

**PROOFS
OF
THE
PROPHETS:
THE
CASE
FOR
LORD
KRISHNA**



Peter Terry
Compiler and Commentator

Volume VII, Bahá'í Studies Series

Original compilation of texts related to

Lord Krishna:

**Forty Proofs of Prophethood set forth
in the Bhagavad-Gita, the Bhagavata
Purana and other Scriptures of
Hinduism, as well as the writings of
Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, 'Abdu'l-Bahá,
Shoghi Effendi, and other authors, in
English translations.**

**Passages from the Writings of the Báb
are in some cases presented in the
compiler's rendering of their French
translation by A.L.M. Nicolas,
originally published circa 1900-1911.**

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The essential requirement for whoso advanceth a claim is to support his assertions with clear proofs and testimonies.¹

Some of the divines who have declared this Servant an infidel have at no time met with Me. Never having seen Me, or become acquainted with My purpose, they have nevertheless spoken as they pleased and acted as they desired. Yet every claim requireth a proof, not mere words and displays of outward piety.²

In this day the verses of the Mother Book are resplendent and unmistakable even as the sun. They can in no wise be mistaken for any past or more recent utterances. Truly this Wronged One desireth not to demonstrate His Own Cause with proofs produced by others. He is the One Who embraceth all things, while all else besides Him is circumscribed. Say, O people, peruse that which is current amongst you and We will peruse what pertaineth unto Us.³

The Cause is manifest, it shineth resplendent as the sun, but the people have become veils unto themselves. We entreat God that He may graciously assist them to return unto Him. He is, in truth, the Forgiving, the Merciful.⁴

The breezes of Revelation can never be confounded with other breezes. Now the Lote-Tree beyond which there is no passing standeth laden with countless fruits before thy face; besmirch not thyself with idle fancies, as have done the people aforetime. These utterances themselves proclaim the true nature of the Faith of God. He it is Who witnesseth unto all things. To demonstrate the truth of His Revelation He hath not been, nor is He, dependent upon any one. Well nigh a hundred volumes of luminous verses and perspicuous words have already been sent down from the heaven of the will of Him Who is the Revealer of signs, and are available unto all. It is for thee to direct thyself towards the Ultimate Goal, and the Supreme End, and the Most Sublime Pinnacle, that thou mayest hear and behold what hath been revealed by God, the Lord of the worlds.⁵

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Verily I say! No one hath apprehended the root of this Cause. It is incumbent upon everyone, in this day, to perceive with the eye of God, and to hearken with His ear. Whoso beholdeth Me with an eye besides Mine own will never be able to know Me. None among the Manifestations of old, except to a prescribed degree, hath ever completely apprehended the nature of this Revelation.^{vi}

FOREWORD

The compiler/editor of this volume has used various orthographical devices in order to highlight what he considers to be notable numbers, letters, words, phrases and passages found in the collected texts. These devices are not integral to the text, nor were they featured in the published editions consulted in preparation for this volume. Quotation marks, square brackets, bold or italic typeface which have been employed within quoted words, phrases or passages are among such devices. Long citations from the writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, and others who are identified in this study as Prophets are indented, while in citations from the Writings and utterances of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the writings of Shoghi Effendi only the first line of the citation is indented.

All citations have been carefully checked, but some errors may yet be found by vigilant readers. Please report these without delay to the compiler/editor so that he can correct these blemishes in the Second Edition.

As monarchs, emperors, pontiffs and justices of the courts are addressed with honorific titles such as His Majesty, His Eminence, His Honor and the like, so also Lord Krishna, the principal subject of this work, and others regarded as Prophets of God in various religious traditions, are addressed with a capitalized male pronoun. This usage does not assume that the reader is a believer any more than referring to Her Majesty the Queen of England or His Eminence the Pope presupposes that the writer or reader is a British subject or a Roman Catholic. What it conveys is a measure of respect for these persons who are more highly revered by some than kings or emperors, pontiffs or priests. It is in honor of such reverence that this convention has been followed in reference to the persons aforementioned, as well as to Muhammad and Jesus and other objects of enduring adoration.

None of the interpretations of texts cited in this study are wholly original to the compiler/commentator, and hence he does not claim to be their inventor. Nor does he claim that his interpretations are the only valid understandings of the texts cited. Let the reader read, reflect and come to his own conclusions.

The abbreviated titles of source texts are used almost without exception in this book:

ABDP: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy
 ABL: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London
 ADJ: Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice
 AHW: Bahá’u’lláh, Arabic Hidden Words
 BG: Bhagavad-Gita
 BP: Bahá’í Prayers
 BWF: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’u’lláh, Bahá’í World Faith
 ESW: Bahá’u’lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf
 FV: Bahá’u’lláh, The Four Valleys
 GL: Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh
 GPB: Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By
 GTT: Shoghi Effendi, Guidance for Today and Tomorrow
 JA: Bahá’u’lláh, Javahiru’l-Asrar
 JN: Gospel of John
 KA: Bahá’u’lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas
 KI: Bahá’u’lláh, Kitáb-i-Íqán
 LK: Gospel of Luke
 MK: Gospel of Mark
 MT: Gospel of Matthew
 PDC: Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come
 PHW: Bahá’u’lláh, Persian Hidden Words
 PM: Bahá’u’lláh, Prayers and Meditations
 PT: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks
 PUP: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace
 REV: Book of Revelation (The Apocalypse)
 SAQ: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions
 SDC: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Secret of Divine Civilization
 SLH: Bahá’u’lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts
 SP: Báb, The Seven Proofs
 SV: Bahá’u’lláh, The Seven Valleys
 SW: *Star of the West*
 SWAB: Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
 TAB: Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
 TB: Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas
 TF: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablet to Dr. Auguste Forel
 UAB: Utterances of Abdul Beha Abbas to two young men, American pilgrims to Acre, 1901; New York: The Board of Counsel, 1902

PREFACE

This book sets forth forty proofs of prophethood described in the Writings of Mírzá Husayn 'Alí Núrí (1817-1892), known as Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. These proofs are found in His Writings, and in the Writings and recorded talks of His appointed Interpreters. Why would a Hindu or anyone interested in Hinduism, let alone a Vaisnavite or a devotee of Lord Krishna read beyond this page? For one reason, and it is one worthy of your close consideration...there is only one among all the religions upon the planet that regards Lord Krishna as the Founder of a Faith, as a Messenger and Manifestation of God. Indeed, Shoghi Effendi, the great-grandson of Bahá'u'lláh, and His second appointed Interpreter has called the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, "the "Tenth Avatar," the "Immaculate Manifestation of Krishna.""^{vii} Not surprisingly in this case, Lord Krishna is regarded by Shoghi Effendi as one of the "Prophets" including "Zoroaster, Krishna, Moses, the Christ, Muhammad, Buddha, the Prophet of the Sabaeans Whose name is unrecorded, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh appeared in the Adamic cycle"^{viii}. Consider this, that neither Zoroastrianism nor Judaism, Christianity nor Mormonism, Buddhism nor Jainism, Sikhism nor Islam have ever regarded Krishna as a Sayoshant (Zoroastrian), prophet (Jewish), divine Son (Christian), prophet (Mormon), Tathagata (Buddhist), Tirthankar (Jain), Guru (Sikh), messenger or prophet (Muslim). In fact, Hindus do not consider Krishna a prophetic figure, but instead He is worshipped as a deity, an incarnation of Vishnu. The Bahá'í Faith may well be unique among all religions in identifying Krishna as a Founder of Hinduism, with a status analogous to that of Moses in Judaism, Zoroaster in Zoroastrianism, Jesus in Christianity and Muhammad in Islam. This unique perspective may well be intriguing enough to attract many readers.

Now to introduce the reader to the Author of these proofs...Bahá'u'lláh was born in Tihran, the capital city of Iran, and was brought up in that city and on various properties in its vicinity and in the province of Mazindaran, northeast of Tihran. His father was a minister in the court of Muhammad Shah, the King of Iran, who left Bahá'u'lláh his extensive properties upon his demise, when his eldest son was only eighteen years of age. In spring of the year 1260 according to the Islamic calendar (1844 Gregorian), at a time of considerable ferment through the Muslim domains because of the time prophecies which many believed would be fulfilled with its advent, Bahá'u'lláh received a document from an emissary named Mullá

Husayn-i-Bushru'i. Upon reading that document, Bahá'u'lláh was immediately and unequivocally convinced of the divine inspiration and prophetic calling of its Author, Siyyid 'Alí Muhammad Shírází (1819-1850), known as the Báb. Henceforth, Bahá'u'lláh was a Bábí, a follower of the Báb. He was active in the promotion of the new Faith, and was chiefly responsible for administering the gathering of Bábís who, in June/July of 1848, affirmed the independence of the Bábí Scriptures (called Bayán) from the Qur'an and hadith of the Islamic Dispensation, and the abrogation of the Islamic law (called sha'riah) by the new Bábí ordinances.

Scarcely two years later, in July 1850 the Báb was executed by order of a group of secular and religious officials in the city of Tabriz, subsequent to imprisonment in the mountain fortresses of Mah-Ku and Chihriq. Another two years after this martyrdom, in August 1852, Bahá'u'lláh was arrested and imprisoned following a failed attempt on the life of Nasiri'd-Din Shah, then reigning King of Iran, by a few Bábís bent upon revenge for the government's approval of the execution of their beloved Báb. When released from this imprisonment, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled, along with family members and other Bábís, from the city of Tihiran and the kingdom of Iran. He journeyed to Baghdad, in the land of 'Iraq, where the family and devoted friends took up their residence for over ten years. Bahá'u'lláh sojourned near the city of Sulaymaniyyih, in Kurdistan, northeast of Baghdad, for two years, from 1854 until 1856, and before and after this period were spent in Baghdad.

In the same year that Bahá'u'lláh became a follower of the Báb, 'Abbás (1844-1921), known as 'Abdu'l-Bahá was born, the eldest son of this eminent Exile. This son also became an ardent believer in the new Faith, whose favorite pass-time in youth was the memorization and recitation of Tablets revealed by the Báb. The Báb had promised the appearance of "Him Whom God shall make manifest," another Prophet to follow soon after the inception of the Bábí Faith, pointing to the years "9" (1269=1852/1853) and "19" (1279=1862/1863). In the year "9" 'Abdu'l-Bahá recognized Bahá'u'lláh as "Him Whom God shall make manifest" but the loyal son did not tell anyone this secret, because the time had not come for its disclosure. However, in the year "19" Bahá'u'lláh openly proclaimed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and a few other Bábís, on the even of their departure from Baghdad, that "Him Whom God shall make manifest" was none other than himself. The family and many of their Bábí friends were summoned first to Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, then to Adrianople, a backwater town to the northwest of Constantinople, and

finally to the prison-city of 'Akka, in the province of Palestine (now known as Acco, in the state of Israel). During these years of exile, first in Baghdad, then Sulaymaniyyih, then Constantinople, Adrianople, 'Akka, and finally in the house of Bahji, in the outskirts of 'Akka, Bahá'u'lláh wrote and dictated thousands of pages of prose and verse, on a fantastic range of subjects, in the Persian and Arabic languages.

One of the themes which is found in many of these Writings are the proofs of the prophets of God. Bahá'u'lláh sets forth, in clear and authoritative fashion, citing verses from the Bible and Qur'an alike, the proofs of all of the Prophets of God. His son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whom He appointed the authoritative interpreter of his teachings, and His great-grandson, Shoghi Effendi, appointed to the same office by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, both elaborated these proofs of prophethood. This book is devoted to setting forth forty proofs of prophethood which have been discovered in their writings and utterances, and applying them to Lord Krishna. If these proofs are universally valid for all Prophets, then it follows that they must apply to Lord Krishna.

INTRODUCTION

Among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that science and religion are compatible; that religion must be in agreement with reason and science; that each must investigate reality for himself and all are encouraged to forego blind imitation of others in matters of religious belief and observance. These are lofty principles, but one might well wonder how they can be translated into practice. How might they be realized in the way we live our lives?

The writings of Bahá'u'lláh call upon every human being to do two things: First, to investigate reality, to search after truth, to seek out knowledge, to learn, and specifically, to read and to meditate on the Word of God; Second, to strive to understand the teachings, obey the commandments, live according to the ordinances, and aspire to approach the ideals set forth in the Word of God. Is the first purpose fulfilled by joining a religious community, taking an oath, converting or returning to a Faith? According to conventional wisdom, it is. Religious belief is generally assumed to be based on emotions which defy reasonable explanation and have no relation to logical or scientific thinking. Indeed, those who continue to ask questions after they have apparently become believers in a particular Faith are often looked upon with suspicion by their fellow religionists, and their "faith" is rendered doubtful, their "trustworthiness" is seriously compromised. This kind of "faith" is not well regarded by Bahá'u'lláh. He not only

permits questioning, rather we are invited to ask questions if there is anything we do not understand. In Seven Valleys (Haft Vadi), a treatise penned in response to the questions of Shaykh Muhyi'd-Din, a Muslim judge [qadi] in the city of Khaniqin, in 'Iraq, Bahá'u'lláh writes:

"If any of the utterances of this Servant may not be comprehended, or may lead to perturbation, the same must be inquired of again, that no doubt may linger, and the meaning be clear..."^{ix}

Some years later, in the "Book of Certitude" (Kitáb-i-Íqán), a two-part reply to the questions of Haji Mirza Siyyid Muhammad, one of the maternal uncles of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh reaffirmed this principle in relation specifically to the Word of God:

"They have even failed to realize, all this time, that, in every age, the reading of the scriptures and holy books is for no other purpose except to enable the reader to apprehend their meaning and unravel their innermost mysteries. Otherwise reading, without understanding, is of no abiding profit unto man."^x

He insisted, in that same Book^{xi}, that the understanding of the Word of God is not reserved for those with human learning, that it is accessible to the masses of humanity:

"Heed not the idle contention of those who maintain that the Book and the verses thereof can never be a testimony unto the common people, inasmuch as they neither grasp their meaning nor appreciate their value. And yet, the unfailing testimony of God to both the East and the West is none other than the Qur'an. Were it beyond the comprehension of men, how could it have been declared as a universal testimony unto all people? If their contention be true, none would therefore be required, nor would it be necessary for them to know God, inasmuch as the knowledge of the divine Being transcendeth the knowledge of His Book, and the common people would not possess the capacity to comprehend it.

"Such contention is utterly fallacious and inadmissible. It is actuated solely by arrogance and pride. Its motive is to lead the people astray from the Ridvan of divine good-pleasure and to tighten the reins of their authority over the people.

"And yet, in the sight of God, these common people are infinitely superior and exalted above their religious leaders who have turned away from the one true God."

This first purpose of humanity, to investigate reality takes on an entirely different character when one considers it in the light of an Islamic tradition, cited by Bahá'u'lláh in that same Book:

"We will accordingly make mention of a few traditions, that these may impart constancy to the wavering soul, and tranquillity to the troubled mind. Thereby, will the testimony of God unto the people, both high and low, be complete and perfect.

"Among them is the tradition, 'And when the Standard of Truth is made manifest, the people of both the East and the West curse it.' The wine of renunciation must needs be attained, and the meditation referred to in the words 'One hour's reflection is preferable to seventy years of pious worship' must needs be observed, so that the secret of the wretched behaviour of the people might be discovered, these people who, despite the love and yearning for truth which they profess, curse the followers of Truth when once He hath been made manifest."^{xii}

What sort of "faith" is this, which proclaims, along with Socrates, that the unexamined life is not worth living? Bahá'u'lláh designated His eldest son 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the authoritative interpreter of His writings and the expounder of His teachings. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has defined "faith" in the following terms:

"Pleasing and acceptable as is a righteous person before God's Holy Threshold, yet good works should proceed from knowledge...The point is this, that faith compriseth both knowledge and the performance of good works."^{xiii}

This is not a "faith" merely composed of "belief" nor one grounded in "imitation"--it is "faith" which is in harmony with science and reason.

Bahá'u'lláh has invited all of humanity to recognize the Prophets of God, not one alone, but all. He affirms that each of the Prophets of God can be recognized through observing His signs, His proofs, His evidences and arguments. We may be accustomed to thinking of "signs" as pertaining to the seasons--April showers bring May flowers,

autumn leaves and winter's snow and ice; and to roads--finding our way as we drive our cars from place to place. It may be quite a stretch for us to even imagine what the "signs" of God could be.

The terminology of proofs, evidence and arguments may remind us of mathematical formulas and rhetorical tactics we may have learned in high-school and college, or of movies about lawyers and newscasts about politicians. For some these words will recall the occasional unsympathetic classmate who was certain to counter whatever one might say with one relentless refrain: "Prove it! Prove it! Prove it!" How can proofs, evidence and arguments be associated with things of the Spirit, with religion, with God and His Prophets?

Bahá'u'lláh affirms the truth of something we probably take for granted--that there is one reality. This is not to say that reality is undifferentiated, but that there are not plural, multiple realities co-existing in the same space and time. That reality is something objective and verifiable, although the manner in which we experience its verifiability may be modified depending upon which facet of reality we are encountering. Bahá'u'lláh establishes the prophethood of all of the Prophets of God on a rational basis, a scientific foundation--this we will discover in the course of this book. This is not positivistic reason, materialistic philosophy, a science of physical things which can be discerned through the senses--the reason and science with which we are all somewhat familiar. Rather, this is the science of metaphysics (that is, beyond the physical), the science of the extra-sensory, and it is as systematic, logical, inclusive, associative and reliable as our "physical" science. Indeed, Bahá'u'lláh affirms that inasmuch as this science has been developed under the guidance of the infallible and divinely-inspired Prophets of God, it is actually more reliable than any physical science.

This systematic formulation of the proofs of prophethood by a claimant to the prophetic station is entirely unprecedented in the recorded history of religion. While it would have been astonishing enough if Bahá'u'lláh had merely set forth scientific proofs in support of His own prophetic mission, Bahá'u'lláh has added astonishment to astonishment through the establishment of the prophethood of all of the Prophets of God on the same foundation. Hence, when we find 'Abdu'l-Bahá stating that the foundation of the religions of God is one, He is not saying something which is beyond our comprehension, something we must "believe" and not question, something which does not satisfy our minds. Rather, in affirming the one foundation of the

teachings of the Prophets, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was simply stating a fact, for it is upon evident and clear signs, proofs, evidences and arguments that Bahá’u’lláh established the validity of the Prophets of God. This one foundation of the proofs of prophethood establishes the essential truth of all of these divinely-revealed Faiths.

There are various terms used in the writings of Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi to denote the signs, proofs, evidences and arguments for God and His Prophets. Study of this terminology and of the subjects it refers to may acquaint us with dimensions of the Bahá’í teachings which would otherwise remain hidden and unappreciated. Those who wish to acquaint themselves with these terms and their definitions in the original languages of the Bahá’í Writings--Arabic and Persian--are invited to read COMPANION TO PROOFS OF THE PROPHETS, Part One: The Nomenclature of Proof.

**AN OUTLINE:
PROOFS OF LORD KRISHNA**

FIRST PROOF

**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FULFILLS THE PROPHECIES OF PREVIOUS
PROPHETS**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:13,17,106,237; JA:7; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: ABDP:43; SW:XVI:2:434

SECOND PROOF

WORDS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:91-92,197-200,216,217,220,227; GL:105; 'Abdu'l-Bahá:
ABDP:43

THIRD PROOF

REVELATION OF GOD

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:139-141; GL:60-62,67,85-86,105,142; BWF:116,117; 'Abdu'l-
Bahá: PUP:143,377,378

FOURTH PROOF

DEEDS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:197; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: ABDP:44; SAQ:14-42; PUP:364,366;
PT:18

FIFTH PROOF

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN HIMSELF

Bahá'u'lláh: GL:47-48,105; KI:35,72-73,75,91-92,99-100;103-104; 'Abdu'l-
Bahá: PUP:366; SAQ:43; Shoghi Effendi: GPB:5,11,14,19-21

SIXTH PROOF

SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:45,224,224-225,225-226,227-228; GL:56-57,75-76,85-86,88-
90,99-100; ESW:36,84-85; WOB:118-119; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: KH:631-633;
PUP:461

SEVENTH PROOF

COURAGEOUS PROCLAMATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:35,45,230-234; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:340; SAQ:43-44;
SW:XIV:8:231; SW:VIII:13:178

EIGHTH PROOF

EVERY VALLEY SHALL BE EXALTED

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:146-147,154-156,221-222; GL:82-85; TB:186; KA:#157;
'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:125,277,340,401-402; SAQ:30-31

NINTH PROOF**EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL SHALL BE MADE LOW**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:33,36,146-147; TB:186; KA:#157

TENTH PROOF**THE STAR-HERALD OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:62,63,65

ELEVENTH PROOF**THE HUMAN HERALD OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:62-66; ESW:158,171

TWELFTH PROOF**THE TRIUMPH OF THE CAUSE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**Bahá'u'lláh: GL:91,219-220; PDC:90; Matthew 15:13; Acts 5:34,38-39;
'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:405**THIRTEENTH PROOF****ANNULMENT OF PREVIOUS DISPENSATIONS BY
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:38-39,44-45,238; GL:147; KA:#7; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:365

FOURTEENTH PROOF**INNATE, DIVINELY-INSPIRED KNOWLEDGE OF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**Bahá'u'lláh: KI:100; SV:26; GL:58,90-91,219; TB:149; KA:#104; 'Abdu'l-
Bahá: ABDP:53-54; SAQ:28-29**FIFTEENTH PROOF****FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECIES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Bahá'u'lláh: ESW:148,150; GL:58,221; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:232,339,410,432

SIXTEENTH PROOF**REPUDIATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS**Bahá'u'lláh: GL:56-58,83; TB:206; KI:14-15,165,182,228-229,238 'Abdu'l-
Bahá: PT:102; SAQ:30,35-36; PUP:431**SEVENTEENTH PROOF****PENETRATION AND POTENCY OF THE WORD OF
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**Bahá'u'lláh: TB:173-174; GL:141; KA:#3-5; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: SWAB:291-292;
PUP:340-341,347; SW IX:9:104

EIGHTEENTH PROOF**DIVINE AND ETERNAL SOVEREIGNTY OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:99-100,106-107,234; GL:302; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:5,210-211,276-277

NINETEENTH PROOF**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH CONFIRMS THE TRUTH OF PREVIOUS PROPHET**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:20-21; KA:#182; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:154,234,338-339,393,403,404

TWENTIETH PROOF**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS A MATERIAL, HUMAN AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATOR**

Bahá'u'lláh: GL:156-158; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: SAQ:8-13; PUP:77-78,308-311,352-353,364,405-406,465

TWENTY-FIRST PROOF**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IS THE DIVINE PHYSICIAN**

Bahá'u'lláh: GL:80-81,213,254-255; KI:247; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:155,171,204; SWAB:59

TWENTY-SECOND PROOF**MIRACLES ARE THE LEAST SIGNIFICANT OF PROOFS**

'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:364; ABDP:43-44; SAQ:44-45,115-118

TWENTY-THIRD PROOF**TEACHINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:38-39,120,121; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: SWAB:7:20-21; ABDP:43-46; PUP:5-6,61,365-366

TWENTY-FOURTH PROOF**SPIRITUAL PROOF OF THE SPIRITUAL SEASONS**

Bahá'u'lláh: GL:27,84,94,167; TB:86; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: SAQ:83-86,229

TWENTY-FIFTH PROOF**SPIRITUAL PROOF OF THE SPIRITUAL SUN OF REALITY**

'Abdu'l-Bahá: SAQ:86-88; WOB:127; PT:127-129,137; ABDP:59-62

TWENTY-SIXTH PROOF**SPIRITUAL PROOF OF THE MYSTIC HERALD**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:195-200; HWA:#1-2; SV:5-8,11-12; 'Abdu'l-Bahá: PUP:277

TWENTY-SEVENTH PROOF**GARDENER OF MANKIND**

Bahá'u'lláh: SV:3,4; HWP:#1,2,18; KI:191,211; GL:31,319,320-321
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: BWF:309-310,352,379,420,438; SAQ:225-226; SW:XIV:2,p.43;
 TAB:I:641; SWAB:129; PUP:24,51-52,77,118,214-215,235,353,399,400,427-
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TWENTY-EIGHTH PROOF**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH WAS NOT WITHOUT HONOUR SAVE IN HIS
COUNTRY AND OWN HOUSE**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:174; ESW:92; P&M:LXVI:106-110; Jesus: MT 13:57; MK 6:4;
 LK 4:24; JN 4:44; Shoghi Effendi: GPB:X,163

TWENTY-NINTH PROOF**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH WAS EXILED FROM HIS HOMETLAND**

Bahá'u'lláh:KI:174; ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Tablet cited in letter of Shoghi Effendi,
 dated 9 April 1923; SAQ: IV:15-16; Shoghi Effendi: GPB:VII:107

THIRTIETH PROOF**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH CAME FROM THE EAST**

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: GPB:XVI:253-254

THIRTY-FIRST PROOF**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH APPEARED AMONG THE MOST SPIRITUALLY
DEPRIVED AND DEGRADED OF MANKIND**

Bhagavad-Gita:IV:7; Bhagavata Purana:IX:24:56; Genesis:VI:5-8; Shoghi
 Effendi: ADJ:17-18

THIRTY-SECOND PROOF**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOUNDED A NEW CIVILIZATION**

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: SDC:96; Khitabat:393-394; PUP:142,375

THIRTY-THIRD PROOF**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH MANIFESTS THE GLORY OF GOD**

Bhagavad-Gita:XI:12; Exodus:24:16-17;33:18-22;34:29-35; Leviticus:9:6;
 Isaiah:33:18-22;35:2;40:5; Gospel of Matthew:16:27; Gospel of
 John:1:14;2:11;17:5,22; Second Epistle to the Corinthians:3:7-11,18;
 Revelation of St. John:21:23; Qur’án:24:36 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Muntakhabati:
 #4:14/SWAB:#4:15; Khitabat:117-119; PT:68-70; SAQ:IX:35;X:43; Balyuzi:
 KG:132-133; F.E.Peters: A Reader in Classical Islám:382-383

THIRTY-FOURTH PROOF**TESTING OF BELIEVERS IN THIS DISPENSATION**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:49,52-53,68-69,162,255

THIRTY-FIFTH PROOF
IN THIS AGE THE LIGHT IS SEEMINGLY QUENCHED

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:73,127; GL:56-58,101-102; WOB:118-119

THIRTY-SIXTH PROOF
PEOPLE KNOWN BY THEIR COUNTENANCES

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:173-174; Exodus 13:16; Deuteronomy 6:8,11:18; Ezekiel 9:4;
 Revelation of St. John: 7:3,9:4,13:16-17,14:1,14:9,20:4,22:4

THIRTY-SEVENTH PROOF
LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:80-82; JA:14,22-24,48,72-73

THIRTY-EIGHTH PROOF
OPPRESSION IN THIS DISPENSATION

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:29-31

THIRTY-NINTH PROOF
**RETURN OF THE PROPHETS AND THEIR CHOSEN ONES IN
 THIS DISPENSATION**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:116-117,118-119,120-121,148-154,158-162,179

FORTIETH PROOF
**REJECTION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH BECAUSE HE DOES NOT
 CONFORM TO CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE**

Bahá'u'lláh: KI:170-171,181-182; GL:82-83

PROOFS OF THE AVATARAS PRECEDING LORD KRISHNA

There are an enormous number of sources which can be consulted in a study of the recognized *Avataras* of Hinduism. The historical value and authenticity of these sources is the subject of much controversy, with most modern scholars agreeing that none of these books represent the direct and unadulterated transcription of inspired or revealed verses from the *Avataras* themselves.

What is an *Avatara*? The *Avatara* is generally regarded as the incarnation of Vishnu, the Sustainer, represented in the ancient Rig-veda by the sun, and represented in the Brahmanas, Puranas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Harivamsa. According to Hindu theology, there are four manifestations of Vishnu. The first is called "vyuha" and describes His emanations in Vasudeva, Samkarshana or Balarama, Pradyumna and Amiruddha; these are perhaps equivalent to the "specific revelation" vouchsafed to the Prophets of God and received only by Them and not by the creatures generally as defined in divine philosophy. The second manifestation is the *Avatara*, also called "pradurbhava" and "vibhava", and is equivalent to the perfect manifestation of the Divine attributes in the Self of the Prophets in divine philosophy. The third manifestation is called "antaryamin" and "vibhutim" and is equivalent to "universal revelation" in divine philosophy. The fourth manifestation of the Divine Reality is called "vighrahas" and is described as the visible embodiment and expression of the divine, which may be equivalent to the physical body and human appearance of the Prophet of God in divine philosophy. It is to be noted that these four manifestations of Vishnu correspond to the three stations or conditions of the Divine Manifestations as described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá^{xiv}:

“Know that the Holy Manifestations, though they have the degrees of endless perfections, yet, speaking generally, have only three stations. The first station is the physical; the second station is the human, which is that of the rational soul; the third is that of the divine appearance and the heavenly splendor...

“The Holy Manifestations have three conditions: one the physical condition; one, that of the rational soul; and one, that of the manifestation of perfection and of the lordly splendor.”

These three conditions seem to bear some similarity to three of the manifestations of Vishnu, the physical with "vigrahas", the rational soul with "vyuha", the divine appearance with "pradurbhava" and "vibhava". What then of "antaryamin", the fourth manifestation? In Kitáb-i-Íqán Bahá'u'lláh describes "universal revelation" as follows:

KI:140: Nay, were man to gaze with the eye of divine and spiritual discernment, he will readily recognize that nothing whatsoever can exist without the revelation of the splendor of God, the ideal King. Consider how all created things eloquently testify to the revelation of that inner Light within them.

According to the various texts cited above, the "Avatara" (descent) periodically manifests Himself to humanity. We read in Bhagavad-Gita on this subject, originally in Sanskrit, in the words of Krishna^{xv}:

BG:IV:7-8: Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata, then I send forth Myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age.

Bahá'u'lláh makes reference to this same theme in these verses from Kitáb-i-Íqán, originally in Persian:

KI:62: ...when the standards of guidance and felicity have been reversed, and the morn of truth and righteousness hath sunk in night, then shall the sign of the Son of man appear in heaven.

According to at least one scholar of Hinduism (Hermann Jacobi, see below), the original appellation of the divine Appearance was "pradurbhava," as found in the oldest accounts, Mahabharata and Harivamsa, and the later appellation "avatara" assumed its present popularity in the medieval period, along with the birth of the "bhakti" movements (please see the Fifth Proof) which venerate the Person of Krishna. The two terms have different meanings: "pradurbhava" means "manifestation" while "avatara" means "descent" and has come to signify "incarnation," and, in particular, incarnations of the god Vishnu. Hence, worshippers of Krishna are accounted Vaisnavites. For the purpose of simplifying this study, the appellation *Avatara* has been retained, although with the original meaning and attention

attached to the earlier "pradurbhava." Hence, the *Avataras* are understood to be Manifestations rather than Incarnations of God.

How many *Avataras* have appeared in the past? About this there is no agreement. Some texts indicate that the number of previous *Avataras* is innumerable. Krishna refers to their number in a verse of Bhagavad-Gita:

BG:IV:5: Many are My lives that are past...

Another verse, in Vanaparva^{xvi}, one of the eighteen sections of Mahabharata, refers to "thousands of his manifestations (pradurbhava)"^{xvii}. When one considers that man is always in need of the services provided by the *Avatara* and described above, and when one also considers the assurance from Krishna that the *Avatara* returns to humanity in every Age, then inasmuch as man is attested, in the traditional Hindu understanding of time, to have lived for millions of years, therefore in the past innumerable *Avataras* would have made their appearance. Nonetheless, some texts enumerate the *Avataras* which can be recalled or perhaps the *Avataras* who seemed of particular significance, with some works giving a list of twenty-four, Bhagavata-Purana giving twenty-two, Matsya-Purana enumerating ten, Mahabharata listing nine, and Harivamsa giving eight, but numbering the eighth tenth.

Probably the oldest sources for the *Avataras* are Harivamsa and Mahabharata, and so we will begin with these here. Eight "pradurbhava" are actually named in Harivamsa: 1)Varaha (Boar), 2)Narasimha/Nr'isinha (Man-lion), 3)Vamana (Dwarf), 4)Dattatreya, 5)Jamadagnya (Parasu-Rama), 6)Rama, 7)Krishna, and 8)Kalki (also called #10). Nine "pradurbhava" are found in Mahabharata^{xviii} in a slightly different configuration: 1)Hamsa (Swan or White Crane), 2)Kurma (Tortoise), 3)Matsya (Fish), 4)Varaha (Boar), 5)Vamana (Dwarf), 6)Parashu-Rama (Rama with axe), 7)Rama Dasarathi, 8)Satvata (Krishna), and 9)Kalki. Matsya-Purana lists ten appearances, with the first three called "sambhuti" (celestial manifestations) and the remaining seven "avatara" (human incarnations): 1)portion of Dharma, 2)Narasimha (Man-lion), 3)Vamana (Dwarf), 4)Dattatreya, 5)Mandhatr, 6)Parasu-Rama, 7)Rama, 8)Vedavyasa, 9)Buddha, and 10)Kalki. "Bhagavata-Purana" gives twenty-two "avatara": 1)Purusa, 2)Varaha (Boar), 3)Narada, 4)Nara and Narayana, 5)Kapila, 6)Dattatreya, 7)Yajna (Sacrifice), 8)Rsabha, 9)Prthu, 10)Matsya (Fish), 11)Kurma (Tortoise), 12)/13)Dhavantari, 14)Narasimha (Man-lion),

15)Vamana (Dwarf), 16)Parasu-Rama, 17)Vedavyasa, 18)Rama, 19)/20)Balarama and Krishna, 21)Buddha, and 22)Kalki.

Krishna is the principal subject of this volume. First, however, it is essential that we understand something of the *Avataras* which are cited on this list prior to the appearance of Krishna. What is obvious from the start? We recognize that the first three or four *Avataras* cited in the two earliest sources, Harivamsa and Mahabharata are depicted as non-humans: Swan or White Crane, Fish, Tortoise, Boar. Man-lion seems to be a man in a lion's body (as in "Beauty and the Beast"), of mixed aspect (like a centaur or minotaur), or a man of leonine temperament. Bhagavata-Purana (7.3-8) and Vishnu-Purana (1.17-20) report that this Avatara appeared to save a righteous man from death and to kill an evil king, Hiranyakasipu. Matsya (Fish) is associated with the story of the flood, the deluge, with some parallels to the Biblical account. In this story, Manu is the only man who survives the flood, and he is thus both the last man of the old age and the first man of the new age. Matsya saves Manu from the flood, as a sort of messenger from God. In Satapatha Brahmana (1.8.1.1-10) this story makes no mention of Vishnu or of Matsya being an Avatara. In Mahabharata (3.187), Matsya is identified with Brahma rather than Vishnu. Only in the much later Matsya Purana (1.12ff) is Matsya depicted as the Avatara of Vishnu, and here, also for the first time, Manu recognizes Vishnu Vasudeva in the fish.

These non-humans could symbolically and allegorically stand for individual Prophets, as may the non-human protagonists of aboriginal, Hindu, Greek and Egyptian myth. They may also lend their non-human emblems to certain Epochs in human development, even as the Chinese identify particular years with certain non-human life forms including the Elephant, Rat, Pig, Dragon, Monkey, Ox and so forth. Furthermore, they may be identified with particular clans, civilizations or exclusive societies such as we find among the Hopi, the Navajo, the Maya. Also we can see in the general list a progression of life-forms which correspond with the picture of evolution as it is currently understood and taught in Western schools: from fish to tortoise(reptile or amphibian) to boar (animal) to man-lion (intermediate stage between beast and man, perhaps referring to a large hairy ape). The Mahabharata list does not follow this pattern as logically as does the general list.

