here the Lord by using the term 'māmevaiṣyasi' means that he will know Him in His entirety, about which the Lord at the beginning of the seventh chapter said, "asamśayam samagram mām yathā jītāsyasi tacchṛṇu." Then Arjuna will have deep intimacy with Him viz., he will become the Lord's own self, about which the Lord said in the seventh chapter 'jītānī tvātmaiva me matam' (7/18); 'priyo hi jītānīno'tyarthamaham sa ca mama priyaḥ' (7/17) (viz., 'exceedingly dear am I to the wise, and he is exceedingly dear to Me').



Link:—Having consoled Arjuna, in the preceding two verses, the Lord in the next verse, unfolds the supreme secret of all secrets.

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज। अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥६६॥ sarvadharmānparityajya māmekam śaraṇam vraja aham tvā sarvapāpebhyo moksayisyāmi mā śucah

Abandoning dependence on all duties (dharma), take refuge in Me, alone. I shall liberate you from all your sins; therefore grieve not. 66

Comment:-

'Sarvadharmānparityajya māmekam śaraṇam vraja'—Lord Kṛṣṇa, exhorts Arjuna to take refuge, in Him by abandoning dependence on all duties and determination of his duty i.e., what to do and what not to do. Refuge in the Lord, is the quintessence, of the gospel of the Lord. When a devotee takes refuge in Him, like a chaste wife, he has to do nothing, for himself. As a chaste wife, performs every action, in order to please her husband, without thinking of her own taste and inclination, and her husband's Gotra (sub caste) becomes hers, similarly, a devotee who takes refuge in Him, surrenders everything to Him and becomes, free from worry, fear, sorrow and doubt.

Here the term 'Dharma,' stands for duty. The reason, is that

from the forty-first verse to the forty-fourth verse, the terms 'Svabhāvaja Karma' (duties born of their natures) have been used. In the first half of the forty-seventh verse, the term 'Svadharma,' (one's own duty) has been used. Again, in the second half of the forty-seventh verse and also in the forty-eighth verse, the term 'Karma' (Duty) has been used. It means, that in this context at the beginning and the end the term 'Karma,' has been used, while in the middle the term 'Svadharma,' (one's own duty) has been used. So the term 'Dharma,' stands for duty.

Now a question arises, whether one's duties should be practically abandoned. The answer is that it is not proper to abandon one's duties, because in response to the order of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna says, "I shall act according to Your word" (18/73). Then he carried out His order, and waged war. Moreover, in the sixth verse of this chapter, the Lord declared, "Acts of sacrifice, gift and penance and all other duties, must be performed."*

^{*} In the third chapter there is description that a man should not abstain from actions. "Not by non-performance of actions does a man reach actionlessness, nor by mere renunciation does he attain to perfection" (3/4). "None can remain inactive even for a moment" (3/5). "He who restraining the organs of action, thinks of the sense-objects, is called a hypocrite" (3/6). "He who controlling the senses by the mind engages himself in action, he excels" (3/7). "Perform your allotted duty because desisting from action, you cannot even maintain your body" (3/8). "Perform action for the sake of sacrifice alone" (3/9). Having created mankind at the beginning of creation, the creator, Brahmā said to them, "By this shall ye propagate; let this be the milch-cow to provide you necessities for sacrifice"(3/10). "You and the gods fostering each other shall attain to the supreme good " (3/11). "He who enjoys the gifts without giving to the gods in return is a thief" (3/12). "Those who partake of what is left after sacrifice, are absolved of all sins while those who cook for the sake of nourishing their body alone, eat only sin' (3/13). "He who does not perform his duties, lives in vain" (3/16). "A man by performing actions without attachment attains the supreme," (3/19). "It is through action alone that Janaka and other wise men reached perfection. You should perform action with a view to the maintenance of the world" (3/20). The Lord says, "If I don't perform actions, I should be the creator of confusion of castes and destruction of these people" (3/23-24). "The wise should act without attachment as the unwise act with attachment" (3/25). "Let no wise man unsettle the mind of ignorant people attached to action, but should get them to perform all their duties, duly performing them

After studying the Gītā, it becomes clear, that a man should not renounce his duties, under any circumstances. Arjuna thought that it was better to live on alms, than to perform his duty, in slaying the honoured teachers in the war (2/5); but Lord Kṛṣṇa, exhorted him to wage such a righteous war, by saying that there is nothing more welcome for a man of the warrior class, than a righteous war (2/31—38). It proves, that one should not renounce one's duty, which has been prescribed for him, according to his caste, stage of life and circumstances etc.

Then, why does Lord Kṛṣṇa say to Arjuna, to abandon all duties? The Lord means to say that all duties, must be offered to Him. By doing so, a striver, will not depend on duties, but will depend on God. The Lord, declares, that those who depend on duties, (actions) are subject to birth and death (Gītā 9/21). By depending only on Him, one need not decide, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. It practically happened, in Arjuna's life.

Arjuna was fighting against Karna. The wheel of Karna's chariot, got stuck in mud. Karna was trying to push it out. So he said to Arjuna, "You are in the chariot but I am not in a chariot. You possess knowledge of scriptures, and you are well-versed in the science of arms, like Sahasrārjuna. You also know the science of ethics. So it is not proper on your part to shoot arrows, at me". So Arjuna did not shoot any arrows. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa said to Karṇa, "It is righteous, rather than sinful, to kill such a desperado, as you.* Six chariot-warriors, including you have murdered Abhimanyu, who was alone. Therefore, there is no use for you to support righteousness. It is fortunate, that you are reminded of righteousness, at this moment. But he who himself, does not translate righteousness into practice has no

himself" (3/26). Thus the Lord has laid great emphasis on the performance of one's duty in the third chapter.

^{*}A desperado who is bent upon doing harm to anyone should be killed. Such a killer does not incur any sin (evil).

right to preach it, to others." Having uttered these words Lord Kṛṣṇa, ordered Arjuna to shoot arrows. By obeying Him, Arjuna began to shoot these.

If Arjuna, had taken the decision about his duty, by applying his intellect, he would have committed an error of judgment. But he left it to the Lord and it was He, Who took the right decision.

