ABHINAVAGUPTA

GĪTĀRTHASAṆGRAHA

TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY

BY

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PREFACE

Anything that comes from the pen of Abhinavagupta is worthy of study, for he was one of India’s greatest scholars. The dates of his works fall between 980 and 1020 of the Christian Era. They were written in Kashmir and I know of no evidence that Abhinava ever left his native province. Kashmir had been a leading province of India in several departments of learning for more than a century before Abhinava’s time. In poetics and literary criticism its position was unchallenged. In grammar Kaiyata had given it a reputation equal to the older centers to the east and south. Then there was the development of Kashmir Śaivism to which it is harder to assign a relative value, for who can say that one school of religious ritual and metaphysics is superior to another? In subtlety and neatness of system, at any rate, Kashmir Śaivism can stand comparison with any Hindu or Buddhist school of its time. It was the genius of Abhinavagupta to bring together these areas of the Kashmiri tradition. After the fashion of his time most of his writings are in the form of commentaries on or summaries of older works: commentaries on the dramaturgist Bharata, the literary critic Ānandavardhana, the Śaiva mystic Utpala; summaries of the Śaiva tantras and of the pratyabhijñā philosophy. While he professes to be explaining what is ancient, what he writes of is often strikingly original. On grammar Abhinava wrote no specific work, but his knowledge of the subject and his ability, almost playful, to use Sanskrit grammar to his peculiar ends, shines throughout his works.

Abhinava’s Gitārthaṅgṛaha has hitherto been little noticed. We have only one edition of the work, printed, or one might better say misprinted, in minute type as the last of seven commentaries on the Bhagavadgītā edited by Wasudev Laxmana Sastri Pansikar just seventy years ago. This work was read at least by S. K. Belvalkar in preparing his edition of the 19th-century Ānandavardhana’s commentary and by K. C. Pandeya in preparing his study of Abhinavagupta. Neither from these authors nor from elsewhere, however, can one learn much about the contents. No translation of the work has hitherto been made.

Now the Gitārthaṅgṛaha is the only work of Abhinavagupta’s on one of the prasthānā-traya, the triad of sacred texts that form the
basis of the Vedānta. One is naturally curious to see how he interprets it, how he could have brought its ancient doctrines into accord with his much later and apparently divergent views. So I was happy when Arvind Sharma, then a graduate student in the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies at Harvard University, chose the Gitārthasāṅggraha as the subject for his doctoral thesis. That thesis consisted in the critical comments on the work, which the reader will find in what follows, plus a translation of the first six chapters. These chapters I read through at the time with considerable care. The remaining chapters, seven to eighteen, with which Dr. Sharma has now completed his translation, I have read over since, not with the critical eye of an examiner but with the interest of one attracted by the author and wishing well to the translator. From such acquaintance I may state briefly my opinion of the book which the reader now holds in his hands.

I may make an immediate criticism, for it is in good Indian tradition to put one’s criticism first. The printed text of the Gitārthasāṅggraha is so corrupt that many passages are unintelligible without emendation. Dr. Sharma has improved many of these passages by the help of BORI ms. # 422 (1875-76). In others his ingenuity and common sense have made matters clear. But there remain a few passages, some of them apparently of importance, which must be left to future scholars to elucidate. As examples I might cite the remarks of Gitā 4.28, 4.29-32, 7.27, 15.15-19.

But does this defect outweigh the merits of what Dr. Sharma offers his readers? I think not. For the first time they can see in an evening’s reading what Abhinava and his teacher Bhaṭṭendurāja found to be of importance in the Bhagavadgitā. Without Dr. Sharma’s work the non-Sanskritist could discover none of this and even a good Sanskritist would have to spend hours in guessing at emendations or running about India in search of new manuscripts. The translation may be improved in the future if more manuscripts are forthcoming. Meanwhile much has been done.

What then is the Gitārthasāṅggraha? The title means “A Summary of the Meaning of the Gitā”. The work is not properly speaking a commentary (bhāṣya or vṛtti). Many passages of the Gitā, and some of them the most important in the view of famous commentators, are left without any comment at all. Abhinava comments only on passages where he, or his teacher, saw a special significance that had been missed by others. But then, as if to compensate for this eclectic
procedure, he furnishes at the end of each chapter a brief verse summarizing the teaching that has just been given.

How many of these hidden meanings sprang from the mind of Abhinavagupta and how many from Bhattendurāja is difficult to say. In the sixth verse of his introduction Abhinava states that he received the tradition from the earlier scholar, who, incidentally, was also his teacher in poetics. Not only there but elsewhere in this work (e.g., on 8.7, 9.23-24) Abhinava gives the credit for his remarks to his teacher. Some of the distinctive views of the book, for example the kindly interpretation of the Gitā's verse on the critical moment of death, were doubtless part of Bhattendurāja's teaching. But elsewhere Abhinava quotes from his own earlier works, from his Devistotravivrti (11.8), from a hymn to the Goddess (12.6-7), and from his Laghu-prakriyā (4.28, 12.11), a work written in a discipline that he had studied under other teachers. Then too, the stretching of Sanskrit grammar to add weight or give variety to a sacred text is so much in the manner of Abhinava's other works that one feels his own mind to be operating. I am not referring to what the western reader will consider an outrageous interpretation, like that of kṣetrajña (see the details at 13.2): such an interpretation is part of an esoteric doctrine and may have had a long history. I mean the interpretations for which there is no esoteric or doctrinal need. For example he takes saṅgrahena in saṁgrahaḥ pravākyāmi (8.11: "I will tell you briefly") in an etymological sense to mean I will show you by means of a correct determination (samyag grhyate niściyata iti saṅgrahaḥ). The word aniketaḥ in 12.19 ("homeless, mendicant") he also takes etymologically and then expatiates: "one who is aniketaḥ has no thought that he must do this or that but enjoys whatever comes along of pleasure or pain, without consideration (a-ketayā), for his heart is set on God". I confess to a certain liking for such interpretations. They add variety to a text, much as a variation may add to the pleasure of a musical phrase. Abhinava was a master of the art of textual variation.

The chief "secret" of the Gitā in the Abhinava-Bhattendurāja interpretation is surely the doctrine of purification through the offering of sense-objects to the senses. The objects of the world were created by the desire of God (7.11), that is, through his vimarsa-sakti. They are needed by the deities of the sense-organs (indriya-devatāḥ) just as the Vedic sacrifice is needed by the gods of heaven. To deny them what they need is more dangerous than to deny the gods of heaven, for the indriyadevatiś are in our own bodies. As Abhinava explains
this doctrine, it is not a licence for unbridled sensuality, though I suspect that some Tantrics may have so taken it. It is essential in Abhinava’s teaching, that one distinguish the sense-enjoyment from one’s self. Karma is built up by self-aggrandisement, by successive attempts at acquisitions for the self. The yogi, on the other hand, engages in actions only as an activity of the senses. He does not force other creatures into constraint or favor for his own purposes (3.17). One is to meditate on the self as propertyless, as pure knowledge, just as in the teaching of Śaṅkara. The worldly life of a Tantric yogi, however, must have differed radically from that of a monk in the Śaṅkara-sampradāya. The Tantric refuses to restrain his senses from the objects that God makes available. In fact God, being a loving God, makes them available precisely so that the yogi may use up his karma by offering them to his senses. The offering has the effect of destroying the inherent misapprehension (vāsanā) of duality (bheda) (4.26).

This doctrine is first set forth in detail in commenting on the Gitā passage: devān bhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vah (3.11). It is developed throughout Book Three and is referred to again at 4.26, 5.7, and 13.2. In the smallest possible compass it is anticipated in the summary ślōka of Book Two:

\[
\text{aho nu cetasas citrā gatir yogena yat kila} \\
\text{ārohayaty eva viśayān āśrayāt tān pariyajet.}
\]

“Ah, how marvellous is the way of the mind with yoga:

one brings upon it the objects of sense
and then by joining with them leaves them”.

Another curious secret is imparted under 4.18 and referred to again at 6.29. Just as the adept who has disassociated himself from his acts is no longer answerable for them, just so he may omit doing any act and still receive the credit for it. By identifying himself with other agents, he worships if they worship, he gains merit if they gain merit. So there is no need to spend time in religious ritual. Somebody, somewhere in the world, is always praying to God. This notion goes back at least to the beginnings of the pratyahhijñā school. In support of it Abhinava quotes from Somānanda’s Pratyahhijñā-śāstra, written a century or more before Abhinava’s time. Again one is not to jump to the conclusion that our author means to legitimize a life of ease. In fact he grows eloquent against sloth in commenting on the word pramādu at Gitā 14.8, adding quotations from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa to his own strictures. One gets the chance of being human only once in how many thousands of births and human life is the only spring-
board from which to reach mokṣa. What a crime it is then, what a pity, to waste it! And one has only to read Abhinava’s own hymns to see how fervently he himself prayed to Śiva and to Devi.

A most attractive trait of Abhinava appears often in this book. I refer not to his philosophy or his critical acumen, but to his kindliness. It appears most strikingly perhaps in his comment on Book Eight, verses 5 through 7, which speak of the moment of death. Here a literal interpretation, especially of verse 6, can be terrifying: “Whatever object one remembers at the moment of death, know that one goes to that object in the next birth, transformed by one’s mental conception of it”. How can one take these words literally, Abhinava asks. At the moment of death the body may be so feeble that you cannot remember anything, or you may remember only the cup of cool water that your wife or your son brings you. What must be meant is that your future birth is governed by what was strongly present in your mind when it was healthy. Abhinava gives credit to his teacher for this interpretation, but he comes back to it at 14.15 as though it were specially important to him.

The same kindliness appears in his insistence at 9.32 that in this instance one must hold to the literal interpretation, which other commentators had denied, namely, that women and śūdras can win mokṣa. It appears in an incidental remark at 3.20 on the word loka-saṅgraha. He takes the word to mean “kindness to people” (lokānugraha) and then considers some further remark to be needed, perhaps because of the general disapproval of purposive action in the Gītā. It is true that one’s action must be selfless, but “that kindness to others may be a proper motive for action”, he says, “is shown by God’s own example”.

For a fuller characterization of the book and its author one must look to the translation and to the remarks of Dr. Sharma. I have said enough here for a preface, except to commend Dr. Sharma for his elucidation of a most refractory text. May his labor be rewarded by a renewed interest in one of India’s greatest scholars.

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FOREWORD

Authorship is like parentage; even when not dubious one is sometimes reluctant to acknowledge the end product. But sometimes one must, warts and all, when it constitutes a rite of passage by which one becomes a "twice-born" in the academia, when one's doctoral dissertation appears again as a book.

The book to which I am writing this foreword thus started as my doctoral dissertation. It then consisted of a translation of the first six chapters of Abhinavagupta's Commentary on the Bhagavadgita and of an essay based on that Commentary. This book completes the translation. If it does not include a distinct discussion of the Täntrika elements in Abhinavagupta's Commentary it is because that is the topic of a separate study currently under progress.

My doctoral work was supervised by Professor D. H. H. Ingalls to whom, like all his students, I remain grateful. But my personal sentiments extend further. I am specially grateful to him for insisting that before seeking embellishment I at least achieve precision; that while seeking literary felicity I at least achieve clarity and that in seeking originality I at least first achieve plausibility.

Much has been written on the Bhagavadgita. Much is being written on the Bhagavadgita. And much will perhaps be written on the Bhagavadgita. Some of it may even be by me, until perhaps I realize that when one encounters a religious classic like the Bhagavadgita it is the reader rather than the text which may be in need of illumination!

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June 18, 1982
CHAPTER ONE

THE GĪṬĀRTHASAṆGRAHA OF ABHINAVAGUPTA

Abhinavagupta\(^1\) is a fairly well-known name in Indian studies\(^2\). On the basis of the reckoning called the Saptarṣi era\(^3\), "the earliest and the latest known works of Abhinava clearly show that the period of his literary activity extended over a quarter of a century"\(^4\) from 990-1-1014-15 A.D.\(^5\). Thus he may be assigned to "the second half of the 10th and the first quarter of the 11th century A.D."\(^6\). During the period of his literary activity Abhinavagupta wrote no less than 48 works.\(^7\) One of these is the GīṭārthasaṆgraḥa.

Abhinavagupta's literary activity covers "three clearly marked periods."\(^8\) Kanti Chandra Pandey calls them (1) the Tāntrika period, (2) the Ālāṅkārika period and (3) the Philosophical period.\(^9\) In terms of this schema, the GīṭārthasaṆgraḥa\(^10\) of Abhinavagupta marks the transition from the Ālāṅkārika to the Philosophical period. The

\(^1\) This Abhinavagupta should not be confused with another Abhinavagupta mentioned in the Śāṅkara Digvijaya of Mādhava. See Kanti Chandra Pandey, *Abhinavagupta: An Historical and Philosophical Study* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1963), pp. 4-5.
\(^4\) Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*., p. 9.
\(^5\) *Ibid.*. By the earliest and the latest known works is meant works whose dates are known. Thus Abhinavagupta's writing career could have commenced earlier and ended later.
\(^10\) Abhinavagupta's commentary on the Gīṭā is referred to by several names within the commentary itself such as ŚrīmadbhagavadgīṭārthasaṆgraḥa [Wāsudeva Laxmana Śāstri Pansikar, ed., *Bhagavadgīṭā* (Bombay: Nirnayasagara Press, 1912), p. 181]; BhagavadgīṭārthasaṆgraḥa (ibid., p. 775); GīṭārthasaṆgraḥa (ibid., p. 6); Gīṭātātparyasaṁgraha (ibid., 672); etc. Out of these the form GīṭārthasaṆgraḥa will be regularly used in this dissertation.
Abhinavabhārati, his celebrated commentary on the Nāṭyaśāstra, was the last work of the Ālāṅkārika period, but "while commenting on Bharata's Nāṭya Sūtra he had already begun writing side by side a purely philosophical work, namely, his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, as we know from a reference in Abhinava Bhārati." Thus the Gitārthasāngraha may be called the first work of the Philosophical period. When was it written?

Unfortunately, unlike some other works of Abhinavagupta, this work is not dated. Thus it is not possible to say, with any definiteness, when the Philosophical period commenced. But though one cannot be definite perhaps a reasonable inference can be drawn. The date of another work of his, the Pratayabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśini, also known as Brhati Vimarśini, is known to be 1014-15 A.D. We "know of only four philosophical works of Abhinava. ... The Bhagavadgītārthasāngraha is the first and the Pratyabhijñā Vimarśini is the last. The Pratyabhijñā Vivṛti Vimarśini immediately preceded the latter," and is "the penultimate of his known works." Thus Abhinavagupta wrote four works during the Philosophical period and the penultimate work around 1014-15 A.D. On this basis, Kanti Chandra Pandey surmises that the "time of the writing of the Abhinava Bārati ... can safely be stated to be the beginning of the eleventh century A.D." It has already been noticed that Abhinavagupta started writing the Gitārthasāngraha while he was commenting on the Nāṭya-śāstra. The composition of the Gitārthasāngraha may thus be placed at the beginning of the 11th century A.D.

The circumstances in which the Gitārthasāngraha was written

As already mentioned, Abhinavagupta started writing this work while working on the Abhinavabhārati. It appears from two of the concluding verses that "it was written at the repeated request of a certain pious Brāhmaṇa Loṭa(a), who, it appears, was Abhinava's relative."
Bhattenduraja and the Gitärthasaṅgaha

Abhinavagupta refers in the introductory verses to one Bhattenduraja19 as his teacher and it might be presumed that Abhinavagupta gives the interpretation as “learnt from his teacher Bhattenduraja”20 though, of course, “not without using his own judgement.”21 for he speaks of reflecting long on what he had learnt.22 The influence of Bhattenduraja is further attested to in the Commentary in the gloss on Bhagavadgitä VIII.7 when he concludes with the remark that as “such is the view of the respected guru of Abhinavagupta, why say much more” (srimadabhinaṅgaṅugūrūvāri sammatam ity alam bahunā).23 Elsewhere too Abhinavagupta openly acknowledges his debt to his guru. Thus in his gloss on Bhagavadgitä IV.24 he remarks:

... This is the supreme secret revealed through this and following verses. It has been revealed to us, though of limited intelligence (to the best) of our understanding gained through the preceptor. We are not to be accused of perpetrating something fanciful, like a painting in the sky, without regard to the doctrine received through the main line of apostolic succession.24

Abhinavagupta had several teachers, as “he approached the best teachers of his time in different subjects for the traditional and the most authoritative information.”25 Out of these several teachers, Bhattenduraja was his teacher (1) in dhvani and (2) of the Bhagavadgitä. Abhinavagupta seems to have held him in high esteem as in the Dhvanyālokalocana he speaks of “vidvatkavisahdydayacakravartino Bhaṭṭendurajasya”26 and in the Gitārthasaṅghagraha he refers to him

key expression reads: sādvyāloka[kakria]c[odanâ]vasaiaḥ. Other texts, however, substitute sādvyāloka[kakria] (vide Wāsudeva Laxmana Śāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., p. 775) or sādvyāloka[kakria] (vide Manuscript No. 422 [1875-76], Government Manuscript Library, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona) for sādvyāloka[kakria]. However, the variants sādvyāloka- or sādvyāloka- for sādvyāloka- lead to a metrically short terminal quarter of the ārya, the metre of the verse concerned.

20 Kanti Chandra Pandey, op. cit., p. 60.
21 Ibd.
22 vivicya ca cirami dhiya, Wāsudeva Laxmana Śāstri Pansikar, op. cit., p. 6.
23 Ibid., pp. 384-5.
25 Kanti Chandra Pandey, op cit., p. 11.
as the “son of Bhūtirāja,” “by whom, the great-souled one, the whole
world, which had fallen into darkness, was saved as by the sun.”

This verse also provides the genealogy of Bhāṭṭendurāja as follows:
1. Kāṭyāyana
2. Sauśuka
3. Bhūtirāja
4. Bhāṭṭendurāja.

The biological ancestry of Bhāṭṭendurāja as mentioned above,
however, should be distinguished from the preceptorial, for “in fact,
Bhūṭa Kallata ... was a great grand teacher of Abhinava from the
side of Bhāṭṭendurāja, who was Abhinava’s teacher in the Bhagavad-
gītā.” The preceptorial line of Bhāṭṭendurāja and therefore of
Abhinavagupta in this respect runs as follows:
1. Kallata
2. Mukula
3. Bhāṭṭendurāja
4. Abhinavagupta.

As a matter of fact, because Abhinavagupta wrote on both poetics
and philosophy, he represents the convergence of “two different pre­
ceptorial lines” as represented by Laksmanagupta (pratyabhijñā phi­
losophy) and Bhāṭṭendurāja (dhvani theory) thus:
1. Somānanda 1. Kallata
2. Utpaladeva 2. Mukula
3. Laksmanagupta 3. Bhāṭṭendurāja

An interesting circumstance needs to be remarked on at this point:
that Abhinavagupta received the āmnāya of the Gitā through the
preceptorial line of poetics rather than philosophy. However, it is
the spanda branch of Kāśmīra Śaivism which seems to have had a

28 The verse refers to him as śrībhūtirājauṃh, which should not be confounded
with the appellation bhūtirājuṃh which Hṛṛāja uses for himself in the colophons
to Bhartrhari’s Vākyapadiyam (vide Kanti Chandra Pandey, op. cit., p. 214).
29 Kanti Chandra Pandey, op. cit., p. 137.
30 Ibid., p. 160.
31 Kanti Chandra Pandey reads āmnāya and not āmnāyam in Introductory verse
no. 6 to the Gitārthasāgara (op. cit., p. 745). However, both the Nirṇayasāgara
edition and the Poona text contain the nominal accusative form āmnāyam and not
the gerund āmnāyu (see Wāsudeva Laxmana Śāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., p. 6).
tradition of commenting on the Gita rather than the pratyabhijña branch, and Kallata ties into the spanda branch.

The size of Gitārthasangraha

Abhinavagupta's commentary on the Gita, the Gitārthasangraha, is "one of the smallest existent." Indeed "as its name implies, it is not a commentary in the strict sense of the word. At some places, however, it has the look of a commentary inasmuch as it gives the meanings of certain words." The brevity of the commentary is probably to be explained in the light of Abhinavagupta's remark that the commentary aims at shedding light on the hidden import of the Gita, so he glosses those verses wherein the hidden import has to be brought to light and passes over the rest of the verses. For instance, he clearly states in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā XVIII.2 that as the concerned points have already been explained in detail by Bhāskara, etc., he will desist from reiterating them, as he is

33 Vasugupta (9th cent. A.D.) of the spumiti branch wrote a vāsavi-tikā on the Bhagavadgītā of which "no complete Ms. . . . has so far been discovered" (Kanti Chandra Pandey, op. cit., p. 157). J.C. Chatterji believes that its "first six chapters are perhaps still to be found existing as incorporated in another Tikā on the Bhā. Gītā called Lāsaki, by Rājānaka Lusakāka of which Ms. are available" (Kashmir Shaivism [Srinagar: Kashmir State Research Department, 1914], p. 37). It is "the oldest Gītā commentary of Kashmir Saivism (though hardly the first Gītā commentary in Kashmir)." (F. Otto Schrader, "Ancient Gītā Commentaries," The Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. X, No. 2 (June 1934), p. 354.) Similarly one Rāmakanta wrote a commentary on the Gītā called sarvatohhadra, which has been published by Anandārama Sanskrit Series: No. 112. Can he be identified with a Rāma of the Spanda school? K.C. Chatterjee (op. tit., p. 38) doubts this, and Kanti Chandra Pandey reports him as so doing without comment (op. cit., p. 158) but see F. Otto Schrader (op. cit., p. 354).


36 Kanti Chandra Pandey, op. cit., p. 60.

37 Introductory verse no. 5. see Wāsudeva Laxmana Sāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., p. 5.

38 Ahhinavagupta also "passes over many words of the text in silence" (S. K. Belvalkar, The so-called Kashmir recension of the Bhagavadgītā, New Indian Antiquary, Vol. 11, No. 4 (July 1939), p. 215).

39 Which Bhāskara is Ahhinavagupta referring to? "Now there is a Bhāskara of the Śaiva school who is a Kashmirian predecessor of Ahhinavagupta. There is another Bhāskara of the Bhedābheda school, and a very early opponent of Śankarācārya. The commentary of a Bhāskara is mentioned in the Tātpuryavandrikā on Rāmānuja's Gītā-hhāsa at iii.42, xiii.3, and xviii.66." S. K. Belvalkar goes on to show that the commentator Jayatirītha mentions the fact that a Bhāskara deliberately emended the reading paramātmā samāñhitah (Bhagavadgītā VI.7b) to purāñmasu samā mūtih, that "Jayatirītha is probably referring" to the Bhāskara of the Bhedābheda school (and
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determined to hold to his resolve of explaining only the gūḍhārtha (kim asmākaṁ taddūḥārthāpratijāmātrtranirvāhanasārānāṁ puranarūka-pradarśanaprayāsena).⁴⁰

It should be noted though, that if Abhinavagupta’s Gītārthasāṅgṛaha appears rather meagre when compared to the other bhāsyas on the Gītā, it is considerably larger than some other saṅgrahas, as for instance that of Yāmuna, which consists of 32 slokas.⁴¹

The text of the Gītā used by Abhinavagupta

The text of the Gītā used by Abhinavagupta was what has since come to be called the Kāśmīra recension.⁴² This becomes clear from the fact that he cites several additional verses which are not found either in the vulgate or the Critical Edition of the Bhagavadgītā but are found in the Kāśmīra recension.⁴³ There are, however, several versions of the Kāśmīra recension.⁴⁴ Most versions are in Sāradā script but Devanāgarī transcripts of the Śāradā texts, and a Bengali one as well, are also available. A description of the various manuscripts of the Kāśmīra recension follows:

not (the one of Kāśmīra) and that as “Abhinava based his commentary on Bhāskara” as shown by his gloss on Bhagavadgītā XVIII.2, he would “in the normal course of things, accept the latter’s textual emendation” (op. cit., p. 224), which he does (see Wāsudeva Lāxmāna Śāstri Pāṇśikā, op. cit., p. 292). For more on Bhāskara of the bhūtābhēdu school see D. H. H. Ingalls, “Bhāskara the Vedāntin,” Philosophy East and West, Vol. XVII (1967), pp. 61-67.

⁴⁰ Wāsudeva Lāxmāna Śāstri Pāṇśikā, ed., op. cit., p. 676.

⁴¹ J. A. B. van Buitenen, Rāmānuja on the Bhagavadgītā, (’s-Gravenhage : H. L. Smiths), p. 9. Appendix Yāmuna’s work, which is “a very concise summary of the G in 32 slokas” (ibid., p. 9) bears a title identical with that of Abhinavagupta’s work, as used in this dissertation. For the Sanskrit text of Yāmuna’s work see Mahāvanāsāstri, cd., Śrimadbhāgavatpūrṇā (Bombay : Lakṣmīvenkatesvara Press, samvat 1959). pp. 1-3.


⁴⁴ S. K. Belvalkar, op. cit., p. 214. “A ‘Version’ should mainly embody modifications happening during the course of scribal transmission from a common codex: and as, ordinarily, the transcripts are in the same script as the original — except in bисcriptal border-regions - a ‘Version’ tends to be Provincial. A ‘Recension’ should connote more deliberate and far-reaching alterations in the text, often changing its tone and emphasis. Such a ‘Recension’ transcends the limits of a Script or a Province. This difference between the two terms is often ignored” (ibid., fn 1).
I — Śāradā version [Ś]

Ś1 — Calcutta, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, No. 3312 (4065); dated Laukika Samvat 85 (ca. A.D. 1739).
Ś2 — London, British Museum, Oriental MS. No. 6763 D.**
Ś3 — The Śāradā Ms. used by Pandit Lakshman Raina of Srinagar for his edition, published in 1933, which represents the text underlying the commentary of Abhinavagupta (Cg).
Ś4 — Poona, Bombay Govt. Collection (deposited at the BORI), No. 424 of 1875-76, representing the text underlying the commentary of Rājānaka Rāmakāṇṭha alias Rāmakavi (Ck).
Ś5 — Poona, Bombay Govt. Collection (deposited at the BORI), No. 423 of 1875-76, representing CK.
Ś6 — Poona, Bombay Govt. Collection (deposited at the BORI), No. 179 of 1883-84, representing the text underlying the commentary of Ānandavardhana (Cā).

II — Kasmiri version [K] being a transcript from Ś in Devanāgari.

K0 — Poona, Mirrikar Collection of the Bhārat Ithihās Sanshodhaka Mandal, No. 207.
K1 — London, India Office Library, No. 326 (2137); dated V. Samvat 1839 (ca. A.D. 1783).
K2 — Poona, B.O.R. Institute’s Mahābhārata Collection, No. 15 (245); dated Śaka 1693 = V. Samvat 1828 (A.D. 1771).
K3 — Poona, Bombay Govt. Collection (deposited at the BORI), No. 565 of 1882-83; dated Śaka 1616 (A.D. 1694).
K4 — Poona, No. 23, Kamat Collection of the BORI; dated Sārīvat 1742 (ca. A.D. 1686).
K5 — Gandal, Kathiawad, ms. (without number) belonging to the Rasasālā; dated V. Sārīvat 1545 (ca. A.D. 1489).
K6 — Gandal, Kathiawad, ms. (without number) belonging to the Rasa-sālā; dated V. Sārīvat 1545 (ca. A.D. 1489).

Out of these thirteen Mss. Ś3 represents the text used by Abhinavagupta, as is clear from the note which accompanies it.

The purpose for which the Gitārthasāngraha was written

Apart from the friendly persuasions that may have led him to write it, Abhinavagupta also offers some intellectual justification for writing the Gitārthasāngraha. He was as conscious in the eleventh century as some writers are in the twentieth,** that the Gitā has

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46 The data presented here have been consolidated from ibid., pp. ix, x, xiii and xiv.
47 "During the last war we used to see notices everywhere asking if our journey was really necessary. In conscience we had often to admit that it was not. Today
Śaṅkara explains this verse as follows:

Never did I not exist; rather, I always did exist, that is, through the past bodily births and deaths, I always existed just as the air is permanent within [a series of] jars, that is the intention. So also, never did you not exist; rather, you always did exist. So, never did these rulers of men not exist; rather, they always did exist. So neither shall we cease to exist; rather, we shall all certainly continue to exist even in the future after the destruction of these bodies. As the Self, the Ātman, we are eternal through all three periods of time (past, present and future). That is the meaning.

The plural is as used with reference to the bodies that are different; it does not mean that there is more than one Self.

(Question): - Now, how is the Self eternal?

(Answer): — Here follows an illustration:

And then Śaṅkara proceeds to gloss the next verse.

Śaṅkara’s explanation may now be compared with the following offered by Abhinavagupta:

Two points are made; one by the verse (beginning with) na hy evāham and the other by the verse (beginning with) dehino ṣmin. [First, to take the verse beginning with] na hy evāham: For I never was not; rather, I was. And so were these kings. [Now to take the verse beginning with] dehino ṣmin: If (mere) change of form is a subject of grief, then why is the attainment of youth after childhood not grieved for? He who is steadfast (brave), does not grieve. If there is fortitude and, moreover, one does not care for the physical body, then it is easy [to avoid grief]. Therefore, seek to be steadfast.54

How is Abhinavagupta’s gloss different from Śaṅkara’s?

At first sight the difference does not seem to be marked. Both of them have connected this verse with the succeeding one, though Abhinavagupta does so more than Śaṅkara. A closer analysis suggests that while Śaṅkara takes the eternality55 of the ātman here in the sense of pravāharūpanityatā, as the jīvātman going through various lives, it is not clear in what way Abhinavagupta takes the eternality involved, as pravāharūpa or as kūṭastha. Hence a comparison here is hard to institute. Moreover, Abhinavagupta does not have much to say on this verse: he has more to say about the next. It is difficult

54 This is the reading of the Kāśmirī recension which Abhinavagupta used (see Wāsudeva Laxmīnā Rao Sāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., p. 46), as against Śaṅkara’s text which reads na tv evāham (Śaṅkara, Gitāsthāya Śrīraṅgam: Śrīvanvilāsa-mudrāyantrālaya, p. 19).

explanations: (1) since the sage really ‘sees’ māyā for what it is, isn’t it strange that there should be night when he sees through the veil of māyā; and (2) the Yogin stays awake in knowledge wherein others are confused, are in the dark, and does not stay up in the ignorance enveloped by which ordinary people are up and about: this contrast is surprising.

The second explanation is common to Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta but Abhinavagupta sees in it an element of wonder (ity api citram). The first explanation is offered by Abhinavagupta on his own.

There is also one important metaphysical difference between Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta in relation to māyā. For Śaṅkara, māyā is wholly bad inasmuch as it refracts the unity of Brahman and causes the plurality of the world to appear. Abhinavagupta, however, distinguishes between two kinds of māyā. There is the ordinary man “who comes under the influence of Maya, he as it were falls asleep ... the universal ‘All-this’ is obscured.” This is the āvarana aspect of māyā to which Śaṅkara also refers. But Abhinavagupta points out that under the influence of this māyā the ordinary man overlooks the primeval form (prācyam rūpam) of māyā when it is “but an aspect of Divine Shakti.” This is clearly suggestive of the distinction in South Indian Śaivism between suddha-māyā and asuddha-māyā and in Kāśmīra Śaivism between sakti and māyā.

It is clear, therefore, that Abhinavagupta does offer some fresh insights here, both on his own and in the light of Kāśmīra Śaivism.

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60 Wāsudeva Laxmana Śāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., p. 129.
62 J.C. Chatterji, op. cit., p. 77.
63 See Śaṅkara on Bhagavadgītā VII.25; Katha Upanisad 2.5; 3.12; Isa Upanisad 3; etc.
64 Wāsudeva Laxmana Śāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., p. 128.
65 J.C. Chatterji, op. cit., p. 76. It could, however, also be a reference to sadvidyā, see Kanti Chandra Pandey, op. cit., p. 370.
68 By contrast, Rāmānuja makes an analogous presentation but connects it not with māyā but buddhi. “A person who has subdued his senses and purified his mind, contemplates the ātman by means of the buddhi that is concerned with the ātman. This buddhi is dark as night to other people, but to him the second buddhi—the one concerned with objects—is as dark as night” (J.A.B van Buitenen, op. cit., p. 65).
INTRODUCTION

Bhagavadgītā III.11

With this prosper ye the gods,
And let the gods prosper you;
(Thus) prospering one the other,
Ye shall attain the highest welfare.69

Śaṅkara has little to say by way of explanation on this verse:

"By this sacrifice ye nourish the gods such as Indra. The Gods shall
nourish you, with rain, etc." 'The supreme good' is the attainment of the
knowledge of Brahman in due course. Or, the 'supreme good' may mean
'svarga.'70

Abhinavagupta offers an esoteric71 allegorical72 explanation of this
verse. He takes the 'gods' to be the playful disposition of the senses,
which rule over the senses; 'making the gods prosper' he takes to
mean partaking of the objects of the senses; 'the gods will make
you prosper' he takes to mean that the senses being satiated will
produce states of bliss consistent with themselves on account of their
being present in one's self. And the highest welfare he regards as the
attainment of Brahman, which follows after one has gone through
the states of samādhi, characterized by the satiation of the senses
and their absorption in the self.

In this case Abhinavagupta's interpretation does turn out to be
original and esoteric.

Bhagavadgītā IV.18

Who sees inaction in action,
And action in inaction.
He is enlightened among men;
He does all actions, disciplined.73

69 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 19
70 A. Mahādeva Śāstri, op. cit., pp 98-99. Rāmānuja says a little more by way
of explanation, emphasizing the fact that sacrificing to these gods is really sacrificing
to Visnu (Mahāvāna Śāstri, op. cit., pp. 48-49).
71 Abhinavagupta refers to rahasyaśāstra, Wāsudeva Laxmāna Śāstri Pansikar, ed.,
op. cit., p. 150.
72 Abhinavagupta seems to have a certain penchant for noticing and offering
allegorical explanations. He offers one here. In his gloss on Bhagavadgītā I.1 he
notices how some people (kecīt) have offered an allegorical explanation and cites it
(see Wāsudeva Laxmāna Śāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., pp 8, 10).
73 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p 25.
Śaṅkara offers an extended gloss on this passage in the course of which he anticipates and answers objections, remarks on the cussedness of people "who have long been subject to great misconceptions" and who "are deluded often and often," and rejects the explanation of this verse offered in karmamimāṇsā. The crux of his position he states at the very outset:

Actions mean that which is done, an act in general. Inaction can be seen in action and action in inaction, since both inaction (nivṛtti) and action (pravṛtti) presuppose an agent. In fact, all experience of such things as action and agent is possible only in a state of avidyā; only when we have not yet attained to the real (vastu). He who sees inaction in action and who sees action in inaction—he is wise among men, he is devout (yukta, yogin), he has done all action. Thus is he extolled who sees action in inaction and vice versa.25

Abhinavagupta’s explanation of this verse proceeds along quite different lines. His explanation of seeing inaction in action is that because the doer does not possess the sense of acting as an agent, even though he ostensibly acts, he really does not act because he is devoid of the sense of being the agent. This explanation is not that surprising and is in keeping with other verses in the Gītā. It is in explaining how in inaction one may see action that Abhinavagupta provides his own interpretive twist. For him akarma = non-ritual action = pūjā (as distinct from karma or sacrificial ritual). Thus in akarma or pūjā performed by others he sees his own action, i.e., he identifies himself with the performance of the pūjā. So in his case the karmic doubt arises: by which karma is to be recompensed? His own? But he has no sense of agency. Those of others? But they are actions of others not his own. In other words, the true yogin either performs all actions or none at all, "this is the supreme secret."26

It may now be asked, how come the yogin can see his own action in another’s actions? Abhinavagupta suggests that such a question

24 A. Mahādeva Śastri, op. cit., p. 130.
25 Ibid., p. 129. Rāmānuja seems to take a somewhat different view of this verse.
26 Karmayoga has the form of knowledge because it involves the knowledge that the ātman is distinct from the body. When a man perceives that acts, when they are performed, have the form of knowledge because they are realizations what the ātman really is (sic), and when he perceives that this knowledge has the form of action, because it is implied in action, then he knows the purpose of the śāstras and is capable of release, for by every act which he performs he seeks to realize this purpose of the śāstras" (J. A. B. van Buitenen, op. cit., p. 81).
about a man of knowledge is misplaced because the possession of knowledge which is perfect and unshaken interpenetrates in many ways the entire class constituted by objects and subjects of knowledge. Just as one can come to ‘know’ both a jar as well as a piece of cloth, so should one understand the interconnection between different subjects.\textsuperscript{77}

\textit{Bhagavadgītā IV.24}

The (sacrificial) presentation is Brahman; Brahman is the oblation; In the (sacrificial) fire of Brahman it is poured by Brahman; Just to Brahman must he go. Being concentrated upon the (sacrificial) action that is Brahman.\textsuperscript{78}

Śaṅkara glosses this verse fairly extensively in the light of jñānāyoga and also states and criticizes a more ritualistic interpretation of the verse. His main point, however, is made early in the gloss and runs as follows:

The man who has realized the Brahman sees that the instrument by which the oblation is poured in the fire is nothing but Brahman: that it has no existence apart from that of the Self, just as silver has no existence apart from that of the mother-of-pearl (mistaken for silver). What (in the illustration) appears as silver is nothing but the mother-of-pearl. What people look upon as the instrument of offering is to one who has realized Brahman, nothing but Brahman. Brahman is the oblation: i.e., what is regarded as oblation is to him nothing but Brahman; and it is by Brahman that the offering is made, i.e., the agent is none other than the Brahman. The act of offering is nothing but Brahman: and the result, the goal to be reached by him who always sees Brahman in action is nothing but Brahman.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{77} ibid., pp. 200-208.
\textsuperscript{78} Franklin Edgerton, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{79} A. Mahādeva Śāstry, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 141. Rāmānuja’s gloss on this verse is problematical. “The entire act consists of Brahman because it is of Brahman’s nature: the sacrifice is Brahman, the utensils are Brahman, the fire in which the sacrifice is offered is Brahman, and the sacrificer himself is Brahman. He who contemplates this insight, contemplates the act-as-Brahman. Such a one is capable of knowing the proper form of the ātman—which is Brahman—through his acts, because his acts are of Brahman’s nature. In other words, the acts performed by an aspirant have the form of knowledge because they imply the realization that they consist of Brahman and are therefore themselves a means of contemplating the ātman without the inter-
Abhinavagupta’s gloss on this verse is fairly comprehensive. He mentions four explanations two of which are esoteric. One of the two esoteric ones Abhinavagupta identifies as having been received by him through his Guru. The explanations are distinct but not completely apart and are presented below.

(1) In the first interpretation, everything is identified with Brahman. The offering proceeds from Brahman, goes to Brahman, is offered in the fire of Brahman and is calculated to make that fire blaze forth all the more. Such a holistic and cosmic Brahman is to be known, for there exists nothing else besides, by the yogin whose \textit{samādhi} consists of that act of offering.\textsuperscript{80}

(2) The second explanation preserves more ritualistic elements. The sacrifice is said to be pervaded by Brahman because the gods to whom the sacrifices are offered represent the nature of Brahman. Thus as a result of the sacrifice no fruit of sacrifice is gained by the sacrificer, rather Brahman itself is gained.\textsuperscript{81}

(3) The third explanation, which Abhinavagupta cites as having been received by him from his Guru, makes the point that people with a limited outlook, for whom the sacrifice consists of ritual action alone, receive fruits in accordance with that belief. How could those, who know the nature of the sacrifice to be unlimited and perfect, as identical with Brahman, become addicted to the small petty fruits which proceed from a limited conception of sacrifice.\textsuperscript{82}

(4) According to the fourth explanation, which Abhinavagupta cites as an esoteric one received in that sect through uninterrupted succession, the specific mention of fire, sacrificial offerings and instruments of sacrifice such as ladle etc., and of specific ritual acts, is to be disregarded. These constitute, so to say, the “letter” of the verse and should be overlooked in favour of the “spirit” of the verse.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{80} Wāsudeva Laxmana Sāstri Pansikar, ed., \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 216-217.
\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 217-218.
\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 219.
\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 219-220.
For the self is the self’s only friend,
And the self is the self’s only enemy.
The self is a friend to that self
By which self the very self is subdued;
But to him that does not possess the self, in enmity
Will abide his very self, like an enemy.
Of the self-imbued pacified mind,
The supreme self remains concentrated (in absorption).
In cold and heat, pleasure and pain,
Likewise in honour and disgrace.88

Śaṅkara in his gloss takes the word ātman, translated above as the self, a word which repeatedly occurs in the first two verses cited above, as referring to the ātman itself except where the text speaks of the ātman being subdued by the ātman (Bhagavadgītā VI.6b) when he comments jītendriya ity arthā,89 thus taking the subjugation of the self by the self to indicate subjugation of the senses.

Abhinavagupta, however, takes a different tack. He glosses ātman as the mind, mana eva ity arthā.90 In the present context this appears to be a very helpful suggestion. Rāmānuja too glosses ātman as manas.91

It is clear, then, from an examination of these cases that Abhinavagupta does indeed offer esoteric interpretations of the Gītā on occasion, as well as helpful suggestions. His glosses, almost always, are of interest and are sometimes distinguished not only by esoteric novelty but also genuine originality.

88 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 32.
89 Śaṅkara, op. cit., pp. 160-161.
91 Mahāvīna Śāstrī, op. cit., p. 97.
In Section IV exegetical aspects will be identified wherein Rāmakavi and Ānanda are in agreement but Abhinavagupta holds a different view.

In Section V an exegetical aspect will be identified wherein Abhinavagupta and Ānanda hold a similar position but Rāmakavi assumes a somewhat different stance.

All the three commentaries under consideration share two remarkable features: all of them use the Kāsmīra recension of the Gita and all of them are Śaiva commentaries from Kāsmīra. These two considerations are not entirely unconnected.

Not all the two hundred and more alleged Kashmirian pāṭhahbahedas are exclusively Kashmirian. Quite a few are current outside Kashmir, and a few others are rejected by some of the Kashmirian writers and commentators themselves. But there is a sufficient body of Pāṭhahbahedas that are found in Kashmirian Mss. of the text, and of the Kashmirian commentaries on the text which have helped to preserve the pāṭhas intact. This was so because there was a distinct Kashmirian script, but particularly because the Kashmirian writers and the commentators were the followers of a distinctive religious sect. When the head of a religious sect—say Vasugupta—writes his own commentary on an important text like the Gita, his recension underlying the original commentary comes to be accepted unquestioned by almost all the subsequent writers; and so the recension comes to be perpetuated during the dominance of the sect in question. ... Hence it is legitimate to speak of a Kashmirian recension of the Bhagavad-gītā, as it is legitimate, in a smaller measure, to speak of a Rāmānujiya recension of the Poem.
INTRODUCTION

Not only are all the commentators Śaiva, commenting on more or less the same text, they also share a further remarkable circumstance. As Śaiva commentators they are not bothered in the least by the fact that the text they are commenting on is a Vaiṣṇavite text. This remains a somewhat puzzling fact till it is realized that Abhinavagupta traces the origin of the Śaivāgama from Bhairava ... (he) represents Rāmacandra to have studied it partly. In the Harivaṃśa Purāṇa we are told that Kṛṣṇa has taught the sixty-four monistic Śaivāgamas by sage Durvāsas, the revealer of all of them in the Kali age. Similarly in the Mahābhārata, Mokṣa Parva, it is stated that he got instruction in the Dvaita and Dvaitādvaita Śaivāgamas, twenty-eight in number, from Upamanyu. It seems that it was because of the above statements that Kṛṣṇa was thought by the Śaivas to have been himself a follower of Trika. Perhaps for this very reason the Bhagavadgītā is classed with the Āgamas.

The acceptance of Kṛṣṇa as an authority on Śaivism by the Śaiva tradition of Kāśmirā probably accounts for the lack of any self-consciousness whatsoever on the part of the commentators that, although Śaiva themselves, they are commenting on a Vaiṣṇava work.

II

Next an exegetical aspect of the Gītā may be identified wherein all the three Śaiva commentators Rāmakavi, Abhinavagupta and Ananda seem to differ.

Such an example seems to be provided by their respective glosses on Bhagavadgītā VIII.6. The verse may be translated thus:

Whatsoever state (of being) meditating upon He leaves the body at death, To just that he goes, son of Kunti, Always, being made to be in the condition of that.

This verse enshrines the well-known Hindu belief that the thoughts or emotions one entertains at the time of one’s death determine the next birth. This idea is, in a general sense, accepted by all the three commentators but is elaborated by each in his own way.

11 The same could be said of Śaṅkara if he is taken to be a Śaivite (see Ainslee T Embree, ed., The Hindu Tradition [New York: Vintage Books, 1972], p 234) but this is by no means certain, see Paul Hacker, Relations of Early Advaitins to Vaiṣṇavism, Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens und Archiv für Indische Philosophie, Band IX (1965), pp. 147-154.
12 Kanti Chandra Pandey, op. cit., p. 63.
13 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 42.
Rāmakavi connects this verse with the notion of the three guṇas. He states that whatever thing a person remembers at the time of death, be it sāttvika, rājasa or tāmasa, or with whatever mental attitude a person yields up his body, sāttvika, rājasa or tāmasa, he obtains a similar rebirth. He also connects this verse with some later verses of the Gītā, namely Bhagavadgītā XIV.14.15; and cites them in the body of his gloss:

\[ \text{yadū sattve vivṛddhe}^{14} \text{ tu pralayam yatī dehabhrt} \\
\text{tadottamavidāṁ lokāṁ amalān pratipadyate } // \\
\text{rajasi pralayam gatvā karmasaṅgisu jāyate} \\
\text{tathā pralinas tamasi mūḍhayonisu jāyate}^{15} // \\
\]

Abhinavagupta adopts a slightly different approach. He does not connect this verse with the three guṇas or with later verses in the Bhagavadgītā itself. He writes:

Not only indeed does one come to Me — the vanquisher of all ailments (thinking of me) at the time of death when one is in good health, but (the Lord) also preaches the way whereby God may be remembered by one even in bad health, who has withdrawn himself from all the activities of the senses. He from whose heart the divine truth is never lost even in the course of all worldly dealings, who has cast off all actions on the Lord and who is ever suffused with God, definitely automatically remembers the divine truth — for the reason that he is always steeped in it. Therefore it is said that whatever thing the innermost self is filled with, that is remembered at the time of death and that state is attained; therefore at all times be devoted to me, be desirous of me, this is the import, and not this that whatever is (literally) remembered at the time of death (i.e., whatever thought happens to cross the mind) that forsooth is obtained. If this be so then the prospect is indeed bleak (tāmasa) for the jñānīn whose mind is disturbed by the disorder of bodily humours and who is comatose (when he dies)...^{16}

The fact that at the exact moment of death one may, because of one’s physical condition, not be able to remember God literally, is also considered by Ānanda. His resolution, however, of this difficulty

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16 Wāsudeva Laxmana Sāstrī Pansikar, ed., op. cit., pp. 381-383. By contrast, on this point Rāmakavi argues that if one is always fixed in one guṇa, say sāttvika, then under the influence of this samskāra his remembrance is bound to have that quality at the time of death (Śrīnivāsa Nārāyana Tādāpatrikara, ed., op. cit., p 136). Abhinavagupta seems to be arguing, however, that God needn’t be literally remembered at the moment of death if one’s being is steeped in Him.
is quite different from Abhinavagupta's. He resolves it not in terms of man's devotion to God but God's love for man. He writes: antakāle kāṣṭhapāṣāṇatulyāṁś caitanyuvigamāṁ matsmaranāsamarthāṁ uham eva tān smarāmī svasāyujyam navāṁity arthāh.17 Thus if he, on account of being unconscious does not remember God, God remembers him and unites him with Himself.

It is clear, therefore, that in their treatment of the last few moments in relation to rebirth or the next life the three commentators follow different courses. According to Rāmakavi what one has devoted one's life to one is bound to remember in one's last moments. Not necessarily. Abhinavagupta would add, for one may be unconscious at the time of one's death, but it makes no difference. The verse should not be taken literally. It makes no difference, agrees Ānanda, but for a different reason: God himself remembers the devotee if the devotee can't remember Him because of his physical condition.

