

the official exponent of the “German Faith”, J W Hauer, a Sanskrit scholar who served for some years as a missionary in India, gives to the *Gītā* a central place in the German faith.’ (*Bhagavadgītā*, p. 11.) Dara Shuko was enamoured of the *Gītā*. We have already indicated that the *Gītā* travelled to Persia during the Mughal Age. In recent times it has been appreciated by eminent men and scholars like Dr L D Barnett, Warren Hastings, Charles Wilkins (who translated *Gītā* into English in 1758), Carlyle and Aldous Huxley.

It is not necessary to present here the gist of the *Gītā*, for this will be apparent to those who read it as also the present translation. Suffice it to say that although many western scholars believe that the *Gītā* is a loose collection of thoughts of different schools, Madhusudan Saraswati divides the *Gītā* into three sections of six chapters each, dealing successively with Karma-Yog, Bhakti-Yog, and Jñāna-Yog, the first leading to the second and the second to the third. But Ānanda Giri holds that the three sections are concerned with the ascertainment of the true meaning of the great Upanisadic saying, ‘Thou art That’. His view has been presented in the footnotes of the present work. Śankarācārya makes no such division, but says that spiritual unfoldment proceeds along the following stages: practice of scriptural rites and duties with a hankering for results; practice of the same as a dedication to Bhagavān without expecting rewards for oneself; purification of the mind or moral excellence along with *upāsanā* (devotion to and meditation on the qualified Brahman); acquisition of knowledge from a teacher and the scriptures, followed by renunciation of all rites and duties (monasticism), which makes one *fit* for steadfastness in that knowledge; steadfastness in that knowledge; removal of ignorance and self-revelation of the supreme Brahman, which is the same as Liberation. (See Śankarācārya’s Commentary on 5.12; his introduction to 5.27, 18.10; and Commentary on 18.46 and 18.49.) He thus reveals a unity of purpose of the book as a whole.

In the preparation of this book we have been helped by Swāmīs Gabhīrānanda and Ātmārāmānanda. In general, we have followed the *Gītā* Press (Gorakhpur) edition of the text and the commentary.