

The sacred act of conferring the *Sreyas* does not take place piecemeal. It comes as a sudden outburst of illumination metamorphosing the recipient into a divine being. At the outset this experience may seem to daze the disciple. But worthy of the enlightenment as he has become, he gets spontaneously attuned to it. As a newly hatched duckling takes to water, the enlightened soul identifies itself with the Cosmic Whole. The Upanishads are intended to awaken cosmic consciousness in the aspirant. One of their revelations runs as follows: "What is beyond the universe is Infinity, what has apparently become the universe is Infinity. Infinity alone is in the manifested and unmanifested states." These sacred books aim at driving home this all-consuming truth in the mind of the novice. In varieties of pattern it is this grand truth that is proclaimed by one and all of them. A student who has undergone the required mental purification catches the message in an instant and merges his individual consciousness into the Cosmic Consciousness, which is Reality.

In this process of imparting Self-knowledge the Bhagavad Gita has a uniqueness and a sublimity of its own. The first chapter in it is merely the setting. No utterance of the Lord finds a place there. But in and through the second and third verses of the second chapter His message in its entirety is delivered. It runs as follows: "At this crisis, wherefrom has this dejection come upon you, O Arjuna, depriving you of your manliness, debarring you from heaven and debasing your earthly