The three commentators, however, do not indeed differ all the time. Sometimes two of them agree but one of them differs. Thus, for instance, Ānanda is unique among the three in dividing the Bhagavadgītā into three parts of six chapters each: prathame' dhyā-yaṣṭake uddeśaṁ madhyame laksanam antyे parikṣeti triparyayin gītā.18 Abhinavagupta and Rāmakavi do not seem to use such a classificatory schema. But more significantly perhaps, Ānanda differs in another respect from Rāmakavi and Abhinavagupta. He attaches far greater emphasis to Yoga not in the general sense of uniting with God but in the specific sense in which it is developed by Patañjali, and more than that, by a commentator on Patañjali. It is this "disproportionate emphasis" laid on "yoga in its more mystic and weird aspects and practices" which "accounts for the several wholesale quotations from the Yogasūtras and from the Vyāsabhāṣya thereon, which takes up pages after pages of the Ānandavardhini."19

A striking illustration of this approach of Ānanda's is provided by his gloss on Bhagavadgītā V.18. The verse translates as follows:

18 S. K. Belvalkar, ed., op. cit., pp. 3-4. There are precedents to this in the Viśistadvaitic tradition of interpreting the Gītā. A similar threefold classification is attributed to Yāmuna and is also found in Rāmānuja (see J. A. B. van Buitenen, op. cit., pp. 48, 99, 137).
In a knowledge-and-cultivation-perfected Brahman, a cow, an elephant, And in a mere dog, and an outcast. The wise see the same thing.20

S. K. Belvalkar comments thus on Ānanda’s gloss21 on this verse:

The commentator tells us that if an individual has in the present and previous lives acquired sufficient perfection in Yogic practices of the type detailed in the Third Pāda of the Pātañjala Yogasūtra, it is possible for him to simultaneously assume a number of bodies, and through each of these bodies to hasten the process of living out the ensuants of his past accumulated karmans. The mumukṣu or the yogin endeavouring thus to hasten the process of achieving the sumnum bonum does not bother himself as to what body he chooses to animate — whether it is that of a pious Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog or a dogcater — provided it helps him to live out the ensuants of his past karmans.22

This interpretation appears far-fetched and is unique to Ānanda. Both Rāmakavi and Abhinavagupta impute no such interpretation to the verse in question.23

IV

In the previous section an instance of exegetical convergence between Rāmakavi and Abhinavagupta but divergence from them on the part of Ānanda was identified. In this section a couple of instances in which Rāmakavi and Ānanda take a similar position but Abhinavagupta takes a different one may be examined.

Rāmakavi and Ānanda are in basic agreement about the general thrust of the Gitā. According to both of them the Gitā teaches jñānakarmasamuccaya. In his introductory comments in Sanskrit to the tīkā of Rāmakavi, S.N. Tadpatrikar remarks that the author seems to have adopted (āngikṛtam) the view that the Gitā espouses jñānakarmasamuccaya.24 This is clear from Rāmakavi’s gloss on Bhav...
gavadgītā III.3. Similarly, in his introductory comments to the tīkā of Ānanda, S. K. Belvalkar points out that the author “intended to set forth and establish the doctrine of Jñānakarmasamuccaya, metaphysically grounding it on the Śaiva Tantricism as current in Kashmir from the days of Abhinavagupta onwards.”26 This becomes clear from Ānanda’s remarks in his upodghāta to the commentary proper, as well as from the colophon to the commentary on Chapter IV which indicates that the commentary could be called one of jñānakarmasamuccaya.27 Indeed, from this point of view the “real service” of Ānanda “consists in his having diligently collected together, from the Mārkaṇḍeya, Viṣṇu and other Purāṇas, and from the Mahābhārata itself, passages supporting the Jñānakarmasamuccaya view.”28

Thus both Rāmakavi and Ānanda are in agreement on this point; but Abhinavagupta in the gloss on the very first verse of the Gītā criticises the jñānakarmasamuccaya interpretation of the Gītā and upholds the view that it stands for jñāna alone.29

Not only does Abhinavagupta differ from both Rāmakavi and Ānanda in the general interpretation of the Gītā, sometimes he differs from their common understanding of certain key expressions in a verse of the Gītā. An instance of this is provided by Bhagavadgītā III.42 which runs:

\[\text{indriyāni parāny āhur indriyebhyah param manāh manasas tu parā buddhir yo buddheh paratas tu saḥ.}\]

A key issue with this passage is: what does the saḥ stand for here? Both Rāmakavi31 and Ānanda32 gloss it as ahankāra, but Abhinavagupta glosses it as ātmā.33

Finally, an instance of convergence on the part of Abhinavagupta
and Ānanda and divergence on the part of Rāmakavi may also be considered.

Such an instance is provided by the treatment of the concept of two classes of beings, the daiva and the āsura, which is developed in the Bhagavadgītā in the Sixteenth Chapter. The classification is clearly stated in Bhagavadgītā XVI.6, which may be translated as follows:

There are two creations of beings in this world.
The divine and the demoniac.
The divine has been explained at length;
Hear from Me of the demoniac, son of Prthū.34

Both Abhinavagupta35 and Ānanda36 gloss the verse in a rather straightforward manner. Indeed, they barely gloss it, but for Rāmakavi this classification possesses a key significance. He refers to this classification in his upodghāta37 and again on his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IV.7-8. These are the famous avatāra verses of the Gītā:

vadā vadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata
abhuyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham38
paritrāṇāya sādhūnām vināśāya ca dūṣṭām
dharmasamsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge.

Rāmakavi connects Kṛṣṇa’s statement that he comes into being to protect the good (paritrāṇāya sādhūnām)39 and to destroy the wicked (vināśāya ca dūṣṭām)40 with the two classes of beings: the daiva and the āsura. He connects the former with the good (sādhu) and the latter with the wicked (dūṣṭa).41 Not only that, according to Rāmakavi each class consists of two kinds of beings. The daiva class consists of (1) the gods (devas) and (2) human beings. The category of the deva also consists of two sub-categories: (i) established gods like Indra etc., and (ii) those human beings who have become gods (temporarily) by winning a sojourn in heaven because of their good deeds. Both are distinguished by the predominance of sativa. The

34 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 76.
36 S. K. Belvarkar, ed., op. cit., p. 239.
37 Srinivāsa Nārāyana Tādapatrikara, ed., op. cit., p. 5.
38 The reading in the Kāsmīra recension is tādātmāṃsām, see Kanti Chandra Pandey, op. cit., p. 61.
40 Ibid.
41 Srinivāsa Nārāyana Tādapatrikara, ed., op. cit., p. 72.
category of manusyas or human beings also consists of two sub-categories: (i) human beings in whom sattva and rajas blend with a heavier admixture of rajas and (ii) human beings in whom sattva and rajas blend with a heavier admixture of sattva.*2

The asura class also consists of two kinds of human beings: (1) those in whom tamas preponderates, who are called râksasa and (2) those in whom tamas contains an element of rajas, who are not as badly off as the previous group.43

It is clear, then, that at the hands of Râmakavi the classification of beings into daiva and āsura has undergone an interpretation and an elaboration far beyond anything suggested by Abhinavagupta and Ānanda.

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*2 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
*3 Ibid., p. 5.
CHAPTER THREE

THE GITÄRTHASÄNGRAHA COMPARED WITH THE GITÄBHÄSYAS OF ŚAṆKARA AND RÄMÄNUJA

In this part of the book the Gitärthasängraha of Abhinavagupta will be compared with the commentaries of Śaṅkara and Rämānuja on the Gitā. This comparison will be carried out in the following manner:

In Section I an exegetical aspect of the Gitā will be identified wherein Śaṅkara, Rämānuja and Abhinavagupta are all agreed.

In Section II an exegetical aspect of the Gitā will be identified wherein all the three differ.

In Section III exegetical aspects of the Gitā will be identified wherein Śaṅkara and Rämānuja take a similar position but Abhinavagupta takes a different one.

In Section IV an exegetical aspect of the Gitā will be identified wherein Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta take a similar position but Rämānuja differs.

I

One may commence with the recognition of the fact that for all three, for Śaṅkara, for Rämānuja and for Abhinavagupta,¹ the Bhagavadgitā is primarily a mokṣasāstra, a text designed to indicate the road to salvation. Thus Śaṅkara says that the “aim of this famous Gitāsāstra is, briefly, the Supreme Bliss, a complete cessation of samsāra or transmigratory life and its cause.”² Similarly, Rämānuja

¹ A comment on the order in which the names are being mentioned: Śaṅkara is usually believed to have lived from A.D. 788-820 (see T. M. P. Mahadevan, op. cit., p 141). The traditional dates for Rämānuja are A.D. 1017-1137 (ibid., p 150) and Abhinavagupta is placed in “the second half of the 10th and the first quarter of the 11th century A.D.” (Kanti Chandra Pandey, op. cit., p 4). The proper chronological order of enumeration, therefore, would be Śaṅkara, Abhinavagupta and Rämānuja. However, Abhinavagupta will be mentioned last as he is the subject of the dissertation who will be successively compared to Śaṅkara and Rämānuja. It is hoped that, though not chronological, this sequence is logical from the point of view of the present undertaking.

² A. Mahādeva Śāstri, op. cit., p 4 (diacritical marks added).
concludes his Introduction with the remark that the "Consort of Śri,"3 and the "Supreme Person, Nārāyaṇa"4 while pretending to exhort Arjuna to fight revealed that "which in the Vedānta is declared to be the means of attaining man's supreme end, release."5 And Abhinavagupta, in his Introductory verse no. 4 says:

Although Mokṣa is spoken of here in connection with other matters6 even so the verses of the Bhagavadgitā furnish the attainment thereof.7

II

All three are thus agreed that the Gītā is meant to be a mokṣaśāstra and not a dharmasāstra, an arthaśāstra or a kāmaśāstra. But although all are agreed about the nature of the goal of the Bhagavadgitā there are differences of opinion among the three scholars when it comes to stating the path the Gītā lays down for the attainment of that goal. Thus Śaṅkara comments, after stating that "the aim of this famous Gitāśāstra is, briefly, the Supreme Bliss, a complete cessation of samsāra or transmigratory life and its cause:"8

This accrues from that Religion (Dharma) which consists in a steady devotion to the knowledge of the Self, preceded by the renunciation of all works.9

In other words, according to Śaṅkara, mokṣa is the goal set forth by the Gītā and jñānāyoga is the path laid down for its attainment.10 Rāmūnuja, while agreeing that the goal set forth in the Gītā is

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3 J. A. B. van Buitenen, op. cit., p. 45.
4 Ibid., p. 46.
5 Ibid.
6 This may be compared with Rāmūnuja's remark that the Gītā was revealed by the Lord "while pretending to exhort Arjuna to fight" (ibid., p. 46).
7 See Wāsudeva Laxmana Śāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., p. 4.
8 A. Mahādeva Śāstri, op. cit., p. 4 (diacritical marks added).
9 Ibid. The key sentence in Sanskrit being: tat eva sāvatsaṁcitvā sāūpyam ādhyātmikā́śāstra pūrvasya vidyāh (Śaṅkara, op. cit., p. 3).
10 It seems to be worth noting that Śaṅkara first quotes from the Anugītā rather than the Gītā to support his position, though he later backs it up with quotations from the Gītā. With this in view, Abhinavagupta's comment towards the end of the XVIIIth chapter applies a fortiori to Śaṅkara's Introduction: evam aṣṭa naṣṭaṁ muhā' itvādīnā yuddhapravṛtīṁ tava durgāyuktoṁ brahmaṁ yuddhaṁ kārmaṁ yogyam Śaṅkaraṁ kārmaṁ kuraṁ saṁśayaṁ ekāyaṁ saṁśayaṁ śaṁcato viśvam aṣṭaṁ muhā' (Wāsudeva Laxmana Śāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., pp. 770-771).
mokṣa, indicates another path for its attainment, namely, bhaktiyoga. Thus according to Rāmānuja:

While pretending to exhort Arjuna to fight, He has revealed the bhaktiyoga, promoted by jñāna and karma yoga, which in the Vedānta is declared to be the means of attaining man’s supreme end, release, and of which He himself is the object.¹¹

Now where does Abhinavagupta stand in relation to these positions? According to Abhinavagupta:

... the very beginning of the Gita is an instruction in the path to mokṣa. When it is said that knowledge is primary and works should be abandoned or that works grounded in knowledge are not a hindrance to mokṣa, the intention is that knowledge is predominant and works no hindrance, not that knowledge and works should be conjoined on an equal footing.¹²

This seems to suggest that like Śaṅkara, Abhinavagupta looked upon the Gita as preaching the path of jñānayoga for the attainment of mokṣa. This is true nominally but not substantively, as for Abhinavagupta the content of jñānayoga seems to be different from that of Śaṅkara. For Śaṅkara, jñāna means the realization of nirguna brahma, which is the ultimate reality in Advaita Vedānta. In Kāśmira Śaivism, however, the ultimate is conceived of as both para brahma and Śiva at the same time.¹³ From this point of view Abhinavagupta’s comments towards the close of the Fourteenth chapter of the Gita are particularly instructive, when he remarks in his gloss on verses 26 and 27, that through these verses the Lord preaches the fundamental way (mūlabhūtam upāyam)¹⁴ of attaining salvation. While commenting on brahmano hi pratiṣṭhāham¹⁵ he remarks: aham eva hi brahmaṇaḥ pratiṣṭhā. Mayi seyamāne brahma bhavati. Anyathā jaḍarūpatayā brahma upāsyamānam mokṣam api sausuptiād aviṣṭām eva prāpayed iti śivam.¹⁶

That is to say:

¹¹ J. A. B van Buitenen, op. cit., p. 47. The text runs: pāndutanayavuddhiprātāhūna-vyūjena paramapurusārthālaksanamokṣasādhanavitā vedāntodevatā svavīsmayam jñāna-karmāṇeghūtum bhaktiyogom avatūrvāṃsā (Mahāvana Śāstri, op. cit., p. 2).
¹² tat kathopakramam eva mokṣamārdogadāyaṃ. jñānum ca pradhiṣṭām karmāṇi cāpahitvayānīti karmāṇām jñānānityāh kṛṣyomānam api na handhīkatvatam iti jñāna-prādhiṣṭām na nairūtvakutvam tu karmāṇām na tu jñānakarmāṁ samutatvat samucciyete iti utra tātparāyaṃ (Wāsudeva Laxmanā Śāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., p. 8).
¹⁵ Bhagavadgītā XIV.27(a).
On Me being resorted to, one becomes (one with) Brahma. Otherwise, if Brahman is worshipped as (something) inanimate17 then it will confer a salvation which too is not different from deep sleep.18

The pen-picture which Abhinavagupta draws of the aspirant is also that of a bhakti par excellence:

He who, not desiring any fruit, with his heart permeated by the penetrating quality of God's constant devotion, with his hair standing on end, his body trembling, a flood of tears flowing from his two eyes, quite dilated, answers only with silence though repeatedly badgered [with such questions as] 'why are you dissimulating?' -- he alone is purified by the intense unswerving devotion of the Lōd (Śiva) -- none else.19

This emphasis on bhakti is also to be found in the verse with which Abhinavagupta concludes his commentary:

One who is devoid of the delusion of egoism under the influence of the nectar of scintillating devotion, even though present amidst the traffic of the gunas is as good as having gone beyond them thereby.20

The negation of the desirability of release in an impersonal Brahman coupled with this emphasis on bhakti indicates that it is the path of devotion which Abhinavagupta sees as leading to salvation. If this is so then the question arises: why does he call it jñāna?

By jñāna Abhinavagupta really means the knowledge of God, of Śiva who is identical with Brahman. Thus he defines the state of mokṣa as follows:

And verily, mokṣa — (which is) to merge in Lord Śiva, the eternal, free from desire, who has attained to all the divisions and forms, who is omniscient, and all of whose senses, etc., are pure in nature.21

Abhinavagupta was to clarify later22 in the Paramārthasāra the simultaneity of the personal and impersonal aspects of reality without which mokṣa cannot be that experience of unity which it must be:23

When thus the imagination of quality has vanished, and he (the released

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17 This seems to be said in criticism of Impersonal Brahman or nirguna brahma.
18 That is to say, if Brahman is without attributes then salvation will be attributeless too.
19 For the text see Wāsudeva Laxmana Śāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., pp. 605-607.
20 Ibid., p. 608.
21 Introductory verse no. 3, see Wāsudeva Laxmana Śāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., p. 3.
22 See Kanti Chandra Pandey, op. cit., p. 63.
soul) has surmounted the illusion of māyā, he is merged in Brahman, as water in water, as milk in milk. When thus through contemplation the group of elements has been resolved into the substance of Śiva, what grief, what delusion can befall him who surveys the universe as Brahman? 24

Then why should Abhinavagupta's position not be referred to as one represented by bhaktiyoga?

The difficulty in doing so becomes apparent once the system of Kāśmira Śaivism is referred to as theistic monism or perhaps less cumbersomely as monistic theism. It is clear that monism is somewhat inconsistent with theism as it is usually understood, in which the distinction between the devotee and God is never fully erased. 25

It appears that Abhinavagupta was fully aware that the monistic type of theism really falls in a class by itself, a class which, qua class, is perhaps closer to the non-dualism of Śaṅkara's school than to traditional theism. This might be the reason why he chose to denote his system as one of jñāna, taking care to explain in the body of his commentary that by this he meant the knowledge of Śiva, that Śiva "who is the self of all beings, moving and non-moving. He is immanent (viśvamaya) as well as transcendent (viśvottirṇa). He is called anuttara, the reality beyond which there is nothing. He is pure consciousness (caitanya), absolute experience (parā samvit) and supreme lord (parameśvara)." 26

The main differences between the positions of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja and that of Abhinavagupta may now be drawn in a few bold strokes. For Śaṅkara the ultimate is represented by nirguna brahma; for Rāmānuja by saguna brahma. For Śaṅkara, saguna brahma is subordinate to nirguna brahma. For Abhinavagupta one is not subordinate to the other, nirguna and saguna brahma are rather co-ordinates and represent a parity; nay, an identity. Knowing the one means knowing the other, they are indeed one.

At the level of the yogas, for Śaṅkara jñāna is primary and bhakti and karma secondary. For Rāmānuja, bhakti is primary and jñāna and karma secondary. For Abhinavagupta karma is secondary, and while nominally he calls jñāna primary he really means it in the sense of bhakti, but his bhakti is more monistically conceived than

25 T. M. P. Mahadevan, op. cit., p. 172
26 Ibid., p. 175.
Rāmānuja’s. One might perhaps say that his system holds bhakti and jñāna together in salvific tension.

III

It was shown above how all three, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Abhinavagupta, agree on the goal of the Gitā but have different views on the means it lays down for the achievement of that goal. In this section an exegetical aspect of the Gitā will be considered on which Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja are united but Abhinavagupta takes a different stand.

Such an instance is provided by the attitude towards the authority of the Vedas adopted by these three commentators of the Gitā. For Śaṅkara śabda is the foremost prāmāna. This is implied in his Introduction to the Gitā and is clearly stated in his bhāṣya on the Vedāntasūtra. He is quite prepared to allow the karma-kānda section of the Vedic corpus to be belittled, as happens in Bhagavadgitā 11.42.45-46, but this is consistent with his own position that the jñāna-kānda supersedes the karma-kānda. But although Śaṅkara is prepared to debate the importance of one part of the Veda relative to another, he is not prepared to let the authority of the Vedas as such be called in question. Thus he seems to wholeheartedly approve of the Gitā when it comes out openly in favour of scriptural authority as it does in XVI.23-24.

For Rāmānuja also the scripture is the supreme authority, though his notion of the “scripture” is sometimes somewhat broader than Śaṅkara’s. Thus while Śaṅkara glosses the word sāstram in Bhagavadgitā XVI.23 as vedah, Rāmānuja glosses it as dharmaśāstra-itihāsa-purāṇādyupābṛmhitā vedā(h). And even if in Rāmānuja “not seldom

27 Ibid., p. 175.
28 See A. Mahādeva Śāstri, op. cit., p. 2
30 This is how he can accommodate “the Gitā passages which definitely disparage the ritual religion. ‘Those who take delight in the words of the Veda’ are called ‘undiscerning,’ ‘full of desires, aiming at heaven,’ their doctrines ‘yield rebirth as the fruit of actions’ and are ‘replete with various rites aiming at the goal of enjoyment and power.’ ‘The Vedas belong to the realm of the three strands (of material nature): be thou free from the three strands.’ The really wise man has no more need of the Vedas (the word Veda means ‘knowledge’) than he needs a water-tank (for irrigation) when there is a general flood. If so pronounced a polemical attitude is exceptional, there are various other passages which treat the ritual religion with scant respect” (Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 180).
32 Śaṅkara, op. cit., p. 388.
the meaning of sruti is made to agree with the Gitā so that the Gitā might agree with sruti. There is little doubt that Rāmānuja was fully conscious of its status as a smṛti and of the fact that “being smṛti its task is to support the purport of the Vedas.” In other words, though Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja may differ in their interpretation of the sruti, they are united in the common acceptance of sruti-prāmāṇya.

With Abhinavagupta, however, the situation is somewhat different, at least in two significant ways. Among the pramāṇas, both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja regard sabda as primary but Abhinavagupta accords it the third place in the Tantrāloka; after personal experience and reason: svāmiṣvit-sattarKapati-sāstratrikakramā. It is in this background that his gloss on Bhagavadgitā XV.20, one feels, should be understood. Not only that, even as a sāstra the Vedas are assigned a ‘low’ position and are thus in a manner of speaking doubly downgraded. In his Īśvara Partayabhijñā Vimarśini we find a passage in which the “knowledge of the six Vedic systems of philosophy and of the Vedas with its six branches of learning” are spoken of only as an “antecedent condition” for a proper understanding of pratyabhijñā philosophy.

It must be pointed out, lest an erroneous impression might be created, that Abhinavagupta does not run down the Vedas, rather that in his tātal system they do not loom as large as they do with Śaṅkara and, to a certain extent, with Rāmānuja. Thus in his gloss on Bhagavadgitā II.45 he actually somewhat paradoxically defends the Vedas more explicitly than Śaṅkara or Rāmānuja:

They (the Vedas) are bondages when they bind. Because Vedic rituals being performed with a mind deluded by (considerations of) pleasure and pain serve to bind, therefore collectively the guṇas, informed by desire, should be given up. But if this was meant to be condemnatory of the Vedas, the war, which is the subject (of the poem) could not be justified because of the absence of anything other than the Vedas for determining one’s duty [so the statement is really not anti-Vedic]. In the case of those whose desires for the fruit (of action) have melted away, the Vedas are

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33 Mahāvana Śāstri, op. cit., p. 260.
34 J. A. B. van Buitenen, op. cit., p. 8.
35 Ibid.
36 Tantrāloka 1.149.
39 Ibid., p. 297.
not bonds, because the Vedas are for them supremely useful for achieving correct knowledge.  

Another instance of an approach shared by Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja but not by Abhinavagupta is provided by their glosses on Bhagavad-gītā II.59-60. The verses may be translated thus:

The objects of sense turn away
From the embodied one that abstains from food.
Except flavor; flavor also from him
Turns away when he has seen the highest.
For even of one who strives, son of Kuntī,
Of the man of discernment,
The impetuous senses
Carry away the mind by violence.

In these verses the word used for the spiritual aspirant is not clearly stated. He is referred to as the “embodied soul” (dehin) in II.59 and as a “man of discernment” (vipaścīt) in II.60. Śaṅkara glosses the first one as dehavat, and the second one as medhāvin and thus retains their non-specific character. Rāmānuja does not seem to see the need to gloss these words singly perhaps because of the obviousness of their meanings. Both of them however seem to take these words in a general sense.

With Abhinavagupta, however, the situation is quite different. To see what he is doing with these verses one needs to go back to his gloss on II.54 wherein Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa:

What is the description of the man of stabilized mentality,
That is fixed in concentration, Keśava?
How might the man of stabilized mentality speak,
How might he sit, how walk?

Two elements in Abhinavagupta’s gloss are of special interest. Firstly, he states that “the expression sthiraprajña has been used to denote the yogin who is stationed in samādhi.” Secondly, he breaks

40 Sec Wāsudeva Laxmana Sāstri Pansikar, cd., op. cit., pp. 103, 105.
41 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 15.
42 Śaṅkara, op. cit., p. 54.
43 Ibid.
44 Mahāvana Sāstri, op. cit., p. 36.
45 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 15.
46 Wāsudeva Laxmana Sāstri Pansikar, cd., op. cit., pp. 113-114. It may be pointed out that nowhere in the rest of Chapter II does the word yogin occur. However, forms connected with the word occur in II.61 (yukta) and II.66 (aruktasya).
down Arjuna’s query into a set of four questions and the second of these Abhinavagupta formulates as follows: “Is the word sthitadhih—which has a sense of corresponding to its specific denotation as well as a sense corresponding to its general connotation—to be understood only as defined by its immediate application or also as inclusive of tapasvin?—this is the second question.”  

Thus Abhinavagupta has posited a possible difference in meaning between yogin and tapasvin and it is with this frame of reference that he glosses Bhagavadgītā 11.59-60. He regards verse 11.59 as an answer to the hypothesized question: “Why does the word sthitaprajña not apply to tapasvin as well?” And the answer according to Abhinavagupta as offered by the verse may be paraphrased thus:

Although this (tapasvin) has no connection with the fields of the senses such as form etc., which are the food (of the senses), even so, in his case (although) the fields of the senses fall back, they do so leaving rasa behind, which has the nature of attachment, in the inner self. Therefore he (the tapasvin) is not a sthitaprajña. Some say that rasa is something which can be savoured, like something sweet etc. The yogin becomes free from attachment on account of the vision of God. But it (the attachment) does not fall away in the other case of the tapasvin.

Abhinavagupta also glosses 11.60 with the distinction drawn by him between the tapasvin and the yogin in mind.

Because of that (attachment) the mind of the tapasvin is carried away by the senses. Or else (the verse implies that) on the part of the energetic tapasvin as well as the yogin it is the mind which has to be subdued. Thus is the second question decided.

Similarly, at another level, Abhinavagupta takes a position distinct from that of both Śāṅkara and Rāmānuja on their glosses on Bhagavadgītā IX.32-33. These are the well-known verses in which the path of devotion is thrown open to vaiśyas, śūdras and women:

For if they take refuge in Me, son of Prthā,
Even those who may be of base origin,
Women, men of artisan class, and serfs too,
Even they go to the highest goal.

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49 Ibid., pp. 119-120.
50 Ibid., pp. 120-121.
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How much more virtuous Brahmans,
And devout royal seers, too!
A fleeting and joyless world
This; having attained it, devote theyself to Me.\(^{51}\)

Both Śaṅkara\(^{52}\) and Rāmānuja\(^{53}\) take the expression pāpayonayah in IX.32 as an adjective qualifying striyo vaiśyās tatāh śūdrāh. ... In other words they see only three categories of beings being saved (1) women, (2) vaiśyas and (3) śūdras according to that verse. By contrast, Abhinavagupta takes the expression as a substantive rather than an adjective and glosses pāpayonayah as paśupakṣisarisripādayah.\(^{54}\) Thus according to Abhinavagupta salvation is promised not only to (1) women, (2) vaiśyas and (3) śūdras but also to (4) animals, birds and reptiles. That is to say, not only to certain classes of human beings but also to members of the animal world. In the body of the gloss Abhinavagupta amplifies the point by adding: “When the (marvellous) deeds of the supremely compassionate God such as the freeing of the elephant (from the jaws of the crocodile) are heard by the thousand, then what doubt can there be (of the salvation of even) those of perverse conduct?”\(^{55}\)

IV

Now a case may be examined in which Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta converge but Rāmānuja diverges.

Such a case is provided by the comments of these three scholiasts on the nature of the avatāra of Viṣṇu as Kṛṣṇa. Both Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta, though perhaps for different reasons, seem to imply that Kṛṣṇa was an amśāvatāra. Thus Śaṅkara writes in his introduction to the Bhagavadgītā: ... sa'ādikartā nārāyanāḥkhyo viṣṇuḥ bhaumasya brāhmaṇaśṛṣṭasya rakṣanārthāṁ devakyāṁ vasudevādamśena kṛṣṇah kila sambahūva.\(^{56}\) The crucial segment of the sentence occurs towards the end, in which Kṛṣṇa is referred to as born from a part or fraction of. amśena, Viṣṇu.\(^{57}\) Similarly, guided by the Kāśmīra recension of the

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\(^{51}\) Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 49.

\(^{52}\) Śaṅkara, op. cit., pp 231-232.

\(^{53}\) Mahāvāna Śāstā, op. cit., p. 155.


\(^{55}\) Ibid., p. 440.

\(^{56}\) Śaṅkara, op. cit., p. 2.

\(^{57}\) It may, however, be pointed out that as amśa “means a part, it would mean that Krishna was a partial incarnation of Vishnu. But of the several forms of the incarnation of God, Krishna is on all hands recognised as a full incarnation of
Bhagavadgītā which reads *tadātmāṁsam* for *tadātmānam*\(^{58}\) in Bhagavadgītā IV.7(d), Abhinavagupta glosses the unit thus: *ātmā pūrṇasād-gunyah arisah upakārakatvenāpradhānabhūto yatra tad ātmāṁsam*.\(^{59}\)

Thus both Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta, it can be argued, seem to refer to Kṛṣṇa as an *arisāvatāra*. But not Rāmānuja. His introduction reads like a tribute to the glory and greatness of Viṣṇu = Kṛṣṇa\(^{60}\) and his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IV.6-8 does not contain any hint of any abridgement of Viṣṇu’s full divinity in his incarnation as Kṛṣṇa.\(^{61}\)

Thus here we have an instance in which a somewhat similar position is taken by Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta and a different position by Rāmānuja.\(^{62}\)

V

This part of the dissertation may now be concluded by citing a case in which Rāmānuja and Abhinavagupta interpret the Gītā along similar lines but Śaṅkara interprets it in a way which differs from them both.

Vishnu. Accordingly, Ānandagiri explains ‘amsena’ to mean ‘svetchānirmitena-māyā-nasena svuṛupena’, that is, ‘in an illusory form created by His own will’. (A. Mahādeva Śastri, *op. cit.*, p. 3. Also, in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IV.7 Śaṅkara does not introduce the expression *ānīta*.)


\(^{60}\) J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-47.

\(^{61}\) Mahāvana Śastri, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

\(^{62}\) Another instance of a convergence between Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta and divergence in the case of Rāmānuja from them is provided by their respective glosses on the pronominal form, *saḥ* in Bhagavadgītā III.42. Śaṅkara glosses *saḥ* as *huddheh dṛṣṭā pari’ātmā* (Śaṅkara, *op. cit.*, p. 93); so also Abhinavagupta (*su’ātmā*, Wāsudeva Laxmana Śastri Pansikar, *ed.*, *op. cit.*, p. 179) but not Rāmānuja. He remarks: *sa’ kāmu ity arthah* (Mahāvana Śastri, *op. cit.*, p. 64). R C. Zaeher observes: ‘Ś. and practically all commentators both ancient and modern take this to mean the ātmā which occurs in the following stanza ... R. takes it as referring to desire in strict accord with the grammatical context. This seems most unlikely ...’ (*op. cit.*, p. 177).

F. Otto Schrader also remarks that Abhinavagupta “does not understand *saḥ* as referring to kāmu but to ātmā as do Śaṅkara and others” (*op. cit.*, p. 353) and then goes on to add in a footnote: “Which, by the way, is (pace Rāmānuja) the only correct view, not merely because of the parallelism with *Kāthaka Upanisad* (III 10), but also because according to *Bhag. Gītā* III 40 the Evil One can penetrate into man only so far as his *huddhi* and, consequently, he who is ‘beyond *huddhi*’ must be the one and only stronghold from which, according to III 43, kāmu can successfully be combated, i.e., the ātmā” (*ibid.*, fn. 14).

It may also be added though that while Abhinavagupta aligns with Śaṅkara here, ideologically he stands apart from both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja inasmuch as he seems to interpret the role of kāmu in that context in a somewhat positive way (see Wāsudeva Laxmana Śastri Pansikar, *ed.*, *op. cit.*, p. 174).
Such an instance is provided by their respective glosses of the word *prajāh* as it occurs in Bhagavadgītā III.10. The verse is translated thus by Franklin Edgerton:

After creating creatures along with (rites of) worship,  
Prajāpati (the Creator) said of old:  
By this ye shall procreate yourselves —  
Let this be your cow-of-wishes.63

Rāmānuja takes *prajāh* to mean creatures,64 so also Abhinavagupta.65 They take the word *prajāh* to mean just that. Śaṅkara, however, somewhat surprisingly, glosses the word *prajāh* as *traya varnāh*, that is to say, as including the *brāhmaṇas*, the *ksatriyas* and *vaiśyas*.67 It is difficult to avoid the impression that he has done so because the word *prajāh* is qualified by the expression *sahavyajñāh* and obviously Śaṅkara held the view, in accordance with the *smṛti* position, that only the three higher *varnas*, the *dvijas*, were eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices.68 This consideration leads him to restrict the semantic scope of the word *prajāh* to the three higher *varnas*. It seems that Śaṅkara has “over-interpreted” the expression here, for the reference really is not to the performance of sacrifice by human beings but by Prajāpati.69

In any case, it is obvious that while both Rāmānuja and Abhinavagupta take the word *prajāh* to mean “creatures” here, plain and simple, Śaṅkara takes the word to mean only the three higher *varnas*.

64 Rāmānuja glosses the word along *Vishistadvaitic* lines: “When creating the world God observed that the creatures were incapacitated by their natural conjunction with beginningless acit. that their distinctions by name and form were lost, that they were submerged in himself and that, for these reasons they were incapable of attaining one of man’s major ends and therefore only qualified for things non-spiritual: in order to resuscitate them He compassionately created them together with sacrifices” (J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, p. 69). However, from our point of view the important point to note is that he takes the word *prajāh* to mean creatures in general (see Mahāvāna Śāstri, *op. cit.*, p. 48).  
66 Śaṅkara, *op. cit.*, p. 76.  
67 A. Mahādeva Śāstri translates “Mankind: composed of three castes” (*op. cit.*, p. 98).  
69 It is interesting to note that Śaṅkara does not cite the Purusāsūkta, which speaks of all the four *varnas* in the context of sacrifice here but does so in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IV.13 where *cāturvānvyam* is spoken of (Śaṅkara, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102).
The Gitārthasāṅgraha does not consist solely of Abhinavagupta's own comments on the verses of the Gitā. Occasionally, Abhinavagupta also refers to the views of other thinkers or commentators, with or without comment. If one thus distinguishes between the comments which Abhinavagupta offers on his own and the comments of others which he reports, then the Gitārthasāṅgraha can be brought into a two-fold relationship with the modern interpretations of the Gitā. One could, then, consider the relationship between the comments reported by Abhinavagupta to the modern interpretations of the Gitā and one could also consider Abhinavagupta's own comments in relation to the modern interpretations of the Gitā.

The expression “modern interpretations” used above, however, is ambiguous and needs to be clarified. To be more precise: by the term modern we mean the period commencing with the first English translation of the Bhagavadgitā into English published in 1785, by Charles Wilkins, and reaching up to our own times. It is obvious that this period has seen the growth of a considerable literature around the Gitā of which the present work itself is in a sense an example. The parameters of the present discussion therefore need to be defined more clearly in view of the wealth of interpretive literature which has accumulated around the Gitā in the modern period. It is now proposed that one concept out of this body of literature be selected for comparison with the Gitārthasāṅgraha; and further that a single commentator be selected and compared with Abhinavagupta in depth. It is hoped that the choice of Kurukṣetra as the concept and of Mahatma Gandhi as the commentator will not appear too

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1 See Wāsudeva Laxmanā Śāstrī Pansikar, ed., op. cit., p. 5; also see F. Otto Schrader, op. cit., pp. 351, 354.
2 Wāsudeva Laxmanā Śāstrī Pansikar, ed., op. cit., pp. 439, 441, etc.
3 Ibid., pp. 9-10, 153, etc.
arbitrary in this respect. It will be seen later that by making these selections one is enabled to compare both the comments reported by Abhinavagupta as well as the comments offered by him on his own with the modern interpretations of the Gitâ.

I

Although the opinion of modern scholars is divided on the question of the historicity of the Mahâbhârata war,5 to most Hindus prior to the eighteenth century the Mahâbhârata war was unquestionably a historical event, which constituted the kernel of the Mahâbhârata epic. It was also never doubted that this war was fought "in the region about the modern Delhi, then known as Kuruksêtra."6 Indeed, the very first verse of the Bhagavadgitâ refers to it as the site where the warriors have assembled ready to fight.7 This site of Kuruksêtra "formed part of the larger Dharmaksetra which lay between the rivers Yamunâ and Sarasvati and was held in ancient days to be of peculiar sanctity."8

There is, however, a consistent trend, it seems, on the part of modern Indian9 commentators of the Bhagavadgitâ to look upon Kuruksêtra as something more than a geographical region. This becomes clear as one analyzes the Gitâ as interpreted by Aurobindo Ghose, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, S. Radhakrishnan and Mahatma Gandhi. Aurobindo begins by clearly accepting the setting of the Gitâ in its literal sense, very much in the orthodox tradition. But while the pre-modern commentators seem to accept the facts of the situation and then pass on, Aurobindo accepts the situation with comments which lead him to interpret the situation in a broader light than the pre-modern commentators ever did. Aurobindo first whole-heartedly accepts the martial setting of the Gitâ and writes: "We must remember that the Gitâ was composed at a time when war was even more

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5 See R.C. Majumdar, ed., The Vedic Age (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965), Chapter XIV, especially pp. 308-315.


7 Bhagavadgitâ I.1.


than it is now a necessary part of human activity, and the idea of its elimination from the scheme of life would have been an absolute chimera.” 

But for Aurobindo, “the physical fact of war, however, is only a special and outward manifestation of a general principle of life. ... War typifies and embodies physically the aspect of battle and struggle which belongs to all life, both our inner and our outer living.”

Or as he says quite explicitly elsewhere, “Life is a battle and a field of death: this is Kurukṣetra.”

Thus for Aurobindo the significance of the Kurukṣetra of the Gitā is existential. Kurukṣetra typifies the existential situation.

Like Aurobindo, Bal Gangadhar Tilak also fully accepts the martial setting of the Bhagavadgitā on the plains of Kurukṣetra. Also like Aurobindo he was a political activist, but unlike Aurobindo who was destined to retire from the political arena, Bal Gangadhar Tilak “was to suffer six years of imprisonment in Mandalay for sedition in the Muzaffarpur case and produce the powerful Gitā Rahasya.”

Therein he glosses Kurukṣetra as “an open space of ground surrounding the city of Hastināpura,” and proceeds to offer the traditional explanation of why it is called Kurukṣetra and dharmakṣetra.

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11 Ibid., p 74.
12 Ibid., p 96.
13 “There is a method of explaining the Gita in which not only this episode but the whole Mahabharata is turned into an allegory of the inner life and has nothing to do with outward human life and action, but only with the battles of the soul and the powers that strive within us for possession. This is a view which the general character and actual language of the epic does not justify and if pressed, would turn the straightforward philosophical language of the Gita into a constant, laborious and somewhat puerile mystification. The language of the Veda and part at least of the Puranas is plainly symbolic, full of figures and concrete representations of things that lie behind the veil, but the Gita is written in plain terms and professes to solve the great ethical and spiritual difficulties which the life of man raises, and it will not do to go behind this plain language and thought and wrest them to the service of our fancy. But there is this much of truth in the view that the setting of the doctrine, though not symbolic, is certainly typical as indeed the setting of such a discourse as the Gita must necessarily be if it is to have any relation at all with what it frames” (Ibid., p 27).


15 “Kuru, the common ancestor of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, was ploughing this field laboriously with his own hands. That is why it is called ‘kṣetra’ (or field). It is said in the Bhārata that, when Indra thereafter gave the Kuru the blessing that all those who would die on that field in war or while performing religious austerities would obtain heaven, Kuru stopped ploughing the field. (Ma.Bhä. Salya 53)” As a
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But even though ostensibly he did nothing more than that and "the more activist doctrines of the Gita ... were dealt with objectively and in a truly orthodox tradition without any reference to political controversies ... the meaning was clear enough because of the author's background and the social and political conditions of India. ... To Tilak ... India was the Dharmakṣetra — the Field of Righteousness — and the inactivity which seemed to have gripped India was but a reflection of the unmanliness which Arjuna felt on the field of battle." 16

Thus for Bal Gangadhar Tilak the significance of the Kurukṣetra, also referred to as dharmakṣetra, is national. The Kurukṣetra represented analogically the national situation. Thus like Aurobindo, although rooted in tradition, for Bal Gangadhar Tilak as well, the term Kurukṣetra comes to stand for much more than the geographical region it represents.

At the hands of S. Radhakrishnan, the term Kurukṣetra is extended even beyond the national theater, to the international. And while for Aurobindo the Gitā represented a situation which was "typical" and for Bal Gangadhar Tilak a situation which was analogical, for Radhakrishnan it comes to represent a situation which is symbolical, and one in which the symbolic significance is the primary one. Thus S. Radhakrishnan writes:

The world is dharmakṣetra; the battleground is a moral struggle. The decisive issue lies in the heart of men where the battles are fought daily and hourly ... the world is dharmakṣetra, the nursery of saints where the sacred flame of the spirit is never permitted to go out.17

The same symbolic interpretation is also imparted to the expression kurukṣetra, which he describes as "the land of the Kuru's, a leading clan of the period." Then he goes on to point out that both the contending parties, the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, had descended from a common ancestor. This fact is now interpreted symbolically:

"The Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas represent the two great movements, the upward and the downward, the divine and the demoniac; the dharma which helps us to grow in our spiritual stature and the

result of this blessing, this field came to be called 'dharmakṣetra' or 'sacred ground'" (Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Srimud Bhagavadgitā Rahasya, Vol. II [Poona: 1936], p. 852).


adharma which drags us down deeper into entanglement with matter. The two are not irreconcilable as they spring from the same source. The Pândavas and the Kauravas are cousins and have a common ancestry.18

The tendency to give primacy to the symbolic rather than the literal aspect of the Gita finds its fullest expression in the interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā offered by Mahatma Gandhi. While the other commentators referred to earlier derived various typical, analogical or symbolic significances from the scene of battle, for Mahatma Gandhi the scene of battle itself is merely symbolical, a setting devised for the delivery of the message. Thus Mahadev Desai quoted Mahatma Gandhi as saying:

The Gita is not a historical discourse. A physical illustration is often needed to drive home a spiritual truth. It is a description not of war between cousins but between the two natures in us—the Good and the Evil.19

He further quotes Mahatma Gandhi to the effect that: I regard Duryodhana and his party as the baser impulses in man, and Arjuna and his party as the higher impulses. The field of battle is our own body. An eternal battle is going on between the two camps, and the Poet-seer vividly describes it.20

What then is the Kurukṣetra? Mahatma Gandhi’s answer is that the “human body is the battlefield where the eternal duel between Right and Wrong goes on. Therefore it is capable of being turned into the gateway to Freedom. It is born in sin and becomes the seed-bed of sin. Hence it is also called the field of Kuru.”21 Hence the human body itself is the Kurukṣetra.

To sum up: for Aurobindo the significance of Kurukṣetra is existential, martial and typical; for Bal Gangadhar Tilak it is national.

18 Ibid., p. 100.
19 Mahadev Desai, The Gita according to Gandhi (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1956), p. 136. But it may be pointed out that Mahatma Gandhi does not so much deny the historicity of the Mahābhārata as assert the primacy of allegory over history. “The persons described therein may be historical but the author of the Mahābhārata has used them merely to drive home his religious theme” (ibid., p. 128). Also see M.K. Gandhi, Hindu Dharma (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1950), p. 150 ff.
20 Ibid., p. 136. This quotation is from Young India, 12-11-1925.
political and metaphorical; for S. Radhakrishnan it is universal, moral and symbolical; and for Mahatma Gandhi it is individual, ethical and allegorical. For none of them is the significance purely geographical or historical as it seems to have been for the pre-modern commentators of the Gitā.  

II  

It is clear, then, that one feature of the commentaries on the Gitā in modern times is a tendency to interpret the Kurukṣetra as something more than a topographical detail. This feature of modern literature on the Gitā can now be brought into relation with a tradition of the interpretation of the Gitā reported by Abhinavagupta. In the Gitārthasāgara, in his gloss on the very first verse of the Bhagavadgitā, after making his own remarks, Abhinavagupta refers to a tradition of interpreting the Gitā in which the Kurukṣetra is equated with the human body and is thus interpreted as something more than just the geographical venue of “the battle of the Bharatas.” This tradition he reports is particularly close to the interpretation of Kurukṣetra developed by Mahatma Gandhi. The relevant passage, Abhinavagupta’s gloss on Gitā 1.1, translates as follows:

Herein some speak of an alternative interpretation. [They explain the word kurukṣetra as] the field of the Kuruś: Kuruvām = karauām—organs of sense; kṣetra (field) = that which favours, that is, the field of the senses is the favourec of all the properties of transmigration as being

22 We have carried out here, in re Kurukṣetra and thus only to a limited extent, “a comparative study of several classical and contemporary interpretations of the Bhagavadgitā by Indian authors, in order to discover any significant differences between the classical and contemporary as two distinct groups, and also between individual interpretations” (infra, p. I), a task which has been carried out in greater scope and depth by Robert Walter Stevenson. “Historical Change in Scriptural Interpretation: A Comparative Study of Classical and Contemporary Commentaries on the Bhagavadgītā (unpublished Ph D dissertation, Harvard University, March 1975). Robert Walter Stevenson, however, has not touched on the notion of Kurukṣetra and has confined his detailed treatment to Avatāra, Ahimsā, Varna and Yajñā (ibid., p. iii).  

23 K. S. Ramaswamy Sastrigal seems to attribute this view to Abhinavagupta. He remarks: “Abhinava Guptacarya says that kṣetra means the body and the war referred to is between the righteous and the unrighteous tendencies in man” (The Bhagavadgītā with translation and notes, Vol I [Srirangam: Sri Vani Vilas Press, 1927], p. 47). But Abhinavagupta introduces this viewpoint with the remark: atra kecit svākhāvāvikalpam āhuh (Wāsudeva Laxmana Sāstrī Pansikar, ed., op. cit., p. 8). We may, however, infer that Abhinavagupta goes along with this view to a certain extent as he does not criticize it and may even be seen as developing it towards the end of the gloss. 

24 See Panini, 4.2.56.
that which helps to bring them about (i.e., the human body). Whereas dharmakśatra (the field of dharma) is to be understood from the sentence, "This is the highest dharma; to see the soul by means of Yoga," namely as being the body of the [aspirant for whom the Gītā] is intended, a body which offers salvation by its attainment of apavarga through the abandonment of everything opposed to dharma. [So that the question asked by king Dhṛtarāṣṭra may be paraphrased thus:] Standing in that [battle] where passion and detachment, anger and forbearance, etc., have come together in mutual conflict, for the senses, etc., always aim at the injury of the body—what have my ignorant volitions, comparable to ignorant men, accomplished, and what have (my) wise (volitions), the Pāṇḍavas, comparable to men of knowledge, accomplished? That is to say, who has defeated whom?

