

Continuing to paint the picture of the Tree-of-Samsara, we have here the etching in more details. Such mystical representations should not be taken too literally, whether in literature or in art. The very style of the *Vedas* is couched in mysticism. Taking any convenient object of the world and describing it in such a poetic style so as to express some of the subtler philosophical truths and thereby to convey some deeper religious message, is called mysticism.

Describing the Tree-of-life and adding more details to it, Vyasa says: "UPWARDS AND DOWNWARDS ITS BRANCHES SPREAD" --- the flow of life in the individual, as well as in the world, is sometimes towards the higher evolutionary purposes, but more often it tends to cater to the lower animal nature. These two tendencies are significant here when it is said that the branches of the Tree-of-life grow both "upwards and downwards."

PATTERNED BY THE *GUNAS* --- These urges for living the higher and the lower values are maintained and nourished by the particular type of psychological tendencies *gunas* available in the individual. In an earlier chapter (XIV) the play of the *gunas* (moods of the mind) has been exhaustively discussed.

In any tree there are nodular buds which are potential branches that have not yet developed, but are waiting for a chance to burst forth. Corresponding to them, Krishna says, in the *Ashwattha*-tree, are the sense-objects, the