Arjuna, was in a dilemma whether to fight or not to fight (2/6). He thought, that if he fought, there would be destruction of his family, and sin would overtake the entire family. The women of the family, would become corrupt, and there would ensue an intermixture of castes. Thus, age-long, caste-traditions and family customs, would die (1/39—44). On the other hand, there was nothing more welcome, for a man of the warrior class, than a righteous war. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna, to entrust Him with the task of taking the decision, about his duty, without being confused about it.

'Māmekam śaraṇam vraja'—Here the term 'ekam' (alone), stands for exclusive or undivided. In (3/2) and (5/1) also Arjuna by using the term 'ekam' (one) asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, to tell him definitely, the one discipline by which he might attain bliss. So Lord Kṛṣṇa in response to his question, says that exclusive (undivided) refuge is the best discipline, to attain bliss or Godrealization.

In the Gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa has laid, time and again, great emphasis on the merit of, exclusive devotion. 'Those who take refuge in Me alone, get over this divine delusion of Mine' (7/14); 'I am easily attainable to the Yogī (ascetic) who always and constantly, thinks of Me, with undivided mind' (8/14).* For those men who worship Me alone, I provide, what is not possessed and preserve what they already possess' (9/22); 'Through single-minded devotion, I can be seen and known and even entered into' (11/54); 'I speedily deliver, from the ocean of birth and death, those who

^{* &#}x27;Undivided mind' stands for exclusive devotion or exclusive dependence.

meditate on Me, with single-minded devotion' (12/6-7); 'Those who worship Me with exclusive devotion, transcend the three modes of nature' (14/26). Thus, having described the merit of exclusive devotion, the Lord gives the quintessence of the entire gospel, of the Gītā by declaring, "Take refuge in Me alone." It means that the Lord, is the means as well as, the end.

The sentence 'Māmekam śaranam vraja' means, that a striver, should take refuge in Him, not by mind and intellect, but by the self. When he himself takes refuge by the self, his mind, body, senses and intellect etc., automatically take refuge, in Him.

'Aham tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ'—It may be thought, that Lord Kṛṣṇa allured Arjuna to liberate him, from the sin, as he was afraid of, in the first chapter. But, it is not reasonable, because, as soon as a man seeks refuge in the Lord, his sins of millions of births perish. If the Lord wanted to allure him, that he would liberate him from all sins, He would have done it earlier, before he took refuge in Him.

When the Lord declares, that He will liberate him from all sins, He means to say, that having taken refuge in Him, if he finds that he has not got rid of evil propensities, has not developed devotion to God, and has not beheld Him, he need not worry. It is the Lord's responsibility, to free him from all defects. If he himself wanted to shoulder the responsibility, it shows that he has not yet taken refuge. When he has taken refuge in Him, he should be free from worry, sadness, fear and doubt. If these evils, crop up in him, they will prove to be obstacles in refuge and the responsibility (burden) will remain his. This responsibility, is a blot on refuge. After he has taken refuge in Him, his shortcomings are the Lord's, and his whole responsibility, goes to the Lord.

When Vibhīṣaṇa took refuge in Lord Rāma, Rāma shouldered his full responsibility. Once in a village named Vipraghoṣa, a Brāhmaṇa (a member of the priest class), was killed by him. First, he was badly beaten up and then he was chained and

imprisoned. When Lord Rāma came to know of this incident, He flew to Vipraghoṣa by the airy vehicle, named Puṣpaka. The villagers, extended a cordial welcome to Lord Rāma, and said to Him, that Vibhīṣaṇa had murdered a Brāhmaṇa and so they gave him a severe beating, but he was not killed. Lord Rāma said, "Oh, people of the priest class, I have granted him an age of a Kalpa (consisting of 4,32,00,00,000 years of mortals), and also a kingdom. How can he be killed? Moreover, he is My devotee. The responsibility of the crime of a servant, goes to his master, and the master deserves punishment. Therefore instead of Vibhīṣaṇa, punish Me." The Brāhmaṇas, having perceived the affection of Lord Rāma for a person who has taken shelter in Him, were wonder-struck and all of them sought refuge in Him.

It means that 'I am the Lord's and the Lord is mine;' this is the quintessence of all spiritual disciplines. Nothing, such as eligibility, capability, qualification and virtue, is equal to a sense of mine, with the Lord. A weeping child, awakens all the members of a family at midnight and they try their best to please the child. Why? Because, the child is theirs. So a devotee, who has taken refuge in the Lord, should hold that he is the Lord's and only the Lord is his.

'Mā śucah' means-

(1) Having taken refuge in me, if you grieve, it is out of your pride and it is a crime and it is a blot, on refuge.

When you have taken refuge in Me, you should totally depend on Me. If you do not totally depend on Me, it is a crime. If you worry after thinking of your shortcomings, it means that you have pride of your own strength because you want to get rid of these by your own power.* If you have defects, you should be sad, but not worried, like a child who starts weeping without

^{*} In the assembly of the Kauravas when an effort is made to strip Draupadī, she holds the Sārī with her hands and teeth. But then finding herself helpless, she invokes Lord Kṛṣṇa and totally depends upon Him. Then Duḥśāsana gets totally tired but is unable to strip the Sārī from her body, because the Sārī becomes endless to strip her.

worrying, when he sees a dog coming towards him. But if you worry, the people will laugh at you, and at Me. They will think that a devotee of God is worried, and the Lord does not rid him of it. It means that your lack of faith in Me, brings a blot on Me, and My refuge. Therefore, abandon your worry.

- (2) Do not worry, even if your thoughts and feelings, have not been purified. It is My responsibility, to purify these.
- (3) In the seventh verse of the second chapter, Arjuna says to Lord Kṛṣṇa, that he has taken refuge in Him. But in the eighth verse, he says that even on obtaining undisputed sovereignty, and an affluent kingdom on the earth, and lordship over the gods, he does not see any means, that can drive away the grief, which is affecting his senses. At this, the Lord seems to say to Arjuna, that he is right because a man cannot be free from grief, so long as he is attached to perishable persons and objects. But, it is a blunder on his part, if he grieves even after having taken refuge in Him.
- (4) A devotee, having taken refuge in the Lord, should not worry what will happen to him, here or hereafter. In this connection a devotee said, "O slayer of Narakāsura, you may provide me residence, either in heaven or hell or on the earth and behave towards me, in anyway according to Your sweet will. But I have only one demand, that I may go on thinking of your most beautiful feet, which excel the beauty of an autumn-lotus of season, even at the time of my death.

