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### Final Emancipation

*In paradise we plucked food from the trees / And we say, "God gave this fruit."*

*On Earth we work to sustain ourselves / And toil in fields, and cook every day*

*And clean up the kitchen / And we say, "We did it all by ourselves."*

*In bondage to the world / The Wheel of Law is set in motion*

*And the stars forever display our fate / But consecrated action outwits the stars*

*And the bonds of action are no more.*

*We toil in fields, and cook every day / And clean up the kitchen*

*We chop wood and carry water and say, "Thy will be done O Lord*

*On Earth as it is in Heaven."*

At the end of a long and tiring day man looks forward to the peaceful bliss of sleep, but upon waking, the familiar human perspective floods in again. In death man looks forward to an infinite sleep, yet wakes once more in a different human form, with all the same attachments, desires, and cravings. Man may find some respite in the death of the visible universe ("At the

end of the night of time all things return to my nature...”) but is not freed from delusive entrapments, manifesting once more “into the light... when the new day of time begins” (9:7). Forever and forever, deluded man “rolls round in the circles of time” (9:8) with vain hopes, vain works, and vain thoughts (9:12). Bound to an infinite regression, man finally asks, *where do we get our long awaited rest?* With love Krishna tells us, “All beings have their rest in me” (9:4).

To all beings, even those we may qualify as evil or bad, ourselves included, Krishna offers divine reassurance: “I am the same to all beings, and my love is ever the same; but those who worship me with devotion, they are in me and I am in them” (9:29). This statement suggests that Krishna’s love extends to all beings, but those who offer themselves in “the fire of sacrifice” experience no distinction between the ego and Self, and offering all actions to Him, find their refuge in Him (7:30). The unity described is reminiscent of the Gospel according to John: “On that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you” (John 14:20). Knowing the Self to be One with the Father, the devotee banishes mortal existence forever, “and he shall soon become pure and reach everlasting peace. For this is my word of promise, that he who loves me shall not perish” (9:31).

A great blessing is offered for “those who take refuge in [Krishna] and strive to be free from age and death” - the devotee finally receives freedom from the mundanity of mortal existence: “They know Brahman, they know Atman, and they know what Karma is” (7:29). Our mortal hopes are in vain, but not if offered at the feet of the Lord. Our work is in vain, but not if offered in adoration to Krishna. Our thoughts are in vain, but offered from a pure heart with love - even “only a leaf, or a flower, or a fruit, or even a little water” (9:26) - man is “freed from the

bonds of Karma... and with thy soul one in renunciation thou shalt be free and come to me” (9:28).

From his vantage point of infinity Krishna is impartial to all beings as all beings are part of his Divine Self. Though all beings are “born in delusion, the delusion of division which comes from desire and hate” (7:27), all beings also are given the opportunity to be born again in heaven, the heaven of unity which comes from devotion and love. According to the Gospel of John: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). So it is that even the worst of sinners may become free. Krishna says, “For even if the greatest sinner worships me with all his soul, he must be considered righteous, because of his righteous will” (9:30).

If Krishna sees us in this impartial way, and loves us in this way, freeing us forever from the bondage of Karma, it becomes entirely abject to treat others as anything but a reflection of Spirit. Living this truth, all beings become Krishna, all things become devotion. Krishna says, “Who in all his work sees God, he in truth goes unto God; God is his worship, God is his offering, offered by God in the fire of God” (4:24). To all beings, the devotee hears the beckoning words, “Give me thy mind and give me thy heart, give me thy offerings and thy adoration; and thus with thy soul in harmony, and making me thy goal supreme, thou shalt in truth come to me” (9:34). Thus the devotee attains self-realization and becomes Divine, and the Divine becomes him, lover and beloved finally One and at rest.

Works Cited

*The Bhagavad Gita*, Penguin Classics. Translated by Juan Mascaró. 1962.

*King James Bible*, King James Bible Online.

<https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/John-Chapter-14/>