The parallels between these remarks on the first verse of the Bhagavadgītā recorded in the tenth century A.D. and the remarks made by Mahatma Gandhi in the twentieth century A.D. are quite obvious. This enables us to offer the conclusion that whereas Mahatma Gandhi was perhaps original in regarding the message of the Bhagavadgītā to be that of ahimsā he was certainly not the first to think up an allegorical interpretation on which he based his opinion.25

25 The allegorical interpretation of the Gītā became quite current around the turn of the century (see W. Douglas Hill, The Bhagavadgītā [Oxford University Press, 1928], p. 99) and continues to be popular (see A. L. Herman, The Bhagavad Gītā: A Translation and Critical Commentary [Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1973], pp. 107-8). It is important to realize, however, that Mahatma Gandhi seems to come by the allegorical interpretation on his own, for he says quite clearly that "Even in 1888-89, when I first became acquainted with the Gītā, I felt that it was not a historical work, but that, under the guise of physical warfare, it described the duel that perpetually went on in the hearts of mankind and that physical warfare was brought in merely to make the description of the internal duel more alluring" (Mahādev Desai, op. cit., p. 127). It should be further noted that according to Mahatma Gandhi his "first acquaintance with the Gītā began in 1888-9 with the verse translation by Sir Edwin Arnold known as the Song Celestial" (ibid., p. 126). This translation does not project the Gītā as an allegory (see Edwin Arnold, The Song Celestial or Bhagavadgītā [Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1888], p. 9), unlike the translations or studies by Annie Besant (The Bhagavad Gītā or The Lord’s Song, preface: Hints on the Study of the Bhagavad-Gītā, p. 6ff.) Hence it is potentially misleading to state, as some have done, that Mahatma Gandhi was first introduced to the Gītā through Annie Besant’s translation (see Agehananda Bharati, “The Hindu Renaissance and its Apologetic Patterns,” The Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXIX, No 2 (February 1970), pp. 274-275). Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi refers to his attempts to read Bal Gandadhar Tilak’s commentary on the Gītā (Mahādev Desai, op. cit., p. 126) which again does not espouse such an allegorical interpretation of the Gītā. It seems that the similarity in the exposition of the Gītā referred to by Abhinavagupta and its exposition by Mahatma Gandhi provides a case of exegetical convergence which spans several centuries.
III

One may now turn to a comparison of Abhinavagupta and Mahatma Gandhi as commentators on the Bhagavadgita. Such a comparison may be carried out by identifying the points of similarity and difference between them. It may also be extended to examine in what ways each is unique and it may be further elaborated by carrying out an in-depth study of one aspect of their interpretation.

In one respect the two commentators seem to be somewhat similar. Both of them were practitioners of religion as distinguished from those commentators for whom commenting on the Gita may be an intellectual exercise. As a matter of fact Mahatma Gandhi offers this as his justification for daring to comment on the Gita notwithstanding his limited acquaintance with Sanskrit. Mahatma Gandhi points out that his desire to write a commentary on the Gita does not mean any disrespect to the other renderings. They have their own place. But I am not aware of the claim made by the translators of enforcing their meaning of the Gita into their lives. At the back of my reading there is the claim of an endeavour to enforce the meaning of my own conduct for an unbroken period of 40 years. For this reason I do indeed harbour the wish that all Gujarati men or women, wishing to shape their conduct according to their faith, should digest and derive strength from the translations here presented.26

Abhinavagupta does not make such a direct statement but the Gitârthasaṅgraha is one of his philosophical works and Kanti Chandra Pandey points out that “Abhinava’s philosophical works are considered to be very important, because people have reason to believe that the statements on supersensuous matters contained therein are based upon the author’s personal experience, gained through spiritual experience, which he carried on for years, as we have attempted to show in his biography. To personal experience he gives the first, to reason the second and to ancient authority only the third place as the basis of his views on supersensuous matters.”27 It is significant that Mahatma Gandhi similarly states that he cannot allow scripture to supersede reason and gives the pride of place to the “inner voice.”28 Thus both Abhinavagupta and Mahatma Gandhi, as commentators on the Gita, share an orientation rooted in personal spiritual experience.

Their general conclusion about the fundamental message of the Gita:

26 Mahadev Desai, op. cit., p. 123.
27 Kanti Chandra Pandey, op. cit., p. 292.
however, differs. For Abhinavagupta the chief yoga inculcated by the Gita is jñāna (understood in a sense somewhat different from Śaṅkara’s). According to Mahatma Gandhi, however, the primary yoga inculcated by the Gita is one of niskāma karma or karma yoga.

Thus though in some respects Abhinavagupta and Mahatma Gandhi interpret the Gita similarly, in other respects they differ. In this sense the relationship between the two may be one of bhedābheda; but they are also unique in some respects. It has already been seen how Abhinavagupta seems to be unique in the sense in which he interprets his jñāna consistently with his own philosophical orientation characteristic of Kāśmīra Śaivism but inconsistently with its common understanding. It now remains to be demonstrated that Mahatma Gandhi is unique in regarding ahimsā as a cardinal teaching of the Gita. To see this the following clarifying question may be asked: has anyone interpreted the Gita as preaching non-violence before Mahatma Gandhi?

IV

In response to this question one may begin by pointing out that there indeed are some hints in ancient Hindu literature which point in that direction. To see their force it is important to realize that one of the reasons why Mahatma Gandhi thought that the message of the Gita was non-violence, was, because, according to him that was the message of the Mahābhārata itself, of which, as he said, “the Gita is a minute part.” Thus he wrote while remarking on the message of the Gita:

The author of the Mahābhārata has not established the necessity of physical warfare: on the contrary he has proved its futility. He has made the victors shed tears of sorrow and repentance and has left them nothing but a legacy of miseries.

In this context certain passages of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa make interesting reading. Indeed, “it is usually said that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa begins where the Mahābhārata ends,” seeking to correct “a story which tells of gambling, dishonouring of women and a devastating war which ends in a pyrrhic victory....” In the fifth chapter of the first canto we actually find Vyāsa, the putative author of the Mahābhārata, being criticized by Nārada:

29 M. K. Gandhi, op. cit., p. 159.
30 Ibid., p. 140.
It was a great error on your part to have enjoined terrible acts (acts involving destruction of life) in the name of religion on men who are naturally addicted to such acts. Misguided by these precepts of yours (in the Mahabharata) the ordinary man of the world would believe such acts to be pious and would refuse to honour the teachings that prohibit such action.32

In other words, Nārada was complaining that the justification of violence involved in the Mahābhārata and especially in the Gītā could have disastrous consequences in general and urged sage Vyāsa to compose a devotional work to offset this effect, namely the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

Thus we find that even as far back as the 10th century A.D., the date usually assigned to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa,33 there was a certain uneasiness in certain Hindu minds regarding the violent nature of the Mahābhārata episode. The ancient thinker writing in the name of Nārada to be sure, took a different route than Mahatma Gandhi; he wanted a new work to turn people’s mind towards the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa, away from the terrible war and its justification. Mahatma Gandhi thought that the work itself implied condemnation of violence. But both the pseudonymous Nārada and the famous Mahatma were grappling with the same issue: the violent nature of the Mahābhāratan narrative and its reconciliation with higher spiritual ends.

The Gandhian solution though, must be regarded as unique for Nārada explicitly recognised the violence involved in the Mahābhārata and condemned it but Mahatma Gandhi commended it as a warning to others. But through this difference in attitude between using it as a warning rather than as an example he could claim, as none had done, that the real message of the Mahābhārata and the Gītā was non-violence.

How then do we answer the question: did anyone interpret the Gītā as preaching non-violence before Mahatma Gandhi did so? The answer seems to be that no one interpreted the Gītā like him on this point; even though it may be argued that the message of non-violence is implied in the Mahābhārata and even though we detect undercurrents of dissatisfaction with the violence involved

32 Ibid., Bhāgavata Purāṇa 1.5.15.
therein. No one before Mahatma Gandhi seems to have clearly and unambiguously stated the message of the Bhagavadgītā, and indeed of the Mahābhārata, to have been non-violence.

Thus both Abhinavagupta and Mahatma Gandhi are similar in some respects, but in other respects they differ. Indeed, they differ to a degree that of each it can be claimed that he made a unique individual contribution to the interpretation of the Gītā, "the final interpretation of which will doubtless never be written."\(^{34}\)

\(^{34}\) Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. ix.
Abhinavagupta’s commentary on the Bhagavadgītā is remarkable for the extraordinary explanations it offers of some fairly well-known verses of the Gītā. Abhinavagupta obviously meant what he said in his introductory verses to the Bhagavadgītā: that he intends to bring to light the hidden or esoteric meaning of the verses. This tendency of Abhinavagupta to give unusual, extraordinary or esoteric interpretations to some of the verses of the Bhagavadgītā may now be examined in some detail.

To illustrate the point, one may begin by selecting some verses from the second chapter of the Bhagavadgītā, one of the longer chapters of that religious classic. Bhagavadgītā II.19 runs as follows:

\[
\text{ya enam vetti hantāram} \\
\text{yaś cainam manyate hatam} \\
\text{ubhau tau na vijānito} \\
\text{nāyam hanti na hanyate}
\]

Franklin Edgerton translates the verse thus:

Who believes him a slayer.
And who thinks him slain,
Both these understand not:
He slays not, is not slain.

Abhinavagupta comments:

Physical bodies are mortal and perishable. The ātman is eternal for it is not an object of knowledge (but the subject). Transformation belongs to the objects of knowledge, to inert matter, not to the spirit which is pure consciousness. This is so because it cannot possess other than its own nature.

\[1\] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., op. cit., p. 121.
\[2\] Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 11.
Thus the physical bodies are forever perishable and not to be grieved over. The ātman is forever imperishable and therefore should not be grieved for.\(^3\)

Up to this point the commentary is quite straightforward. Soon, however, Abhinavagupta introduces a fine grammatical point when he adds:

> It is because of this that the sage Vyāsa has exhibited a single Kr̡tya suffix in two different senses in the passage aśocyaṇ anvaśoçaṃ tvam.\(^4\)

Obviously, Abhinavagupta interprets the Kr̡tya suffix nyat in aśocyaṇ in the sense of sakya\(^5\) as applied to the body and in the sense of arha\(^6\) as applied to the soul. That is to say: “We cannot grieve for the body, we should not grieve for the soul.” This is a fine point not made by other commentators to the best of our knowledge.

The very next comment by Abhinavagupta in the Second Chapter is brief, but offers a novel explanation. The concerned verse, Bhagavad-gitā 11.21, runs as follows:

\[
\text{vedāviniśinām nityām} \\
\text{ya enam ajam avyayām} \\
\text{kathāṁ sa puruṣāḥ pārtha} \\
\text{kam ghātayati hanti kam}\(^8\)
\]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

> Who knows as indestructible and eternal  
> This unborn, imperishable one.

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\(^4\) Ibid.  
\(^5\) Pāṇini 3.3.172.  
\(^6\) Pāṇini 3.3.169.  
\(^7\) Abhinavagupta’s grammatical comments are not always as perspicacious. For instance, he comments on the irregular form vyāthanti in Bhagavadgitā XIV.2 thus:  
> [The \textit{ti} suffix in the verbal form] vyāthanti is so on account of metrical exigency [as it really should be vyāthante and not vyāthanti, but that would violate the metre].  

In this gloss Abhinavagupta cites the \textit{tiṇ} suffix (Wāsudeva Laxmana Sāstri Pansikar, ed., \textit{op. cit.}, p 587). But the mere mention of the \textit{tiṇ} suffix by Abhinavagupta leaves his comment looking somewhat anemic as any verbal suffix, active or middle, can be referred to by \textit{tiṇ} (see Pāṇini 3.4.78). So what Abhinavagupta really implies but leaves unsaid is that the switch in the \textit{tiṇ} suffix from middle to active form is due to metrical reasons. Perhaps by \textit{tiṇ} Abhinavagupta merely had the active ending in mind (but see Śrīśa Chandra Vasu, \textit{The Astādhyāyi of Pāṇini} Vol 1 [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1962], p. 589).  

\(^8\) V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 121.
INTRODUCTION

That man, son of Prthä, how
Can he slay or cause to slay—whom?"

Abhinavagupta remarks: "He who takes the soul as the slayer and the body as the slain is ignorant." The point to note here is that no translator or commentator of the Bhagavadgîtâ distinguishes between the slayer and the slain in terms of body and soul. S. Radhakrishnan draws comparison with the following lines from Emerson's Brahma:

If the red slayer thinks he slays,  
Or if the slain think he is slain,  
They know not well the subtle ways  
I keep and pass and turn again.  

Here the slayer and slain seem to be related to the body or the person. More often, in the light of the previous verse of the Bhagavadgîtâ and the first half of this one, the homicidal impeccability is believed to belong to the soul. As R. C. Zaehner points out:

This stanza is based on Katha Upaniṣad 2.19, the second line being identical. For the first line Katha Upaniṣad has: "Should the killer think, 'I kill,' or the killed, 'I have been killed'. ..." The Gita gives the more satisfactory sense since enam 'he,' must refer to the embodied self already mentioned.

In other words enam could refer to (1) the body; (2) the self or (3) most likely, the embodied self. But in any case the slayer and the slain are not distinguished, both in each case being either the body or the self or the embodied self. But Abhinavagupta departs from this pattern when he remarks: "He who takes the soul as the slayer and the body as slain is ignorant." This is a novel exegetical twist. It is also interesting that Abhinavagupta is not bothered by the moral issue involved here, unlike Bhāskara who, after "glossing each word in order to give the literal meaning" of the verse cited above "turns, to refute the religious enthusiast Šāmkara":

* Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 21.
11 S. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., p. 107, fn. 2.
12 Prof. Daniel H. H. Ingalls translates the verse in this sense: "He who knows the self to be indestructible, eternal, unborn, unchanging, how should that man cause to be killed anyone or kill anyone" (Dharma and Mokṣa, Philosophy East and West, Vol. VII, Numbers 1 and 2 (April, July 1957), p. 42.
13 R. C. Zaehner, op. cit., p. 132.
Here some philosophers who are too lazy to work for liberation (mokṣa) explain the verse by imputing to the Blessed One the following doctrine: "For the wise man all works are excluded; such is the Blessed One's intention in this passage. The expression 'kills' is used merely as an example. Works which are enjoined in scripture are enjoined only on the ignorant. This is the judgment of the Blessed One." This explanation of the Blessed One's intention that pays no attention to the preceding words of the text will not do. Why? Because it is to urge Arjuna on to battle that the nature of the self is here described. Having told him, "Therefore, fight, Bhārata," God sets out to establish the rightness of this with the words, "It is not born," etc. If the intention of this verse were the renouncing of all work, surely it should not have been told to Arjuna. Just suppose that the Blessed One had stated that works were impossible for the wise man who knows that the self is void of the six organic alterations. The same might just as well hold true of Arjuna, in which case he would cease to act. Furthermore, all the following verses would be improper. Accordingly, one should not cherish a vain hope, nor let one's mind be tempted to forsake one's moral duty (dharma), thinking, "Let us just sit here comfortably and receive liberation (mokṣa)."

Again:

The distinction of good and evil, of bound and released, fits only with our view.

Or:

A just battle, that is, one which does not depart from morality (dharma), than this nothing makes for greater good. For others, too, adherence to their proper code of morals makes for good. In this way the text combines knowledge and works as both making for good.14

The fact that Abhinavagupta does not make similar comments is historically important as it confirms the fact that the Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara to whose commentary he refers approvingly in his gloss on Bhagavad-gītā XVIII.2, is different from the Bhāskara cited above.15

One may next turn to Bhagavadgītā 11.49 for another illustration of Abhinavagupta's originality as an exegete. The verse runs as follows:

dūreṇa hy avarāṁ karma
buddhiyogād dhanamjaya
buddhau saraṇam anviccha
krpanāḥ phalahetavah16

14 Daniel H. H. Ingalls, op. cit., p. 42.
16 V. S. Sukthankar and S K. Belvalkar, eds., op. cit., p. 123.
Franklin Edgerton translates:

For action is far inferior
To discipline of mental attitude, Dhanamjaya.
In the mental attitude seek thy (religious) refuge:
Wretched are those whose motive is the fruit (of
(action).17

Abhinavagupta offers here quite an extraordinary interpretation of
the first line of the text. He comments:

Verily through buddhi yoga (discipline of judgment) the inferior karma
beset with evil is removed.18

All commentators of the Gita, ancient and modern, see in this
verse a relative comparison being instituted between karma and buddhi
yoga to the disadvantage of the former. Indeed R.C. Zaehner goes
so far as to point out that elsewhere the Gita seems to take a some­
what contradictory position:

The superiority of buddhi-yoga over karma, ‘action.’ seems to be contra­
dicted in 3.8 where work (karma) is said to be better than doing no
work at all (akarma) which is another word for saṁnyāsa (‘renunciation’). Krishna, however, is now speaking of works tout court: He has not yet
fully expounded his doctrine of performing actions without regard to their
fruits or results. This, because of the total detachment it entails, is equi­
ivalent to doing nothing at all. All this will become clearer in the sequel.19

Interestingly enough, there is an additional verse in the Kāśmīri
text preceding this one, which speaks of detached action prior to the
verse under discussion and not “in the sequel.” It runs:

yasya sarve samārambhā nirāsir-bandhanās tv iha
tyāge yasya hutam sarvam sa tyāgī sa ca buddhimān20

He, all whose undertakings in this world are free from the bondage of
expectation, who has sacrificed everything in (the fire of) renunciation,
he is the true renouncer and is really wise.

Abhinavagupta has a gloss on the verse21 so he obviously takes
note of it; nevertheless his explanation of the next verse is not
affected and remains extraordinary.

19 R. C. Zaehner, op. cit., p. 147.
20 V. S. Sukhānkar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., op. cit., p. 123 (Kp*).
It is not only in the Second Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā that some of Abhinavagupta’s interpretations take one by surprise. Some of his interpretations in Chapter IV of the Bhagavadgītā have a touch of novelty as well. Early in the Fourth Chapter the following verse appears:

sa evāyam mayā te ‘dya
yogah proktah purātanah
bhakto ‘si me sakhā ceti
rahasyam hy etad uttamam22

It is the third pāda which is of interest here. None of the ancient commentators make much of it and one modern commentator who does gloss that pāda does so with a distinctly modern touch. Thus S. Radhakrishnan comments:

bhaktosi me sakhā ceti: Thou art My devotee and My friend. Revelation is never closed. So long as the human heart has qualities of devotion and friendship, God will disclose His secrets to them. Divine self-communication is possible wherever we have sincerity and a sense of need. Religious revelation is not a past event; it is that which continues to be. It is possible for all beings and not the privilege of a few. “Every one that is of the Truth heareth my voice,” said Jesus to Pilate.23

Now Abhinavagupta. In the third verse of the Fourth Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā Kṛśna explains to Arjuna why He is revealing to him the great secret of Yoga whose transmission has suffered interruption but is now being reinstituted by Kṛśna.24 And why, indeed, is Kṛśna revealing the secret of that Yoga to Arjuna? Because, says Kṛśna to Arjuna: “You are my devotee and friend.” Almost all ancient commentators25 and modern translators26 of the Bhagavadgītā, as noted earlier, pass over this statement without making anything of the distinction which might be drawn between a devotee (bhakta) and a friend (sakhā). Arjuna is both and that seems to be the end of the matter. But not for Abhinavagupta.27 Abhinavagupta glosses

22 V S Sukthankar and S K Belvalkar, eds., op. cit., p. 131.
23 S Radhakrishnan, op. cit., p. 152.
24 Bhagavadgītā IV.1-3.
the clause thus: "You are my devotee and my supreme friend. By (the particle) ca the conjunction of a subordinate fact with a principal one is spoken of. Therefore, as in going out for begging, begging is primary and the fetching of the cow is secondary, so also devotion to the Guru is primary here and not friendship — this is the intended meaning."

How far is Abhinavagupta justified in subordinating sakhi to bhakta on the strength of the copulative ca?

The conjunctive ca, like the English "and," can be used to express several forms of association: those of opposition (light and darkness); subordination (car and wheel); coordination (tea and coffee) and aggregation (this and that). It is also used to express ordination (i.e., in order to; as in "go and get this book") and qualification (friend, philosopher and guide). Abhinavagupta has chosen the sense of 'subordination' out of these various options as his preferred sense for ca. To what extent is he justified in doing so?

It will now be contended that the use of the ca here could be understood in the sense of qualification with as much, or perhaps even more, justification than in the sense of subordination.

In the Bhaktic literature of Hinduism several forms of devotion are recognized, patterned on human relationships. "There are several kinds of human relationship such as filial affection, friendship, reverence, servitude, etc. The bhakta may hold himself as related to God in any of these ways." These attitudes, which are called bhāvas include the sakhya bhāva which is "comparable to the love and

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28 This is the meaning of the word anvācaya, see Vaman Shivram Apte, The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1965), p. 423.
29 An obvious reference to the standard illustration of the use of ca in the sense of anvācaya: hho bhikṣūm api gām cānaya, "where going out to beg is enjoined to the beggar as his principal object, and the bringing of a cow (if he can see any) is tacked on to it as a secondary object" (Vaman Shivram Apte, op. cit., p. 92).
31 T. M. P. Mahadevan, Outlines of Hinduism (Bombay: Chetana Ltd., 1960), p. 91. Thus, for instance, Vallabhācārya "taught bhakta based on strong emotional ties already present in human beings: that of the master-servant, husband-wife, king-subject, father and mother-children; that of friend-friend of the same sex; that of parent-child, adult-child; and that of lover-beloved" (Richard Barz, The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhācārya [Faridabad, Haryana: Thomson Press (India) Ltd., 1976], p. 92).
regard that a man has for his friend." Arjuna’s devotion to Kṛṣṇa is often placed in this category. It is clear, therefore, that devotion need not be viewed in some sense in opposition to friendship as Abhinavagupta seems to have done; rather, in the light of the subsequent developments within the tradition itself, which looks upon Arjuna as a devotee of Kṛṣṇa of the sakhiya type, such a position seems hard to sustain. Indeed, the apposition of the descriptions of Arjuna in the same breath as devotee and friend may have been seminal in the context of the subsequent developments within the tradition. Thus the description of Arjuna as friend might with equal, if not more, justification be looked upon as qualifying the nature of his devotion, as he has already been addressed as a devotee, rather than as merely subordinate to it.

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32 T.M.P. Mahadevan, op. cit., p. 91.
33 Ibid.
34 That Arjuna, at least prior to the theophany, looked upon Kṛṣṇa as a friend becomes clear from Bhagavadgītā XI.41-42.
35 Rūpa Gosvāmi, in the Bhakti-rasāmrta-sindhuḥ (Second labhuri, verses 188-193) explains that “there are two kinds of sakhiya: one is complete faith in Shri Kṛṣṇa’s willingness to give protection from the dangers of the world and the other is the feeling with which a bhakta may consider himself a friend of Shri Kṛṣṇa and treat him with the kind of attachment that is, in ordinary life, reserved for very close friends” (Richard Barz, op. cit., p. 84). It is obvious that at this stage in the Gītā, although Arjuna has already sought Kṛṣṇa’s guidance (II.7), Arjuna does not completely throw himself in Kṛṣṇa’s protection. Indeed, although in many verses he is asked to do so (XVIII.66 etc.), and in many verses he stands in awe of Kṛṣṇa (Chapter XI, prāṣāṇi) in the end when he consents to fight he does so by merely saying “I shall do as you say” (XVIII.73) and not by any grand display of ‘faith.’ Indeed, the Gītā does at places “demand from the devotee … complete surrender and a highly emotional involvement through love and bhakti.”

Be with thy mind fixed in Me, by My devotee, by My worshipper, bow down to Me, and thou shalt come even to Me; this I verily swear unto thee; thou art beloved of Me. Abandoning all acts, take sanctuary with Me alone. I shall liberate thee from all sins; do thou not grieve.

These stanzas so emphatically spoken by Krishna to Arjuna have also held the minds of devoted Hindus and have given rise to considerable exegesis and application” (Milton Singer, ed., Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes [Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966], p. 157). It should be noted, however, that these stanzas are “emphatically spoken by Krishna to Arjuna” demanding complete surrender and not by Arjuna to Krishna as representing complete surrender. In this respect it is important to bear in mind that in the Hindu mythos, after his infantile and juvenile phases “Krishna emerges as a mighty hero, a leading character in the Mahābhārata legend, preaching the Bhagavad Gītā to his friend Arjuna before the great battle and destroying demons and wicked kings throughout India. In these three main phases he is still the chief object of worship among the ordinary folk of India—a divinity of remarkable psychological completeness, standing to his worshippers not only in the relation of father, friend and elder brother, but also of lover and husband, and even of son” (R.C. Zachner, ed., The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths [Boston: Beacon Press, 1959], p. 231, emphasis added).
Abhinavagupta’s exegeses of Bhagavadgîtâ IV.16-17 also represent a departure from the generally accepted interpretation. The concerned verses run as follows:

kim karma kimakarmeti
kavyap'pyatra mohitah

tat te karma pravakṣyàmi
yaj jñātvà mokṣyase'subhåt

karmano hy api boddhavyam
boddhavyam ca vikarmaṇah

akarmaṇaḥ ca boddhavyam
gahanā karmano gatiḥ

Franklin Edgerton translates:

What is action, what inaction?
About this even sages are bewildered.
So I shall explain action to thee,
Knowing which thou shalt be freed from evil.

For one must understand the nature of action, on the one hand,
And must understand the nature of mis-action,
And must understand the nature of inaction:
Hard to penetrate is the course of action.

These are admittedly difficult verses to interpret. This is clear from the fact that

Madhvaçārya suggests the separation of nāḥ from karma etc., ‘that work, etc., proceeds from me.’ Rāmānuja explains vikarmam as ‘variety of actions for various fruits’ and identifies akarmam with jñānas.

Moreover,

Śāmkaraçārya explains that both action and inaction (which is a kind of action) belong to the body, while the deluded believe they belong to the Self: he is wise who understands that action, as being of the body, is inaction of the Self, and that inaction is also a kind of action and pertains to the body. Rāmānuja identifies akarmam with jñāna, and says that the wise man is he who sees jñāna in all true performance of work,

38 W. Douglas P. Hill, op. cit., p. 105, fn. 3.
and that jñāna itself is a kind of action. Madhvacārya says that he is wise who sees God alone as always active, whether he himself is active or inactive.39

Thus the verses are obviously capable of divergent interpretations. But even here Abhinavagupta takes off on a trajectory all of his own. He writes:

Next it is said: it is not the fact that action alone leads to salvation. Wherefore [the two verses beginning] kim karma and karmano hy api. The distinction between what is action and what is not action is hard to understand. For even in the performance of (proper) action evil action is present as in the killing of the victim in the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice. Moreover, there is good present even in wrong (forbidden) action as in saving people from suffering by killing criminals. Besides, even when one is (physically) doing nothing, both good and evil action is being performed by speech and mind because actions of that sort cannot be avoided except by knowledge. Therefore even the wise do not know what karma is on account of its mysterious nature: whether by this good action our good will come about and whether by not performing these actions our salvation will not be achieved. Therefore that which is about to be spoken of, which is capable of burning up the fuel of all karma good and bad — must be sought: this is what the Lord means.40

So far the unique element in Abhinavagupta’s interpretation has not yet emerged. It does so as he continues his gloss on IV.18:

To explain that, (the Lord) says [the verse beginning with] karmāni: he who sees the absence of action (karma) in his own actions because of the absence of the sense of agency (i.e., that he is the agent), (and who), by having calmed his passions realized that his non-action (if) performed by others, is really performed by himself: he alone is fully wise amongst all; he acts in full, in every (sense). So how could any fruit (retribution) be given him for any action? Even in the case of the retribution that has now arisen (that is in a ripe state) he cuts off, severs the karmas (from himself). So he either performs all actions or he performs none: this is the supreme secret. (He is wise) who sees in all of his activity of body and sense the absence of action, the non-involvement of his āśīman, so that he feels “my (senses) such as the sense of hearing work upon (the elements) such as the air; my voice etc. upon speech etc.; what has all this to do with me? And in his non-action, that is, inaction such as worship etc. performed by other conscious agents, he generates (his) action (karma) in their activity of worship, realizing, “I am identical with all these agents,” on the basis of what the adept (siddha) has said:

W. Douglas P. Hill, op. cit., p. 105, fn. 4.
“Worship is the constant, undifferentiated worship-acts of (all) worshippers.” Such a person alone is wise among ordinary men. He alone may perform any action because he sees the agent is (only) the body and the senses and sees that his átman is wholly without action. It was by identifying himself with other agents that the venerable Somânanda stated: “I am not pleased by (my) performance of worship; nor am I distressed by my non-performance. Worship is the constant, undifferentiated worship-acts of (all) worshippers.”

It must be pointed out here that such an interpretation of these verses seems to be characteristic of the Śaiva commentaries of the Bhagavadgîtā composed in Kashmir. From Abhinavagupta’s reference to Somânanda and the evidence of commentaries which preceded him, it is likely that Abhinavagupta is continuing rather than originating this line of interpretation. Another commentator, Ánanda, carries this line of argument to its logical but rather fantastic conclusion in his gloss on Bhagavadgítā V.15. Shripad Krishna Belvalkar describes his position thus:

The mumukṣu or the yogin endeavouring thus to hasten the process of achieving the summum bonum does not bother himself as to what body he chooses to reanimate—whether it is that of a pious Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog or a dog-eater—provided it helps him to live out the ensuants of his past karmans. In this way it will be seen that in the production of the ultimate end—emancipation—Yoga in its more mystic and even weird aspects and practices is given by our Commentator an altogether disproportionate emphasis, which of course fully accounts for the several wholesale quotations from the Yogasūtras and from the Vyāsa-bhāṣya thereon, which take up pages after pages of the Ánandavardhini. Śaivite Tantrism, as we know, played a distinctive role in Kashmir from the tenth century onwards.

Abhinavagupta, however, does not carry the argument to such a conclusion, as becomes clear from a consideration of his gloss on Bhagavadgítā V.15, which will be taken up later.

Another verse in the Fourth Chapter of the Bhagavadgítā in which Abhinavagupta attempts a rather unusual explanation is in his gloss on verse 25 which runs as follows:

dai-vāmar evāpare yajña
yogínah paryupāsate

41 Ibid., pp. 200-205.
43 Ibid., p. 11. He also adds: “The Jñāneśvari, the Mahārāstra saints’ well-known commentary on the Bhagavadgítā, affords a parallel in this matter” (ibid., fn 2).
SOME EXTRAORDINARY INTERPRETATIONS

63

brahmāñgnav apare yajñam
yajñenaivo 'pajuhvati

Franklin Edgerton translates:

To naught but sacrifice to the deities some
Disciplined men devote themselves.
In the (sacrificial) fire of Brahman, others the sacrifice
Offer up by the sacrifice itself.

It is Abhinavagupta’s etymological explanation of the word *daivam*
and the interpretation of the rest of the passage in its light which is
of supreme interest here. The word *daivam* is normally derived from
the root *div*, “to shine.” But Abhinavagupta writes:

Others, practising self-restraint, observe (*parita upāsate*) a sacrifice in their
cognition of objects by making use of *daivāni* i.e. the senses, [*daiva* being
derived from *div*, to play, to sport and so meaning] “characterized by
playful enjoyments” [i.e., the senses]. Examining this cognition-sacrifice
down to its roots, they realize their true nature. They are termed Yogins
for this reason, viz., that they are always possessed of *yoga*, this suffix
[*-in* being added to *yoga*] in the sense of constant attachment. Others
offer this sacrifice of cognizing objects by a sacrifice of the same sort
into the fire of *brahman* which can be satiated.

Such is the interpretation of some. But as the sage (Vyāsa) does not
contradict himself [as the above interpretation would have him do], we
shall explain what he had in mind. Some possessed of *yoga*, perform a
*daivam* sacrifice, that is, a sacrifice of external objects, called *daiva* because
it is addressed to the various deities that govern the senses. And since
while performing this sacrifice they look to no reward but are guided
only by the belief that it should be performed, it is said that they offer
this sacrifice into the insatiable fire of *brahman*. Accordingly, those of
the *daiva* sacrifice also go to *brahma*. Hence the sage will say [Gita V.30]
“all these are knowers of the sacrifice.” So also the Vedas “the gods
performed sacrifice with sacrifice” [R.V. X.90.16].

At least three aspects of this passage deserve attention, which shed
light on the methods Abhinavagupta uses and the conclusions he
draws by applying his methods. First of all one may consider the
etymological aspect. Innovative etymologizing as a commentarial device

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45 Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
46 Vaman Shivram Apte, *op. cit.*, pp. 498, 509, 512; but also see William Dwight
is a standard technique employed by Indian exegetes. Saṅkara uses it, for instance, to explain *aśvattha*, in *Bhagavadgītā* XV.1 as *na śvo’pi sthātā!* Abhinavagupta here uses the word *daiwam* to obtain the sense of *indriyas*. The word *daivah* occurs in *Bhagavadgītā* XVI.6, *daiwam* in IV.25 and XVIII.14 and *daivi* in VII.14 and XVI.3.5. In XVI.6 Abhinavagupta interprets *daivah* in the sense of “divine.” In XVIII.14 he takes *daiwam* to mean “(karmic) merit and demerit earned earlier on (in previous lives).” In his gloss on VII.14 Abhinavagupta seems to be drawing again on the etymology suggested in IV.25 when he remarks: “*Deva* means one who plays, activity originating therein is *daivi* or divine — it is mine, this is what is meant.” The occurrence of the word in XVII.3 and 5 is not even glossed. It may be pointed out that in his penchant to derive *deva* from *div*, meaning to play, Abhinavagupta is reflecting a classical etymological bias.

After suggesting a suitable etymological derivation, Abhinavagupta next employs another favourite commentarial device of Indian exegetes. He takes the possessive suffix in *yogin*, which is capable of being taken in several senses, in the sense of *nitya-yoga* or constant attachment. Pāṇini himself does not mention this sense, it is given by Patañjali on Pāṇini 5.2.94 as one of the senses of *matup* (possessive) suffixes.

With etymology and grammar having thus been pressed into service, Abhinavagupta takes the final step and internalizes the process of sacrifice in his exegesis.

In the Fifth Chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* also one encounters some unusual glosses by Abhinavagupta. One of these is on the 18th verse of the chapter, referred to earlier. It runs:

\[\text{vidyāvinayasaṁpanne} \]
\[\text{brāhmaṇe gavi hastini} \]
\[\text{śuni caiva śvapāke ca} \]
\[\text{panditāḥ samadarśinah}^{48} \]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

In a knowledge-and-cultivation-perfected Brahman, a cow, an elephant,
And in a mere dog, and an outcaste.
The wise see the same thing.\(^{49}\)

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This is one of the more popular verses of the Gitā, its current popularity perhaps reflecting the egalitarian temper of our own times. It was invoked by Mahatma Gandhi in his fight against untouchability:

My views on untouchability are not the product of my Western education. I had formed them long before I went to England, and long before I studied the scriptures, and in an atmosphere which was by no means favourable to those views. For I was born in an orthodox Vaishnava family and yet ever since I reached the year of discretion I have firmly held my uncompromising views in the matter, which later comparative study of Hinduism and experience have only confirmed. How in face of the fact that no scriptural text mentions a fifth varna, and in face of the express injunction of the Gita to regard a Brahmana and a hhangi as equals, we persist in maintaining this deep blot on Hinduism, I cannot understand. Regarding a brahmana and a hhangi as equals does not mean that you will not accord to a true brahmana the reverence that is due to him, but that the brahmana and the hhangi are equally entitled to our service, that we accord to the hhangi the same rights of sending his children to public schools, of visiting public temples, of the use of public wells, etc., on the same basis as these rights are enjoyed by any other Hindu.49a

But that the egalitarian thrust of this verse was not overlooked by other readers of the Gitā long before Mahatma Gandhi is clear from the following remarks of Albirūni, the Muslim savant of the eleventh century:

All these things originate in the difference of the classes or castes, one set of people treating the others as fools. This apart, all men are equal to each other, as Vāsudeva says regarding him who seeks salvation: “In the judgment of the intelligent man, the Brahman and the Candāla are equal, the friend and the foe, the faithful and the deceitful, nay, even the serpent and the weasel. If to the eyes of intelligence all things are equal, to ignorance they appear as separated and different.”49b

By contrast Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja interpret the verse not so much in terms of social equality as in terms of Brahman’s homogeneity or the identity of the various puruṣas. Śaṅkara writes that by a vidyāvīna-yasampanna brāhmaṇa is meant a Brāhmaṇa who is both learned and restrained and that the sage sees the self-name Brahman in him as well as in a cow, elephant, dog and outcaste.50

50 Śrīśaṅkaraghraṇṭhāväliḥ Sampūta 8, pp. 144-145.
Rāmānuja takes the verse to mean that the various souls are the same, the standard Śāṅkhya position that there exists a plurality of purusas who are all alike in being units of pure consciousness. Thus for Rāmānuja this verse teaches the equality of the ātmans:

He who knows the proper form of the ātman will see the same form in the ātmans of all the creatures — however dissimilar these creatures may appear — because all ātmans have only one form — knowledge. Inequality is of the prakṛti, not of the ātman. Consequently one will perceive that the ātmans are the same in all creatures, because all have the same form, knowledge.51

It is in this background of the bifurcation of the interpretation of the verse along social lines on the one hand and metaphysical lines on the other that Abhinavagupta appears to take a curious position, as also on some other points. He writes:

In order to say that such is the state of those whose ignorance has been annihilated (the Lord) says the verse beginning with vidyā etc. Thus those Yogins who do not think regarding the brahmaṇa that by service etc. (of the brahmaṇa) I will earn spiritual merit etc., regarding the cow that it bestows holiness etc., regarding the elephant they do not think of its value etc., regarding the dog they are not concerned with the removal of impurity, regarding the outcaste they are not exercised over his sinfulness, lack of purity, etc. Thus do they regard all equally, but do not act thus (so far as worldly conduct is concerned).52

The sting lies in the tail. Abhinavagupta remarks: atu eva samāṁ paśyantītī na tu vyavaharanti. In other words, Abhinavagupta interprets this verse in terms of the two levels of truth — pāramārthika and vyāvahārika. One might have expected this of Śaṅkara, but the expectation is fulfilled by Abhinavagupta.

Another verse in glossing which Abhinavagupta surprises the reader is Bhagavadgitā V.27:

sparsān kṛtvā bahir bāhyāṁś
caksuḥ caivaṁtare bhruvoḥ
prānapānaṁ samaṁ kṛtvā
nāsābhyaantaracārīnaṁ53

Franklin Edgerton translates:

51 J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
52 Wāsudeva Lāxmac Śāstri Pānsikar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 265-266.
Putting out outside contacts,
And fixing the sight between the eye-brows,
Making even the upper and nether breaths,
As they pass through the nose.  

The verse describes the way in which the sage bent on final release obtains it through meditation. There is a similar verse in the Eighth Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā (VIII.10) which runs:

prayānakāle manasācalena
bhaktyā yukto yogabalena caiva
bhruvor madhye prāṇam āvesya samyak
sa tāṁ param puruṣam upaiti divyam

Now whether one accepts Abhinavagupta’s interpretation or not it must be granted that his exegesis of these two verses is consistent. He glosses V.27 as follows:

Now the verse beginning sparsân. Casting off the external (sense) impressions: that is to say, not accepting them; having placed all the senses, here indicated by the (use of the word) ‘eye,’ between the right and the left eyebrow, that is to say, in a special state (lit. place) free from anger and attachment; having established the prāṇa and the apana, that is, dharma and adharma evenly in the centre of the mind, let him thus sit. The word nāsā means the mind, because the mind acts crookedly (nasate), without equanimity, under the influence of anger, etc. Just this on the outside.  

This may be compared with Abhinavagupta’s gloss on Bhagavadgītā VIII.10:

Now the verse beginning prayāṇa. “In between the eyebrows” has to be understood as before.

Thus one is referred to V.27, and to the peculiar features of its interpretation, which are (1) placing the eye between the eyebrows really refers metaphorically, according to Abhinavagupta, to the attainment of a state of pacification of all the senses;

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54 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 31.
57 Ibid., p. 390.
(2) *prāna* and *apāna* do not really stand for in-or-out-breaths but for *dharma* and *adharma*;
(3) the word *nāsā* in *nāsāḥhyantaracārīṇau* really stands not for the nose and the movement of the breath through the nasal passages but for the mind and the equalization of *dharma* and *adharma*. This interpretation of the verse must be regarded as far-fetched. One can see how far Abhinavagupta stands from the more traditional position which regards this *śloka* as “bearing reference to *dhyānayoga*, a description of which with its eight limbs may be found in the Yogasūtras.” Even according to Abhinavagupta these verses would refer to *dhyānayoga*; it is in the detailed interpretation of the verse, not in its overall orientation of the interpretation, that Abhinavagupta departs from tradition.

It has been shown earlier how some of the interpretations of the verses of the Gītā offered by Abhinavagupta are curious, even outrageous perhaps at times, so different are they from the common explanations. In any case, they are often unusual and at times extraordinary. But when it comes to his interpretation of Bhagavadgītā VII.11 Abhinavagupta departs from the established tradition so radically that his interpretation is perhaps best described as nothing short of revolutionary.

The verse runs as follows:

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balām balavatāṁ cāham
kāmarāgavivarjitam
dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu
kāmo 'smi bharatarṣabha
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Franklin Edgerton translates:

Might of the mighty am I, too,
(Such as is) free from desire and passion;
(So far as it is) not inconsistent with right, in creatures
I am desire. O best of Bharatas

It is the second line of this verse which detains us here. I will first try to demonstrate the degree of uniformity with which this line has been interpreted within the Hindu tradition to indicate how radical a break Abhinavagupta makes with it. Śaṅkara glosses the verse thus:

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Passion (Kāma): thirst for objects not present to the senses. Attachment (rāga): love for those presented to the senses. I am that energy which is necessary for the bare sustenance of the body, certainly not that which causes thirst and attachment (for sense-objects) in the case of worldly mortals. So I am the desire not opposed to the teaching of the scriptures: I am, for instance, the desire for that much of eating and drinking, etc., which is necessary for the bare sustenance of the body.61

Not only Śāṅkara but the entire Hindu exegetical tradition has consistently interpreted the second line to mean what it so obviously seems to mean: “in beings I am desire forbidden not by law, O prince of Bharatas.”62 And understood in this sense this hemistich has played a very important role in Hindu axiology as it legitimizes the puruṣārtha of kāma so long as it is subordinated to dharma. Thus it is pointed out that “In a well-known passage, the Bhagavadgītā (7.11) makes the Lord identify Himself with such desire (kāma) as is consistent with dharma. The Hindu ideal does not preach abstinence from pleasures for all or at all stages, it rather preaches, universally, the ideal of chastened love, or pleasure regulated by considerations of both morality and material well-being.”63 Similarly, T. M. P. Mahadevan, in his discussion on the scheme of values in Hinduism remarks:

The normal man has his desires, and he seeks pleasure in the objects of sense. The passions are an integral part of his nature, and there must be channels through which they may flow. The world would be a dull affair without its dance and music, sport and recreation, connubial love and filial affection. Indian thought does not attempt to suppress the desires and emotions that well up from the human heart. On the contrary, its purpose is to let them flow within bounds and so canalize them that through them one may reach higher levels of experience. Marriage and the founding of a family are helpful in that they make the individual less egocentric and assist in the process of sublimating his desires. Kṛṣna in the Bhagavad-gītā says: “I am pleasure (kāma) that is not opposed to goodness (dharma).”64

M. Hiriyanna uses this line from the Bhagavadgītā perhaps even more cogently to clinch this point. He asks:

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61 A. Mahādeva Śāstri, trad., op. cit., p. 212.
What is the relation of \textit{dharma} to \textit{artha} and \textit{kāma}? Or, as \textit{artha} is ordinarily but a means to \textit{kāma}, we may narrow the scope of our question and ask: What is the relation of \textit{dharma} to \textit{kāma}? If \textit{kāma} stands for pleasure, as stated above, we may say that it is desired by all, for pleasure is always welcome to every one. Indeed, we cannot help desiring our own felicity. But not every thing desired is necessarily desirable. A sick person may long for a certain kind of food, but it may not at all be advisable for him to partake of it from the standpoint of his physical well-being. That is, \textit{kāma}, while it may be an object of desire, may not always be desirable; and, though appearing to be a true value of life, it may not really be so or may even prove to be a disvalue. How then can we distinguish between these two kinds of \textit{kāma}? To speak with reference only to the \textit{tri-varga} which we are now considering, \textit{dharma} furnishes the necessary criterion. That variety of \textit{kāma} is a true value, which is in accord with the requirements of \textit{dharma}, but not any other. In thus helping us to discriminate between good and bad \textit{kāma} or in rationalising it, as we might put it, consists the superiority of \textit{dharma}; and it is accordingly reckoned as the highest of the three values. This conception of \textit{dharma} as a regulative principle is so important in the philosophy of conduct that all the \textit{sāstras} and all the higher literature of India (the latter, though only implied) emphasise it. That is, for example, what Sri Krishna means when he says in the Gita: \textit{Dharmāviruddhah kämo' smi: 'I am \textit{kāma}, not at strife with \textit{dharma}.}\textsuperscript{65}

Similarly, P. V. Kane observes that "The experience of sexual life and other pleasures not opposed to righteousness was not condemned by Manu and other \textit{Ṣāstras} and in the Bhagavadgītā (VII.11) Lord Kṛṣṇa identifies himself with Kāma that is not in opposition to righteousness."\textsuperscript{66}

For the reader accustomed to the obvious meaning of Bhagavadgītā VII.11cd; so obvious that Rāmānuja does not even care to comment on the verse, Abhinavagupta has a shock in store. He writes:

> By "strength devoid of desire and passion" is meant (strength) in the form of energy capable of sustaining everything. By Kāma is meant desire only in the form of consciousness, which does not conflict with substances in the form of pot, cloth, etc. Desire, indeed, on account of the power of the Lord, spreads everywhere, is obstructed nowhere, and is refracted by adventitious \textit{dharmas} such as pot, cloth, etc. By worshipping it (there comes about) the jñānin's (realization) of the nature of pure consciousness. It is said in the Śivopanisad: "Place your mind in desire or in arisen knowledge." As soon as it arises, not (after) it has spread outside — that

\textsuperscript{65} M. Hiriyanna, \textit{The Quest After Perfection} (Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers. 1952), pp. 104-105

is what is meant. Those who, abandoning this explanation explain the intent (of the verse) as (stating that) resort to dharma, artha and kāma in a harmonious way — they are to be avoided as expounding the divine secret without knowing the (esoteric interpretation received through the) apostolic succession of the sect.67

The passage is remarkable for its forthright attack on those who interpret the word kāma here as belonging to the triad or tetrad of the puruṣārthas. Abhinavagupta’s statement of their position that the verse implies the harmonious pursuit of the three arms of life (ye parasparānupaghātakunī trivargam sevante)68 is distinctly reminiscent of Kāmasutra 1.2.1: parasparasya anupaghātakam trivargam seveta. In this context it is pertinent that Abhinavagupta refuses to accept a negative connotation of the word kāma even in his gloss on Bhagavadgīthā III.43 wherein it is universally accepted that the word kāma is referred to as a foe to be overcome.69 Moreover, even in his gloss on III.37 wherein both kāma and krodha are singled out, he fights an exegetical battle to place the entire blame on krodha as far as possible.70 Abhinavagupta’s interpretation of kāma there and here must be regarded as truly extraordinary.71

68 Ibid., p. 355.
69 Ibid., p. 42.
70 Ibid., pp. 173-174.
71 It is, however, not entirely indefensible, as the preceding verses are cosmological and Abhinavagupta is clearly trying to interpret kāma here in a cosmological sense. Nevertheless, even S. K. Belvalkar, who clearly recognizes the cosmological character of the context ends up with the traditional interpretation: “The latter half of stanza vii.10 and st. 11 introduce a slightly different topic, not altogether unconnected with cosmology. While, in what had gone before, it was stated and clearly demonstrated how God has created all this diversified creation, the point now to be made is that there are certain happenings in the Creation for which God does not wish to hold himself primarily responsible. Since God has granted man the freedom of the will, God is not, for instance, expected to assume primary responsibility for such aspects and happenings in the Creation as are the results of the perverse exercise by the individuals of their own God-given freedom of the will. This perverseness which man at times exhibits is the consequence of man’s own unbridled cravings and passions, which lead him to acts which cannot be said to be God-inspired. It is the sane and self-controlled acts illumined by the dry light of reason that can be legitimately attributed to God. The adjective kāmarāgavivarjitam at the end of st. 11ab is generally associated with the noun balam alone after which it is placed. It seems to me legitimate to take it also with tejas and buddhi (in the latter case with the permissible change of gender). The kāmarāgavivarjita exercise of the three powers rational, spiritual and physical emanates from God and is approved by Him. Passion (kāma) itself, in so far as it serves as a handmaid to Dharma, is God-inspired, is Godhood itself,” S. K. Belvalkar, Two Mishandled Passages from the Bhagavadgīthā, in N. Sivaram Sastry and G. Hanumantha Rao, eds., Prof. M. Hiriyanna Commemoration Volume (Mysore: 1952), pp. 10-11.
Abhinavagupta does not offer so radical a break from the accepted interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā in the Eighth Chapter as he has done in some of his glosses on the verses of the Seventh Chapter. On the contrary, he is very traditional in his interpretation of Bhagavadgītā VIII.5-6. Herein the extraordinary aspect of the situation lies not in the extent to which Abhinavagupta departs from the traditional interpretation but rather in the thoroughness with which he supports it. Bhagavadgītā VIII.5-6 run as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
antakāle ca mām eva & 
smaran muktā vā kalevaram  
yaḥ prayāti sa madbhāvarṁ 
yāti nāsty atra samśayāḥ 
yāṁ-yāṁ vāpi smaran bhāvarṁ 
tyajaty ante kalevaram 
tam-tam evaiti kaunteya 
sadā tabhāvabhāvitah
\end{align*}
\]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

And at the hour of death, on Me alone
Meditating, leaving the body
Whoso dies, to My estate he
Goes; there is no doubt of that.
Whatsoever state (of being) meditating upon
He leaves the body at death,
To just that he goes, son of Kunti,
Always, being made to be in the condition of that.