As for the Avataras which have been manifested in the human form on this general list, they begin with Nr'isinha (Man-lion) who is a mix

of man and beast, perhaps akin to the Greek centaur or minotaur; then is found Vamana (Dwarf) who is a small and ugly man by most accounts; followed by Parashu-Rama (Rama with axe) which is the divine man at his most primitive--a manual laborer in the woods. We know from the Ramayana that Rama was a king and hence much exalted in social station above his progenitor with the axe. Krishna, the Avatara of Bhagavad-Gita is depicted in that book and many other texts as possessed of infinitely greater gifts and powers than those of a king. Indeed, the kings depicted in Mahabharata are quite impotent in their war against the Will of God, and the "royal sages"^{xix} are clearly subordinate to this Supreme Person. Krishna reveals the divine Will to Arjuna, and Arjuna, is a sort of axe-man, for his caste (Ksatriya) is that of a warrior--it is his duty to chop down human trunks, to hack down as many free-standing majesties as he is able.

What then are the principles being demonstrated in these lists of Avataras? One principle which may be derived is that the Manifestation of God, the Avatara is related directly to the evolution of humanity. Humanity, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, has traversed all of the levels of creation, from the mineral to the vegetable and up the ladder of existences within the animal kingdom.^{xx} This is not to be confused with the doctrine of reincarnation^{xxi}, or with its cognate metempsychosis^{xxii}. Human evolution is ongoing and eternal, and once man assumed the form we now recognize as human he continued to evolve, and he will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. As the Avataras represent the revelation of God among humanity, these lists encourage one to believe that there is a progressive revelation of the spiritual life of the Divine Reality which has been ongoing and will continue. Likewise, there is no finality attached to the appearance of the Avatara in general, nor is any particular Avatara depicted as assuming a supreme importance, a superiority to all other Avataras. Other volumes are devoted to the study of the Avataras who have assumed a great historical significance. This volume will consider the prophetic station of Krishna, whose other names, cited by Radhakrishnan, include: Sri Bhagavatan^{xxiii}; Narayana^{xxiv}; Hari^{xxv}; Hrsikesa, Acyuta, Madhusudana, Arisudana, Govinda, Vasudeva, Yadava, Kesava, Madhava, Janardana^{xxvi}. Walker^{xxvii} lists other names for Krishna: Balaji, Damodara, Dasarha, Dvarakanath, Gopala, Venugopala, Madanagopala, Rajagopala, Govardhana-dhara, Kanhaiya, Kisorilal, Lal, Mohan, Murali, Murari, and Syam.

Four translations of Bhagavad-Gita were referred to in the course of this study: J.A.B. van Buitenen: Chicago, 1981; Alladi Mahadeva Sastry: Madras, 1979; Prabhavananda and C.Isherwood: New York, 1951; and S. Radhakrishnan: NY, Harper & Brothers. The last of these proved to be the most useful. The authorities consulted for this study included: S.Radhakrishnan's Introductory Essay and notes for his translation of The Bhagavad-Gita; Krishna, the divine lover: myth and legend through Indian art, Bombay:B.I. Public, 1982; K.M. Munshi^{xxviii}, Krishnavatara, a six volume biography, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1962; Asha Goswami, Krishna-katha and allied matters, Delhi: Y.R. Public, 1984; Nigel Frith, The legend of Krishna, NY: Schocken Books, 1976; Bimanbehari Majumdar, Krsna in history and legend, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1969; The International Cyclopaedia, London, 1898; Larousse World Mythology, NY, 1965; Hermann Jacobi, "Incarnation (Indian)," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, New York: Scribner's Sons, 1968, vol. VII; Benjamin Walker, "Krishna," The Hindu World, NY: Frederick Praeger, 1968, vol. I; Yves Bonnefoy, compiler, "Avatars," Mythologies, Chicago, 1991, vol. II; Mircea Eliade, editor, The Encyclopedia of Religion, New York: Macmillan, 1987, vol. 8; Dr. H.M. Munje, The Whole World is but One Family, New Delhi; Mario Bussagli, Calembus Sivaramamurti, Five Thousand Years of the Art of India, New York: Abrams.

FIRST PROOF
PROPHECIES FULFILLED BY KRISHNA

The earliest proof that we come into contact with for every new Prophet of God are the prophecies of previous, preceding Prophets which are fulfilled in the manifestation of succeeding Prophets. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has stated regarding this proof of prophethood^{xxxix}:

"One of the proofs is through the fulfillment of former prophecies...The prophecies deal with dates and symbols which proclaim the end of each dispensation. In former books the conditions are explained concerning subsequent manifestors of the divine plan."

On another occasion he categorically asserted that every Prophet predicted his successor and acknowledged the truth of his predecessor^{xxx}:

"The Prophets of God manifested complete love for all. Each One announced the glad tidings of His successor, and each subsequent One confirmed the teachings and prophecies of the Prophet Who preceded Him."

The first volume of *Krishnavatara* reports three distinct prophecies of the advent of Sri Krishna: Nanda^{xxxi}, Akrura^{xxxii} and Muni Krishna Dvaipayana in Veda Vyasa^{xxxiii}. The works consulted do not report the first appearance in written form of these prophecies, let alone their historicity. Hence, these details may be largely or even entirely legendary and ahistorical, and it is likely that after such a passage of time (see the Fifth Proof), all details would have become distorted and mythicized. Nonetheless, it is significant that there are three separate reports of prophecies concerning the appearance of Krishna, and therefore that there was the consciousness that an Avatara would be announced in advance of His advent, as well as the affirmation that this particular Avatara was indeed foreseen by spiritually perceptive men. This in turn indicates that at least some of His contemporaries were prepared for His arrival, or rather, that they expected His arrival and so were able to welcome Him as Avatara of His Age. It also follows that those contemporaries who were opposed to the manifestation of an Avatara, who were enemies of God and of His laws, or who paid no attention to the prophecies of the ancient holy men--whether out of ignorance, cynicism or preoccupation with ritual or sensuality--that they would stand against this Avatara and repudiate

His teachings. This is the context into which Sri Krishna appeared, and which is expressed, whether historically or metaphorically in the eighteen day battle between the evil Duryodhana and the Kauravas with their allies and the virtuous Yudhisthira and his Pandava brothers and their allies on the plain of Kurukshetra.

SECOND PROOF ***THE WORDS OF KRISHNA***

‘Abdu’l-Bahá cites the "second proof" of the prophets of God as "their creative words and phrases which salute the hearts of humanity".^{xxxiv} It is imperative that distinction be made at this point between the Word of the Prophets, that is the actual physically manifested Word of God, and the process whereby the Word is revealed, which is called Revelation; and furthermore this must be distinguished from the Teachings contained in that Word which have come forth in that Revelation. Here we discuss the physically manifested Word of God itself as a proof. The most detailed exposition of this proof of the Prophets of God is found in the "Dala'il-i-Sab'ih" of the Báb. The seven proofs from which the book takes its name and which are the primary substance of this work are all centered on this Second Proof. Furthermore, the Báb bases all of his arguments in support of this proof upon specific verses from the Qur'an. The Báb states in the Fourth Proof^{xxxv}:

"The verses and the Book are superior to no matter what miracle, in such manner that, for the Muslim, there is no other way but to believe in this superiority which God Himself has affirmed in the Surah of the Spider"^{xxxvi} — "Is it not enough for them that We have revealed to you the Book for their instruction? Surely in this is a blessing and an admonition to true believers."

Bahá'u'lláh cites this same Qur'anic verse and then writes^{xxxvii}:

"This is the testimony which He, Himself, that ordained; greater proof than this there is none, nor ever will be: "This proof is His Word; His own Self, the testimony of His truth."

There is no extant report of Krishna having written down His teachings. The authorship of Bhagavad-Gita is traditionally attributed to Vyasa, who is also alleged the compiler of Mahabharata in which Bhagavad-Gita is found. The Mahabharata in its totality numbers over

100,000 verses^{xxxviii}, comprised of eighteen books called *parvans* and a supplementary volume called *Harivansa*^{xxxix}. As the *Bhagavad-Gita* is composed of eighteen chapters, numbers twenty-three through forty of the book entitled *Bhisma parvan* of *Mahabharata*, it seems plausible enough that the compiler of the whole should be compiler of the part.

As to *Bhagavad-Gita*, Vyasa is not understood to be the author so much as the scribe who notates the actual words of Krishna and Arjuna and who succinctly describes their actions for the duration of their conversation as reported in seven hundred verses. The *Bhagavad-Gita* purports to be the report of Sanjaya, charioteer and minister to King Dhritarashtra, father of Duryodhana and mentor and spiritual father of the Pandava brothers. Sanjaya is, according to *Mahabharata* giving this report of events as he witnesses them telepathically or mediumistically. However, considering that the account is related in the past tense, it is also possible that Sanjaya received eye-witness reports from observers of both of the warring camps (as he relates events on both sides) and that he conveyed these reports to his King in obedience to his command. Certainly, considering the legendary capacity of the ancients to recall events and to relate such events in epic form, it is not unlikely that a gifted raconteur could have synthesized various reports and then related the compiled events in a consistent and convincing fashion.

In any case, this is precisely what we find in *Bhagavad-Gita*, a consistent and convincing exposition of Krishna's teaching as given to Arjuna, His first disciple. Arjuna seems to have been rather like Simon Peter, the first disciple of Jesus--a modest, common man given to doubts and fears like all the rest of us. The utterances of Krishna found in *Bhagavad-Gita* number around four hundred out of a total of seven hundred verses. These four hundred verses contain some of the most potent expositions of the divine teachings in existence. Radhakrishnan, the acclaimed expert on Hinduism and President of India writes of *Bhagavad-Gita*, which is the only "book" which has been universally attributed to Krishna: "Millions of Hindus, for centuries, have found comfort in this great book" (p. 11) and "It represents not any sect of Hinduism but Hinduism as a whole" (p. 12). Gandhi, undoubtedly the most famous Hindu in modern history writes of it in *Young India*: "This famous Gitastra is an epitome of the essentials of the whole Vedic teaching"^{xi}; and Prabhavananda and Isherwood in notes preceding their translation of *Bhagavad-Gita*: "The *Bhagavad Gita*...is the most popular book in Hindu religious literature"^{xli}.

THIRD PROOF

REVELATION OF KRISHNA

Divine philosophy requires that we define the terms we propose to use before any arguments are made. Revelation is defined as "the effulgence of God", "the bounties of God", and "the reality of Divinity is like unto the sun, and revelation is like unto the rays thereof."^{xliii} "If we should assert that the bounties of God are not everlasting, we are forced to believe that Divinity can come to an end, whereas the reality of Divinity enfolds all virtues and by reason of these bounties is perfect. Were it not possessed of all these perfections or virtues, it could not be Divinity. The sun is the sun because of its rays, light and heat. If it could be dispossessed of them, it would not be the sun. Therefore, if we say that the divinity or sovereignty of God is accidental and subject to termination, we must perform think that Divinity itself is accidental, without foundation and not essential."^{xliii} "Among the bounties of God is revelation. Hence revelation is progressive and continuous."^{xliv} There are two kinds of Revelation described by Bahá'u'lláh:

KI:139-140: "Should they assert that the "Revelation" of God signifieth a "Universal Revelation", it is clear and evident that such revelation already existeth in all things. The truth of this We have already established, inasmuch as We have demonstrated that all things are the recipients and revealers of the splendours of that ideal King, and that the signs of the revelation of that Sun, the Source of all splendour, exist and are manifest in the mirrors of beings. Nay, were man to gaze with the eye of divine and spiritual discernment, he will readily recognize that nothing whatsoever can exist without the revelation of the splendour of God, the ideal King. Consider how all created things eloquently testify to the revelation of that inner Light within them."

The Revelation of Krishna is described in a great variety of verses of Bhagavad-Gita, including His "vibuti", meaning glory or manifestation (X:7,16,40,41) and His "teja", meaning splendor, radiance and light (VII:10; X:36,41; XI:17; XV:12; XVIII:43). He describes Himself, the Avatara as the life, the spirit, the life or personality inherent in all things, and this is certainly also an exposition of His Revelation^{xlv}:

BG:VII:8-12: I am the taste in the waters, O son of Kunti, I am the light in the moon and the sun. I am the syllable Aum

in all the Vedas; I am the sound in ether and manhood in men. I am the pure fragrance in earth and brightness in fire. I am the life in all existences and the austerity in ascetics. Know Me, O Partha, to be the eternal seed of all existences. I am the intelligence of the intelligent; I am the splendor of the splendid. I am the strength of the strong, devoid of desire and passion. In beings I am the desire which is not contrary to law, O Lord of the Bharatas. And whatever states of being there may be, be they harmonious, passionate, slothful--know that they are all from Me alone. I am not in them, they are in Me.

Likewise, Krishna speaks metaphorically of the Day of Revelation in these words^{xlvi}:

BG:VIII:17-19: Those who know that the day of Brahma is of the duration of a thousand years and that the night is a thousand ages long, they are the knowers of day and night. At the coming of day, all manifested things come forth from the unmanifested and at the coming of night they merge in that same, called the unmanifested. This very same multitude of existences arising again and again merges helplessly at the coming of night, O Partha, and streams forth into being at the coming of day.

FOURTH PROOF DEEDS OF KRISHNA

Bahá'u'lláh writes in Kitáb-i-Íqán writes that the true seeker will discover in the “mighty deeds” of the Prophet “the signs of God”:

KI:197: "He will likewise clearly distinguish all the signs of God--His wondrous utterances [Second Proof], His great works [Third Proof], and mighty deeds [Fourth Proof]--from the doing, words and ways of men, even as a jeweller who knoweth the gem from the stone, or the man who distinguisheth the spring from autumn and heat from cold."

‘Abdu’l-Bahá states this proof succinctly in one of His talks^{xlvii}:

"A clear proof of validity lies in the achievements and here we are confronted by certain irrefutable facts. The prophets have come from the lowliest and most humiliated of the nations and in each age

the prophet has raised his downtrodden nation to the highest zenith of prosperity and success among the nations of the earth. For instance, His Holiness Christ was quite alone. He was a Jew among the Jews. He came at a time when the Israelites were under the yoke of the Romans. He revived the people till they were transferred from one state of existence into a higher state of existence."

We find very little information about Krishna's deeds in Bhagavad-Gita or, for that matter, in the entirety of Mahabharata. Indeed, the offer He makes to the two warring parties amply demonstrates His policy of non-action and His advocacy of non-attachment to action. To quote Prabhavananda and Isherwood^{xlviii}: "Both sides wanted Krishna's aid. To both, Krishna offered the same choice. 'Either you can have the help of my kinsmen, the Vrishnis, in the battle,' he told them, 'or you can have me alone. But I shall take no part in the fighting.' Duryodhana chose the Vrishnis. Arjuna preferred to take Krishna himself, as his personal charioteer."

The actions ascribed to Krishna in the "Gita" are as follows: 1)conversation; 2)driving Arjuna's chariot; 3)blowing His conch, Pancajanya (I:14-15); 4)revelation (XI:5f) of His "supreme form, luminous, universal, infinite and primal which none but thee [Arjuna] has seen before" (XI:47). In the various Puranas, which are alledged to have been compiled by Vyasa, as with the Mahabharata--and in this case the eight Puranas claimed by the Vaisnavites, those Hindus who worship Vishnu as the Supreme Person rather than Shiva, Brahma or Durga--there are many elaborate stories of Krishna's deeds. Krishna is, of course, "by far the most charming and human of Vishnu's incarnations"^{xlix}, and He is also the greatest teacher of wisdom among the Avatars.

To regard the stories found in the Puranas as historically accurate seems altogether unreasonable to many people. Nevertheless, these stories portray a prodigal person, and His deeds are nothing if not epic in stature and scope. Already shortly after birth He demonstrated His prodigious strength and fearlessness, His superhuman powers. "Shortly after his birth, Krishna, who was already energetic and resourceful, began to show his prowess. He could uproot two trees at once, mock and triumph over fearful demons, and at the same time steal butter, play with monkeys, eat soil and so on."¹ As a youth He became famous for another sort of prodigality--women were attracted to Him, maidens and matrons alike, and He loved them all. "The shepherds' daughters and wives, forgetting their usual modesty and

reserve, abandoned their work and their homes to follow Krishna into the forest as soon as they heard the sound of his flute."ⁱⁱ Krishna Gopala, the divine shepherd's first encounter with the gopis, the shepherdesses, is told in a wonderfully charming story which is playful, erotic and spiritually instructive all in one. "One day when the shepherdesses had gone bathing in the Jumna, he stole their clothes and climbed up a nearby tree. When they emerged from the water and could not find their saris the shepherdesses were at a loss what to do; their distress increased when they caught sight of Krishna laughing from the tree. Hiding themselves in the river, they begged him to have pity on them, but he would not agree to give them back their clothing until they came to get it one after the other, with their hands joined above their heads in the attitude of supplication."ⁱⁱⁱ This story has served as a metaphor for the relationship between God and His devotees, with the Avatara stealing away our coverings and demanding that we show Him obedience, humility and that we abandon pretence and conventionality with Him. The many adventures of Krishna Gopala and the gopis found in the verses of Gita-Govinda and the Vaisnavite Puranas depict divine love in erotic metaphor. The gopis "symbolize souls yearning to be reunited with the divinity."ⁱⁱⁱⁱ While these tales are unique in many ways, they are not without parallels in the religious literature of the world. The *Shir Ha-Shirim*, the Song of Solomon outwardly purports to be the amorous conversation between the Shulamite maiden and her beloved, King Solomon^{liv}, and some of their exchanges are as erotic as any found in Gita-Govinda:

How fair you are, how beautiful!
 O Love, with all its rapture!
 Your stately form is like the palm,
 Your breasts are like clusters.
 I say: Let me climb the palm,
 Let me take hold of its branches;
 Let your breasts be like clusters of grapes,
 Your breath like the fragrance of apples,
 And your mouth like choicest wine.

While this poem has obvious exoteric eroticism, it has been interpreted symbolically for thousands of years, by Jewish and Christian commentators, as an allegorical depiction of the love of God for the soul of man, which is like the partnership between two lovers. The love of God is revealed in Krishna Avatara to be full of play, of joy, of surprise and of candid intimacy. Krishna gives supreme pleasure to all who love Him, denying none.

In His maturity Krishna Avatara killed powerful wrongdoers who persisted in exploiting His creatures. For, all creatures are His, as He attests in Bhagavad-Gita, VII:6^{lv}: "I am the origin of all this world and its dissolution as well." One of the wrongdoers He kills is His uncle, King Kamsa. "His mother Devaki was the sister of King Kamsa, and he destroyed her children as soon as they came into the world because a celestial voice had predicted that he would be assassinated by one of them. Krishna owed his life entirely to a trick, whereby his parents exchanged him for the daughter of a modest herdsman, Nanda."^{lvi} The fate of King Kamsa recalls the Greek tale of Oedipus: King Laius of Thebes is warned by the oracle of Apollo, the God of truth, that his son Oedipus will assassinate him and so he orders the infant exposed to the elements; Oedipus is taken in by shepherds and raised to maturity, only to fulfill the oracle in all of its horror.

This also reminds one of the story of King Herod, who was informed by his astrologers that a star in the heavens heralded the immanent birth of the King of the Jews. As the ruling King over Judaea, Herod had no intention of having another Jew assume his position and prerogatives, and so he called for the extermination of all Jewish male offspring at that time, and Mary could only save the life of her child Jesus by spiriting Him away to Egypt until He reached the age of maturity. There are countless stories in religious scripture and mythology which demonstrate that loyalty to God and adherence to righteousness is essential while loyalty to family and adherence to custom is always of secondary importance and may be in direct conflict with the primary duty.

It is not the supernatural powers which are the enduring impression from the accounts of Krishna's battles with evil-doers. Indeed, at the conclusion of the battle on the plain of Kurukshetra, "the war ends in the total destruction of the two armies. The Kurus have four survivors and the Pandavas seven, counting Krishna, who died shortly afterwards as he has foretold."^{lvii} The moral of the story seems to be that the war between light and darkness, between good and evil is massively destructive and that men must wage this war with high casualties. Even the Avatara is not immune to death. In the end, however, light and good will triumph, as in the death of Duryodhana and the defeat of the Kauravas in Mahabharata and the corresponding crowning of Yudhisthira as ruler of India and the triumph of the Pandavas.

Indeed, this tale does not end here but with the pilgrimage of the Pandavas to the abode of the gods in the Himalayan Mountains. On this pilgrimage all of the journeyers but one alone, Yudhishthira himself, die en route and do not attain to their aim because they are not pure enough. Yudhishthira passes two spiritual tests and then he is permitted to the heavenly abode and becomes also the cause of the redemption of the Pandavas. In the abode of the gods they are reunited with Krishna, who died earlier, of a wound to His "Achilles' heal" only to ascend in "complete radiance...to the sky, where the gods welcome him."^{lviii}

To summarize, in His actions Krishna showed miraculous powers even as an infant, inspired love and joy among multitudes, and superhuman courage and strength as He battled and vanquished wrongdoers. While other Prophets of God have been portrayed as showing superhuman courage, miraculous powers, opposition to and triumph over injustice and evil, Krishna is entirely unique with regard to His portrayal as the supreme lover, the divinely beautiful youth. In religion we encounter divine pairs, like the Shulamite maiden and Solomon, Batsheva and David, Sita and Rama, Parvati and Shiva. In the Hebrew Bible we find Joseph, who loves his father Jacob and his younger brother Benjamin and who forgives his other brothers for their wickedness towards him; but this same Joseph rejects the advances of Potiphar's wife. In Islamic legend and mysticism Joseph is transformed from the virtuous administrator and family man into the quintessential lover, and is linked with a woman called Zuleika. The mystical tributes to their erotic love are well known in Islamic literature. However, no other prophetic figure is depicted as the unabashed lover of all the women who are attracted to Him. Yet this is part of the potency of His personality as an Avatara. He symbolizes the living loving God Who would have all of us love Him as He loves us, without self-consciousness, without inhibitions, without attachments to others save Him, without jealousies, in perfect freedom and in perfect humility.

FIFTH PROOF PERSON OF KRISHNA

Bahá'u'lláh wrote in *Lamb-i-Ashraf*, "Say: The first and foremost testimony establishing His truth is His own Self."^{lix} Now we will consider the Self, the Personality of the Prophet apart from His deeds, His actions. Bahá'u'lláh in *Kitáb-i-Íqán* wrote about the prophets:

KI:99-100;GL:47: "...those luminous Gems of Holiness...are one and all, the Exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the universe, its Essence and ultimate Purpose. From Him proceed their knowledge and power; from Him is derived their sovereignty. The beauty of their countenance is but a reflection of His image, and their revelation a sign of His deathless glory. They are the Treasuries of Divine knowledge, and the Repositories of celestial wisdom."

The person of Krishna has inspired love for God among millions of Hindus, certainly to a comparable degree to the persons of Jesus among Christians, and of Dionysius among the devotees of the ancient Greek mysteries. He is the most popular form of Vishnu, God the preserver and sustainer, and Vaisnavite Hindus are found all over India, in the following configurations: Madhwacharyas, whose founder Madhwacharya was born in 1199; Ramanujas, whose followers are found mostly in South India, whose founder Ramanuja lived in the 12th century; Ramanandas Ramavats, whose founder Ramananda lived in the 13th century; Kabir Panthis, named after their founder Kabir who lived in the 14th century; Vallabhacharyas, founded by Vallabha Swamin who was born in 1485; and the Vaisnavas of Bengal, whose founder Chaitanya was also born in 1485. Kabir was the disciple of Ramananda, who was the disciple of Ramanuja, so these three branches of Vaisnavite Hinduism are linked.^{lx} The other branches do not seem to be connected to each other. Nevertheless, these are the branches of one tree, of "bhakti yoga," the path which seeks God through the love of the Avatara, Lord Krishna. The Twelfth Chapter of Bhagavad-Gita is devoted to the exposition of "bhakti yoga."

The origin of these "bhakti" movements may be found in the spontaneous popular adoration for the person of Krishna as depicted in legend. His person is celebrated daily by many millions of devotees, and in annual festivals by large portions of the Indian population at large, particularly in those areas where Vaisnavites are numerous. This fervent worship of Krishna may be based, in part, on the Twelfth Chapter of Bhagavad-Gita wherein Krishna answers this question of Arjuna:

BG:XII:1: Those devotees who, thus ever earnest, worship Thee and those again (who worship) the Imperishable and Unmanifested, which of these have the greater knowledge of yoga?

Arjuna is asking a question that millions of souls have asked across the centuries and millennia--is it better, in the eyes of God, to worship Him directly or to worship Him through the agency of His Avatara? Krishna answers this question in these verses^{lxi}:

BG:XII:2-8: Those who fixing their minds on Me worship Me, ever earnest and possessed of supreme faith--them do I consider most perfect in yoga. But those who worship the Imperishable, the Undefinable, the Unmanifested, the Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the Unchanging and the Immobile, the Constant; By restraining all the senses, being even-minded in all conditions, rejoicing in the welfare of all creatures, they come to Me indeed (just like the others). The difficulty of those whose thoughts are set on the Unmanifested is greater, for the goal of the Unmanifested is hard to reach by the embodied beings. But those, who, laying all their actions on Me, intent on Me, worship, meditating on Me, with unswerving devotion, These whose thoughts are set on Me, I straightway deliver from the ocean of death-bound existence, O Partha (Arjuna). On Me alone fix thy mind, let thy understanding dwell in Me. In Me alone shalt thou live forever. Of this there is no doubt.

Krishna in His human aspect is always depicted as dark skinned, sometimes black or green but usually some shade of blue. His brother Bala-Rama is, on the other hand, light-skinned. Krishna has a boyish figure, a beautiful face, and often an elaborate crown. He often appears with jewelry but no garments above the waist, perhaps to show the beauty and color of His limbs. His stature is similar to that of the women who are most often surrounding Him, whether they be gopis or His wife Radha. Paintings of Krishna survive from the 18th century and have been reproduced in [Art of India](#)^{lxii}; other paintings are found in various collections of Indian art. Altogether the images of Krishna that have been preserved describe a man of markedly feminine attributes, maidenly rather than matronly, graceful, seductive, playful, beautiful rather than handsome, deep toned in hue like a bird of the heavens or a fish of the seas. We have already discussed the deeds recounted of Krishna which have won Him the hearts of millions of devotees. It seems that it was this promise of release from suffering into eternal and infinite joy, contained in the [Bhagavad-Gita](#) and in many of the legends of the Vaisnavite **Puranas** which have made this blue-skinned Avatar the beloved of so many hearts. He wins the hearts not by manly valor, by Herculean labors, by Samsonian

strength or by Merlinian magic but much more simply and directly--through the gentleness of His love, through the playfulness of His melody.

SIXTH PROOF **SUFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES OF KRISHNA**

This proof of the prophets of God is explicitly stated in Kitáb-i-Íqán as a general principle:

KI:45: "Moreover, consider the hardships and the bitterness of the lives of those Revealers of the divine Beauty."

KI:73: "Other Prophets, similarly, have been subject to poverty and afflictions, to hunger, and to the ills and chances of this world...You must undoubtedly have been informed of the tribulations, the poverty, the ills, and the degradation that have befallen every Prophet of God and His companions. You must have heard how the heads of their followers were sent as presents unto different cities, how grievously they were hindered from that whereunto they were commanded. Each and every one of them fell a prey to the hands of the enemies of the Cause, and had to suffer whatsoever they decreed."

There is no record known to this author of the sufferings and sacrifices of Krishna. Indeed, the death of Krishna is described with a characteristic anecdote regarding His attitude towards suffering and sacrifice: "As he sits meditating in the forest, with his legs crossed, the balls of his feet are uncovered. A huntsman from afar, taking Krishna for a deer he is pursuing, shoots an arrow, which strikes him in his only vulnerable spot, his left heel. The huntsman approaches and despairs of his mistake, but Krishna tells him neither to be afraid nor to grieve. These words of consolation are the last that he pronounces on earth."^{lxiii} This comment is completely in character for Krishna, Who counseled Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra in much the same way. In the first chapter of Bhagavad-Gita we read that Arjuna spoke to Krishna of his mortification that he was honor bound to wage a war against his own relations:

BG:I:45-47: Alas, what a great sin have we resolved to commit in striving to slay our own people through our greed for the pleasures of the kingdom! Far better would it be for me if the sons of Dhrtarastra, with weapons in hand, should slay me in

the battle, while I remain unresisting and unarmed. Having spoken thus on the (field of) battle, Arjuna sank down on the seat of his chariot, casting away his bow and arrow, his spirit overwhelmed by sorrow.

Our human sympathy goes out to Arjuna, and many of us would agree that it is better to be slain than to slay, and that human lives are more valuable than possession of territory. However, Krishna sees things differently. He perceives the reality of the situation, and He replies in His characteristic fashion, in the second chapter of Bhagavad-Gita:

BG:II:11: Thou grieveest for those whom thou shouldst not grieve for, and yet thou speakest words about wisdom. Wise men do not grieve for the dead or for the living...

BG:II:14-15: Contacts with their objects, O Son of Kunti (Arjuna), give rise to cold and heat, pleasure and pain. They come and go and do not last for ever, these learn to endure, O Bharata (Arjuna). The man who is not troubled by these, O Chief of men (Arjuna), who remains the same in pain and pleasure, who is wise makes himself fit for eternal life...

BG:II:17-18: Know thou that that by which all this is pervaded is indestructible. Of this immutable being, no one can bring about the destruction. It is said that these bodies of the eternal embodied (soul) which is indestructible and incomprehensible come to an end. Therefore fight, O Bharata (Arjuna).

Hence, Krishna teaches that the sufferings and sacrifices which we experience in this world are illusory, that they simply pertain to our bodies and to physical conditions, which are temporal, which are impermanent, while our true realities are spiritual and these are indestructible and can not be affected by physical pain or even physical death.

And yet Krishna is very responsive to the mental sufferings of Arjuna. Almost the entirety of Bhagavad-Gita is devoted to relieving the mental suffering of Arjuna, replacing his ignorance with understanding, resolving his misconceptions, comforting him, encouraging and inspiring him, banishing his fears. Krishna urges Arjuna to sacrifice his personal scruples, his human feelings in the path of obedience to the Divine Will. It is the Divine Will that there be a

battle between evil and good. It is the Divine Will that Arjuna, who was brought up and educated to be a warrior, should fulfill his obligations and sacrifice his life if need be in the pursuit of his duty. It is also the Divine Will that Krishna forsake the company of His lovers, His gopis to enter into the turmoil of this primaeval battle.

SEVENTH PROOF PROCLAMATION BY KRISHNA

The foregoing passage speaks of the fortitude of the prophets in the face of persecution, trials, tortures, martyrdom. It also speaks of the courage and steadfastness of the prophets in the proclamation of their Message, as articulated by Bahá'u'lláh in *Kitáb-i-Íqán*:

KI:45: "Reflect, how single-handed and alone they faced the world and all its peoples, and promulgated the Law of God! No matter how severe the persecutions inflicted upon those holy, those precious, and tender Souls, they still remained, in the plenitude of their power, patient, and, despite their ascendancy, they suffered and endured."

Krishna is depicted as a teacher of truth in *Bhagavad-Gita*, but not to multitudes, rather to one man, Arjuna. Nor does Krishna call upon Arjuna to teach the message of the "Gita" to the masses, but rather only to learn this message for himself and to practice the teaching. Likewise, with the gopis Krishna does not teach in words but in deeds, in spirit rather than in letter. In this He is not unlike Jesus and Buddha, also apparently Avatars of many good deeds and few words. However it is clear from the legends and from the "Gita" that Krishna did not conceal His teaching from human beings, that He conveyed it to those whom He knew to be spiritually ready to learn. As Jesus counseled His followers, as stated in the *Gospel of Matthew*:

Matt:VII:6: Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

The same wise counsel is found in the *Proverbs* of King Solomon:

Pro:XXIII:9: Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

The very fact that Krishna has been endowed by Hindu tradition with a book of teachings, which is entitled the "Song of God" (translation of Bhagavad-Gita), indicates that history remembers that this Avatar proclaimed His teachings abroad and did not keep them to Himself. None of the Avatars which are held to precede Krishna, with the exception of Rama in the Ramayana is associated with a book which records the Divine Word; and Rama teaches by example and not by word, and is, after all, a philosopher king, a virtuous monarch, a paragon of morality and not the Divine Educator.

EIGHTH PROOF EVERY VALLEY EXALTED BY KRISHNA

The divine philosophy of Bahá'u'lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá waxes luxuriously eloquent upon this Proof, which indicates that the abased and ignorant ones among humanity are exalted and uplifted through contact with the prophet and the specific Revelation of God. This proof is not limited to certain prophets and withheld from others. Bahá'u'lláh writes in "Kitáb-i-Íqán":

KI:146: "This station is also one of the signs of the Day of Revelation; even as it is said: "The abased amongst you, He shall exalt; and they that are exalted, He shall abase." And likewise, He hath revealed in the Qur'an^{ksiv}: "and We desire to show favour to those who were brought low in the land, and to make them spiritual leaders among men, and to make of them Our heirs.""

The teachings of Bhagavad-Gita exalt the humility of the lowly and the selflessness of the servant. Krishna encourages Arjuna to do his duty and in doing so he and his Pandava brothers lead the forces of good in the battle of Kurukshetra to triumph, to victory. That cosmic moral battle begins with the first son of King Dhritarashtra, named Duryodhana, conspiring to exterminate the Pandava brothers and Kunti, their mother. They escaped death but had to flee and hide in the forest to stay alive. There is a story told which illustrates Krishna's "exaltation of the humble", and it is related by Isherwood and Prabhavananda as follows^{ksv}:

"The Pandavas lived in the forest, disguised as Brahmins, meeting all kinds of dangers and adventures. One day they heard that a neighbouring king was to choose a husband for his daughter. The winner must bend a bow of enormous strength and hit a tiny target.

The Pandavas thought they would try. They went to the city in their disguise.

“Suitors had gathered from all over India, Duryodhana among them. One after another, they failed in the test. At last Arjuna, third of the Pandavas, stood up, bent the bow and hit the target with the greatest ease. Draupadi, the princess, threw him the victor's garland. But the assembled princes could not accept this humiliation at the hands of a seemingly poor and unwarlike Brahmin. There would have been a fight--just as in the story of Ulysses--if Krishna, who was present, had not intervened and persuaded them that Arjuna had a right to his bride.”

With the assistance of Krishna, the Pandavas won their battle against the Kauravas, and the tables were turned, wherein "every valley" was "exalted", and "every mountain and hill" was "made low"^{lxvi}. The Pandavas were wanderers in the forest disguised as Brahmins, and they became the first family of India, with their eldest brother Yudhisthira reigning as the undisputed ruler of that land for thirty-six years.^{lxvii} In yet another fashion, Krishna exalted the humble: each one of the gopis, the humble shepherdesses becoming His lovers. "All the shepherdesses in love with Krishna wanted to give him their hand, when he danced with them in the rasalila; so he multiplied his hands as many times as was necessary and then each could hold his hand in her own."^{lxviii} The gopis became the symbols of true devotees, and a more humble livelihood is hard to imagine. If Krishna had meant to exalt the exalted, to support the status quo, surely He would have supported Duryodhana in the battle of Kurukshetra, sided with the princes in the contest for the hand of Draupadi, and only accepted royal lovers.

