

BHAGAVAD GITA AND AVYAKTAM.

THE word *Avyaktam* literally means indiscrete, impalpable, unmanifest or indistinguishable. This has recently called forth much controversy, on account of the late Mr. T. Subba Rao, in his discourses on Bhagavad Gîtâ, having translated it as *Mûla-prakriti* (root-matter stuff, as yet undifferentiated or unevolved). But what Subba Rao has said, in addition to other statements is this again:—"This *Avyaktam* is *Mûla-prakriti*, or rather Parabrahman manifested in *Mûla-prakriti* as its Upadhi. In this view Parabrahman is really the fourth principle, the highest principle in man; and the other three principles simply exist in it and by reason of it. That is to say, this *Avyaktam* is the one principle which is the root of all self, which becomes differentiated in the course of evolution, or rather which appears to be differentiated in the various organisms, which subsists in every kind of *Upâdhi*, and which is the real spiritual entity which a man has to reach.' In this passage, there is a confusion between *Parabrahma* and *Mûla-prakriti*, 2ndly, there is confusion which of these is the spiritual entity; and 3rdly, which of these has man to reach!

Mr. C. R. Srinivasiengar (*vide The Thinker*, April 1896, p. 123 ff.) has further complicated this subject by understanding *Avyaktam* of the XVth chapter, Gîtâ, (verse 3)* to mean *Mûla-prakriti*; and he charges Krishna with deprecating the worship of *Mûla-prakriti*. Evidently none of the parties in the contest ever referred to the standard Commentaries. The truth is that "*Avyaktam*" means, according to the context, where it may occur, (1) *Achit* (= *Jada* = inert = non-intelligent) principle, (2) *Ohit* (= *Ajada* = intelligent = *Pratyag-âtma*) principle, and (3) *Isvara* (= *Paramâtma* = *Parabrahma* = Divine = Universal Intelligent) Principle. In Chapter XII., v. 3, *Avyaktam* means neither *Parabrahma* (3) nor *Mûla-prakriti* (1), but *Ohit* = *Atma* (2). Râmanuja clearly points out this meaning in his commentary on XII., 3; for he says "*Yêtvaksharam pratyag-âtma Svarûpam*," i.e., to say "that which is called *aksharam*, *amirdesyam*, *avyaktam*, is *Pratyag-âtma*. Sankara also, in commenting on the term *kûtastha* hints at the word "*Adhyaksha*," which refers to the *Ohit* principle vitalising *Achit*. That "*Avyaktam*" is used to represent *Pratyag-âtma* may further be found in II. 25; (1) II. 28, (2) and VIII. 21 (3). Upanishads and other authorities can be quoted in support (4).

Where the word "*Avyaktam*" stands for *Paramatma* may be found in IX. 4, where Lord Krishna says, "By Me, *Avyak-a-mûrti*, all this universe is pervaded.

Where the word "*Avyaktam*" is repeated twice, standing for *Pratyag-âtma* and again for *Prakriti*, may be seen in VIII. 20 "Therefore the

* XII. 3. *Yêtvaksharam-anirdesyam-avyaktam paryupasati*.

(1) II. 25 "*Avyaktôyam Achintyôyam*," &c. (2) II. 28 "*Avyaktadini Bhutani*," &c., (*Manushyadi Bhutani Comm. of Ramanuja*). (3) II. 21, "*Avyatkôksharaityuktah*," &c. (4) For example "*Yadêkam-avyaktam-âchintyarupam*," &c. (*Taittiriya Up.*). "*Panchavimsakam-avyaktam*," &c. (*Vedantaacharya's Tatparya Chandrika*, pp. 376).

superior nature of *Avyakta* (Chit) as contradistinguished from *Avyakat* (Achit).

Upāsanas are of two kinds, *Pratiku* and *Apratika*, (5) the one indirect, and the other direct, form of contemplation of *Parabrahma*. The indirect, viz., *Pratika* is the contemplation of any other principle (in the categories of intelligents or non-intelligents) than *Parabrahma* itself, as *Parabrahma*, as such texts of the Upanishads "contemplate mind as Brahma," (5) "contemplate food (earth) as Brahma," (6) &c., (*Chandogya*). Whether *Upāsana* or *Bhakti* in other words (this being the subject-matter of *Srī Bhagavad Gītā*), be of the one kind or the other, the ultimate aim is either *Parabrahma* or *Pratyag-ātma*, but never *Prakriti*. Mr. A. Krishnasami Iyer therefore rightly objected to Mr. T. Subba Rao's interpretation of "*Mūla-prakriti, Jada-prakriti, Avidya*, or inanimate, inert matter as an object of worship, ideal, or goal" (*vide Theosophist*, p. 425, April 1896).