Now as Douglas P. Hill has pointed out,

Commentators claim that this is not a doctrine of “death-bed repentance,” but that a man will naturally turn at the last hour to the object of his life-long devotion. Rāmānuja refers to the story of Ādi-bharata, told in the Viśṇu Purāṇa; at the moment of death his mind was wholly occupied with a beloved deer, he was therefore born again as a deer in the forest.

The point, of course, is that Ādibharata was not born as a deer just because by sheer accident the thought of a deer happened to cross his mind at the time of his death but rather because of his

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72 V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., op. cit., p. 146.
73 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 42.
74 W. Douglas P. Hill, op. cit., p. 133, fn. 6.
attachment to the deer the last thought to arise in his mind was that of the deer which led to his rebirth as one. Thus it is what a man has been or has done all his life which really determines his rebirth and not some chance happening at the moment of his death. This fact is emphasized at considerable length by Abhinavagupta. He writes:

Now the remaining question — 'how are you to be known at the time of death' — is settled [in the verse] beginning with antakâle’pi and ending with asamsayam. Not only, indeed, does one come to me — the vanquisher of all ailments — (thinking of me) at the time of death when one is in good health; but (the Lord) also preaches the way whereby God may be remembered by one even in bad health, (by one) who has withdrawn himself from all the activities of the senses. He, from whose heart the divine truth is never lost even in the course of all worldly pursuits, who has cast off all actions on the Lord and who is ever suffused with God, he definitely automatically remembers the divine essence (at the time of death) — and the reason for this is that he is always steeped in it. Therefore it is said that with whatever thing the innermost self is always filled, that is remembered at the time of death and that state is attained; therefore at all times be devoted to me, be desirous of me: this is the import, and not this that whatever is remembered at the time of death (i.e. whatever thought crosses the mind) that forsooth is obtained. If this be so then the prospect is indeed bleak even for the jñânin whose mind may be disturbed by the disorder of bodily humours and who is comatose (at the time of death). Nor is logical deduction in order here: because of its opposition to the śruti which is authoritative. There is (for instance the following statement): ‘One who has overcome sorrow attains liberation even if his memory fail him, while he is dying, be it at a sacred place or in the house of an outcaste, for he was liberated simultaneously with (the acquisition of) jñâna.’ [There is the further statement:] ‘He may give up his body in Kâśi or in the house of an outcaste. He, whose (sâmsâric) fever is over, was liberated at the time of the attainment of jñâna.’ Hence two endorsements such as these. That with which the heart is always informed, in the end, after death, that indeed is attained. This is not conditional on whether it is remembered or not (at the exact moment of death). This primary meaning has been indicated by the use of (the particle) api. In (the expression)—yān yān vāpi—the word vā expresses the idea that memory need not always be present. A person who is always devoted to me may abide in any way — the sage himself makes this sense manifest.

Abhinavagupta continues the same trend of thought in his gloss on Bhagavadgîtā VII.7. Indeed, as he indicates at the beginning of his

75 The Kâsmîrî recension reads antakâle’pi for the vulgate antakâle ca.
gloss on VIII.5. he treats VIII.5-7 as one unit. Bhagavadgîtâ VIII.7 runs as follows:

\[
tasmāt sarvesu kāleṣu  
mām anusmara yudhya ca  
mayy arpitamanobuddhir  
mām evaisyasya asaṁsayaḥ\]

Abhinavagupta glosses the verse thus:

The connection between what has been said, with [the verse beginning with] \textit{tasmāt sarvesu kāleṣu mām anusmara} is as follows: Thinking constantly of whatever thought one gives up the body, one attains to that, whether one remembers it at the last moment or does not remember it because it could not be remembered. Because he is always full of that thought. Others, however (interpret the verse thus): the form he assumes is the first mental impression he forms, which is what he remembers at what is called the moment of death, when relatives, sons, etc., and other subjects can be seen, when symptoms such as heavy breathing, hiccups, choking etc., prognose the end, and when one is deluded by (alternating) signs of relief and distress caused by the emaciation of the firm frame of the body.

At such a moment the cause for arising of the memory (of God) is always having been filled with His thought. The proper form of \textit{tyajati} is locative (and not third person present indicative) otherwise the meaning is the same as before. Then what is the point in remembering at the last moment indeed? Who says so, that it is of any use. Is it that at the last moment only that happens which is circumstantial? Indeed, then, if at the last moment the drink of cold water, etc., fetched by son, wife or relative is seen and remembered then one may become that! Not so. By last moment is not meant the moment of obvious physical demise. The last moment we wish to talk of is not the kind seen by you all (on the outside). At that last moment, whatever (mental) form ought to be will come to be by the logic that even a remote mental impression, even in the case of those obscured by time and space, will be regained on account of belonging to the innermost nature. Under its influence memory (will arise) and through that memory that (appropriate) condition will be attained.

With some even when the body is in good health, the same happens accidentally as is described in the \textit{purāṇa} about the deer etc., and the consequent assumption of the body of a deer.\footnote{This reference is to the story of the deer mentioned earlier as occurring in the \textit{Visnu Purāṇa}. Also see \textit{Bhāgavata Purāṇa}, Canto 5, Chapter 8.} Therefore “even at the time of death (remember) me” etc., is stated. Those who constantly honour God and (say) “so it has been and so will it be with us” — this mental impression of theirs prevents other mental impressions (from arising). By this, in that internal state not outwardly known, by the removal of other

\footnote{V S Sukthankar and S K Belvarkar, eds., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 146.}
mental impressions one remembers the essence (of God) on account of the mental impression. And after the remembrance, for the sake of obtaining a proper condition for the body, follows the moment of the dissolution of the body. The mental impression of time done away with, from the disappearance of the distinctions, "this is to be known" etc., one becomes merged with the Lord who is of the nature of consciousness alone. This is the considered opinion of the guru of Abhinavagupta; more need not be said. By *usamśayati* ²⁹ is meant that no doubt need be entertained in this respect.³⁰

Two additional remarks seem to be called for as one moves on to the other glosses of Abhinavagupta. The first has to do with the remark with which Abhinavagupta introduces his gloss on Bhagavad-gītā VII.5, wherein he refers to the remaining question (*avasistah prāśnāḥ*).³¹ According to Abhinavagupta, in Bhagavadgītā VII.1-2 Arjuna raises nine questions.³² These verses run as follows:

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kim tad brahma kim adhyātmam
kim karma puruṣottama
adhibhūtam ca kim proktam
adhidaivaṁ kim ucye
adhyājñāḥ kathāṁ ko 'tra
dehe 'smin madhusūdana
prayāṇakāle ca kathāṁ
jñeyo 'si niyatāmabhīḥ³³
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The questions, according to Abhinavagupta, appear to be:

(1) What is *brahman*?  
(2) What is *adhyātma*?  
(3) What is *karma*?  
(4) What is *adhibhūta*?  
(5) What is *adhidaiva*?  
(6) What is *adhyājñā*?  
(7) How is it known?  
(8) How is it present in the body, and  
(9) How is it to be known by the self-controlled ones when death is imminent?

²⁹ The Kāśmirī recension reads *usamyāvanī* for the vulgate *usamśayavaḥ*.  
According to Abhinavagupta verses five through seven of the Eighth Chapter are meant to answer the ninth question. This tendency to set up a series of questions on the basis of the text and to answer them on its basis is characteristic of Abhinavagupta. He does the same with Bhagavadgītā II.54 for instance.\textsuperscript{84}

The second comment relates to the way in which he concludes his gloss on Bhagavadgītā VIII.7, by appealing to the authority of his guru.\textsuperscript{85} This seems to be a special feature of Abhinavagupta’s commentary, indeed, one of which he is himself conscious as he has set out to expound the esoteric significance (gūḍhārtha) of the text and the esoteric meaning is believed to be received in apostolic succession.

In the Ninth Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā as well Abhinavagupta offers a novel and extremely liberal interpretation of the expression avidhipūrvakam in Bhagavadgītā IX.23. For a fuller explanation the succeeding verse also needs to be considered. The two verses run thus:

\begin{verbatim}
   ye 'py anyadevatābhaktā
   yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
   te 'pi mām eva kaunteya
   yajanty avidhipūrvakam
   aham hi sarvayajñānām
   bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca
   na tu mām abhijānanti
   tattvenātaś cyavanti te
\end{verbatim}

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Even those who are devotees of other gods,
And worship them permeated with faith,
It is only Me, son of Kuntī, that even they
Worship, (to) not in the enjoined fashion.
For I of all acts of worship
Am both the recipient and the Lord;
But they do not recognize Me
In the true way, therefore they fall (from the ‘heaven’
(t hey win).\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{84} Wāsudeva Lāxmana Śāstri Pansikar, ed., \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 114-115.
\textsuperscript{85} Wāsudeva Lāxmana Śāstri Pansikar, ed., \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 384-385.
\textsuperscript{86} V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{87} Franklin Edgerton, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 48.
Almost all commentators and translators of the Bhagavadgītā, ancient and modern, take the word avidhi as implying a mode of worship not properly ordained. Thus Śaṅkara comments: avidhiḥ ajñānam taitpūrvakam. And Rāmānuja has a fairly extended gloss on the point which J.A.B. van Buitenen paraphrases as follows, in which he also takes the succeeding verse into account:

The ignorant, however, are devoted to mere divinities and so rely on the Vedas alone and faithfully sacrifice to these divinities. But while doing so they actually sacrifice to God himself, for everything constitutes God's body and as God is the ātman of everyone and everything, He may be called by the names of these divinities. But the ignorant perform their sacrifices without connecting them with the words of the Vedānta. As has been stated before, the entire Vedānta lays down the doctrine that the divinities are to be worshipped in so far as they constitute the body of the Supreme Person, but that it actually is the Supreme Person himself who is the one to be worshipped, because He is their ātman. When performing their sacrifices the four hotps will find fulfilment of their desires via the divinities— who constitute God's body—in God who is the inner ruler of these divinities; or, in other words, when they know that by their acts they pay homage to God himself and then perform these acts—serving to reconcile the divinities—they will find in God the perfect fulfilment of their aspirations. The ignorant, however, do not know this, so their reward is but a small one and it is in their nature to fall back to samsāra.

Some modern commentators on the Bhagavadgītā, perhaps under the influence of the prevailing view which highlights Hindu tolerance, take a soft approach to the issue and handle the verse with kid gloves as it were. Thus R.C. Zaehner renders avidhi as rites that "may differ from the norm." And S. Radhakrishnan remarks on this verse:

The author of the Gītā welcomes light from every quarter of the heaven. It has a right to shine because it is light.

A little later he further comments:

The shining gods, the spirits of the dead and the spirits in the psychic world all happen to be worshipped by men in different stages of development but they are all limited forms of the Supreme and cannot give the aspiring soul the peace that is beyond all understanding. The result of

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88 Śrīśaṅkaragrāntāvalī Sampata 8, p. 227.
89 J. A. B. van Buitenen, op. cit., pp. 117-118.
91 S. Radhakrishnan, op. cit., p. 248.
worship is assimilation to the form worshipped and these limited forms give limited results. No devotion fails of its highest reward. The lesser ones bring lesser rewards while devotion to the Supreme brings the supreme reward. All sincere religious devotion is a seeking after the Supreme Godhead.\footnote{Ibid.}

An extraordinary feature of Abhinavagupta's commentary is that his approach is quite modern on this point if one may say so; for he declines to take the word avidhi to mean wrong or improper rites and insists that the word stands for different rites. Thus in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IX.23 he takes avidhi to mean not an "improper" rite but rather as one involving duality:

Those who worship through other names [and forms], they also worship me alone. There is nothing to be worshipped other than the brahman — but the special thing (about their situation is that it is done) 'without the proper rite (vidhi).’ ‘Without the proper vidhi’ means with another vidhi (or mode of worship). By rites of various kinds I, who have the same nature of being as the supreme brahman, am indeed to be worshipped. [The word avidhi is not to be understood] as it has been explained by others, who are sullied by terrible sins produced by the defects (arising from their being) of a different school of philosophy (who maintain) that by ‘avidhi’ is meant ‘bad or wicked rites.’ If this be so then statements such as "they worship me alone,"\footnote{Bhagavadgītā IX.23.} "I am the enjoyer of the sacrifice"\footnote{Bhagavadgītā IX.24.} plainly cannot be reconciled; so enough of bandying words with those full of sin. Our guru rather explains thus. [Those who] worship some other god as different from one’s ātman, as devoid of the nature of brahman on account of dualism — in reality, they worship me who is of the nature of one’s own ātman, but “without the proper rite,” with a “bad rite,” i.e. by adopting a form implying duality. Therefore it is said: they do not know me really as of the nature of one’s own ātman (but) as the partaker (of the worship) on account of the form of the god (they worship). Therefore do they fall away from me.\footnote{Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Sāstri Pansikar, ed., \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 432-433.}

Elsewhere too, in the Ninth Chapter, Abhinavagupta evinces a remarkably liberal spirit, this time in his interpretation of Bhagavadgītā IX.32.33:

\begin{quote}
\begin{align*}
\text{māṃ hi pārtha vyāpāśritya} \\
\text{ye 'pi syuḥ pāpayonayaḥ} \\
\text{striyo vaiśyās tathā śūḍrās} \\
\text{te 'pi yānti parām gatim}
\end{align*}
\end{quote}

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}
kim punar brähmanāḥ puñyā
bhaktā rājarsayas tathā
anityam asukham lokam
imām prāpya bhajasva mām

Franklin Edgerton translates:

For if they take refuge in Me, son of Prthā,
   Even those who may be of base origin,
Women, men of the artisan class, and serfs too.
   Even they go to the highest goal.
How much more virtuous brahmans,
   And devout royal seers, too!
A fleeting and joyless world
   This; having attained it, devote thyself to Me.

To see the extent to which Abhinavagupta liberalizes the interpretation of these verses, it is useful to present first the rather narrow interpretation of these verses Abhinavagupta alludes to as espoused by some scholars. One such scholar is Bhāskara though we do not know whether Abhinavagupta had him in mind or not. Bhāskara writes in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā:

It is forbidden to impart to the Südra, etc., knowledge of unseen things, to instruct him in dharma and the like. Besides, when a Südra, out of his own foolish desire, bypasses the instruction by Brahmans and either from a written text or from a commentary thereon learns its import and performs the rites, the rites he performs will not be of any benefit to him. On the contrary, the knowledge acquired by one who is forbidden it and who is not initiated only creates distress for him. ... Since the higher and the lower classes are not equal, they likewise do not have the same dharma. As has been said, “If women and the Südras were qualified for release, the caste eminence of the Brahman would serve no purpose.” ... The norm of good conduct in the land of the Āryans is conveyed solely by the Brahman’s action. ... In the line “wisdom, knowledge and orthodoxy are the natural functions of the Brahman,” our text will demonstrate that the Blessed dharma is only for Brahmans a way to Release. [Not typical, his expression bhagavān dharmaḥ!] The Südra, etc., cannot be elevated ... nor can iron be made into gold by heating it some more. ... Even the Ksatriya and the Vaiśya do not have the same qualification for release as the Brahman. Therefore, only the Brahman has it. No release is possible for Südras, no more than it is for animals. ... Since the Südra etc., have

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97 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 49.
no release and lack qualification for the three pursuits of dharma, artha, and kāma, which are the goals of man. It follows that they may also not learn the doctrine of the Bhagavad Gītā. ... Just as a bilious man who, in order to cure himself, takes medicine that is intended for a phlegmatic not only fails to be cured, but suffers even worse from the onslaught of his ailment, so indeed is it in the case of Śūdras, etc.*

Abhinavagupta criticizes this position in the strongest possible terms in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IX.32.33:

Now the verse beginning maiti hi: [In this verse by the expression] pāpa-yonayah ('those born in wicked wombs') are meant animals, birds and reptiles; by strivah (women) those that are ignorant, by vaśyas (merchants etc.) those engaged in the occupation of farming etc. and by śūdras (serfs etc.) all of those who are excluded from Vedic ritual and dependent on others for a living; even they, resorting to me, worship me indeed. When the (marvellous) deeds of the supremely compassionate God, such as the freeing of the elephant (from the jaws of the crocodile) are heard by the thousand, then what doubt can there be (of the salvation) of those of perverse conduct? Some say that this statement is meant to glorify the brahmāyas and the ksatriyas and it is not intended to indicate the accessibility of salvation on the part of women etc. They (who say so), denying the all-embracing power of God with their narrow intellects: being unable to bear the supreme kindheartedness of the supreme lord, going against sentences which clearly state the intended meaning such as ‘I hate none and love none’; even if one be terribly depraved' and others; not accepting, on the strength of dualism, the non-duality of the essence of God established through a host of irrefutable arguments; not noticing other scriptural contradictions (of theirs); joining issue repeatedly ‘how can you say this,’ ‘how can you say this’: with their hearts penetrated and possessed by the supreme prejudice of birth etc., which has been completely accepted; turning askance their lowered face and eyes because of enmity, dissimulation and embarrassment, prating nonsense before all, — make themselves the butt of ridicule among the people— which serves to explain everything in advance!

It will be noticed that Abhinavagupta’s gloss on some of the verses of the Ninth Chapter considered here are not only remarkable for their liberality but also for their modernity. A striking illustration of this is provided by the fact that Abhinavagupta does not take the

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98 See Milton Singer, ed., Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes (Honolulu: East-West Center Press. 1966), p. 32. This passage has been quoted by Prof. J.A.B van Buitenen in the above-mentioned book. The translation is his, the relevant chapter and verse of the Gītā to which Bhāskara’s gloss belongs have not been cited.

99 See Bhagavadgītā IX.29(b).

100 See Bhagavadgītā IX.30(a).

expression *strīyah* in the Bhagavadgītā IX.32 to mean "women" as almost every commentator and translator does but rather to mean "ignorant men" presumably on the assumption that since women were denied access to Vedic learning, by this expression those labouring under this disability are intended. This is clearly a very modern explanation indeed, one which comes close to the explanation Swami Chinmayananda gave in one of his public lectures that "*strīyah*" does not mean women but people, men or women with negative feminine traits.

Abhinavagupta's comments on the Tenth Chapter are not quite extraordinary but nonetheless not entirely lacking in novelty and freshness. Abhinavagupta, taking the cue from the very first pāda of the chapter *bhūya eva*, that the chapter involves a re-iteration of what has already been said, comments on it with great economy. As he remarks at the very outset:

The meaning which has been expressed through the previous nine chapters, that very meaning is elaborated again in this chapter through every metrical foot.\(^1\) And so [the Lord] says [the verse beginning with] *bhūya eva*. Listen to what is being said again to clarify what has already been said. Arjuna will also say likewise, "Tell me again."\(^2\) Such, then, is the purpose of the chapter. The rest has been explained, then why the repetition? For (thereby) doubt will be resolved.\(^3\)

This chapter contains a description of the various *vibhūtis* or marvellous manifestations of the Lord, and Abhinavagupta takes pains to clarify that the singling out of these manifestations does not in any way compromise the unitary nature of the Godhead, a point not usually taken into account in this context. He comments on Bhagavadgītā X.10-42 in a single gloss and says:

The comment made [now covers the verses] beginning with *teṣām satayuktānām*\(^4\) till the end of the chapter\(^5\) and should be read (as covering all of them) simultaneously. Now [after the verse beginning with] *teṣām evānu- (kampārthaḥ)* [the sage Vyāsa] cites six verses\(^6\) containing the questions of Arjuna. Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks verses ending with [the verse

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\(^1\) Read *pāda* for *pada* in the text.
\(^2\) See Bhagavadgītā X.18.
\(^3\) Wāsudeva Laxmana Śāstri Pansikar, *ed.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 442, 444.
\(^4\) Bhagavadgītā X.10.
\(^5\) Bhagavadgītā X.42.
\(^6\) In the critical edition these are seven. Bhagavadgītā X.12-18, inclusive of both. Among the Kāśmira recensions Ś6 omits X.15.
beginning with] * athavā bahu. By [the verse beginning with] *ahum āmā[108] * [He] wards off separateness. Otherwise in statements such as 'among the mountains I am the Himalayas,' God is Himalaya alone and nothing else (could be assumed) — by such exclusion the unitary vision of *brahmā* would have been annulled on account of the absence of indivisibility (of *brahmā* which such statements seem to imply). Therefore this lesson is put together for one whose mind cannot grasp that concept of indivisible pervasiveness as such but who wants to know about it. Now, in conclusion, after having expressed the notion of difference-with-non-difference through [the verse containing the expression] *yad-yad vibhūiimat sail vom*,[109] (the Lord) concludes with [a note of] non-difference [with the verse110 which may be paraphrased thus:] *athavā kīn hahumaitena viṣṭabhūyāham ity ekāṃśena jagat sthitah.*[111] As has been said [in the Purusāsūktā:] *'A quarter of Him comprises all the creatures; three-fourths of Him is immortal in the sky.'*[112] It is for the sake of created beings that all his divine essence, shining forth in various variegated forms, becomes the object of perception.[113]

Abhinavagupta’s commentary on the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā shares the brevity of his commentary on the Tenth. This is in itself unusual, especially from the point of view of some modern commentaries, who regard this chapter as “the climax of the Gītā.”[114] This tradition perhaps goes back to Rudolf Otto who regards the scene in which Kṛṣṇa’s cosmic manifestation evokes terror in Arjuna “as an example of the place of the numinous, the *mysterium tremendum* in religion.”[115] Even in the course of his brief commentary, however, Abhinavagupta makes some interesting comments and connections. In XI.18 an epithet is applied to the Lord which in the critical text reads: *sāśvatadharmagopta,*[116] so also in the vulgate.[117] In the Kāśmirī recension, however, the text on which Abhinavagupta is commenting, it reads *sātvatadharmagopta.*[118] This is itself is not surprising but Abhinavagupta’s gloss on the term is, as we shall presently

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108 Bhagavadgītā X.20.
109 Bhagavadgītā X.41.
110 Bhagavadgītā X.42.
111 Why say more? I abide having planted (Myself) with a fraction of Myself in the universe.
112 Rg Veda X.90.3.
117 Śrīśāṅkara-granthishāvalī Śūntaka 8, p. 260.
118 But not in all Kāśmirī recensions, see V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 158.
But first a few comments on the word sātvata. According to S. N. Dasgupta:

... the word Sātvata also is used as a synonym of Vāsudeva or Bhāgavata. The word Sātvata in the plural form is a name of a tribe of the Yādavas, and in the Mahābhārata, VII.7662. the phrase Sātvatāṃ varah is used to denote Sātyaki, a member of the Yādava race, though this appellation is applied to Kṛṣṇa in a large number of places in the Mahābhārata. In the later Bhāgavata-purāṇa (IX.9.50) it is said that the Sātvatas worship Brahman as Bhagavān and as Vāsudeva. In the Mahābhārata, VI.66.41, Samkarsana is said to have introduced the sātvata rites in worshipping Vāsudeva. If Sātvata was the name of a race, it is easy to imagine that the persons may have had special rites in worshipping Vāsudeva. Yāmunācārya, the great teacher of Rāmānuja in the tenth century A.D., says that those who adore God (bhagavat), the supreme person, with purity (sattva), are called bhāgavata and sātvata.119

Abhinavagupta’s interpretation, though not entirely unrelated to Yāmuna’s, contains elements of originality. For he remarks:

Now the verse beginning tvam aksaram: [The word] sātvatadharmagoptā [is to be understood thus]. The Sātvatas are those who have offered the quality of goodness (sattva)—which has the nature of not making the differentiation between the two, jñāna and karma, appear—to the supreme guru, the great god Śiva; and for whom the truth, of the nature of light, shines forever. Their dharma is one in which the entire cosmos gets folded up (or destroyed) on account of devotion to the renunciation of incessant grasping, and which surpasses all (other) paths. (Lord Kṛṣṇa) acts as a protector of such a dharma. This indeed is the secret purport of this chapter, and one on which light has often been shed by me in (my) Devistotraviveṭi. That (secret is such as) is automatically understood by those who are well-instructed and endowed with an understanding heart. What is the point then in being verbosely repetitive about what is obvious.120

Abhinavagupta’s gloss on Bhagavadgītā XI.33 is also similarly of interest. He reads this verse in the light of Bhagavadgītā II.6 wherein Arjuna wonders “Whether we should conquer, or they should conquer us.” The verse runs as follows:

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119 S N Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy (Cambridge University Press, 1968), Vol. II, pp. 541-54. He quotes the following verse from the Āgamapramāṇya of Yāmuna:

tataś ca sattvād bhagavān bhajyate yaiḥ paraḥ purmān
    te sātvāḥ bhāgavātā ity ucyante dvijottamaḥ
   
Yāmuna’s Āgama-pramāṇya, p 76

INTRODUCTION

na caitad vidmah kataran no gariyo
yad vā jayema yadi vā no jayeyuh
yān eva hatvā na jījivīśāmas
te 'vasthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ.¹²¹

Franklin Edgerton translates:

And we do not know which of the two were better for us
Whether we should conquer, or they should conquer us:
What every ones having slain we wish not to live,
They are arrayed in front of us, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's men.¹²²

This verse is not connected by either Śaṅkara¹²³ or Rāmānuja¹²⁴
with the Bhagavadgītā XI.33, which runs:

tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
jitvā satṛun bhuṅkṣva rājyam samṛddham
mayaivaite nihatāḥ purvam eva
nimittamātram bhava savyasācin.¹²⁵

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Therefore arise, thou, win glory,
Conquer thine enemies and enjoy prospered kingship;
By Me Myself they have already been slain long ago:
Be thou the mere instrument, left-handed archer.¹²⁶

Abhinavagupta concludes his gloss on XI.31.33 with the comment:

Herein, where it was said: 'In respect to these, who have (already) been
killed by me, you are the (mere) occasion (for their killing. Therefore
kill them and) be victorious' therein the Lord gave his reply to what Arjuna
had asked earlier in the verse beginning with na caitad vidmah katarat
e tc.¹²⁷

As is clear from the entire verse cited above, the question whether
the Pāṇḍavas will win or lose is incidental to Arjuna's doubt
which is really on a different plane. He does not appear so much
concerned with the fact of winning or losing as with the issue: which

¹²² Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 9.
¹²³ Śriśāṅkaragranthaśāvālī Sampūta 8, p. 269.
¹²⁴ Mahāvāna Śāstri, ed., op. cit., p. 186.
¹²⁶ Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 58.
of the two is better for us, winning or losing? (rather than with the issue: will we win or lose!) So the question seems to have been slightly misconstrued by Abhinavagupta here.

One meets with some extraordinary explanations in Abhinavagupta’s Gitārthasaṅgraha next in his glosses on the Thirteenth Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā. What is extraordinary here is not so much Abhinavagupta’s own interpretation (though in part it is too) but rather some of the prevailing views he cites. This he does in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā XIII.1-2:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{idam šariram kaunteya} \\
\text{kṣetram ity abhidhiyate} \\
\text{etad yo vetti tam prāhuḥ} \\
\text{kṣetrajña iti tādvidah} \\
\text{kṣetrajña cāpi mām viddhi} \\
\text{sarvakṣetresu bārata} \\
\text{kṣetrakṣetrajñayor jñānam} \\
\text{yat taj jñānam matam mama}^{128}
\end{align*}
\]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

This body, son of Kuntī,
Is called the Field.
Who knows this, he is called
Field-knower by those who know him.
Know also that I am the Field-knower
In all Fields, son of Bharata.
Knowledge of the Field and the Field-knower,
This I hold to be (true) knowledge.\(^{129}\)

Abhinavagupta comments on these verses, including a third verse found only in some versions of the Gitā. Indeed the first verse commented on by Abhinavagupta in this chapter does not exist in the vulgate or the critical edition of the Bhagavadgītā. It is, however, found in some versions of the Kāśmīra recension of the Bhagavadgītā.\(^{130}\)

That verse itself comes in two readings. In one it is spoken by Kṛṣṇa,\(^{131}\) in the other by Arjuna.\(^{132}\) On the basis of the internal

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\(^{129}\) Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 65.
\(^{132}\) Ibid., p. 166.
evidence provided by Abhinavagupta in the gloss it is possible to identify the reading he had before him. It seems to have run as follows:

Śribhagavān uvāca

prakṛtim puruṣāṁ caiva
kṣetram kṣetrajñam eva ca
etat te kathayisyāmi
jñānam jñeyam ca bhārata

His gloss on this and the rest of the verses runs as follows:

Somewhere in the Vedas the kṣetrajña is heard of as worthy of being worshipped. Is he the ātman or God or else some other third entity: suspecting such a question the Lord instructs [through the verse beginning with] prakṛtim puruṣāṁ. For those involved in the process of samsāra, the body is the field (kṣetra), wherein the seed of karma sprouts. Therefore their ātman, vexed by external defilement, is called 'the knower of the field' (kṣetrajña). For the enlightened, that itself is the field. But there is a difference in [etymological] interpretation [to be met with in the case of the word kṣetrajña as follows:] The kṣe in kṣetra may be connected with kṣinoti (*kṣiki thus:) that which cuts asunder the bond of karma by its dissipation through enjoyment [and the i in kṣetra may be connected with trāyate (*trai) thus:] that which delivers one from the fear of birth and death; for such ātman the supreme soul Vāsudeva is the kṣetrajña, that is to say, one who makes such a kṣetra known. [But how can one get the sense of “making it known” (vedayati) when the form vetti means to know (and the word kṣetrajña translates as “knower of the field”?)]

In the root vid the causative sense of the suffix (nie) should be undestood as subsumed. Therefore He, by whose grace, that which is lacking in consciousness acquires the state of consciousness, he indeed is kṣetrajña and none else. But as particular and resorting to a form, possessing limited pervesiveness, it is called the ātman (i.e. the jīvātman). Lord Vāsudeva is the supreme soul on account of pervading all the fields (kṣetras) without any distinction. The (genitive) form māma is to be understood as an accusative [i.e. the expression mātām māma does not mean “knowledge about me or opinion about me” but rather that] I am to be known by this knowledge — this is what is meant.

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133 Read rūsitah for rūṣateh(?), Wāsudeva Laxmana Śāstri Pansikar, ed., op. cit., p. 524.
134 See Panini 3.1.26; also Siddhāntakaumudi on Panini 7.1 101, rule 2571 (root No. 1709).
135 See Panini 2.3.67.
The etymologies cited by Abhinavagupta are fanciful, though no more than one often meets with in Sanskrit commentarial literature and his own understanding of *mama* as *mānī*, though making an interesting point, seems a trifle forced.

The Fourteenth Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā deals primarily with the three *gunas*. Abhinavagupta's glosses on the verses of this chapter share their straightforward, even somewhat pedestrian, character except that sometimes he alternately surprises us with exegetical felicity, followed quickly by etymological "ingenuity." This happens in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā XIV.8. The verse runs:

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tamas tv ajñānajam viddhi
mohanām sarvadehinām
pramāḍālasyanidrābhis
tan nibadhñāti bhārata
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Franklin Edgerton translates:

> But know that darkness is born of ignorance, 
> The deluder of all embodied (souls); 
> By heedlessness, sloth, and sleep 
> It binds, son of Bharata.

Abhinavagupta writes:

Now the verse containing *tamas tu* and *pramāḍālaśya*: Heedlessness (*pra-māda*) consists of wasting away human life which is hard to obtain, which is obtained as a result of hundreds of spiritual merits accumulated over a long time and which is the sole cause for achieving salvation. As has been said with reference to the same: "Not a single moment of life (once lost, can be re-)gained by all the wealth in the world (lit. by all the jewels). He who wastes it away is heedless, wretched among men." Or as (has been said) in the Śrimadbhāgavata: "The night is taken away by sleep, and moreover, life by obstacles. The day, O king, in trying to obtain wealth and in supporting the family. Even though these hosts consisting of the physical body, children, wife etc. are unreal, one who is intoxicated by them, does not see (his) death (close at hand); even though seeing it (i.e. one remains blind to the prospect of his death)." Moreover: "Of what avail here are the numerous years (that stretch out) in the future for a heedless person. Much better the moment at hand which is capable of producing good " [Not heeding that moment — ] that is heedlessness. Indeed therein (in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa) in the eleventh canto the Lord

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has declared what is meant by the word suicide thus: "Having first easily obtained this human body hard to obtain, a ship well-designed with the guru at the helm and urged on by me with a favourable wind: that man who does not cross over the ocean of samsāra (given these favourable circumstances) is one who commits suicide." Laziness (ālasya) means slackness in performing good deeds. A completely woebegone state is [what is meant by] nidrā [by taking the prefix ni to stand for nihsesena or completely and drā to stand for drānam or a wretched state].

Though Abhinavagupta’s glosses on the Fourteenth Chapter may be passed over as not outstanding in general in comparison with other commentaries, the place the Fifteenth Chapter occupies in Abhinavagupta’s Gitārthasangraha deserves special mention. The Fifteenth Chapter is one of the shortest in the Bhagavadgitā but it is comparatively speaking, glossed by Abhinavagupta in more detail than perhaps any other chapter. Moreover, Abhinavagupta sees the Fifteenth Chapter as occupying a special position in the Bhagavadgitā. This is clearly stated and amplified in his gloss on the last verse of that Chapter, i.e., XV.20. The verse runs:

\[\text{iti guhyatamam śāstram}\
\text{idam uktam mayānagha}\
\text{etad buddhvā buddhimān syāt}\
\text{kṛtakṛtyaś ca bhārata}\]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Thus the most secret science
Has now been declared by Me, blameless one:
Being enlightened as to this, a man would have true
[enlightenment.
And would have done all there is to do, son of
[Bharata.]

Abhinavagupta comments:

Now the verse beginning iti: It is most recondite (guhyatamam) because it propounds the non-duality of everything. True knowledge consists in knowing things as they are and not (in espousing) a worldly point of view. And through knowing things as they are comes true fulfilment, not with such actions as defeating enemies, obtaining wealth, enjoying women etc.

\[\text{139} \text{Wāsudeva Lāxmāna Śāstrī Pansikar, ed., op. cit., pp. 593-594.}\
\[\text{140} \text{V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., op. cit., p. 175.}\
\[\text{141} \text{Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 75.}\\

The particle ca is expressive of wonder. Through that (knowledge) is true fulfilment to be had. By this mere knowledge (and no action): this is the great wonder. By the word iti, the conclusion of the treatise is indicated. From something being concluded one knows that what was to be said has been fully said. For instance, in the XVIth chapter only Arjuna’s eligibility (as a receiver of spiritual instruction) is established, nothing is preached. Daivi or divine attributes are those which are such (divine) and āsuri or demoniac attributes are such as are pervaded by ignorance. You have obtained to the divine attribute, pervaded by knowledge, this much alone is the purport. That he will say [in the verse beginning with] mā śucah sampādāṁ daivim.142 Therefore earlier, through the device of the account of the battle of the gods and the demons at the time of the depiction of the clash of knowledge and ignorance, it was indicated that there is a conflict between knowledge and ignorance. Similarly in explaining things primarily for a disciple, as the occasion required, something else was also said. Hence two (additional) chapters will also come about. The instruction is concluded right here. In every state one should seek intense devotion to God; for achieving that all else has been said earlier. Supreme felicity lies in total devotion to the true nature of God.143

Perhaps in view of the importance Abhinavagupta attaches to it, his commentary on the Fifteenth Chapter is more detailed, subtle and difficult. The situation is further complicated by the text which is at times corrupt. Bhagavadgītā XV.3 serves to illustrate the point. The verse runs:

rūpam asyeha tathopalabhyate
nānto na cādir na ca sampratisthā
aśvattham enāṁ suvirūḍhamālam
aśaṅgaśastraṇa dṛḍhena chittvā144

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Its form is not thus comprehended here in the world,
Nor is its end or beginning or basis.
This peepal-tree, with its firmly grown roots,
Cutting with the stout axe of detachment,145 *

This refers to the famous statement in the Bhagavadgītā about applying the axe to the aśvattha tree of samśāra.146 It is in the

142 Bhagavadgītā XVI.5.
145 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 73.
interpretation of the last *pāda* that Abhinavagupta introduces his own exegetical twist:

"Having cut it" (*tāṁ chittvā*): in this expression the act (of cutting), which is spoken of as applying to the substantive (*viśeṣya = aśvattham*) takes on the adjective (*viśeṣanam*) due to syntactic connection, as in the (Mīmāṁsīc) injunction: "The staff-bearer should repeat the commands." 

It should be noted that in the injunction "The staff-bearer should repeat the commands," it is really the repetition of the commands which is crucial and more important than the bearing of the staff. Abhinavagupta seems to imply that the well-entrenched roots of the tree are to be chopped down rather than any other part thereof.

The process of *saṁsāra* in Hinduism is essentially represented by the transmigration of the *jīvātman* and *mokṣa* represents the recognition of the true nature of the *ātman*. This process is described in Bhagavadgītā XV.9.10. The verses run as follows:

```
śrotram caṇḍuḥ sparśanam ca
rasanam ghrāṇam eva ca
adhiśṭhāya manaś cāyāṃ
viṣayāṇ upasevate
utkṛśmantam sthitam vāpi
bhūṇānam vā guṇānvitam
vimūḍha nānupasyanti
paśyanti jñānacakṣusah
```

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Hearing, sight and touch,
Taste and smell,
Making use of these, and the thought-organ, he
Devotes himself to the objects of sense.
As he departs (from the body) or remains (in it)
Or experiences (sense-objects), while attended by the
[Strands,

Deluded men do not perceive him,
Those whose eye is knowledge, perceive him.

---

148 Ibid., *dandi praśāṇa anubrūyāti*. The B.O.R.1 manuscript reads *dandi praśyo* nu na hrūyāt?
150 Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
Abhinavagupta's gloss on the verse is significant in emphasizing the moral desiderata for achieving spiritual insight, and also for the rather attractive metaphor he develops.

Now the verse beginning śrōtram: "The mind"—by this the heart is indicated. Therefore remaining present on account of being united with the physical condition, and leaving in order to take hold of another body, or for enjoying the sense-objects, the ignorant do not see it because they are unenlightened. But the enlightened ones, seeking out its nature of consciousness everywhere in unbroken samādhi know it as it is because they are diligent. In the case of the ignorant, however, even effort does not bear fruit because of the immaturity of their emotion. In autumn, even with the intensive application of resources such as water etc., the sown seeds are not able to come to fruition. Hence resources alone do not suffice. The case of the water which is released by the wheel of the pond where water has collected in spring is, however, something else. Hardly is there a piece of earth, rendered desolate by winter, which shines up with the mere touch of the sun's rays; just so the effort of those who are not self-controlled, their effort not being fullfledged and wholehearted, does not succeed. Therefore those who have obtained the (spiritual) means represented by Śaivite initiation etc., cannot be deemed to be practising the method in its entirety if their inner eye is full of complexes such as anger, attachment etc. As has been said: "On anger etc., being present, even the initiated do not obtain mokṣa."¹⁵¹

Abhinavagupta finds ample scope to display his exegetical versatility in a well-known verse of the Seventeenth Chapter of the Bhagavad-gitā. The verse is well-known; unfortunately it is also well-known for its obscurity. It runs as follows (Bhagavadgitā XVII.23):

\[
aum tat sad iti nirdeśo \\
brahmaṇās trividhāḥ smṛtah \\
brāhmaṇās tēna vedāś ca \\
yajñaś ca vihitāḥ purā\]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Om, Tat Sat: thus the designation
Of Brahman, threefold, is recorded.
Thereby brahmans, and Vedas,
And acts of worship were fashioned of old.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p 81.
Abhinavagupta comments:

Now how do those whose understanding has gone beyond the perils of the three guṇas, perform ritual acts? Their manner is described [in the verse] beginning with aum tat sad, etc. Aum, tat and sat, by these three words there is the description, the encounter, of brahma. Therein by aum it is indicated that the scriptural injunction (regarding yajña etc.) should be accepted as long as one is alive. By tat, a pronoun, which is only expressive of the general and incapable of any specific determination, the non-seeking of the fruits (of ritual acts offered) in the brahma is spoken of, because of the absence of any seeking without the special mention of what is sought after. Besides, even in the case of the acceptance of all particular actions, of all fruits, (there is the absence of the attainment of any special fruit) on account of non-attachment to any special fruit although one is the performer of all action. Sat, by this report, praise is mentioned. Yajñas etc., though performed, acquire the quality of tāmas if performed with the thought that (the performance of) yajñas etc. is evil. Therefore regarded as a duty (even though) performed with a specific result in mind (a sacrifice performed as) sat is not a cause of bondage, so that even those who perform yajña etc., regarding it as a duty, are not bound. With this very intention has it been said in the Adi Parvan:

Tapas is no bondage, study is no bondage, natural performance of Vedic rites is no bondage (even) much seizure of wealth is no bondage, but all of them, affected by attachment, are bondage.

[The word] kalka [repeatedly used in the verse cited above] means bondage. [The word] svābhāvika [in the verse quoted above, in the expression svābhāviko vedavidhiḥ] means that the Vedas etc., along with the six ancillary sciences, should be studied by the brahma without any specific reason (i.e. desire). [The word] prasahya [similarly in the above verse] means a manner inconsistent with what is scripturally or socially acceptable. [The word bhāvopahatam is to be understood thus:] these are the cause of bondage when affected by a mind which is united with the three guṇas such as sattva etc. Therefore yajña etc., so long as the body exists, should be performed, and action should be performed for its sake such as earning, etc.

Or else, by aum is propounded the pacification of the phenomenon (of samsāra); by tat the nature (of the supreme) free from desire, only touched by the nascent wave of the universe and by sat, notwithstanding the perfection (of the supreme principle) the coming into being of various natures which cause plurality in the (reality to appear), which possesses tranquility and (perfect) freedom of will. Moreover, it has been said that (the word sat) can be used in the sense of reality and goodness. Therefore, having first presented the supremely tranquil form (of brahma), that supreme form then sports, which is accompanied with waves in the form of desire, pervaded by the desire to give, to perform sacrifice, to perform austerities in the midst of which the whole body of ceremonies.

\[154\] Bhagavadgītā XVII 26.
and factors involved therein: dāna, yajña and tapas enjoined in Hindu religious law is fulfilled. This indeed is the equilibrium state of the triad and the natural form free from destruction. So then, whose, what, how, wherefrom and whereby should any fruit (of such action) come about?  

In spite of the fact that the passage has been much commented on, Abhinavagupta's remarks are original. Since Abhinavagupta regards the Fifteenth Chapter as virtually concluding the Bhagavadgītā, it is not surprising that the rest of the significant glosses in his commentary are encountered in Chapter Eighteen, the last chapter of the Bhagavadgītā, difficult to overlook on account of its length. It will be interesting to see what Abhinavagupta has to say on Bhagavadgītā XVIII.14 about which, Franklin Edgerton remarks rather acidly, that "Much needless trouble has been caused by this verse, owing to attempts to make it too philosophical, and particularly to make it fit the theories of the later so-called Sāmkhya system." This verse, along with the preceding, runs as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pancaita} & \text{ñi mahābāho} \\
\text{kāra} & \text{nāni nibodha me} \\
\text{sāmkhye kṛtante proktāni} \\
\text{siddhayē sarvaka} & \text{rmanām}
\end{align*}
\]

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157 The remarks are difficult to assess in view of the fact that "Commentators vary considerably in their interpretations of this obscure passage" (W. Douglas P. Hill, *op. cit.*, p 199 footnote). According to Hill: "The intimate, indissoluble connexion between all true sacrifice, austerity, and almsgiving, and the authority of Scripture, is indicated by the use of the mystic syllables - OM TAT SAT. These form the threefold designation of Brahman. OM expressing its absolute supremacy. TAT is universality, and SAT its reality, reflected as goodness in the world of men. The castes (with Brāhmaṇas at their head), the Vedas, and the Sacrifices proceed from this one source, and are thus inseparable.

Therefore all Vedic rites of sacrifice, austerity, and almsgiving begin with the utterance of OM. Those, too, whose aim is liberation, and in whose works is no desire for fruit, knowing that all is Brahma, perform their rites with thought of Brahman as TAT. And all who would continue in sacrifice, austerity, and almsgiving, or any work that has these for its end, and make them real and good and auspicious, must join with them the thought of Brahman as SAT.

For whatsoever sacrifice is offered, or austerity practised, or alms given, without the thought and utterance of the sacred threefold name, and therefore contrary to rule and without faith, is ASAT, having neither reality nor goodness; such work is of no value in this world, and bears no fruit of happiness hereafter." (*ibid.*, p 198, fn 3.)

INTRODUCTION

adhiṣṭhānam tathā kartā
karanam ca prthagvidham
vividhāś ca prthakceśtā
daivam caiva tra pañcamam

Franklin Edgerton translates:

O great-armed one, these five
Factors learn from Me,
Which are declared in the reason-method doctrine
For the effective performance of all actions.
The (material) basis, the agent too,
And the instruments of various sorts,
And the various motions of several kinds,
And just Fate as the fifth of them.

It is interesting that Abhinavagupta’s gloss, in view of Edgerton’s remarks, is refreshingly direct. Moreover, he also criticizes those who, in his view, try to obfuscate the meaning.

Now it is preached [through the verses beginning with] pañcaitāni etc., that even in a situation where one performs worldly actions, there being five causes present (which are responsible) in (the fruition of) an action, these people, blinded by ignorance, impose upon the ātman the burden of being the whole agent of action and thus through their own (mis-)understanding bind themselves, while [the fact of the matter is that] there is really no such bondage. [The word kṛtānta should be understood thus:] that with respect to which a conclusion has been reached is kṛtānta, the same as siddhānta. By adhiṣṭhāna is meant the object. By daivam is meant (karmic) merit and demerit earned earlier on (in previous lives). These five, adhiṣṭhāna etc., assembled together, are the causes in the case of all actions. Others have said, in a somewhat forced way, [that adhiṣṭhāna has to be interpreted thus:] that by which all action is presided over is adhiṣṭhāna, as described by the word karma yoga [and should be understood] as denoting the five-fold modifications which result when the buddhi takes on a disposition characterized by rajas, namely (1) firmness, (2) faith, (3) joy, (4) no desire to know and (5) the desire to know. The kartā or doer is the one who aims at the fruit and possesses the distinguishing characteristic of buddhi. Karanam or means are the mind, eye, etc.: (means internal) as well as external, such as a dagger etc. Čestā or motion is that of prāna, apāna, etc. (the various “winds”). By the word daiva or Fate are indicated Right (dharma) and Wrong (a-dharma) and by their use are indicated all the states arising in the buddhi from them. Others (erroneously)

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160 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 84.
take *adhisthāna* to be God, on account of being of imperfect wisdom because of possessing an unsettled mind. He, however, who performs action with a firm rejection of the ego and as purified (in his attitude) in a hundred subtle ways as mentioned earlier, does not become involved (with the fruit of action) on account of his perfect wisdom: this is what is meant.\textsuperscript{161}

In regarding *cestā* as motion of the *prāṇas*, Abhinavagupta is in line with Śaṅkara\textsuperscript{162} and Rāmānuja.\textsuperscript{163}

Another well-known verse of the Eighteenth Chapter is verse No. 66. Indeed, it is perhaps the best-known verse of that chapter, being regarded among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas as the *cārama śloka* or the last word.\textsuperscript{164} Small wonder, then, that it is commented upon in detail by Rāmānuja\textsuperscript{165} and even Śaṅkara glosses the verse at length.\textsuperscript{166} By contrast, Abhinavagupta's gloss on this verse is brief. The verse runs as follows:

\[
\text{sarvādharmaṁ parityajya} \\
māṁ ekaṁ śaraṇāṁ vṛaja \\
aham tvā sarvapāpebhoyo \\
mokṣayiśyāmi mā śucaḥ.\textsuperscript{167}
\]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

> Abandoning all (other) duties,  
> Go to Me as thy sole refuge;  
> From all evils I thee  
> Shall rescue: be not grieved!\textsuperscript{168}

Abhinavagupta does not even gloss the verse independently. He comments on Bhagavadgītā XVI.65.66 at the same time and writes:

> "Now listen to that knowledge which has been identified herein as the 'most esoteric'," hence are said [the lines beginning with] īṣyo'śi and ending with mā śucaḥ. *Manmanā bhāva* [occupy thy mind with me] herein among the scriptures it is offering to brahmaṇ which is primary: this is settled.