NINTH PROOF

EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL MADE LOW BY KRISHNA

Many references which affirm this proof have already been cited in the portrayal of the previous proof, inasmuch as they are linked together in every Dispensation. Rather than cite those passages once more, the reader is directed to read them once more and consider their application to this proof. One manner of the fulfillment of this Proof of the Prophets is through the proclamation of the prophet to the ruling powers, ecclesiastical and secular, and the collapse of those powers as a consequence of rejecting the call of the prophet. There are innumerable examples of this scenario recorded in the Tanakh^{lxix}, including the stories of the prophet Samuel and king Saul; the prophet Moses and the Pharaoh of Egypt; the prophet Daniel and the king

Belshazzar; the prophet Elijah and the followers of Baal; the prophet Nathan and king David. Such stories are also found in the Qur'an and in other Scriptures. Jesus Christ was opposed by the combined powers of the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities and the Roman surrogate temporal powers. The Jewish priesthood was virtually eliminated as a governing power structure with the razing of the Temple less than 40 years following the martyrdom of the Messiah. The Temple was of course razed by the Roman government, which worked in league with the Jewish authorities in the prosecution and execution of Jesus Christ. It took the Roman authorities much longer to collapse, but in the generation following the mission of the Messiah the teachings of Christ were preached throughout the Roman Empire, and within a century there were large and influential communities of Christians, while in the 4th century the Roman Emperor, Constantine converted to Christianity, and from henceforth the Roman realms were governed by the power of Christ.

Lord Krishna did not hesitate to oppose evil, and since "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely"^{lxx} He was instrumental in toppling two monarchs from their heights to the depths of perdition. He dispatched the evil brother of His mother, King Kamsa, and served as Arjuna's charioteer in the battle of Kurukshetra which resulted in the defeat of the Kauravas and the death of the evil Duryodhana and most of his allies.

TENTH PROOF

STAR HERALDING THE APPEARANCE OF KRISHNA

Divine philosophy makes the extraordinary assertion that preceding the appearance of every one of the Prophets of God there has been manifested in the sky a star heralding his coming. For Christians familiar with the account in the *Gospel of Matthew* (II:2,9-10) of the star which the Magi kings followed in search of the Promised One, this assertion may not seem as curious as it will certainly for many Jews, Muslims and other religionists. Bahá'u'lláh, in *Kitáb-i-Íqán* explains this phenomenon:

KI:62: "By "heaven" is meant the visible heaven, inasmuch as when the hour draweth nigh on which the Day-star of the heaven of justice shall be made manifest, and the Ark of divine guidance shall sail upon the sea of glory, a star will appear in the heaven, heralding unto its people the advent of that most great light. In like manner, in the invisible heaven a

star shall be made manifest who, unto the peoples of the earth, shall act as a harbinger of the break of that true and exalted Morn. These twofold signs, in the visible and the invisible heaven, have announced the Revelation of each of the Prophets of God, as is commonly believed. Among the Prophets was Abraham, the Friend of God. Ere He manifested Himself, Nimrod dreamed a dream. Thereupon, he summoned the soothsayers, who informed him of the rise of a star in the heaven..."

According to one source, upon the birth of Krishna, the eighth child of Devaki and her husband Vasudeva, "planetary bodies moved in brilliant order in the heavens"^{lxxi}. The six-volume Krishnavatara biography states^{lxxii} that His birth was signalled by lighting striking in the midst of the darkness of night, and the appearance of the constellation Abhijit on the eastern horizon. No other celestial signs have been found in the sources consulted relative to this theme.

ELEVENTH PROOF HUMAN HERALD OF KRISHNA

As we have already read, the star appearing in the physical heavens to announce the coming of the new prophet is complemented in the invisible heavens, that is in the spiritual realm which is manifested in holy souls. Bahá'u'lláh elucidates in Kitáb-i-Íqán:

KI:62-63: "In like manner, in the invisible heaven a star shall be made manifest who, unto the peoples of the earth, shall act as a harbinger of the break of that true and exalted Morn. These twofold signs, in the visible and the invisible heaven, have announced the Revelation of each of the Prophets of God, as is commonly believed. Among the Prophets was Abraham, the Friend of God. Ere He manifested Himself, Nimrod dreamed a dream. Thereupon, he summoned the soothsayers, who in-formed him of the rise of a star in the heaven. Likewise, there appeared a herald who announced throughout the land the coming of Abraham. After Him came Moses, He Who held converse with God...In like manner, there appeared a sage who, in the darkness of the night, brought tidings of joy unto the people of Israel, imparting consolation to their souls, and assurance to their hearts. To this testify the records of the sacred books..."

While there are prophecies of the advent of Krishna attributed in Krishnavatara to Muni Krishna Dvaipayana in Veda Vyasa (I:25), Akrura (I:17) and Namda (I:8), only the first is clearly identified as a contemporary of Krishna. Asha Goswami, in Krsna-katha and allied matters reports that Harivamsa Purana^{lxxiii} has Krishna recognized as the appearance of the Divine by Akrura.^{lxxiv} It would seem then that Akrura was a human herald of Lord Krishna.

TWELFTH PROOF TRIUMPH OF THE CAUSE OF KRISHNA

In preceding proofs we have seen that all of the prophets have suffered rejection at the hands of the rulers of their lands and have been opposed or ignored by the majority of the commoners, so much so that it may be said, along with Jesus Christ: "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house."^{lxxv} Nevertheless, the True Cause prevails, and nothing can impede it from eventual triumph. Jesus speaks to this theme, according to the *Gospel of Matthew*:

Matt:15:13-14: Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone [the Pharisees]: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

As has already been stated, Vaisnavite Hinduism has spread throughout large regions of India and Krishna has been worshipped for thousands of years as the Divine Avatara. The historical record for ancient Hinduism is not easily pieced together to reconstruct the advance of this religion either in India or in its neighboring territories. However, it is undeniable that Hinduism represents one of the great world religions, with practicing Hindus concentrated in India but scattered throughout Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas. While not all Hindus worship Krishna or follow the teachings of Bhagavad-Gita, this Avatara and His "Gita" are known throughout the world and in particular the "Gita" has indeed triumphed inasmuch as it is now regarded as one of the most important religious classics, even in the Bible-centered West.

THIRTEENTH PROOF
ANNULMENT OF THE LAWS OF PREVIOUS AVATARAS

The universality of this Proof is stated briefly in Bahá'u'lláh's Kitáb-i-Íqán:

KI:39: "Inasmuch as every subsequent Revelation hath abolished the manners, habits, and teachings that have been clearly, specifically, and firmly established by the former Dispensation, these have accordingly been symbolically expressed in terms of "sun" and "moon"."

This is written in relation to the interpretation of certain verses in the Scriptures (Tanakh, Gospels and Qur'an) which refer to the darkening of the sun and the eclipse of the moon at the time of the end. Bahá'u'lláh interprets this as a symbolic depiction of the annulment of fundamental laws in each new Dispensation:

KI:38,39: "In another sense, by the terms "sun", "moon", and "stars" are meant such laws and teachings as have been established and pro-claimed in every Dispensation, such as the laws of prayer and fasting...The traditions established the fact that in all Dispensations the law of prayer hath constituted a fundamental element of the Revelation of all the Prophets of God--a law the form and the manner of which hath been adapted to the varying requirements of every age."

Once again there is little evidence of annulment of laws by Krishna, however Mahabharata reports^{lxvii} that Krishna abolished the Indra-Makha Festival and initiated the Giri Festival. Krishna calls upon His devotees to worship Him exclusively and directly, and states that this is the surest and best way to salvation in the twelfth chapter of Bhagavad-Gita, on "bhakti yoga". He does not forbid the following of Vedic law and ritual, but He indicates that conformity with the Vedas does not bring salvation, in the ninth chapter of Bhagavad-Gita:

BG:IX:20-22: The knowers of the three Vedas who drink the soma juice and are cleansed of sin, worshipping Me with sacrifices, pray for the way to heaven. They reach the holy world of Indra (the lord of heaven) and enjoy in heaven the pleasures of the devas. Having enjoyed the spacious world of heaven, they enter (return to) the world of mortals, when their merit is exhausted; thus conforming to the doctrine enjoined

in the three Vedas and desirous of enjoyments, they obtain the changeable (what is subject to birth and death). But to those who worship Me, meditating on Me alone, to them who ever persevere, I bring attainment of what they have not and security in what they have.

When Krishna appears in His Supreme and Divine Form to Arjuna, He explains to Him that man can not come to see this Form through observance of previously revealed laws and rituals, as in these verses of the eleventh chapter of Bhagavad-Gita:

BG:XI:48: Neither by the Vedas, (nor by) sacrifices nor by study nor by gifts nor by ceremonial rites nor by severe austerities can I with this form be seen in the world of men by any one else but thee, O hero of the Kurus (Arjuna)...

BG:XI:53-55: In the form in which thou hast seen Me now, I cannot be seen either by the Vedas or by austerities or by gifts or by sacrifices. But by unswerving devotion to Me, O Arjuna, I can be thus known, truly seen and entered into, O Oppressor of the foe (Arjuna). He who does work for Me, he who looks upon Me as his goal, he who worships Me, free from attachment, who is free from enmity to all creatures, he goes to Me, O Pandava (Arjuna).

This certainly appears to be an annulment of Vedic law and its replacement with a spiritual law revealed by Krishna for the first time in Bhagavad-Gita, the law of complete concentrated devotion to the Avatara as the one way to God. We are reminded of Jesus stating in the *Gospel of Matthew*:

Matt:XI:27: All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Bahá'u'lláh makes a similar statement, in Kitáb-i-Aqdas, calling humanity to approach God through Him rather than trying to “entrap the object of your aspiration” through “austerities and mortifications”, recalling also His citation of the Islamic hadith: "One hour's reflection is preferable to seventy years of pious worship..."^{lxxvii}

KA:K36: "And among the people is he who maketh claim to inner knowledge, and still deeper knowledge concealed within this knowledge. Say: Thou speakest false! By God! What thou dost possess is naught but husks which We have left to thee as bones are left to dogs. By the righteousness of the one true God! Were anyone to wash the feet of all mankind, and were he to worship God in the forests, valleys, and mountains, upon high hills and lofty peaks, to leave no rock or tree, no clod of earth, but was a witness to his worship -- yet, should the fragrance of My good pleasure not be inhaled from him, his works would never be acceptable unto God. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Lord of all. How many a man hath secluded himself in the climes of India, denied himself the things that God hath decreed as lawful, imposed upon himself austerities and mortifications, and hath not been remembered by God, the Revealer of Verses. Make not your deeds as snares wherewith to entrap the object of your aspiration, and deprive not yourselves of this Ultimate Objective for which have ever yearned all such as have drawn nigh unto God. Say: The very life of all deeds is My good pleasure, and all things depend upon Mine acceptance. Read ye the Tablets that ye may know what hath been purposed in the Books of God, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Bounteous. He who attaineth to My love hath title to a throne of gold, to sit thereon in honour over all the world; he who is deprived thereof, though he sit upon the dust, that dust would seek refuge with God, the Lord of all Religions."

FOURTEENTH PROOF
INNATE AND DIVINELY-INSPIRED KNOWLEDGE OF
KRISHNA

In other Writings, including the Seven Valleys, a Tablet addressed to 'Abbas Faruq, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and *Lawb-i-Hikmat*, Bahá'u'lláh refers to his own innate and divinely-inspired knowledge:

SV:26: "There is many an utterance of the mystic seers and doctors of former times which I have not mentioned here, since I mislike the copious citation from sayings of the past; for quotation from the words of others proveth acquired learning, not the divine bestowal. Even so much as We have quoted here is out deference to the wont of men, and after the manner of the friends. Further, such are beyond the scope of

this epistle. Our unwillingness to recount their sayings is not from pride, but is it a manifestation of wisdom and a demonstration of grace."

GL:XXIII:58: "Consider this Wronged One...though, in spite of His not being accounted among the learned, His being unschooled and inexperienced in the disputations current among the divines, He hath rained upon men the showers of His manifold and Divinely-inspired knowledge; yet, behold how this generation hath rejected His authority, and rebelled against Him!"

The Puranas report that Krishna was endowed with His divine nature at birth^{lxxviii}. The Mahabharata and Harivamsa Purana describe the innate wisdom and superhuman intellect of Krishna, affirming that He completed study of the four Vedas, along with the arts of archery and hand combat in just sixty-four days^{lxxix}. "Shortly after his birth, Krishna, who was already energetic and resourceful, began to show his prowess."^{lxxx} While Krishna's prowess in infancy and even in youth is outwardly portrayed in fantastic feats, it is evident that behind all of His actions there was operating a divine intellect which provided at every turn its human audience with didactic pictures of spiritual truth. For example, "when some shepherds were preparing to give homage to the god, he advised them to worship Mount Govardhana instead, for it provided nourishment for their herds, and also to worship the herds themselves, which gave them milk. Then, appearing on top of the mountain, he declared: "I am the mountain." And he took for himself the first fruits that were offered."^{lxxxi} What seems at first to be a nonsensical and childish story proves to be the source of much wisdom upon further study. Krishna traces the development of human worship, transferring it from the inanimate (which is probably feared rather than loved) to the animate (which is needed and appreciated) and finally to God Himself, Whom He represents as the Godhead on earth. He prepares the souls to transfer their allegiance to Him, Who is their ultimate aim and purpose. Throughout His life He teaches others wisdom and there is no account of Him having studied with a sage or some other earthly human source of divine knowledge.

FIFTEENTH PROOF
PROPHECIES OF KRISHNA FULFILLED

‘Abdu’l-Bahá asserts that "The purpose in religion is pure love and agreement. The Prophets of God manifested complete love for all. Each One announced the glad tidings of His successor, and each subsequent One confirmed the teachings and prophecies of the Prophet Who preceded Him. There was no disagreement or variance in the reality of Their teaching and mission. Discord has arisen among Their followers, who have lost sight of reality and hold fast to imitations."^{lxxxii} "Each of the holy Manifestations announced the glad tidings of His successor, and each One confirmed the message of His predecessor."^{lxxxiii} "In conclusion, since the Prophets themselves, the Founders, have loved, praised and testified of each other, why should we disagree and be alienated?"^{lxxxiv} Inasmuch as divine philosophy asserts that all of the prophets have in turn prophesied of their successors and confirmed their predecessors, then we must conclude that in all cases the prophecies of the prophets have been fulfilled. The specific prophecies fulfilled by the Prophets are discussed in principle in the First Proof and, in great detail, in subsequent volumes devoted to particular Prophets. Bahá’u’lláh refers to this proof of his prophethood in His Tablet to ‘Abbas Faruq:

GL:XXIII:58: "Consider this Wronged One. Though the clearest proofs attest the truth of His Cause; though the prophecies He, in an unmistakable language, hath made have been fulfilled...yet, behold how this generation hath rejected His authority, and rebelled against Him."

According to the Mahabharata, the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas "ends in the total destruction of the two armies. The Kurus fhave four survivors and the Pandavas seven, counting Krishna, who dies shortly afterwards as he has foretold."^{lxxxv} Hence, Krishna foretells His own decease, which we find among other Avataras as well.

One of the teachings of Krishna in Bhagavad-Gita is that the Avatara has come many times in the past and will come again unlimited times in the future. This is a statement which fulfills the prophecies of earlier Avataras and also predicts the appearance of subsequent Avataras. In the fourth chapter Krishna says to Arjuna:

BG:IV:6-8: Though (I am) unborn, and My self (is) imperishable, though (I am) the Lord of all creatures, yet establishing Myself in My own nature, I come into (empiric) being through My power (maya). Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata (Arjuna), then I send forth (create incarnate) Myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age.

This teaching is also found in Bhagavata Purana, and is translated by S. Radhakrishnan as follows^{lxxxvi}:

BP:IX:24,56: Whenever righteousness wanes, and unrighteousness increases the Almighty Lord, Hari, creates himself.

As was pointed out earlier, Hindu texts list the Avatars of Vishnu quite differently, with ten in Mahabharata, twenty-two in Bhagavata-Purana and twenty-four in other texts. Indeed, some writers have regarded the Avatars of Vishnu as unlimited in number. Mahabharata does not list Krishna along with the other Avatars, and follows the eighth Rama-Avatara with the ninth Savata-Avatara and the last Kalkin-Avatara. Most lists however agree that Ramachandra was the seventh Avatara and that He preceeded Krishna; that Krishna was the eighth Avatara; and that Buddha, who is only briefly alluded to in the Vaisnavite Puranas, was the ninth Avatara, who followed Krishna. Hence, Buddha is widely regarded as the successor to Krishna, and therefore predicted by His statement in Bhagavad-Gita. The prophetic proofs of Gotama Buddha will be considered in a separate volume.

Subsequent to Buddha, the only other Avatara listed in these various works is Kalkin-Avatara. We find descriptions of Kalkin-Avatara in Vishnu Purana and in Mahabharata, two works associated with Krishna, and so we will treat the promise of Kalki as a prophecy of Krishna-Avatara. Hence, if Kalki has appeared, this prophecy (which might be attributed to Krishna) has been fulfilled. Kalkin-Avatara appears at the close of Kali-Yug and inaugurates a new cycle of ages. Kalki possesses the glory of Vishnu, which is described in Bhagavad-Gita as the "Supreme and Divine Form" of Krishna:

BG:XI:12: If the light of a thousand suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, that might resemble the BHAH [splendour] of that exalted Being.

References to this glory of the Divine are also found in the Vedas, as in these verses, cited by Dr. H.M. Munje^{lxxxvii}:

O Exalted Fire! O thou Merged in BHAH [glory]! Rise Thou regularly shining out brilliantly Thine Own progressively blazing Light; make the world particularly and especially BHAHI [glorious] and never-getting-old.

Dr. Munje identifies the following invocation as the "Gayatri Mantra," and asserts that it "is considered to be the Ved-Mata, the Mother of the Vedas"^{lxxxviii}:

O Thou Protector of all! Giver of life to all! The Remover of difficulties! The Ordainer of perfect working Order! O, cause us to receive that most great All-Subduing BHAH [glory] of God Who, enlightening our intelligence and deeds, inspireth progress.

Kalkin-Avatara comes from Shambhala village, and is endowed with eight superhuman qualities. His appearance is distinctive indeed: Kalki will be seated on a white horse, and, in some accounts, this horse has wings. So strong is His identification with the white horse that He is sometimes depicted as having the head of a white horse, or even the entire appearance of a horse. In His hand He holds aloft, like a flaming comet, either a naked sword or a huge razor-edged axe. His voice is like rolling thunder and spreads terror among men for their iniquity in the world. The sun and all solar existences are associated with Kalkin-Avatara. His first act will be to destroy the wicked kings and rulers of the earth, then the wicked Brahmins (the priestly caste), and then the rest of the wicked ones. At new Age will then commence in the ashes of the old Age, and Kalkin-Avatara will rule over upright and pure men.

These images of Kalkin-Avatara strikingly recall certain verses of the *Apocalypse of John of Patmos*, also called the *Book of Revelation*, the last book of the Christian canon:

Rev:19:11-16: And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse: and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes

were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

These images of the Promised One are so similar and come to us from such wholly different religious traditions, and from such widely separated epochs that the curiosity of most readers will indeed be peeked. Those who wish to determine whether or not the prophecies related to Kalkin-Avatara have been fulfilled in history, that is, in the Person of a new Avatara, are invited to read Proofs of the Prophets—The Case for Bahá'u'lláh.

SIXTEENTH PROOF **REPUDIATION OF KRISHNA BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

"From the beginning of the world until the present time," is the testimony of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "each 'Manifestation' sent from God has been opposed by an embodiment of the 'Powers of Darkness'. This dark power has always endeavoured to extinguish the light. Tyranny has ever sought to overcome justice. Ignorance has persistently tried to trample knowledge underfoot. This has, from the earliest ages, been the method of the material world. In the time of Moses, Pharaoh set himself to prevent the Mosaic Light being spread abroad. In the day of Christ, Annas and Caiaphas inflamed the Jewish people against Him and the learned doctors of Israel joined together to resist His Power. All sorts of calumnies were circulated against Him. The Scribes and Pharisees conspired to make the people believe Him to be a liar, an apostate, and a blasphemer. They spread these slanders throughout the whole Eastern world against Christ, and caused Him to be condemned to a shameful death! In the case of Muhammad also, the learned doctors of His day determined to extinguish the light of His influence. They tried by the power of the sword to prevent the spread of His teaching."^{lxxxix}

While there are stories of royal opposition to Krishna extant, there do not seem to be tales related to His rejection by the Brahmins, the priestly caste. However, such repudiation may be inferred from His straightforward downgrading of priestly rites, sacrifices, austerities, gifts. Surely the Brahmin caste could not have received this teaching with equanimity. Their place as mediators between the divine and human beings was clearly annulled by Krishna. The effectiveness of their meticulous observance of Vedic laws in attaining union with God was authoritatively replaced with a direct channel of love between the heart of every devotee, regardless of caste, and Krishna the Avatara of God. In Bhagavad-Gita, Krishna articulates this teaching:

BG:XI:20-21: The knowers of the three Vedas who drink the soma juice and are cleansed of sin, worshipping Me with sacrifices, pray for the way to heaven...thus conforming to the doctrine enjoined in the three Vedas and desirous of enjoyments, they obtain the changeable (what is subject to birth and death).

BG:XI:48: Neither by the Vedas, (nor by) sacrifices nor by study nor by gifts nor by ceremonial rites nor by severe austerities can I with this form be seen in the world of men by any one else but thee, O hero of the Kurus (Arjuna).

BG:XI:53-54: In the form in which thou hast seen Me now, I cannot be seen either by the Vedas or by austerities or by gifts or by sacrifices. But by unswerving devotion to Me, O Arjuna, I can be thus known, truly seen and entered into, O Oppressor of the foe (Arjuna).

Krishna goes on to reinforce this teaching, which so powerfully undermines the authority of the Brahmin priestly caste:

BG:IX:29-30: I am the same in (alike to) all beings. None is hateful nor dear to Me. But those who worship Me with devotion they are in Me and I also in them. Even if a man of the most vile conduct worships me with undistracted devotion, he must be reckoned as righteous for he has rightly resolved.

Nor does Krishna offer any quarter to polytheists and worshippers of other gods and other spirits:

BG:IX:25: Worshippers of the gods go to the gods, worshippers of the manes go to the manes, sacrificers of the spirits go to the spirits and those who sacrifice to Me come to Me.

It is not important that a certain ritual be observed in this devotion, and Krishna does not weigh the love of His worshippers in the scale of worldly gain, be it prestige or power or wealth:

BG:IX:26: Whosoever offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, that offering of love, of the pure of heart I accept. The best of all possible paths is for each one to give his every action to God as a gift of love:

BG:IX:27-28: Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerities thou dost practice--do that, O son of Kunti (Arjuna), as an offering to Me. Thus shalt thou be freed from the good and evil results which are the bonds of action. With thy mind firmly set on the way of renunciation, thou shalt become free and attain to Me.

To reiterate, while there are not tales in the Mahabharata or the Puranas of ecclesiastical opposition to Krishna, it is evident that His teachings undermined priestly authority and Brahmanical legalism and consequently He must have been opposed by many of the Brahmans, even as this caste must be antithetical to the "bhakti yoga" movement in our own time. That there are so many Brahmans to this day who practice the Vedic rites, that there are so many yogis who practice severe austerities, that so many millions of Hindus still offer sacrifices and gifts to a multitude of deities and spirits is ample evidence that Krishna and His teachings are still repudiated by many Hindus. While they may give Him lip-service, unless they actually practice the yoga of devotion He has revealed in Bhagavad-Gita they are in opposition to Him, and, He says, they are in opposition to themselves.

SEVENTEENTH PROOF
PENETRATION AND POTENCY OF THE WORD OF
KRISHNA

Divine philosophy considers that the Word of God, revealed in and through the prophet of God is a proof of each of the prophets of God. The penetration and potency of the Word of God is also considered a proof of each of the prophets of God, but while the first

is a proof in itself, the second is a proof in its effects. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes this proof, as revealed in the ordering of the world, an historical proof^{sc}:

"Consider the flowers of a garden: though differing in kind, colour, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. Thus when that unifying force, the penetrating influence of the Word of God, taketh effect, the difference of customs, manners, habits, ideas, opinions and dispositions embellisheth the world of humanity. This diversity, this difference is like the naturally created dissimilarity and variety of the limbs and organs of the human body, for each one contributeth to the beauty, efficiency and perfection of the whole. When these different limbs and organs come under the influence of man's sovereign soul, and the soul's power pervadeth the limbs and members, veins and arteries of the body, then difference reinforceth harmony, diversity strengtheneth love, and multiplicity is the greatest factor for coordination"

A full-scale study of the religious history of India and the influence of Bhagavad-Gita upon the millions of souls which have been touched by this repository of Krishna's words is beyond the capacity of the author as well as far surpassing the scope of this study. However, it is evident to any fair-minded student of history that Bhagavad-Gita has had a profound and beneficial influence upon the hearts of men and the civilization of Hindus. The most recent evidence we have of this influence is the example of Mohandas K. Gandhi, the most important communal spiritual leader to have so far emerged in modern India. Gandhi is known to drawn much of his courage and inspiration from reading Bhagavad-Gita, and it is also undeniable that many of his millions of followers followed his example. In Young India (1925), Gandhi wrote these comments on the "Gita"^{sci}:

“I find a solace in the Bhagavad-Gita that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad-Gita. I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies--and my life has been full of external tragedies--and if they have left no visible, no indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teachings of the Bhagavad-Gita.”

Gandhi is remembered in the West largely because of his success as a political leader in bringing about the emancipation of India from British colonial rule. But Gandhi was a moral and a spiritual leader of extraordinary influence. He encouraged the Indian people to return to their ancient values of chastity, reverence for all life, moderation and courtesy, simplicity, truthfulness, cooperation, cosmopolitanism and non-violence. His philosophy and his behavior inspired the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., leader of the civil rights movement in the USA; Mr. Nelson Mandela, leader of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, the first President of a color-blind South African government; and Ghaffar Khan, founder of the Afghani and Pashtun movement for independence from the brutal military domination of the British Empire. All three of these great leaders were heartened by the ideas and actions of Gandhi, and Gandhi derived the better part of his wisdom from the Bhagavad-Gita.

Of all the Scriptures associated with Hinduism, Bhagavad-Gita has had the most profound and widespread influence for the spiritual improvement of human beings. As Aldous Huxley wrote in his Introduction to the Isherwood/Prabhavananda translation of Bhagavad-Gita^{xcii}: "The Bhagavad-Gita is perhaps the most systematic scriptural statement of the Perennial Philosophy." S. Radhakrishnan wrote, in the Introductory Essay to his translation of Bhagavad-Gita^{xciii}: "It is a powerful shaping factor in the renewal of spiritual life and has secured an assured place among the world's great scriptures." Hence, in the views of some distinguished students of Hindu religion and history, Bhagavad-Gita has indeed the potency and penetration of the Word of God and has transformed countless lives through its teachings.

EIGHTEENTH PROOF ***DIVINE AND ETERNAL SOVEREIGNTY OF KRISHNA***

The prophet of God is no ordinary man. His reality becomes apparent to most ordinary men only in the course of history, after the passing of centuries. The prophet of God is the spiritual king and his sovereignty is eternal. 'Abdu'l-Bahá compares the temporal monarch with the spiritual king^{xciv}:

"How great the difference between the glory of Christ and the glory of an earthly conqueror! It is related by historians that Napoleon I embarked secretly by night from Egypt. His destination was France. During his campaign in Palestine revolution had broken out and grave

difficulties had arisen in the home government. Christian worship had been forbidden by the revolutionists. The priests of Christianity had fled in terror. France had become atheistic; anarchy prevailed. The ship sailed out into a night brilliant with the light of the moon. Napoleon was pacing up and down the deck. His officers were sitting together, talking. One of them spoke of the similarity between Bonaparte and Christ. Napoleon stopped and said grimly, "Do you think I am going back to France to establish religion?" Jesus Christ established the religion of God through love. His sovereignty is everlasting. Napoleon overthrew governments in war and bloodshed. His dominion passed away: he himself was dethroned. Bonaparte destroyed human life; Christ was a Savior. Bonaparte controlled the physical bodies of men; Christ was a conqueror of human hearts. None of the Prophets of God were famous men, but They were unique in spiritual power. Love is the eternal sovereignty. Love is the divine power. By it all the kings of [the] earth are overthrown and conquered."

The estimates of Krishna's birth date range from 6000 BC (Wheeler) to 600 BC (H.C. Seth), with many other dates being cited by other scholars, all of which are quoted in Asha Goswami's Krsna-katha and allied matters. Thousands of years after Krishna sojourned on earth there are millions of Hindus who revere Him as their Lord. This is proof enough that the sovereignty of Krishna is eternal, as eternal is understood within the narrow human historical context. His sovereignty will continue to be acknowledged unless all of His devotees, the Vaisnavite Hindus are converted to a religion which refuses to recognize Krishna as one of the Avatars of God. The Moghul Emperor Akbar found that many Muslims could embrace Krishna as a Messenger of Allah, for although Krishna is not mentioned specifically in the Qur'án or the hadith, respectively the revealed Scripture and the oral tradition of Islam, the Qur'án and hadith state that there have been many Messengers and Prophets of God which are not named in the Islamic Revelation. Hence, it is possible that Hindus could embrace Islam and yet continue to venerate Krishna as one of these "missing" Messengers of God. It is much more probable that Hindus will convert to Bahá'í, inasmuch as Bahá'ís regard Krishna as one of the Universal Manifestations of God, along with Buddha, Zoroaster and those described in the Torah, Gospels and Qur'án.

However, the divine and eternal sovereignty of the Prophet of God is not determined alone by the vagaries of history, but also by the

actualization of His own affirmation of such sovereignty. Krishna declares, in Bhagavad-Gita that He is imperishable, but that His reality transcends the imperishable:

BG:XV:18-19: As I surpass the perishable and am higher even than the imperishable, I am celebrated as the Supreme Person in the world and in the Veda. He who, undeluded, thus knows Me, the Highest Person, is the knower of all and worships Me with all his being (with his whole spirit), O Bharata (Arjuna).

In this verse Krishna identifies Himself with the eternal and divine station of Manifestation, the station of Prophethood, of Emanation, of Divine Will, and in this station He is one with all the Avatars of the past and all the Avatars of the future. To repeat His promise once again:

BG:IV:8: For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age.

In this station He is all of the Avatars, and in this sense also His sovereignty is both divine and eternal. This station is generally called "Purusha" in Hindu texts, and is described as the primaeval man, the Supreme Man, a form of Brahma (God), Who uttered three words which brought the universe into existence. He creates the universe through sacrificing Himself according to the Rig-Veda, in Purusha-sukta. He represents the first principle of the Samkhya philosophy, and the Cosmic Spirit and animating force of the world in Hindu metaphysics. Krishna speaks of "Purusha" in the fifteenth chapter of Bhagavad-Gita, which is the exposition of "Purusottamayogo", the "yoga of the Supreme Person". It is that Primal Person Who is divine and eternal in sovereignty:

BG:XV:4: Then, that path must be sought from which those who have reached it never return, saying "I seek refuge only in that Primal Person from whom has come forth this ancient current of the world"

NINETEENTH PROOF
KRISHNA CONFIRMS TRUTH OF PREVIOUS PROPHETS

Bahá'u'lláh articulates this proof in Kitáb-i-Íqán:

KI:20-21: "Every discerning observer will recognize that in the Dispensation of the Qur'an both the Book and the Cause of Jesus were confirmed. As to the matter of names, Muhammad, Himself, declared: "I am Jesus." He recognized the truth of the signs, prophecies, and words of Jesus, and testified that they were all of God. In this sense, neither the person of Jesus nor His writings hath differed from that of Muhammad and His holy Book, inasmuch as both have championed the Cause of God, uttered His praise, and revealed His commandments."

In Bhagavad-Gita, chapter four, Krishna affirms that His teaching is not original, that His words recorded in the "Gita" consist of a restatement of the timeless teachings, the "vivasvate yogam" (imperishable yoga), the "yogah puratanah" (ancient yoga):

BG:IV:1-3: I proclaimed this imperishable yoga to Vivasvan; Vivasman told it to Manu and Manu spoke it to Ikshvaku. Thus handed down from one to another the royal sages knew it till that yoga was lost to the world through long lapse of time, O Oppressor of the foe (Arjuna). This same ancient yoga has been today declared to thee by Me; for thou art My devotee and My friend; and this is the supreme secret.

S. Radhakrishnan explains this concept in a footnote to his translation of these verses^{xv}: "The great teachers do not lay claim to originality but affirm that they are expounding the ancient truth which is the final norm by which all teachings are judged, the eternal source of all religions and philosophies, the philosophica perennis, the sanatana dharma..."

S. Radhakrishnan states his understanding of the perennial point of view, in the Introductory Essay to his translation of Bhagavad-Gita^{xvii}: "Bhagavad-Gita...gives utterance to the aspirations of the pilgrims of all sects who seek to tread the inner way to the city of God." He quotes M.K. Gandhi in a foreword immediately preceding this Introductory Essay^{xviii}: "This famous Gitastra is an epitome of the essentials of the whole Vedic teaching. A knowledge of its teaching

leads to the realization of all human aspirations." Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, in his book entitled Hinduism and Buddhism, states that Bhagavad-Gita is a "compendium of the whole Vedic doctrine to be found in the earlier Vedas, Brahmanas and Upanishads, and being therefore the basis of all the later developments, it can be regarded as the focus of all Indian religion."^{xcviii} Aldous Huxley, in his Introduction to Isherwood and Prabhavananda's translation of Bhagavad-Gita, confirms and broadens this view^{xcix}:

"The Bhagavad-Gita is perhaps the most systematic scriptural statement of the Perennial Philosophy...this 'focus of Indian religion' is also one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the Perennial Philosophy ever to have been made. Hence its enduring value, not only for Indians, but for all mankind."

A comparative study of Bhagavad-Gita and other Scriptures, to identify the "Divine Ground" of "Perennial Philosophy" spoken of by Aldous Huxley would undoubtedly yield many fascinating details^c. However, such a study is beyond the scope of this work. However, it is very evident that a number of distinguished students of this work agree that it is an eloquent statement of the fundamental, the essential truths revealed by all the Prophets of God. Not only are the essential teachings of Krishna in harmony with those of Buddha, Jesus, Moses, Muhammad and other Prophets, they are also re-articulations of those statements of philosophia perennis which preceded His divine manifestation and human appearance as Krishna. For while the specific and human sojourn of Krishna in the earthly world of men was fleeting, transient, and while He is, in one sense separate from the other Avataras, in another sense Krishna is all of the Avataras, as He affirms in the fourth chapter:

BG:IV:5: Many are My lives that are past...all of them I know
but thou knowest not, O Scourge of the foe.

TWENTIETH PROOF
KRISHNA IS THE MATERIAL, HUMAN AND DIVINE
EDUCATOR

Bahá'u'lláh makes brief reference to this proof in *Lawb-i-'Abdu'l-Wahhab*:

GL:156-57,158: "The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to

the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High...

"The majority of the truly wise and learned have, throughout the ages, as it hath been recorded by the Pen of Glory in the Tablet of Wisdom^{ci}, borne witness to the truth of that which the holy Writ of God hath revealed. Even the materialists have testified in their writings to the wisdom of these divinely-appointed Messengers, and have regarded the references made by the Prophets to Paradise, to hell fire, to future reward and punishment, to have been actuated by a desire to educate and uplift the souls of men. Consider, therefore, how the generality of mankind, whatever their beliefs or theories, have recognized the excellence, and admitted the superiority, of these Prophets of God. These Gems of Detachment are acclaimed by some as the embodiments of wisdom, while others believe them to be the mouthpiece of God Himself."