An Important Fact Pertaining to Refuge

When a devotee, assumes that he is the Lord's and the Lord is his, his defects such as worry, fear, sadness and doubt, are rooted out. The reason is, that all defects are based on his dependence on the world, including the body, and on his disinclination, for the Lord. As soon as his affinity, with the Lord gets a firm footing, all his defects perish.

The criteria of one's firm affinity, with the Lord are the following:—

(1) Fearlessness:—The devotee who takes refuge in the Lord, becomes free from external fear, as that of poisonous snakes, and scorpions, and wild beasts such as lion etc., and also from internal fear, of evil propensities etc. A striver, should not have such a fear, that his tendencies may be of evil nature, as by God's grace, he becomes saturated with divine mercy. So, there is no question of any such fear, for him. He could not purify his evil thoughts, as he regarded these as 'mine'. To regard these as one's own, is impurity. He also becomes totally free, from the greatest fear of death, from which even great scholars cannot escape. He perceives the Lord's grace, everywhere.

Now, a doubt may arise, that when a devotee worships God with exclusive devotion, it means that he regards himself as different from God and as fear arises in duality so he should be afraid of Him. But this doubt is baseless, because the devotee becomes so much intimate with the Lord, that no question arises of his being afraid, of Him. He being the Lord's fragment, having taken refuge in Him, becomes fearless, forever, like a child, who becomes fearless in the lap of his mother. He is different from prakṛti (nature), not from Him. The Lord and he (self), are sentient, eternal, imperishable and unchanging, while prakṛti is insentient, transient, perishable and everchanging. So he can be afraid of nature, but not of the Lord. Actually, a devotee (self) has his identity with God, but he forgets it. And when he takes refuge in the Lord, he realizes this fact.

- (2) Freedom from sadness (sorrow):—A person, grieves over what has passed. To grieve over the past, is a blunder. A devotee, believes that whatever is allotted, cannot be blotted, and every action, incident or circumstance, destined by the Lord, is for his good. By thinking so, he remains free from sadness.
- (3) Freedom from worry:—When a devotee takes refuge in God, he is not at all worried, about the necessities of life, here or what will happen to him, in future. If he surrenders himself to God, how can any worry remain? Worry is contrary

to surrender. If there is worry, actually there is no surrender. The Lord declares, "I'll release you from all sins." What efforts does he need then? He is least worried, whether his mind and intellect, are purified or not. If sometimes evil propensities, get hold of his mind, he may invoke the Lord to save him, but he does not, at all worry or grieve. He becomes a yesman of His will, because the Lord, shoulders his full responsibility. If sometimes, he feels that body, senses, mind, life-breath and intellect, are his, it is his error. He prays to God to deliver him, from this error and becomes free from worry.

- (4) Freedom from doubt:—He does not doubt, whether he is of the Lord or not, and whether the Lord has accepted him or not. He believes, that he has been of the Lord since time immemorial, and he will remain His. He holds, that it was an error on his part that he had regarded himself as separate, from the Lord. But it is impossible, because the Lord declared, "He (the self) is a fragment of My own self" (Gītā 15/7). Thus, he has a belief that he is of the Lord and the Lord is his, without doubt.
- (5) Not to put to a test:—The devotee, who takes refuge in the Lord, does not put his surrender to a test, that he should possess such virtues; and if he does not possess them, it means that he has not taken, true refuge. He has a firm belief, that he has taken refuge in the Lord, and so he is surprised, when he perceives that the signs of a devotee, who is dear to the Lord (Gītā 12/13—19), are missing from him.* By thinking so, he

Next day one of the elder brothers said to the younger brother that he

^{*}In order to make the point clear there is an anecdote. At the death of the mother, the two elder brothers asked the younger brother to take the ash of the dead mother's body and cast it into the Ganges. The distance of the Ganges from their house was six hundred miles. He got tired after covering a distance of three hundred miles. So he threw the ash and filled the metal mug with rainy water in order to show that he had gone to the Ganges and brought its holy water. When he came back home, his elder brothers knew the fact because he had come back earlier than he should have returned. When they asked him, he told a lie.

develops the marks of an enlightened devotee, without making any effort.

(6) Not to have a contrary resolution:—Such a devotee, has no contrary resolution, that he is not of the Lord. He has a firm belief, that his relationship with the Lord is permanent and eternal, and he is only His. He was not conscious of this. It was his blunder. This relationship is axiomatic. Now this blunder is no more. So, how can he have a contrary belief?

One who heartily accepts refuge in God, he becomes free from evil, such as fear, grief and worry etc., and his belief in surrender, is intensified automatically.

A girl after her marriage regards her husband's house, as her own. This relationship is so much strengthened, that when she becomes a grandmother or great grandmother, she almost forgets, that she belonged to another family. When the wife of her grandson or great grandson misbehaves, towards any other member of the family, she scolds her by uttering the words, that a girl born in another family has spoiled, the environment of her family. It means, that when such an assumed affinity, is so strengthened, why should the real affinity of a man, with the Lord, not be strengthened? His assumed affinity, with the world, is the only obstacle to it.

If such a devotee, lacks anything in devotion or conduct; if he has contrary tendencies and his conduct is not according to the Lord's will, there will be a feeling in his heart. God by His

had a dream in which the mother said to him that he had thrown the ash on the way, not into the Ganges. The younger brother replied if the mother instead of coming in this direction having covered a distance of three hundred miles, had gone in the opposite direction, she would have reached the Ganges.

This anecdote shows that a devotee should not have a contrary resolution like the younger brother who said why the mother came in the opposite direction and if she had gone the other side, she would have reached the Ganges.

A devotee should think why he lacks the marks of an enlightened devotee when he has taken refuge in the Lord. By thinking so he will inculcate those virtues (marks) and become enlightened. But if he has the contrary resolution, he will be cheated by his own self.

grace, will purge him of all sins and will make up his deficiency and he need not make any amends.