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\textsuperscript{161} Wāsudeva Laxmana Śaśtri Pansikar. ed., op. cit., pp. 692-697.

\textsuperscript{162} Śrīśaṅka-granthāvalih Sampuṭa 8, p. 416.

\textsuperscript{163} Mahāvana Śaśtri, ed., op. cit., p. 278.


\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., pp. 215-217.

\textsuperscript{166} Śrīśaṅka-granthāvalih Sampuṭa 8, pp. 455-467.

\textsuperscript{167} V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., op. cit., p. 187.

\textsuperscript{168} Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 90.
It is said that the scripture is meaningful in the case of one who causes the offering to be made to brahmani: and (the Lord) says sarvadharmaṁ parityujña. [Having given up all dharma]. In the matter of this adventitious killing of relations, etc., in the battle: I am the doer of all that. Give up any sense of your own dharma: and banishing the thought from the mind that as the killing of ācāryas etc. is prohibited, adharma shall fall to your share, go to refuge in me who is One, the Doer of all, the supreme lord, and Independent, because I am the foundation of the inner nature of all. Thus is it that I, allknowing, shall release thee from all sins. Do not grieve. Do not be confused about your duty.\textsuperscript{169}

It is extraordinary that even though the verse is clearly emotive, Abhinavagupta hardly comments on the verse from that point of view, but seems to take a rather jnāna-oriented view of the verse. This may not be surprising on the face of it as Abhinavagupta has stated in his gloss on Bhagavadgitā I.1\textsuperscript{170} that he rejects the jnānakarmasamuccaya interpretation of the Gitā and upholds jnāna alone; but jnāna for him is not the Advaitic jnāna of Śaṅkara but monotheistic knowledge of Śiva and love evoked by and directed towards the unified vision of God. Hence Abhinavagupta’s treatment of this verse is rather surprising.

It is rather on his gloss on Bhagavadgitā XVIII.61 that Abhinavagupta produces a comment of considerable literary merit. The verse runs:

\begin{quote}
iśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṁ
ḥṛddeṣe 'ṛjuna tiṣṭhati
bhṛmāyan sarvabhūtānī
yantrārūḍhāṇī māyayā
\end{quote}

Franklin Edgerton translates:\textsuperscript{171}

Of all beings, the Lord
In the heart abides, Arjuna,
Causing all things to turn around
(As if) fixed in a machine, by his magic power.\textsuperscript{172}

Abhinavagupta writes:

This God, the supreme soul, must indeed be accepted as a refuge. In Him.
the Presider, the Doer, the Knower, pervaded by His ātman, crystal-clear, karmas cannot dwell.173 The fickle-minded young of the deer, whose only strength consists in their ability to take to flight, do not, of their own accord, resort to the state of going about their business of rumination skilfully when the lion-cub sits in the cave whose valiant lustre is made manifest by the multitudes of clusters of pearls, which have fallen from the temples of elephants in rut, torn apart by the extremely sharp ends of his claws.174

At one place, however, Abhinavagupta’s comment in the course of the Eighteenth Chapter is truly extraordinary. This comment occurs in his gloss on Bhagavadgitā XVIII.73:

naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir labdhā
tvatprāśādān mayācyuta
sthito ’ṣmi gatasamdehaḥ
kariṣye vacanam tava175

Franklin Edgerton translates these words of Arjuna thus:

Destroyed the confusion; attention (to the truth) is won,
By Thy grace, on my part, O Changeless One;
I stand firm, with doubts dispensed;
I shall do Thy word.176

Abhinavagupta comments:

Arjuna spoke. Herein, in this way, by saying, “My delusion is destroyed etc.,” Arjuna’s readiness to engage in battle has come about but proper knowledge of brahman has not been attained, indicating this (sage Vyāsa) creates room for Anugitā which is yet to come.177

The extraordinary feature of Abhinavagupta’s comment lies in the fact that he regards the Anugitā as an extension, if not a continuation, of the Bhagavadgitā. It is true that Śaṅkara quotes from the Anugitā in his Introduction to the Bhagavadgitā,178 but this is an exception rather than the rule. As R.C. Zaehner asks: ‘Why is it that Krishna’s second discourse, the Anugitā or ‘Supplementary Gitā,’ remains neglected and almost unknown’?179

173 Disregard period after vispadye in the text.
175 V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., op. cit., p. 188.
176 Franklin Edgerton, op. cit., p. 91.
178 Śrīsāṅkara-granṭhāvalaḥ Sampūta R., p. 3.
Abhinavagupta seems to be suggesting that the Anugitā is not to be treated merely as an appendage or an afterthought to the Bhagavadgītā but needs to be integrally related to it. That this view may possess considerable force has been demonstrated by this writer elsewhere.\footnote{Arvind Sharma. “The Role of the Anugitā in the Understanding of the Bhagavadgītā.” \textit{Religious Studies} (14). pp. 265-271.}

It is clear, then, that Abhinavagupta’s commentary of the Bhagavadgītā is not a slavish imitation of some existing work nor merely a restatement of existing interpretations. In his etymological explanations, Abhinavagupta may be a trifle adventurous but he is ingenious; in his grammatical comments he may occasionally tend to be superficial but often comes up with brilliant suggestions; in his hermeneutics he betrays traces of Tantrika influence but this enables him to indicate unforeseen esoteric exegetical possibilities which are always challenging if not always convincing. His commentary is direct, to-the-point and brief, without its directness implying abruptness, its matter-of-factness, dullness and its brevity any lack of profundity.
THE TRANSLATION
INTRODUCTORY VERSES

1. He who, as identical with the various expanded and throbbing centres of existence, becomes perceived as possessed of mutual contradictoriness, but by force of meditating on whose unitary nature one goes to [i.e., the worshipper achieves] unity — that Lord Śambhu, the remover of evil, the abode of the rays of intelligence, is victorious.

NOTE: ekabhayabhāvanā: emended to ekamayabhāvanā.

2. This authoritative work, which measures a hundred thousand (verses) was composed by the sage Dvaipāyana; in it mokṣa is proclaimed as the primary goal but other dharmas are also described for the sake of nourishing it.

3. And verily, mokṣa — (which is) to merge in Lord Śiva, the eternal, free from desire, who has attained to all the divisions and forms, who is omniscient, and all of whose senses, etc., are pure in nature — that mokṣa is proclaimed succinctly.

4. Although mokṣa is here spoken of in connection with other matters, even so the verses of the Bhagavadgītā furnish the attainment thereof.

5. Although those (verses of the Bhagavadgītā) have been much commented on by the uninitiated; even so my undertaking is justifiable because it brings to light their hidden meaning.

6. And this Gitārthasāngraha was composed by Abhinavagupta after reflecting long on the text received through Bhaṭṭendurāja.

CHAPTER I

1. 1-9

The beginning of the first chapter [of the Gītā] is intended to show the predominance and inferiority of the elements of knowledge and ignorance.

NOTE: ABHĪBHĀVYĀBHĪBHĀVAKATVAM must be understood in the light of Gītā: XIV.10. The sattvikah purusah is not a man who consists entirely of sattvam, but the man in whom sattvam predominates (abhībhāva) over rajas and tamas. So here: Abhinavagupta says that the first chapter shows the Pāṇḍavas to be men in whom vidyā predominates over avidyā.
The Kauravas are in the opposite case. *Neither* side has a perfect possession of *vidyā* or a complete lack of it. If that were so, the Gitā would be unnecessary, or useless.

For one who lacks the slightest trace of knowledge cannot be taught, nor can one who has eradicated the whole proliferation of ignorance be taught. It is rather the case that one who has reached either of these extremes cannot be made to budge from that point. On the other hand, where there is talk of instruction for the wise and for the opposite, this instruction is limited [to those between the two extremes]. In regard to a subject that is to be taught to persons of such tendencies (*tathārvacunmukhya*) there must be a doubt. Accordingly, and since instruction acts as a dispeller of doubt, doubt itself may be called a conflict between the party of knowledge and the party of ignorance.

The creation of the gods and the demons was a creation consisting of knowledge and ignorance (respectively). Thus the very beginning of the Gitā is an instruction in the path of *mokṣa*. When it is said that knowledge is primary and works should be abandoned or that works grounded in knowledge are not a hindrance to *mokṣa*, the intention is that knowledge is predominant and works no hindrance, not that knowledge and works should be conjoined on an equal footing. In this manner, we shall explain the purport of the author at the proper places. What use is further discussion here which could serve only as an obstacle to true understanding?

[The poem begins with the words:] *dharmaksetra*, etc. Herein some speak of an alternative interpretation. [They explain the word *kurukṣetra* as] the field of the Kurus: *kurūnām = karuṇānām* — organs of sense; *ksetra* (field) = that which favours, that is, the field of the senses is the favourer of all the properties of transmigration as being that which helps to bring them about. Whereas *dharmaksetra* (the field of *dharma*) is to be understood from the sentence, “This is the highest *dharma*; to see the soul by means of *yoga*,” namely as being the body of the [aspirant for whom the Gitā is] intended, a body which offers salvation by its attainment of *apavarga* through the abandonment of everything opposed to *dharma*. [So that the question asked by king Dhṛtarāṣṭra may be paraphrased thus:] Standing in that [battle] where passion and detachment, anger and forbearance, etc. have come together in mutual conflict, for the senses etc. always aim at the injury of the body, what have my ignorant volitions, comparable to ignorant men, accomplished, and what have (my) wise
(volitions), the Pândavas, comparable to men of knowledge, accomplished? That is to say, which have defeated which? [The word māmaka may be understood as meaning] those who say, “This is mine” and act as if they were mere bodies, that is, men of ignorance. Pându means pure [hence the Kauravas stand for impure volitions and the Pândavas for the pure ones].

I. 10

What is to be gained by much counting? So the real state of affairs is spoken of in the verse [beginning with] aparyāpta. The Pândavas guarded by Bhimasena are aparyāpta, that is, incapable of defeating us, or, are nothing when compared to our army. And the army belonging to us, protected by Bhīṣma, is paryāpta, that is, is capable of defeating these Pândavas, or they can probably win in battle.

NOTE: It is clear that Abhinavagupta followed the reading bhimābhirakṣitam (for bhismābhirakṣitam) in b and bhismābhirakṣitam (for bhimābhirakṣitam) in d. The same reading is found in the Kāśmīra Ms: K3 and in Bhāskara Vedāntin.

I. 11-36

In the passage ayanesu ca sarvesu, the word ayana means passages or lanes. These preceptors, etc., if they are judged under the sway of anger as objects to be killed will certainly lead (the slayer) into sin. Moreover, if one kills because the war is being waged for the sake of worldly enjoyments and happiness, one will certainly be committing sin. This is the pürvapakṣa (the preliminary and incorrect view).

I. 35

If it be urged then that he who does (such) acts strictly in accordance with duty is (acting with) good judgement, an answer will be given in the words dhārtrarāṣṭrān, etc. In the killing of armed men who attack one, sin alone is the killer. So the following meaning [is offered]. These our enemies are killed (i.e., will be killed) on account of sin. But having killed those who are in the grip of sin, the sin will infect us as well. Herein the sin referred to is the corruption that is seen in family traditions on account of greed.

1 Kāyanti = kāyam + kvip (upamānād ācāre) vide Pānini 3.1.11 vārttika.
I. 36

Therefore, it (sin, greed) causes one to neglect the traditions (dharmas) of the family, etc. (as explained by the verse) beginning with: svajanam hi katham hatvā.

I. 43-44

In order to state briefly what a heinous sin killing is in regard to its specific result and considering those specific persons who are to be killed, Arjuna speaks in the first person to indicate the extremity of his agony, in the verse aho hata, etc. The “We” (vayam) here means all the various persons, as Kauravas and Pândavas.

I. 45-46

Would it be proper for me, who among all these undiscriminating people have discrimination, to turn away from battle? Indeed, it would be proper (concludes Arjuna); so he says yadi maṁ, etc.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

If a sage, rendered powerless by the conflicting blows of knowledge and ignorance, turns from both sides by reason, he will become a man of no discrimination.

Here ends the first chapter of the Gitārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva Śācārya, Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER II

II. 2

To begin with, the Lord instructs Arjuna by appealing to worldly considerations; in due course will he impart spiritual knowledge. Therefore he says: “It is not proper for a nobleman, etc.”

II. 3

By rebuking him (with such epithets) as impotent, etc. the Lord shows that Arjuna’s self-righteous pride in (doing what is really) unrighteous is false.

II. 4-5

By (saying) ‘how can I fight Bhīṣma and Drona’ and by (saying) ‘I will enjoy (bloody) pleasures, etc.’ (Arjuna) indicates that this (battle) is to be avoided both by consideration of the deed itself and by consideration of the specific consequence.
II. 6

"I do not know": by this (verse) he speaks with regard to the deed itself. For action does not proceed without consideration. Nor does one engage in battle aiming at defeat. And even victory here would be disaster; therefore he says, it is better to go about begging than to kill my elders.

II. 7

It is impossible to decide whether to desire victory or defeat, for even in the case of victory my kinsmen will be destroyed, as is indicated by (the words) ‘between both armies, etc.’ (II. 10). Thus assailed by doubt on every side he has desisted from battle; for this reason he says, "instruct me who have come to you."

II. 11. K

(The next verse glossed by Abhinavagupta is not present in the Critical Edition, but is found in the Kāśmirī version of the Bhagavadgītā. It runs as follows;

\begin{verbatim}
tvam mānusyaṃopahatāntarātmā
vīśādamohābhībhavād visuñjñāḥ
kṛpāgrhitah samavekṣyā bandhūn
abhītrapannān mukham antakasya.
\end{verbatim}

Your heart is smitten with humanity and you are faint, being overcome by distress and confusion. You are seized by compassion as you look at your kinsmen entering the mouth of death.

Abhinavagupta glosses this verse as follows:]

Therefore (Arjuna) standing between knowledge and ignorance is instructed by the Lord. The Lord said: You are smitten by humanity (mānusya). Mānusya is the quality of being a (mere) human. These (Kauravas) have entered the jaws of death of their own accord; so what is holding you back?

II. 11

(Now the verse beginning with) aśocyaṁ (is explained). You grieve for the body and the soul. But one cannot grieve for the body, as it always perishes, while one should not grieve for the soul. No one.

\footnote{The metre is Upendraśāra.}
whether dead or alive is to be grieved for. To explain: first, the soul is imperishable; second, what subject of grief is there in its transmigration through different bodies? Nor is the fact of transmigration to be grieved for. If it were so, then youth and other (stages of life) would be subjects of grief.

NOTE: II. 11. (b) in the Critical Edition reads prajñāvādānī ca hāsase. Abhinavagupta probably read prājñāvan nāhlihāsase as found in the Kāśmiri version.

Two points are made; one by the verse (beginning with) na hy evāham and the other by the verse (beginning with) dehino 'smin. [First, to take the verse beginning with] na hy evāham: For I never was not; rather, I was. And so were these kings. [Now to take the verse beginning with] dehino 'smin: If (mere) change of form is a subject of grief, then why is the attainment of youth after childhood not grieved for? He who is steadfast (brave) does not grieve. If there is fortitude and, moreover, one does not care for the physical body, then it is easy [to avoid grief]. Therefore, seek to be steadfast.

II. 14

Those who are not steadfast grieve over the states of cold and warmth, pleasure and pain, etc. which arise from the connection of the ātman, through the senses, with the sensible properties (sparśa) of objects (of the material world) indicated by the word mātrā; but those who are steadfast do not. Thus the Text says mātrāsparśāḥ etc. Or the meaning may be that these objects are sensible only with the senses (mātrāḥ), not directly to the supreme soul. The sense of these objects is characterized by āgama (arising) and apāya (destruction). Bear them; put up with them.

II. 15

Is it because all these conditions come and go that they are grieved over? Let it not be so. For, what is this coming (āgama)? If it is an arising (utpatti), then what is that? If it is the coming into being of something that was not, it is false. Because having a non-existent nature means having no nature at all. How could that which has no self, which has no nature, be brought to have a nature? One cannot turn into blue what is not blue. Because it involves the fault of (a thing's) assuming a nature other than its own. As the text-book says: "The own nature of things does not change, like the sun's heat."
II. 16

Then let us say that the arising is gaining existence of that which was. Then what is there to grieve over in this coming (or arising), as it must be eternal inasmuch as there can never have been an absence of that which has gained existence. The same holds for destruction, whether of an existent or a non-existent entity. That which is non-existent is simply non-existent. And how could that which has the nature of an existent ever have the nature of a non-existent? If you say, in the second moment it may have the nature of a non-existent, we say: then it must have been such in the first moment also. It must have had no being at all, for the own being (nature) of a thing cannot be lost. Well (you say), at least there can be the destruction of it by a hammer, etc. If the thing is distinct from its being (its own nature), what has then happened? Well, it is no longer seen. Let it not be seen, its being has not changed any more than when something is covered by a cloth. But if the thing is not distinct (from its being), then, as we have said, it was not [in the first moment also]. The Text states this briefly in the verse nāsato vidyate etc. Now the Text explains this by reference to what happens in the world. There is no real existence of the body which is continuously perishing, because it is constantly being transformed into (different) states. And of the supreme soul, which is eternally existent, there is never destruction, because of its immutable nature [it is incapable of transformation (parināma)]. Thus it is said, 'Imperishable verily is the soul and indestructible.' [The seers of truth see] "the end" of these two, viz. the existent and the non-existent, that is, they see the basis, that (principle) upon which both entities rest.

II. 17

Now is that which is seen by the seers of truth eternal or non-eternal? With reference to this question he says avināṣi tu etc. The (particle) tu has been used in the sense of 'and' (ca). And the ātman is imperishable.

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2 Read na jätu in the text of the commentary.
3 Punctuate the text of the Commentary thus: nā nāmu darsī:ḥhāvo na tv anyathāhhūtah.
4 Quotation from Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad IV.5.14.
II. 18

[Now the verse beginning with] antavanta: Objects that undergo tangible destruction at the time when they cease to be perceptible\(^5\) are also undergoing destruction, that is, are entering upon new states, every moment, since that (tangible destruction) would be otherwise inexplicable. As has been said: "On seeing something old in the end, one infers the loss of newness at every moment." And as the sage says: "There is a transformation of the particles of separate objects at every moment in all states, but it is not perceived on account of its minuteness." By "specific objects" is meant separate capabilities of useful activity.

II. 19

Physical bodies are mortal and perishable. The ātman is eternal for it is not an object of knowledge (but the subject). Transformation belongs to the objects of knowledge, to inert matter, not to the spirit which is pure consciousness. This is so because it cannot possess other than its own nature. Thus the physical bodies are forever perishable and not to be grieved over. The ātman is forever imperishable and therefore should not be grieved over. It is because of this that the sage Vyāsa has exhibited a single Krtya suffix\(^6\) in two different senses in the passage asocyān anvāsocas tvam. Now the verse ya'enam etc. He who takes the soul as the slayer and the body as slain is ignorant. Therefore he is bound.

\textit{NOTE:} One should probably read \textit{tena na socanārhaḥ} tāntre \textit{yam ekah krtyapratyayyāvah dvayor} etc. Abhinavagupta interprets the Krtya suffix \textit{nayat} in \textit{asocyān} (II. 11) in the sense of \textit{sakya} (Pāṇini 3.3.172) as applied to the body and in the sense of \textit{arha} (Pāṇini 3.3.169) as applied to the soul. We cannot grieve for the body, we should not grieve for the soul.

II. 20

"It is never born nor dies." He explains this by the words \textit{nāyam bhūtvā}. It is not correct that the ātman after having not been, is: rather after having been, it is. Therefore it is not born. Nor does it die, since, having been, it will not fail to be; rather, it will be.

II. 21

Now the verse beginning \textit{vedāvināśīnā}: He who, from being

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\(^5\) Or visible to the eye.

\(^6\) Read \textit{krtyapratyayavor} instead of \textit{krtyayupratyayunr} in the text of the commentary.
enlightened, knows the ātman does not kill nor is killed, is not destroyed. Thus the ātman is concealed within the body.

II. 23

Now the verse beginning nainam: In no way can weapons, etc. be the cause of its destruction. For the ātman, whose nature is consciousness alone, which belongs to nothing else, which is secure and independent, cannot be destroyed by any process, whether by its assumption of a different nature, by the destruction of what it belongs to, by the separation of its parts, or by the use of something which would counteract it. The fact that due to the necessity of transmigrating to another body, the soul, although eternal is constantly going from its old body to another one, does not imply that it is bound. Because the body is not stable for even a moment. Knowing it to be thus, you should not grieve for the ātman.

II. 26

Now the verse beginning athavainam: Now if you regard this body as being continuously born because of the unbroken continuity (of bodies), even then there is nothing to grieve over. Or (if you regard the body) as continuously perishing because of constantly altering process, even then there is nothing to grieve over. In the same way, whether you consider the ātman as continuously being born or as continuously dying on account of union or separation with these bodies, your sorrowing over the persons involved is altogether misplaced.

II. 27

Otherwise eternality and perishability make no sense because ‘what is born must die.’ After birth there is death and after death there is birth: the continuum of birth and death is like a wheel. To what extent, then, may one grieve?

II. 28

Moreover (consider the verse) avyaktādīni. The souls may be perishable or imperishable but to him who grieves the Text says that the soul is unmanifest in the beginning and at the end and is manifest

\[\text{It is suggested that the text of the commentary be read as: } \text{na ca dehāntaragana-}
\text{manasvāvasvākavat pārvadēhān nīyo }\text{pi etc.}\]
in the interval ... but on the contrary in the modification which does have a lamentable nature. Furthermore some basic cause must be admitted and that cause [viz. prakṛti], being of a nature which varies according to its successive stages, and exhibiting within itself the variety of endless creation, manifestation and destruction of each and every thing, is eternally possessed of this nature. So who can grieve over this?

II. 29

Being such, the ātman "is rarely seen by anyone." [It may be asked: if the ātman, being such, is indestructible, why is it not perceived as such by everyone? Because it is a marvel, seen only by a few. Even having heard of it no one "knows," that is, understands the soul.

II. 30

Now the verse dehi nityam: Thus the soul is eternally indestructible.

II. 31

Now the verse beginning svadharmān api: As one must not avoid one's own duty, one should not tremble at the thought of fighting.

II. 32

Now the verse beginning yadṛčchayā: Other ksatriyas filled with desire, will not abandon such a battle because it leads to heaven; how much less can it be abandoned by one (like you) who has been spiritually instructed? This is what is meant.

II. 33

[The charge] that you are withdrawing because of fear will strike you a worse blow than a hundred weapons. This is stated in (the verse beginning with) atha ced iti.

II. 33-37

Besides [there is the consideration contained in the verse beginning with], akirtim. The five ślokas beginning with the verse atith cet and ending with the verse that ends in kṛtaniscayāḥ, etc. are in the form

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8 Something seems to have dropped out of the text of the commentary.
of a concession. If you stand by wordly norms of behaviour, then too you must act (i.e., fight).

II. 38

Now the verse beginning *sukhaduhkha*: If you perform actions in accordance with your duty, you will incur no sin.

II. 39

Now the verse beginning with *eva te*: This definitive opinion in the Sāṅkhya, that is, in correct knowledge, has been given to you. And listen now to the same opinion, as it is given in the Yoga for the skilful accomplishment of action (*karma*). By this opinion you will escape the bondage of *Karma*. *Karma* does not bind by itself, being inert. Hence it is the soul which binds itself with actions as transformed with *vāsanās*.

*NOTE:* Vāsanās: The *vāsanās* are the traces left on the personality by a man’s acts, the seeds of retribution, the latent predispositions.

II. 40

There is no destruction by transgression, or offence, or heedlessness in this doctrine, because it has no heedlessness. Just as a burning pan of oil cools down with (the application of) a small amount of sandalpaste, ever so the terror of *sāṁsāra* is destroyed even by a small bit of Yogic doctrine.

II. 41

Nor is this doctrine brought in as something new or unprecedented. Rather it is (as explained by the verse) definitive, “*vyavasāyātmiśa.*” Definitive means it is a single doctrine for all things, [but] it becomes manifold because of the different issues to be resolved.

II. 42-43

Thus, in the verses beginning *yām imām* and *kāmātmānāh* —

II. 44

—and *bhogaivārye‘ti*. Those who seek sensual enjoyments use a speech that takes the body as the self, flowery, and permeated with desire for heaven. So those unwise people desire *karma* as the fruit of this life.9 Losing their minds over the Vedic speech that they have

* The sense would be improved by reading *ata eva jannanah karmānāvā phalam ičchanti*: “So they seek the fruit of this life by action (ritual) only.”
thought up, even though they may be given the definitive doctrine, they are unfit for samādhi. The reason: their mind being set on the fruit of action—this is the intended meaning of the three verses [II.42.43.44].

II. 45

And therefore [the verse beginning with] traigunya etc.

Because the Vedas are composed of the three guṇas [they are called viśavyāh], that is, they bind (sinvanti) to a great degree (viśesena), and as they bind, they may be called bonds.

NOTE: Viṣaya: read viśesena sinvanti badmanti bandhakāh, compare Kiṣirasvāmin on Amarakosa 1.4.7 (giving the etymology of viśavyāh). Abhinavagupta is here giving an explanation of the words traigunavishayā vedāḥ in the text.

Because Vedic rituals being performed with a mind deluded by (considerations of) pleasure and pain serve to bind, therefore collectively the guṇas, so far as they are objects of desire, should be given up. But if this were meant to be condemnatory of the Vedas, the war, which is the subject (of the whole poem) could not be justified because of the absence of anything other than the Vedas for determining one’s duty [so the statement is really not anti-Vedic]. In the case of those whose desires for the fruits (of action) have melted away, the Vedas are not bonds, because the Vedas are for them supremely useful for achieving correct knowledge.

II. 46

Hence is said the verse (beginning with) yāvān artha —

II. 47

He whose primary concern is only with duty and knowledge, has need of only a limited amount of Vedic speech (recitation). Accordingly it is said “be concerned with action alone,” not with the fruit of action. But surely10 fruits follow inescapably upon actions being performed. Not so. If in performing actions you are pervaded by the impurity of the desire for the fruit of action, then there exists a cause for the fruit of action to arise. And that attachment to non-action that arises from one’s thinking “that fruit which is not sought (by

10 In place of namu karmaphalesu na tu karmani ..., read na tu karmaphalesu, namu karmani ....
action), namely knowledge, does not come to one who does not desire it," that attachment holds one in a vice-like grip and has the nature of a false understanding; accordingly, it must be shaken off.11

II. 48

Now the verse beginning with yogasthah: Perform actions taking your stand in Yoga. Equanimity is Yoga.

II. 48.K

This verse occurs only in the Kāsmīrī recension and runs as follows:

\[ \text{yasya sarve } \text{samārambhā nirāsīr-bandhanās tv iha} \]
\[ \text{tyāge yasya hūtan sarvān sa tyāgī sa ca buddhmān}^{12} \]
He, all of whose undertakings in this world are free from the bondage of expectation, who has sacrificed everything in (the fire of) renunciation, he is the true renouncer and is (really) wise.

Abhinavagupta glosses this verse thus:

Now the verse beginning with \text{yasya sarve}: He all of whose transactions are without\(^{13}\) the bondage of expectation, for desire is a bond.

II. 49

Now the verse beginning dūreṇa hi: Verily through huddhiyoga (discipline of judgement) the inferior karma beset with evil results is removed.\(^{14}\) Therefore seek refuge in such judgement; by him who gains such judgement —

II. 50

[is achieved what is described in the verses beginning with] \text{ubhe sukṛte}. By the word ‘both’ the contradiction between the two is indicated. "Therefore train yourself for yoga": So that both good and evil deeds\(^{15}\) are destroyed—acting in such a manner is the supreme skill — this is the idea.

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11 One must read \text{iti tyājya} eva to agree with the Gitā verse.
13 To agree with the verse one must read \text{bandhanena na yuktāḥ}.
14 This is an extraordinary interpretation of the Gitā text.
15 One must omit \text{na}, which seems to be a case of ditography caused by the following \text{na} of \text{nāyutah}. 
II. 51

Now the verse beginning with *karmajam*: Those who follow the doctrine of Yoga, having given up the fruit of actions, give up the bond of transmigration and attain to Brahma-being.

II. 52-53

Now the verse beginning with *yadā te*: This realization (*abhijñāna*) will become obvious at the time of the attainment of Yogic understanding. There is (then) lack of interest in scriptures of both kinds — those which one wants to hear and those which one has (already) heard. This is as much as to say that your wrongly foreseeing the destruction of your family, etc. [as a result of your waging war, cf. *Gitā* I.39] is a great deception, due to the memory of books which favor an ego that has fallen into the intoxication of ignorance. Such false views will go away when the overestimation of books of teaching disappears.

II. 54

Now the verse beginning with *sthiraprajña* [see NOTE (1) below]: Since the text says with reference to the *yogin* in meditation “when his *buddhi* comes to a halt” (II. 53), it has shown that the word *sthiraprajña* is denotative of that [viz. of the *yogin* in meditation]. But what sort of expression is this [see NOTE (2) below], what is the original cause by which the object is expressed in these words? Thus, the first question here is the question: is the word *sthiraprajña* denotative by force of *rūdhi* [the conventional application of words regardless of their etymological meaning], or is it denotative in accordance with its etymological meaning [see NOTE (3) below]? This is the first question.

Although a doubt does not really arise here concerning the conventional usage [see NOTE (4) below], the author still asks the question in order to make clear the etymological sense, which when obtained may serve to define the nature [of the person referred to]. *Sthiradhiḥ*: The word *sthiradhiḥ* might have as its designation a) the [sum of its] words, or b) the thing [that the words refer to]. That is to say, does a) refer to the way such a person operates, or b) does it refer simply to [a person, namely] an ascetic [see NOTE (5) below]? This is the second question.

And how does this *yogin* of firm mind sit, that is, how does he practise [his *yoga*]: just what is his firmness? This is the third question.
And as he practises [his yoga], what does he attain? This is the fourth.

*NOTE (1):* Throughout the commentary one should read *sthiraprajña* and *sthiradhih*, these being the Kashmir readings. The printed text often substitutes the vulgate reading *stihita*.

*NOTE (2):* One should punctuate the line *tasya kā hāṣā, kim pravṛttininim-itiam* etc.

*NOTE (3):* The question can best be explained by reference to an easy example. If we say *rājā asmin deśe anvesṭavyah* "a rājā should be sought for this country," we may mean either of two things depending on whether we take the word *rājā* conventionally (*rūdhyā*) or etymologically (*anvartham*).

In the first case all we are saying is that a king is needed. Here the *pravṛttininimitta* (the occasion, the object source, of our expression 'rājā') is any ruler of men. In the second case we mean "one who pleases his subjects (*raṇjayati praṇā iti rājā*) is to be sought for this country." Here the *pravṛttininimitta* is far more restricted.

Abhinava's interpretation of *kā bhāṣā* differs sharply from Śaṅkara's although both were led to their comments by the same difficulty: the fear of a tautology between *kā bhāṣā* and *kīṁ prabhāṣeṣa*. Rāmānuja shows some similarity to Abhinava, indeed a close similarity if we follow Vedānta Deśika's commentary on Rāmānuja.

*NOTE (4):* Since the Text is evidence for the *rūdhi* usage by its having already referred to the yogin in meditation.

*NOTE (5):* i.e. does *sthiradhih* mean specifically 'him who acts always with a firm mind,' or does it mean simply 'an ascetic'? This again is like the question regarding the meaning of *rājā*; see note (3). [D.H.H.I.]

II. 55

The Blessed One proceeds to answer the four questions in succession.

"The glorious one answered, *prajahāti* etc." [Sthiraprajña]: he whose wisdom is *sthira*, that is *drdhā*,16 firm. There is conventional usage here, since the term is regularly used conventionally of the ātman. But if we take the word *sthiraprajña* in its etymological sense, it will also be appropriate because the yogin has withdrawn or ceased from the commotion caused by sense objects. Thus the first question is answered. [D.H.H.I.]

II. 56

Now the verse beginning with *duhkheṣu*: He whose disposition is free from attachment and aversion in the midst of pleasure and pain, that sage alone is a *sthiraprajña*, none else.

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16 I suppose one should read *sthirā drdhā praṇā yasya*. [D.H.H.I.]
II. 57

This too is said [in the verse beginning with] yah sarvatra. No joy or grief is felt by him when he encounters favourable or unfavourable experiences.

II. 58

Now the verse beginning: yadā samhurate. He is not fixed in Yoga all the time: just as a cook [is not always cooking]. He is a sthira-prajña whenever indeed he withdraws the senses into himself, just as a tortoise retracts its limbs, from the objects of sense, having shut out these objects of sense. Or, (we may interpret as follows): Beginning with the objects of sense he (goes on and) dissolves the senses themselves into the self; that is, he reduces the conjoined (āsannam) senses and sense objects to just the self.

II. 64

Now the verse beginning with krodhāt: The renunciation of the objects of the senses by the ordinary ascetic culminates in the very grasping of those objects, for he keeps thinking of them as he gives them up. At the very time of meditation, his attachments, etc. arise. Therefore it is the renunciation of the objects of desire in the manner of the sthiraprajña which is successful.

II. 68

Now the verse beginning tasmād yasya: He who has his mind in control, even while he is experiencing the objects of sense is not overcome by the waves of anger [desire and folly]. Accordingly he alone is the sthiraprajña yogin. This is the sense.

NOTE: Clearly the negative has dropped out from the text. read: na krodhādikullolair.

II. 69

And the Yogin, even while engaged in all kinds of worldly activities is beyond worldly life: explaining this, the Lord briefly indicates (the Yogin’s) nature [in the verse beginning] yā niśā. The deluding māyā, which is the (dark) night for all creatures, in that the sage stays awake (thinking): how can it be got rid of. And the condition in which the world is awake and performs various activities, that is night for the sage because he is not awake to worldly concerns. This
TRANSLATION

is as much to say [the following]. Mâyâ has two illusion-making faculties, the world of forms (nāmarūpam) and the appearance of a modicum of pleasure (sukhatantutâhâsatvam). In the former the world fails to take account of its true (illusory) nature and so is intellectually caught in the second.

NOTE: See Locana on Ānandavardhana 3.1 who quotes Gītā verse II.69:
tasmād ādhibhūtavārthah etad vākyam sānyaminlo lokottaratālaksanena nimittena tattvadēṣyāvadhānam mithyādyêṣyau ca parānāmukham ca divanati . . . .
sarveṣām bhūtānām yā nīśā viyāmohajananī tattvadeṣīṁ tasyāṁ sāmyām jāgartya katham prâpyeti iti . . . . yadi vā sarvabhūtanāmsāyāṁ mohināṁ jāgartya katham avam heya iti.

The Yogin, on the contrary, takes a look at its delusive faculty only to uproot it and as not touched by its modicum of pleasure. Seeing mâyâ (for what it is), of perfect knowledge, disregarding petty pleasure on account of having destroyed false knowledge, — it (mâyâ) is night for him because he really sees. This is a wonder (i.e., a paradox). Or, one may put it that the Yogin stays awake in knowledge wherein all are confused and does not stay awake in ignorance in which the ordinary person is awake, this too is a paradox.

II. 70

Hence the verse āpūryamānam etc. The Yogin does not run outside himself to satisfy his desires; rather the desires although entering him by the invariable association with the senses do not affect(?) him, just as the streams of the rivers do not affect(?) the ocean. Thus the third question is answered.

NOTE: The text seems to be corrupt. One wants something like visayā' anupraviṣánto na kṣobhavatāṁ yānti.

II. 71-72

[Now the verse beginning with] vihāya and esā: That Yogin, on account of having abandoned all desires, attains to the peace of mokṣa.

Such is the reality of Brahman; on having stayed or found a place in which even for a moment one attains to the supreme Brahman on the dissolution of the body. Thus all four questions are answered.

NOTE: iti śivam: Abhinava uses this phrase to indicate the end of a chapter, literally "all that precedes has been holy."
On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

Strange, indeed, is the way the mind works with Yoga. It ventures upon the objects of the senses (and resorts to them) indeed; (but) though resorting to them it may give them up.\(^{17}\)

Here ends the second chapter of the Gitārthasaṅgraha, composed by the great Śaiva ācārya, Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER III

III. 1.2

śrīḥ. Now the verses beginning with jyāyasi and vyāmisrena. Action has been spoken of and knowledge as well. These two are not equally important; rather, knowledge is primary. But if actions are to be destroyed by the force of knowledge on the principle laid down in buddhiyukto jahātiha (II.50), then what is the point in performing actions in the first place. This is the purport of the question.

III. 3

The Lord gives the reply [in the verse beginning] loke 'smin. In the world these two courses are well-known: knowledge, which the Sāṅkhyas consider primary, and action, which the Yogins (consider primary). But I have declared them to be one and the same principle, because self-realization (samvittva) consists of both knowledge and action.

III. 5

Action, which is included in knowledge, cannot be avoided because one is not free (to do otherwise). One must do things because the body, speech and mind consist of movement (parispanda).

III. 6

Now the verse beginning karmendriyāṇi. If one does not act with the organs of action then one surely acts with the mind; and this (giving up the organs of action), is a foolish course because mental actions are utterly unavoidable.

\(^{17}\) Read viṣayān āśrayaṁ iṁn pariṣyajet.
Now the verse beginning *yas tu*. There is no loss of knowledge (*jñāna*) in the mental activity involved in performing actions as the actions are performed mechanically.¹

Therefore [the verse beginning with] *niyatam kuru*. Constantly perform the actions enjoined by the scriptures, for the mere business of staying alive depends on action.

Wherefore [the verse beginning with] *yajñārthāt*. Actions bind when they are other than obligatory actions performed for the sake of *yajña* (sacrifice). Obligatory actions, being free from attachment to the fruit, yield no fruit when they are performed.²

Now the verse beginning *saha*. The Lord of the creatures, that is, the highest soul (*paramātmā*) created creatures along with *karmas* (actions). And he said: from the action of creatures (will proceed) their continuous generation. And these (actions) will confer the desired ends of *samsāra* (material life) or *mokṣa* (salvation). Through attachment (to them) they will confer *samsāra* and through freedom from attachment (to them) they will confer *mokṣa*. So those very persons whose chief goal is *mokṣa* should deal with (not reject) the objects of the senses. That is what is said here.

[The word *deva* is derived from the root *div* 'to play, take pleasure.' Thus] *devāḥ* here means the lords of the senses, who are characterized by taking pleasure, who function through the senses, and who are celebrated in esoteric texts. You should gratify these lords by your action. The meaning is that you should enjoy the objects of sense insofar as may be possible. Then these [lords], being satisfied, will grant you *apavargas* (preliminary states of release) which are appropriate to the very nature of the Self, for they are capable of this through their residing in your Self. After there has been a mutual

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¹ Literally, as by a puppet.
² Read *avasyakartavyam muktaphalasangatāyā kriyamānam*. 
service of this sort throughout a series of uninterrupted states of Activity (vyuṭṭhāna) and Trance (sanādhi), a service characterized by your gratifying the senselords and their becoming absorbed in your Self, you will soon reach the highest good, that is, brahma (final release), which is characterized by the disappearance of all duality.

III. 12

This fact is to be pursued not only to preliminary release but all the way to final spiritual success (sidhi). And so the text says istān etc. The sense (-lords), being gratified by one's sacrifice, will take up their abode in whatever one meditates on, etc. So when this operation occurs, if one should remember or imagine or meditate on an object, that object is given to one [in positive form?] by the sense (-lords). If they are not given it back for their enjoyment, then an act of theft, of stealing, has occurred, for one has acted deceitfully. The Lord has already said earlier that "it is called hypocrisy." Therefore this is what the sentence means: one who desires an easy means either to final or to preliminary release, should enjoy pleasures as they fall to his share but only for the sake of assuaging the longing of the senses.

III. 13

Now the verse beginning yajñaśītā. [yajñaśītāśīnāḥ 'partakers of what is left after a yajña] are those who partake of enjoyments out of regard for the scriptural injunctions which state them to be obligatory and who do it only as a mediate activity and not as part of a goal in itself eat this left-over of the meal which gratifies the group of deities who are the senses, a left-over that is characterized by the inner power and delight of that which is within themselves, are assimilated [to the same lords] and desire the enjoyment of the senses (only) as a means to that end. Such persons are freed from all karmic taints, good as well as bad.

[Now to explain] "those who [cook] only for their own sake." Those who, on account of ignorance, consider gross sensual enjoyment as superior and act with the thought that they are acting for their sake obtain the taint of both good and bad (deeds).

III. 14-15

Now the verses beginning annūd and karma. From annum (lit. food), in its form as the individual experientum, known also by such synonyms
as mâyâ, avidyâ (nescience), prakṛti (nature), kāla (time), etc., come the various creatures [of this world]. And annam comes from parjanya (lit., the cloud) which has the form of the uninterrupted experiencing of the Soul, because the experiendum is dependent for its origination on the experiencer. And the parjanya, which is the experiencer comes from the yajña (sacrifice) [which signifies the process of enjoyment] because the fact of being an enjoyer is dependent on the process of enjoyment, and the process of enjoyment comes from karma (action) which is the independent power called kriyāsakti (the power of action of Śiva, one of the five Saktis through which the universe appears as Śiva’s self-manifestation).

And that independent power, although it never ceases to be, comes from brahma, which is the active (samucchalat) being (bhūva) of God (paramesvara) replete with unlimited independent powers. [It comes from brahma] because it is in touch [with brahma]. And that brahma, which is active and of unhindered power, comes from aksara (the Imperishable) which is pure self-consciousness in which all other waves of the divine nature come to rest. The yajña (sacrifice) thus placed causes a wheel of six spokes to bear [its burden] and this wheel brings about release (apavarga) by the presence of three of its spokes and worldly activity (vyavahāra) by the guidance of the three [other] spokes. Thus Brahma, blessed with wave-like manifestations of knowledge and ignorance is firmly set in that very yajña (sacrifice).

But others (explain the verse differently, thus). Food by its successive transformation into (menstrual) blood, semen etc. is the cause of creatures. And food comes from clouds through rain. And the cloud comes from sacrifice because “the offering cast properly into the fire” goes to the sun, [whereby clouds are caused] and then rain. And sacrifice is the result of action and action is preceded by knowledge and knowledge is from the Imperishable.

Yet others (explain the verse differently, thus). The creatures are the senses (who flourish) by feeding on the five fields of the senses. These senses as well as the sense-fields are manifestations of the ātman. Thus the ātman itself is nourished through the enjoyment of the objects of the senses. Therefore, the omnipresent Brahman is firmly fixed in action because it is made up of action.

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3 There should be no danda between bhoktā and yajñād.
4 Read vāhāvati for vāhāvyan.
5 Some such phrase seems to have dropped out from the text.
III. 16

Now the verse beginning evam. He who does not accept the foregoing is sinful; for this reason, that he takes delight in the senses, not in the ātman.

III. 17

Now the verse beginning yus tv ātma. For one who rejoices in the ātman, action and non-action are the same, for he acts only at the instances of the senses (and not out of his desires). Therefore he neither restrains himself nor permits himself liberties toward created things with any personal consideration in mind.

III. 19

Furthermore such men as Janaka are examples of those who reached spiritual success by acting [not out of personal consideration but] simply because it was their duty so to act.

III. 20-22

Kindness towards others is a motive for engaging in action even for one who has obtained whatever is to be obtained and is fully contented. Herein the Lord cites his own example.

III. 23

Therefore one should do what one ought to do unattached. Furthermore, if one who knows what is to be known were to give up action, his people would suffer distraction (durbdha), that is, a loss of spiritual growth (aprarudhi), because their faith would be shaken by (the example) of a famous figure (not engaging in action).

III. 24

Because they are unable to let go their karmic propensities (on the one hand) nor are they able to enter the stream of knowledge (on the other): hence they become lax.

III. 25

Therefore those hallowed with proper knowledge will not create doubts in the minds of these, out of the compassionate consideration

* The commentary assigned by the text to III.22 belongs to III.23. There should be no sentence break between tvajet and talbokānām.
that mental doubting (and) slackening on the part of the people will be utterly disastrous.

III. 26

This he says [in the verse beginning with] na buddhi. Knowing thus himself, let him perform actions. And let him not destroy the understanding of the people.

III. 27

He has spoken concerning the ignorant, so he points out the nature of their ignorance [in the verse beginning with] prakrti. Actions are really performed by the gunas such as sattva etc., connected as they are with prakrti. But the fool, wrongly deciding that he himself is the doer, binds himself.

III. 28

Now the verse beginning tattvavit. He who knows the true nature of the gunas and of karma emancipates himself by realizing: “it is prakrti which acts; so what results can follow for me?”

III. 29

Having spoken of those attached to action, he now indicates the nature of attachment to action (in the verse beginning with) prakrti. It is because of the power of the gunas such as sattva, etc., that ignorant persons become attached to the actions performed by the gunas such as sattva, etc., which are connected with prakrti.

III. 30

Therefore, being self-possessed one should engage in action: this has been said; but how? This the Lord clarifies in [the verse beginning with] mayi. Having cast away all actions on Me (i.e., God) with the thought, “I am not the doer,” having realized that the independent supreme Lord alone is the doer of all and not I in any way, and wishing to act favourably to the world, do your worldly duty, which is to fight.

III. 31-32

Now the verses beginning ye me and ye tv etat. Whatever one does resorting to this view, it does not bind him. But those who have no
faith in this knowledge are destroyed; for they are constantly affected by the fear of birth and death, etc.

III. 33

Now the verse beginning sadrśam. He also who is a man of knowledge will be in no way averse to such worldly activities as eating etc. Rather, he acts properly in accordance with the sattva (that predominates in him) and he knows that “after this the elements such as earth, etc., will dissolve in prakṛti, but the ātman, which is a non-actor, is eternally free.” So who is imprisoned in birth, etc.? [Not the man of knowledge.]

III. 34

Then how is it that one speaks of its bondage—[this is explained in the verses beginning with] indriyasya, śreyān and svadharma. The worldly man feels attachment or aversion toward every object of enjoyment, because out of his folly he believes that he himself is the agent of his acts. This is the point of special difference between a worldly man and a man of knowledge, although both carry out in common the acts of eating, etc. This is the correct view.

III. 35

For one who is altogether free from attachment and acts in accordance with his own nature (or duty, svadharma), there is no bondage involving (karmic) merit or demerit. One’s own nature never disappears from the heart; it is naturally implanted and no creature is born without it; therefore it cannot be given up.

III. 36

Now the verse beginning atha kena. How is it that a person, even when knowing evil to be evil, proceeds to commit it; that is the question. The intention in raising the question is this. If one’s own nature (svadharma) cannot be given up because of its being inseparable from one’s heart, how (does one explain) the unrighteous conduct of these (Kauravas)? What is this svadharma which no creature is without? This is what is meant.

* svadharma really is the first word not of an independent verse, but of line 2 of verse III.35.
Now the answer. Even if the dharma is present in one’s heart, this transgression is caused by the working of a foreign property; it is not a fault due to absence of one’s dharma. With this in mind, the Lord has said [the verse beginning with] kāma ēsa. By the use of these two words (in apposition) their extreme opposition (to each other) is indicated. And these two, kāma (desire) and krodha (anger) are eternally interrelated, as one cannot exist without the other; therefore they are spoken of together. This [kāma] has an appetite for great pleasures and causes one to seek them greedily; while krodha (anger) confers sin because it causes one to commit sin. The wise man should regard it (i.e., krodha) as an enemy.