Divine philosophy argues that an educator is needed for man. But what sort of educator? An educator which fits his nature. What then is his nature? 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that man's "nature is threefold: animal, human and divine"^{ci} and that the education of man is likewise threefold^{ciii}:

"...education is of three kinds: material, human, and spiritual. Material education is concerned with the progress and development of the body, through gaining its sustenance, its material comfort and ease. This education is common to animals and man. Human education signifies civilization and progress; that is to say, government, administration, charitable works, trades, arts and handicrafts, sciences, great inventions and discoveries of physical laws, which are the activities essential to man as distinguished from the animal. Divine education is that of the Kingdom of God: it consists in acquiring divine perfections, and this is true education; for in this estate man becomes the centre of divine appearance, the manifestation of the words, 'Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness.'^{civ} This is the supreme goal of the world of humanity...

"Then it is plain and evident that man needs an educator, and this educator must be unquestionably and indubitably perfect in all respects, and distinguished above all men. For otherwise he cannot be their educator. More particularly because he must be at the same time their material and human as well as their spiritual educator; that is to

say, he will teach men to organize and carry out physical matters, and to regulate the form of society with regard to the establishing of help and assistance in life, so that material affairs may be organized and regulated for any circumstances that may occur. In the same way he will establish human education, that is to say, he must educate intelligence and thought in such a way that they may attain complete development, so that knowledge and science may increase, and the reality of things, the mysteries of beings, and the properties of existence may be discovered; that day by day instructions, inventions, and laws may be improved; and from things perceptible to the senses conclusions as to intellectual things may be deduced. He must also impart spiritual education; so that intelligence and comprehension may penetrate the metaphysical world, and may benefit from the sanctifying breeze of the Holy Spirit, and may enter into relationship with the Supreme Concourse. He must so educate the human reality that it may become the centre of the divine appearance, to such a degree that the attributes and names of God shall be resplendent in the mirror of the reality of man, and the holy verse, 'We will make man in Our image and likeness,' shall become true."

In the Vaisnavite Puranas there are undoubtedly stories which confirm that Krishna was a material, a human and a divine educator. His most important role, as a divine educator, is demonstrated par excellence in the text of Bhagavad-Gita and the Teachings found in this volume are self-evident proof of His efficacy in this capacity. All three instructional roles of this Avatara are portrayed in a short story about Krishna and the death of King Kamsa. This tale is told by Sister Nivedita and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy^{cv}, and was adapted by Joseph Campbell^{evi}. In this version, Kamsa^{cvi} is called Kans, and we begin by reminding the reader of the background to this story^{cvi}: "Kans, the cruel uncle of Krishna, usurper of his own father's throne in the city of Mathura, heard a voice one day that said to him: 'Thy enemy is born, thy death is certain.' Krishna and his elder brother Balarama had been spirited to the cowherds from their mother's womb to protect them from this Indian counterpart of Nimrod. And he had sent demons after them--Putana of the poison milk was the first--but all had been undone. Now when his devices had failed, Kans determined to lure the youths to his city. A messenger was sent to invite the cowherds to a sacrifice and great tournament. The invitation was accepted. With the brothers among them, the cowherds came and camped outside the city wall." At this point we find the story of Kamsa's death^{cix}:

“Kans that night had ominous dreams. When he awoke, he ordered the stadium prepared for the tournament and the trumpets blown for assembly. Krishna and Balarama arrived as jugglers, followed by the cowherds, their friends...

“The youths walked onto the field. Everybody saw what his own nature revealed to him: the wrestlers thought Krishna a wrestler, the women thought him the treasure of beauty, the gods knew him as their lord, and Kans thought he was Mara, Death himself. When he had undone every one of the wrestlers sent against him, slaying finally the strongest, he leapt to the royal dias, dragged the tyrant by the hair, and killed him. Men, gods, and saints were delighted, but the king's wives came forth to mourn. Krishna, seeing their grief, comforted them with his primal wisdom.”

The point of this story is that Krishna is perceived by each according to his capacity, and each according to his nature. To most of the women He encounters He is a material and human educator, the master-teacher in the arts of erotic love. He is reputed to have had 16,108 wives (and, in case we might have wondered whether all of these unions were consummated, he is credited with fathering 180,008 sons). Apart from His wives there were His lovers, among them the gopis and the wives of the Brahmins of Mathura^{cx}. To Arjuna and to the Pandavas in the battle of Kurukshetra, Krishna is also a material and human educator, advising these warriors of the tactics which will win them victory over their enemies, the Kauravas. However, His most significant and enduring role is as a divine educator. Radhakrishnan, in the Introductory Essay to his translation of *Bhagavad-Gita*^{cxii}, dwells at length on "Krsna, the teacher"^{cxii}, and points out that the Teaching conveyed by Krishna, as attested by the Avatara Himself^{cxiii}, was not "new" but rather represented what was "preached by him to Vivasvan and by Vivasvan to Manu and by Manu to Ikshvaku." Elsewhere in *Mahabharata*^{cxiv}, it is stated that "the Bhagavata religion has been traditionally handed down by Vivasvan to Manu and by Manu to Ikshvaku." Krishna affirms that "Thus handed down from one to another the royal sages knew it till that yoga was lost to the world...This same yoga has been today declared to thee by Me; for thou art My devotee and My friend; and this is the supreme secret."^{cxv} There are millions of Vaisnavite Hindus who worship Lord Krishna as the Supreme Educator. The power of His influence as a divine educator is demonstrated in the transformation wrought in the lives of His devotees, in the past and in the present.

TWENTY-FIRST PROOF
KRISHNA IS THE DIVINE PHYSICIAN

Bahá'u'lláh in *Lawb-i-Manakji Sahib* sets forth this proof:

GL:213: "The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements."

In *Lawb-i-Muhammad Ibrahim Khalil* Bahá'u'lláh writes:

GL:80-81: "The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. To none is given the right to question their words or disparage their conduct, for they are the only ones who can claim to have understood the patient and to have correctly diagnosed its ailments. No man, however acute his perception, can ever hope to reach the heights which the wisdom and understanding of the Divine Physician have attained. Little wonder, then, if the treatment prescribed by the physician in this day should not be found to be identical with that which he prescribed before. How could it be otherwise when the ills affecting the sufferer necessitate at every stage of his sickness a special remedy? In like manner, every time the Prophets of God have illumined the world with the resplendent radiance of the Day Star of Divine knowledge, they have invariably summoned its peoples to embrace the light of God through such means as best befitted the exigencies of the age in which they appeared. They were thus able to scatter the darkness of ignorance, and to shed upon the world the glory of their own knowledge. It is towards the inmost essence of these Prophets, therefore, that the eye of every man of discernment must be directed, inasmuch as their one and only purpose hath always been to guide the erring, and give peace to the afflicted. These are not days of prosperity and triumph. The whole of mankind is in the grip of manifold ills. Strive, therefore, to save its life

through the wholesome medicine which the almighty hand of the unerring Physician hath prepared."

In Mahabharata the Pandavas chose Krishna as their counsellor in the battle of Kurukshetra, with the Kauravas choosing His kinsman, the Vrishnis, a band of mighty warriors. The Pandavas chose wisdom and divine guidance while the Kauravas chose common sense and human power. It was symptomatic of their division on the battlefield, and the fact that this battle is a metaphor for the battlefield of life between good and evil, between the divine Self and the human self. Krishna was adviser to Arjuna, leader of the Pandavas, and, from the very onset of this conflict, Arjuna was "overcome with great compassion and...sadness"^{cxvi}, and after he expressed his misgivings about entering into a war with the Kauravas, "Arjuna sank down on the seat of his chariot, casting away his bow and arrow, his spirit overwhelmed by sorrow."^{cxvii} Arjuna's "dark night of the soul," which concludes this first chapter of the "Song of God" has led to the entitling of this chapter "arjunavisadayogo," "The Depression of Arjuna."^{cxviii}

"Visada," (depression) is not a moral failing. Compassion, sadness, sorrow are not evils. They are illnesses of the soul. Krishna is the Divine Physician, and in the second Chapter of Bhagavad-Gita He prescribes the remedy for these dis-eases of the heart. First of all, in verse 2, Krishna appeals to Arjuna's conscience and heritage, and calls on this young warrior to turn to Him for guidance and education. In His second appeal, in verses 11-12, Krishna explains that what is real cannot be killed, and that wise men do not grieve either for the living or for the dead. His third appeal, in verses 26-28, teaches Arjuna that death is inevitable and unavoidable, and it is fruitless to grieve for what one cannot escape. A fourth appeal, in verses 31-32, counsels Arjuna to do his duty, to carry out the tasks he has been trained for, and a fifth appeal, in verse 33, warns that if he fails to do his duty he incurs sin. The sixth appeal, in verses 34-36 further states that if he fails to do his duty he will be dishonored, and this will be a fate worse than death. Krishna continues, explaining in the seventh appeal, verses 31-33, 37, that if Arjuna is slain doing his duty he will go to heaven. His eighth appeal, in the same verses, states that if he does his duty and lives he will enjoy the earth. Krishna concludes these appeals to Arjuna's heart and mind with this commanding summons:

BG:II:37-38: Therefore arise, O Son of Kunti (Arjuna), resolved on battle. Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and

loss, victory and defeat, then get ready for battle. Thus thou shall not incur sin.

The balance of Bhagavad-Gita is, in effect, a commentary on this second Chapter, with Krishna's exposition on various ways or paths to spiritual illumination: 1)samkhyayogo (way of knowledge); 2)karmayogo (way of works); 3)jnanayogo (way of wisdom); 4)karmasamnyasayogo (way of works and knowledge); 5)dhyanyogo (way of meditation); 6)jnanavijnanayogo (way of wisdom and knowledge); 7)aksarabrahmayogo (way of the Imperishable Absolute); 8)rajavidyarakshasayogo (way of sovereign knowledge and mystery); 9)vibhutyogo (way of Manifestation); 10)visvarupadarshanayogo (way of the vision of Cosmic Form); 11)bhaktiyogo (way of devotion); 12)ksetraksetrajnavibhagayogo (way of the distinction between the field and the knower of the field); 13)gunatrayavibhagayogo (way of differentiation of three modes); 14)purusottamayogo (way of the Supreme Person); 15)daivasurasampadvibhagayogo (way of distinction between divine and daemonic endowments); 16)sraddhatrayavibhagayogo (way of the threefold division of faith); 17)mokshasamnyasayogo (way of release by renunciation). The divine remedy is hence adapted to many different temperaments and various manifestations of one fundamental illness--man's distance from the divine. His reconciliation with the divine reality, the world of reality, and his cure from attachment to the sensate reality, the world of appearances, is the purpose of Bhagavad-Gita.

Did Krishna's divine remedy cure Arjuna's depression? At the conclusion of this "Song of God" we find Arjuna's response:

BG:XVIII:74: Destroyed is my delusion and recognition has been gained by me through Thy grace, O Acyuta (Krsna). I stand firm with my doubts dispelled. I shall act according to Thy word.

As for the influence of this balm upon the hearts of others, Samjaya, the charioteer and minister of King Dhritarashtra, who is the teller of this tale, speaks these words at its conclusion:

BG:XVIII:74,76: Thus have I heard this wonderful dialogue between Vasudeva (Krsna) and the high-souled Partha (Arjuna) causing my hair to stand on end...

O King, as I recall again and again this dialogue, wondrous and holy; of Kesava (Krsna) and Arjuna, I thrill with joy again and again.

As for testimonials from more recent sources, we repair to the words of Mohandas K. Gandhi^{cxi}:

“When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad-Gita. I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies--and my life has been full of external tragedies--and if they have left no visible, no indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teachings of the Bhagavad-Gita.”

Here are the words of Aldous Huxley^{cxx}:

“The Bhagavad-Gita is perhaps the most systematic scriptural statement of the Perennial Philosophy. To a world at war, a world that, because it lacks the intellectual and spiritual prerequisites to peace, can only hope to patch up some kind of precarious armed truce, it stands pointing, clearly and unmistakably, to the only road of escape from the self-imposed necessity of self-destruction.”

TWENTY-SECOND PROOF THE MIRACLES OF LORD KRISHNA

Divine philosophy states that while so-called miracles may be the most commonly demanded proofs of prophethood, and the most popular proofs of prophethood among the generality of mankind, they are the least reliable and the least significant of all proofs. In reference to the prophet Moses ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states: "We do not need to mention miracles, saying that out of rock water gushed forth, for such miracles and statements may be denied and refused by those who hear them."^{cxxi} "Miracles are likewise convincing to a limited number only. For instance, a Buddhist would not be convinced by the miracles of Moses which are proofs only for orthodox Jews, because they love and revere Moses. On the other hand, the miracles attributed to Jesus Christ are refuted by the Jews as a whole, saying 'No one lives today who has seen these miracles performed, therefore, who can bear testimony to them?'"^{cxxii} ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is cognizant of the great attachment of the followers of the prophets to the specific miracles which are traditionally claimed for these particular prophets, and understanding that such an attachment constitutes a veil between the

Beloved and His lovers, a lengthy and detailed explanation is given of the true status of miracles as proofs of the prophets of God:

"The Holy Manifestations are the sources of miracles and the originators of wonderful signs. For them, any difficult and impracticable thing is possible and easy. For through a supernatural power wonders appear from them, and by this power, which is beyond nature, they influence the world of nature. From all the Manifestations marvellous things have appeared.

"But in the Holy Books an especial terminology is employed; and for the Manifestations these miracles and wonderful signs have no importance; they do not even wish to mention them. For, if we consider miracles a great proof, they are still only proofs and arguments for those who are present when they are performed, and not for those who are absent.

"For example, if we relate to a seeker, a stranger to Moses and Christ, marvellous signs, he will deny them and will say: 'Wonderful signs are also continually related of false gods by the testimony of many people, and they are affirmed in the Books. The Brahmans have written a book about wonderful prodigies from Brahma.' He will also say: 'How can we know that the Jews and the Christians speak the truth, and that the Brahmans tell a lie? For both are generally admitted traditions, which are collected in books, and may be supposed to be true or false.' The same may be said of other religions: if one is true, all are true; if one is accepted, all must be accepted. Therefore, miracles are not a proof. For if they are proofs for those who are present, they fail as proofs to those who are absent.

"But in the day of the Manifestation the people with insight see that all the conditions of the Manifestation are miracles, for they are superior to all others, and this alone is an absolute miracle. Recollect that Christ, solitary and alone, without a helper or protector, without armies and legions, and under the greatest oppression, uplifted the standard of God before all the people of the world, and withstood them, and finally conquered all, although outwardly He was crucified. Now this is a veritable miracle which can never be denied. There is no need of any other proof of the truth of Christ.

"The outward miracles have no importance for the people of Reality. If a blind man receive sight, for example, he will finally again become sightless, for he will die, and be deprived of all his senses and powers. Therefore causing the blind man to see is comparatively of little importance, for this faculty of sight will at last disappear. If the body of a dead person be resuscitated, of what use is it since the body will die again? But it is important to give perception and eternal life,

that is, the spiritual and divine life. For this physical life is not immortal, and its existence is equivalent to non-existence. So it is that Christ said to one of His disciples: 'Let the dead bury their dead'; for 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.'

"Observe: those who in appearance were physically alive, Christ considered dead; for life is the eternal life, and existence is the real existence. Wherever in the Holy Books they speak of raising the dead, the meaning is that the dead were blessed by eternal life; where it is said that the blind received sight, the signification is that he obtained the true perception; where it is said a deaf man received hearing, the meaning is that he acquired spiritual and heavenly hearing. This is ascertained from the text of the Gospel where Christ said: 'These are like those of whom Isaiah said, They have eyes and see not, they have ears and hear not; and I healed them.'

"The meaning is not that the Manifestations are unable to perform miracles, for they have all power. But for them inner sight, spiritual healing, and eternal life are the valuable and important things. Consequently, whenever it is recorded in the Holy Books; that such an one was blind and recovered his sight, the meaning is that he was inwardly blind, and that he obtained spiritual vision, or that he was ignorant and became wise, or that he was negligent and became heedful, or that he was worldly and became heavenly.

"As this inner sight, hearing, life, and healing are eternal, they are of importance. What, comparatively, is the importance, the value, and the worth of this animal life with its powers? In a few days it will cease like fleeting thoughts. For example, if one re-lights an extinguished lamp, it will again become extinguished; but the light of the sun is always luminous. This is of importance." ^{cxxiii}

"I do not wish to mention the miracles of Bahá'u'lláh, for it may perhaps be said that these are traditions, liable both to truth and to error, like the accounts of the miracles of Christ in the Gospel, which come to us from the apostles and not from any one else, and are denied by the Jews. Though if I wish to mention the supernatural acts of Bahá'u'lláh, they are numerous; they are acknowledged in the Orient, and even by some strangers to the Cause. But these narratives are not decisive proofs and evidences to all; the hearer might perhaps say that this account may not be in accordance with what occurred, for it is known that other sects recount miracles performed by their founders. For instance, the Brahmanists relate miracles: from what evidence may we know that those are false and that these are true? If these are fables, the others also are fables; if these are generally

accepted, so also the others are generally accepted: consequently these accounts are not satisfactory proofs. Yes, miracles are proofs for the bystander only, and even he may regard them not as a miracle but as an enchantment. Extraordinary feats have also been related of some conjurors.

"Briefly, my meaning is that many wonderful things were done by Bahá'u'lláh, but we do not recount them; as they do not constitute proofs and evidences for all the peoples of the earth; and they are not decisive proofs even for those who see them, they may think that they are merely enchantments.

"Also, most of the miracles of the Prophets which are mentioned have an inner significance. For instance, in the Gospel it is written that at the martyrdom of Christ darkness prevailed, and the earth quaked, and the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the dead came forth from their graves. If these events had happened they would indeed have been wonderful, and would certainly have been recorded in the history of the times. They would have become the cause of much troublings of heart. The soldiers would either have taken down Christ from the cross or they would have fled. These events are not related in any history, therefore it is evident they ought not to be taken literally, but as having an inner significance.

"Our purpose is not to deny such miracles; our only meaning is that they do not constitute decisive proofs, and that they have an inner significance."^{cxix}

In the Mahabharata, the Harivamsa, and the Bhagavata-Purana and portions of other Puranas, we find accounts of the life-story of Krishna. These accounts, as we would expect of stories gathered and elaborated over the course of many centuries, are full of extraordinary exaggerations, of fantastic distortions, of imaginary feats, like the mythologies associated with all heroes and gods. The miracles associated with Krishna are extremely numerous and so large in scale as to render them unbelievable to the educated modern. Nevertheless, millions of His devotees today believe that each one of these miracles took place, and that they are actually only indicative of that fraction of the Divine Personality which God has, in His wisdom, revealed to His creatures. As Arjuna affirms to Krishna:

BG:X:14-15: I hold as true, all this that thou sayest to me, O Kesava (Kṛṣṇa); neither the gods nor the demons, O Lord, know Thy manifestation.

Verily Thou Thyself knowest Thyself by Thyself, O Supreme Person; the Source of beings, the Lord of creatures; the God of gods, the Lord of the world!

Benjamin Walker^{cxv} relates some of the myriad of miracles attributed to Lord Krishna^{cxvi}:

“While still in infancy his life was sought by the evil demoness Putana, whose milk was poisonous. She gave him her breast to suckle and the infant god drained her dry and thus killed her. When he was twenty-seven days old the demon Saktasura flying through the sky noticed him lying in a cart and alighted to destroy him, but the infant kicked him and the demon was reduced to pulp. Next, when he was five months old a demon named Trinavartta in the form of a whirlwind carried off the child, but Krishna brought the demon down to earth with such violence that he perished. Another five-headed, fire-breathing naga or serpent named Kaliya who dwelt in a deep pool of the river Jamna menaced the herdsmen of the countryside and was subjugated by the boy-god and banished to the ocean...”

Throughout His life, He is alleged to have battled and destroyed various demons^{cxvii}:

“While on their way to Mathura, Krishna and Balarama had many more adventures and scores of contests with sundry demons, ogres and monsters who attempted to waylay them, but the two brothers dealt suitably with each...the cow-demon Vatsasura...crane-demon Bakasura...snake-demon Ugrasura...the monster Sankhasura...the ogre Vyamasura, and...a number of other presumptuous giants...”

“The god Indra now came to Dvaraka to seek Krishna's aid in dealing with the demon Naraka (see Kamarupa) and Krishna proceeded to the city of Naraka where he slew the demon as well as his ally Muru and the asura Nikumbha.”

Krishna did not only do battle with demons, ogres and giants, but with a host of other beings, as for example at the Mathura games, to which he and his brother Balarama were invited to participate by King Kamsa^{cxviii}:

“During the games at Mathura a succession of fearsome beings were sent against the two brothers. First came the king's giant

wrestler, Chanura, who was throttled by Krishna till his eyeballs fell to the ground; then the great boxer Mushtika, who was overthrown and killed before he knew what had happened; then came the savage Tosalaka whom Krishna caught by the ankle and smashed to the ground...Next two mighty wrestlers were disposed of; followed by Kuvalayapida a gigantic elephant.”

Other feats of superhuman strength are reported of Krishna^{cxix}:

“Krishna on one occasion braved Indra [Vedic king of the gods and the solar god of Hinduism] in person. When some shepherds were preparing to give homage to the god, he advised them to worship Mount Go-varohana [a mountain of cow dung] instead, for it provided nourishment for their herds, and also to worship the herds themselves, which gave them milk. Then, appearing at the top of the mountain, he declared: 'I am the mountain.' And he took for himself the first fruits that were offered. In fury Indra sent cataracts to drown the shepherds and their cattle, but Krishna lifted the mountain and, holding it on one finger, he protected his friends from the storm for seven days and seven nights. Indra was stupefied at this, and went so far as to come down from the sky with his wife, Indrani...”

Krishna is credited with healing the physical infirmities of a deformed woman^{cxix}:

“He then encountered the ugly, low-caste, hunchback maiden Kubja carrying ointment for Kamsa. At his request she rubbed some of the ointment over his body. In return Krishna pressed her feet down with his foot, lifted her chin and straightened her out. She became a beautiful girl...”

He even raised six of his brothers from the dead^{cxix}:

“Krishna next descended into the infernal regions...and brought back his six brothers whom Kamsa had slain at birth.”

His most famous exploits, however, were as a lover^{cxix}:

“Perhaps the most widely sung of all of Krishna's attributes is his devotion to the service of the fair sex as indicated by some of his titles. In the course of his life he is supposed to have had 16,108 wives...In Gokula his youthful companions the gopis, headed by his favorite Radha, were ever entranced by the magic of his flute and

maddened by his love. On one occasion he humbled the brahmins of Mathura who had refused him food, by making their wives come to him.”

TWENTY-THIRD PROOF TEACHINGS OF LORD KRISHNA

As we have already seen in previous proofs, each of the prophets of God reveals divine teachings, which constitute the true remedy for the ills that afflict mankind in the age to which they are addressed, and these teachings are of two kinds--the primary spiritual teachings, which are ratified and restated by every one of the prophets, and the secondary social teachings, which are annulled and recreated to suit the needs of each stage in the evolution of mankind. In Kitáb-i-Íqán we find that Bahá'u'lláh makes reference to certain teachings of the Prophets which are renewed in every Dispensation:

KI:38-39: "In another sense, by the terms 'sun', 'moon', and 'stars', are meant such laws and teachings as have been established and proclaimed in every Dispensation, such as the laws of prayer and fasting. These have, according to the law of the Qur'an, been regarded, the beauty of the Prophet Muhammad had passed beyond the veil, as the most fundamental and binding laws of His dispensation. To this testify the texts of the traditions and chronicles, which, on account of their being widely known, need not be referred to here. Nay rather, in every Dispensation the law concerning prayer hath been emphasized and universally enforced. To this testify the recorded traditions ascribes to the lights that have emanated from the Day-star of Truth, the essence of the Prophet Muhammad. The traditions established the fact that in all Dispensations the law of prayer hath constituted a fundamental element of the Revelation of all the Prophets of God--a law the form and the manner of which hath been to the varying requirements of every age."

As far as we know, there is only one repository of the teachings of Krishna, and this is the slim volume which is found in the longest epic of India and probably the world, Mahabharata. While Mahabharata is over 100,000 verses in length, Bhagavad-Gita numbers only 700 verses, of which just over 400 represent the words of Krishna^{cxviii}.

There are two numbers which have a special significance in the study of Bhagavad-Gita and these numbers are three (3) and eighteen (18). There are three factors in the functioning of the universe: time, space and Cause. The primal and ultimate Cause is the subject of this Book. There are three worlds: earth, heaven and that which is between them (I:35). There is a threefold symbol of Brahman, "Aum Tat Sat" (XVII:23). There are three names of Brahman which apply to His three functions or roles in relationship with His creation: "Vishnu," the preserver; "Shiva," the destroyer; and "Brahma," the creator. Krishna describes the Supreme Brahman: "He is undivided (indivisible) and yet He seems to be divided among beings. He is to be known as supporting creatures, destroying them and creating them afresh" (XIII:16). As for human beings, there is a threefold incitement to action, and a threefold composite of action (XVIII:18). There is also a threefold gate to hell: lust, anger and greed (XVI:21-22). There is a threefold penance, the penance of the body (XVII:14), the penance of speech (XVII:15), and the penance of mind (XVII:16). There are three "gunas" (human modes or natures), and these are called "sattvas" (goodness), "rajas" (passion) and "tamas" (dullness). These are discussed, in some detail, in Chapters XIV, XVII and XVIII. Corresponding to the three "gunas" there are three kinds of faith and worship (XVII:2-6), three kinds of food (XVII:7-10), three kinds of sacrifice (XVII:11-13), three kinds of the threefold penance (XVII:17-19), three kinds of gifts and gift-giving (XVII:20-22), three kinds of knowledge (XVIII:20-22), three kinds of work (XVIII:23-25), three kinds of doer (XVIII:26-28), three kinds of understanding (XVIII:29-32), three kinds of steadiness (XVIII:29,33-35).

As for the role of God reflected in Bhagavad-Gita, the teachings of Krishna, Who was considered an "avatara" (descent into this world) and "pradurbhava" (manifestation) of "Vishnu", this role belongs primarily in the support and preservation department, and, in particular, the support and preservation of the spiritual consciousness of man. As for the number eighteen, there are eighteen parvas (sections) in Mahabharata and eighteen chapters in Bhagavad-Gita, corresponding to the eighteen military divisions of the combined forces of the Pandavas and Kauravas in the battle of Kurukshetra and the eighteen days during which the battle was wrought. Inasmuch as the first Chapter of Bhagavad-Gita is in the form of an introduction, the succeeding seventeen Chapters depict the seventeen named ways (yogas) to realization of the Divine.

The seventeen yogas are here listed and the teachings of Krishna according to each yoga will shortly be detailed:

- II: Samkhyayogo = the path of KNOWLEDGE
- III: Karmayogo = the path of WORK
- IV: Jnanayogo = the path of WISDOM
- V: Karmasamnyasayogo = the path of RENUNCIATION OF ACTION
- VI: Dhyanyogo = the path of MEDITATION
- VII: Jnanavijnanayogo = the path of WISDOM and RATIONAL KNOWLEDGE
- VIII: Aksarabrahmayogo = the path of THE IMPERISHABLE ABSOLUTE
- IX: Rajavidyarakshayogo = the path of SOVEREIGN KNOWLEDGE and MYSTERY
- X: Vibhutyogo = the path of GLORY/MANIFESTATION
- XI: Visvarupadarsanayogo = the path of THE VISION OF COSMIC FORM
- XII: Bhaktiyogo = the path of DEVOTION
- XIII: Ksetraksetrajnavibhagayogo = the path of THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE FIELD AND THE KNOWER OF THE FIELD
- XIV: Gunatrayavibhagayogo = the path of THE DIFFERENTIATION OF THE THREE MODES
- XV: Purusottamayogo = the path of THE SUPREME PERSON
- XVI: Daivasurasampadvibhagayogo = the path of THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE DIVINE AND DEMONIC ENDOWMENTS
- XVII: Sraddatrayavibhagayogo = the path of THE THREEFOLD DIVISION OF FAITH
- XVIII: Moksasamnyasayogo = the path of RELEASE BY RENUNCIATION

We will attempt here to analyze the contents of each of these teaching chapters of the Bhagavad-Gita, in comparison with selected teachings of other Avatars.

CHAPTER I: Introduction

The First Chapter of Bhagavad-Gita is in the form of an introduction, setting the scene in which the dialogue of Krishna and Arjuna takes place, describing certain characteristics attributed to the Lord and His disciple, and articulating a few initial teachings. In I:14 the vehicle

which Arjuna is taking into the battle of Kurukshetra is depicted--a chariot drawn by white horses with Krishna as charioteer. The reader may recall that Kalkin-Avatara is depicted in three ways, 1)a giant seated upon a white horse and holding aloft like a comet a naked sword or a huge razor-edged axe; 2)the same figure with the head of a white horse; 3)a giant white horse. These images might also call to mind these verses, from the *Apocalypse* of John of Patmos:

Rev:6:2: And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Rev:19:11-12: And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

The celestial conches of Krishna and Arjuna (I:15) and those of their allies and enemies (I:18,19) recall the shofarim (the ram's horns) of the Israelites, blown before and during battle, as well as the trumpets sounded upon the appearance of the Divine in the wilderness and in the Temple in Jerusalem. In the Book of Revelation, trumpet calls of the seven angels, depicted in the eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters, signal the arrival of cosmic events of great import. Arjuna right away begins to express to Krishna his grave reservations about waging war against the Kauravas. One of his arguments is that this conflict will lead to confusion of "varna" (caste), the organizational principle traditionally operative in Hindu society (I:41,43). Confusion of "varna" he argues will consign its victims to hell, the abode of those whose laws have been destroyed (I:42,44). He also articulates a conviction in the efficacy of ritual offerings of rice and water to benefit the souls of deceased ancestors (I:42).

CHAPTER II: SAMKHYAYOGO

Krishna makes eight appeals to Arjuna, and His First (II:2) is to the warrior's conscience and heritage as Kshatriya, a member of the soldier "varna." He tells this man at arms that his attitude is unworthy, that he should be courageous, courteous, noble and honest. These recall the attributes required of the medieval knights, the rules of chivalry, that is, of the sacred orders of knights such as those consecrated to Saint John and the Templars. Arjuna asks Krishna to advise him (II:7), and this is where Krishna becomes the charioteer not only of

Arjuna's chariot, holding the reins of his white horses but also the charioteer of his soul, holding the reins of his heart-strings. This is the first step of every seeker after truth, to turn to the Avatara for guidance. Krishna is smiling, joyful in revealing guidance to the one who has turned to Him (II:10). His Second Appeal (II:11) advises Arjuna that wise men do not grieve for either the living or the dead. It does not profit man to be attached to either this world or to the next. As Bahá'u'lláh counseled in Haft Vadi^{cxixiv}: "shut the door of friendliness and enmity upon all the people of the earth"; and in Kitáb-i-Íqán^{cxixv}: "He must so cleanse his heart that no remnant of either love or hate may linger therein, lest that love blindly incline him to error, or that hate repel him away from the truth." This is an appeal to "prajna," wisdom, and this is reflected in two of the yogas to come, "jnanayogo" in Chapter IV and "jnanavijnanayogo" in Chapter VII.

Krishna teaches that reality is eternal, imperishable (II:12). What truly is will always be and what is not will never be (II:16). All reality is pervaded by the immutable, indestructable being of "sariri" (spirit), which is incomprehensible to man (II:17-18). Bodies are born and come to an end, decomposition follows composition (II:18,26-28). There is a slaying of bodies but not of souls, for the body is born and dies but the soul is not born and once it comes into being it will never cease to be (II:19-20). The birth of bodies leads to their rebirth (II:13,21). This doctrine is never fully explained in Bhagavad-Gita and the traditional theories which have circulated amongst most Hindus have no firm basis in the words of Krishna. For a more precise and revealing understanding of birth and rebirth the seeker must repair to the most recent Manifestation of God, and compare the words of Krishna and of other earlier Avatars with His divine words. Krishna teaches that contact with material objects in the material world is ephemeral (II:14). A man who is not troubled by the ephemeral remains constant in pain and pleasure, and this wise man prepares himself for his eternal spiritual life (II:15). "Sariri" (spirit) is identified with the all-pervading manifestation of God, called Purusa in the Samkhyayogo (II:24). This is what other prophets called the Holy Spirit, which pervades and sustains all things, in all the created worlds of God. God is called the unmanifest, the unthinkable, the unchanging (II:25).

Krishna's Third Appeal (II:26-28) is that Arjuna should not grieve for the death of his kinsmen, because, whatever is born must die and therefore its death is inevitable, and to grieve over the inevitable is senseless. Furthermore, the true self cannot be slain, so, once more

grieving is uncalled for (II:30). The spiritual reality is a marvel, but it is unknown and essentially unknowable (II:29). His Fourth Appeal (II:31-32) counsels Arjuna to do his duty, to do his work. The Fifth Appeal (II:33) advises this warrior that if he fails to do his duty he will incur sin--His first threat of divine punishment for failure to act appropriately. Krishna's Sixth Appeal (II:34-36) says that if he fails to do his duty he will be dishonored and that dishonor is a fate worse than death. His Seventh Appeal (II:31-33,37) assures Arjuna that if he is slain in battle he will go to heaven. This is clearly then a "jihad", a holy war, such as we find enjoined and praised in the Qur'án, for surely the Avatara would not promise the delights of paradise to every warrior in every war. His Eighth Appeal (II:31-33,37) reminds Arjuna that if he survives this battle, having done his duty, he will live to enjoy the pleasures of earthly existence. Now Krishna winds up for His punchline--He commands Arjuna to treat all things alike, to detach himself from all things and ready himself for battle (II:38). As Bahá'u'lláh put it in *Chahar Vadi*^{cxvii}: "Whatever high proofs and wondrous allusions are recounted herein, concern but a single Letter, a single Point." And the point, in this case is: do your duty.