The Lord, perceives the feeling of 'mineness', of a devotee for him. He cannot behold his defects, because he is His fragment permanently, while defects are temporary, as these appear and disappear. When a child, soiled with mud comes to his mother and seeks her lap, the mother is ever prepared to put him in her lap, without thinking whether he is dirty or clean. All this happens, due to a feeling of mineness. The child, does not mind whether it is dirty or not or whether the mother cleans it or not. Instead of seeing the mud, it only beholds the mother. Draupadī had evil feelings of enmity and anger, for Duḥśāsana, and she resolved that she would not dress her hair, unless she stained it with Duḥśāsana's blood. But as soon as she called, Lord Kṛṣṇa, He appeared before her, because of her closeness with Him.

Regarding the feeling of 'mineness', one may consider (i) 'The Lord is mine' (ii) 'I am the Lord's'. In the former case a devotee may lay a claim over the Lord, and thus may wish that his desires should be fulfilled by Him. But in the latter, he surrenders himself to the Lord and thus becomes a puppet of His sweet will. A striver, should never lay claim on God. He should rather accept God's lordship, over him. If the Lord does something according to his will, he feels hesitation, that the Lord has to satisfy his will. If he feels satisfied and happy in any happening according to his will, it means that there is some deficiency, in his surrender.

Such a devout devotee, has nothing to do for him. He has already offered himself and his possessions to the Lord, which were really the Lord's. Whatever, he does, does only God's work. In such a situation, even in the most adverse and horrible circumstances, he remains enamoured of Divine grace, in abundance. So a striver, who takes refuge in the Lord ever remains pleased, with His will, without having any desire of his own, even in the most undesirable circumstances like that of Kākabhuśundi.

Kākabhuśundi narrated the life story of his previous birth. that he was a Brāhmana, (a member of the priest class). The sage named Lomasa put a curse, upon him. So he took birth, as a crow. But he was not sad, because he thought that it happened by Lord's will (Mānasa 7/113/1). Sage Lomasa saw, that he was still happy. So he called him and preached him how to meditate on Lord Rāma, because he was a loving devotee of God. Moreover, he narrated to him the life story of Lord Rāma, and gave him blessings, "You will become dear to Lord Rāma. You will possess all virtues. You will be able to transform yourself, into any form, you like. Your home with its surroundings will remain totally untouched, by any deluding potency of the Lord (Mava) and so on." Just then there was an oracle, "O sage, whatever you have said will prove true, this crow is a devotee of Mine, by thought, word and deed." So in the Rāmacaritamānasa, it is said that the sage's curse proved to be a blessing for it, because of adoration and such a blessing is seldom granted, even to an ascetic.

Here, adoration stands for being pleased by the Lord's sweet will, even in most unfavourable and undesirable circumstances. The more unfavourable the circumstances, are, the more pleased, a devout devotee becomes, because love enhances every moment.

As a rule, if a thing is ours, it is dear to us. All the beings are the Lord's and so they are very dear to Him (Mānasa 7/86/2), and the Lord is also naturally loving to them. But they have a disinclination for Him, by an error regarding the kaleidoscopic world and the bodies, as their own. Still the Lord does not renounce them, as these are a fragment of the Lord. He ever loves them. So, for the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of the wicked and for the firm establishment of righteousness, He is born in every age (Gītā 4/8). What is the Lord's own purpose, which is served through these three objectives of His incarnation? It is because of His love for people, that he comes into being for their welfare. His incarnation proves His sense of mineness, mercy, lovingness, benevolence and disinterested and impartial magnanimity. It is because of disinclination of beings

for Him, that they have to suffer and follow the cycle of birth and death, So the Lord, asks them to fix their mind on Him, to be devoted to Him, to worship Him and to prostrate themselves before Him, so that they may have an inclination for Him, and a disinclination, for the perishable world.

Whatever the Lord designs, it is only for the welfare of all beings. If people, pay attention to this fact, nothing remains to be done, by them. The Lord, has a keen desire to do good, to beings. So He discloses the secret of all secrets. "Abandoning all duties, take refuge in Me alone." The reason is, that He regards Himself as a disinterested friend of all beings (5/29). He has given them freedom to attain Him, by anyone of the Disciplines of Action, Knowledge or Devotion and get rid of worldly sufferings forever.

In fact, a being attains salvation, only by God's grace. So He and the liberated souls, who know Him in reality, have revealed the different disciplines—of Action, Knowledge, Devotion, Aṣṭāngayoga, Layayoga, Haṭhayoga and Rājayoga etc., because both of them think of the good of all beings, without any selfish motive (Mānasa 7/47/3). The Lord by His grace, by making a striver, just an instrument, enables him to attain perfection.

A devout devotee, who takes refuge in the Lord, does not worry, that he has not yet had a vision of the Lord, he has not developed true devotion for Him and that his inclinations have not been purified and so on. If he worries, he is like a monkey's young one, who by holding its mother, shoulders the responsibility itself. A devout devotee, like a kitten, which totaly depends upon its mother, depends on the Lord, without worrying whether He appears before him or not, whether He bestows love upon him or not, and whether He purifies his propensities or not. A kitten folds its limbs and remains ready for its mother to carry it anywhere. Similarly a devotee withdrawing himself from the world, beholds the Lord by meditating upon Him, reciting His name and perfoming such spiritual activities. He remains fully

satisfied and happy with whatever happens to him, regarding it as the Lord's, sweet will.

A devotee is like clay, which leaves itself to a potter's will. The potter, mixes water in it, kneads it, crushes ..., pats it, puts it on his wheel, moulds it, and makes pots, such as pitcher, jar and plates etc. Similarly, a devotee leaving himself at the Lord's will, becomes free, from worry and fear etc. Then, the Lord's grace, showers on him incessantly. The more free he is from worry and fears, the more Divine grace, is showered on him. The more he is worried and prides in his capability, the more impediments, he puts in, Divine grace. The Lord's uncommon, unique, incessant and continuous grace, is showered on a devout devotee, who takes refuge, in Him.

When a fisherman casts his net, in order to catch fish, all the fish which come within the net, are trapped. But the fish which come closer to his feet, is not trapped. Similarly, beings having been attached to the world, get entangled and follow a cycle of birth and death. But those, who take refuge in Him, get over the deluding potency (Māyā) of the Lord (Gītā 7/14). There is an important difference, between the attitude of the fisherman and the Lord. The fisherman wants to trap the fish, but the Lord wants beings to be liberated from illusion, by taking refuge in Him. So He declares, "Take refuge in Me, alone." A person gets entangled in illusion, by being attached to worldly pleasure.

