and after embracing Arjuna said, "I said all this outwardly to find out whether the unity of

all the different manifestations of which I spoke has left its stamp on your mind (321-325). But I am now convinced that you have a proper understanding of My manifestations." Arjuna thereupon said, "It is for you to see whether I have understood or not. I, on my part, now know that this whole universe is filled with your Divine presence."

In this way, O King, Arjuna became fit for the experience of *Brahman*. When *Sanjaya* was narrating all this, king *Dhritarashtra* was sitting quiet. *Sanjaya* felt sore at heart, seeing him in that state and said to himself, "Is it not amazing that one should miss what good luck has brought him? I had thought that at least he possessed sound intelligence. But it is not so, he is blind no less inwardly as outwardly." Arjuna, however is trying to achieve the full measure of his good fortune, for there sprang in his heart another ardent desire (326-330). He said, "I have realised now that you are this entire universe, but I long to perceive it with my own eyes." As Arjuna was fortune's favourite, he could hope to see the cosmic form of the Lord. O hearers, Arjuna was as it were, a branch of the wish-yielding tree which could never produce barren flowers. For whatever came out of his lips was accomplished by the Lord. For he had Lord Krishna as his great Master, who himself became poison at the bidding of *Prahlada*. So *Jnanadeva*, the disciple of *Nivritti*, says, I shall next narrate to you how Arjuna will proceed to ask the Lord, to show him his universal form (331-335).