Krishna then spontaneously begins to discourse on the yoga of "samykha" (knowledge). He defines "samykha" as rational knowledge, akin to philosophy and science (II:39), and relates it to the faculty of reason (II:30-31). Krishna warns Arjuna to guard himself from the dangers of literalism, ritual magic and desire for heavenly reward (II:42-43). He also warns that those who are devoted to enjoyment of life and to power have their capacity to differentiate between right and wrong corrupted (II:45). He advises his student to purify himself of twofold and threefold nature and to concentrate his energies on unifying his personality (II:46). Understanding of what is real is vastly superior to ritual (II:47). One must act without being attached to the fruits of action (II:48). Here one is reminded of Jesus' teaching, part of His "Sermon on the Mount of Olives" in which He says:

Matt:6:2-4: Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

Krishna teaches that steadfastness is called for, and discipline of the mind (II:49,50). Whoever disciplines his mind casts away choice, the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (II:51), is reborn out of the animal nature, and is free of the constraints of legalism which govern those who are preoccupied with cutting corners and finding loopholes. He becomes independent of what has been and what will be heard from others (II:52). He will see with his own eyes and not through the eyes of others; hear with his own ears and not through the ears of others; and know of his own knowledge rather than through the knowledge of others, to paraphrase Bahá'u'lláh (KMA:#2). Krishna also wants Arjuna to be free from a purely intellectual understanding of the Scriptures, and calls him to that higher consciousness which is independent of traditional human interpretations (II:53). Arjuna asks Krishna for a description of "sthitaprajna," the wise man (II:54) and Krishna obliges him here with a number of verses (II:55-71). In later Chapters (V:8; VI:4-32; X:9-10; XII:13-20; XIII:7-11; XIV:21-35; XVI:1-3; XVIII:50-60) Krishna also treats this theme of the wise man, calling this archetype by various titles: "jnanin, yogarudha, gunatita, bhakta." In Chapter II the topics covered include the following:

- 1) He puts away desires of the mind and his spirit is content in itself. He is detached from passion, fear, rage, sorrow and desire. (II:55-56)
- 2) He has no affection on any side. (II:57)
- 3) He draws in, withdraws his senses from objects of sense. (II:58,68)
- 4) Objects of sense turn away from a spiritual man, and taste for them turns away when the Supreme is perceived. (II:59)
- 5) Beware of the senses, that is, passion for the things of the senses, for they can carry off the mind by force. (II:60)
- 6) He brings the senses under control and remains intent upon Lord Krishna. (II:61)
- 7) When man dwells in his mind on objects of sense, attachment is produced: attachment leads to desire to anger. (II:62)
- 8) Anger leads to bewilderment to loss of memory to destruction of conscience to spiritual death; neither love nor hate the senses, and do not try to overcome them by passion. (II:63)
- 9) Purity of spirit is that man's who has a disciplined mind, control over his senses, no attachment or aversion to anything. (II:64)
- 10) The end of sorrow is in purity of spirit. (II:65)
- 11) Where there is no conscience, no intelligence, no concentration, no control, there is no peace, no happiness. (II:66)

- 12) If one runs after the senses, one's understanding will be carried away by the senses. (II:67)
- 13) For the sage day is night, spiritual exercises should be at mid-night and before dawn; in outer darkness close the eyes and immobilize the body; spiritual experience in dreams. (II:69)
- 14) He is as uninfluenced by the senses as the sea is by the waters that flow into it. (II:70)
- 15) He is free from egotism and from claiming property. (II:71)

Krishna ends this discourse (II:72) on "samykhayogo" with the affirmation that deliverance can come at the very hour of death. Bahá'u'lláh, in "Lawh 'Abdu'l-Wahhab"^{cxxxvii}:

The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High.

He also directly confirms the statement of Krishna (II:72) with this teaching from Kitáb-i-Íqán^{cxxxviii}:

He should forgive the sinful, and never despise his low estate, for none knoweth what his own end shall be. How often hath a sinner, at the hour of death, attained to the essence of faith...how often hath a devout believer, at the hour of his soul's ascension, been so changed as to fall into the nethermost fire."

CHAPTER III: KARMAYOGO

Arjuna, probably bewildered by the intellectual sophistication of this discourse of Krishna, asks his teacher for simplicity, asks him what one thing will be to the highest good (III:2). Krishna says there is a twofold path, "jnanayogo" for the "samykha" man who is naturally contemplative; and "karmayogo" for the man of action (III:3). Work done in the spirit of sacrifice is "karmayogo" (III:9,10). The attributes of the "deva" which may correspond to the living attributes of God, are recounted (III:11). In the realm of names, the attributes of God fulfill prayers which are accompanied by sacrifice: this is the meaning of all sacrifices in the temples (III:12). "Karma" is the law of reward and punishment which governs the universe, and it originated in Brahma, which came from the Imperishable (III:13). Purasa, the

Primal Man, was offered as a sacrifice whereby the whole world was created (Rig Veda X,90). The soul of man is mentioned and called "atman" (III:17). The man of action must work for the maintenance of the world, and thereby he will spiritualize human society (III:20). Arjuna is exhorted to be a leader and to teach others by his example (III:21). Do not unsettle the minds of the ignorant, who are attached to action (III:26). A soul which is deluded by self-consciousness is called "ahamkaravimudhatma" (III:27). Arjuna is called to surrender to God (III:30). "Sraddha" (faith) is required (III:31;IV:39). Attachment and aversion are both to be avoided (III:34), a theme often repeated by Krishna. Krishna depicts the levels of human consciousness: "indriyani" (senses), "mano/manah" (mind), "buddhir" (intelligence), and "duddheh param buddhva" (He who is beyond intelligence), which He identifies with "steadying the self by the Self" and which Bahá'u'lláh seems to refer to in the first valley of "Chahar Vadi"^{cxviii}: "that self which is 'The Self of God standing within Him with laws.' [hadith]" In other words, this is the Self of the Avatara, which is reflected in the pure mirror of the soul (II:38) rather than obscured by the dust of the lower self.

CHAPTER IV: JNANAYOGO

Krishna opens this Chapter with an account of how this "yoga puratanah" (ancient yoga) was transmitted--from Krishna to Vivasvan to Manu to Ikshvaku, and then to the royal sages, until it was forgotten, and was taught anew to Arjuna (IV:1-3). Radhakrishnan, in the "Introductory Essay" to his translation of Bhagavad-Gita has written that "the Gita is called an upanishad, since it derives its main inspiration from that remarkable group of scriptures, the Upanishads" and further affirms that it develops "a spiritual message based on the ancient wisdom, prajna purani, of the Upanishads," citing a verse from Vaisnaviya Tantrasara to the effect that "the Gita restates the central teachings of the Upanishads."^{cxl} In a note to explain the meaning of "yoga puratanah" the same author writes that this yoga is "the eternal source of all religions and philosophies, the philosophia perennis, the sanatana dharma"^{cxli}. As Aldous Huxley affirmed, in his "Introduction" to Prabhavananda and Isherwood's translation of Bhagavad-Gita^{cxlii}: "The Bhagavad-Gita is perhaps the most systematic scriptural statement of the Perennial Philosophy."

There are two points relative to these opening verses which should arrest our attention. The first is that Krishna names none other than Himself as the original Teacher of this "yoga," and then affirms that He is once more teaching the same "yoga puratanah" to Arjuna. This

recalls the statements of the various prophets: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58); "Thus hath Muhammad, the Point of the Qur'án, revealed: 'I am all the Prophets.' Likewise, He saith^{exliii}: 'I am the first Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus.'" The second point is that this "yoga" was passed down not to Avatars but to wise men and royal sages. This seems to point to the origins of "divine philosophy" which theme is found explained in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the addresses of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

When Arjuna, obviously confused by Krishna's statement of having preceeded Vivasvat, asks how it is possible that He could have declared this "yoga" to one who was born so many centuries or even aeons before Him (IV:4), Krishna replies that He has had previous lives, as has Arjuna (IV:5). This return of the Avatara and of His disciple is explained by Bahá'u'lláh in *Kitáb-i-Íqán* as a return of qualities of personality and attributes of character rather than a return of bodies or souls. Then Krishna states that He manifests Himself whenever there is a decline in religion and righteousness (IV:7), and affirms that He comes into this world to establish religion and the law of reward and punishment (IV:8). In His protection of the good we see His manifestation of Vishnu, the Preserver; in His destruction of the wicked His appearance as Shiva, the Destroyer; and, in His establishment of righteousness, His representation of Brahma, the Creator.

He who recognizes the true nature of the Avatara is not born again but rather leaves his body and goes to Krishna (IV:9). Absorbed in the Avatara, purified by "jnana" the devotee attains to the "madbhavan," the presence of his Lord, delivered from passions (IV:10). The Avatara accepts all men who approach Him (IV:11). Krishna indicates that worldly men offer sacrifices to the "devas" (gods) and receive the blessings they supplicate (IV:12). He says that He created the four "varnas" (castes) according to temperament and chosen vocation, not by birth and heredity (IV:13). Works, deeds do not defile an Avatara, for He is not attached to the fruits of His works; the true devotee of an Avatara is not bound by the works of others because he is detached from them and attached only to Krishna (IV:14). He urges Arjuna to work for his own purification (IV:15). The Avatara will define action and inaction, and understanding this, Arjuna will be delivered from evil (IV:16). Krishna says that "karma" is hard to understand (IV:17): a wise man sees action in inaction and inaction in action (II:18), and, in the words of Bahá'u'lláh^{exliv}, "because

they see the end in the beginning, see peace in war and friendliness in anger"; the works of the man of true learning are purified in the fire of "jnana" (wisdom) and therefore free from desire (IV:19). If man performs works without attachment to fruits, without desire and with no thought of profit, he will be content and independent (IV:20-21). The wise man is satisfied with all things, has transcended the duality of pleasure and pain, is free from jealousy (IV:22). The wise man offers his work as a sacrifice to God (IV:23), as an oblation, an offering (IV:24).

Krishna allows that some yogis offer sacrifices to "daivam" (gods), others to the fire of the Supreme (IV:25); some hearing and other senses into the fire of restraint, or sound and the other objects of sense into the fire of sense (IV:26). He describes other offerings: works of the senses into the fire of self-control (IV:27); material possessions, austerities, subdued minds and severe vows (IV:28); "pranam" (breath control), both outgoing and incoming (IV:29); fasting (IV:30). Those who eat the sacred food left over after sacrifices are made attain to God (IV:31). The law of the universe is sacrifice, and there are many varieties of sacrifice as all are born of "karma" (work) and there are so many varieties of work (IV:32). All works culminate in "jnana" and hence sacrifice in knowledge is greater than any material sacrifice (IV:33). This clearly undermines the importance of the material ritual sacrifices which are the province of the Brahmin "varna" (caste), although it does not abolish these sacrifices. The way to learn is through humility, inquiry and service, and the seeking soul is directed to learn from men of wisdom (IV:34). When the seeker knows "jnana" (wisdom) he will not fall again into confusion; he will see all things in "atman," his spirit, and in Krishna, the Avatara's Spirit (IV:35). Even the most sinful man can cross over the black waters of evil in the vessel of "jnana" without any other help (IV:36). The fire of "jnana" burns all actions and all work to ashes (IV:37), and "jnana" has the greatest purity of anything on earth (IV:38). He who has faith and subdues his senses is absorbed in "jnana" and attains "parasantim" (supreme peace), and the ignorant, faithless man perishes, without achieving either happiness in this world or in the next (IV:39-40). At the close of this Chapter, Krishna once more calls Arjuna to action:

BG:IV:42: Therefore having cut asunder with the sword of [jnana] wisdom this doubt in thy heart that is born of ignorance, resort to yoga and stand up, O Bharata (Arjuna).

CHAPTER V: KARMASAMNYASAYOGO

Arjuna asks of Krishna which is better, the renunciation of action, of works or the unselfish performance of action and works (V:1), and Krishna answers that both of these are sure ways to salvation, but that the unselfish performance of works is preferable (V:2). This calls to mind the Mahayana Buddhist predilection for "boddhisatvas," for those who have achieved "moksa" (liberation) and who, out of compassion for humanity, abide in the midst of the unregenerate and work towards their liberation. Likewise, in other religious traditions are to be numbered the saints and mystics who have not been satisfied with seeking their own enlightenment but who have sacrificed their lives for the betterment of others. Detachment leads to renunciation, but not necessarily to renunciation of action but rather to renunciation of the fruits of action (V:3). While the ignorant think that renunciation and "yoga" (spiritual discipline) are different (V:4), in fact renunciation and action are one and renunciation requires "yoga" (V:5,6). He who follows the "yoga" of works is not tainted by those works if he remains detached (V:7) because then he understands that the senses operate independently of the true self (V:8,9). Hence, he who is unattached is untouched.

He dwells at peace in his body, "the city of nine gates" (V:13). While there is a ready and traditional explanation for this expression, that the body has nine apertures, being the mouth, the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, and the organs of excretion^{exlv}, it also finds its parallel in the "Mashriqu'l-Adhkar," the Dawning-place of the Remembrance of God, instituted by Bahá'u'lláh in Kitáb-i-Aqdas as the center for worship of God in this Age. The "Mashriqu'l-Adhkar" has nine gates, and many other features to the number nine. This "Dawning-place" is itself symbolic of the "haykal" (temple) of the Spirit of God in the Person of His Avatara, and also of the "haykal" of the spirit of servitude and faith in the person of man. It represents the City of God which is the Revelation sent down by God in every Age.

"Prabhuh" (glory), the "Sovereign Self" manifest in the Avatara, is held up as an example of correct attitude and practice. "Prabhuh" is independent of works and actions (V:14). Another attribute and name associated with the Avatara is "vibhuh," the "All-pervading Spirit" and is independent from the sin or merit of any human being (V:15). "Jnana" (wisdom) destroys "ajnanam" (ignorance: the absence of wisdom), and "jnana" lights up the "atman" (soul or spirit) like the sun (V:16). Sins are washed away by "jnana" (V:17). Krishna then makes a

statement which could not have sat well with the powerful and privileged of His Day, and which continues to be unpopular to this Day: the wise man sees all beings with an equal eye, unprejudiced, with justice and equity, "a Brahmin, a cow, an elephant or even a dog or an outcaste" (V:18). He refers then to the influence of the enlightened ones upon the earth, and affirms that this influence derives from the flawless spirit revealed in them (V:19). The self-controlled one does not try to attain what is pleasant or to avoid what is unpleasant--he finds happiness in the Self of God and knows undying bliss (V:20,21). All pleasures which are born of contacts with material objects are sources of sorrow, inasmuch as they have beginnings and endings (V:22). Happy is the man who can resist the sudden onset of anger and desire (V:23), who finds happiness, joy and light from within and attains to "brahmanirvana," the "beatitude of God" (V:24). Here, at the close of the Fifth Chapter, Krishna describes a meditation technique which enables the sage to control the senses, the mind and understanding, to achieve liberation (V:27,28). He closes the Chapter on "Karmasamnyasayogo" with the following assurance:

BG:V:29: And having known Me as the Enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, the Great Lord of all the worlds, the Friend of all beings, he (the sage) attains peace.

CHAPTER VI: DHYANAYOGO

While this is a Chapter devoted to the path of meditation, it is not composed alone of instructions on meditation practices. Rather, it continues with the spiritual instruction of Arjuna, and of all who would follow in one of the paths to enlightenment. Krishna advises him to follow his duties, not to shirk them (VI:10, to renounce selfish purposes (VI:2). The sage follows yoga by means of his work and demonstrates yoga in his serenity upon the completion of work (VI:3). Yoga is comprised of detachment from the objects of sense, from action and from selfish purposes (VI:4). Independence is necessary, and the Self alone is the friend and the enemy of the self of man, the Friend of him who has conquered his lower self and an enemy for him who has not done so (VI:5,6). He who has conquered the lower self, he has attained self-mastery, he has recognized the Supreme Self, and he is at peace under all conditions (VI:7). The yogi is satisfied with "jnana" (wisdom) and "vijñana" (knowledge), is master of his senses, and to him "samalostasmakancanah," a clod [of earth], a stone and a piece of gold are the same (VI:8; also see XIV:24). He is equal-minded among friends and foes alike (VI:9; also see XIV:25), and practices mental discipline in private (VI:10).

At this point, Krishna speaks of "dhyana" (meditation) itself, proscribing a position (VI:11), an attitude of mind (VI:12), bodily posture and visual focus (VI:13), firm in the vow of chastity (VI:14), and moderate in food and sleep (VI:15,16). When the mind is established in the Self alone, it is freed of all desires and harmonized in yoga (VI:18), with mind absorbed in "atman" (VI:19), beholding the Self in "atman" (VI:20), and finding the supreme delight perceived by "buddhi" (spiritual perception) and beyond the senses (VI:21). He is unshaken by the greatest sorrow (VI:22), disconnected from pain by yoga (VI:23), abandoning all selfish desires and restraining the senses (VI:24), his mind fixed on the Self (VI:25), restraining also the wandering of the mind (VI:26), this yogin who becomes one with God will achieve supreme happiness (VI:27,28). This is the perennial aim of the seeker after God, as described eloquently by Radhakrishnan in this note^{cxlvi}:

“The illuminations of the Hindu and the Buddhist seers, of Socrates and Plato, of Philo and Plotinus, of Christian and Muslim mystics, belong to the same family, though the theological attempts to account for them reflect the temperaments of the race and the epoch.” The ideal yogin is then described by Krishna: he sees the Self abiding in all beings (VI:29), God in all things and all things in God (VI:30), established in oneness of God (VI:31), sees all with equality and without superiority (VI:32). Arjuna is puzzled by this teaching, inasmuch as the mind, in his experience is so restless, fickle, impetuous, strong and obstinate (VI:33-34). Krishna counters that, while the mind is all that Arjuna says, it can be controlled by constant practice and non-attachment (VI:35-36). Arjuna asks what will become of that one who has faith but whose mind wanders away from yoga (VI:37) He fears that he will perish (VI:38), and turns to Krishna alone to dispel his doubt (VI:39). The mercy of God is then revealed by Krishna, who states that no one who does good will walk the path of woe (VI:40). The next few verses (VI:41-45) refer to rebirth and, like those others which make mention of this subject, must be understood in the light of the teachings of the most recent Avatara. Krishna states that the seeker after the knowledge of yoga goes beyond the Vedic rule, and this articulates one of Krishna's seminal teachings, that spiritual life is not tied to ritual regulations and actions. Krishna strongly encourages Arjuna to become a yogin, saying that the yogin is better than the ascetic, better than the man of knowledge, better than the doer of ritual works (VI:46), and the best of yogins is

he "who full of faith worships Me, with his inner self abiding in Me, him, I hold to be the most attuned" (VI:47).

CHAPTER VII: JNANAVIJNANAYOGO

The yoga of "jnana" (wisdom) and "vijñana" (knowledge) is the path combining "direct spiritual illumination and detailed rational knowledge of the principles of existence"^{exlvii}. Krishna indicates that scarcely one truly knows Him among many thousands who strive for perfection (VII:3), recalling Jesus' statement: "for many be called, but few chosen"^{exlviii}. Then Krishna proceeds to expound upon the nature of existence, the kingdoms of earth and heaven, with the lower world of nature being made up of earth, water, fire, ether, mind and understanding and self-consciousness (VII:4), and the higher world composed of spirit, which upholds the lower world (VII:5). Krishna proclaims Himself as the origin of the world and of its dissolution (VII:6). Nothing is higher than Himself (VII:7), and in Him are the highest attributes of all things (VII:9-12). All things are in God and not the reverse (VII:12), but the world does not recognize God (VII:13) except for those who cross beyond divine "maya" (illusion) by taking refuge in Him (VII:14). There are four kinds of virtuous men who worship God: the man in distress, the seeker for knowledge, the seeker for wealth and the man of "jnana" (VII:16), and of these the "wise one...is the best. For I am supremely dear to him and he is dear to Me." (VII:17) In Kalimat-i-Maknunch Bahá'u'lláh writes^{exlix}:

Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee...since I desire to be loved alone and above all that is.

Krishna indicates that those who worship other gods besides Him are constrained by their natures, but whatever benefits accrue to him from God alone (VII:21,22). However, in the end, we go to the gods we have worshipped (VII:23). God is "veiled by His creative power" and "not revealed to all." (VII:25) God is Omniscient, knowing all that has been, that is and that will be, and He is Unknowable to anyone but Himself (VII:26). Those who know God as the Governor of all aspects of life, they have true knowledge of God (VII:30). This recalls a statement by Bahá'u'lláh, in Prayers and Meditations^{cl}:

Thou hast ordained that the utmost limit to which they who lift their hearts to Thee can rise is the confession of their powerlessness to enter the realms of Thy holy and transcendent unity, and that the highest station which they who aspire to know Thee can reach is the acknowledgement

of their impotence to attain the retreats of Thy sublime knowledge...

The highest consciousness to which man may attain, according to Krishna is to know that God knows all things, and more, God governs all things. "He doeth whatsoever He willeth."

CHAPTER VIII: AKSARABRAHMAYOGO

Arjuna asks Krishna to explain to him what is "Brahman," what is "atman," what is "karma," what is the world of the elements and what is the world of the gods (VIII:1); what is the domain of sacrifice in the human body, and how He is to be known at the hour of death (VIII:2). Krishna replies that "Brahman" is the Indestructible, the Supreme (VIII:3); this reality is that which the Semitic monotheists call "Elohei" and "Allah" and what the Kabbalists call "En Sof" (without an end). Essential nature is called "atman" and the creative force which brings beings into existence is called "karma" (VIII:3). The basis of all sacrifices in the body is Krishna, the "pradurbhava" of God (VIII:4). At the hour of death, he goes to whatever he has set his mind on (VIII:5,6). He therefore advises Arjuna to remember Him, to set his mind and understanding on Him at all times (VIII:7).

Krishna then tells Arjuna he will describe the state into which will enter those who are focused on His Supreme Divine Person (VIII:11). First, He depicts some of the practices of yogis, including the restraint of the senses, fixing of life-force in the head, and of mind in the heart (VIII:12), uttering the sacred word "Aum" (VIII:13), and meditating constantly on Him (VIII:14). When these "mahatmas" (great souls) come to Krishna, they have attained their highest perfection (VIII:15), and they will no longer be reborn into other worlds (VIII:16). Krishna then describes the day of Brahma and the night of Brahma as each of one thousand ages in length (VIII:17). Existences arise and merge during the coming of night and come forth into being at the coming of day (VIII:19). Beyond all of these perishable existences is the Imperishable, Unmanifested, and Krishna says of this: "That is My supreme abode." (VIII:21) He says that this is "Purusa," the Supreme Person, and he who attains to His presence knows the Absolute and goes to Him (VIII:22,24). The path of light liberates him from this world, associated with fire, light and day; and the path of darkness binds him to this world, associated with smoke, obscurity and night (VIII:24-26). Knowledge, wisdom are once again more important to Krishna than ritual observance (VIII:27):

The yogin having known all this, goes beyond the fruits of meritorious deeds assigned to the study of the Vedas, sacrifices, austerities and gifts and attains to the supreme and primal status.

CHAPTER IX: RAJAVIDYARAJAGUHYAYOGO

This is a continuation of "jnana vijnanayogo" for Krishna opens this Chapter affirming that "I shall declare this profound secret of wisdom [jnana] combined with knowledge [vijana], by knowing which thou shalt be released from evil." (IX:1) He then calls this combination of "jnana" and "vijana" the "rajavidya" (royal knowledge) and "rajaguhya" (royal secret), and assures Arjuna that it is easy of attainment, and matter for direct experience (IX:2). This makes it accessible to everyone, and able to be immediately experienced rather than learned of by someone else's report or mediation. On the other hand, this path requires faith in Krishna, and without it, the soul will return to "samsara," mortal living (IX:3). All the universe is pervaded by His Unmanifested Being and all beings abide in Him (IX:4,5). Even as the air abides everywhere, so also all existences abide in Him (IX:6).

He speaks of His cycles of creation (IX:7,8), but reminds Arjuna that He is independent of His creation (IX:9), and that He creates all beings by means of "prakrti," nature (IX:10). The deluded despise Him in human body, not recognizing His higher nature as Lord of the universe (IX:11). Those who despise Him are like demons, the "mohini prakrti" and those who worship Him are like angels, the "daivi prakrti" (IX:12-14). Those who worship Him in "jnana" (wisdom), understand that God is to be celebrated in every aspect of worship (IX:15-18). Krishna now affirms that those who worship according to their ancestral rites do not win liberation from mortality:

BG:IX:20-21: The knowers of the three Vedas who drink the soma juice and are cleansed of sin, worshipping Me with sacrifices, pray for the way to heaven...thus conforming to the doctrine enjoined in the three Vedas and desirous of enjoyments, they obtain the changeable (what is subject to birth and death).

While those who worship to other gods actually "sacrifice to Me alone" (IX:23), they "go to the gods, worshippers of the manes go to the manes, sacrificers of the spirits go to the spirits and those who

sacrifice to Me come to Me." (IX:25) Krishna then says that the least of sacrifices offered to Him is acceptable:

BG:IX:26-27: Whosoever offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, that offering of love, of the pure of heart I accept. Whatsoever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerities thou dost practice--do that, O Son of Kunti (Arjuna), as an offering to Me.

In this way alone can the soul be free from the good and evil results of actions (IX:28). He is the same to all beings, but those who worship Him with devotion are in God and He is in them (IX:29). Even if the man of the most vile behavior worships Him with complete devotion he must be regarded as righteous, for loyalty to God counts higher than loyalty to upright behavior (IX:30). It is evident that Krishna speaks here of the repentant doer of evil rather than the persistent malefactor, for in the next verse He states that this evil-doer swiftly becomes "a soul of righteousness" (IX:31). Krishna does not discriminate against women, or persons born into low caste (IX:32), and all, including high castes and royal saints are called upon to worship Him (IX:33). Once again Krishna articulates the essence of His message:

BG:IX:34: On Me fix thy mind; to Me be devoted; worship Me; revere Me; thus having disciplined thyself, with Me as thy goal, to Me shalt thou come.

CHAPTER X: VIBHUTIYOGO

Krishna addresses Arjuna as "priyamanaya," which Radhakrishnan renders "who art beloved" (X:1, note, p. 256), and this sets the tone for this dialogue. The Avatara speaks to us, teaches us out of love, because we are beloved, and His aim is always to make us more lovable to ourselves, to Him and hence to God. He affirms that He is the source of sages and great souls and that they cannot know His origin (X:2,6). He who knows Him in His divine nature, unborn and Lord of the worlds is undeluded (X:3). He then gives a list of the qualities of the undeluded, all of which are His attributes, all of which emanate from Him alone:

BG:X:4-5: Understanding, knowledge, freedom from bewilderment, patience, truth, self-control and

calmness...fearlessness...Non-violence, equal-mindedness,
contentment, austerity, charity...

Krishna then refers to His universal Revelation, distinct from His specific Revelation or "pradurbhava" (manifestation), using the term, "vibhuti" (glory, manifestation), which gives its name to this Chapter:

BG:X:7: He who knows in truth this [vibhuti] glory (manifestation) and power (steady action) of Mine is united (with Me) by unfaltering yoga; of this there is no doubt.

Arjuna asks Krishna to tell him about His "divine glories by which the Supreme pervades all the worlds" (Radhakrishnan, note, p. 261):

BG:X:16: Thou shouldst tell me of Thy [atmavibhutayah] divine manifestations, without exception, whereby, pervading these worlds, Thou dost abide (in them and beyond).

Krishna obliges him in verses 20-38, introduced with verse 19 and concluded with verses 40-41:

BG:X:19: Yes, I will declare to thee of My [atmavibhutayah] divine forms but only of those which are prominent, O best of the Kurus (Arjuna), for there is no end to my extent (the details).

BG:X:40-41: There is no end to My divine [vibhutinam] manifestations, O Conqueror of the foe (Arjuna). What has been declared by Me is only illustrative of My infinite [vibhuter] glory. Whatsoever being there is, endowed with [vibhuti] glory and grace and vigour, know that to have sprung from a fragment of My [tejo] splendour.

In His litany on "atmavibhutayah" Krishna indicates that "of the lights (I am) the radiant Sun" (X:21), and "of the splendid [tejasvinam] I am the splendor [tejas]" (X:36). These references as well as those to "atmavibhutayah" will be related to the Twenty-Fifth Proof.

Krishna continues with His teachings beyond the exposition of His glorious manifestation. He teaches that He is the origin of all and that the wise worship Him (X:8-10). He destroys the darkness of ignorance for those who worship Him through "jnadanipena," the lamp of wisdom (X:11). At this point in the text, Arjuna recites the

names of Krishna, the Avatara, and proclaims that "Thou knowest Thyself by Thyself, O Supreme Person" (X:15). Bahá'u'lláh has written many verses on this theme--here cited are a few:

P&M:CLXXXIV:328: From eternity Thou didst Thyself describe Thine own Self unto Thy Self, and extol, in Thine own Essence, Thine Essence unto Thine Essence.

P&M:CLXXVIII:298: How sweet, therefore, is the praise Thou givest to Thine own Self, and the description Thou givest of Thine own Being!

Arjuna asks Krishna how he may know Him (X:17), and indicates his dissatisfaction with the "amrtam" (nectar-like) speech of Krishna and his desire to know His power and "vibhutim" (X:18); to which Krishna replies with a list of His major "atmavibhutaya," cite above. In this list, could certainly merits study, but which is beyond the scope of this work, we find that the best and highest of sciences is "atmavidya"--which Radhakrishnan translates as "the science of the self"^{cli}, and which he relates to "the universal science according to Plato,"^{clii} citing *Alcibiades*^{cliii}. Krishna identifies Himself directly with this science, saying: "of the sciences (I am) the science of the self" (X:32). We find a similar statement in "Lawh-i-Hikmat" of Bahá'u'lláh:

TB:144-145: The sages aforetime acquired their knowledge from the Prophets, inasmuch as the latter were the Exponents of divine philosophy [hikmat ilahiyyat] and the Revealers of heavenly mysteries...

TB:145: The essence and fundamentals of philosophy have emanated from the Prophets.

CHAPTER XI: VISVARUPADARSANAYOGO

Krishna has explained much already, but Arjuna wants more yet--he wants to see the Cosmic Form of Krishna (XI:1-3). The Avatara has shown Himself most agreeable to the questioning of His disciple. Indeed, we are indebted to the disciples of the Avatars for many of the teachings of their Masters. What would the Gospels of Jesus be without the searching enquiries of His disciples? Many of the Tablets and Books of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá were written in response to the questions of believers, and others were in response to questions from unbelievers. This is not true of the Qur'án of Muhammad, but it

is true of many of the "hadith" associated both with the Prophet and with His twelve Imams.

Krishna proceeds to reveal His Cosmic Form to Arjuna, which is then described by three persons: Samjaya, the narrator of Bhagavad-Gita (XI:9-13); Arjuna, the witness to whom it is being revealed (XI:15-31); and Krishna Himself (XI:32). This recalls the transfiguration of Jesus: "and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt 17:2; Mark 9:2-3; Luke 9:29). It also reminds us of the appearance of the Lord God to Moses on Mount Sinai, in the "kavod" (glory) of God (Exodus 3:2f;19:18f). Krishna advises Arjuna, His dearly beloved friend:

BG:XI:8: But thou canst not behold Me with this [svacaksusa] (human) eye of yours; I will bestow on thee the [caksuh pasya] supernatural eye. Behold My divine power.

Radhakrishnan cites Hindu tradition, stating that "Divya caksus is the angelic eye while mamsa caksus is the eye of the flesh." (XI:8)^{cliv}. At the conclusion of the following Chapter, Krishna speaks of what seems to be another denomination for this "third eye" (XIII:34):

BG:XIII:34: Those who perceive thus by their [jnanacaksusa] eye of wisdom the distinction between the field and the knower of the field, and the [bhutaprakrtimoksam] deliverance of beings from [the material] nature (prakrti), they attain to the Supreme.

We may once more recall the words of the Lord God to Moses, in the Book of Exodus:

Ex:33:20,22: Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live...And it shall come to pass, while My [kavod] glory passeth by, that I will put thee in the cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by...

The Song of Solomon uses the following words to symbolize God addressing His beloved:

Song of Songs:2:14: O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

In the Book of Jeremiah (48:28), the Prophet calls upon those who dwell in Moab to:

...dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest
in the sides of the hole's mouth. (48:28)

The use of the dove as symbol of the Spirit of God is found in the story of Noah (Genesis 8:8-12), and in the story of the baptism of Jesus (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32). Those who could not see the spiritual realities of things which Jesus spoke of He addressed in these words:

Mark:8:18: Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

Bahá'u'lláh refers to this new vision in many verses, including these:

P&M:LVI:80: Open Thou, O my Lord, mine eyes and the eyes of all them that have sought Thee, that we may recognize Thee with Thine own eyes.

KI:196: Gazing with the eye of God, he will perceive within every atom a door that leadeth him to the stations of absolute certitude.

SV:17: With the ear of God he heareth, with the eye of God he beholdeth the mysteries of divine creation.

The description of the Cosmic Form includes Samjaya's depiction of the "bhah" (splendour) of the Supreme Person, like "the light of a thousand suns" (XI:12); Arjuna's words about Krishna's "glowing everywhere as a mass of light, hard to discern, (dazzling) on all sides with the radiance [tejorasim] of the flaming fire and sun" (XI:17), and seeing His "fiery rays fill this whole universe and scorch it with their fierce radiance [tejobhir]" (XI:30). These signs are discussed more fully in the Twenty-fifth Proof. Krishna however does not dwell on His Cosmic Form, rather, having revealed this Form to Arjuna, He returns to His constant theme:

BG:XI:33: Therefore arise and gain glory. Conquering thy foes, enjoy a prosperous kingdom. By Me alone are they slain already. Be thou merely the occasion, O Savyasacin (Arjuna).

Arjuna has been shaken by this vision of the Cosmic Form of Krishna. He continues with his praises (verses 36-40,43), and then, realizing that he may have offended Krishna with a lack of respect, he asks for His forgiveness:

BG:XI:44: Therefore bowing down and prostrating my body before Thee, Adorable Lord, I seek Thy grace. Thou, O God, shouldst bear with me as a father to his son, as a friend to his friend, as a lover to his beloved.

The disciple wishes once more to see the Cosmic Form of Krishna (XI:45-46), and Krishna agrees to do so, counseling him to be "Free from fear and glad at heart" (XI:49-50). While, at the first vision, Arjuna was terrified (XI:35), at the second vision of the Cosmic Form Arjuna has "become collected in mind" and is restored to his "normal nature" (XI:51). Krishna once again affirms that the way to Him is not through ritual observance but through devoting oneself wholeheartedly and in every way to Him:

BG:XI:53-55: In the form in which thou hast seen Me now, I cannot be seen either by the Vedas or by austerities or by gifts or by sacrifices. But by unswerving devotion to Me, O Arjuna, I can be thus known, truly seen and entered into, O Oppressor of the foe (Arjuna). He who does work for Me, he who looks upon Me as his goal he who worships Me, free from attachment, who is free from enmity to all creatures, he goes to Me, O Pandava (Arjuna).

CHAPTER XII: BHAKTIYOGO

This Chapter ties for shortest in number of verses (twenty) with XV. And yet it is widely regarded in India itself, particularly in Bengal where the veneration of Krishna has long flourished, as the essence of the "Gita". Arjuna opens this Chapter by asking Krishna which devotees have the greater knowledge of the path to God, those who worship "the Imperishable and the Unmanifested" (XII:1) or those who worship Krishna, the "pradurbhava" (manifestation) of God; to which Krishna replies:

BG:XII:2: Those who fixing their minds on Me worship Me, ever earnest and possessed of supreme faith--them do I consider most perfect in yoga.

He continues, in the same vein:

BG:XII:6-8: But those, who, laying all their actions on Me, intent on Me, worship, meditating on Me, with unswerving devotion, These whose thoughts are set on Me, I straightway deliver from the ocean of death-bound existence, O Partha (Arjuna). On Me alone fix thy mind, let thy understanding dwell in Me. In Me alone shalt thou live thereafter. Of this there is no doubt.

For those unable to attain to this exalted practice, Krishna counsels them to practice concentration (XII:9), to perform actions for His sake (XII:10), or to renounce the fruit of all action (XII:11). Krishna then describes the characteristics of the true devotee, the yogi, who is beloved to Him, in verses which will be confirmed in Chapter XVI:

BG:XII:13-19: He who has no ill will to any being, who is friendly and compassionate, free from egoism, and self-sense, even-minded in pain and pleasure and patient. The yogi who is ever content, self-controlled, unshakable in determination, with mind and understanding given up to Me...He from whom the world does not shrink and who does not shrink from the world and who is free from joy and anger, fear and agitation...He who has no expectation, is pure, skilful in action, unconcerned, and untroubled, who has given up all initiative...He who neither rejoices nor hates, neither grieves nor desires, and who has renounced good and evil, he who is thus devoted...He who (behaves) alike to foe and friend [see VI:9,XIV:25], also to good and evil repute and who is alike in cold and heat, pleasure and pain [Ibid.] and who is free of attachment...He who holds equal blame and praise, who is silent (trained in speech), content with anything (that comes), who has no fixed abode and is firm in mind...