As in a moving mill, all the grains are ground but which are those near the rivet are not pulverised. Similarly in the grindingstone of the world, people are crushed i.e., they suffer and follow a cycle of birth and death. But those, who take refuge in Him, escape suffering and the cycle of birth and death. However, there is a difference between, grain and devotees. The grains remain near the rivet, without making any effort, while devotees themselves, by having a disinclination for the world, take refuge at His feet. It means, that if a man (soul), even being a fragment of the Lord, accepts his affinity with the world, and wants his

desire to be fulfilled by it, he has to suffer, by following the cycle of birth and death.

A man's affinity with the world is an assumed, one, while with the Lord it is real. Affinity with the world makes him a slave to the world, while the affinity with the Lord, makes him a Lord, even to the Lord. If a person, regards himself superior to others, because of learning, riches, power and even renunciation and dispassion, it means, that he is a slave to them, because in fact he is not superior, but these possession have made him feel superior. So there is superiority of these possessions, rather than his real own. He is inferior to them. But if a devotee takes refuge in the Lord, and depends only on Him, the Lord makes him a jewel of His crown, or considers him, His Lord. But, even then he has no superiority complex, no pride of his virtues. In that case, the Lord's uniqueness descends on him and sometimes even their bodies, senses, mind and intellect bocome divine, as their earthliness is completely gone. Such devotees, with their bodies merge in God. Mīrābāī merged in His idol. Only a piece of her Sārī, was left in the Lord's mouth. Similarly, saint Tukā Rāma went to the Abode of Lord Visnu, with his body.

In the Discipline of Knowledge, body does not become divine, because a Jñānī (wise man), by renouncing his affinity with the unreal, becomes established in the divine essence. But, when a devotee, develops an inclination for God, his body, senses, mind and life-breath etc., are also inclined towards the Lord. It means, that those who behold only divine essence everywhere, divinity descends on their bodies, though they appear as gross, to the worldly people.

When a devotee takes refuge in the Lord, He with Goddess Lakṣmī, showers on him so much of affection and grace, beyond description. When the Lord saturated with love, comes alongwith His consort Lakṣmī on His vehicle Garuḍa, to behold His devotee, hymns of Sāmaveda are sung, by its wings. But if a devotee, instead of worshipping Lord Viṣṇu, the preserver, worships only

Goddess Lakṣmī (the goddess of wealth), whose vehicle is an owl, he receives wealth and is intoxicated with, pride, and then falls. The reason is, that he looks at Mother Lakṣmī with deceptive eyes, as he wants to enjoy himself, with her help. Thus, he is very mean. Moreover, if a person has a desire only to obtain wealth by adoring Her, he may not get it. But if he adores the Lord, Goddess Lakṣmī also certainly appears with Her husband, Lord Viṣṇu and blesses him with wealth.

In this connection, there is an anecdote of Hanumān, the monkey-god. Once Lord Rāma, Goddess Sītā and devotee Hanumān, were sitting under a tree, in a garden. A creeper vine, was creeping over the branches of a tree. It looked very beautiful with its flowers and leaves. Lord Rāma said to Hanumān, "Look, how beautiful this creeper is! It is enhancing the beauty of the garden and specially this tree, over which it is creeping. Moreover, it is because of it that beasts and birds seek shelter under this tree. How blessed it is! Is it not so?"

Hearing praise from the Lord, Goddess Sītā said, "Dear son Hanumān, the beauty of this creeper depends, on the tree. Its base or support, is the tree. Where can it creep without a tree? So the credit for its beauty and shelter, goes only to the tree, truly! Hanumān?"

Hanuman said, "There is something more meritorious, than these two."

"What is that?" said Sītā.

Hanumān said, "Mother, how fine the shade of the tree and the creeper is! I relish the shade of the two". Similarly, the Lord and His power of bliss, enrich the glory of each other. Some devotees consider both of them supreme, others declare only the Lord, as supreme, while still others regard His power of bliss, as supreme. However, for a devout devotee, refuge in both of them, is desirable.

Once, a blind saint was going along the bank of the Yamunā, with a stick in his hand. The river was flooded. Suddenly he fell

into the river and also lost his stick. He remembered the Lord's declaration, pertaining to refuge. So, he surrendered himself to the will of God. Then he felt, as if someone had pulled him out on to the bank and provided him with a stick as well. Thus a devotee, is ever happy, with what God destines for him.

Once a goat got astray from its herd, at dusk. It saw the footprint of a lion, and sat near it by taking refuge in it. When beasts, such as jackals and wolves, etc., came to attack the goat, it said that it had sought refuge, at the feet of the lion. So being afraid of a lion, all of them fled. Finally, the lion came and asked why, the goat was sitting there, all alone. The goat said, that it had taken refuge in the lion, whose footprint was there. The lion saw that it was his footprint. So he assured it, that it need not be afraid of anyone, as he would offer protection.

At night, when an elephant came to drink water, the lion asked him to put the goat on his back, and feed it with green leaves. The elephant carried out his order, and the goat, ate green leaves and remained carefree.

Similarly, when a man seeks refuge in God, he gets rid of all obstacles and becomes fearless, like the fish which swims against the flow of a river, while even an elephant cannot move, in that direction.

Affinity with the Lord out of love, desire, fear and envy, leads a man to salvation*. But those who have no affinity with

Lord Kṛṣṇa says, 'O sinless Uddhava! In all the ages, by good company i.e., affinity with Me, demons and devils, birds and beasts, celestial musicians and damsels, snakes, perfect souls and demi-gods, have attained Me. Among human beings, persons of trading and labour classes, women and even persons of the lowest class, who are endowed with the mode of passion and ignorance, have attained My Supreme State. Vṛṭra, Prahlāda, Vṛṣaparvā, Bāli, Bāṇa, Maya,

^{*} Not only one, but so many people out of desire, envy, fear and love by concentrating their mind on God and being purged of the sins, have realized God as a devotee realizes Him, through devotion. The cowherdesses, out of desire, Kamsa out of fear, the kings such as Śiśupāla and Dantavaktra, out of envy, members of the Yadu clan out of family relationship, and you (Yudhiṣṭhira etc.,) out of love, and we (Nārada etc.,) out of devotion, have concentrated our minds on God (Śrīmadbhā. 7/1/29-30).

him, but remain indifferent, are deprived of God-realization. Those who take refuge in God, are dear to Him and become of the 'Acyuta' (Infallible), Lord's caste and creed, though they are of different sexes, castes, creeds, colours, calibres etc.* They become one with Lord 'Acyuta'. So their 'Gotra' (sub-caste), also becomes 'Acyuta.'