As Mr. C. R. Srinivasiengar understands (see *Thinker* pp. 123, April 1896), it is not *Mūla-prakriti* that is meant by *Avyaktam* in verses 3, 4 & 5, XII., as explained above, it is *Chit* or *Pratyag-ātma*. Man aims at three different ideals, or *Purusharthās*, which are each realizable by using *Bhakti* as means. So says *Srī Yāmunāchārya* in slokas 27, 28, and 29 of his *Gītārtha Sangraha*;—and these aspirations are, material prosperity, *Atmic-bliss* and *Godly-bliss*. What Lord Krishna deprecates is the endeavour to reach the middle or the 2nd of these three objects a man aims at. According to *Gītā*, *Pratyag-ātma*-perfection, though in itself an immaterial happiness, cannot equal *Brahmic* beatitude; and what Krishna further tells us is that the path to the former is attended with "Klesa" (trials) and 'dukha' (affliction) (verse 5, XII).

The path to Himself as reaching Divine bliss is easy and happy, as is stated in the same XIIth Chapter in verse 2. The burden of the whole *Gītā* is this teaching, which receives final confirmation in the famous stanza 66, of the last or the XVIIIth Book of the *Gītā*, viz., "*Sarva-dharman parityajya*," &c., *Gītā* is no other than *Bhakti-Sastra*; to *Bhakti* are contributory the efforts described as *Karma* and *Jñāna*. Thus, (1) The end is *Parabrahma*. (2) The means are of two kinds, direct and indirect. And (3) that in the course of reaching the end, *Atmic-illumination* (or *Ātma-Sākshātkara*) forms an intermediate stage. From the standpoint of the *Visishtadwaita* philosophy therefore, neither is *Mūla-prakriti* to be worshipped, nor is spiritual bliss to be sought for in its embrace. (This may be left to the materialists, and to those *Asuric* natures mentioned in the XVIth Chapter of the *Gītā*). Nor did (or does) Krishna mean that worship of matter (or for the matter of that, worship of Mammon) is to form an intermediate stage to reach the *Divine*.

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(5) "*Mano Brahmētyōpāsita*"; (6) "*Annam Brahmetyōpasita*"—5. *Read Vedānta Sūtras*, IV, 3-14.

P. S.—I shall have to say something in a separate contribution, as to Mr. T. Subba Rao's statements about surmising Krishna and Râma, Avatars, as but souls Logos-possessed!—(Read pp. 368—369, Vol. VIII., *Theosophist*).

THE DIVINE KINGS AND THE ADEPTS OF ZOROASTRIANISM.

(Concluded from page 593.)

THE foregoing account relates to the Peshdâdian sub-race: now we come to the subsequent Kaiyânian. Kai Kobâd, the Founder of the Kaiyânian Race, had proceeded, like his predecessors, from the sacred Alburz. Nothing extraordinary is known of him, except that he had descended from the line of Faridun, and before he could take the reign of Irân he had a vision in which he beheld two falcons with white wings, flying to him from Irâu with a sunny crown in their beaks. These two birds, white of wings, were the heroes Zâl and Rustem, who had invited Kai Kobâd to take the reign of the Empire, and restore order from the previous chaotic state of the country caused by the Turanians, who were ever raising troubles in ancient Persia. He reigned in peace afterwards for a space of an hundred and twenty years, during which the earth was quiet.

The Mahâtma who appeared on the scene of Irân after Kai Kobâd, was Shiavaksha or Shiavarshan. He is known among the Parsis for his passing unscathed through a mass of fire, to prove his innocence of a charge that was imputed to him by a revengeful woman, his step-mother; and therefore is he classed among the holy men.

But the most celebrated and worthy of the name of this race was Mahâtma Kai Khoshrau,—a king reared and initiated in the mountain caves. He had come down to Persia to put down Afrasiyab, an occultist of some degree, who had misused his power for selfish purposes, and was trying to raise mischief among the Irânians. Kai Khoshrau was helped by another Adept named Haoma (not the sacred Haoma-tree), an Adept, who, we are told, existed even in the First or Peshdâdian sub-race. The account of holy Haoma is also wrapped in mystery, like that of some others of the Adepts, as we find an Yazata (a god) also of that name in the Avastaic literature. Kai Khoshrau, however, had ruled Persia for some years, and wanted to retire again into the sacred caves, after restoring order, but he had won the love of his nation and ministers so that they would not allow him to separate bodily from them. The physical comfort and pleasure of a vast empire, which at this time had developed to a certain extent, appeared to him nothing in comparison with the happiness and peace he was ever after to repose in. The following account of his retirement, which is taken from the "Shâh-nameh," *The Epic of Kings*, will be found interesting:—

He saw a vision one night in which Sarosh, the Messenger of Ahura-Mazda, appeared before him, and spoke words to express that