Krishna then ends, as He has begun this Chapter:

BG:XII:20: But those who with faith, holding Me as their supreme aim, follow this immortal wisdom, those devotees are exceedingly dear to Me.

Krishna is not advocating a salvation by faith alone, deliverance from all evil simply through loving Him. He indicates that those who faithfully and lovingly "follow this immortal wisdom" are "exceedingly

dear to Me." This implies not only love for the "pradurbhava" of God, but also, obedience to His teachings.

CHAPTER XIII: KSETRAKSETRAJNAVIBHAGAYOGO

Arjuna, the ever inquisitive disciple, begins this Chapter with another request for knowledge, but this time not knowledge of Krishna but rather of the world and the ways it is perceived (XIII:prefactory verse not found in some editions and therefore not counted among the 700 verses of Bhagavad-Gita). Krishna tells Arjuna that the body and the material nature (prakrti) constitute the field (XIII:1), while the knower of the body--he who is separate from the body and material nature and who knows that it is not he himself but distinct from himself--is the knower of the field (XIII:1). Consequently, the Knower of all fields, par excellence, is Krishna (XIII:2). The knowledge referred to here is not "vijñana" (rational knowledge) but rather "jñana" (wisdom, spiritual illumination). Krishna describes the meaning of the field and relates it to human consciousness (XIII:3-6). Following this, He lists qualities associated with "jñana," and with the knower of the field:

BG:XIII:7-11: Humility (absence of pride), integrity (absence of deceit), non-violence, patience, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity (of body and mind), steadfastness and self-control. Indifference to objects of sense, self-effacement and the perception of the evil of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain. Non-attachment, absence of clinging to son, wife, home and the like and a constant equal-mindedness to all desirable and undesirable happenings. Unswerving devotion to Me with wholehearted discipline, resort to solitary places, dislike for a crowd of people. Constancy in the [atmajñana] knowledge of the Spirit, in sight into the end of the [jñana] knowledge of Truth--this is declared to be (true) [jñana] knowledge and all that is different from it is [ajñana] non-knowledge.

Krishna then announces the object of all wisdom: "It is the Supreme Brahman which is beginningless and who is said to be neither existent nor non-existent" (XIII:12). Brahman is "the object of knowledge [jñana] and the goal of knowledge [jñana]" (XIII:17). Bahá'u'lláh teaches, in "Lawh-i-Jam'i-Azahba": "The beginning of all things is the knowledge of God..." And, in another Tablet: "Arise in the name of Him Who is the Object of all knowledge, and, with absolute detachment from the learning of men...attain unto the knowledge of the one true God--the most exalted station to which any man can aspire."^{clv} Krishna indicates that Brahman transcends our human

categories of existent and non-existent, not that He is without existence: "He dwells in the world, enveloping all" (XIII:13), "He is without and within all beings" (XIII:15). He is free from all the temporal qualities of His creation (XIII:14-16); finally, Krishna says:

BG:XIII:17: He is the Light of lights, said to be beyond darkness...He is seated in the hearts of all.

These teachings, Radhakrishnan points out, are found in the Upanishads: Svetasvatara Upanishad (III,8,16); Isa Upanishad (5); Mundaka Upanishad (XIII,1,7); Brhadaranyaka Upanishad (IV,4,16). They are also found in the Qur'án and in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as well as many mystical texts associated with the Semitic monotheistic traditions.

Krishna then explains the two selves, the self or personality which is tied to nature (*prakṛti*) and the self which is in the body but not of it (XIII:19-22). He then says that knowledge of nature and of the natural self (XIII:23), meditation, the path of knowledge (*samkhya*) or the way of works (*karma*), a man may achieve liberation. Even those who are ignorant and who learn to worship from others, who have not arrived at consciousness through their own initiative, these also are liberated "by their devotion to what they have heard." (XIII:25) After repeating, in different wording, His teaching of the distinction between the field and the knower of the field, Krishna concludes with this image:

BG:XIII:33-34: As the one sun illumines the whole world, so does the Lord of the field illumine this entire field, O Bharata (Arjuna). Those who percieve thus by their eye of wisdom the distinction between the field and the knower of the field, and the deliverance of beings from nature (*prakṛti*), they attain to the Supreme."

CHAPTER XIV: GUNATRAYAVIBHAGAYOGO

In the Introduction, mention was made of the three "gunas," the previous Chapter noted that the Supreme Brahman is "free from the gunas" (XIII:14); this Chapter and Chapter XVII elaborate upon the significance of the "gunas." Krishna opens by stating that He will "again declare that supreme "jnana," of all "jnana" the best" (XIV:1). By knowing this "jnana" Krishna says that "all sages have passed from this world to the highest perfection" (XIV:1), and having "resorted to this "jnana" and become of like nature to Me" they achieve liberation,

they are free of birth and death alike (XIV:2). Krishna then says something very interesting about the creation of all beings: He asserts that Brahma is the womb of all life (and, as we know, is considered God the Creator) and that He is the Father of all beings, He Who "casts the seed" (XIV:3,4). This recalls the alchemical teaching which states that all beings are generated by the interpenetration of the active principle with that which is its recipient. In China this is known as yin and yang, in India and Southeast Asia as shakti and lingam. In the wisdom literature associated with King Solomon, "hochmah" (wisdom) is a female principle, and in congress with this principle God brings forth the world.

The three "gunas" are defined, and the attachment which each mode engenders is explained (XIV:5-9): "sattva" (good) attaches to happiness and "jnana" (XIV:6,9), "rajas" (passion) to action (XIV:7,9), and "tamas" (dullness) to negligence, indolence and sleep (XIV:8,9). Each one of these modes may prevail in the individual. The sign that goodness has increased is when the light of "jnana" shines forth from all the nine gates of the body (XIV:11). The signs of the increase of passion and of dullness are also indicated (XIV:12,13). While "sattva" causes "prakasa" (illumination), "tamas" causes "aprakasa" (the opposite of illumination), and "rajas" ranges between the two. Speaking of the hour of death, Krishna teaches that if, "goodness prevails" when "the embodied soul meets with dissolution...then it attains to the pure worlds of those who know the Highest." (XIV:15) Bahá'u'lláh, in *Kitáb-i-Íqán* also identifies the hour of death as of supreme importance: "How often hath a sinner attained, at the hour of death, to the essence of faith, and, quaffing the immortal draught, hath taken his flight unto the Concourse on high!" (KI:194;GL:266) The fruit of "sattva" is goodness and purity--from which arise "jnana"; the fruit of "rajas" is pain--from which arises greed; the fruit of "tamas" is ignorance--from which arise negligence and error (XIV:16,17). Krishna calls the soul to rise above the three "gunas," to be detached, freed from the bonds of "birth, death, old age and pain" and to attain "life eternal" (XIV:20).

Arjuna asks of Krishna what will be the way of life of the soul who has risen above the three "gunas," (XIV:21) and Krishna replies that the distinguishing characteristic of this soul will be his radiant acquiescence, his detachment from all things, "who does not abhor illumination, activity and delusion when they arise nor longs for them when they cease." (XIV:22) To him pain and pleasure are alike; blame and praise are one; same in honour and dishonour (XIV:24,25); same

to friends and foes (XIV:25; also see VI:9). "samalostasmakancanah" is the third word of this verse, and corresponds exactly to the eighth word of VI:8: a clod [of earth], a stone, a piece of gold are the same [of equal worth] (XIV:24). Krishna reiterates that the essential characteristic of one who would attain to the abode of the immortal, the imperishable, and to absolute bliss (XIV:27) is that he "serves Me with unfailing devotion of love" (XIV:26).

CHAPTER XV: PURUSOTTAMAYOGO

This Chapter is devoted to describing certain special attributes of the Avatara, the Primal Man, the Supreme Person. Krishna says that there is no refuge except in "purusam prapadya," the Supreme Person (XV:4), that he who is liberated from the dualities of the deluded repairs to His presence (XV:5), that this is His supreme abode (XV:6), that those who reach this abode will never return to the nether realms (XV:6). The symbol He gives for the sustenance of the cosmos which has originated in this Supreme Person is the imperishable "asvattham" (peepal tree), which Radhakrishnan identifies as "samsaravrksa," the cosmic tree (XV:1 and note, p. 326). This cosmic tree is found in "Kathan Upanishad" (V:1), in "Taittiriya Upanishad" (I:10), and in "Rig Veda" (I:24:7). Another cosmic tree is found in the "etz hayyim" (the tree of life), which stands in the Garden of Eden, according to the first book of the Bible (Bereshit/Genesis, 3:22). In the annals of Jewish mysticism (kabbalah) the ten Sephirot, emanations from God, are depicted in the form of a tree, recalling "etz hayyim." This image of the tree of life, called "Sadratu'l-Muntaha" (farthest Sidra or Lote tree) also appears in the Qur'án (53:15,17), and under this name we find it in the Writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, denoting the Primal Will which governs the cosmos.

Krishna then describes His appearance in a body (XV:7-10), the recognition of the divine "pradurbhava" (Manifestation) among those who have "jnanacaksusah" (the eye of wisdom) and the "yoginas" (sages), and the failure to recognize Him in His human form by "the deluded...the unintelligent, whose souls are undisciplined" (XV:10-11). His "tejo" (splendour) is divine, not that of the sun or moon or fire (XV:6,12). Krishna then, in metaphorical language, describes His vivifying influence upon the world at the time of His appearance in the Avatara (XV:13-14). He reminds Arjuna that His existence is primordial, that He and no other is "the author of Vedanta and...knower of the Vedas" (XV:15), to reiterate His earlier declaration (IV:1,3):

I proclaimed this imperishable yoga to Vivasvan; Vivasvan told it to Manu and Manu spoke it to Ikshvaku...
This same ancient yoga has been today declared to thee by Me...

Krishna tells Arjuna that there are two kinds of persons in this world, the perishable and the imperishable, and those which are of this world (physical) are perishable while those which are of the spiritual world are imperishable. This is a teaching found in all the Avatars, for the promise is not that all persons will attain to eternal life but that those who detach themselves from perishable and attach themselves to the imperishable will become entities of a new creation, reborn in the spirit, and therefore eternally living themselves. The Highest Spirit, the Supreme Self sustains all existences (XV:17). Krishna tells Arjuna that He surpasses the perishable and imperishable persons, that He is the Supreme Person, the Highest Person (XV:18-19), and He makes this promise (XV:19-20):

He, who, undeluded, thus knows Me, the Highest Person, is the knower of all and worships Me with all his being (with all his spirit), O Bharata (Arjuna).

Thus has this most secret doctrine been taught by Me, O blameless one. By knowing this, a man will become wise and will have fulfilled all his duties, O Bharata (Arjuna).

Krishna referred to "the supreme secret" earlier (IV:3), related to "yogah puratanah" (ancient yoga), and likewise He calls it "wisdom more secret than all secrets" (XVIII:63) and "My supreme word, the most secret of all" (XVIII:64) in the last Chapter of Bhagavad-Gita.

CHAPTER XVI: DAIVASURASAMPADVIBHAGAYOGO

This Chapter opens with a list of the endowments of the divine nature, a veritable litany of virtues and perfections (XVI:1-3):

Fearlessness, purity of mind, wise apportionment of knowledge and concentration, charity, self-control and sacrifice, study of the scriptures, austerity and uprightness.

Non-violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, aversion to fault finding, compassion to living beings, freedom from covetousness, gentleness, modesty and steadiness (absence of fickleness).

Vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, freedom from malice and excessive pride...

Krishna also sets forth the characteristics of the demonic nature, the qualities which lead to error, to sin (XVI:4):

Ostentation, arrogance, excessive pride, anger, as also harshness and ignorance...

As "the divine have been described at length" (XVI:6), Krishna proceeds to describe the demoniac in some detail (XVI:7-19):

The demoniac do not know about the way of action or the way of renunciation. Neither purity, nor good conduct, nor truth is found in them.

They say that the world is unreal, without a basis, without a Lord, not brought about in regular causal sequence, caused by desire, in short

Holding fast to this view, these lost souls of feeble understanding, of cruel deeds, rise up as the enemies of the world for its destruction.

Giving themselves up to insatiable desire, full of hypocrisy, excessive pride and arrogance, holding wrong views through delusion, they act with impure resolves

Obsessed with innumerable cares which would end only with (their) death, looking upon the gratification of desires as their highest aim, assured that this is all.

Bound by hundreds of ties of desire, given over to lust and anger, they strive to amass hoards of wealth, by unjust means, for the gratification of their desires.

'This today has been gained by me: this desire I shall attain, this is mine and this wealth also shall be mine (in future).

'This foe is slain by me and others also I shall slay. I am the lord, I am the enjoyer, I am the successful, mighty and happy.' Bewildered by many thoughts, entangled in the meshes of delusion and addicted to the gratification of desires, they fall into a foul hell.

Self-conceited, obstinate, filled with pride and arrogance of wealth, they perform sacrifices which are so only in name with ostentation and without regard to rules.

Given over to self-conceit, force and pride and also to lust and anger, these malicious people despise Me dwelling in the bodies of themselves and others.

These cruel haters, worst of men, I hurl constantly these evil-doers only into the wombs of demons in (this cycle of) births and deaths.

Where, in the previous Chapter, Krishna described the two kinds of persons as perishable and imperishable (XV:16), here "the two types of beings created in the world" are depicted as "divine and demonic" (XVI:6). This same teaching we find in the Kitáb-i-Íqán of Bahá'u'lláh, and Some Answered Questions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Know verily that Knowledge is of two kinds: Divine and Satanic. The one welletth out from the fountain of divine inspiration; the other is but a reflection of vain and obscure thoughts. The source of the former is God Himself; the motive-force of the latter the whisperings of selfish desire. (KI:69)

But the spirit of man has two aspects: one divine, one satanic; that is to say, it is capable of the utmost perfection, or it is capable of the utmost imperfection. If it acquires virtues it is the most noble of the existing beings, and if it acquires vices it becomes the most degraded existence. (SAQ:XXXVI:164-165)

...for capacity is of two kinds, natural capacity and acquired capacity. The first, which is the creation of God, is purely good--in the creation of God there is no evil; but the acquired capacity has become the cause of the appearance of evil. (SAQ:LVII:249)

There are three gates of darkness: lust, anger and greed (XVI:21). Those who are released from the bondage of these three gates, those who are delivered from the demoniac, those who do what is good for their souls, they reach "the highest state" (XVI:5,22), but "he who discards the scriptural law and acts as his desires prompt him, he does not attain either perfection or happiness or the highest goal." (XVI:23) Nor does Krishna approve of "violent austerities" (XVII:5) which are "impelled by the force of lust and passion" (XVII:5), and which "oppress the group of elements in their body and Me also dwelling in the body" (XVII:6), and He calls those men who engage in such austerities "vain and conceited" (XVII:5) and "demoniac in their resolves." (XVII:6) Krishna affirms that it is in obedience to divine

restraint, not in inventing our own practices or in throwing off all rules and regulations, that we achieve spiritual freedom:

BG:XVI:24: Therefore let the scripture be thy authority by determining what should be done and what should not be done. Knowing what is declared by the rules of the scripture, thou shouldst do thy work in this world.

CHAPTER XVII: SRADDATRAYAVIBHAGAYOGO

Arjuna, like so many human beings, seeking a way out of the yoke of divine law, asks Krishna what happens to those who neglect the ordinances of scripture but offer sacrifices to God in faith. Krishna replies that each man worships according to his nature, whether that nature is "sattvas" (good), "rajas" (passionate) or "tamas" (dull). He does not approve of "violent austerities, which are not ordained by the scriptures" (XVII:5). Men of different natures choose food, sacrifices, austerities and gifts, each according to his nature (XVII:7-13). Whereas the previous Chapter said there were two types of beings, the divine and the demoniac, here Krishna posits three natures: one of which, the good, corresponds to the divine, and the other two, the passionate and the dull to the demoniac. Then Krishna describes three kinds of "tapa" (penance), the penance of the body, the penance of speech, and the penance of mind. The characteristics of these three varieties of penance complement the list of divine qualities found in Chapter XVI:

BG:XVII:14,15,16: The worship of the gods, of the twice-born, of teachers and of the wise, purity, uprightness, continence and non-violence...The utterance (of words) which gives no offence, which is truthful, pleasant and beneficial and the regular recitation of the Veda...Serenity of mind, gentleness, silence, self-control, the purity of mind...

He explains that when this threefold penance is practiced "with utmost faith by men of balanced mind without expectation of reward" it is good (XVII:17); when "in order to gain respect, honour and reverence and for the sake of show" it is passionate, and neither stable nor lasting (XVII:18); and when "with a foolish obstinacy by means of self-torture or for causing injury to others" is called dull (XVII:19). He likewise explains the value of gifts according to the giver of gifts, be he "sattvas", "rajas" or "tapas" in nature. He concluded this Chapter by describing the significance of the threefold symbol of Brahman, "Aum Tat Sat," and all three are used by those of "sattvas"

nature, of divine type, while whatever "offering or gift is made, whatever penance is performed, whatever rite is observed, without faith, it is called "asat," O Partha (Arjuna); it is of no account hereafter or here." (XVII:28)

CHAPTER XVIII: MOKSASAMNYASAYOGO

The final chapter of Bhagavad-Gita gives an account of the seventeenth yoga, the path of liberation or release from this world of birth and death by renunciation. Arjuna begins the Chapter by asking Krishna the true nature of renunciation (XVIII:1), and Krishna replies that the wise understand renunciation as the abandonment of works prompted by desire, the abandonment of the fruits of all actions (XVIII:2). He explains that, contrary to some opinions (XVIII:3), acts of sacrifice, gift-giving and penance are not to be abandoned, but should be performed without attachment to the fruits of those actions (XVIII:5-6). "Verily the renunciation of any duty that ought to be done is not right." (XVIII:7) Indeed, He says "It is indeed impossible for any embodied being to abstain from work altogether" (XVIII:11).

He states that the attitude towards actions is of the greatest import, and refers to the attitudes of the three "gunas" (XVIII:7-10): "sattva" (goodness), "rajas" (passion) and "tamas" (dullness): 1) renunciation is threefold, according to the three "gunas" (XVIII:4); 2) threefold is the fruit of action for those who have not renounced that fruit: pleasant, unpleasant and mixed (XVIII:12); 3) "the threefold incitement to action: the instrument, the action and the agent" (XVIII:18); 4) the three kinds of knowledge (XVIII:19-25); 5) the three kinds of doer (XVIII:26-28); 6) the three kinds of understanding (XVIII:29-32); the three kinds of steadiness (XVIII:33-35); 7) three kinds of happiness (XVIII:36-39). Krishna then says that these "gunas" influence all beings, whether of earth or of heaven (XVIII:40), and proceeds to outline the duties incumbent upon each of the caste groups--Brahmin, Ksatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras--which correspond to their nature (XVIII:41-44). "Devoted each to his own duty man attains perfection" (XVIII:45). Krishna explains this principle in the following verses:

BG:XVIII:47-49: Better is one's own law though imperfectly carried out than the law of another carried out perfectly. One does not incur sin when one does the duty ordained by one's own nature. One should not give up the work suited to one's nature, O Son of Kunti (Arjuna), though it may be defective, for all enterprises are clouded by defects as fire by smoke. He

whose understanding is unattached everywhere, who has subdued his self and from whom desire has fled--he comes through renunciation to the supreme state transcending all work."

In Chapter XIII, Krishna tells Arjuna that Brahman is the object of all knowledge, of all wisdom (XIII:12,17), and here again He says that Brahman is the "supreme consummation of wisdom [jnana]." (XVIII:50) He follows this assertion with another description of the perfections of the enlightened soul:

BG:XVIII:51-56: Endowed with a pure understanding, firmly restraining oneself, turning away from sound and other objects of sense and casting aside attraction and aversion. Dwelling in solitude, eating but little, controlling speech, body and mind, and ever engaged in meditation and concentration and taking refuge in dispassion. And casting aside self-sense, force, arrogance, desire, anger, possession, egoless and tranquil in mind...Regarding all beings as alike he attains supreme devotion to Me. Through devotion he comes to know Me, what My measure is and who I am in truth; then, having known Me in truth, he forthwith enters into Me. Doing continually all actions whatsoever, taking refuge in Me, he reached by My grace the eternal, undying abode.

Krishna advises Arjuna to follow the path of the wise man, the yogi, and assures him that "wisdom [jnana] more secret than all secrets" has "been declared to thee by Me" (XVIII:63), and advises him to "Reflect on it fully and do as thou chooseth." (Ibid.) Krishna then summarizes His teaching once more:

BG:XVIII:64-66: Listen again to My supreme word, the most secret of all. Well beloved art thou of Me, therefore I shall tell thee what is good for thee. Fix thy mind on Me; be devoted to Me; sacrifice to Me; prostrate thyself before Me; so shalt thou come to Me. I promise thee truly, for thou art dear to Me. Abandoning all duties, come to Me alone for shelter. Be not grieved, for I shall release thee from all evils.

Then Krishna warns Arjuna not to teach this secret wisdom to "one who is not austere in life or who has no devotion in him or who is not obedient or who speaks ill of Me," (XVIII:67) and exhorts Arjuna to teach this supreme secret to those who show "the highest devotion to

Me" so that they may also "come to Me" (XVIII:68). One of the proverbs of King Solomon is similar:

Proverbs:23:9: Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

As Jesus said, in His sermon on the mount:

Matt:7:6: Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Krishna asks Arjuna if he has heard His teaching, "with thy thought fixed to one point" (XVIII:72), and Arjuna assures Him that "Destroyed is my delusion and recognition has been gained by me through Thy grace...I stand firm with my doubts dispelled." (XVIII:73) Arjuna's last words sum up the effect of this teaching upon him: "I shall act according to Thy word." (XVIII:73)

TWENTY-FOURTH PROOF SPIRITUAL SEASONS OF KRISHNA

While divine philosophy asserts that "first we must speak of the logical proofs, afterwards the spiritual proofs...which we cannot at the beginning put forth for the benefit of the materialists"^{clvi}; and while this argument in its original context applies to proofs of the origin of the human species; as we have already understood from studying the criteria of truth recognized by divine philosophy in the Introduction, besides logical proofs there are also spiritual proofs. Inasmuch as all of the logical proofs and traditional proofs have been stated, now there will be a careful consideration of the spiritual proofs. The first spiritual proof which we will study is that there are "spiritual cycles of the Prophets" which correspond in the spiritual realm to the cycle of seasons in the material world^{clvii}:

"In this material world time has cycles; places change through alternating seasons, and for souls there are progress, retrogression, and education.

"Sometime[s] it is the season of spring, at another time it is the season of autumn, and again it is the season of summer or the season of winter.

"In the spring there are the clouds which send down the precious rain, the musk-scented breezes and life-giving zephyrs; the air is perfectly temperate, the rain falls, the sun shines, the fecundating

wind wafts the clouds, the world is renewed, and the breath of life appears in plants, in animals, and in men. Earthly beings pass from one condition to another. All things are clothed in new garments, and the black earth is covered with herbage; mountains and plains are adorned with verdure, trees bear leaves and blossoms, gardens bring forth flowers and fragrant herbs. The world becomes another world, and it attains to a life-giving spirit. The earth was a lifeless body; it finds a new spirit, and produces endless beauty, grace, and freshness. Thus the spring is the cause of new life, and infuses a new spirit.

"Afterwards comes the summer, when the heat increases, and growth and development attain their greatest power. The energy of life in the vegetable kingdom reaches to the degree of perfection, the fruit appears, and the time of harvest ripens; a seed has become a sheaf, and the food is stored for winter. Afterwards comes tumultuous autumn when unwholesome and sterile winds blow, it is the season of sickness, when all things are withered, and the balmy air is vitiated. The breezes of spring are changed to autumn winds, the fertile green trees have become withered and bare, flowers and fragrant herbs fade away, the beautiful garden becomes a dust-heap. Following this comes the season of winter, with cold and tempests. It snows, rains, hails, storms, thunders and lightens, freezes and congeals; all plants die, and animals languish and are wretched.

"When this state is reached, again a new life-giving spring returns, and the cycle is renewed. The season of spring with its hosts of freshness and beauty, spreads its tent on the plains and mountains with great pomp and magnificence. A second time the form of the creatures is renewed, and the creation of beings begins afresh; bodies grow and develop, the plains and wildernesses become green and fertile, trees bring forth blossoms, and the spring of last year returns in the utmost fullness and glory. Such is, and such ought to be, the cycle and succession of existence: such is the cycle and revolution of the material world.

"It is the same with the spiritual cycles of the Prophets. That is to say, the day of the appearance of the Holy Manifestations is the spiritual springtime, it is the divine splendour, it is the heavenly bounty, the breeze of life, the rising of the Sun of Reality. Spirits are quickened, hearts are refreshed and invigorated, souls become good, existence is set in motion, human realities are gladdened, and grow and develop in good qualities and perfections. Universal progress takes place, and there are resurrection and lamentation; for it is the day of judgment, the time of turmoil and distress, at the same time that it is the season of joy, of happiness, and of absolute attraction.

"Afterwards the life-giving spring ends in fruitful summer. The word of God is exalted, the Law of God is promulgated; all things reach perfection. The heavenly table is spread, the holy breezes perfume the East and the West, the teachings of God conquer the world, men become educated, praiseworthy results are produced, universal progress appears in the world of humanity, and the divine bounties surround all things. The Sun of Reality rises from the horizon of the Kingdom with the greatest power and heat. When it reaches the meridian it will begin to decline and descend, and the spiritual summer will be followed by autumn, when growth and development are arrested. Breezes change into blighting winds, and the unwholesome season dissipates the beauty and freshness of the gardens, plains, and bowers. That is to say, attraction and goodwill do not remain, divine qualities are changed, the radiance of hearts is dimmed, the spirituality of souls is altered, virtues are replaced by vices, and holiness and purity disappear. Only the name of the Religion of God remains, and the exoteric forms of the divine teachings. The foundations of the Religion of God are destroyed and annihilated, and nothing but forms and customs exist. Divisions appear, firmness is changed into instability, and spirits become dead; hearts languish, souls become inert, and winter arrives; that is to say, the coldness of ignorance envelops the world and the darkness of human error prevails. After this come indifference, disobedience, inconsiderateness, indolence, baseness, animal instincts, and the coldness and insensibility of stones. It is like the season of winter when the terrestrial globe, deprived of the effect of the heat of the sun, becomes desolate and dreary. When the world of intelligence and thought has reached to this state, there remain only continual death and perpetual non-existence.

"When the season of winter has had its effect, again the spiritual springtime returns and a new cycle appears. Spiritual breezes blow, the luminous dawn gleams, the divine clouds give rain, the rays of the Sun of Reality shine forth, the contingent world attains unto a new life, and is clad in a wonderful garment. All the signs and the gifts of the past springtime reappear, with perhaps even greater splendour in this new season."

The Avatars of Vishnu have come at various intervals, corresponding to the needs of humanity:

BG:IV:7-8: Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata (Arjuna), then I send forth (create incarnate) Myself.

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age.

The advent of the Avatara is generally associated by chroniclers with the end of an age, with the abyss of its cycle. But the end of one age is also the beginning of another. Hence, Krishna says that "of seasons (I am) the flower-bearer (spring)." (X:35) For, even as spring actually begins according to astronomers at the arrival of the vernal equinox, when day and night are everywhere on earth of equal length, nevertheless, the cold and apparent lifelessness of winter may persist for some weeks or even months beyond this beginning of the spring season. There is overlap, with winter appearing to carry over into spring, while spring is known to have commenced.

In the macrocosmic view^{clviii}, the Primal Man, Purusa ("Purusa Vishnu" in Katha Upanishad and "Purusa Narayana" in Satapatha Brahmana), Who is the primordial Manifestation of God, is the means by which the worlds of creation come into existence. According to the speculative time-scheme employed by Hindu chroniclers, Purusa emits the world of creation for one mahakalpa (life of Brahma), which consists of 100 kalpas (years of Brahma) of 360 days (days of Brahma). Each one of the kalpas contains 1000 mahayugas, and each mahayuga is made up of four yugas. Each of these yugas is made up of 3000 divine years, and each of those years must be multiplied by 360 in order to arrive at the corresponding human years. Hence, working from the small to the large, one yug is equivalent to 1,080,000 human years; one mahayug equivalent to 4,320,000 human years; one kalpa 4,320,000,000 (4.32 billion) human years; one mahakalpa 432,000,000,000 (432 billion) human years. Inasmuch as scientists are currently estimating the age of this planet in the single digit range of billions of human years, it is to be assumed that the traditional Hindu system, while beautifully organized, has considerably exaggerated the actual time which has elapsed since the origin of this earth. While life forms certainly exist on other planets in other solar systems in other galaxies, the Hindu system is not very useful for earthly computations, unless it were to be understood in a symbolic rather than a literal manner.

The ancient science of numbers, called numerology in English, gematria in Latin and 'abjad in Arabic, may provide us with methods of better understanding the significances of the cosmic time periods employed in the Hindu system. According to these ancient authorities, there are four yugas (ages or aeons): 1)Kṛta yuga; 2)Tretayuga;

3)Dvaparayuga; and 4)Kaliyuga. The entire span of one mahayuga or four yugas is 12,000 years. This is an important number, inasmuch as Zoroastrian literature likewise posits a cycle of 12,000 years.

The chroniclers claim that an Avatara appears at the end of every yuga. Narasimha, the Man-Lion appeared at the end of the Krtayuga; Rama, at the end of Tretayuga; Krishna at the end of Dvaparayuga; and Kalkin-avatara would arrive at the end of Kaliyuga. Thus, Krishna would have appeared at the darkest time in the third cycle of 3000 years, which bears the name Tretayug. As the appearance of the Divine Manifestation, He represented the dawn of the new yug, the new cycle of 3000 years. Kaliyug is the cycle which is furthest from divine guidance, and hence He inaugurated a cycle in which lawlessness and disobedience to God and disharmony among men were the general practice rather than the unfortunate exception. While it is evident that Krishna inspired the creation of an elaborate and highly sophisticated culture in India and Southeast Asia--judging from the extant archaeological record and the links of this record to the worship of this Avatara, nevertheless, the overwhelming character of the last 3000 years, the Kaliyug which He inaugurated, and which the Bhagavata-Purana speaks of in future tense, is abysmally debased and depraved, according to the Hindu chroniclers^{clix}:

BP:XII:2:2-3: In the Kali Yuga, wealth alone will be the deciding factor of nobility...brute force will be the only standard in establishing or deciding what is righteous or just...cheating will be the order of the day in business relations; satisfaction of sexual pleasure will be the only consideration of male or female excellence and worthiness..

BP:XII:3:24-25: In that age, people will be greedy. They will take to wicked behavior. They will be merciless, indulge in hostilities without any cause, unfortunate, extremely covetous for wealth and women...mortal beings will become dull-witted, unlucky, voracious, destitute of wealth yet voluptuous, and women, wanton and unchaste.

BP:XII:3:30-33: Countries will be laid waste by robbers and vagabonds; the Vedas will be condemned by heretics; kings will exploit their subjects, and twice-borns like Brahmanas will only think of the gratification of their sexual desires and other appetites...

BP:XII:3:37-39: In the Kali Yuga, men will abandon their parents, brothers, friends, and relatives. They will establish their relationships on a sexual basis. People who are ignorant of religion will occupy high seats and will preach religion. People will have their minds weighed down with constant anxiety and fear...

In the story of Krishna's own life story the blackness of the Kaliyug is depicted. Rather than welcoming Krishna, the Lord of the Universe, with open arms, with loving obedience, the generality of mankind turned away from Him. After the battle of Kurukshetra, in which the Pandavas triumphed under the guidance of Krishna, the Lord returned to His birthplace. What happened after this clearly demonstrates the perversity of the age^{dx}:

“When he returned to Dvaraka fearful portents and signs began to manifest themselves and there was a general feeling of unrest and alarm. A dreadful figure, Death personified, haunted every house; fierce hurricanes blew; huge rats multiplied, infested roads and houses and attacked people in their sleep; storks hooted like owls and goats howled like jackals; cows gave birth to foals and camels to mules; food was filled with worms; fire blazed with dark-hued flames and the air was traversed by headless and hideous spirits. Drunkenness became rife and the destructive flame of dissension was kindled...and in one of the ensuing brawls Krishna's son Pradyumna was killed in his presence, and in further quarrels, disputes and mutual clashes nearly all the Yadava chiefs exterminated one another with the very clubs they had forged from the iron rod of his other son Samba...

“Tumult and rebellion were in the air, and though Krishna slew many of the rebels he could not quell the fighting. Only his faithful charioteer Duraka remained with him to the end and attended his last days.

“Full of sorrow Krishna and Balarama retired to the forest where Balarama died in his sleep. Krishna mourned by himself on a river bank, was mistaken for a deer and shot through the foot [His "Achilles' heal"] by the hunter Jaras who had tipped the fatal arrow with an arrowhead of iron that had been extracted from the body of Samba...It has been pointed out that the elements of Krishna's later life are 'quite un-Indian in their tragic character'...”

“The drunken brawl, the general slaughter, the hero slain by an arrow piercing his one vulnerable spot, the city engulfed, the "twilight of an era," are well-known in early European literature. The

notion of the dying god is widespread in the Near East. All these themes are found nowhere else in Indian mythology.”^{clxi}

Some Western students of Hindu mythology have speculated that certain incidents in the life of Krishna may have been patterned after tales told of Jesus in the Gospels. Hermann Jacobi writes^{clxii} that "Christian influence, assumed by Weber, is excluded by chronological considerations, for the Jains have built up their entire hagiology^{clxiii} on the model of the history of Krsna...As this curious system of the Jains, which presupposes the worship of Krsna as a very popular religion of India, is already found in some of their canonical books, and as these are prior to our era, there can have been no Christian influence at work in originating the worship of Krsna." Furthermore, there was very little influence of Christian stories and themes upon any community in India until the beginning of the Western colonial legacy, in the 16th and 17th centuries. Long before this time, even the latest Vaisnavite works to be composed were extant, including Bhagavata-Purana, which has been dated by Western scholars^{clxiv} around the ninth or tenth century of this era, and the "Gitagovinda" of Jayadeva, dated circa 1185 CE.

Perhaps the reader would consider another reason for the peculiar and distinctive characteristics of Krishna's biography, in contrast with the corpus of Hindu mythology--that in this compendium of legends there are to be found the traces of a Manifestation of God, akin to, and therefore resembling in some ways, the Manifestations of God which have appeared in other lands. Even as there are resonances between the tableaux presented of the life of Krishna and that of Jesus, so also there are similar resonances with the biography of Zarathushtra (Zoroaster), and Gotama Buddha. A Manifestation of God is not the incarnation of a god--He represents God to man, but He also has the form and nature of a man during His residence on earth. In His human nature, He is susceptible to all the limitations of human life, including the calamities, the sufferings, and the death which are alleged for Krishna. Miraculous powers are claimed for this Avatara, but He is not All-Powerful, and human beings still are endowed with free will. Hence, when Krishna permits His followers to use their own judgment in deciding how much to drink, when He encourages to exercise their free will in limiting their intoxication, the following is reported^{clxv}:

“Great drunkenness and licentiousness prevailed and in one of the ensuing brawls Krishna's son Pradyumna was killed in his

presence, and in further quarrels, disputes and mutual clashes nearly all of the Yadava chiefs exterminated one another..."

Even as the appearance of Krishna-Avatarā was related to the close of the Tretayuga, so the advent of Kalkin-Avatarā has been prophesied for the close of the Kaliyuga. This advent of the Manifestation is also linked with the decline of religion:

VP:4:24: When Vedic religion and the dharma [religious practice] of the law books have nearly ceased and the Kali Yuga is almost exhausted, then...the blessed Lord Vasudeva, will become incarnate here in the universe in the form of Kalki...