The Secret of Refuge

It is only the Lord, Who really knows the secret of refuge, in Him. I am trying to explain this according to my own understanding, and request that, the reader without grasping the deep and abstract meanings, should not take a contrary view. They should reflect upon the topic, because it is something very vital and rare.

In the Gītā, pertaining to refuge Lord Kṛṣṇa has pointed out two factors—

(i) 'Seek refuge in Me alone' (18/66).

Vibhīṣaṇa etc., of the demon class; Sugrīva, Hanumān, Jāmbavān etc., of the monkey class, beasts and birds, such as the Gajendra and Jaṭāyu. Tulādhāra of the trading class; Dharma, a hunter, Kubjā of the low caste, cowherdesses of Vraja; wives of the people of priest class who performed sacrifices, and other people, because of good company, have attained Me.

Those people neither studied the Vedas, nor obeyed the great personalities as sanctioned by scriptures, nor observed any fast, nor performed any penance. But only by good company i.e., affinity with Me, they attained Me.

*In My adoration, there is no distinction between men and women, and between persons having different names, and belonging to different stages of life, the only important factor is, devotion to Me (Adhyātma. Aranya 10/20).

What is the use of being born in the upper most caste (Brāhmana)? What is the utility of the deep study of all the scriptures? It means, that there is no utility. Who can be more blessed in the entire universe, than the being whose heart is full of devotion to God?

Was the hunter a man of good conduct? Was Dhruva aged? Did Gajendra (lord of elephants) possess any learning, or art? Did Vidura belong to an upper caste? Was Ugrasena belonging to the Yadu clan, heroic? Was Kubjā beautiful? Was Sudāmā rich? No. Yet all of them realized God, because devotion is the only virtue, which is loving to God and He gets satisfied with devotion, not with virtuous conduct and learning etc.

(ii) 'An undeluded person, knowing all worship me with his whole being (heart)' (15/19); 'Seek refuge in Him, alone with all your being' (18/62).

How to take refuge in Him? A devotee without paying any attention to His virtues, glories, names, abode, beauty and lordliness etc., and having no desire of his own, should surrender himself to Him. He should believe, that he is only the Lord's and only the Lord, is his. But anyone should not assume a contrary meaning. The contrary implications, is that he stops listening to the virtues and glories etc., of the Lord, and does not go to His birthplace etc.

A devotee holds, that the Lord is his, whether He possesses virtues, such as grace, beauty, glory, influence etc., or not. If the Lord is more hard-hearted and unkind than anyone else, in the entire universe, still He is his.* If a person respects a rich man or a powerful man, or a man holding a high post, he in fact, does not respect him but he respects his riches or power or post. Similarly, if a devotee adores the Lord because of His virtues, glories, beauty and lordliness etc., he in fact, does not adore the Lord, but he adores those qualities. So a striver, instead of setting eyes on His qualities, should behold Him purely.

Seven sages went to Goddess Pārvatī, and described the vices of Lord Śiva, and virtues of Lord Viṣṇu, and requested her to renounce her affinity, with Lord Śiva. In response to their proposal she said, "Even if Lord Śiva is a sea of vices and Lord Viṣṇu a sea of virtues, but anyone who has set mind on someone, is only connected with him" (Mānasa 1/80).

A similar message was conveyed by the cowherdesses to

^{*} My most loving Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whether ugly or handsome, without virtues or most virtuous, envious of me or most gracious to me, howsoever He treats me, He is my only resort.

Whether He delights me by embracing or crushes me, under his feet while I cling on to his feet or breaks my heart without appearing before me, that Śrī Kṛṣṇa of the free will may treat me in anyway, He likes, but He is the only Lord of my life, (Śikṣāṣṭaka 8).

Uddhava, when he brought Lord Kṛṣṇa's message, to them.

Those, who have an eye on the Lord's virtues and glories etc., can attain salvation and glory etc., but cannot have vision of God. But, a devout devotee who beholds Him only, can have His vision, bind Him and even sell Him. The Lord holds such devotees in high esteem. Those, who see His glory and influence, etc., have regard for His glory and influence, etc., and it shows, that they have a desire to receive something. But if a devotee beholds only the Lord, it means, that he has taken refuge in Him and he is only the Lord's.

An ogress named Pūtanā, by applying poison to her teats put these into Lord Kṛṣṇa's mouth, so that while drawing milk He might be poisoned. But the merciful Lord, enabled her to attain salvation, treating her as his mother. Who can be more gracious than He*? He awards salvation to an ogress, who wants to poison Him. How should He award His mother, who feeds Him with milk everyday? He gives himself to her, He submits to her. When His mother shows a stick to Him, He starts to weep.

A devotee, who has taken refuge in the Lord, does not think whether his body, senses and mind etc., are under his control, or not. He does not think of his honour, praise, virtues and conduct etc. He does not think, that his eyes should be filled with tears, and throat be choked with delight, when he chants the Lord's name and glories, or listens to divine discourses. He regards all these items as trivial. The reason, is that if he finds virtue and characteristics of enlightened devotees (Gītā 12/13—19) in them, he will feel proud. But, if he finds that he misses them, he will be dejected. So a devotee, should not worry about these. But He should not take the contrary meaning that he may bear enmity or malice or have a possessive spirit. Divine propensities, are naturally developed in devotees who take refuge, in God. He

^{*} Oh! This sinful Pūtanā having applied the deadly poison to her teats, wanted to feed Kṛṣṇa in order to kill Him, while He awarded her salvation, which should have been awarded to a nurse. Who can be more merciful than He in whom one may seek refuge (Śrīmadbhā. 2/3/23)?

looks neither at his own virtues, nor at the virtues of saints, and liberated souls, that he should possess these.

