

God. The worship of God is very easy as it needs no technique, no rules, no labour; in it there is only predominance of devotion. But in the worship of deities, there is predominance of actions, prescriptions and objects.

A man may have the knowledge of several worldly sciences, arts and crafts etc., yet he is a man of meagre intellect. In fact that knowledge strengthens ignorance. But he who has known God, he may not have knowledge of the worldly science, art and craft etc., yet he is 'sarvavit' (knower of all) (Gītā 15/19).



*Link:—Worshippers of the gods, gain the fruit which is finite and perishable. Then, why do men get entangled in it? Why do not they worship, God? An explanation comes in the next verse.*

**अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।**

**परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥**

**avyaktam vyaktimāpannam manyante māmabuddhayaḥ  
param bhāvamajānanto mamāvyayamanuttamam**

Men who lack understanding think of Me, the unmanifest as a perceptible ordinary human being, not knowing My supreme state as immutable and unexcelled. 24

*Comment:—*

'Avyaktam vyaktimāpannam manyante māmabuddhayaḥ param bhāvamajānanto mamāvyayamanuttamam'—Men of poor understanding, think of Me as having been born, and dead, just like ordinary men. They think, that I am also manifested, in the mid-state only, like other beings (Gītā 2/28). They do not know Me, as imperishable, uniform, immaculate, all-pervading, untainted, beyond time, space and causation, and as an incarnation of God. So they, instead of worshipping Me, worship the gods.

There is not a total negation of discrimination in them. But, their understanding is poor, because they do not admit

the perishable world, as perishable. Secondly, they know that if desires cannot be satisfied, they will have to be abandoned, but they do not abandon them.

They do not know My supreme state, immutable and unsurpassed. So, they for satisfaction of their desires, are attracted towards, the gods. Had they known Me, as unsurpassed, they would have worshipped Me, only.

(i) Men of understanding, are those who, accepting the Lord as unsurpassed, take refuge in Him. (ii) Men of poor understanding, are those who regarding the gods, as superior to them to take refuge in them. They are, somewhat polite and simple. (iii) Men without understanding, are those who regard God, as an ordinary human being, and think that they are supreme (Gītā 16/14). God, in spite of being imperishable, the Lord of the whole universe, manifests Himself, through His own divine potency, keeping His nature (prakṛti), under control. But men of poor understanding, do not know, that, He is beyond perishable matter and is superior to the imperishable soul.

#### An Exceptional Fact

Some people, interpret this verse to mean that those who think of the Lord, the unmanifest, as having manifestation, are of poor understanding, because they do not know Him, as unmanifest and formless. Others, interpret that those who regard Lord Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation of God, Who works as Arjuna's charioteer, as formless, are of poor understanding.

But, both views are not correct. The reason is, that the former will censure the Lord endowed with form, and His devotees, while the latter will censure formless God, and the devotees who worship a formless God. When, even the elements such as earth, water and fire etc., can be with form and without form, why can the Lord, not be with form and without form, with attributes and without attributes?

The Gītā, accepts both His aspects, the unmanifest, as well as, the manifest. In the sixth verse of the fourth chapter, Lord Kṛṣṇa declares that He, in spite of being unborn manifests Himself, in spite of being immortal, disappears and despite his being the Lord of the whole universe, becomes an obedient son or pupil, while in the fourth verse of the ninth chapter, He declares that all this is permeated by Him, in His unmanifest aspect. Thus, He can be both—manifest and unmanifest.

**Appendix**—God is manifest and also unmanifest; He is worldly as well as unworldly—‘Vāsudevaḥ sarvam’ (Gītā 7/19), ‘sadasaccāhamarjuna’ (Gītā 9/19). But men, who lack understanding, think of God as manifested from the unmanifest like other beings viz., regard Him as worldly (who is born and dead) for whom the Lord has said—

**avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyaktamadyāni bhārata**

**avyaktanidhanānyeva tatra kā paridevanā** (Gītā 2/28)

‘O Bhārata (Arjuna), all beings were imperceptible before they were born and will become so again when they are dead; they are perceptible only in the intermediate stage. Therefore why to lament?’

God like common human beings is not manifest from the unmanifest, but at the same time being unmanifest, He manifests Himself and being manifest, He remains unmanifest.

**‘Param’**—God endows the worshippers of deities with faith and also rewards them for their worship—this is God’s supreme viz., impartial attitude.

**‘Avyayam’**—Deities are relatively imperishable (immortal), they are not totally imperishable. But God is absolutely imperishable. Anyone else neither is nor can be imperishable like Him.

**‘Anuttamam’**—God wants the welfare of all beings—this is the unexcelled feeling of the Lord. No other feeling can be superior to it.