But it is not easy to give up a thing which is the destroyer of one’s goals, etc., and which has the nature of ignorance;* with this in mind (Arjuna asks:)

EXTRA VERSES

At this point Abhinavagupta glosses five verses which do not appear in the critical or vulgate text of the Gītā but are found in the Kāśmīrī version. These are:

Arjuna uvāca:

bhavaty ēsa kathāṁ kṛṣṇa kathāṁ caiva vīvardhate
kimātmakah kimācāras tan mām ācākṣya precchataḥ.
Śrībhagavān uvāca:
esa sūkṣmah parah satrur dehināṁ indriyāṁ saha
sukhatantra ivāsino mohayan pārthā tiṣṭhāti.
kāmakrodhamayo ghorah stamblah arsavah
ahanikāro ‘ḥhimānātmā dustaraḥ pāpakarmabhīḥ.
harsya asya nivartyaśa śokam sya dadāti ca
bhavyah cāsyā karoty ēsa mohayamis tu mühr mühr.
sa ēsa kalaśah kṣudraś chidrapreksi dhvanīyajā
rajapravṛttto mohātmā manusyānāṁ upadravah.9

* The Text reads jñāna-svrūpam, which makes no sense. I have substituted apjñāna-svrūpam.
9 Read mūnasvānāṁ; see V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., op. cit., p. 128 (89*).
These verses may be translated thus:

Arjuna said:

O Krṣṇa, how does it happen and how does it grow? What is its nature and behaviour, tell me who am asking.

The Lord said:

This is an extremely subtle enemy of the embodied souls along with the senses, O son of Prthā, causing delusion seated as it were in the control of pleasure.

It consists of passion and anger, it is terrible, it is born of pride and excitement, it is egoism, it has self-esteem as its essence and it is hard to cross over by those of sinful deeds.

Removing a man's joy, it gives him sorrow and causes him fear, deluding him again and again.

This mean defilement, O Dhananjaya, is ever looking for an opening by which to enter. It springs from rajas and is a delusion and disaster for mankind.

The English rendering of Abhinavagupta's gloss on these verses follows:

(1) Now the verse beginning bhavaty esa. What is the cause of its arising and for what reason does it grow? What is its true nature? Having arisen and become firmly established what does it do? This is the question.

(2) To this the Lord gave answer. It is subtle, not perceptible to the senses at the time of its arising. And, similarly, when present it seems to control one's happiness. But in reality it consists of sorrow and delusion because of its tāmasa nature. That is why it deludes.

(3) Now the verse beginning with kāma. Haughtiness is the pride of lineage etc., the joy arising from the thought "I am such and such." Therefore it is said egoism, etc. Thus its nature is self-esteem; it grows with pride, and it arises from thoughts of happiness. Here three questions have been answered.

(4) Not glossed independently.

(5) Now the verse beginning sa esa. It looks for openings, thinking, "by means of this opening I will destroy his chances both in this world and the next." As it is said in the mokṣadharmaḥ (viz. MBhār. 12.288.27): 'Whatever a wrathful person sacrifices, or gives in charity,

10 For 'hum ādrśa read 'hum idrśa.'
whatever penance he performs or whatever he pours as oblation: the Lord of Death\textsuperscript{11} deprives him of all. The efforts of a wrathful person are futile." It proceeds from the quality of \textit{rajas} and has the form of \textit{tamas}: this is what is meant. By these three examples\textsuperscript{12} it is shown that anger is of violent attack(?), causes one to do wrong actions, and resides in shameful places.

III. 39

[The commentary here is corrupt. For \textit{ayam iti} one should read \textit{āvrtam iti}. But something has dropped out of the sentence which follows.] It is in the form of desire because it operates in one's wishing (for things). By it [one's knowledge is covered] as if by an insatiable fire, that is, a fire that one cannot satisfy because it feeds on both the visible and invisible.

III. 40

He now speaks of the way to prevent this (beginning with the verse) \textit{indriyāni} etc. At first, it takes its stand in the senses, just as an enemy, seen with the eye, generates one's anger [first] in the area of the [ocular] sense. It then becomes productive in the mind, and then in the \textit{buddhi}, that is, the organ of judgement. Producing delusion in this way it destroys knowledge.

III. 41

[In commentary on this verse Abhinava treats the form \textit{prajahihi} (such as the Kashmir reading) or \textit{prajahihi} (vulgate) in a very strange manner. Most Europeans have taken the form from \textit{pra-han} 'to slay.' But by Pāṇinian grammar it can come only from \textit{pra-hā} 'to leave,' the imperative from \textit{pra-han} being \textit{prajahi}. So most Indians take it from \textit{pra-hā}. But Abhinava segregates the final \textit{hi}, glossing it as \textit{yatah} (because). This would leave him free to take \textit{prajahi} as "kill." But he does not do so. He still glosses the verb as \textit{tyaj} (leave).] [D.H.H.I.]

Therefore one must first restrain the senses. One must not accept anger when it first arises in the senses. Since (\textit{hi} = \textit{yatah}) it destroys

\textsuperscript{11} Read Vaivasvatas.

\textsuperscript{12} It is hard to see what Abhinava means by "these three examples." Is he referring to the last three adjectives of inserted verse number 5, or has something dropped out of his commentary? Nor is it fully clear what he thinks the examples teach.
knowledge and understanding of brahma, that is, (all) godly activity, therefore leave (tyaj) wicked anger. Or one may explain [jñāna-vijñāna-nāsanam] as adverbial, thus “having destroyed, or demolished, it (viz. anger) by one’s jñāna, that is, one’s mind, and by one’s vijnāna, that is, one’s huddhi.” The general meaning is that one should refuse to accept the mental image produced by the senses, or should refuse to judge by it even if it has been formed.

III. 42

The technique for this is given by the two verses (beginning with) indriyāni, etc. Since the senses are different from the object of the senses, which is like an enemy, and the mind different from them, and the buddhi different from even that and since the ātman has an existence separate even from the buddhi, why should anger born of the senses, disturb the mind, the buddhi and the ātman? This one should reflect on. This is what is meant.

III. 43

The meaning of the secret doctrine here is as follows. That which is beyond the buddhi, the supreme Self-assertion,13 ‘I am everything,’ the nondual ātman: that is the acme of non-duality. Therefore because that which is perfect cannot have any division (khandana), anger etc. cannot arise [in it]. Therefore taking hold of the supreme Self-assertion, which has supreme courage and is of the nature of self-realization (samvit), kill anger, which is an enemy and of the nature of ignorance. May this (undertaking) be auspicious.

In respect to this chapter, there is the following summary verse.

He who approaches (his) wealth, his wife and his physical body as if they were other than himself: what can anger etc., the disturbers of the mind, do to him?

Here ends the third chapter of the Gitārthasaṅgraha, composed by the great Śaiva ācārya, Abhinavagupta.

13 The term para 'hankāra seems to have this special sense here and just below (param ahankāram).
CHAPTER IV

IV. 1-2-3

The Lord said [the three verses beginning with] imam vivasvate, evam paramparā and sa evāvain mayā. [These verses are now glossed.] And this knowledge, although received through a regular succession of preceptors is now lost; by this the Lord shows the difficulty of receiving and the importance of this knowledge. Now the line beginning with bhaktō 'si me sakhā ceti: you are my devotee and my supreme friend. Here (the use of the particle) ca (i.e., and) indicates “incidental addition.” The following meaning is intended: just as on going out for alms-gathering it is the alms which are primary and the bringing home of a cow (if one comes by one) is secondary, so also it is devotion towards the preceptor here which is primary and not friendship.

NOTE: Anvācaya and anvācaya-sīṣya are terms used by the grammarians (cf. Kāśikā on 3.1.11. 7.3.119 etc.). Normally the word ca connects two items of equal importance. When, on the other hand, the second item is added as an afterthought, as an incidental or secondary thought, ca is said to denote anvācaya. The stock example is bhiksām aqā gānī cânaya (Kāś. 2.2.29): “make your round for alms and bring back a cow (if you are lucky enough to receive one).” Abhinava’s so interpreting the ca in IV 4 is of interest. It implies that any living devotee has the same access to God’s message as had Arjuna. Devotion is the criterion, not one’s personal identity.

IV. 4

Arjuna, although knowing the true nature of the Lord, asks [the question in the verse beginning with aparam] in order to make it evident to the world.

IV. 5-9

Now the verses beginning bahūni me vyāśitāni, ajo’pi, yadā yadā, paritrānāva and janma-karma: the Lord, although without any contact whatsoever with a physical body on account of possessing the six qualities in perfection,1 being compassionate, brings forth an amīśa (an emanation?) of His ātman (or Himself) because He is the sustainer of the universe. The ātman possesses the six qualities in perfection;

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1 I.e., jñāna, aśvārya, sakti, bala, virya and tejas.
He assumes a body, which is a self-emanation in which he is chiefly concerned to help the world.

*NOTE:* The difficulty is this: God's ātman has no samparka with śarīra. But śarīra is an anśa of God's ātman. The point seems to be that God does not join with a body as a result of karma (as humans do), but emits his body as an instrument for saving the world.

IV. 9

Therefore His birth (i.e., God's embodiment on earth) is divine. Because it comes into being not through karma but through the māyā of the ātman, through yogic wisdom and by the power of His own free will. And His karma is also divine because of its incapacity to incur fruits.2 He who comes to realize this truth and holds the same with respect to his own self (soul), he surely knows the truth about Lord Vāsudeva.

IV. 10

Now the verse beginning *vita*: and, moreover, many knowing (themselves) thus, free from anger etc. because all their desires have been fulfilled on account of being devoted to me, (and) performing obligatory actions which bear no fruit, have attained to my true form.

IV. 11-12

Wherefore [the two verses] beginning *ye yathā mām* and *kānksantah.* Whosoever seeks refuge in Me with whatever understanding (they have of my nature), I oblige them by assuming that very form towards them. Thus those who are devoted to me as well as those who are not devoted to me, all indeed follow my path.

The *jyotiṣṭoma* etc. (i.e., the Vedic rituals), are not a different path; they are my express wish, for the text goes on to say *cāturvar-nyāṁ mayā srṣṭam,* “the world of the four varnas was created by me.” Others say that in the word *anuvanti* (IV.11) the indicative mood has been used here in the sense of the optative, as is seen in the statement: “They perform (the rite called) sodasin” during Atirātra,3 where what is meant is: they should perform (the rite called sodasin). Similarly here for “all follow me,” one should understand “all should follow me.” Only in the world of mortals and nowhere else is perfection

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2 For *phalañāna* read *phalañāna.*
3 *Atirātra* is “an optional part of the jyotiṣṭoma sacrifice.”
characterized by both enjoyment (of worldly pleasures) and (the attainment of) salvation.

IV. 13-15

Now the verses beginning cāturvarṇyam, na mām karmāṇi and evam jñātāvā kṛtam karma: how can karma touch (lit. smear) me, who am like pure air (that nothing can touch)? The simile of air has been given because God is free from desire. He who takes refuge in the Lord with the following kind of understanding is not bound by actions.4 “Everywhere, always, it is God alone, a single mass of bliss; there is nothing beyond Vāsudeva”: he who reflects in this manner, for him there is no karmic bondage. Therefore, purified by this understanding, do you too perform such actions as must be performed.

IV. 16-17

Next it is said: it is not the fact that action alone leads to salvation. Wherefore [the two verses beginning] kīṁ karma and karmāṇo hy api. The distinction between what is action and what is not action is hard to understand. For even in the performance of (proper) action evil action is present as in the killing of the victim in the Agnistoma sacrifice. Moreover, there is good present even in wrong (forbidden) action as in saving people from suffering by killing criminals. Besides, even when one is (physically) doing nothing, both good and evil action is being performed by speech and mind because actions of that sort cannot be avoided except by knowledge. Therefore even the wise do not know what karma is on account of its mysterious nature; whether by this good action our good will come about and whether by not performing these actions our salvation will not be achieved. Therefore that which is about to be spoken of, and which is capable of burning up the fuel of all karma good and bad, must be sought: this is what the Lord means.

IV. 18

To explain that, (the Lord) says [the verse beginning with] karmāṇi: he who sees the absence of action (karma) in his own actions because of the absence of the sense of agency (i.e., that he is the agent), (and who) by having calmed his passions realizes that his non-action, (if) performed by others, is really performed by himself: he alone

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4 Construed from the verse glossed i.e., IV.14(d).
is fully wise amongst all; he acts in full, in every (sense). So how could any fruit (retribution) be given him for any action? Even in the case of the retribution that has now arisen (that is in a ripe state) he cuts off, severs, the karmas (from himself). So he either performs all actions or he performs none: this is the supreme secret. (He is wise) who sees in all of his activity of body and sense the absence of action, the non-involvement of his ātman, so that he feels "my (senses) such as the sense of hearing work upon (the elements) such as the air; my voice etc. upon speech, etc.; what has all this to do with me?". And in his non-action, that is, in action such as worship etc. performed by other conscious agents, he generates (his) action (karma) in their activity of worship, realizing "I am identical with all these agents." on the basis of which the adept (siddha) has said: "worship is the constant, undifferentiated worship acts of (all) worshippers." Such a person alone is wise among ordinary men. He alone may perform any action because he sees that the agent is (only) the body and the senses and sees that his ātman is wholly without action. It was by identifying himself with other agents that the venerable Somānanda stated, "I am not pleased by (my) performance of worship; nor am I distressed by (my) non-performance. Worship is the constant, undifferentiated worship acts of (all) worshippers." Now how can the performance of action by others be regarded as action performed by oneself? One will not grant that the food eaten by someone else has been eaten by oneself. Therefore how can it be said "he who sees action in his non-action (is indeed wise)"? Such an objection is amiss because such matters (as the actions of others) are of concern to the man of knowledge. To him who possesses perfected, unshakable wisdom (vijnāna) other objects of knowledge and other perceivers of these objects are of immediate concern in many ways. Just as the same 'I' who cognizes the jar etc. may cognize a piece of cloth etc., so may one adept of knowledge know all the objects of knowledge cognized by Caitra, Maitra, etc. Therefore has the absence of any distinction between worshippers been stated by the revered sage Vaśiṣṭha. And thus (the clause beginning with) akarmanī is well said indeed. [D.H.H.I.]

Therefore actions, performed after giving up the thought of desires,

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3 The Text is corrupt. For sarve karmāni read sarvakarmāni or sarvasyām.

that is, of desired fruits of actions, burn out having entered the fire of knowledge, whose nature has been described and will (also) be described (later).

IV. 20-21

Now the verses beginning tyaktvā and nirāsīh. Even though engaged in activity, that is, although directly engaged in physical action, that is, in the operation of the senses which are of use to the body, but to which the mind and buddhi feel no attachment.

IV. 22

Now the verse beginning yadrcchā. Even having acted (he) is not bound. [In this clause] the passive form is used in the reflexive sense.7 He binds himself on his own, acquiring the taint of longing for the fruit of action; that is what is meant. The other (interpretation, viz. as true passive) is not so good, as it would assign freedom of agency to the actions themselves, which are insentient (non-agents).

IV. 23

Now the verse beginning gatasaiṣa: in the expression yajñāya, the word yajña has been used in the singular as indicative of a class or type. The characteristics of these sacrifices (yajñas) will be described (subsequently).

IV. 24

"For the sake of sacrifice" (yajñāya), this was said. Now its (i.e., the sacrifice's) general nature is spoken of [in the verse beginning] brahmārpanam. That brahma, viz. the whole universe, of which there is a reinsertion (samarpana) into the brahma from which it came, is offered us an oblation (havis) into the brahma-fire (brahmāgni), viz. the peace of perfect enlightenment, in order to increase the flame of that fire, by brahma (brahmaṁā), viz. by any ritual action. By yogic concentration (samādhi), which is in effect such a ritual action, brahma alone is to be attained, that is, to be understood, nothing else, for nothing else exists.

Or, one may construe the sentence by supplying a relative pronoun to go with the sense of tena (in the second half-verse), thus: That brahma-oblaction, of which the destination is into brahma inasmuch

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7 Cf. Pān. 3.1.87.
as the deities take the place of brahma, being offered into brahma-fire by a sacrificer who is of the nature of brahma, is a samâdhi insofar as it is a means of realizing one's true nature; by this samâdhi which is a brahma-rite no other fruit is obtained than brahma itself: this on the authority of [Gita 4.11] "just as they approach me, [so do I reward them]."

It is one thing for those of restricted nature to receive a reward comparable to the limited nature (kṛta—svabhāva) of their ego-sacrifice. But how can those who are aware of the unlimited, perfected nature of their ego-sacrifice have any desire for such an extremely limited reward? Such is the general sense.

In this way the highest mystery is embedded in this and the following verses and we explain it despite our limited intelligence according to the tradition handed down by our teacher. We are not to be accused of perpetrating something fanciful like a painting on air without regard to the doctrine received through the main line of apostolic succession.

Here some interpreters take the oblation, the fire, the instruments of sacrifice such as ladles, etc., and the sacrificial act to qualify (particularize) the word brahma [i.e., they would take the verse to mean that brahma is nothing more than pouring an oblation into a Vedic fire from a sacrificial laddle]. Their explanation is to be set aside, as they are not trained in the tradition of the mystery.

IV. 25

Now the verses beginning daivameva and śrotrādin. Others, practising self-restraint, observe (parita' upāsate) a sacrifice in their cognition of objects by making use of the daivāni, i.e. the senses, [daiva being derived from div to play, to sport and so meaning] "characterized by playful enjoyment," [i.e. the senses]. Examining [this cognition-sacrifice] down to its roots, they realize their true nature. They are termed yogins for this reason, viz. that they are always possessed of yoga, this suffix [-in being added to yoga] in the sense of constant attachment. Others offer this sacrifice of cognizing objects by a sacrifice of the same sort into the fire of brahma that can never be satiated.

Such is the interpretation of some. But as the sage (Vyāsa) does

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8 nitya-yoga (constant attachment) is given by Patañjali on Pāñ. 5.2.94 as one of the senses of matup (possessive) suffixes.
not contradict himself [as the above interpretation would have him do], we shall explain what he had in mind. Some, possessed of yoga, perform a daivam sacrifice, that is, a sacrifice of external objects, called daiva because it is addressed to the various deities that govern the senses. And since while performing this sacrifice they look to no reward but are guided only by the belief that it should be performed, it is said that they offer this sacrifice into the insatiable fire of brahma. Accordingly, those of the daiva sacrifice also go to brahma. Hence the sage will say [Gitā IV.30] "all these are knowers of the sacrifice." So also the Vedas: "the gods performed sacrifice with sacrifice" [R.V. X.90.16].

[Thus AbhG. treats the subject of the second half-verse as the same as the subject of the first. He does not tell us how he eliminates the adversative sense of apare ... apare.]

IV. 26

Others (offer) the senses in the fires of restraint. Restraint is the manas (mind-will). It has fires, which assume the nature of what is imparted to it, and sparks which turn up desires. Those who offer their senses into these flames are practitioners of tapas (ascetism).

NOTE: The process is envisaged as follows. The senses furnish the mind-will with images (e.g. wealth, beautiful women). The mind-will by assuming (parîbhâvanā) the nature (bhāva) of these objects catches on fire. But if one holds the senses in the mind-will, its sparks will consume these objects.

Others offer sense-objects into the fires of the senses. These fires, if kindled by knowledge [viz. the knowledge that the sense, not the self, is the agent], burn the karmic result. The mystical meaning is that these (yogins) seek sensual objects in order to destroy the inherited instinct (vāsanā) of duality.

IV. 28

And moreover, as has been stated by me (in my book) Laghvi Prakriyā: "Enjoyment is not to be seen as different from you, the enjoyer. That which is the enjoyment is identical with the enjoyer and the enjoyed." As (has been stated) in the Spanda as well: "The enjoyer is always everywhere present as the enjoyed." And they place all activities, of themselves or their minds, whether belonging to the senses, to the manas, or to the vital airs such as come out of the mouth and nose or cause urine to flow downwards etc., for the sake of
controlling them, in the fire of single-pointed concentration called yoga, which blazes with perfect knowledge and which can never be satiated. What is meant is that they grasp the objects of enjoyment whether, actually enjoyed or thought of, with a mind which is single-pointed to the extent of having abandoned every other concern. It has been said in the Śivopanisad: "If the reifying power of the mind (bhāvanā) is checked by abandoning one state and does not go on to another, it will then blossom in the state between." Thus are the sacrifices of Yoga explained.

IV. 29-32

[The text of the following passage seems to be corrupt. If one had a clear notion of the seven-fold process of self-realization through breath-control practised by Abhinava (for a confused account, see Pandey, pp. 646-648), one might try to emend. As I lack that knowledge, I must leave a larger part of the passage under marks of interrogation.]

Thus have the characteristic features of dravyayajnas, tapoyajnas and yogayajnas been described; and now those of the svādhyāyayajnas and jñānayajnas are described in the verses beginning with apāna, apare, yajñaśīśāh and evam bahuvidhā yajñoḥ. They sacrifice [the prāṇa], that is, the rising breath; this consists of sound [read nādam for nāde] beginning with 'om' and ending with the mātrālaya (?source of phonemes?) [into the apāna], that is, the descending breath, which represents(?) the internalized state of self-bliss [svānanda = nijānanda, for which see Pandey, p. 646]. Svādhyāya is the material self. [?It unites with?] the disciple-self for the perception of nayānaya(?).

[But] some [sacrifice] by placing [the apāna] or descending [breath] in [the prāṇa] which is rising and by uniting it with that, abide in the teacher-self [apavargadānātma, literally, salvation-giving self] and in the disciple-self with minds fixed on the knowledge of svādhyāya. This knowledge has four forms: purification, enlightenment, entrance and unification, and it consists in self-bliss (svānanda) and outer bliss (parānanda). Therefore is inbreath spoken of first and the out-breath last. By the first part is suggested the internalization of the sense-enjoyments and by the second the loss, through the succeeding stages of mahāvideha(?) and dhūranā, of memory for grasping the objects of the senses. Therefore are the sacrifices of knowledge (jñānayajñas).
different from the sacrifices involving of the self (svādhyāyayajñas).
[The practitioners of jñānayajnā] having, by practising in the afore-
said manner, fulfilled the wishes of the material (?) self and of the
disciple-self, restraining both the motions (i.e. in-breathing and out-
breathing) curbing the appetite for the enjoyment of the senses, by
stopping the breath (in kumbhaka) offer the prānas, i.e. the arising
of all the activities of the mind into the prānas, i.e. joys which are
parānanda and nījānanda. All of them, beginning with the practitioners
of dravyayajñas and ending with those of jñānayajñas are knowers
of the truth about the sacrifices (yajnas); and having become sinless
thereby and having uprooted the great delusion of duality that resides
in the Karmic impressions, they enjoy the ambrosia that is left over
from the sacrifice, (that is to say) they enjoy parānanda which is
nījānanda after the svātmā has come to rest(?). So they are sent
forth in accordance with their wishes on account of being one with
Brahman. But one desists for fear of revealing too many secrets by
saying too much.

For those whose humors have been brought into equipoise by the
great medicine of traditional instruction from a guru who has been
won over by extreme devotion, the secret rasa, although it melts
within them, becomes the object of esthetic enjoyment (carvana)
and the cause of relishing things as they really are. On these verses
commentators have offered other explanations. Let the wise them-
selves examine those statements together with those given by our
revered preceptor. Why say more? Why make fun of the false ex-
planations of other commentators? We shall keep to the task at
hand. All of these sacrifices have been spoken of as “the face of
Brahman,” that is, the door, the means (of reaching Brahman). In
them (in those sacrifices) there is the acceptance of actions, knowing
this you too will be freed from bondage.

IV. 33-34

Now the verses beginning śreyān and taudviddhi. Herein there is
this distinction: the sacrifice enlightened by knowledge is superior to
the sacrifice that consists in material things only. The suffix maya
in dravyamaya suggests the sense of “mere, only,” because all
action is based on knowledge. Acquire that knowledge by prostration,

10 maya pratyaya is Pāṇini’s term for maya.
by devotion, by thorough questioning, that is, by logical ratiocination and arguments and counter-arguments etc., by service and repeated practice. When you become such a jñānin, then your own senses, when favored by (being given) objects for their perception, will point out (deksyanti) close (upa) to you, the truth; that is, they will enable you to read the truth. Therefore are they called taitvadarśinah, because they reveal the truth. As has been said: “Yoga itself is the spiritual preceptor in Yogic practices (Vyāsa-bhāṣya), therein one’s own understanding is the upholder of truth” (Yoga Sūtra 1.48). If we interpret “jñāninah” to mean “other men possessed of jñāna,” this would imply that it is not true that the Lord preached it Himself. If [we take] the word in this sense, [it cannot apply to Arjuna; rather,] its intention will be to set forth the rule that other people can obtain knowledge from those who possess it by prostrating before them etc., and not in just any way they please.

IV. 35

Now the verse beginning yajjñātvā: “in your self,” that is, when it has become identical with me. Ātmani is in grammatical agreement [with mayi]. The particle atho is a verse-filler. The special virtue of identifying the self with God is here stated. Without this identity determinate knowledge (vikalpa) is impossible.

IV. 36

In order to clarify sarvam karma akhilam, “all actions without exception,” that was used in IV.33, etc. the Lord now explains sarvam karma by stating in the first half-verse that even adharma will be destroyed; and explains akhilam by suggesting in the second half-verse that no trace of samskāra will remain.

IV. 37

Now the verses beginning yathaidhāmsi, na hi jñānena, sraddhāvān and ending with (the verse that ends in) samsayātmanah: efforts should be directed in such a way that the fire of knowledge be well-fuelled, with a firm hold on understanding achieved through constant practice.

IV. 38-40

For there is nothing so purifying as knowledge. The purity obtained by the acquisition of anything else is not real, this (point) is not
elaborated for fear of going beyond the context. When you have reached enlightenment (subuddhatā) you will realize its purity yourself. And in this faith and sacred tradition (are important) because activity directed towards that (viz. toward knowledge) comes quickly from orthodoxy (āstikatva) when no doubt is present. Therefore one should have faith and should show reverence to the teacher and the sacred tradition, for they destroy all doubt. For the man of doubt learns nothing because he has no faith. Therefore one should be free of doubt: that is what the sentence means.

IV. 41-42

The message spread over the entire chapter is briefly stated in two verses beginning with yogasannyasta, and tasmād jñāna. It has been considered that only through yoga is the abandonment of action (karma) possible, not otherwise, and it will be considered again as well. Rending doubt asunder, resort to yoga, which is skill in action, in the manner described. Therefore arise thou and do what is to be done only because it is your duty to do so.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

Perform whatever action proceeds from the desires of the senses alone. By such action the deities [who are] the senses will receive welfare and be satisfied. [D.H.H.I.]

Here ends the fourth chapter of the Gitārthasāṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva ācārya Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER V

V. 1

Arjuna spoke (the verse beginning with) sannyāsam. "[First you have spoken of sannyāsa as primary and then of yoga]." [Accordingly] this is the question of one possessing doubt.

V. 2

The Lord spoke (the verse beginning with) sannyāsah. Out of sannyāsa and karma, neither one alone is said to give salvation, but both together. The special virtue of yoga is that without it sannyāsa is not possible.
V. 3

Now the verse beginning ḷheya. Therefore he alone is a sannyāsin all the time (i.e. for good), who has cast away desire and aversion from his mind. He whose thoughts have passed beyond the dualities of anger, infatuation, etc. is easily liberated.

V. 4-5

Now the verses beginning sāṅkhyayogau and yatsāṅkhyaiḥ. This is sāṅkhyya and this is yoga: there is no such difference. These two are forever bound together. There can be no jñāna without yoga and no yoga without jñāna. Hence the oneness of the two.

V. 6

Now the verse beginning sannyāsas tu. The word tu is used in the restrictive sense and is placed out of order [i.e. we are to take it with the second half-verse]. It is hard for him who is without yoga to attain sannyāsa, on account of the difficulty of abandoning actions as already shown. But (tu) that is easily accomplished by yogins, as has been said earlier.

V. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Now the verse beginning yogayukta. He whose ātman is the ātman of all creatures, no matter what he does he is not stained (or does not become attached), because by definition he is not an agent. Therefore even though (he may be) acting in such ways as seeing etc., he understands (dhārayati = dhūrayan of vs. 9), that is, he realizes with firm understanding [the following], “If the senses such as the eye, etc. are active in their own sense-fields, how does that concern me? One is not stained by the action of someone else.” This is the offering of all actions into Brahman. Herein the distinguishing feature is lack of attachment. Therefore he is not stained.

And the yogins perform actions, because they are without attachment, with their body etc. only, which are not involved in attachment and are mutually independent.

V. 12

Now the verse beginning yukta. (The word) naiśthikim used in the verse means free from rebirth.

1 Read saṅgarahitaḥ for saṅgarahitaḥ.
V. 13

Now the verse beginning sarva. Just as a man inside a house does not partake of the dilapidatedness etc., of the house, even so I do not partake of the dharmas of the body which is like a house adorned by nine window-like apertures such as the eye, etc.

V. 14

Now the verse beginning na karttvam. Because this self, of anyone, does not do anything; and its activity (pravrttih) is simply automatic. Thus, of the Lord, who is identical with (pure) cognition, whose ultimate nature is illumination, bliss, and independence, and who implies (āksipta) the continuity of creation, maintenance and destruction of the world, there can be no falling off from his nature. Hence there is no agency of God apart from his being in the creator state. In the absence of agency, what works can there be? In the absence of works, what fruit and what bond of karma and fruit? Karma here means activity (kriyā); karmaphala, fruit of activity. Thus, the activity is simply the circulatory motion of the potter's wheel (under) the stick and no more. And this activity is not what is productive of the pots because the activity is contained within the cognition. From this it follows that it is only the conscious, independent, highest Lord who appears as this or that: there is no activity or fruit of activity other than he.

**NOTE:** The point of the comment is that nothing is made, nothing is created or destroyed. The world is simply an appearance of the creator, something that appears automatically when he is in the state of creation. Agency is nothing more than God in that state. The activities do not make anything; the whirling of the potter's wheel does not make the pot. The idea of the potter makes the pot. The world is the idea of God. So there can be no karma—karmaphala. [D.H.H.I.]

V. 15

Therefore, in the absence of action and the fruit of action, even fate and reward are not brought about by our unseen (karma). Having said this in the first half-verse, he substantiates it for those involved in samsāra by an arthāntaranyāsa (a proof by analogy): nādatte, etc. Sins etc. are not committed by it (the ātman) but are committed by one's nescience. It is because of doubt [regarding this] that in the midst of nectar one tastes poison.
V. 16

Hence (the verse beginning with) jñānēna tu. After ignorance has been destroyed by knowledge, the supreme self-luminosity and self-validity of knowledge, after doubt has ceased, like the sun after darkness is destroyed, confers immortality of its own accord.

V. 17

And this is appropriate for those whose minds and intellect are set on that [viz. knowledge] to the exclusion of all other activity. To explain this idea, the Lord says (the verse beginning with) tadbuddhayah.

V. 17A

[At this point there is an extra verse. It is found in all Kashmir manuscripts of the Gītā.]

"Even though continually thinking of it and being in touch with it (such people) even though attached to their own action are really not bound by it, just as the rays of the sun do not stick in the mud."

V. 18

Because one's nature causes one to act thus in the world. In order to say that such is the state of those whose ignorance has been annihilated, (the Lord) says (the verse beginning with) vidyā etc. Thus these yogins do not think regarding the brāhmaṇa that by service etc. (of the brāhmaṇa) they will earn spiritual merit etc., or regarding the cow that it bestows holiness etc. Regarding the elephant they do not think of its value etc.; regarding the dog they do not consider that its impurity harms them; regarding the outcaste they are not exercised over his sinfulness, lack of purity, etc. Thus do they regard all equally, but they do not act thus in their worldly conduct. It has been said, [the soul] whose nature is pure consciousness is present in all bodies, there is no distinction within it. Therefore he who cherishes (bhāvayan) everything that is pervaded by it breaks [the bonds] of transmigration. Herein too, by the word bhāvayan this same flow of jñāna is spoken of.

[For V. 19 see VI. 9]

V. 20

And such is the attitude of this [man of knowledge], viz. as spoken
of (in the verse beginning with) na praḥrṣyet. For him who regards all equally, the distinctions of friend, foe, etc., are only for practical purposes, not in his heart on account of its being firmly established in Brahman.

V. 21, 22

Now the verse beginning bāhyasparsesu. He who is not attached to external contact, that is, to the objects of sense thinks thus: this is spoken of in (the verse beginning with) ye hi. He regards (them) thus: All the enjoyments of external sense objects are a cause of sorrow. Not only that: they are also ephemeral.

V. 23

Now the verse beginning śaknoti. Nor is it difficult to achieve. If the force of anger and passion is forborne even for a moment before one dies, lasting happiness is obtained.

V. 24

Now the verse beginning yo'ntah. "Within" means within himself; "happiness," which is not dependent on external things. There he takes his pleasure and he finds his light. But in practical affairs he is as if stupid, (for it amūdhatvam read tu mūdhatvam), for it has been said: let him move about as if dumb, disputing not.

V. 25

Now the verse beginning labhante. This is attained by those whose knots of dualism and doubt have been destroyed.

V. 26

The verse beginning with kāmakrodha. That their existence in the ultimate sense is brahma, is present to them in every way at all times; it does not depend on (i.e. is not limited to) the period of yogic repression.

V. 27

Now the verse beginning spārśān. Casting off the external (sense) impressions: that is to say, not accepting them; having placed all the senses, here indicated by the (use of the word) 'eye,' between the right and the left eyebrow, that is to say, in a special state (lit. place) free from anger and attachment; having established the prāṇa and
the apāna, that is, dhārma and adhārma evenly in the centre of the mind, let him thus sit. The word nāsā means the mind, because the mind acts crookedly (nasate), without equanimity, under the influence of anger, etc. Just this on the outside.²

V. 28

Now the verse beginning yatendriya. Such a yogin even though carrying out all worldly transactions, is indeed emancipated.

V. 29

Now the verse beginning bhoktāram. Among the rewards of sacrifice is the enjoyer [Himself] because He is so great a reward.³ Thus, a tapasvin, discovering that such is the true nature of the Blessed One, is freed irrespective of his condition.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

He who regards all creatures with equanimity, even if he be like a man of no intelligence in practical affairs, is fit for salvation.

Here ends the fifth chapter of Gitārthasāgraha, composed by the great Śaiva ācārya, Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER VI

VI. 1, 2

The Lord spoke (the verse beginning with) anāśrita. The meaning developed through the previous chapters is now declared in two verses. Kāryam (means action) prescribed by one's caste, etc. The two (words) sannyāsin and yogin are synonymous. Therefore (the Lord) says (the verse beginning with) yam sannyāsam. Thus, without yoga, sannyāsa is not possible. Similarly, one cannot practise yoga without abandoning personal intention. Thus yoga and sannyāsa are always clearly related. By na niragnih etc., the following meaning is suggested: he does not stop tending the agnihotra fire, he does not stop practising ritual. (Even so) he is sannyāsin (one who has renounced everything): this is indeed marvellous.

² (?I suspect the last sentence is a corruption, perhaps for etad evam vyāhṛtyam: “The passage is to be interpreted thus.”)
³ I am not sure that this is the meaning.
VI. 3

Although it has been said that sannyāsa (the giving up of the personal intention) is not possible for him who has given up action only, on the reasoning that a kingdom without a king\(^1\) is destroyed, even so (the Lord makes a distinction in the verse beginning with) āturukṣyoḥ. Action should be performed by the sage possessed of knowledge [when he wishes to attain yoga]. Kārana or cause is that which brings about or leads to something. Ṣama or tranquility, is continuance in the state of attainment. Kārana here means mark or characteristic.\(^2\)

VI. 4

This same meaning is illuminated (in the verse beginning with) yudā hi. By objects of the senses are meant objects of sensual enjoyment, by action, actions aimed at them, that is, in order to obtain sensual enjoyment.

VI. 5, 6

One must give close heed to this idea (as is said in the verses beginning with) uddharet and bandhur ātmā. Here there is no means other than oneself, that is, other than one’s own mind. When subdued the mind is a friend and rescues one from the horrors of transmigration. But unsubdued it acts like an enemy causing one to fall into the pains of hell.

VI. 7, 8

Therein such is the condition of one who has successfully subdued the mind: (one and a half hemistichs of the verse are now quoted).\(^3\) Utterly tranquil (praśānta), (that is) without egoism: having a frame of mind which does not distinguish among outer things between those that may be cold or hot, etc. to oneself, with no attachment and aversion. Jñānam means correct knowledge; vijñānam means that wherein knowledge of various kinds is present. [The last clause of the comment is corrupt.]

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1 Just as a kingdom without a king is destroyed, so sannyāsa without someone performing it is destroyed.
2 In achieving yoga, action is a cause: after achievement, tranquillity is a mark of the person who has attained this state.
3 One should read: jītātmanah praśāntasya purātmu samā math śītasnasukha-duḥkhēṣu....
VI. 9

Now the verse beginning suhrd. Suhrd: one who harbors a good heart, mitra: the friendship of a mitra is mutual; the enmity (of an ari) is reciprocal. One who lacks both of these (friendship and enmity) is “indifferent.” One who is part friend, part enemy is a ‘neutral’ (madhyastha). A rival (dvesya) is one who deserves hatred but to whom one cannot show hatred. A relative (bandhu) is one related by birth etc. (The yogin) regards all these with equanimity. So also, saints and sinners. And he excels, that is, step by step, he goes beyond saṁsāra.

VI. 9 [See V. 19, Abhinava reads this verse of the Fifth Chapter here in the Sixth. Three of the Śāradā mss. of the Critical Edition agree with this order.]

(What is achieved) by such people, that is, people of worthy conduct, (is described in the verse beginning with) ihaiva. Right here, even while connected to the physical body, they overcome saṁsāra by their equanimity. Saṁsāra cannot fetter those who have achieved jivanmukti. They are firmly fixed in the experience of oneness (sānyāsa). And Brahman is oneness.

VI. 10, 11

One who has subdued his mind has been spoken of (VI.7), but how does he subdue it? Suspecting such a question, the author teaches a method of discipline of the mind, raising it from the body, for one who wishes to scale [the spiritual heights] (in the verse beginning with) yogi. He should discipline himself and his mind by making them single-pointed. Continuously (satatam), that is, not for a limited duration. He should practise yoga only in secluded spots etc., not otherwise. By his firmness of posture his body\(^4\) will be firm, and from this his mind will become firm.

VI. 12

(The compound yatacittendriyakriyah is to be analyzed as follows:) by whom the activities of the mind, that is, its imaginings (sāmkalpāh), and other activities of the senses have been brought under control.

\(^4\) For kālusthairye read kāyasthairye.
VI.13

Holding with effort (this is how the word dhārayan should be understood). Looking at the tip of one's nose involves not looking in any direction.

VI. 14, 15

(What yukta āśita matparah means is:) he should sit practising yoga with his mind concentrated on me. As he unites himself (yuñjataḥ), that is, concentrates himself (samādadhatāḥ) thus, peace will come to him. In this state the highest point is attainment of me.⁵

VI. 16, 17

Now the verse beginning nātyaśinatas: “of one not over-eating”: (“eating” means any activity for the enjoyment of food (āhāra), that is, of sense objects that are brought to (āhrīyamāna) one. Therefore yoga consists in the absence of over-attachment and over-avoidance. Thus in all things [i.e. not only in the pursuit of sense-objects but in all activities]. The rest is clear. “Waking and [sleeping]” should be — ? —. The same elsewhere.⁷

VI. 18

This is the mark of the yogin; restraining the mind within himself he covets nothing whatsoever.

VI. 19

Now the verse beginning yathā. The yogin does not waver, as a lamp does not flicker in a windless place. His (the yogin's) wavering would consist of efforts to secure sense-objects etc.

VI. 20, 21

Now the nature of that Brahman, which is his own very self, is described by a number of adjectives. It is different from what its form is imagined to be in other philosophies (tirthāntara). (It is that wherein) the mind, restrained, ceases to operate; wherein the self by itself experiences supreme felicity because of the absence of the impurity caused by sensual objects.

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⁵ The text seems to be corrupt.  
⁶ Read tasmāc eva for tasyās eva  
⁷ The text seems to be corrupt.
VI. 22

By other gain (aparam lāhham) is meant union with wealth, wife and children. The idea of pleasure [in these], which are other than yoga,8 ceases, for they are of material nature. (The yogin) is not shaken in any special way, but rather, on account of pre-existent mental impressions, there is an initial momentary agitation on account of pity etc., but not (on account of) ignorance.

VI. 23

'Alas, I am done for'; 'What should be done by me?' (that yoga) whereby one becomes freed from association with sorrows such as these (is the meaning of the expression duhkhasaniyogaviyogam yogam). That (yoga) should be practised with determination, that is, with faith generated by right belief, wholeheartedly. (The expression anir-vinnacetiḥ refers to) one whose mind feels no distaste once the goal has been reached, but feels intense distaste for the many sharp pains of samsāra.

VI. 24

The way to give up the means of desire is to give up imagining. This is said (in the verse beginning with) saikalpa.

VI. 25

One should slowly (attain quietude) by (subduing) the mind and not by ceasing to act. Taking hold of the mind, step by step, having reduced the sorrow caused by (vain) desires, one should give no thought to the abandoning or grasping of sense-objects. The explanation given by others, that one should not think at all, does not appeal to us. Because it would imply the sūnyavāda doctrine (of the Buddhists which we reject). Nor is this stated on the supposition that a complete cessation of sense-objects occurs.

VI. 26

Now the verse beginning yato yato. As the mind turns back from any given object, one should immediately thereupon bring it to rest in the self.

* The text is corrupt! One wants something like samnyovah, labdhe ca yogād anyatra sakhuḍhitī nivartata iti.
VI. 27

Otherwise, the mind, if not made firm, will resort again to sense-objects. There, in the ātman, happiness, the subject, [comes to] the yogin, object, whose mind is at peace.

VI. 28

In this way Brahman is attained easily by the yogins, and not by painful yogic practices etc.; this is what is meant.

VI. 29

Now the verse beginning sarva. He should identify the ātman with all beings, inasmuch as it enters them as the perceiver. And he should unite all beings within the ātman through the knowledge of their being the perceived. That is how omiscience arises, and yoga (unification). This in brief is what is meant. The details have been discussed by me in the Devistotravivarana, in the section refuting pluralism, and may be ascertained there.

VI. 30

The same meaning is clarified (in the verse beginning with) yo mām. “Perish” means “fail to accomplish its effect.” That is to say, from him who does not see the all-pervasive form of the supreme soul, the supreme soul flees; because its form is not made manifest. But he who [sees] all things as entered into the supreme soul which reflects them, [for him?] it shines forth.9

VI. 31

He who does not see thus is lost to the nature of reality, because the truth shines forth only by the opposite procedure. I am not lost to him who sees me everywhere, because I shine forth to him in my true nature. If he sees all beings in me then they can be reflected, his power of being a seer is fulfilled, and he is not lost to the supreme soul.

VI. 32

He who is thus possessed of knowledge, knowing God to be necessarily present everywhere on account of His identity with everything, is not smeared (by karma) situated in whatsoever condition he may be.

* Something seems to have been omitted from the text.
He regards the joys and sorrows of all as similar to his own, this nature (of his) has been spoken of so no new procedure is involved here.

VI. 33, 34

Arjuna spoke (the verse beginning with) *yogam*. By the expressions *yah* (which) and *ayam* (this), expressive of what is remote and what is proximate (respectively) this is indicated: that mind, which is meant for immersion in Brahman, as clearly and directly stated by the Lord in uninterrupted sequence, is removed far away by the wickedness of mental fickleness and thus being made remote it becomes agitated with regard to the present and the future (or the visible and the invisible realms) and is not manifestly capable of being maintained in the attitude of being a (mere) witness.

VI. 35

Herein the Lord said in reply (the verse beginning with) *asaniśayam*. Through detachment the longing for sense-objects is destroyed. By (persistent spiritual) practice the *mokṣa* aspect (is strengthened). They are gained possession of one after the other, hence the enumeration of both. As has been said by the Commentator (Patañjali) in this respect, “the restraining of the modifications arising in the mind depends on both.” Hence the affirmation. (See Yogasūtra I. 12).

VI. 36

In no way can *yoga* be attained by one who is not self-controlled and detached. By self-controlled is meant one who is detached, hard-working, persevering, having adopted the methods laid down in many canonical scriptures\(^\text{10}\) etc.

VI. 37, 38, 39

Arjuna spoke (the verse beginning with) *ayatih*. (By *śraddhayopetah*, one with faith, is meant one) whose faith is not shaken even when the mind has been dislodged from the *yogic* state to which it had attained. One who has lost faith renders everything fruitless even if accomplished in *yoga*. It has been said: ‘When knowledge, even though acquired, is corrupted by mental confusion it is quickly destroyed right then like a pile of cotton by fire.’ Thus, is it that although

\(^{10}\) Or in the class of scriptures designated *siddhânta* etc.
duly accomplished in \textit{yoga} he is destroyed because he has not merged in Brahman having duly left the world or is it that he is destroyed because he is not firmly rooted in Brahman because of some obstacle in the other world, this is the question.

VI. 40

Herein the decision of the Lord is spelled out (in the verse beginning with) \textit{pārtha}. There is no destruction in store for one who has fallen from \textit{yoga} either in this world or in the next. Because his faith is intact, this is the idea. (The compound \textit{kalyānakrt} is to be understood as follows:) he (who) performed the meritorious deed, which has the characteristic of being a pathway to God. (The fruit of) that (path) is not perishable like that of the \textit{agniśṭoma} etc.\footnote{Cf. \textit{Bhagavadgītā} IX.20-21.}

VI. 41

(The expression \textit{sāsvatih samāh} refers to) the time-span of the eternal Viṣṇu, that is, the three years of Viṣṇu.\footnote{That is, three divine years on the calculus of one \textit{kalpa} = a \textit{day} = 4.320 million earthly years and the year containing 360 such days and nights. The implication clearly is that the use of the word \textit{sāsvat} does not refer to an eternal but a finite duration of time.} (Now the expression) \textit{sucinām} is glossed. (It should be taken as) referring to those whose minds are in touch with a part of God.

VI. 42

Now the verse beginning \textit{athavā}: if his (approach towards) \textit{mokṣa} is going to continue, then he is indeed born in a family of \textit{yogins}. Therefore it is said, it is harder (to be born in a family of practising \textit{yogins} than in a wealthy family because) in the house of the rich there are bound to be many obstacles to the attainment of \textit{mokṣa}.

VI. 44, 45

Indeed, he is led by that previous practice (of \textit{yoga}) perforce towards the practice of \textit{yoga} (in the new life) like one helpless, under another's control. He goes beyond Vedic lore not just in the ordinary way by being inquisitive after the manner of (or about) \textit{yogins} (instead of being inquisitive about the Vedas) but he also goes beyond it in the sense that he does not conform to meditation on Vedic \textit{mantras}
TRANSLATION

e等。但改采yogic冥想。其後，滿足他想知道（yogin）的意願後，他便通過懂事的漸進實踐，達到Väsudeva的解體。他並未在現世獲得救脫，這必須注意。也應考慮他已經練習瑜伽好幾生。因此，他應被認為是落入瑜伽（yogabhrasta）——完全皈依於神的異教徒。

VI. 46

瑜伽的優越性由於（在題為）tapasvibhyah的詩歌中被提起。jñänins的優越性在於這一點：jñāna導向yoga。他（yogin）優於karmayarins（因為）他（yogin）真正知道如何行動。救脫不是純粹無神論的karmayoga，這是說的。

VI. 47

現在題為yoginùm的詩歌開始：在yogins中，他就是最好的人，飽滿著神，將我放在他心中，充滿著虔誠和信心，獨自將我崇拜，而沒有其他人。所宣告的是一切神產的勝者。這都好。

在這章中，有如下的總結詩歌：

一切獲得只是因為獲得主宰的名。稻谷在雨的（純粹）視線下就会開花。

這裡結論—the sixth chapter of the Gitârthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva ācārya Abhinavagupta

CHAPTER VII

VII. 1

The Lord said [the verse beginning with] mayyāsakta.

VII. 2

Now the verse beginning: jñānani te'ham. Jñāna and vijñāna are (identical with) knowledge and action, therefore nothing remains (to be said once they have been spoken of), on account of all that is to
be known being firmly fixed in knowledge and action (i.e. knowledge and action encompass all that is worth knowing).

VII. 3

Now the verse beginning with manusyaṁaṁ: not everyone is capable of (attaining to) this reality; because it is difficult to attain, it is said: 'strive with diligence'.