People complain, why a devotee falls ill, why he suffers, why he becomes poor and why he is insulted and dishonoured, why his son may expire, why his riches are lost and so on. But such complaints or thoughts are futile. Those, who put a devotee to such a test, do not know anything, either about good company, devotion or refuge. But it does not mean, that such a devotee is always poor, sick or is insulted, dishonoured or blamed. He is not the least concerned with health and sickness, praise and blame, or honour and dishonour etc. He beholds, the Lord only. He does not think, even of the glory of the Lord, that He is creator, preserver and destroyer, of the entire universe.

Someone asked a saint, whether he was a devotee of the Lord, Who creates the universe, or one Who preserves it or one Who destroys it. He replied, "This is nothing special about our Lord, this is a phase of His life and glory." A devout devotee, should never look at His glory.

At Rsikeśa, on the bank of the Ganges, a saint was holding a discourse, during the summer season. A cold wind out of cold wave came to that side. A striver said, "What a cold wind!" Another striver said, "How could you divert your attention to the cold wind, from a divine discourse?" Therefore, so long as a striver, pays attention to these outwardly temptations etc., it means that he is not devoted, to the Lord.

In this connection, there is an anecdote, relating to a depraved woman. Her conduct is bad, but it teaches a good moral. She wanted to meet her lover. On the way, there was a mosque where a learned muslim was offering his prayer, to God. She unknowingly put her foot on the arm of the learned person, and went away. When she comes back, he was very angry with her, and he scolded her by saying, that she was very foolish, as she did not see that he was offering his prayer to God. She replied that she was so much absorbed by her passion, for that man, that

she could not see him. But, how could he behold her, when he was engrossed in offering his prayer, to the Lord? According to her, there was no use of such a prayer, and study of the Kurāna. He should have devoted himself, heart and soul, to the Lord, otherwise he cannot be called a devout devotee, and it means, that he has not taken refuge in Him.

When the Kauravas and the Pāndavas, learnt archery, their preceptor gave them, a test. An artificial bird, was perched on the branch of a tree. Each of them was asked to hit the throat of the bird. But before shooting, each was asked, what he was beholding. Other persons said, that they saw a branch, a bird, wings and the beak etc. The same question, was put to Arjuna. He answered that only the throat, was visible to him. So he was ordered to shoot the arrow. Arjuna hit the throat of the bird with his arrow, because he saw the aim, to achieve. Thus a devotee should have only the aim of Divine love. This is called unswerving devotion (Gītā 13/10) or exclusive devotion, to Him.

Someone told saint Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa, "Your Lord Rāma, Whom you worship, is partly divine, as He possesses only twelve divine traits (Kalā), while Lord Kṛṣṇa is fully divine, as He possesses all the sixteen divine traits." Having heard these words, Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa bowed to him and said "You have been very kind to me, by explaining that Lord Rāma is an incarnation, having twelve Kalās (divine traits). I worshipped Him, regarding him as Daśaratha's loving baby son, only." He did not pay attention to the fact, that Lord Kṛṣṇa was a complete incarnation of God, as He possessed all the sixteen Kalās (divine traits).

Several devotees worship Lord Rāma, or Lord Kṛṣṇa, regarding Him as a small boy, a son of Daśaratha or Nanda. So they request saints, to bless their favourite Deity, boy Rāma or Kṛṣṇa. The Lord, likes such a devotee and such a blessing, very much. It means, that such devout devotees, do not pay any attention, to His glories.

If a person touches the dust of a courtyard, where Kanhaiyā

(Kṛṣṇa) played, this dust enables him to attain, all the four kinds of salvation. But mother Yaśodā, regarding it as dirt, threw it into a dustbin, because she beheld Kṛṣṇa only her son, without paying any attention to His glory and qualifications etc.

Saints, have declared that if a person wants to have a vision of the Lord, he should have nothing with him because the dependence on anything, such as mind, intellect, learning, riches or kith and kin etc., are veils, which are obstacles to His vision. As soon as, this veil of dependence on the material world, is removed, a devotee beholds the Lord really.

Once a saint, met a rustic peasant of Vraja. The peasant said that he worked only for his loving Kṛṣṇa. The saint said, that he had an exclusive devotion to him. The peasant said that he had the most exclusive devotion, to Him. The saint said to him, "What is the most exclusive devotion?" The peasant said, "What is exclusive devotion?" The saint said, that in exclusive devotion a devotee has undivided devotion, to his favourite Deity, without worshipping the Sun-god, Gaṇeśa, Durgā and Brahmā etc. The rustic peasant said, "O Grandpa, I have the most exclusive devotion, because I don't know any damn name besides my Kanhaiyā (Kṛṣṇa)." Thus, a devout devotee, does not meditate on, what is the Absolute, what is soul, whether God is endowed with form and attributes or is without attribute and formless, and so on.

Once a saint, in Vraja was discussing spirituality, with someone. A cowherdess, heard their discussion. She asked her companion, about the terms God and soul etc. The latter said, that these should be the other names of their loving Kanhaiyā (Kṛṣṇa) or His neighbours, or relatives, because these saints are bent upon attaining Him. So they always talk about Him. Similarly, the cowherdesses also believe that only Kanhaiyā is theirs, and they are His. But they have no desire to receive, anything from Him.

Mother Yaśodā says to Dāū (Balarāma), the elder brother

of Lord Kṛṣṇa, "Look after this Kanhaiyā, because he is very innocent. He should not go into dense woods etc." Balarāma replies, "Kanhaiyā is very carefree. He puts his hand into the holes of snakes and does such other mischiefs. He may be bitten by poisonous snakes etc." So Balarāma and other cowherds, look after Kanhaiyā, lest he should do any mischief. They do not believe, when anyone says that He rears and preserves the entire world, because according to them, He is only a loving kid.

Once, a saint began to narrate the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa, to the cowherdesses, while talking to them. The cowherdesses said, "The key of the treasure of His glories is with us. He has nothing. So how can he grant anything to anyone?" Anyone who nurses any desire should never approach Him. So, one who wants nothing from Him, even in adversity or at the time of death, should go to Him.

Sage Vālmīki says to Lord Rāma in the Rāmacaritamānasa, "You reside in the heart of a person who loves, You, naturally without expecting any reward, because that is Your own seat" (2/13).