BP:XII:2:16: He will then establish righteousness upon the earth and the minds of the people will be awakened and become pure as crystal. And these men, the remnant of mankind, will thus be transformed...these offspring will follow the ways of the Kṛta Age.

The Hindu Scriptures predict that Kalkin-Avatarā will appear at the close of Kaliyuga and to announce the dawn of Kṛtayuga, which is not only a new yuga (age), corresponding to the Biblical millennium, but also a new mahayuga (cycle), as Kṛtayuga is the springtime, the commencement of the mahayuga cycle. While the new yuga represents "new heavens and a new earth,"^{clxvi} the new mahayuga likewise inaugurates "a new heaven and a new earth"^{clxvii}, but more powerfully, inasmuch as the cycle comes every 12,000 years whereas the age comes every 3,000 years. The coming of the Avatarā at the close of one age and inaugurating a new age fulfills this spiritual proof of the Spiritual Seasons, and likewise, the promised advent of Kalkin-Avatarā at the end of the mahayuga indicates that He will usher in not only a new age, but a new cycle of human existence.

TWENTY-FIFTH PROOF KRISHNA IS THE SUN OF REALITY

The second spiritual proof of all of the prophets is articulated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá^{clxviii}:

"The spiritual cycles of the Sun of Reality are like the cycles of the material sun: they are always revolving and being renewed. The Sun of Reality, like the material sun, has numerous rising and dawning

places: one day it rises from the zodiacal sign of Cancer, another day from the sign of Libra or Aquarius, another time it is from the sign of Aries that it diffuses its rays. But the sun is one sun and one reality; the people of knowledge are lovers of the sun, and are not fascinated by the places of its rising and dawning. The people of perception are seekers of the Truth, and not of the places of its appearance, nor of its dawning points; therefore they will adore the Sun from whatever point in the zodiac it may appear, and they will seek the Reality in every Sanctified Soul who manifests it. Such people always attain to the truth, and are not veiled from the Sun of the Divine World. So, the lover of the sun and the seeker of the light will always turn towards the sun, whether it shines from the sign of Aries or gives its bounty from the sign of Cancer, or radiates from Gemini; but the ignorant and uninstructed are lovers of the signs of the zodiac, and enamoured and fascinated by the rising-places, and not by the sun. When it was in the sign of Cancer they turned towards it, though afterwards the sun changed to the sign of Libra; as they were lovers of the sign, they turned towards it and attached themselves to it, and were deprived of the influences of the sun merely because its place had changed. For example, once the Sun of Reality poured forth its rays from the sign of Abraham, and then it dawned from the sign of Moses and illuminated the horizon; afterwards it rose with the greatest power and brilliancy from the sign of Christ: those who were the seekers of Reality, worshipped that Reality wherever they saw it, but those who were attached to Abraham were deprived of its influences, when it shone upon Sinai and illuminated the reality of Moses. Those who held fast to Moses when the Sun of Reality shone from Christ with the utmost radiance and lordly splendour, were also veiled; and so forth.

"Therefore man must be the seeker after the Reality; and he will find that Reality in each of the Sanctified Souls. He must be fascinated and enraptured, and attracted to the divine bounty; he must be like the butterfly who is the lover of the light from whatever lamp it may shine, and like the nightingale who is the lover of the rose in whatever garden it may grow.

"If the sun were to rise in the West, it would still be the sun; one must not withdraw from it on account of its rising-place, nor consider the West to be always the place of sun-set. In the same way, one must look for the heavenly bounties, and seek for the Divine Aurora. In every place where it appears, one must become its distracted lover. Consider that if the Jews had not kept turning to the horizon of Moses, and had only regarded the Sun of Reality, without any doubt they would have recognized the Sun in the dawning-place of the reality of Christ, in the greatest divine splendour. But, alas! a

thousand times alas! attaching themselves to the outward words of Moses, they were deprived of the divine bounties and the lordly splendours!"

As the sun rises every morning and enlightens the world of appearances, so also the Sun of Reality arises at the dawn of every age and cycle and sheds His light on the spiritual and physical worlds alike. David sings, in Tehillim:

Psalms 84:8-12: O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun [shemesh] and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory [Kavod]: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

Radhakrishnan remarks that the coming of the Avatara, and in particular of Lord Krishna, is like the rising of the sun^{clxix}:

“According to the Bhagavata^{clxx}, 'at midnight, in the thickest darkness, the Dweller in every heart revealed Himself in the divine Devaki [mother of Krishna] for the Lord is the self hidden in the hearts of all beings.' The glorious radiance arises from the blackest of black nights. In mysteries and revelations the night is rich. The presence of night does not make the existence of light less real. Indeed but for night there could be no human consciousness of light. The meaning of the birth of Krsna is the fact of redemption in the dark night. In the hour of calamity and enslavement the Saviour of the world is born.”

Bhagavad-Gita makes reference to the Krishna as the "sun" of the eternal realm:

BG:X:21: ...of the lights (I am) the radiant Sun...

BG:XIII:33: As the one sun illumines this whole world, so does the Lord of the field illumine this entire field, O Bharata (Arjuna).

BG:XV:5-6: Those, who are freed from pride and delusion, who have conquered the evil of attachment, who, all desires

stilled, are ever devoted to the Supreme Spirit, who are liberated from the dualities known as pleasure and pain and are undeluded, go to that eternal state. The sun does not illumine that, nor the moon nor the fire. That is My supreme abode from which those who reach it never return.

BG:XV:12: That splendour [tejo] of the sun that illumines this whole world, that which is in the moon, that which is in the fire, that splendour [tejo], know as Mine.

TWENTY-SIXTH PROOF **KRISHNA IN THE MYSTIC REALM**

This encounter of the Manifestation of God in the mystic realm of the heart is described by Bahá'u'lláh, in Kitáb-i-Íqán (KI:Book of Certitude), Kalimat-i-Maknunch (AHW:Arabic Hidden Words; PHW:Persian Hidden Words), and Haft Vadi (SV:Seven Valleys):

KI:195-196: Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker's heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being. At that hour will the mystic Herald, bearing the joyful tidings of the Spirit, shine forth from the City of God resplendent as the morn, and, through the trumpet-blast of knowledge, will awaken the heart, the soul, and the spirit from the slumber of negligence.

AHW:#59: Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent. Thy spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My manifestation.

AHW:#4: I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. Wherefore, do thou love Me, that I may name thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of life.

AHW:#16: Forget all save Me and commune with My spirit. This is the essence of My command, therefore turn unto it.

AHW:#18: Ask not of Me that which We desire not for thee, then be content with what We have ordained for thy sake, for

this is that which profiteth thee, if therewith thou dost content thyself.

PHW:#27 All that is in heaven and earth I have ordained for thee, except the human heart, which I have made the habitation of My beauty and glory...

PHW:#78: Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of the heart, and water them with the waters of certitude, that the hyacinths of knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green from the holy city of the heart.

SV:54: Wherefore, a man should make ready his heart that it be worthy of the descent of heavenly grace, and that the bounteous Cup-Bearer may give him to drink of the wine of bestowal from the merciful vessel.

This is a state which must be experienced to be known. Any attempt to describe it is doomed to failure. In the last Chapter of Bhagavad-Gita, Krishna taught Arjuna similarly, as follows:

BG:XVIII:61-65: The Lord abides in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing them to turn round by His power as if they were mounted on a machine. Flee unto Him for shelter with all thy being, O Bharata (Arjuna). By His grace shalt thou obtain supreme peace and eternal abode. Thus has wisdom more secret than all secrets, been declared to thee by Me. Reflect on it fully and do as thou chooseth. Listen again to My supreme word, the most secret of all. Well beloved art thou of Me, therefore I shall tell thee what is good for thee. Fix thy mind on Me; be beloved to Me; sacrifice to Me; prostrate thyself before Me; so shalt thou come to Me. I promise thee truly, for thou art dear to Me.

Having conveyed this greatest of secrets to Arjuna, Lord Krishna asks His companion this question:

BG:XVIII:72: O Partha (Arjuna), has this been heard by thee with thy thought fixed to one point? O Winner of wealth (Arjuna), has thy distraction (of thought) caused by ignorance been dispelled?

In the fourth valley of Chahar Vadi, Bahá'u'lláh writes:

SV:57: If the mystic knowers be of those who have reached to the beauty of the Beloved One (Mahbub), this station is the apex of consciousness and the secret of divine guidance.

He continues, in reminding the recipient of this epistle:

SV:63: Whatever high proofs and wondrous allusions are encountered herein, concern but a single Letter, a single Point.

Arjuna's response to Krishna's question is affirmative--he himself thereby constitutes evidence of the fulfillment of this proof of his Lord:

BG:XVIII:73: Destroyed is my delusion and recognition has been gained by me through Thy grace, O Acyuta (Krsna). I stand firm with my doubts dispelled. I shall act according to Thy word.

Thus ends the "Song of God," the spiritual epic of Krishna and Arjuna, the Manifestation of the Divine, and His first follower. This epic is returned to, over and over, throughout the ages, in the story of Moses and Aaron, of Jesus and Peter, of Muhammad and 'Alí, of the Báb and Mullá Husayn, of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It is also, quintessentially, the epic poem of a conversation, between God and the soul of every man and every woman. If, by means of this conversation, the soul awakens to the truth of its Creator, then it has achieved its aim. If it fails to apprehend this reality, then it is wandering in the wilderness of illusion. As Krishna said: "Reflect on it fully and do as thou choolest." (XVIII:63) As Bahá'u'lláh wrote, in "Lawh-i-Ahmad": "Whomsoever willeth, let him turn aside from this counsel, and whomsoever willeth, let him choose the path to his Lord."

TWENTY-SEVENTH PROOF ***THE PROPHET IS THE GARDENER OF HUMANITY***

One of the depictions of the Prophet is the Gardener of Humanity. 'Abdu'l-Bahá speaks of the first man, and his development in horticultural terms, in Some Answered Questions^{clxxi}:

“Man from the beginning was in this perfect form and composition, and possessed capacity and aptitude for acquiring material and spiritual perfections, and was the manifestation of these

words, 'We will make man in Our image and likeness.' He has only become more pleasing, more beautiful, and more graceful. Civilization has brought him out of his wild state, just as the wild fruits which are cultivated by a gardener become finer, sweeter, and acquire more freshness and delicacy. The gardeners of the world of humanity are the Prophets of God."

In his last "Tablet to America" (circa 1921) there is the following reference to the "Divine Gardener"^{clxxii}:

"The Divine Gardener cuts off the dry or weak branch from the good tree and grafts to it, a branch from another tree. He both separates and unites. This is that which His Holiness Christ says: that from all the world they come and enter the Kingdom, and the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out."

In another Tablet, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains that the death of a youth seemingly before his time is actually according to an "inscrutable divine wisdom" which is known only to the Divine Gardener^{clxxiii}:

"The inscrutable divine wisdom underlies such heart-rending occurrences. It is as if a kind gardener transfers a fresh and tender shrub from a narrow place to a vast region. This transference is not the cause of the withering, the waning or the destruction of that shrub, nay rather it makes it grow and thrive, acquire freshness and delicacy and attain verdure and fruition. This hidden secret is well-known to the gardener, while those souls who are unaware of this bounty suppose that the gardener in his anger and wrath has uprooted the shrub. But to those who are aware this concealed fact is manifest and this predestined decree considered a favor. Do not feel grieved and disconsolate therefore at the ascension of that bird of faithfulness, nay under all circumstances pray and beg for that youth forgiveness and elevation of station."

In Kalimat-i-Maknunch Bahá'u'lláh refers to the advent of a new prophetic Dispensation as the appearance of "a new garden"^{clxxiv}:

O ye dwellers in the highest paradise! Proclaim unto the children of assurance that within the realms of holiness, nigh unto the celestial paradise, a new garden hath appeared...

The preferred place for the nurturing of spiritual sensibilities in Hindu tradition is the forest hermitage, where the wilderness of human nature

is transformed into a beautiful garden under the tutelage of the spiritual master. We do not find Krishna associated closely with such hermitages, either in His life or in His teaching. But Krishna had a close connection to another division of agriculture...the dairy. The consummate symbols of unconditional devotion to God are the one hundred and eight cowherding girls (gopis) of Vrindavan. Vrindavan is located in Uttar Pradesh, in north central India. Why should Krishna be associated with the dairy business? Because He was a cowherd Himself as a boy. The Bhagavad-Purana describes Krishna's early childhood in the Vrindavan forest, which was allegedly very lush in the past. In that forest it is written that Krishna, His brother Balarama and His cowherd friends engaged in minor thievery, pranks and fought with demons. It was there He met and danced with the gopis. Hence, Krishna is depicted in Hindu literature as a husbandman rather than a gardener, and as a charmer of women, drawn to His beauty of person and His bewitching flute.

TWENTY-EIGHTH PROOF

A PROPHET IS NOT WITHOUT HONOUR, SAVE IN HIS OWN COUNTRY, AND IN HIS OWN HOUSE

In all four of the canonical Gospels, Jesus the Messiah refers to this proof of Prophethood:

Matt:13:57: A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

Mark:6:4: A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

Luke:4:24: No prophet is accepted in his own country...

John:4:44: For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

Krishna fulfilled this proof in a particularly spectacular manner. He was a cousin of the Pandavas and the Kauravas, who were, respectively the five sons of King Pandu and the one hundred sons of King Dhritarashtra. The Mahabharata, an epic poem which, together with its supplementary work Harivamsa is over 90,000 verses in length, ten times the length of the Iliad and the Odyssey combined, and four times longer than the Ramayana. Mahabharata tells the story of these cousins, who ended up going to war with one another when the Kauravas sought to extend their control over property ceded to

them for thirteen years by the Pandavas. Krishna counseled Arjuna, the leading archer of the Pandavas to take up this battle as it was his duty to defend good and defeat evil. So Krishna was opposed by His cousins the Kauravas...but also by His own tribe. The Vrishnis, the Bhopas and other branches of the Yadavas belonging to Krishna's tribe spent their days in unrestrained self-indulgence and luxury, until they turned on one another and perished in an orgy of internecine violence. This violence took Krishna's life and that of His brother Balarama as well.

TWENTY-NINTH PROOF
EVERY PROPHET IS EXILED FROM HIS HOMELAND

Every Prophet of God has not only been rejected by His people, the neighbors and associates and often the very family into which He has been born, but every One has been exiled from His homeland. This is one of the signs of Prophethood. In one of His Tablets, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states the following^{clxxv}:

“Abraham's migration from his native land caused the bountiful gifts of the All-Glorious to be made manifest, and the setting of Canaan's brightest star unfolded to the eyes the radiance of Joseph. The flight of Moses, the Prophet of Sinai, revealed the Flame of the Lord's burning Fire, and the rise of Jesus breathed the breaths of the Holy Spirit into the world. The departure of Muhammad, the Beloved of God, from the city of His birth was the cause of the exaltation of God's Holy Word, and the exile and banishment of the Sacred Beauty led to the diffusion of the Light of His Divine Revelation throughout all regions. Take ye good heed, O people of insight!”

When the Kauravas tricked their cousins the Pandavas out of their share of the kingdom of Bharata, in north central India, with its capital city on the Ganges River, as Krishna was a friend and counselor to the Pandavas, it is most likely that He suffered their fate. They were driven into the wilderness for twelve years, and then into hiding for an additional year. When they returned from this exile, they were denied the promised return of their ancestral lands, and the battle of Kurukshetra ensued. His exile from His homeland, along with the Pandavas resulted in His revealing of the Bhagavad-Gita in the course of the battle between good and evil. This time good won the day. Subsequently Krishna's own family turned away from godly ways and then against each other, and evil triumphed over good.

THIRTIETH PROOF
THE PROPHET OF GOD MUST COME FROM THE EAST

Every one of the Prophets of God has arisen in the East. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá affirms that this has always been the case, and hence this is also one of the proofs of the Prophet:

“In the Holy Books it is recorded that when the Sun of Truth dawns, it will appear in the East, and its light will be reflected in the West. Already its dawning has taken place in the East, and its signs are appearing in the West...

“On Sunday last at Carnegie Hall the revered soul who introduced ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave voice to the statement that according to tradition demons would appear from the land of the sunrise, but now we find angels appearing instead. At the time this statement was made a reply was not possible, but today we will speak of it. The great spiritual lights have always appeared in the East. The Blessed Perfection, Bahá’u’lláh, appeared in the East. Jesus Christ dawned upon the horizon of the East. Moses, Aaron, Joseph and all the Israelitish prophets such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah and others appeared from the Orient. The lights of Muhammad and the Báb shone from the East. The eastern horizon has been flooded with the effulgence of these great lights, and only from the East have they risen to shine upon the West.”^{elxxvi}

“Therefore, it is shown that the divine Manifestations, the holy Mouthpieces of God, are the Collective Centers of God. These heavenly Messengers are the real Shepherds of humanity, for whenever They appear in the world They unite the scattered sheep. The Collective Center has always appeared in the Orient. Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, Muhammad were Collective Centers of Their day and time, and all arose in the East. Today Bahá’u’lláh is the Collective Center of unity for all mankind, and the splendor of His light has likewise dawned from the East.”^{elxxvii}

“I have come from distant countries of the Orient where the lights of heaven have ever shone forth, from regions where the Manifestations of God have appeared and the radiance and power of God have been revealed to mankind.”^{elxxviii}

“In the Books of the Prophets certain glad tidings are recorded which are absolutely true and free from doubt. The East has ever been the dawning point of the Sun of Reality. All the Prophets of

God have appeared there. The religions of God have been promulgated, the teachings of God have been spread and the law of God founded in the East. The Orient has always been the center of lights. The West has acquired illumination from the East, but in some respects the reflection of the light has been greater in the Occident.”^{clxxxix}

“And ye who are the people of the Orient--the Orient which has ever been the dawning point of lights from whence the Sun of Reality has ever shone forth, casting its effulgence upon the West--ye, therefore, must become the manifestation of lights.”^{clxxx}

The geographical appearance of Krishna in Uttar Pradesh automatically identifies Him as coming from the East. The only Manifestation of God Who resided further to the East was Gautama Buddha, a resident of Benares (Varanasi), a city on the shores of the Ganges River and in Uttar Pradesh.

THIRTY-FIRST PROOF

PROPHET OF GOD ALWAYS APPEARS AMONG THE MOST SPIRITUALLY DEPRIVED AND DEGRADED OF MANKIND

Bahá'u'lláh seems to allude to this proof in this passage:

KI:174: "Were these people, wholly for the sake of God and with no desire but His good-pleasure, to ponder the verses of the Book in their heart, they would of a certainty find whatsoever they seek. In its verses would they find revealed and manifest all things, be they great or small, that have come to pass in this Dispensation. They would even recognize in them references unto the departure of the Manifestations of the names and attributes of God from out their native land^{clxxxix}; to the opposition and disdainful arrogance of the Universal Manifestation in an appointed and specially designated land."

The Manifestation invariably appears in “an appointed and specially designated land” which is, according to Shoghi Effendi, inhabited by the most spiritually deprived and depraved of mankind, hence those who are most in need of the redeeming grace of the Prophet of God, and whose transformation will most clearly demonstrate the divine influence of that Prophet. Shoghi Effendi has written eloquently, in "The Advent of Divine Justice"^{clxxxii}, that the Prophets of God have

invariably appeared to depraved peoples^{clxxxiii}:

"How often have the Prophets of God, not excepting Bahá'u'lláh Himself, chosen to appear, and deliver their Message in countries and amidst peoples and races, at a time when they were either fast declining, or had already touched the lowest depths of moral and spiritual degradation. The appalling misery and wretchedness to which the Israelites had sunk, under the debasing and tyrannical rule of the Pharaohs, in the days preceding their exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses; the decline that had set in the religious, the spiritual, the cultural, and the moral life of the Jewish people, at the time of the appearance of Jesus Christ; the barbarous cruelty, the gross idolatry and immorality, which had for so long been the most distressing features of the tribes of Arabia and brought such shame upon them when Muhammad arose to proclaim His Message in their midst; the indescribable state of decadence, with its attendant corruption, confusion, intolerance, and oppression, in both the civil and religious life of Persia, so graphically portrayed by the pen of a considerable number of scholars, diplomats, and travelers, at the hour of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh--all demonstrate this basic and inescapable fact. To contend that the innate worthiness, the high moral standard, the political aptitude, and social attainments of any race or nation is the reason for the appearance in its midst of any of these Divine Luminaries would be an absolute perversion of historical facts, and would amount to a complete repudiation of the undoubted interpretation placed upon them, so clearly and emphatically, by both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

"How great, then, must be the challenge to those who, belonging to such races and nations, and having responded to the call which these Prophets have raised, to unreservedly recognize and courageously testify to this indubitable truth, that not by reason of any racial superiority, political capacity, or spiritual virtue which a race or nation might possess, but rather as a direct consequence of its crying needs, its lamentable degeneracy, and irremediable perversity, has the Prophet of God chosen to appear in its midst, and with it as a lever has lifted the entire human race to a higher and nobler plane of life and conduct. For it is precisely under such circumstances, and by such means that the Prophets have from time immemorial, chosen and were able to demonstrate their redemptive power to raise from the depths of abasement and of misery, the people of their own race and nation, empowering them to transmit in turn to other races and nations the saving grace and the energizing influence of their Revelation.

"In the light of this fundamental principle it should be always borne in mind, nor can it be sufficiently emphasized, that the primary reason why the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh chose to appear in Persia, and to make it the repository of their Revelation, was because, of all the peoples and nations of the civilized world, that race and nation had, as so often depicted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, sunk to such ignominious depths, and manifested so great a perversity, as to find no parallel among its contemporaries. For no more convincing proof could be adduced demonstrating the regenerating spirit animating the Revelations proclaimed by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh than their power to transform what can be truly regarded as one of the most backward, the most cowardly, and perverse of peoples into a race of heroes, fit to effect in turn a similar revolution in the life of mankind."

In Bhagavad-Gita, the Lord Krishna is reputed to have pronounced these famous words pertaining to the appearance of the Divine Educators^{clxxxiv}:

BG:IV:7: Whenever there is a decline of righteousness [dharma] and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata [Arjuna], then I send forth Myself.

This verse is echoed in Bhagavata-Purana^{clxxxv}:

BP:IX:24: Whenever righteousness [dharma] wanes, and unrighteousness increases the Almighty Lord, Hari, creates himself.

The decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness in the lifetime and age of Krishna is chronicled in Mahabharata and the Puranas. Not only the wickedness of the Kauravas which ultimately led to the internecine conflict at Kurukshetra, but also the unrestrained depravity of the Vrishnis, the Bhopas and other branches of the Yadavas belonging to Krishna's tribe which resulted in their mutual destruction and the martyrdom of both Krishna and His brother Balarama depict the state of moral turpitude into which humanity had descended, particularly in the land of Bharata. According to Hindu tradition, the Kaliyuga began with the death of Krishna, and inasmuch as this Kaliyuga is described as the Dark Age, associated with the demon named Kali (not the goddess named Kálí) and as having one quarter of the moral perfections of the Golden Age (Satyayuga).

THIRTY-SECOND PROOF

ALL PROPHETS FOUND CIVILIZATIONS

In "The Secret of Divine Civilization" ("Risalih-i-Madaniyyih"), 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, regarding the founding of true civilization^{clxxxvi}:

"By the Lord God, and there is no God but He, even the minutest details of civilized life derive from the grace of the Prophets of God. What thing of value to mankind has ever come into being which was not first set forth either directly or by implication in the Holy Scriptures?"

This same principle is found affirmed in some of his talks in North America, published in "The Promulgation of Universal Peace"^{clxxxvii}:

"The Prophets of God have founded the laws of divine civilization."

"The philosophers have founded material civilization. The Prophets have founded divine civilization. Christ was the Founder of heavenly civilization. Mankind receives the bounties of material civilization as well as divine civilization from the heavenly Prophets."

While Hindu tradition associates Krishna with a location and historical period that is matched only by Vedic civilization, concentrated in a number of realms in northern India. This civilization ultimately expanded, in what has been called Epic India, the Greater India depicted in the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Puranas, and it included all of the kingdoms represented here below:

Main kingdoms of Northern and North-Central India

<u>Kuru Kingdom</u>	<u>Panchala Kingdom</u>	<u>Vatsa Kingdom</u>
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Main kingdoms of North-Central India

<u>Kosala Kingdom</u>	<u>Kasi Kingdom</u>	<u>Videha Kingdom</u>	<u>Dakshina Kosala Kingdom</u>	<u>Malla Kingdom</u>
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Kingdoms of Western and West-Central India

<u>Surasena Kingdom</u>	<u>Dwaraka Kingdom</u>	<u>Anarta Kingdom</u>	<u>Saurashtra Kingdom</u>	<u>Heheya Kingdom</u>
<u>Nishadha Kingdom</u>	<u>Gurjara Kingdom</u>	<u>Karusha Kingdom</u>	<u>Chedi Kingdom</u>	<u>Dasarna Kingdom</u>
<u>Kunti Kingdom</u>	<u>Avanti Kingdom</u>	<u>Malava Kingdom</u>		

North-Northwestern (Fishermen's) kingdoms

<u>Matsya Kingdom</u>

Western kingdoms

<u>Trigarta Kingdom</u>	<u>Salwa Kingdom</u>	<u>Madra Kingdom</u>	<u>Sindhu Kingdom</u>	<u>Sauvira Kingdom</u>
<u>Sivi Kingdom</u>	<u>Kekeya Kingdom</u>	<u>Gandhara Kingdom</u>	<u>Youdheya Kingdom</u>	<u>Pahlava Kingdom</u>

Northwestern kingdoms

<u>Bahlika Kingdom</u>	<u>Parama Kamboja Kingdom</u>	<u>Uttara Madra Kingdom</u>	<u>Uttara Kuru Kingdom</u>
<u>Yavana Kingdom</u>	<u>Khasa Kingdom</u>	<u>Saka Kingdom</u>	

Northern kingdoms

<u>Kasmira Kingdom</u>	<u>Kamboja Kingdom</u>	<u>Darada Kingdom</u>	<u>Parada Kingdom</u>	<u>Parasika Kingdom</u>
<u>Tushara Kingdom</u>	<u>Huna Kingdom</u>	<u>Hara Huna Kingdom</u>	<u>Rishika Kingdom</u>	<u>China Kingdom</u>
<u>Parama China Kingdom</u>				

Eastern kingdoms

<u>Magadha Kingdom</u>	<u>Kikata Kingdom</u>	<u>Anga Kingdom</u>	<u>Pragiyotisha Kingdom</u>	<u>Sonita Kingdom</u>
<u>Lauhitya Kingdom</u>	<u>Pundra Kingdom</u>	<u>Suhma Kingdom</u>	<u>Vanga Kingdom</u>	<u>Odra Kingdom</u>
<u>Utkala Kingdom</u>				

Kingdoms South of the Vindhya Range

<u>Vidarbha Kingdom</u>	<u>Anupa Kingdom</u>	<u>Surparaka Kingdom</u>	<u>Nasikya Kingdom</u>
<u>Konkana Kingdom</u>	<u>Asmaka Kingdom</u>	<u>Danda Kingdom</u>	<u>Kalinga Kingdom</u>

Kingdoms in the extreme South

<u>Telंगा Kingdom</u>	<u>Andhra Kingdom</u>	<u>Kishkindha Kingdom</u>	<u>Gomanta Kingdom</u>	<u>Karnata Kingdom</u>
<u>Kanchi Kingdom</u>	<u>Chola Kingdom</u>	<u>Pandya Kingdom</u>	<u>Tulu Kingdom</u>	<u>Mushika Kingdom</u>
<u>Satyaputra Kingdom</u>	<u>Kerala Kingdom</u>	<u>Sinhala Kingdom</u>		

Saraswati Valley kingdoms

<u>Saraswata Kingdom</u>	<u>Abhira Kingdom</u>	<u>Sudra Kingdom</u>	<u>Nishada Kingdom</u>
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Himalayan kingdoms

<u>Kimpurusha Kingdom</u>	<u>Pisacha Kingdom</u>	<u>Naga Kingdom</u>	<u>Kinnara Kingdom</u>	<u>Yaksha Kingdom</u>
<u>Gandharva Kingdom</u>	<u>Kirata Kingdom</u>	<u>Himalaya Kingdom</u>	<u>Parvata Kingdom</u>	<u>Nepa Kingdom</u>

The influence of the Bhagavad-Gita in Epic India has not been verified by archeological studies and is contested by some scholars. From 600 BCE until 320 BCE, this civilization continued to flourish among the sixteen Mahajanapadas in northern India, and in that year was founded the Maurya Empire (322-185 BCE), which culminated in the reign of Ashoka the Great (ruled 273-232 BCE), who became a Buddhist and renounced violence, and thereafter presided over 40 years of peace and prosperity. We know more about Ashoka's reign than about all of the kings who preceded him.

THIRTY-THIRD PROOF **ALL PROPHETS MANIFEST THE GLORY OF GOD**

There is yet another aspect of Krishna which represents His person and which has invited the worship of Vaisnavite Hindus. Like so many human beings before him and since, Arjuna asks Krishna to reveal His cosmic form, His divine reality. Moses asks God a similar question, and God answers (Exodus XXXIII):

Exo:XXXIII:17-23: And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory. And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee: and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And He said, Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts:but My face shall not be seen.

Arjuna asks a similar question of Krishna, in the eleventh chapter of Bhagavad-Gita:

BG:XI:3-4: As Thou hast declared Thyself to be, O Supreme Lord, even so it is. (But) I desire to see Thy divine form, O Supreme Person. If Thou, O Lord, thinkest that by me, It can be seen then reveal to me, Thy Imperishable Self, O Lord of yoga (Krsna).

Krishna answers Arjuna beginning with this preface and then by revealing His divine power:

BG:XI:8-9: But thou canst not behold Me with this (human) eye of yours; I will bestow on thee the supernatural eye. Behold My divine power. Having thus spoken, O King, Hari, the great lord of yoga, then revealed to Partha (Arjuna), His Supreme and Divine Form.

There is one image in particular which seems to best characterize the Supreme and Divine Form of Krishna, and this is His radiance, His splendor:

BG:XI:12: If the light of a thousand suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, that might resemble the splendour of that exalted Being.

This corresponds to the "glory of the Lord" which Moses asks to see, and which God will only show from behind, saying, "Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see me, and live." Although Moses is not permitted to see the face of man, for although He is a prophet, He is also a man, He nevertheless dwells with and talks with God on Mount Sinai (Exodus, chapter XXXIV) and when He descends from the Mountain Moses has been transfigured:

Exo:XXXIV:29-30,33: And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of the testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him...And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.

Kalkin-Avatara is described in a number of Sanskrit sources, including, as mentioned above, in Mahabharata and Vishnu Purana. He appears at the close of Kaliyuga and to inaugurate the new cycle of ages. Kalki possesses the glory of Vishnu, which is described in Bhagavad-Gita as the "Supreme and Divine Form" of Krishna:

BG:XI:12: If the light of a thousand suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, that might resemble the BHAH [splendour] of that exalted Being.

References to this glory of the Divine are also found in the Vedas, as in these verses^{clxxxviii}:

O Exalted Fire! O thou Merged in BHAH [glory]! Rise Thou regularly shining out brilliantly Thine Own progressively blazing Light; make the world particularly and especially BHAHI [glorious] and never-getting-old.

Dr. Munje^{clxxxix} identifies the following invocation as the "Gayatri Mantra," and asserts that it "is considered to be the Ved-Mata, the Mother of the Vedas":

BG:XI:12: If the light of a thousand suns were to blaze forth all at once in the sky, that might resemble the splendour [bhah] of that exalted Being.

BG:XI:17: I behold Thee with Thy crown, mace and discus, glowing everywhere as a mass of light, hard to discern, (dazzling) on all sides with the radiance [tejorasim] of the flaming fire and sun, incomparable.

BG:XI:30: Devouring all the worlds on every side with Thy flaming mouths, thou lickest them up. Thy fiery rays fill this whole universe and scorch it with their fierce radiance [tejobhir], O Visnu!

There are three words which refer to the glory and splendor of Lord Krishna, "vibhuti," "tejo" and "bhah." This recalls the Tanakh, which likewise refers to the glory and splendour of God with the words "hadar," "tiferet" and "kavod." In both of these Scriptures, the radiance of the Presence of God is compared to that of the sun, for, as the sun provides light and warmth--both of which are required by living creatures--so also the Sun of Reality provides the spiritual light of knowledge and the spiritual warmth of love, which are both indispensable for the spiritual education and maturation of living souls.

As was noted earlier, the oldest surviving accounts of Krishna and the other appearances of the glory and splendor of God, the Santiparvan of Mahabharata (339.103=12966f) and the Harivamsa (2368) call them "pradurbhava" rather than "avatara." (The information here cited, unless otherwise noted, was found in Hermann Jacobi's article.) "Pradurbhava" is translated as "manifestation" and does not imply "incarnation." On the other hand, "prabhava" is translated as "splendor" and, in esoteric Hinduism, this "prabhava" constitutes the supernatural power in all persons, which is latent but may blaze forth. (Walker, p. 229) "Santiparvan" lists nine "pradurbhava", with the eighth as Satvata (Who is clearly Krishna) and the ninth Kalki, while Harivamsa lists eight "pradurbhava", with the seventh as Krishna and the eighth Kalki, but then states that Kalki is the tenth "pradurbhava." Vanaparva (487) of Mahabharata speaks of "thousands" of God's "pradurbhava."

THIRTY-FOURTH PROOF
TESTING OF BELIEVERS IN EVERY DISPENSATION

Bahá'u'lláh affirms that God can compel all of humanity to embrace His Cause ("a single breeze...one drop..."), but that the purpose of God is to test the souls of men, and that this is the pattern in every Dispensation. He further indicates, that were certain of the symbolic verses to be fulfilled in the literal sense which many believers expected, this would so overwhelm the consciousness of men that they would be unable either to accept or reject the new Prophet of God; thereby God's purpose would be frustrated:

KI:80-81: They have even failed to perceive that were the signs of the Manifestation of God to appear in every age in the visible realm in accordance with the text of established traditions, none could possibly deny or turn away, nor would the blessed be distinguished from the miserable, and the transgressor from the God-fearing. Judge fairly: Were the prophecies recorded in the Gospel to be literally fulfilled; were Jesus, Son of Mary, accompanied by angels, to descend from the visible heaven upon the clouds; who would dare to disbelieve, who would dare to reject the truth, and wax disdainful? Nay, such consternation would immediately seize all the dwellers of the earth that no soul would feel able to utter a word, much less to reject or accept the truth.

He also indicates that there is a way for each soul to pass this test, to discover the true meaning of the symbolic verses of Scripture:

KI:68-69: Wert thou to cleanse the mirror of thy heart from the dust of malice, thou wouldst apprehend the meaning of the symbolic terms revealed by the all-embracing Word of God made manifest in every Dispensation, and wouldst discover the mysteries of divine knowledge. Not, however, until thou consumest with the flame of utter detachment those veils of idle learning, that are current amongst men, canst thou behold the resplendent morn of true knowledge.