VII. 4, 5

Now the verses beginning with bhūmiḥ and ending with apare'yaṁ: that (prakṛti), which, being manifestly seen by all in the state of saṁsāra, although (constituting) a unity, divides eightfold. Because of originating from a single prakṛti, the universe is also a single entity — thus non-dualism (at the level) of materialism is also demonstrated. She (i.e. prakṛti), upon resorting to the life-principle, the puruṣa, becomes parā (prakṛti). She too belongs to me indeed and to none else, possessing both the forms (purā and aparā) and diversified by projecting the phenomenon consisting of (the duality) of subject and object. This is the prakṛti, which, without any exception, ever, is in essence of one's own true nature, being the ground of all states that are perceived on the clear surface of the mirror of one's ātman. By (saying) "I am that," the Lord, (indicates that) although distinct from prakṛti, puruṣa and what is beyond the puruṣa, (he) is always omnipresent. The absence of any contradiction between sāṅkhya and yoga is thus demonstrated. By [the syntagm] idaṁ is meant the earth, etc.

VII. 6

Now the verse beginning etat: upadhāraya that is, realize it (lit. bring it in the presence of the Self) through constant practice (leading to) actual experience.

VII. 7-13

Now the verses beginning with mattah and ending with avyayam. Understand it thus that I, having become Vāsudeva, am the origin and dissolution of all. 'As rows of gems on a string' — I am present everywhere just as the thread is present on account of being concealed within, without its form being perceived.

NOTE: to get the full force of the last statement a tightly woven string
of gems should be visualized, wherein the thread is invisible because of the absence of interstices between the gems.

VII. 8

[Now the syntagm ending with] apsu is glossed (i.e. raso'ham apsu). I am that generic (sense of taste) which is being savoured everywhere and in which the distinctions of sweetness etc., have not yet arisen. Similarly, I am (the general quality of) light devoid of (the attributes of) softness or brilliance. By the expression 'I am the sound of ether' (the) entire (range of) sound is affirmed on account of it possessing ether as its element. That sound which is solely on account of the etheric quality and is free from the entire gamut of divisions such as saṁyoga etc., and which is perceived by congregations of yogins with concentrated hearts (i.e. minds) as reaching into the deep recesses of Brahman and is called anāhaṭa (is the sound of om) which follows the entire Vedic concourse (—this is how the syntagm pranavah sarvavedeṣu is to be understood).¹ That essence of God is pauruṣa (the quality of being a pūrṇa)—and by its glory am I pūruṣa: thus ensues the universality (of God).

NOTES: sarvatrāśvādyamānaṇayor anudhīmannanadurādiviḥghuh: emend to sarvatrāśvādyamānaṇah yah anudhīmannanadurādiviḥghah.
prakāsa: the Kāśmīri recension reads “prakāṣāḥ sāsūryavoh” for the vulgate “prabhā’smi sāsūryavoh”.

VII. 9

That which is the quality of smell in the earth, on account of the purity of its mode, is naturally pleasant. Putrid, pungent (smells) etc., (arise) on account of contact with other objects. It has been said: “Firmness (results) from the abundance of the element earth; stench from the arising of the element fire, frigidity from the abundance of the element water”, etc.

VII. 10

[The word] bijam means the subtle primeval cause.

VII. 11

By “strength devoid of desire and passion” is meant (strength) in the form of energy capable of sustaining everything. By kāma is

¹ Read a period after _ grāmāṇugāmi.
meant desire only in the form of consciousness, which does not conflict with substances in the form of pot, cloth, etc. Desire, indeed, on account of the power of the Lord, spreads everywhere, is obstructed nowhere, and is refracted by adventitious dharmas such as pot, cloth, etc. By worshipping it (there comes about) the jñānin's (realization) of the nature of pure consciousness. It is said in the Śivopanisad: "Place your mind in desire or in arisen knowledge". As soon as it arises, not (after) it has spread outside—this is what is meant. Those who, abandoning this explanation explain the intent (of the verse) as (stating that) resort to dharma, artha and kāma in a harmonious way—they are to be avoided as expounding the divine secret without knowing (the esoteric interpretation received through the) disciplic succession of the sect.

**NOTE:** ye parasparānupaghātakuri trivargāṁ sevante: compare with Kāmasūtra 1.2.1: parasperasya anupaghātakuri trivargāṁ seveta.

VII. 12, 13

[The guṇas such as] sattva etc., are pervaded by me but not I by them. Therefore one who is pervaded by the divine perceives everything as in a divine state; one who is devoted to the knowledge of the manifold objects does not attain to the divine essence—this course (of viewing things as manifold) is such as appeals to everyone. And with this intention is it said that he attains to the divine essence whose mind is favoured by supreme divine grace (saktipāta)—by the knowledge that Vāsudeva is all—arising subsequent to the evenness of karma which has resulted from its dissipation over several lives. Not indeed is 'he a sage and a rare person' just on account of the (merely mentally adopted) point of view that 'all is Vāsudeva'. On the contrary, being thought of in this way, deluded by the guṇas such as sattva, etc., this world does not obtain the essence of Vāsudeva which transcends the guṇas.

**NOTE:** sakalamānavaṇavarjaka: a variant reading is sakalamānasāvargaka or appealing to the whole mind.

saktipāta: a technical term in Kāśmira Saivism for divine grace.

VII. 14

How come those abiding only in sattva etc., do not come to know the divine essence? (This is) said in the verse [beginning] daivi. Deva means one who plays; activity originating therein is daivi or divine
— it is mine, this is what is meant. On account of that, although sattva etc., are really not different from the supreme brahman which is pure consciousness, yet there is the perception of those various (gunas) as distinct, that very guna-ship is the enjoyer and therein is the dependence on the object of enjoyment. And that form, pervaded by duality, is the form of mâyā through being involved in samsāra one account of its mysterious indescribability(?). Therefore those who have seen the light of brahman, the supreme goal — seeing the universe as not distinct from it — (they) go beyond mâyā which is characterized by the quality of the gunas such as sattva etc., and whose very nature consists in the appearance of duality. This is the sense of the (emphatic) eva in mām eva. Those who abide in such a way as knowing only the appearance of duality, do not go beyond mâyā. Hence it has been appropriately said, “I am not in them”.

**NOTE:** devah kriḍākarah: Abhinavagupta is employing the traditional etymology for deva— from div in the sense of ‘to play, sport’.

**VII. 15**

Now the verse beginning na mām. Those who do not honour me, even though (I) possess a form deserving of it, are evil-doers, the worst among men, dumb, demoniac, full of darkness — such is indeed the prowess of mâyā (that overcome by it they do not honour me).

**VII. 18**

Now the verses beginning with caturvidhā and ending with sudur-labhah: Those who worship me are meritorious. They are (of) four (kinds). All of these are excellent. Because others, of narrow minds, seek wealth etc. or removal of distress from beings with similar hand, feet, belly, and body or at most from beings less than the ātman. They are inferior beings compared to the jñānin. For with them there is this much of difference — that ‘I will desire this of the Lord’. Because of the manifest appearance of duality. But the jñānin resorts to me alone without any sense of duality. therefore, I am indeed identical (with him). I alone am dear to him, not the fruit (of praying to me). Therefore is he one whose heart is purified by the firm resolve: Vāsudeva is indeed all.

**VII. 20**

Now the verse beginning with kāmais tais—and ending with mām
api: 2 Now those whose minds have been disturbed by the variegated nature of the excellent primeval desire of theirs, they—with their hearts captivated by desires worship that special deity consistent with those (desires) which is really another form of mine. Hence they obtain the desired fruit from me but it is finite. Because it is circumscribed by one's own vāsanā. Therefore performing sacrifices etc., with the intent of devotion to Indra etc., they obtain results accordingly. Those who seek me (obtain) me alone.

VII. 24

Now if the essence of God is all-pervasive, then how come the fruits of those who worship other gods are (of a) limited (nature)? [In answer to this is] said [the verse beginning with] avyaktain. Indeed, on account of their narrow-mindedness, they do not recognize my ultimate form as one in which no manifestation is present but know it as possessing the special nature in accordance with the form of their own desires; not otherwise. There is no difficulty in (the matter of) name and form but in this respect there is the following principle. Whosoever resorts to the form of any god without any desire, then that culminates in pure and free Being and the opposite (culminates) in the opposite (i.e. if the form is resorted to with desires then it culminates in that).

VII. 25

Now the verse nā'harin: I am not visible to all.

VII. 27

Is it that actions, being performed, confer salvation at the time of universal dissolution, otherwise why does the great dissolution take place? [The verse] icchā etc., has its origin in this doubt. He (it?) is led to a state of supreme expansion indeed, then pervaded by delusion by (the operation of) desire, enmity, anger, infatuation, etc. Therefore the entire jagat, present (dormant) in every belly, resorts to sleep. only incapable of causal activity, (as if) free from delusion which is like sleeping at the time of night every day under the influence of inherent tendencies; by that logic it is not like the end of all delusion consequent upon mokṣa on account of the reappearance of saṁsāra with its various activities (again at the end of the period

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2 Emend māvityantā to māmupityantān.
of dissolution). Those whose tāmas has been destroyed, whose souls have been blessed by the dissipation of good and bad karma, who have felled the awnings of great delusion, they come to know brahma, the darkness of old age and death as purged\(^3\) by the ray of God. The ādhyātmika, ādhibhautika, ādhidivaika and ādhiyajñika forms are my transformations. They know me at the time of death because their hearts are always steeped in God. Those whose life (lit. birth) is already divine in essence, they would remember God at the time of death. Those who think what (is wrong with) repeated births,\(^4\) it is best to be silent about them.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

Devotion to God is said to be the manifest wish-fulfilling blossom by which (every) hope, consistent with the desire of the seeker, may be fulfilled.

Here ends the seventh chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva ācārya, Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER VIII

VIII. 1, 2

Arjuna said [the verses beginning with] kiṁ tad (and) adhiyajñah kathāṁ ko' tra. [With the expression dehe'smin (in this body)] (the sense) ‘is present in the body’ has to be supplied.

VIII. 3

That which was alluded to by the Lord [in the statement] beginning with te\(^1\) brahma tad viduḥ kṛṣṇam is now explained by the Lord in detail, preceded by the set of nine questions\(^2\) (raised by Arjuna) [in the verses beginning with] aksarāṁ. The para brahman is (so called) both on account of its (own) expansiveness and because it

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\(^4\) Read te for ye in the Nirnayasāgara text.

\(^1\) These appear to be: (1) What is brahma; (2) What is ādhyātmika; (3) What is ādhibhautika; (4) What is ādhidivaika; (5) What is ādhiyajñika; (6) How is it to be known; (7) How is it to be known by the self-controlled ones when death is imminent; (8) How is it present in the body; and (9) How is it to be known by the self-controlled ones when death is imminent?
causes (things) to expand. Therefore it is designated by the word *adhyātma*.3

That emission (*visarga*) of that *brahman*—which possesses the nature of consciousness and which on account of its manifest quality of indivisibility constitutes the *ātman* which is the inner perceiver in externally created beings, (and which) on account of the lordship of the universal *sakti* has embraced, of its own free will, and thus brought to light the external beings—is the creator, in due order, of divine beings such as *brahmā* etc., and of inanimate beings, and the illuminator of the variedness of both the animate and the inanimate. And it causes truth to arise in the case of the created being who has got rid of the entire chimera of falsehood.

VIII. 4

Now the verse beginning *adhibhūtan*: A collection of objects such as pot, etc., is called *ksara* or perishable because it perishes, wastes away, on account of its characteristic finitude. The *purusa*, that is the *ātman*, is *adhidaivam* because therein all the gods firmly abide. Therefore, by virtue of being the enjoyer of (the offerings) of all sacrifices without exception, as one who presides over all the sacrifices and obligatory rites—that supreme person (*purusottama*) am I indeed. And I am, indeed, present in the body—thus are two questions answered at one stroke.

VIII. 5, 6

Now the remaining question—'how are you to be known at the time of death'—is settled [in the verses] beginning with *antakāle'pi* and ending with *asamsayām*.4 Not only, indeed, does one come to me—beyond any material limitation—(thinking of me) at the time of death when one is in good health; but (the Lord) also preaches the way whereby God may be remembered by one even in bad health, (by one) who has withdrawn himself from all the activities of the senses. He, from whose heart the divine truth is never lost even in the course of all worldly pursuits, who has cast off all actions on the Lord and who is ever suffused with God, he definitely automatically remembers the divine essence (at the time of death)—and the reason for this is that he is always steeped in it. Therefore it is said that

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3 Because it becomes the *ātman* in the *jīva* as Ānanda explains.

4 The Kāsmiri recension reads *antakāle'pi* and *asamsayām* for the vulgate *antakāle ca* and *asamsayāh*.
TRANSLATION

with whatever thing the innermost self is always filled, that is remembered at the time of death and that state is attained; therefore at all times be devoted to me, be desirous of me; this is the import, and not this that whatever is remembered at the time of death (i.e. whatever thought crosses the mind) that forsooth is obtained. If this be so then the prospect is indeed bleak even for the jñāna whose mind may be disturbed by the disorder of bodily humours and who is comatose (at the time of death). Nor is logical deduction in order here; because of its opposition to the śruti which is authoritative. There is (for instance the following statement): "One who has overcome sorrow attains liberation even if this memory fail him, while he is dying, be it at a sacred place or in the house of an outcaste, for he was liberated simultaneously with (the acquisition of) jñāna". [There is the further statement:] "He may give up his body in Kāśi or in the house of an outcaste. He, whose sanātīnea fever is over, was liberated at the time of the attainment of jñāna". Hence two endorsements such as these. That with which the heart is always informed, in the end, after death, that indeed is attained. This is not conditional on whether it is remembered or not (at the exact moment of death). This primary meaning has been indicated by the use of (the particle) api. In (the expression) — yam vāpi — the word vā expresses the idea that memory need not always be present. A person who is always devoted to me may abide any way — the sage himself makes this sense manifest.

VIII. 7

The connection between what has been said, with [the verse beginning with] tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu mām anusmara is as follows. Thinking constantly of whatever thought one gives up the body, one attains to that, whether one remembers it at the last moment or does not remember it because it could not be remembered. Because he is always full of that thought. Others, however (interpret the verse thus): the form he assumes is the first mental impression he forms, which is what he remembers at what is called the moment of death, when relatives, sons, etc., and other subjects can be seen, when symptoms such as heavy breathing, hiccups, choking etc., prognose the end, and when one is deluded by (alternating) signs of relief and distress caused by the emaciation of the firm frame of the body. At such a moment the cause for the arising of the memory (of God) is always having been filled with His thought. The proper form of tyajati is
locative (and not third person present indicative) otherwise the meaning is the same as before. Then what is the point in remembering at the last moment indeed? Who says so, that it is of any use. Is it that at the last moment only that happens which is circumstantial? Indeed, then, if at the last moment the drink of cold water, etc., fetched by son, wife or relative is seen and remembered then one may become that! Not so. By last moment is not meant the moment of obvious physical demise. The last moment we wish to talk of is not of the kind seen by you all (on the outside). At that last moment, whatever (mental) form ought to be will come to be by the logic that even a remote mental impression, even in the case of those obscured by time and space, will be regained on account of belonging to the innermost nature. Under its influence memory (will arise) and through that memory that (appropriate) condition will be attained. With some even when the body is in good health, the same happens accidentally as it described in the purāna about the deer etc., and the consequent assumption of the body of a deer. Therefore "even at the time of death (remember) me" etc., is stated. Those who constantly honour God and (say) "so it has been and so will it be with us"—this mental impression of theirs prevents other mental impressions (from arising). By this, in that internal state not outwardly known, by the removal of other mental impressions one remembers the essence (of God) on account of the mental impression. And after the remembrance, for the sake of obtaining a proper condition for the body, follows the moment of the dissolution of the body. The mental impression of time being done away with, from the disappearance of the distinctions, of the 'this is to be known' etc., one becomes merged with the Lord who is of the nature of consciousness alone. This is the considered opinion of the guru of Abhinavagupta; more need not be said. By asamsayani is meant that no doubt need be entertained in this respect.

VIII. 8

Now the verse beginning abhyāsa. By the expression anucintayan is meant that upon the separation of the body, freed from physical agony, then he thinks of God.

5 The reference is to well-known story of the sage who became attached to a foundling deer in a hermitage and on his death was reborn as one, as that thought of the deer haunted him at the moment of death. See Bhag P.V. 8-12.
VIII. 9

He should remember in this manner. Now the syntagm beginning with aditya: the quality of solar colour distinguishes the essence of Vâsudeva. Because it is beyond the darkness constituted by the ignorance consisting of the delusion of form, imagination etc., hence its sunlikeness — this is what is meant.

VIII. 10

Now the verse beginning prayâna: "In between the eyebrows" has to be understood as before.  

VIII. 11

Now the verse beginning yad aksaram: I shall speak 'with saṅgraha'. Saṅgraha is that by which there is the proper (saṁ) determination (of the means). By way of proper means I shall say the 'word': I shall tell the means in order that it may be constantly practised.

VIII. 12

Now the verse beginning sarva-. The doors are the senses. By the word hṛd is meant the absence of attachment to sense-objects and not the anus(?)  

They place the prâna, the charioteer of the soul, through the force of will, in one's head, (that is) in that which is beyond everything: this constitutes the regulation of the body (in yoga).

VIII. 13, 14

(The aspirant) repeats the (mystic sound) om — this constitutes the regulation of speech (in yoga). Mâm anusmâran ('Remembering me', by this is indicated) the single-pointedness of the mind. Yah prayâti ('who goes' refers to him) who advances day by day, goes forth not to be re-born. Moreover, discarding the body how come he goes forth not to be re-born --- so that another physical body, the abode of all miseries, may not come to be.  

He who in this manner, with an unwavering mind, remembers me, constantly resorts to me: he comes to know my being and my form. Nor is the emphasis of the sage

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^ See Bhagavadgītā V. 27

^ The point seems to be that the mind should be placed in the heart (i.e. the unāhataukra of the Tāntric scheme) and not in the coccygeal area (i.e. the mūlādhāra). And further, that by placing the mind in the heart is meant the absence of attachment to sense-objects.

* Read 'mā hūyāditī' for 'māḥḥūyāditī'.

* Read 'mātvaṭṭa' for 'mātvattra'. 
here opposed to the suggestion of the non-duality of brahman upon
the flight of the soul after death. For, as has been said: "The being
of Śiva being (perceived as) all-pervasive, the (question of the) flight
of the soul, after death is meaningless. But upon Śiva not\textsuperscript{10} (being
perceived as) all-pervasive, death does not lead to Śiva". Or in the
case of those by whom, although constant practice has not been
carried out, even so somehow, on account of the independent wish
of the Lord etc., if at the last moment such a (God-ward) mental
state comes about, then the means at the time of the passage of the
soul has been described which shall block out other mental impressions.
Hence the affirmation beginning with \textit{yad akṣaram}, ending with \textit{abhi-
dhāsyē} (i.e. VIII.11).\textsuperscript{11} For the excellent sages have said, propounding
the marvellous quality of even a momentary remembrance of the
Lord as possessing the property of destroying all (\textit{samsāric}) mental
impressions: 'O lady whose sins have faded away,\textsuperscript{12} if but for a
moment you shall place Śiva in your heart, what will that not achieve?'
Therefore, there is the negation (of the prospect of release) without
the remembrance (of God) at the time of death—in order to remove
the doubt of those who entertain this doubt [the verse beginning]
\textit{ananyacetāḥ satatam} has been uttered. [\textit{Ananyacetāḥ}] means one whose
mind is not set elsewhere on the attainment of some fruit (of action)
etc. For him, I am easily accessible. By him no such troubles need
be taken as proper worship at the time of death, pilgrimage, the sun’s
presence in the northern course, doubts about the sanctity of the
place, purity, alertness, auspicious hour such as the equinoctial etc.,
(the right) day, being in an unpaved and pure spot, the freedom of
the body from excretions and dirt, the wearing of clean clothes, etc.
As has already been said—(whether one dies in) a place of pilgrimage
or the house of an outcaste etc. (is immaterial).

\textbf{VIII. 15}

It was indeed said that (the spiritual aspirant) goes to my being;
in this matter, suspecting the doubt: is one re-born even after attaining
(to God)?, (the Lord) says [the verse beginning with] \textit{māṃ upetya}.
From everywhere else there is rebirth, this will be propounded through

\textsuperscript{10} Read \textit{‘āvyāpini} as \textit{‘āvyāpini}.

\textsuperscript{11} In the vulgate the verse ends not with \textit{abhidhāsyē} as in the Kāsmīrī version,
but with \textit{pravakṣye}.

\textsuperscript{12} I.e. Pārvati.
the succeeding verse. On attaining to me, the yogins do not experience the misery of birth, etc. As is said in the Vedas: ‘He does not return’. And it is also said later on (in this very chapter) “(Those who) attain to him return not”.

VIII. 16

Now the verse beginning ābrahma: even those who have attained to brahmaloka are re-born, this is how (the first line of the verse) has been explained by everyone. On taking this as true. mokṣa consists of attaining to the loka beyond (that brahmaloka)—this could be said to be meant, but that is not appropriate. To us, this appears to be a ravelled explanation pertaining to the āgamas on the part of those whose inner vision has been vitiated by doubt and great delusion. Ābrahma means that so long as brahman is not attained, till then (creatures) come back from this or that high, low or oblique world, and return roaming ceaselessly from place to place like a wheel.

VIII. 17

Now who indeed knows thus that there is rebirth from all the worlds, for brahmā etc., are heard of as lasting for a very long time? Hence how are they to be considered as being re-born? Even they are subject to rebirth possessing the nature of coming into being and ceasing to be—this is said [in the verse] beginning with sahasra-

Those who are far-sighted, they see the night and day of even Brahmā as a dissolution and creation. Thus, day after day, as they awake, they conform each to his own activities. And every night they abide as mere sakti, when their vibrations have subsided. In this way, there is coming into being again and again in (the process of) creation and dissolution; it is not that other (new) beings are created (at the time of a new creation) but the same living souls. The distinction which brings about a longer or a shorter cycle is occasioned by Time: and this (Time-) limitation applies to the prajāpatis also. Therefore they too possess the nature of coming into being and ceasing to be—this is established.

VIII. 21

There is rebirth everywhere from the lokas but not on attaining to

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13 See Bhagavadgītā VIII 21 cd
14 Read khalsvādirghadrśvānah as khalu dirghadrśvānah.
me, the supreme lord, this is clarified (in the verse beginning with) *avyakta* etc.\(^{15}\) The afore-mentioned essence of Vásudeva, which is free from the duration of time, is manifest and omnipresent but on account of its inaccessibility lies concealed within the elements. And it has been said earlier that it can be obtained through devotion (*bhakti*). And in that (essence of Vásudeva) is placed this universe which is such as possesses always indestructible form. In this respect what then is the meaning of the word *punah* (again) and of the word *āvṛtti* (return)? That (indicates that the universe), in the midst (of the essence of Vásudeva) is capable of separation from its true nature (i.e. from the true nature of the essence of Vásudeva). But there is never separation on the part of anyone from the nature (of God) who has attained to the being of the supreme lord who possesses a nature which is always beyond the universe, different from the universe, the seat of the universe, supreme intelligence and independent. Hence it was well-said: “On attaining to me (there is) no rebirth”, etc. In this way is the condition of those people stated who by constant practice, without trouble, attain God.

VIII. 23

Now, again, something more is said about those who, through the passage of the soul after death desire enjoyment in fulfilment of their desires [through the verse] beginning with *yatra kāle*. *Anāvṛtti* means *mokṣa* (freedom from rebirth). *Āvṛtti* or rebirth is for the sake of sensual enjoyments.

VIII. 24

*Uttarāyana* means the six months consisting of the northern i.e. higher movement (of the sun). And that, on account of it possessing the property of brightness\(^{16}\) etc., it is referred to by words such as fire, etc.

VIII. 25

Therefore the opposite, conversely, is when there is rebirth for the sake of enjoying the fruits of *karma* because of the influx of the

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\(^{15}\) The Nirnayasagar edition adds: *purastasmādhivyadāna* after *avyakta itivādi*, which does not seem to make sense. Hence that clause has been overlooked.

\(^{16}\) Read *prakāśādādharmakasvād* as *prakāśādādharmakarvād*.
remaining degrees of the moon.\textsuperscript{17} Mokṣa is not returning from amidst these two primeval paths. Otherwise bhoga (involving rebirth ensues).

VIII. 26

He who knows these paths, that is, knows the due inner process by adopting the method of yoga (—this is what is meant). This the present work describes in detail: there is no need to say more.

VIII. 27

Therefore at all times be possessed of yoga O Arjuna — this is said. All the moments that are internal, with respect to them practise yoga. Our preceptor has said, out of compassion for everyone, having explained the secret of the moment of death (as) constituted of an internal moment, now the main topic relating to the popular external (notion of) time is summed up [through the line] \textit{tasmāt sarvesu kāleśu} etc.

VIII. 28

‘Goes beyond’, that is, overcomes. On account of all the traces of karma being rendered ineffective by the remembrance of God, upon the cessation of all karma he easily obtains the supreme good.

On this chapter there is the following summary-verse:

On account of the fact that God pervades all beings, there is no condition, inside or outside, in which the God (the pervading One) does not shine forth, once God has been realized.

Here ends the eighth chapter of the Gitārthasāṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva àcārya Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER IX

IX. 1

The Lord spoke [the verse beginning with] \textit{idam tu te}. Absence of ill-will is the main factor in the (successful) transmission of knowledge [that is why Arjuna is described as free from spite]. [The two words] jñāna and vijñāna [should be understood] as before.\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1} Read \textit{candramasah} for \textit{candramasam}. The reference seems to be astrological. In Indian astrology the degrees of the moon determine the astrological \textit{dāsā} or period at the time of birth. Or else see Chāndogya V. 10.

\textsuperscript{1} See Abhinavagupta’s gloss on Bhagavadgītā VII 2.
IX. 2

That which shines forth among all branches of learning, which is resplendent right here—such indeed is spiritual knowledge said to be among all kinds of knowledge. [The expression rājaguhyāni is to be thus understood:] in this matter kings such as Janaka etc., are qualified [to expound]: their secret knowledge, (which) on account of its extreme secrecy, and because of its remaining unshaken (i.e. unbroken) on account of the courage which comes easily to the ksatriyas is easy to follow, for it is not like the action consisting of the worship of brahman which suffers diminution like other karmas through bhoga.

IX. 3

Now the verse beginning aśraddadhānāḥ: [Those who are without faith] return, that is to say, are born and die again and again.

IX. 4

"The creatures are stationed in me"—because they are present (in me) even after being for a long time in the fixed abode of some other (god). "I am not in them"—this is said because by the bringing forth of the inanimate form of that (in the process of creation) which is well-known as the conscious nature of created forms, there is the obscuration of that (conscious) nature which reveals the opposite of all that (i.e. of consciousness) in its (material) appearance.3

IX. 5

Now the verse beginning na ca matsthāni: Because those blinded by ignorance cannot see the truth [they do not see all created beings in me]. The ignorant ones do not regard the supreme lord, possessing the nature of undivided consciousness as the ground of and the boundary of all things. Rather, (thinking) I am the lean Devadatta, I know this (to be such and such): (here) this object is present on the surface of the earth—they see only the limited nature (of the ultimate) on account of its spatial locus. Now how come this contradiction arises? Thus it is said: Behold the power of my yoga. [It is

2 The form vidyamānaivāi is confirmed by the B.O.R.I. manuscript.
3 The point seems to be that God, who is the same as the ātman, is pure consciousness but in the process of creation matter appears first and in that appearance the opposite nature (i.e. the conscious nature) of the created beings is obscured because of materiality. Therefore God, as pure consciousness, is no longer present in them.
called] *yoga* on account of being united with *sakti*. My glory indeed consists of this unsurpassed wonderful freedom (to act). This is what is meant.

IX. 6

Now the verse beginning with *yathā*: Notwithstanding the invariable association of sky and wind, the touching of the sky (on the part of the wind) is never indeed heard of. Similarly, although the essence of God is spread out over the entire world, it is not perceived by all.

IX. 7

Now the word *prakṛti* (in 7b): *Prakṛti*, that is, in its unmanifest form.4

IX. 8, 9, 10

Now the verse beginning *prakṛtim*: [I 'create' the world] resorting to my own *prakṛti*. In this way, although inanimate, this concourse of beings comes to light (i.e. life) on cumulating with *paraprakṛti*. And for me there is no bondage of *karma*, because I remain present with detachment; wherefore am I the cause (of the universe), being resorted to by the process of universal creation.

IX. 11

Now the verse beginning *avajānanti*: I, who repose inside everyone, become the butt of contempt (by the ignorant) on account of being present in the form of the *ātman* in all (and am thus disregarded because of the subtle nature of this presence). How God, who is quite distinct from the fourteen kinds of creation, such as man etc., is not perceived [is described in the next verse].

IX. 12

Now the verse beginning *mogha*: Their knowledge and action, as well as desires—all are fruitless because they pertain to the unreal. [The clause] *āsuraṃ rākṣasaṃ ca*5 (demoniac and ghoulish) [means that in such people the property of *rajoguna* and *tamoguna* predominates].

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4 Read 'praktimavvakarūpām' for 'praktimavyvakarūpām'.
5 The vulgate text runs: *rākṣasim āsuraṃ āsuraṃ* etc.
IX. 13, 15

Now the verse beginning ∥mahātmānāḥ∥: [The great-souled ones honour me] worshipping the divine (sāttvika) prakṛti with sacrifices, employing external substances. Others worship me with the sacrifice of knowledge (jñānayajñā) alone. Therefore some (worship me) by way of unity through jñānayoga and some in different ways through karma-yoga: all of them are indeed devoted to me.

IX. 16

But how can karma (ritual), abounding in distinctions which pervade the (entire) band of agents lead to a divine state (characterised by) the absence of distinctions? [The verse beginning with] ahāṁ kratuḥ is said by way of answer to this question. Karma (ritual) which is dependent on various means that are fashioned out of the one partless essence of brahman, returns again to that unity on account of the attainment of the divine state, never being far from it, through the realization of the ātman as the performer in all agents during the performance of ritual. As has been said: “That very śakti of Śiva, characterized by activity, which is an instrument of bondage when present within the soul, leads to the attainment of perfection when understood in its own way”. It has been said by me too: “That very bhūdhi which when turned outward (in pravṛtti) conforms to the (perception of the) duality of being and non-being, when turned inward (in nivṛtti) leads to the absence of rebirth”. This point has been previously reflected on in detail in several places hence we desist here (from further elaboration).

IX. 19

“I pour out heat” etc., has been said in the context of the talk of non-duality.

IX. 20

If, indeed, in this way, brahman can be attained by external sacrificial observances, then in the matter of agnīstoma etc., is there not an inconsistency in admitting that another sacrifice (and not agnīstoma) be performed? If Vāsudeva alone is, then why don’t they (the per-
formers of *agnistoma* etc.) attain salvation? For the sake of (clarifying that) is said the verse (beginning with) *traividyā*.

IX. 21

Now the verse beginning *te tāṁ bhuktvā*: Although they worship me to be sure, yet because they pray only for heaven and because of the weakness of their own essence and of finite action,7 they are cut off with merely the fruit of heaven etc. Thus they are characterized by rebirth. In this way they attain to coming and going (i.e. the repeated births and deaths of the cycle of *samsāra*).

IX. 22

It is not the (innate) nature of sacrifice to cause rebirths. Hence [the verse beginning with] *ananyā*. People other than those, meditating on me [who are called *ananyāḥ* in the verse], how come they have no one else in mind (i.e. are single-minded)? They are those for whom there exists no fruit to be desired other than me. [The word *yoga* in the expression *yogaksema*] means the obtaining of that form of mine (i.e. God) which has not been obtained. The word *kṣema* in the expression *yogaksema* means the safe-guarding of the achievement of the form of God which has been obtained. So that even the shadow of a doubt about falling away from *yoga* should not arise. This is what is meant.

IX. 23, 24

Those who worship through other names [and forms], they also worship me alone. There is nothing to be worshipped other than the *brahman*—but the special thing (about their situation is that it is done) ‘without the proper rite (*vidhi*)’. ‘Without the proper *vidhi*’ means with another *vidhi* (or mode of worship). By rites of various kinds I, who have the same nature of being as the supreme *brahman*, am indeed to be worshipped. [The word *avidhi* is not to be understood] as it has been explained by others, who are sullied by terrible sins produced by the defects (arising from their being) of a different school of philosophy (who maintain) that by ‘*avidhi*’ is meant ‘bad or wicked rites’. If this be so then statements such as “they worship me alone”,8 “I am the enjoyer of the sacrifice”9 plainly cannot be

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7 Read *svargamātruprārthanaṁ* and *mitakarmayanasadvadhaḥkalāraṁ* as separate units.
8 See Bhagavadgītā IX. 23.
9 See Bhagavadgītā IX. 24.
reconciled: so enough of bandying words with those full of sin. Our guru rather explains thus. [Those who] worship some other god as different from one's ātman, as devoid of the nature of brahman on account of dualism — in reality, they worship me who is of the nature of one's own ātman, but "without the proper rite", with a "bad rite", i.e. by adopting a form implying duality. Therefore it is said: they do not know me really as of the nature of one's own ātman (but) as the partaker (of the worship) on account of the form of the god (they worship). Therefore do they fall away from me.

IX. 25

Why 'by observing the vows of the gods they go to the gods' etc.? This indeed is the 'fall' (referred to above). Those who know my form as without distinctions, they worship me alone through various sacrifices such as those to gods, creatures, manes. etc., and they being my worshippers go to me—(the Lord) will conclude thus. Now it is said that the gods are specifically named (as those) for whose sake the offering of oblations is made. Then, how come the essence of one's own nature has been established as that which is sacrificed to without any specific statement to that effect being made, (as for instance in the case) "boiled rice should be offered to āditya"? But such a specific mention of a name (uddeśa) would require another vidhi, but another vidhi can be made only if some other gods are left after the (other) injunctions (vidhi) have been made. But there is no vidhi for (worshipping) one's own ātman (which encompasses all the gods)—with this intent was it said: [They worship me but] not with the proper vidhi. A vidhi is necessary in the case of a god who is different from one's own ātman because in this way what is not possessed by it can be offered (to it). But one's own ātman is the supreme lord, is not to be approached with a vidhi because of the absence of anything which can be offered to it through a vidhi. Thus its non-specification is of no account. In the specific mention of all the gods such as Indra etc., who receive due offerings, one's own ātman, of such a nature as accounts for the appearance of the universe, forever manifest by being present in the limited manifestations of those gods specifically addressed and who are full of eagerness for precedence, is indeed always specifically referred to being like a thread in a garland. It thus stands to reason that they worship me alone without any vidhi because their main interest lies in attaining to God. There is no intention (on the part of those who institute the sacrifice, the
yajamānas) for feeling that “I am the performer” of these (sacrifices), rather their success in achieving the status of Indra etc., (as a result of the sacrifice) is like that of the officiating priest obtaining his limited sacrificial fees. It is to convey this that the active voice has been used (with the root yaj in verse IX. 23). As has been said by me myself: “The sacrificer, sacrificing (by himself) having given up the role of one who gets a sacrifice instituted, indifferent to worldly objects and desirous of heaven comes to grief if he knows the Vedas but knows not the state (of consciousness) pertaining to Lord Śiva. All the streams of consciousness, spreading out in various directions with currents of karmic essence do not achieve their perfect fulfilment without attaining to You (O Śiva), the ocean of bliss”.

**NOTE:** Two distinctions are important in the above passage: (1) between the yajamāna, one who institutes a sacrifice, and the yājaka who actually officiates at the sacrifice, and (2) the use of the root yaj in active and middle voices. In the active the root yaj is used with reference to the officiating of the priest, in the middle it refers to the instituting of the sacrifice by the yajamāna.

**IX. 27, 28**

He who knows thus in the aforesaid manner, in his case even the sacrifice to gods such as Indra etc., is a sacrifice to the supreme lord. Although it is a different rite, yet it assumes the form of the worship of God’s own nature because it points to Him everywhere; hence is said [the verse beginning with] yat karoṣi. For those who worship other gods with countless desires (thereby) lessen the fruit (of their own deed but even so the fruit comes ultimately from me) therefore you offer everything to me in the manner preached earlier; regard everything as pervaded by me. This indeed is sannyāsa yoga (the yoga of renunciation). This I have declared already quite clearly and at length. This appropriate sense (of sannyāsa yoga) will become very well established (in your mind) on the attainment of the knowledge of God.

**IX. 32, 33**

Now the verse beginning māṁ hi: [In this verse by the expression] pāpavonayah (‘those born in wicked wombs’) are meant animals, birds and reptiles; by strīyah (women) those that are ignorant, by vaiśyas (merchants etc.) those engaged in the occupation of farming etc. and by śūdras (serfs etc.) all of those who are excluded from
Vedic ritual and dependent on others for a living; even they, resorting to me, worship me indeed. When the (marvellous) deeds of the supremely compassionate God, such as the freeing of the elephant (from the jaws of the crocodile) are heard by the thousand, then what doubt can there be (of the salvation) of those of perverse conduct? Some say that this statement is meant to glorify the hrähmanas and the ksatriyas and it is not intended to indicate the accessibility of salvation on the part of women etc. They (who say so), denying the all-embracing power of God with their narrow intellects; being unable to bear the supreme kindheartedness of the supreme lord, going against sentences which clearly state the intended meaning such as “I hate none and love none”;10 “even if one be terribly depraved”11 and others; not accepting, on the strength of dualism the non-duality of the essence of God established through a host of irrefutable arguments; not noticing other scriptural contradictions (of theirs); joining issue repeatedly ‘how can you say this’, ‘how can you say this’; with their hearts penetrated and possessed by the supreme prejudice of birth etc., which has been completely accepted; turning askance their lowered face and eyes because of enmity, dissimulation and embarrassment, prating nonsense before all, – make themselves the butt of ridicule among the people— which serves to explain everything in advance!

Of this chapter there is the following summary verse:

In the non-dual brahmam there flows forth the supreme sakti with compassion for all. Therefore strive to obtain it.

Here ends the ninth chapter of the Gitārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva acārya Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER X

X. 1

The meaning which was expressed through the previous nine chapters, that very meaning is elaborated again in this chapter through every and each word. And so [the Lord] says [the verse beginning with] bhūya eva. Listen to what is being said again to clarify what has

10 See Bhagavadgītā IX. 29 (h).
11 See Bhagavadgītā IX. 30 (a).
already been said. Arjuna will also say likewise, "Tell me again" — such then is the purpose of the chapter. The rest has been explained, then why the repetition? For (thereby) doubt will be resolved. So the Lord said [the verse beginning with] bhūyā eva.

X. 4

Now the verse beginning with buddhi: ‘Freedom from delusion’ (asammohah) [here] means energetic exertion (utsāhah).

X. 9

[Now the verse containing the expressions] maccittā and bodhayantah parasparam: Through mutual enlightenment, that is, by the transmission (of knowledge) which grows as the instruction is passed on from one to another, they all come to possess the correct understanding, that there is (but) one God (who is present everywhere) having filled (everything) by his pervasiveness. The idea is that the quality of (devotion to) the great lord (Śiva) is easily reached by them through the understanding that he is possessed of all powers, is all-pervasive and possesses the form of one’s ātman.

X. 10-42

The comment made [now covers the verses] beginning with tesām satatayuktānām till the end of the chapter and should be read (as covering all of them) simultaneously. Now [after the verse beginning with] tesāmevānu- (kampārtham) [the sage Vyāsa] cites six verses containing the questions of Arjuna. Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks verses ending with [the verse beginning with] athavā bahu. By [the verse beginning with] ahamātmā [He] wards off separateness. Otherwise in statements such as ‘(among) the mountains I am the Himalayas’, God is Himalaya alone and nothing else (could be assumed) — by such exclusion the unitary vision of brahman would have been annulled on account of the absence of indivisibility (of brahman which such statements seem to imply). Therefore this lesson is put together for one whose mind

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2 See Bhagavadgītā X. 18.
3 Bhagavadgītā X. 10.
4 Bhagavadgītā X. 42.
5 In the critical edition these are seven, Bhagavadgītā X. 12-18, inclusive of both. In the Kāśmirā recension Ś6 omits X-15.
6 Bhagavadgītā X 42
7 Bhagavadgītā X 20
cannot grasp that (concept of) indivisible pervasiveness as such but who wants to know about it. Now, in conclusion, after having expressed the notion of difference-cum-non-difference through [the verse containing the expression] \( \text{yad-yad vībhūtimat sattvam,} \) (the Lord) concludes with [a note of] non-difference [with the verse\(^9\) which may be paraphrased thus:] \( \text{ātavā kiṁ bahunai 'tena viśabhya 'ham ity ekām-} \)
\( \text{ṣena jagat sthitāh.} \)\(^10\) As has been said [in the Puruṣasūkta:] ‘A quarter of Him comprises all the creatures; three-fourths of Him is immortal in the sky’.\(^11\) It is for the sake of created beings that all the divine essence of His, shining forth in various variegated forms, becomes the object of perception.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

[Even] the slayer of a brahmin may obtain peace by forcefully dissolving\(^12\) into the one true principle whatever approaches his desire or his organs of sense\(^13\).

Here ends the tenth chapter of the Gītārthasāgra composed by the great Śaiva ācārya Abhinavagupta.\(^14\)

**CHAPTER XI**

XI. 1

Arjuna questions (Kṛṣṇa) in order to directly realize the sense of what has been spoken of in the immediately preceding chapter.\(^1\) The course of action, the purpose of which was understood through (the previous) teaching, becomes (all the more) evident\(^2\) when experienced directly in one’s consciousness; for the sake (of achieving that) are these statements and responses uttered (which now follow). Arjuna said [the verse beginning with] \( \text{madanugrahāya.} \)

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\(^8\) Bhagavadgītā X. 41.
\(^9\) Bhagavadgītā X. 42.
\(^10\) Why say more? I abide having planted (Myself) with a fraction (of Myself) in the universe.
\(^11\) RgVeda X. 90. 3.
\(^12\) Lit. causing it to wail.
\(^13\) Brahmahālit means the slayer of a hrāhmuna or the slayer of brahman.
\(^14\) The Nirnayasāgar edition adds: “The glorious Teacher of Rājānaka.”

\(^1\) Read a period after \( \text{prechati} \) and not a dash as in the Nirnayasāgar edition.
\(^2\) This refers to the imminent Viṣvarūpaḍarśana.
XI. 6

The Lord spoke [the verses beginning with] pasvam me etc.

XI. 9

Sañjaya spoke [the verses beginning with] evam etc.

XI. 15

Arjuna said [the verses beginning with] pasvami etc.

XI. 18

Now the verse beginning tvam aksaram: [The word] satvadharma-gopta [is to be understood thus]. The Sātvatas are those who have offered the quality of goodness (sattva)—which has the nature of not making the differentiation between the two, jñāna and karma, appear—to the supreme guru, the great god Śiva; and for whom the truth, of the nature of light, shines forever. Their dharma is one in which the entire cosmos gets folded up (or destroyed) on account of devotion to the renunciation of incessant grasping, and which surpasses all (other) paths. (Lord Kṛṣṇa) acts as a protector of such a dharma. This indeed is the secret purport of this chapter, and one on which light has often been shed by me in (my) Devistotravivriti.3 That (secret is such as) is automatically understood by those who are well-instructed and endowed with an understanding heart. What is the point then in being verbosely repetitive about what is obvious.

NOTE: The critical edition reads sāsvatadharmagopta for sātvatadharma-gopta. The latter is the Kāsmiri reading.

XI. 31, 33

Now the verse (containing the expressions) akhyāhi and na hi prajānāmi: [Arjuna says:] I do not understand [the nature of] your activity; what is the purpose underlying the fierceness (of the form revealed to me)? Therein the Lord’s4 reply [is as follows:] That this world is said to be of a nature which possesses both knowledge and ignorance

3 Seems to be another name for Abhinavagupta’s Devistotravivaraṇa, a commentary on the Devistotra of Anandavardhana to which Abhinavagupta has already referred in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā VI. 30. Kanti Chandra Pandey does not seem to notice this second reference by Abhinavagupta in the Gitārāja to Devistotravivriti (sic) (vide Kanti Chandra Pandey, Abhinavagupta—An Historical and Philosophical Study, p. 34).

4 Read ‘bhavavatitvarunī’ for ‘bhavatitvarunī’.
on account of feeding on pure, impure and mixed perceptions has
often been aphoristically stated; in this chapter the secret is merely
touched upon⁵ for the sake of those capable of knowing it. So be it.
For how many more lines must we continue this painful business of
writing on? Herein, when it was said: 'In respect to these, who have
(already) been killed by me, you are the (mere) occasion (for their
killing. Therefore kill them and) be victorious'⁶— therein the Lord
gave his reply to what Arjuna has asked earlier in the verse beginning
with na caī 'tad vidmaḥ kutarat etc.⁷

XI. 32

The Lord said [the verses beginning with] kālo 'smi etc.

XI. 35

Sañjaya said [the verse beginning with] etac chrutvā.

XI. 36

Arjuna said [the verse beginning with] sthāne hṛṣikeśa. Prakṛtyā
means through litanies of praise.

XI. 37

[The clause] sad asat tātparam is now glossed. Sat or truth is so
called on account of its substantiality; asat or untruth is so called
because it cannot be an object of (genuine) perception. Or else [the
expression may be understood thus:] Even when there is a void in
the mind, it is embraced by the various individual specificities of
speech⁸ (in their unmanifest form) and (thus) obtains to various
forms of cognition which are not really a part of the reality of
the supreme brahman. [The supreme reality] is beyond the sat-form
and the asat-form—that is, that form of the reality [which is beyond
both sat and asat] is obtained when the awareness of both (the sat
and the asat) has disappeared.

XI. 38, 39

Now the verses beginning with tvām and vāyu occur.

⁵ Lit. scratched.
⁶ Abhinavagupta here paraphrases Bhagavadgītā XI. 33.
⁷ Bhagavadgītā II. 6.
⁸ The translation is conjectural. The text is hard to determine.
XI. 47
The Lord said [the verse beginning with] mayā. The frequent repetition of salutations (namonamah) is expressive of the superabundance of devotion. Those forms of His which were spoken of by the Lord in the past chapters, those very forms Arjuna describes as having been directly perceived by him by means of hymns of praise. Any (further) commentary on that will only involve repetition, so we pause.

XI. 54
[The verse beginning with] bhaktyā tv ananyayā etc. follows.

XI. 55
Now the verse beginning matkarmakṛt: As [the love of God] confers, when everything is withdrawn (in universal)⁹ dissolution, a place in the essence of brahman, in the form of supreme peace, therefore at the conclusion (of this chapter) the benignness (i.e. the benign form) of God (has been shown). On those in whom throbs a love of God pleasing on account of knowing nothing else (but God’s love), the realization of the universal essence of Väsudo deva descends effortlessly, through the marvellous effect of the various teachings spoken of already such as “Väsudo deva is all”¹⁰ etc.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

Since it is one single consciousness which illumines (all the) three acquisi tions—pure, impure and mixed, the equanimous sage (dwells) viewing the three worlds— the bhūḥ (earth), the bhūvah (the atmosphere) and the svah (heaven)—with equanimity.

Here ends the eleventh chapter of the Gitärthasāñgraha, composed by the great Śaiva ācārya Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XII

XII. 1, 2, 3
[Arjuna’s] question is meant to make known the distinction between those who, in the aforesaid manner worship the personal God and

⁹ See Bhagavadgītā XI. 50, 51.
¹⁰ Bhagavadgītā VII. 19.
those who worship the ātman (i.e. the impersonal God) alone. The Lord said the verse beginning with mayy āveśya [in reply]. Those who abide in devotion to the great God (Śiva) and whose existence is naturally pervaded by (love for) Him — they in my opinion are yogins par excellence. This assertion is made [in the verse beginning with] ye tv aksaram etc.

XII. 4, 5

Now the verse beginning sanniyamya: Those who worship the imperishable brahman impose on the ātman all the attributes of God by such characteristic descriptions as ‘The ātman is all-pervasive etc.’. Thus, although those who worship brahman also go to me, they put themselves to more trouble. In spite of an effortlessly attainable God being present, the excellence of whose host of qualities is naturally perfect, they (first) impose on the ātman the octad of qualities such as sinlessness etc., and then worship it and undertake a double effort.