When a devotee has no desire of his own, the Lord, becomes loving to him and He resides in him. A devout devotee, loves him for His sake, not for his own sake. If he loves Him, to get his desire fulfilled, it means that there is no true love, there is attachment, lust or delusion. Therefore, the cowherdesses gave a warning to travellers, say, "O travellers, do not go by that street, because that is very deadly and dangerous. There a naked boy, having a dark complexion like black catechu tree, is standing with his hands on his buttocks. In appearance, he is like an ascetic, but he robs travellers, of the treasure of their hearts, without any exception".

He is called Kṛṣṇa, because He attracts everyone towards Him. One who is attracted towards Him, becomes His forever and he remains of no use to anybody in the world. Such a man, who is of no use to anybody, is really useful to, everyone. But, he has no self-interest, to be served by anyone. When a devotee takes refuge in Him, he has not to adore Him. Adoration like breathing, becomes a natural part and parcel of his life. A devotee, cannot forget Him, he becomes restless, without remembering Him, even for a moment (Nāradabhaktisūtra 19). Such a noble devotee, shuns the Kingdom of the entire universe which if offered to him, as a substitute for forgetfulness of the Lord, for even a fraction of a moment (Śrīmadbhā. 11/14/14).

In the Bhāgavata it is mentioned—Excellent devotees, are those who cannot renounce the Lord's lotus feet, which are scarcely available to the gods, not even for half a moment (Śrīmadbhāgavata 11/2/53).

It is declared by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Bhāgavata, "Devotees who have surrendered themselves to Me, have no desire to attain the seat, either of Brahmā or Indra (the lord of the gods), or the kingdom of this world, or the underworld or all yogic perfection or even salvation," (Śrīmadbhāgavata 11/14/14).

Bharata, the brother of Lord Rāma also declares in the Rāmacaritamānasa, that he has no desire, either for riches or for righteousness, or for lust or even for salvation, but he wants to be blessed with the boon, that he should love (adore) Lord Rāma's feet, in all births (2/204).

Appendix—A Karmayogī has his 'nitya' (eternal) affinity with God, a Jñānayogī has Tāttvika unity, while the devotee, who has taken refuge in God, has 'ātmīya affinity', ownness with God. In 'nitya' affinity there is renunciation of the transient relationship with the world; in 'tāttvika' unity there is realization of the Self (Self-realization); and in 'ātmīya' affinity there is oneness with God. In 'nitya' affinity there is 'śānta rasa' (peaceful relish or bliss); in 'tāttvika' unity there is 'akhaṇḍa rasa' and in 'ātmīya' affinity there is infinite relish (bliss). Without attaining infinite relish, a man's hunger is not fully satisfied. The infinite relish can be attained by taking 'refuge' in God. Therefore 'seeking refuge in God' is the Supreme Secret and the best spiritual discipline.

'Sarvadharmanparityajya' does not mean physical abandonment

of all duties but it means abandonment of dependence on all duties. Thus a striver should not depend on duties. As in the first chapter, it is mentioned 'ta ime' vasthitā vuddhe prānāmstyaktvā dhanāni ca'—here 'prānāmstyaktvā' does not mean abandonment of lives but it means abandonment of the desire to live because by abandoning the life, how will a warrior be arrayed on the battlefield? It is impossible. Similarly in the ninth verse of the first chapter, it is mentioned—'anye ca bahavah survā madarthe tyaktajīvitāh'—it does not mean that many other heroes are arrayed by abandoning their lives. It means that those heroes have given up hope to live alive viz., they don't care for their lives. Therefore here the expression 'sarvadharmānparityajya' should mean 'abandonment of dependence on duties'. As heroes don't care for their lives, similarly devotees don't care for duties. They don't attach importance to duties. The reason is that they attach more importance to 'refuge in God' than to duties. In duty there is connection with the insentient, while in 'refuge' there is affinity with the sentient. The duty is discharged according to one's 'varna' (order of life) and 'āśrama' (stage of life), therefore in it there is significance of the body. But a devotee takes refuge in God himself, therefore in it there is significance of God.

'Māmekam śaraṇam vraja'—In mundane life a devotee should have fair dealings with love, respect and courtesy with others but as he needs nothing from others, he does not depend on anyone else but he totally depends on God only.

yaha binatī raghubīra gusāīm aura āsa-bisvāsa-bharoso, harau jīva-jaḍatāī

(Vinayapatrikā 103)

'O Lord Rāma! I pray to you to free me from the stupidity of my hope, belief and dependence on the matter (world)'.

eka bharoso eka bala eka āsa bisvāsa eka rāma ghana syāma hita cātaka tulsīdāsa

(Dohāvalī 277)

"As a 'cātaka' bird lives only on rain drops (it does not drink even Ganges-water), similarly Tulasīdāsajī wants to have trust, hope and belief only in Lord Rāma and he wants to depend only on His power."

In fact only God grants full refuge. As a baby raises its hand to go to the lap of its mother, the mother raises it up by catching its hand, similarly when a devotee, by applying his power, is inclined to God and prepares himself for taking refuge in Him, God grants him full refuge.

Arjuna wanted to get rid of sins, therefore the Lord said that He would liberate him from all sins because it is God's nature that howsoever a devotee seeks Him, so does He meet him—'ye yathā mām prapadyante tāmstathaiva bhajāmyaham' (Gītā 4/11). In fact liberation from sins is not the fruit of refuge. By exclusive refuge a man being inseparable with God, can attain infinite bliss. Therefore a striver, without having the desire to be liberated from sins or sufferings, should take refuge in God. If a striver has some desire, he gets something (perishable) but if he is totally free from desire, he gets all (imperishable or endless). God offers Himself to the devotee, becomes submissive to him who takes refuge in Him and feels indebted to him.

This refuge is the gist of the Gītā which the Lord has related by showering His special grace. In this 'refuge' only, the gospel of the Gītā attains perfection. Without it the gospel of the Gītā would have remained incomplete. Therefore when Arjuna surrendered himself totally to God, by declaring, that he would act according to the Lord's bidding 'kariṣye vacanam tava', after that the Lord did not sermonize.



Link:—In the next verse, Lord Kṛṣṇa forbids Arjuna, to unfold the supreme secret gospel of all the other secrets, as mentioned in the preceding verse, to those who are undeserving.

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन। न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति॥६७॥