In Bhagavad-Gita resides a classic tale of the testing of human souls, and the response of the divine Educator to the plea offered up, a plea for understanding, a plea for deliverance from perplexity and suffering. The close of the first chapter of Bhagavad-Gita represents the doubt that gripped Arjuna when he contemplated the consequences of doing his duty, and the entirety of the text that follows is Krishna's response to that plea. The Mahabharata continues the story by subsequently recounting the triumph of Arjuna over his doubts and sentiments and

his discharge of his duty to serve the cause of good when pitted against evil, with his Lord by his side, his Companion and Charioteer. Here we will cite the full text, in Edwin Arnold's elegant translation, of the plaint of Arjuna, the testing of his faith^{exc}:

"See!" spake he [Krishna] to Arjuna, "where they stand,
 Thy kindred of the Kurus:" and the Prince [Arjuna]
 Marked on each hand the kinsmen of his house,
 Grandsires and sires, uncles and brothers and sons,
 Cousins and sons-in-law and nephews, mixed
 With friends and honoured elders; some this side,
 Some that side ranged: and, seeing those opposed,
 Such kith grown enemies- Arjuna's heart
 Melted with pity, while he uttered this:
 Arjuna. Krishna! as I behold, come here to shed
 Their common blood, yon concourse of our kin,
 My members fail, my tongue dries in my mouth,
 A shudder thrills my body, and my hair
 Bristles with horror; from my weak hand slips
 Gandiv [the name of Arjuna's special weapon], the goodly
 bow; a fever burns
 My skin to parching; hardly may I stand;
 The life within me seems to swim and faint;
 Nothing do I foresee save woe and wail!
 It is not good, O Keshav [name of Krishna]! naught of good
 Can spring from mutual slaughter! Lo, I hate
 Triumph and domination, wealth and ease,
 Thus sadly won! Aho! what victory
 Can bring delight, Govinda [name of Krishna]! what rich
 spoils
 Could profit; what rule recompense; what span
 Of life itself seem sweet, bought with such blood?
 Seeing that these stand here, ready to die,
 For whose sake life was fair, and pleasure pleased,
 And power grew precious:- grandsires, sires, and sons,
 Brothers, and fathers-in-law, and sons-in-law,
 Elders and friends! Shall I deal death on these
 Even though they seek to slay us? Not one blow,
 O Madhusudan [name of Krishna]! will I strike to gain
 The rule of all Three Worlds; then, how much less
 To seize an earthly kingdom! Killing these
 Must breed but anguish, Krishna! If they be
 Guilty, we shall grow guilty by their deaths;

Their sins will light on us, if we shall slay
 Those sons of Dhritirashtra [the Kauravas or Kurus], and our
 kin [the Pandavas];
 What peace could come of that, O Madhava [name of
 Krishna]?
 For if indeed, blinded by lust and wrath,
 These cannot see, or will not see, the sin
 Of kingly lines o'erthrown and kinsmen slain,
 How should not we, who see, shun such a crime-
 We who perceive the guilt and feel the shame-
 O thou Delight of Men, Janardana [name of Krishna]?
 By overthrow of houses perisheth
 Their sweet continuous household piety,
 And- rites neglected, piety extinct-
 Enters impiety upon that home;
 Its women grow unwomaned, whence there spring
 Mad passions, and the mingling-up of castes,
 Sending a Hell-ward road that family,
 And whoso wrought its doom by wicked wrath.
 Nay, and the souls of honoured ancestors
 Fall from their place of peace, being bereft
 Of funeral-cakes and the wan death-water.
 So teach our holy hymns. Thus, if we slay
 Kinsfolk and friends for love of earthly power,
 Ahovat! what an evil fault it were!
 Better I deem it, if my kinsmen strike,
 To face them weaponless, and bare my breast
 To shaft and spear, than answer blow with blow.
 So speaking, in the face of those two hosts,
 Arjuna sank upon his chariot-seat,
 And let fall bow and arrows, sick at heart.

The testing of Arjuna does not come to an end with the preaching of Krishna. As is pointed out by Ruth Cecily Katz^{exci}: “Certainly Arjuna is never fully comfortable with the necessity of killing his relatives, or, similarly, his teachers and elders”. She cites three examples of this discomfiture which followed Krishna’s sermon^{excii}.

THIRTY-FIFTH PROOF
EVERY AGE THE LIGHT IS SEEMINGLY QUENCHED

Bahá'u'lláh points out that in every Age associated with an independent Manifestation of God, it appears that the combined forces of the temporal world eclipse the radiance of that new Prophet:

KI:73: You must undoubtedly have been informed of the tribulations, the poverty, the ills, and the degradation that have befallen every Prophet of God and His companions.

KI:126-127: Were the verse 'And verily Our host shall conquer' [Qur'án 37:173] to be literally interpreted, it is evident that it would in no wise be applicable to the chosen Ones of God and His hosts, inasmuch as Husayn, whose heroism was manifest as the sun, crushed and subjugated, quaffed at last the cup of martyrdom in Karbila, the land of Taff. Similarly, the sacred verse 'Fain would they put out God's light with their mouths: But God hath willed to perfect His light, albeit the infidels abhor it.' [Qur'án XX:XXX] Were it to be literally interpreted it would never correspond with the truth. For in every age the light of God hath, to outward seeming, been quenched by the peoples of the earth, and the Lamps of God extinguished by them. How then could the ascendancy of the sovereignty of these Lamps be explained? What could the potency of God's will to 'perfect His light' signify? As hath already been witnessed, so great was the enmity of the infidels, that none of these divine Luminaries ever found a place for shelter, nor tasted of the cup of tranquility. So heavily were they oppressed, that the least of men inflicted upon these Essences of being whatsoever he listed. These sufferings have been observed and measured by the people. How, therefore, can such people be capable of understanding and expounding these words of God, these verses of everlasting glory?

Krishna and the Pandavas triumph in Kurukshetra, which Krishna depicts as a war between good and evil, a quintessential “just” and “holy” war. However, the war does not end at Kurukshetra. In fact, the death of Krishna ushers in Kaliyuga, the reign of unrest and “abomination that maketh desolate”. At the time it occurred, it must have seemed that the light of the divine had been quenched, and that its emergence could not be expected for many thousands of years.

THIRTY-SIXTH PROOF
PEOPLE KNOWN BY THEIR COUNTENANCE

In Kitáb-i-Iqán, Bahá'u'lláh refers to another sign of each Dispensation, which might consequently serve as a proof of prophethood if fulfilled:

KI:173-174: "And it came to pass that on a certain day a needy man came to visit this Soul, craving for the ocean of His knowledge...We then asked him saying: 'Hast thou not read the Qur'án, and art thou not aware of this blessed verse: 'On that day shall neither man nor spirit be asked of his Sin?' [Qur'án 55:39] Dost thou not realize that by 'asking is not meant asking by tongue or speech, even as the verse itself doth indicate and prove it?' For afterward it is said: 'By their countenance shall the sinners be known, and they shall be seized by their forelocks and their feet.' [Qur'án 55:41] "Thus the peoples of the world are judged by their countenance. By it, their misbelief, their faith, and their iniquity are all made manifest. Even as it is evident in this day how the people of error are, by their countenance, known and distinguished from the followers of divine Guidance."

One theme that we find reiterated in the depictions of Krishna, whether in painting or frieze, as well as in literature is His overwhelming beauty of countenance and form. This is paralleled in the beauty of His wives and lovers, His disciples and devotees. Just as characteristic of His enemies and of demons generally is their ugliness, indeed, the terrifying demeanor of their faces and figures. The beauty of Krishna recalls the beauty of Joseph, as depicted in the Biblical text and in Jewish and Islamic literature.

THIRTY-SEVENTH PROOF LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

As is indicated in the Qur'án, there are two kinds of divine verses^{exciii}:

He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book: in it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are allegorical. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part there of that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden meanings except Allah and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord;" and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding.

Bahá'u'lláh reiterates and expands upon this distinction in Kitáb-i-Íqán^{exciv}:

It is evident unto thee that the Birds of Heaven and Doves of Eternity speak a twofold language. One language, the outward language, is devoid of allusions, is unconcealed and unveiled; that it may be a guiding lamp and a beaconing light whereby wayfarers may attain the heights of holiness, and seekers may advance into the realm of eternal reunion. Such are the unveiled traditions and the evident verses already mentioned. The other language is veiled and concealed, so that whatever lieth hidden in the heart of the malevolent may be made manifest and their innermost being be disclosed.

Krishna indicates, in the 3rd chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita, that a literal and material understanding and observance is of limited value:

The fool, cheated by self, thinks, "This I did"
 And "That I wrought;" but- ah, thou strong-armed Prince
 [Arjuna]!
 A better-lessoned mind, knowing the play
 Of visible things within the world of sense,
 And how the qualities must qualify,
 Standeth aloof even from his acts. 'Th' untaught
 Live mixed with them, knowing not Nature's way,
 Of highest aims unwitting, slow and dull.

It is such fools, such slow and dull ones who have failed to recognize the Avatara in His spiritual nature. Krishna warns against an even greater foolishness, namely, the rejection of the baby along with the bathwater:

Those make thou not to stumble, having the light;
 But all thy dues discharging, for My sake,
 With meditation centred inwardly,
 Seeking no profit, satisfied, serene,
 Heedless of issue- fight! They who shall keep
 My ordinance thus, the wise and willing hearts,
 Have quittance from all issue of their acts;
 But those who disregard My ordinance,
 Thinking they know, know nought, and fall to loss,
 Confused and foolish.

THIRTY-EIGHTH PROOF
OPPRESSION IN EVERY DISPENSATION

In every Dispensation there comes a time when there is a culmination of unrighteousness, of human evil and estrangement from God, and it is at this time that the new Prophet of God becomes manifest in the world of creation. Bahá'u'lláh cites from the Gospel of Matthew in Kitáb-i-Íqán in this connection:

KI:24: "In the first Gospel according to Matthew it is recorded: And when they asked Jesus concerning the signs of His coming, He said unto them: 'Immediately after the oppression of those days shall the sun be darkened...'"

The King James Version gives the following version of this verse:

Matt:24:29: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened..."

Bahá'u'lláh translates this verse from its Arabic version (which he has earlier cited) into Persian as follows:

KI:25: "When the oppression and afflictions that are to befall mankind will have come to pass, then shall the sun be withheld from shining..."

He then explains this verse some pages later:

KI:29: "As to the words--'Immediately after the oppression of those days'--they refer to the time when men shall become oppressed and afflicted, the time when the lingering traces of the Sun of Truth and the fruit of the Tree of knowledge and wisdom will have vanished from the midst of men, when the reigns of mankind will have fallen into the grasp of the foolish and ignorant, when the portals of divine unity and understanding--the essential and highest purpose in creation--will have been closed, when certain knowledge will have given way to idle fancy, and corruption will have usurped the station of righteousness."

This proof is found also in the words of Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita^{cxv}:

BG:IV:7: "Whenever there is a decline of righteousness [dharma] and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata [Arjuna], then I send forth Myself."

This verse is echoed in Bhagavata-Purana^{cxvii}:

BP:IX:24:56: "Whenever righteousness [dharma] wanes, and unrighteousness increases the Almighty Lord, Hari, creates himself."

While there are few sources that would enable us to gauge the tenor of the times in which Krishna lived, let alone the centuries that preceded His life, the Mahabharata does give us some indications. It reports that the reigning family was divided, that the dominant faction was demonic and that this demonic faction, the Kurus (or Kauravas) treated their kin (and presumably their subjects) brutally and unjustly. This led to an armed resistance ultimately and to the triumph of the Pandavas over the Kauravas. However, this did not liberate the social environment from brutality and injustice. The victors in this battle who were closest kin to Krishna, called the Yadavas fell to mutual bickering and ultimately to mutual extinction. According to three texts, the Bhagavata-Purana (1.18.6), the Vishnu-Purana (5.38.8), and the Brahma-Purana (212.8), the very day that Krishna died was the day that the Dvapara Yuga ended and the Kali Yuga began. This Kali Yuga is accounted the darkest period in the cycle of human existence.

THIRTY-NINTH PROOF

RETURN OF THE PROPHETS AND THEIR CHOSEN ONES

Bahá'u'lláh indicates that each Manifestation of God is the return of all Manifestations of God:

KI:151,159-160: "Strive therefore to comprehend the meaning of 'return' which hath been so explicitly revealed in the Qur'án itself, and which none hath as yet understood. What sayest thou? If thou sayest that Muhammad was the 'return' of the Prophets of old, as is witnessed by this verse, His companions must likewise be the 'return' of the bygone companions, even as the 'return' of the former people is clearly attested by the text of the above-mentioned verses. And if thou deniest this, thou hast surely repudiated the truth of the Qur'án, the surest testimony of God unto men. In like manner, endeavour to grasp the significance of 'return,'

'revelation,' and 'resurrection,' as witnessed in the days of the Manifestations of the divine Essence, that thou mayest behold with thine own eyes the 'return' of the holy souls into sanctified and illumined bodies, and mayest wash away the dust of ignorance, and cleanse the darkened self with the waters of mercy flowing from the Source of divine Knowledge; that perchance thou mayest, through the power of God and the light of divine guidance, distinguish the Morn of everlasting of splendour from the darksome night of error."

"O brother, behold how the inner mysteries of 'rebirth,' of 'return,' and of 'resurrection' have each, through these all-sufficing, these unanswerable, and conclusive utterances, been unveiled and unravelled before thine eyes. God grant that through His gracious and invisible assistance, thou mayest divest thy body and soul of the old garment, and array thyself with the new and imperishable attire.

"Therefore, those who in every subsequent Dispensation preceded the rest of mankind in embracing the Faith of God, who quaffed the clear waters of knowledge at the hand of the divine Beauty, and attained the loftiest summits of faith and certitude, these can be regarded, in name, in reality, in deeds, in words, and in rank, as the 'return' of those who in a former Dispensation had achieved similar distinctions. For whatsoever the people of a former Dispensation have manifested, the same hath been shown by the people of this latter generation. Consider the rose: whether it blossometh in the East or in the West, it is none the less a rose. For what mattereth in this respect is not the outward shape and form of the rose, but rather the smell and fragrance which it doth impart.

"Purge thy sight, therefore, from all earthly limitations, that thou mayest behold them all as the bearers of one Name, the exponents of one Cause, the manifestations of one Self, and the revealers of one Truth, and that thou mayest apprehend the mystic 'return' of the Words of God as unfolded by these utterances. Reflect for a while upon the behaviour of the companions of the Muhammadan Dispensation. Consider how, through the reviving breath of Muhammad, they were cleansed from the defilements of earthly vanities, were delivered from selfish desires, and were detached from all else but Him. Behold how they preceded all the peoples of the earth in attaining unto His holy Presence--the Presence of

God Himself--how they renounced the world and all that is therein, and sacrificed freely and joyously their lives at the feet of that Manifestation of the All-Glorious. And now, observe the return of the self-same determination, the self-same constancy and renunciation, manifested by the companions of the Point of the Bayan. Thou hast witnessed how these companions have, through the wonders of the grace of the Lord of Lords, hoisted the standards of sublime renunciation upon the inaccessible heights of glory. These Lights have proceeded from but one Source, and these fruits are the fruits of one Tree. Thou canst discern neither difference nor distinction among them. All this is by the grace of God! On whom He will, He bestoweth His grace."

The Bhagavad-Gita likewise indicates that there have been Avatars from the beginning of time and will continue to be Avatars, and that they are, in essence, one Being. Once more we cite these famous verses^{cxvii}:

BG:IV:7: "Whenever there is a decline of righteousness [dharma] and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata [Arjuna], then I send forth Myself."

BP:IX:24:56: "Whenever righteousness [dharma] wanes, and unrighteousness increases the Almighty Lord, Hari, creates himself."

FORTIETH PROOF
REJECTION OF PROPHET IN EVERY DISPENSATION
BECAUSE HE DOES NOT CONFORM TO CURRENT
UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

As has been pointed out already in other contexts, the Prophet of God is rejected in every Dispensation. The principle reason for this rejection is that He does not conform, in His Person and in His teachings to the expectations of religionists amongst whom He appears. They understand their Scripture to have made certain promises, and do not recognize the fulfillment of those promises in the Man Who stands before them.

In Kitáb-i-Íqán Bahá'u'lláh addresses the diversity of the claims made by the Prophets of God and concludes with this weighty affirmation:

KI:181-182: "Those words uttered by the Luminaries of Truth must needs be pondered, and should their significance not be grasped, enlightenment should be sought from the Trustees of the depositories of Knowledge, that these may expound their meaning, and unravel their mystery. For it behooveth no man to interpret the holy words according to his own imperfect understanding, nor, having found them to be contrary to his inclination and desires, to reject and repudiate their truth. For such, today, is the manner of the divines and doctors of the age, who occupy seats of knowledge and learning, and who have named ignorance knowledge, and called oppression justice. Were these to ask the Light of Truth concerning those images which their idle fancy hath carved, and were they to find His answer inconsistent with their own conceptions and their own understanding of the Book, they would assuredly denounce Him Who is the Mine and Wellhead of all Knowledge as the very negation of understanding. Such things have happened in every age."

We can surmise through perusal of Mahabharata that none, apart from Arjuna viewed the cosmic reality of Krishna. And as there is no account in that book of any disciples of Krishna apart from Arjuna, it likewise seems that there were very few believers in His divinity and in the perfection of His teachings during His lifetime. Traces of Krishna which can be dated are scattered throughout Hindu literature, beginning with the Upanishads. One of the earliest recorded references is found in the Chandogya Upanishad, where Krishna is depicted as the son of Devaki, and the student of Ghora Angirasa^{cxviii}.

The Nārāyaṇātharvaṣirsa and Ātmabodha Upanishads refer to Krishna as a god and associate him with Vishnu^{cxix}. Another name of Krishna, Vasudeva is also found in early Sanskrit literature. Taittiriya Aranyaka, also called Maha-Narayana-Upanishad (X,i,6) identifies him with Narayana and Vishnu. Panini, ca. 4th century BCE, in his Ashtadhyayi explains the word "Vāsudevaka" as a Bhakta (devotee) of Vāsudeva^{cc}. This, along with the mention of Arjuna in the same context, indicates that the Vāsudeva here is Krishna^{cci}. Also in the 4th century BCE, Megasthenes the Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya says that the Sourasenoī (Surasena), who lived in the region of Mathura worshipped Herakles. This Herakles is usually identified with Krishna due to the regions mentioned by Megasthenes as well as similarities between some of the heroic acts of the two^{ccii}.

The Greco-Bactrian ruler Agathocles issued coins bearing the images of Krishna and Balarama in around the 2nd century (180–165) BCE. Three inscriptions from Hāthibādā and one from Ghosundi (near Nāgari, Chittorgarh district) from the 2nd century BCE, record the building of a *pujā-silā-prākar* (stone enclosure for worship) in Nārāyana-vata (park of Nārāyana) by king Gājāyana Sarvatāta for the worship of the gods Sankarshana (Balarama) and Vasudeva (Krishna)^{cciii}. From the same century, the Nānāghāt cave (in the state of Maharashtra) inscription of the Satavahana queen Nāyanika begins with an invocation to various gods including Sankarshana and Vasudeva.^{cciv}

In the 1st century BCE, Heliodorus from Greece erected the Heliodorus pillar at Besnagar near Bhilsa with the inscription: "This Garuda-column of Vasudeva the god of gods was erected here by Heliodorus, a worshipper of the Lord Bhagavata, the son of Diya Greek Dion and an inhabitant of Taxila, who came as ambassador of the Greeks from the Great King Amtalikita [Greek "Antialcidas"] to King Kasiputra Bhagabhadra the saviour, who was flourishing in the fourteenth year of his reign [...] three immortal steps [...] when practiced, lead to heaven—self-control, charity, and diligence." (Rosen, *Ibid.*) Another inscription from Besnagar, from the same period, records the setting up of a Garuda pillar in a *prasādotama* (excellent temple) in the twelfth regnal year of a king called Bhāgavata, usually identified as a Sunga king^{ccv}. A 1st century BCE inscription from Mathura records the building of a part of a sanctuary to Vasudeva by the great satrap Sodasa. The renowned grammar scholar Patanjali, who wrote his commentary on Panini's grammar rules around 150 BCE (known as the *Mahabhashya*), quotes a verse: "May the might of Krishna accompanied by Samkarshana increase!" Another verse speaks of "Janardana with himself as fourth" (Krishna with three companions, the three possibly being Samkarshana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha). Yet another verse mentions musical instruments being played at meetings in the temples of Rama (*Balarama*) and Kesava (Krishna). Patanjali also describes dramatic and mimetic performances (Krishna-Kamsopacharam) representing the killing of Kamsa by Vasudeva. (Bryant, *Ibid.*) Also in the 1st century BCE, there seems to be evidence for the worship of were known as the five Vrishni heroes (*Balarama*, Krishna, *Pradyumna*, *Aniruddha* and *Samba*)--an inscription has been found at Mora near Mathura, which mentions a son of the great satrap Rajuvula, probably the satrap Sodasa, and an image of Vrishni, "probably Vasudeva", and of the "Five Warriors"^{ccvi}. Many

inscriptions and references to worship of Krishna can be found from the early centuries of the Common Era.

There is a gap, however, in evidence pointing to the worship of Krishna, lasting several centuries. We know that Vaishnavism generally, including worship of Krishna flourished in South India during the 7th to 10th centuries CE, and is still commonplace, especially in Tamil Nadu, as a result of the twelve Alvars, saints who spread the sect to the common people with their devotional hymns. The temples which the Alvars visited or founded are now known as Divya Desams. Their poems in praise of Vishnu and Krishna in Tamil language are collectively known as Naalayira (Divya Prabandha)^{ccvii}. Subsequently, Vaishnava practices increased in popularity due to the influence of sages like Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Manavala Mamunigal, Vedanta Desika, Surdas, Tulsidas, Tyagaraja, and many others^{ccviii}.

By the 11th century CE, Vaishnava Bhakti schools with elaborate theological frameworks around the worship of Krishna were established in north India. Nimbarka (11th century CE) is credited with founding the first of the influential schools associated with this movement. The Bhakti movement began in northern India and spread quickly into the south, with the Sanskrit poem Gita Govinda of Jayadeva (12th century CE) becoming a landmark of devotional, Krishna-based literature. It elaborated a part of the Krishna legend—his love for one particular gopi, called Radha, a minor character in Bhagavata Purana but a major one in other texts like Brahma Vaivarta Purana. Through the influence of Gita Govinda, Radha became inseparable from devotion to Krishna^{ccix}.

While the learned sections of the society well versed in Sanskrit could enjoy works like Gita Govinda or Bilvamangala's Krishna-Karnamritam, the masses sang the songs of the devotee-poets, who composed in the regional languages of India. These songs expressing intense personal devotion were written by devotees from all walks of life. The songs of Mirabai and Surdas became epitomes of Krishna-devotion in north India. These devotee-poets, like the Alvars before them, were aligned to specific theological schools only loosely, if at all.

Vallabhacharya (15th century CE) and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (16th century CE) were the founders of other influential schools of Bhakti. In the Deccan, particularly in Maharashtra, saint poets of the Varkari sect such as Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Janabai, Eknath and Tukaram promoted the worship of Vithoba, a local form of Krishna, from the beginning of the 13th to the end of the 18th century. Vithoba is not

only viewed as a form of Krishna. He is also by some considered that of Vishnu, Shiva and Gautama Buddha according to various traditions^{ccx}. In southern India, Purandara Dasa and Kanakadasa of Karnataka composed songs devoted to the Krishna image of Udupi. Rupa Goswami of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, has compiled a comprehensive summary of bhakti named Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu^{ccxi}.

Large Vaishnava communities now exist throughout India, and particularly in Western Indian states, such as Rajasthan and Gujarat. Important sites of pilgrimage for Vaishnavs include: Guruvayur Temple, Sri Ranganam, Vrindavan, Mathura, Ayodhya, Tirupati, Puri, Mayapur and Dwarka^{ccxii}. According to Dr. Sift Giromoney, the Hindus of Tamil Nadu (in South India) worship the following deities, including Krishna, as of January 1976:

TABLE I: RESULTS OF A SURVEY CONDUCTED IN JANUARY 1976: PERCENTAGES OF HINDUS WORSHIPPING DIFFERENT DEITIES: http://www.cmi.ac.in/gift/Surveys/surv_deities.htm

Name of Deity	Worshipped daily	Worshipped occasionally
Muruga	51.3	13.2
Perumal	23.3	15.7
Vinayaka	14.9	16.4
Siva	11.8	16.7
Saraswathi	06.6	17.8
Lakshmi	07.2	16.4
Kali, Durga	07.5	17.7
Village gods	08.1	13.6
Village goddesses	07.2	15.4
Rama	04.9	14.1
Krishna	04.8	14.5
Other gods	01.7	02.7

REFLECTIONS

With this proof we do not come to the end of this study. Undoubtedly other proofs of the Prophethood of Lord Krishna will be discovered and added to this collection.

Indeed, while Bahá'u'lláh has articulated many proofs in His Writings; and while 'Abdu'l-Bahá has cited many such proofs in His writings and addresses; and while Shoghi Effendi has referred to many proofs in his letters and books, yet there are infinite proofs which have never been written down. Bahá'u'lláh speaks of these proofs in *Tafsir Surat va'l-shams*^{ccxiii}:

"How great the multitude of truths which the garment of words can never contain! How vast the number of such verities as no expression can adequately describe, whose significance can never be unfolded, and to which not even the remotest allusions can be made!"

'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to such proofs in relation to human recognition of the existence of God, in *Some Answered Questions*^{ccxiv}:

"These obvious arguments are adduced for weak souls; but if the inner perception be open, a hundred thousand clear proofs become visible."

It is fitting that this volume should conclude with a prayer, composed by Rabindranath Tagore, the poet laureate of modern India:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
 Where knowledge is free
 Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
 By narrow domestic walls
 Where words come out from the depth of truth
 Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
 Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
 Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
 Where the mind is led forward by Thee
 Into ever-widening thought and action
 Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake!
 Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let humanity awake!

ENDNOTES

¹Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Haykal, in Summons of the Lord of Hosts [SLH]:242

²Bahá'u'lláh, Suriy-i-Haykal, in SLH:223

³Bahá'u'lláh, Kalimat-i-Firdawsiiyih, in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas [TB]:74

⁴Bahá'u'lláh, Kalimat-i-Firdawsiiyih, in TB:79

⁵Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf [ESW]:115

⁶Bahá'u'lláh, in Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice [ADJ]:77

^{vii}Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 95

^{viii}From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi - 13 July 1938; published in "Extracts from the Bahá'í Writings on Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster and Related Subjects" in the Compilation of Compilations, Vol. I, #4, pp. 15-23

⁹Seven Valleys [SV], p. 40

^xKitáb-i-Íqán [KI], p. 172

^{xi}KI:210-211

^{xii}KI:238

^{xiii}Passage from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá included in a Memorandum from the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice dated 28 March 1996, attached to a Letter to Mr. Gavin Reed dated 22 October 1996 from the Secretariat of the Universal House of Justice. The original text of this statement is found, in Persian, in Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-'Abdu'l-Bahá, III:99-100: [avval dánistan ast va ba'da 'amal namúdan/ímán dánistan ast va 'amal khayr majrí dáshtan]; and in an earlier English translation, in Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (TAB:III:549) and Bahá'í World Faith (BWF:383): "Although a person of good deeds is acceptable at the Threshold of the Almighty, yet it is first 'to know,' and then 'to do'...By faith is meant, first conscious knowledge, and second, the practice of good deeds." The same principle was cited in: "A humanity which has come of age can respond to a directness of teaching that goes beyond the language of parable and allegory; faith is a matter not of blind belief, but of conscious knowledge." (Bahá'í International Community, 1992 May 29, Statement on Bahá'u'lláh, p. 5)

^{xiv}SAQ:173,253-254

^{xv}S. Radhakrishnan translation

^{xvi}Vanaparva, verse 487

^{xvii}Op.cit., p. 193

^{xviii}Santiparvan, cccxxxix.103=12966f

^{xix}Bhagavad-Gita, IV:2

^{xx}From a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Baha, translated on behalf of the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, March 1987; published

- in Marzieh Gail, Summon up Remembrance (George Ronald, Oxford, 1987), pp. 174-176, Note #106; PUP:358-359; SAQ:193-194,199
- ^{xxi}Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá [SWAB]:#156:183; SAQ:282-288; TAB:III:549,642;PUP:167-168; Lights of Guidance [LG]: #1392,1771,1820,1826,1827
- ^{xxii}PUP:167-168; LG:#1820
- ^{xxiii}Radhakrishnan, p. 30
- ^{xxiv}Ibid, p. 10
- ^{xxv}Ibid, p. 272
- ^{xxvi}Ibid., p. 87
- ^{xxvii}Walker, p. 566
- ^{xxviii}Kanhaiyalal Maneklal Munshi (December 30, 1887-February 8, 1971), Krishnavatara, series of 7 finished volumes and 1 unfinished volume.
- ^{xxix}ABDP:43
- ^{xxx}PUP:234
- ^{xxxi}Krishnavatara, p. 8
- ^{xxxii}Krishnavatara, 17
- ^{xxxiii}Krishnavatara, p. 25
- ^{xxxiv}'Abdu'l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy, p. 43
- ^{xxxv}Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih, p. 14; English translation from the French of A.L.M.Nicolas
- ^{xxxvi}Qur'an, XXIX:50, Dawood translation
- ^{xxxvii}Kitáb-i-Iqán, pp. 91-92
- ^{xxxviii}Cyclopaedia, IX:375-76
- ^{xxxix}Cyclopaedia, IX:375-76
- ^{xl}Young India, pp. 1078-79
- ^{xli}Isherwood translation, pp. 27-28
- ^{xlii}PUP:377
- ^{xliii}Ibid.
- ^{xliv}Ibid., p. 378
- ^{xlv}Radhakrishnan translation, pp. 215-217
- ^{xlvi}Radhakrishnan translation, p. 233
- ^{xlvi}ABDP:44
- ^{xlvi}Isherwood, p. 26
- ^{xlvi}Larousse, p. 218
- ⁱLarousse, p. 218
- ⁱⁱIbid.
- ⁱⁱⁱIbid.
- ^{liii}Art of India, p. 301
- ^{liii}The Song of Songs, VII:7-10
- ^{lv}Radhakrishnan translation, p. 215
- ^{lvi}Larousse, p. 218

^{lvii} Larousse, p. 219

^{lviii} Larousse, p. 219

^{lix} GL:105

^{lx} Cyclopaedia, XV, p. 39-46

^{lxi} Radhakrishnan translation

^{lxii} Art of India, pp. 270, 304, 306

^{lxiii} Larousse, p. 219

^{lxiv} Qur'an 28:5

^{lxv} Isherwood translation, p. 23-24

^{lxvi} All citations from Isaiah XL:4

^{lxvii} Op cit., p. 27

^{lxviii} Larousse, p. 219

^{lxix} **TaNaKH** is the Hebrew acronym for what Christians have traditionally called the Old Testament. This acronym representations **T**orah (Pentateuch), **N**eviim (Prophets) and **K**etuvim (Writings, including Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, etc.).

^{lxx} <http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/288200.html>: "This arose as a quotation by John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, first Baron Acton (1834–1902). The historian and moralist, who was otherwise known simply as Lord Acton, expressed this opinion in a letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton in 1887: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men." Another English politician with no shortage of names - William Pitt, the Elder, The Earl of Chatham and British Prime Minister from 1766 to 1778, is sometimes wrongly attributed as the source. He did say something similar, in a speech to the UK House of Lords in 1770: "Unlimited power is apt to corrupt the minds of those who possess it".

^{lxxi} Krishna, the divine lover: myth and legend through Indian Art, p. 28

^{lxxii} Krishnavatara, pp. 44-45

^{lxxiii} Harivamsa Purana, pp. 79,80

^{lxxiv} Krsna-katha and allied matters, p. 59

^{lxxv} *Gospel of Matthew* 13:57b; *Gospel of Luke* 4:24; *Gospel of John* 4:44

^{lxxvi} Mahabharata, V:130.46 and VII:11.1-26

^{lxxvii} KI:238

^{lxxviii} Puranas, p. 51, Asha Goswami

^{lxxix} Mahabharata, VII:1-26; Harivamsa Purana, HV:90; see *Ibid.*, p. 51

^{lxxx} Larousse, p. 218

^{lxxxii} *Ibid.*

^{lxxxii} PUP:234

^{lxxxiii} PUP:339

^{lxxxiv} PUP:410

^{lxxxv} Larousse, p. 219

^{lxxxvi} Bhagavad-Gita, p. 154

^{lxxxvii} Sam Veda, Uttararchika, VI,2-2-12-1-3/1385; cited in Dr. H.M. Munje, The Whole World is but One Family, pp. 22, 50-51

^{lxxxviii} Sam Veda, IV,3-8-13-4-10, Verse 1462), and Rig Ved, III, 3-3-5-62-10; in *Ibid.*, p. 50

^{lxxxix} PT:102, UK-11th ed.

^{xc} SWAB:291

^{xc} *Young India*, pp. 1078-79

^{xcii} Introduction, p. 22

^{xciii} Introductory Essay, p. 12

^{xciv} PUP:210-211

^{xcv} Op. cit., p. 152

^{xcvi} *Ibid.*, p. 11

^{xcvii} *Ibid.*, p. 10

^{xcviii}

^{xcix} Introduction, pp. 22, 13

°An attempt to make such a systematic comparison was essayed by a Sanskrit scholar and member of the Theosophical Society, Bhagwan Dass (1869-1958), and published as The Essential Unity of All Religions (Theosophical Press, Wheaton 1939).

^{ci} *Lamb-i-Hikmat*, TB:137-52

^{cii} PUP:465

^{ciii} SAQ:9,10-11

^{civ} Genesis I:26

^{cv} Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists, New York, 1914, pp. 236-37

^{cvi} Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Princeton, 1949

^{cvi} Larouse, p. 218

^{cviii} *Ibid.*, p. 350

^{cix} *Ibid.*, pp. 351-52

^{cx} Benjamin Walker, The Hindu World; Frederick Praeger, 1968, Vol. I, p. 561

^{cx} Bhagavad-Gita, p. 11-78

^{cxii} *Ibid.*, pp. 28-37

^{cxiii} Bhagavad-Gita, IV:1,3

^{cxiv} Shantiparva, 348, 51-52

^{cxv} Bhagavad-Gita, IV:2,3

^{cxvi} Bhagavad-Gita, I:28

^{cxvii} *Ibid.*, I:47

^{cxviii} *Ibid.*

^{cxix} *Young India*, 1925, p. 1078-79; in Radhakrishnan, p. 10

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- ^{cxx}"Introduction," in Bhagavad-Gita, translated by Isherwood and Prabhavananda, 1955, p. 22
- ^{cxxi}PUP:364
- ^{cxxii}ABDP:43-44
- ^{cxxiii}SAQ:115-118
- ^{cxxiv}SAQ:44-45
- ^{cxxv}Benjamin Walker, The Hindu World, pp. 561-64, passim.
- ^{cxxvi}Walker, p. 561
- ^{cxxvii}*Ibid.*, pp. 562,563-564
- ^{cxxviii}*Ibid.*, p. 562
- ^{cxxix}Larousse World Mythology, p. 218
- ^{xxx}Walker, p. 562
- ^{xxxi}*Ibid.*, p. 563
- ^{xxxii}*Ibid.*, p. 561
- ^{xxxiii}Bhagavad-Gita, II:2-3,11-53,55-72; III:3-35,37-42; IV:1-3,5-42; V:2-32,35-36,40-47; VII:1-30; VIII:3-28; IX:1-33; X:1-11,19-42; XI:5-8,32-34,47-49,52-55; XII:2-20; XVIII:2-72
- ^{xxxiv}Bahá'u'lláh, Haft Vadi (Seven Valleys, p. 5)
- ^{xxxv}Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Íqán (Book of Certitude, p. 192)
- ^{xxxvi}Bahá'u'lláh, Chahar Vadi (Four Valleys, p. 63)
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