XII. 6, 7

Now the verses beginning ye tu: Those who, in accordance with earlier teaching, cast everything on me, I am their saviour from all afflictions such as obstacles etc. [In re the expression āveśitacetasām, the manner in which] the absorption of the mind [in me has to be accomplished] has already been explained. Moreover, this indeed is the best (form) of yoga on account of its naturalness. As I have (said) in my hymn:

When (someone) causes some spiritual realization to come about, by the bringing about of it made possible by a samādhi induced by a special method, posture and disciplined state, it is not a state of same samādhi (citi) as yours which is everlasting, which bears its own essence (and which) therefore in the proximity of the triad1 is clearly experienced right here. (Then) the fire of Realization comes to be known instantaneously and simultaneously, gained on its own; having exhausted its fuel (in the form of desires etc.) and resorting to its own independence, when it follows upon the tears, trembling and horripilation from (the overflow of)

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1 Obscure. According to the pratyahhijnâ system “there are three triads, the higher, the lower and the combined (Para, Apara and Parāpara). The first consists of Śiva, Sakti and their union; the second of Śiva, Sakti and Nara; and the third of three goddesses Parā, Aparā and Parāparā. It is called Trika because it deals with all the three triads” (Kanti Chandra Pandey. Abhinavagupta: An Historical and Philosophical Study, pp. 295-6).
natural joy; manifestly disregarding the body. Only then, O goddess, the great god Śiva comes to be known, free from the (deluding?) beautiful essence of your body, who is the destroyer of the bonds of the helpless.

XII. 9

Now the verse beginning athu: [The word] samādhatum means to cause to become devoted or absorbed.

XII. 9, 10

Now the verse beginning athaitadapi and ending with avāpsyasi: Without the strongest possible divine grace and the grace of the feet of the guru who has been pleased for a long time, absorption (in God) is difficult to achieve — hence constant practice is recommended. If even constant practice is not possible on account of the obstacles which arise, then in order to destroy them perform action, that is, pūjā, japa, svādhyāya, homa etc.

XII. 11

[Now the verse beginning] athaitad api: If you are unable to perform these actions directed towards God because of ignorance of the procedures enjoined in the scriptures, then cast all that on me by means of self-surrender: this is the intended message. With this very intention in mind has it been said by me in the Laghuprakriya:4

Whatever (action) was (performed) without the proper knowledge of what is to be done more and what less, what comes before and what after: whatever were devoid of concentration, or involved lapse of intelligence on my part, this miserable and perverse devotee of yours, O lord of all— please forgive them out of your grace. O Śiva, for thou art compassionate. Through the use of this hymn I surrender myself to Thee. May I never again become a fit place for sorrows without (good) reason.

In the authoritative texts of Śaivism this is what is meant by self-surrender.

XII. 12

Now the purport (of these remarks) is brought to a conclusion [with

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2 The expression ‘abhāṣapitī’ in the Nirnayāsāgara text needs to be disregarded. It does not occur in the B.O.R.I. manuscript.

3 Somewhat unaccountably both the Nirnayāsāgara and the B.O.R.I. texts have the form athaitadapi here, which is how XII. 11 commences and not XII. 9 which starts with atha vittum (vulgate) or athāvēṣavitum (Kāśmīri version).

4 Abhinavagupta also quotes from this text in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IV 28.
the verse beginning with) śreya hi etc. Jhāna is better, that is to say, (being a) soul absorbed in God is better than constant application—because that is what constant application results in. From that (mere devotional) absorption (in God), meditation on God is superior, it has its own special quality. More appropriate than meditation, which involves attachment to the attainment of the desirable, is the casting away of all fruits of action on devotion to God. Otherwise, if the form (of God) is not known, how (will the actions be) cast away? Upon abandoning the fruits of action (follows) absolute peace. Therefore knowledge characterized by absorption (in God) is primary because it lies at the very root.

XII. 13, 14, 19

Now the verse beginning advesṭā: Friendship is that from which comes freedom from jealousy; so also compassion. [Nirmamah means one who is free from the sense of] 'mineness' which means (saying) 'Thine' 'We' etc., that is. 'I am generous', 'I am brilliant'. [Nirhankārah means one who is free from ahankāra or] egoism (characterized by) being impatient (or intolerant) etc. He who is free from these two (is one who is called nirmamo-nirhankārah). Forgiveness is the absence of enmity towards a wicked enemy. [A person having these attributes] is ever a yogin by virtue of possessing a pacified mind even in the midst of all worldly dealings. [The expression] aniketah means one who has no such resolve "I must do this": partaking of the joys and sorrows, etc., as they are obtained at random, one who has his heart set on God easily attains supreme beatitude.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

One who has the good fortune of being absorbed (in God) by being overwhelmed by (a sense of) supreme felicity, experiences, of its own accord, in all states, the reality of brahman spontaneously.

Here ends the twelfth chapter of the Gitārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva acārya Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XIII

Introductory Note

The first verse commented on by Abhinavagupta does not exist in
the vulgate or the critical edition of the Bhagavadgītā. It is, however, found in some versions of the Kāsmīra recension of the Bhagavadgītā.\footnote{See Vishnu S Sukthankar and S K Belvalkar, eds., \textit{op. cit.}, pp 166-167}

That verse itself, however, comes in two readings. In one it is spoken by Krṣna,\footnote{\textit{ibid.}, p 166.} in the other by Arjuna.\footnote{\textit{ibid.}, p 167} On the basis of the internal evidence provided by Abhinavagupta in the gloss it is possible to identify the reading he had before him. It seems to have run as follows:

\begin{verbatim}
Śri Bhagavān uvācu
prakṛtim puruṣāṁ caiva
kṣetraṁ kṣetrajñaṁ eva ca /
etat te kathayiṣyāmi
jñānāṁ jñeyaṁ ca bhārata  //
\end{verbatim}

Abhinavagupta glosses this verse as follows:

Somewhere in the Vedas the \textit{kṣetrajña} is heard of as worthy of being worshipped. Is he the \textit{ātman} or God or else some other third entity—suspecting such a question the Lord instructs [through the verse beginning with] \textit{prakṛtim puruṣāṁ}.

XIII. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

For those involved in the process of \textit{sāṁśāra}, the body is the field (\textit{kṣetra}), wherein the seed of \textit{karma} sprouts. Therefore their \textit{ātman}, vexed by external defilement, is called ‘the knower of the field’ (\textit{kṣetrajña}).\footnote{Read \textit{rūsitah} for \textit{rūṣateh}.} For the enlightened that itself is the field. But there is a difference in [etymological] interpretation [to be met with in the case of the word \textit{kṣetrajña} as follows:] The \textit{kṣa} in \textit{kṣetra} may be connected with \textit{ksinoti} (\textit{ksī}) thus:] that which cuts asunder the bond of \textit{karma} by its dissipation through enjoyment [and the \textit{tra} in \textit{kṣetra} may be connected with \textit{trāyate} (\textit{trāi}) thus:] that which delivers one from the fear of birth and death; for such \textit{ātmans} the supreme soul Vāsudeva is the \textit{kṣetrajña}, that is to say, one who makes such a \textit{kṣetra} known. [But how can one get the sense of “making it known” (\textit{vedayati}) when the word \textit{kṣetrajña} translates as “knower of the field”?] In the root \textit{vid} the causative sense of the suffix (\textit{nīc}) should be understood...
as subsumed. Therefore He, by whose grace, that which is lacking in consciousness acquires the state of consciousness, he indeed is kṣetrajña and none else. But as particular and resorting to a form, possessing limited pervasiveness, it is called the ātman (i.e. the jivātman).

Lord Vāsudeva is the supreme soul on account of pervading all the fields (kṣetras) without any distinction. The (genitive) form mama is to be understood as an accusative [i.e. the expression mātan mama does not mean "knowledge about me or opinion about me" but rather that] I am to be known by this knowledge — this is what is meant. That by which anything becomes modified is called a modifier [or vikārin] and the word is used in verse XIII. 3 in this sense. The word samāsena, in the same verse, similarly means that [the Lord] cuts through questions [asked by Arjuna] with one common answer, without distinguishing among them individually. Although this has been spoken of many a time by the sages and through the Vedas as well, even so I speak of it briefly. The unmanifest is prakṛti. The senses, along with the mind, are eleven (in number). The fields of the senses such as form, etc., are five. Consciousness means the ability to perceive. The puruṣa is referred to as dhṛti (or fortitude).

Herein [i.e. in the listing of all the elements of kṣetra] in the end [appears dhṛti or puruṣa, which is me for] the collectivity of all actions — whether being initiated or concluded, such as passion, anger, etc., of all, right from that of brahma to that of an insect can be accounted for by me satisfactorily — (so) what else (remains?). Such am I always and such shall I (always) be. [What is referred to as] dhṛti, the bearer of life, characterized by respiration, is referred to in the esoteric texts of others by the word rāga.

XIII. 7

In this manner kṣetra and kṣetrajña have been explained. Now jñāna is described [in the verses beginning with] amānītvam.

XIII. 10, 11

Now the verse containing the expression ananyayoga: The uniform conviction that there exists nothing apart whatsoever from the supreme lord (Śiva), the supreme soul, that indeed is yoga — through that conviction is devotion to me (secured). [Because it is of this kind]

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5 The point to be borne in mind is that in true causatives the nie may occasionally be dropped.

6 See Panini 2. 3, 67.
such a devotion is unfailing (it never deviates or becomes corrupt) either because of the absence of all those desires which provide the occasion for corruption or on account of those (desires), which constitute the inner form of mental activities, having become one with the (purified) mind. Thus should it be construed everywhere (i.e. with respect to other expressions in the verse). What is opposed to this is ignorance, such as arrogance etc.

XIII. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

That which is the object of this knowledge is spoken of [in the verses beginning with] jñeyam yat tat, etc.? Everywhere undivided, within and without all the senses, the (light of) lights—it is described by such characteristic descriptions—as beginningless etc. (to indicate) its conduciveness for embracing the nature of brahman and its non-difference from consciousness which has been stated in all the various schools. These characteristic expressions have been explained already, so why indulge in futile repetition. He who knows this triad of kṣetra, jñāna and jñeya—he is my devotee and he attains to my state.

XIII. 19, 20, 21

These characteristics having been detailed, they are now examined [in the verses beginning with] prakṛti, etc. That prakṛti, which is responsible for the creation of the body and the senses, is also eternal because of the absence of any other cause (which would account for it). The modifications are (objects such as) cloth etc. Prakṛti is the reason behind the existence of causal relationships. Purusa is the enjoyer on account of his primacy [which is stated in the verse beginning with] purusa etc.

XIII. 22

Now the verse beginning with upadrastā: There is indeed the mutual dependence of purusa and prakṛti like that of the lame and the blind. Therefore this is referred to by the authors of the scriptures under various names, such as “one is form, the other the onlooker” etc. [i.e. prakṛti is form, purusa is the onlooker etc.]. In this respect this is the meaning aimed at: there is prakṛti, its fourteenfold modifications constitute creation. And there is purusa: all of these are

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7 There is a lacuna in the Nirmayasāgara text: after jñeyam yat tadviddmā add suravah sarvendriyabahirantu-avibhaktām jyotiṣām iti kṣetram (unāduttā etc.), as per the B.O.R.I. manuscript.
unborn and eternal, upon being blended in the essence of brahman, for there is nothing apart from that.

XIII. 23, 24, 25

And it is also said [the verse beginning with] ya evam vetti. Thus the yogin who, in this manner, knows purusa, prakrti, the qualities and their modifications—all through the uniform vision of brahman, he is indeed liberated whatever and howsoever his situation—this is what is meant. This type of preeminent knowledge is worshipped by some as being identical with the âtman; by others in the Sânkhyan manner mentioned earlier; by others through karma, and by yet others who are keen listeners and who, not knowing this truth by themselves worship it as revealed—they too go beyond death, beyond saṁsâra. The essence of God worshipped in whatsoever way, carries one across (the ocean of saṁsâra), therefore in every way ever abide in it—this is what is said.

XIII. 26, 28

Now the verse beginning yâvat: Whatever moves and does not move—it is not possible for any of that to be beyond ksetrajña (God)—therefore (thinking thus) the yogin is always equanimous and does no violence to himself, that is to say, does not cause himself to fall in the ocean of saṁsâra, hard to cross.

XIII. 29

Now the verse beginning prakṛtyai'va hi. He whose understanding is firmly of this kind that prakṛti alone acts and not I in any wise, he, although performing all actions (actually) does nothing. In this way he is not an agent of action.

XIII. 30, 31, 32

Or else, when, on account of the magnitude and all-pervasiveness (of the âtman) one sees the distinctness and diversity of all creatures as present within the âtman: and regards them as impelled by the âtman alone, then too, on account of being the doer of everything, he does not become subject to the smear (of karma). For the supreme soul, although situate in the body, is not smeared, like the sky.

* The reading in the critical text is eva for hi.
XIII. 33

Now the verse beginning yathā prakāśayati: How can one single supreme soul (paramātmān) embrace several fields (ksetras)?: this doubt is removed by the celebrated illustration of the sun. By “all fields” is meant all fields (kṣetra) movable and immovable.

XIII. 34

Now the verse beginning kṣetra kṣetrajñāyoh: In this manner what has been spoken of in this chapter—what is the object of knowledge (jñeya), knowledge (jñāna), the difference between the field (kṣetra) and the knower of the field (kṣetrajña), the difference between creatures (bhūta) and nature (prakṛti) and the achievement of release through a slight modification in the characteristic relationship between the creatures (bhūta) and nature (prakṛti)—those who see those things with a divine eye, unassailable everywhere (and) characterized by knowledge, they, having obtained the (quintessential) quality of Vāsudeva—indeed attain it.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

The distinction between purusa and prakṛti is only drawn by the confused.
The perfect ones regard the world as pervaded by one pure ātman.

Here ends the thirteenth chapter of the Gitārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva ācārya Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XIV

XIV. 1

The Lord said [the verse beginning with] parāṁ bhūyah: I shall speak of that very knowledge which has been spoken of earlier, once again, thoroughly and at great length in order to depict the quality of each guna. “Knowing which” (vajñātvā) - by this the manifestly convincing nature and logical demonstrability of this knowledge is stated.

XIV. 2

Now the verse beginning idaim jñānam is glossed. [The ti suffix in the verbal form] vyāthanti is so an account of metrical exigency [as
it really should be vyathante and not vyathanti, but that would violate the metre. Elsewhere too (modifications in) the case of nominal and verbal suffixes should be similarly understood.

**NOTE:** The mention of tin suffix by Abhinavagupta is a bit vague as any verbal suffix—active or middle—can be referred to by tin. So what he really seems to imply but leaves unsaid is that the switch in the tin suffix from middle to active is due to metrical reasons.

XIV. 3, 4

Therein, at the very outset, the order of creation is described [in the verses beginning with] mama yoni- and sarvayoni.su. Giving up is easy when it is known what is to be given up and why. To me—who am indescribable as possessing the nature of supreme bliss belongs maha brahman, that (aspect of) brahman which has the power to make its own nature expand. I, resorting to my own power called vinurśa [i.e. "that power which gives rise to self-consciousness, will, knowledge, and action in succession"1] make the eternal atomic souls subject to the process of saṁśāra for the sake of obliging them.² Therefore the expansive power of God is called the Mother because it is the original cause of all beings and possesses a nature which brings forth the entire world. I, on the other hand, am the Father, the possessor of power (sakti), who am indefinable.³

XIV. 5

Now the verse beginning sattvam: And this embodied soul, by its very nature, is bound by the qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas for the sake of enjoyments which last till the attainment of salvation.

XIV. 6, 7

Now the verse beginning tatra sattvam: Rajas is of the nature of attachment; tamas is born of ignorance etc., in this manner their form (i.e. the form of the gunas) is described. Sattva is pure. [And rajas is described as tṛṣṇāṣuṇgaśaśudbhavam in verse XIV. 6 because] from it arise longing and attachment.

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1 A technical term in Kāśmīra Śaivism, see Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
2 In Śaivism, God, in addition to the functions of creation, preservation and destruction also performs two more: of concealment and bestowal of grace. He puts the souls through saṁśāra so that they may be rid of ignorance and realize their nature. Hence even subjecting them to saṁśāra is an act of favour. See T. M. P. Mahadevan, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
3 For this sense of avyāpyadeśaḥ see Māṇḍūkya Upanisad 1. 7.
XIV. 8

Now the verse containing the tāmas tu and pramāḍālāsya: Heedlessness (pramāda) consists of wasting away human life which is hard to obtain, which is obtained as the result of hundreds of spiritual merits accumulated over a long time and which is the sole cause for achieving salvation. As has been said with reference to the same: "Not a single moment of life (once lost, can be re-)gained by all the wealth in the world (lit. by all the jewels). He who wastes it away is heedless, wretched among men". Or as (has been said) in the Śrīmad-bhāgavata: "The night is taken away by sleep, and moreover, life by obstacles. The day. O king, in trying to obtain wealth and in supporting the family. Even though these hosts consisting of the physical body, children, wife etc. are unreal. one who is intoxicated by them, does not see (his) death (close at hand) even though seeing it (i.e. one remains blind to the prospect of his death)". Moreover: "Of what avail here are the numerous years (that stretch out) in the future for a heedless person. Much better the moment on hand which is capable of producing good". [Not heeding that moment— ] that is heedlessness. Indeed therein (in the Bhāgvata Purāṇa) in the eleventh canto the Lord has declared what is meant by the word suicide thus: "Having first easily obtained this human body hard to obtain, a ship well-designed with the guru at the helm and urged on by me with a favourable wind - that man who does not cross over the ocean of saṁsāra (given these favourable circumstances) is one who commits suicide". Laziness (ālasya) means slackness in performing good deeds. A completely woebegone state is [what is meant by] niḍrā [by taking the prefix ni to stand for niḥśrṣeṣṇa or completely and drā to stand for drāṇam or a wretched state].

XIV. 9

Now the verse beginning sattvaṁ. [The verbal form] saṁjaśayati means to cause to unite with.

XIV. 10

Now the verse beginning rajas tamaś ca: Sattva grows by predominating over rajas and tamaś. And rajas (by predominating over) sattva and tamaś. Tamaś (by predominating) over sattva and rajas. As has been said: "By the predominance of one over the other (comes about) the growth of the gunas".
XIV. 11, 12, 13

Now the verse beginning sarva: Rajas becoming prominent, greed, etc., arise in all the doors, that is, in all the senses, duly in regular succession. Similarly, darkness, etc., arise duly in regular succession from increase of tamas.

XIV. 14, 15

Now the verse beginning yadā: When sattva becomes predominant as a result of carrying on sāttvika practices ceaselessly throughout one's entire life, then follows the attainment by the deceased of the benign worlds. In the same way, on the departure of one who has constantly engaged in rājasika activities since his birth (follows) the attainment of the human condition for the sake of special enjoyments. Similarly, in that very manner, if tāmasika activities have been engaged in throughout one's entire life, then one is born in infernal, animal or vegetable bodies etc. Those who say that these results follow upon the predominance of sāttvika or other qualities only at the moment of death, (then) by saying that they have become (pre-)occupied with physical experience [i.e. they take a grossly physical view of the situation]. For in the case of everyone always at the last moment infatuation alone appears. In this commentary of ours there are other verses consistent with these ideas.

XIV. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20

Now the verses beginning karmanah: Here some unconnected verses have been conjured up some say, to be shunned as being repetitious. On the other hand, hearing about one who has gone beyond the gunas is indeed conducive to salvation.

XIV. 21

Now how does the embodied soul go beyond the gunas? With whatever mental disposition it always abides, this must be different from that which is characterized by the three gunas. With this in mind Arjuna asks [the question contained in the verse beginning with] kair liigaih:

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Read visisnopahhagāya for vi(sista)-miśrapahhagāya.
Abhinavagupta seems to refer to his glosses on VIII. 5, 6 etc.
The expression keva is significant here.
XIV. 22, 23

Herein by way of answer the Lord said [the verse beginning with] prakāśam ca. Although qualities such as sattva etc., are present in all things (or situations), even so the yogins do not get attached to those qualities such as sattva etc. nor feel aversion towards them. But rather these (gunas) are present only on account of the very nature of the body, they are not capable of upsetting me—reflecting thus they go beyond the gunas. Therefore is it said: the ignorant man who abides without discrimination, he is one who (really) knows for he possesses genuine knowledge. And also, he does not become agitated, that is, fall away from his true nature. This is the (yogic) technique of dealing with all actions—the firm understanding that all this that happens is out of the very nature of the senses etc., that are located in the body, and I do not seek the attainment of any fruit (therefrom).

XIV. 26, 27

This fundamental technique is preached with [the verse beginning with] mãni ca. [The particle] ca has been used in the sense of the exclusion of everything else. [That is to say, the expression mãm ca sevate means] he who serves me alone. In this way, he who, desirous of fruits etc., resorts only secondarily to me and primarily to the fruit is excluded (from consideration). For this devotion of his is not exclusively for me, as he is devoted to the fruit. He who, not desiring any fruit, with his heart permeated by the penetrating quality of God’s constant devotion, with his hair standing on end, his body trembling, a flood of tears flowing from his two eyes, quite dilated, answers only with silence though repeatedly badgered [with such questions] as ‘why are you dissimulating?’—he alone is purified by the intense unswerving devotion of the great lord (Śiva)—none else. On me being served, brahman is realized. Otherwise, if brahman is worshipped as inanimate then it will confer salvation which is devoid of any express quality—like sleep.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

One who is free from egoism and delusion under the influence of the nectar of scintillating devotion, such a person, even though present amidst the traffic of the gunas, is as good as having gone beyond them thereby.

Here ends the fourteenth chapter of the Gitārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva ācārya Abhinavagupta.
CHAPTER XV

XV. 1

The Lord spoke [the verses] beginning with ārdhavamūlam and ending with padam avyayam: It is said in other scriptures that aśvattha is everything; it alone is to be worshipped etc.—through this (verse) the significance of that for the worship of God and brahman is described. The root is of the nature of tranquility. It is on high, then one indeed attains abstention from worldly acts in every way. The Vedas are its foliage. Just as the size, fruitfulness, sapfulness, moisture, etc., is indicated by the leaves in the case of a tree, so is the conviction of the truth of brahman said to come through the scriptural portals marked by the Vedas.

XV. 2

[The expression guna-pravrddhah has to be understood as follows] (with branches) flourishing through the guṇas such as sattva etc. on account of being full (of creatures) beginning with the gods and ending with immovable ones.¹ The lower roots of such (a tree) consist of good and evil karmas.

XV. 3

"Having cut it" (taṁ chitvā)—in this expression the act (of cutting), which applies literally to the thing qualified (viśexya = aśvattham) must be taken, because of the context, as attracted to the qualifier (viśesanam), as in the (Mīmāṁsīc) injunction: "The staff-bearer should repeat the commands."

NOTE: In the injunction "The staff-bearer should repeat the commands,"¹² it is really the bearing of the staff which is primary: similarly, what is meant is that the well-entrenched roots of the tree are to be chopped down rather than the tree as such.

XV. 4, 5

Beyond that is the eternal tranquil station—that is (what they attain to).

¹ Place a period after devādisthāvarāntatūtyā.
XV. 6

Now the verse beginning with na tad: Therein the sun etc., find no place because they are bounded by time, because they can be objects of knowledge; because of their being of use to the senses. But that, (the ultimate reality), is beyond them on account of its being unbounded by time and space, because it is the (ultimate) cause of knowledge and because it is that which sets the senses in motion.

XV. 7

Now the verse beginning mamai 'vā 'niṣo: That this is a part of brahman -- this fragmentation of one (brahman) which is perfect in itself which continues to continuously possess consciousness and awareness is on account of a mistaken understanding (of its true nature): it is not that it really becomes fragmented. As the Vedas declare: "Not a spot lies beyond the universal scope of brahman". Such (heuristic) devices may be resorted to on occasion—thus there is no contradiction involved.

XV. 8

Reaches (avāpnoti) that is, grasps. Goes beyond (utkrāmati). that is, leaves. With these—just as the all-pervasive wind reaching a king in repose then having taken along the scent, goes elsewhere along with it—so the soul (enters into) the city, with the eight elements (i.e. the body). In this way the coming together of these at the time of creation and dissolution, having been spoken of; it is determined that even in the (intermediate) state of preservation—which has the forms of standing, sitting, mineness etc., and which is such in nature as grasps the sense objects—the activity is carried on along with it.

XV. 9, 10, 11

Now the verse beginning śrotanā: "The mind"—by this the heart is indicated. Therefore remaining present on account of being united with the physical condition, and leaving in order to take hold of another body, or for enjoying the sense-objects, the ignorant do not see it because they are unenlightened. But the enlightened ones, seeking out its nature of consciousness everywhere in unbroken samādhi know it as it is because they are diligent. In the case of the ignorant, how-

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3 Insert na in the text after apacāritam.
4 See Bhagavadgita VII 4
ever, even effort does not bear fruit because of the immaturity of their emotion. In autumn, even with the intensive application of resources such as water etc., the sown seeds are not able to come to fruition. Hence resources alone will not do the trick (i.e. work for it). The case of the water which is released by the wheel of the pond where water has collected in spring is, however, something else. Hardly is there a piece of earth, rendered desolate by winter, which shines up with the mere touch of the sun's rays—just so the effort of those who are not self-controlled, their effort not being full-fledged and whole-hearted, does not succeed. Therefore those who have obtained the (spiritual) means represented by Śaivite initiation etc., cannot be deemed to be practising the method in its entirety if their inner eye is full of complexes such as anger, attachment etc. As has been said: "On anger etc., being present, even the initiated do not obtain mokṣa".

XV. 12

Now the verse beginning yadāditya: Our guru explains the three forms of brilliance, namely, sun etc.,\(^5\) in (terms of) the manifestation of creation, preservation and dissolution (of the universe) as indicated in the tenth chapter. That the universe is supported by the fusion and diffusion (fission) of the five elements is the great glory of God alone—this is (proclaimed) by this (verse). For thus (is to be explained) the shining and sustaining quality of sun and fire, because of the identity of these two streams of tejas. Thus has it been said—that (brilliance) which resides in the sun etc.

XV. 13, 14

[Now the verse beginning with gām āvisya is glossed.] [I] having entered the earth [support it] with two halves [i.e. half-elements]. The lunar light illuminates and nourishes; the earth is (made) from the union of water and light. [It has been said earlier—that I am that brilliance] which is in the moon—by that part (of my brilliance which is in the moon) I nourish (the earth) this is said through half a verse. The brilliance pertaining to fire—characterized by illumination, nourishment, combustion, perspiration and digestion—that is from the union of earth, water, fire, and air: that is spoken of

\(^{4}\) These three forms are (1) the sun; (2) the moon and (3) fire, see Bhagavadgītā XV 12.
here through [the expression: I am that brilliance] which is in fire; and also through the verse beginning ahām vaiśvānarah (I am the universal fire.) Ether—being present in the form which provides room for perception. is all-pervasive.

XV. 15

Therefore, having spoken of the forms [in which God is] perceptible, [the Lord] speaks the verse beginning with sarvasya to indicate the ātman, transcendent by nature, having the form of the supreme lord, free from all modalities of discursive knowledge, the doer of all, which forms the back-drop of those various perceptible forms and possesses an independent consciousness. In possession of that nature of awareness which is independent of all that is grasped (by the senses) in all that is known, I, as vimarśa, and therefrom as the unique manifesting knowledge in the form of the great creation of the universe, am also indeed in the pot. [Apohana (concealment)] has for its essence the denial of the (presence of) the universal soul (in everyone) and has the nature of ignorance and uncertain knowledge; [smṛti] is the memory of the subject, pervaded by the form of māyā, which creates the individual souls. These, being withdrawn and reduced to only their forms of mental images or impressions, are again caused to re-appear—hence is the independent creative ability of God spoken of, as also possessing the nature of omniscience because it is into it that all items of knowledge are withdrawn (at the time of dissolution). By sarvaih is meant that the nature of the supreme lord has to be so understood in all the scriptures. On account of the authorship of the Vedas, and by way of creating the entire universe and establishing it in its form again by uprooting it in accordance with the fruits of actions God alone is free and the doer of everything. Others have explained apohana thus: through (works) composed by other (unaccomplished) ones the sense of duality (of the ultimate reality) comes about, so out of the truthfulness of the Self He composes Vedānta.

XV. 16, 17, 18, 19

Now the verses beginning with dvāv imau and ending with bhārata?: This is what is said through the verse (beginning) dvau imau purusau. In this world everyone, even though not of an enlightened disposition.

* Read karmaphalatatsambhandhādhvāratavā for karmaphalatatsambhandhādhvāratvā.

1 i.e. Bhagavadgītā XV. 16-20
knows his conscious body, composed of various elements such as earth, etc., as perishable; so duality does not disappear on account of the ignorance of the people. I, conferring my grace on everyone, am to be known, after cutting the knot of duality, as pervading the whole world. I am beyond the perishable because the creatures are inert. I am beyond the imperishable on account of the denial of the all-pervasiveness of the ātman upon its non-realization. In the world and in the Vedas, by statements such as these “He is the supreme puruṣa”, that very pair of paramātmans (or supreme souls) is referred to. Knowing thus, worshipping me, the all-pervasive one, as the essence of brahma, knowing everything as pervaded by me (whosoever) in various ways e.g. images, with proper knowledge, worships me alone, whatever he sees, (he perceives) through the form of God etc. As has been said by me myself in the Śivaśaktivinābhavastotratra: “What is not a hymn of praise for thee, for all words indeed constitute your body! In all forms, born in the mind and external to it I was associated (with you)”. “O benign one, O suppressor of the inauspicious—regarding everything in this universe as emerging spontaneously, there is not a single moment when I am not engaged in your praise, the holy repetition of your name, worship or meditation”.

XV.420

Now the verse beginning iti: It is most recondite (guhyatamam) because it propounds the non-duality of everything. True knowledge consists in knowing things as they are and not (in espousing) a worldly point of view. And through knowing things as they are comes true fulfillment, not with such actions as defeating enemies, obtaining wealth, enjoying women etc. The particle ca here is expressive of wonder. Through that (knowledge) is true fulfilment to be had. By this mere knowledge (and no action): this is the great wonder. By the word iti, the conclusion of the treatise is indicated. From something being concluded one knows that what was to be said has been fully said. For instance, in the XVIth chapter only Arjuna’s eligibility (as a receiver of spiritual instruction) is established, nothing is preached. Daivi or divine attributes are those which are such (divine) and āsuri or demoniac attributes are such as are pervaded by ignorance. You have obtained to the divine attribute, pervaded by knowledge, this much alone is the purport. That he will say [in the verse beginning with] ma śucāḥ saripadāṁ daivim.

* Bhagavadgītā XVI. 5.
Therefore earlier, through the device of the account of the battle of the gods and the demons at the time of the depiction of the clash of knowledge and ignorance it was indicated that there is a conflict between knowledge and ignorance. Similarly in explaining things primarily for a disciple, as the occasion required, something else was also said—hence two (additional) chapters—will also come about. The instruction is concluded right here. In every state one should seek intense devotion to God—for achieving that all else has been said earlier. Supreme felicity lies in total devotion to the true nature of God.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

Abandoning the great delusion of duality, and performing a meditation pervaded by brahman, the sage, even in worldly dealings may always remain merged (in God).

Here ends the fifteenth chapter of the Gitârthasângraha composed by the great Śaiva ācârya Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XVI

XVI. I

Etad buddhā (realizing this)—it was said thus.1 [Now what is meant by realization?] Realization means (a kind of) knowledge, other than revealed knowledge, other than knowledge pervaded by ideation, reflection and logic involving ‘this’, ‘thus’, ‘in this manner’, (though) following upon the knowledge pervaded by ideation, reflection and the logic of ‘this’, ‘thus’, ‘in this manner’ through deliberation examination and consultation; (‘realization’ is the kind of knowledge which) consists of a cognition which is devoid of the downgrading of dissimilar experiences and is gained after the acquisition of the intellectual concept (âkâra) and its experiential content (vijñâna), well-practised. Thus the lord will say, “Do as you please having reflected over it thoroughly”.2

Therein, in the matter of revealed knowledge there exists the primacy of the guru and the scripture indeed. In the knowledge consisting of

1 In Bhagavadgītā XV. 20.
2 In Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 63.
logic, reflection and emotion it is the ability to deliberate (by oneself) and the extraordinary good qualities of the disciple which are primary. Therefore, with the intention (of saying) that this (quality) is possessed by Arjuna; and in order to provide the proper context for the statement being made, namely "having thought it over", the Lord, the Master, with the intention of making Arjuna gird up his loins, says [the verse beginning with] abhayam.

Ignorance is indeed of the nature of tanas, comprised of demoniac parts, it is held in check by knowledge which has grown strong and which holds on to the divine element: such is the nature of the thing. You have attained to the sattvic divine element which possesses the nature of knowledge; therefore getting rid of the ignorance inside you characterized by confusion, perform the act enjoined by the scripture which is characterized by the killing of one's enemies and pertains to the knowledge of the external (world). Thus commences the chapter.

XVI. 2

Moreover, these characteristic marks of (being imbued with) the divine element are quite obvious. [These consist of:] victory over the senses; (and) steadfastness — the absence of fickleness which consists of acting without weighing the pros and cons.

XVI. 3

Valour [is another such quality which] consists of getting rid of (timid) moderation through gaining confidence in oneself.

XVI. 5

These are the divine attributes. They are conducive to your salvation because they remove desires. Therefore do not grieve thus, "how will I attain happiness if I kill my brothers, etc.". The rest is clear.

XVI. 6

Now the verse beginning dvau: These divine attributes have been spoken of, such as fearlessness, etc.

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\(^5\) Note that the word mitävä generally has a positive meaning in the sense of moderation, but seems to have been used here in a negative sense.

\(^4\) The actual text uses the singular number: translated in the plural to avoid awkwardness.
XVI. 7, 8

[Now] the demoniac is described [in the verse beginning with] pravrttim ca etc. Pravrtti (raises the question) whence has (all) this arisen? Nivṛtti (raises the question): where does it disappear? Akiñcita-kām (consists) in (holding the view) that nothing exists apart from the immediately perceivable.

XVI. 11, 12

Their worries last till the dissolution of the universe; they are unceasing on account of the non-cessation (of the process of) creation and dissolution. [Now the clause beginning with] etāvat: [For them] the enjoyment of pleasures is the supreme end and by its non-attainment (lit. loss) supreme anger (results in them). Therefore is it said that they are obsessed with passion and anger.5

XVI. 16

[They are] “bewildered by many a fancy” on account of indecision. [They fall] in the foul hell, that is, the hells called avīci,6 etc. and [continue to be a victim of] the continuous process of birth and death (i.e. saṁsāra).

XVI. 17

They indeed perform sacrifices. What is meant is that the sacrifices are fruitless. By anger everything is destroyed — this is the meaning. Or else [the expression nāmayajñāiḥ means that] they perform sacrifices in name only. Or else, they are performed for the sake of name, for the sake of fame — whereby the reputation spreads that “He is a performer of sacrifices” — they are fraudulent indeed, they bear no fruit.

XVI. 18

On account of anger, etc., bearing enmity towards the people they bear enmity towards me indeed.

XVI. 19, 20, 21

I, Vāsudeva, have my abode in all; bearing enmity towards themselves (or the ātman) they act in such a way as to bring evil on them—

5 Overlook the comma in the gloss in the Nirnayaśāgara text.
6 It is interesting to note that avīci is “the deepest and the most unpleasant of Buddhist purgatories” (A. L. Basham, op. cit., p. 278).
selves, which is the cause for their falling into hell: them I throw into demoniac wombs. Because the triad of passion etc. (i.e. kāma, krodha and lobha) is the door to hell, therefore give them up.

XVI. 23, 24

Do not (think) that “These are merely human words so they may be disregarded”, because in this respect the eternal scripture is the authority [— this is said in the verse beginning with] yah śāstravidhim. Au contraire, one who gives up the way enjoined by the scriptures and uses his own intelligence to decide what to do and what not to do falls into hell. Therefore, not disregarding the scriptures, do not use your own discretion as to whether to act or not — this is what is intended.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

In the absence of proper understanding do not use your own intelligence to decide what to do, but rather (decide) in accordance with what is laid down in the scriptures — the scriptures promote understanding.

Here ends the sixteenth chapter of the Gitārthasaṅgraha of the great Śaiva ācārya Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XVII

XVII. 1

Arjuna said [the verse beginning with] ye śāstravidhim. Those who conduct themselves without relying on scriptural injunctions, what becomes of them, this is the question.

XVII. 2

Herein the answer is given by the Lord in accordance with faith [through the verse] trividhā etc. Therein the intended meaning is as follows. Śāstra (i.e. the true understanding of the scripture) is indeed such — it is devoid of any prejudice on account of a point of view contaminated by partisanship, firm on account of mature reflection, having such a nature as produces the fruit etc., that comes through firm reflection from the free realization (of truth): which possesses the nature of supreme brahman in its aspect of para vāk which is vīmārśa in its pure and undisturbed state; which on account of its
free expansiveness flows from within, being the nature of pure realization outside, and whose sublimest form as pradhåna\textsuperscript{1} etc., becomes manifest in external confluence. As has been said: dharma has the Vedas as one of its sources and the memorial law and conduct of those who know it as another.\textsuperscript{2} It (i.e. scripture) of its own accord, discriminates between right and wrong for the sake of instructing in what conduces to one's good and what does not. Those who by nature possess an extremely sensitive heart on account of the super-abundance of the quality of sattva, their conduct is as good as possessing scriptural force. Another (with his mind) made turbid by rajas and tamas does not act according to the āstrās even when so doing because he cannot follow them fully. Only among those possessed of sattva does āstra bear fruit. As the scripture itself says: "He whose hands and feet and mind are well-controlled and who possesses knowledge, austerities and proper conduct, he achieves the fruit of going on a pilgrimage". None else on account of not being well-controlled. Therefore it is the intended meaning of this chapter that the (true) meaning of the scripture bears fruit among those who have forsaken passion (kāma), anger (krodha) and infatuation (moha). This is thus elaborated, but not expounded further because the meaning is clear; we write only to remove textual inconsistencies.

XVII. 3, 4

The Lord [said the verse beginning with] sattvānurūpā: The word sattva here is a synonym of "one's own nature" (svabhāva). This puruṣa, the ātman, is invariably connected with faith (sraddhā) which is beyond all activities; he (the puruṣa) should be realized as pervaded by it.

XVII. 5

Now the line aśāstravihitāṁ ghorānir tapyante ye tapo janāḥ: Therefore, because they perform austerities thought out by themselves (and not as enjoined by the scriptures) they, on the other hand, are characterized by tamas.

XVII. 6

Now the clause bhutagrāmam acetanam:\textsuperscript{3} [They are described as]

\textsuperscript{1} Read pradhāna for pradhâna.
\textsuperscript{2} taddvidāṁ ca smṛtisēle is a paraphrase of Manusmṛti II. 6.
\textsuperscript{3} The vulgate reading is acetasah.
lacking in consciousness on account of absence of discrimination. They torture me (by performing austerities) because they do not follow the scriptural injunctions.

XVII. 7

Food is also threefold, with distinctions of sattva etc., so also sacrifice, austerities and charity. [This is stated in the verse beginning with] āhāras tv api.

XVII. 10

Now the verse beginning yātayāmanī: [Yātayāmanī] is that whose time is past (i.e. stale).

XVII. 11

"Having concentrated the mind" [manah samādhāva], that is, having calmed it with firm resolution.

XVII. 12

[Now the clause] dambhārthanī: Pretence (dambha), that is, that people may know me to be this kind of person (without one sincerely wanting to be such).

XVII. 13

[A yajña is tāmasa if it is] vidhihina (devoid of proper ordinance), that is, devoid of the proper rites mentioned in the scriptures — that (kind of a) sacrifice is more elaborately described by adjectives such as "in which no food is distributed" (asṛṣṭānānī) etc.

XVII. 14

Now the verse beginning devadvija: Ārjavam means straightforwardness. Dhrṣṭatā (brashness) stops at nothing (i.e. keeps no secrets).

XVII. 15

The nature of truth is described by (the expression) priyahitam — sweet and salutary. A statement which is agreeable at the moment (when it is uttered) and beneficial later on is called truth and not merely stating things as they actually happened.

XVII. 16

[The expression bhāvasaṁsuddhi means] due purity of motive.
XVII. 17, 18, 19

Now the verses beginning with śraddhayā and ending with udāhṛtam: Faith is also involved in the three kinds of austerities (tapas). Śātvika tapas involves faith which is pervaded by the sativa guna; rājusika tapas involves faith in the quality of rajas, that is, pretence (dambha) etc.; and (the kind of austerity) firmly established in tamas involves faith (in such activities pervaded by tamas as) in causing another's destruction. Thus the threefold austerities are accompanied by (a corresponding kind of) faith—this is what the sage says.

XVII. 20, 21, 22

Now the verse beginning with dātavyaṁ: The mere injunction to "give" is to be followed—this is the cause of the defectiveness (of the sacrifice) on account of the defect of giving with reluctance, a niggardly amount, etc. And the act of charity is falsified (i.e. not performed as it should be) on account of the falsification of what is to be given away in it etc. In this way the ritual acts of worldly people in accordance with the threefold intent such as sātvika etc., have been explained.

XVII. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27

Now how do those, whose understanding has gone beyond the perils of the three guṇas, perform ritual acts; their manner is described [in the verse] beginning with aum tat sad, etc. Aum, tat and sat—by these three words there is the description, the encounter, of brahman. Therein by aum it is indicated that the scriptural injunction (regarding yajña etc.) should be accepted as long as one is alive. By tat a pronoun, which is only expressive of the general and incapable of any specific determination, the non-seeking of the fruits (of ritual acts offered) in the brahman is spoken of, because of the absence of any seeking without the special mention of what is sought after. Besides, even in the case of the acceptance of all particular actions, of all fruits, (there is the absence of the attainment of any special fruit) on account of non-attachment to any special fruit although one is the performer of all action. Sat, by this report, praise is mentioned. Yajñas etc., though performed, acquire the quality of tamas if performed with the thought that (the performance of) yajñas etc. is evil. Therefore regarded as a duty (even though) performed with a specific result in mind, (a sacrifice performed as) sat is not a
cause of bondage, so that even those who perform yajña etc., regarding it as a duty, are not bound. With this very intention has it been said in the ādiparvan:

Tapas is no bondage, study is no bondage, natural performance of Vedic rites is no bondage (even) much seizure of wealth is no bondage, but all of them, affected by attachment, are bondage.

[The word] kalka [repeatedly used in the verse cited above] means bondage. [The word] svābhāvika [in the verse quoted above, in the expression svabhāvikō vedavidhiḥ] means that the Vedas etc., along with the six ancillary sciences, should be studied by the brāhmaṇa without any specific reason (i.e. desire). [The word] prasahya [similarly in the above verse] means in a manner consistent with what is scripturally or socially acceptable. [The word] bhāvopahatā [similarly in the above verse] means these are the cause of bondage when affected by a mind which is united with the three guṇas such as sattva etc. Therefore yajña etc., so long as the body exists, should be performed, and action should be performed for its sake such as earning, etc.

Or else, by aum is propounded the pacification of the phenomenon (of saṁsāra); by tat the nature (of the supreme) free from desire, only touched by the nascent wave of the universe and by sat, notwithstanding the perfection (of the supreme principle) the coming into being of various natures which causes plurality in the (reality to appear), which possesses tranquility and (perfect) freedom of will. Moreover, it has been said that (the word sat) can be used in the sense of reality and goodness.4 Thereby, having first presented the supremely tranquil form (of brahman), that supreme form (is) then sported, which is accompanied with waves in the form of desire—pervaded by the desire to give, to perform sacrifice, to perform austerities in the midst of which the whole body of ceremonies and the performers of dāna, yajña and tapas enjoined in Hindu religious law is fulfilled. This indeed is the equilibrium state of the triad and the natural form free from destruction—so then, whose, what, how, wherefrom and whereby should any fruit (of such action) come about?

XVII. 28

Now the ritual act performed by one lacking in faith, of tāmasic nature, is futile in every way and only results in causing fatigue to the

4 Bhagavadgītā XVII. 26 (a) is quoted here.
body of performers brought together to perform it. (Therefore) never should one be lacking in faith—(this is the purport of the verse beginning with) aśraddhāyā: Aṣut is that which is not recommended; therefore for those endeavouring to perform recommended ritual everything is easily achieved.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

The intentness is the same as of the (regular) performer of ritual: and the ritual act is also the same, even so for those possessed of true knowledge (the same ritual act) ends up as one leading to mokṣa.

Here ends the seventeenth chapter of the Gitārthasaṅgṛaha, composed by the great Śaiva ācārya, Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XVIII

XVIII. 1

Arjuna said the verse beginning sannyāsasyā: It has been said earlier "he is a tyāgin";1 and "he is the wise one";2 and also "he is a sannyāsin and yogin, and not one who is without a fire"3 etc. Hence this question (of Arjuna being one who is) desirous of knowing, through hearing (from Kṛṣṇa) who is superior between the tyāgin and the sannyāsin.4

XVIII. 2

Herein the Lord replied [through the verse beginning with] kāmyā-nāṁ: Optional rites (kāmya) are such as those of agniṣṭoma, etc. Now the line beginning with sarvakarma: Tyāga (or renunciation) means the renunciation of the fruits of all actions — obligatory (nitya); occasionally obligatory (naimittika) and optional (kāmya) — even upon their being performed. Whatever remains to be said touching (the matters discussed) in this chapter has already been discussed in detail by (scholars such as) Bhāṭṭa Bhāskara and others, so what is the

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1 See Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 11: this quotation, though cited as pūrvakta, really occurs later.
2 See Bhagavadgītā IV. 18.
3 See Bhagavadgītā VI. 1.
4 Read śravanād viśeṣant jiṣṭasoh etc.
point in attempting a display of redundancy when we are committed
to abide by our resolve to shed light only on the concealed meaning of
the verses of the Gitā (in this commentary).

XVIII. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Now in order to arrive at a distinct conclusion in this matter (the Lord) presents the various opinions [through the verses beginning with] ṭyājyam dosavat etc. The bad fruit, which is sinful because it involves the killing of animals, etc., [in a sacrifice] should be given up and not all the good fruit—some hold this distinct view in the matter of ṭyāga, like the Sāṅkhyaṇs. Others, in the garb of Mimāṃsakas, maintain that the true significance of a sacrifice can only be understood through the scriptures. Moreover, “Therefore the killing involved in the performance of Vedic ritual (is no killing at all)”—with this kind of logic (it is said) that (the killing) which is a component an obligatory sacrificial duty is not violence. For in that respect the general scriptural precept “do not kill” is not binding; (on this view) killing is that which is carried out by falcons etc. alone [and not the one practised in ritual. In this respect there is the quote:] “Concerning one’s share of the fruit (of a rite), the emotional conviction is the determinant”. One should not give up sacrifices etc., even though they involve killing, etc. Thus do those learned people hold, who depend solely on the scriptures for discriminating between what ought and ought not to be done. In this respect, there is the following judgement: Because, on account of the striking differences in the nature of the guṇas as indicated earlier, ṭyāga, being performed with a mentality pervaded by sattva, rajas and tāmas leads to the appearance of states in keeping with their special nature. Verily ṭyāga (i.e. true ṭyāga) consists of the cessation of action on the part of the knowers of brahman by performing actions with a sense of equanimity in success and failure, by avoiding attachment and aversion and by the absence of the desire for the fruit (of action). Therefore was it said: having done rājasika or tāmasika ṭyāga, there is no connection with the fruit (of that ṭyāga). But from the giving up of sattvika ṭyāga, there follows the fruit (due) from the obedience of scriptural injunctions. Moreover, again, in the case of the sage

5 See Introductory verse no. 5.
6 Read uttra bādhanāt as uttrābādhanāt.
who has shaken off the hold of the guṇas (on him), is tyāga-talk really appropriate(?)

XVIII. 12

Now the verse beginning anisāṁ: [In the case] of those who are not tyāgins (atyāgīnāṁ), that is, those who are pervaded by [the guṇas. karma bears fruit].

XVIII. 13

Now it is preached [through the verses beginning with] pañcāitiṇī etc., that even in a situation where one performs worldly actions, there being five causes present (which are responsible) in (the fruition of) an action, these people, blinded by ignorance, impose upon the ātman the burden of being the whole agent of action and thus through their own (mis-)understanding bind themselves, while [the fact of the matter is that] there is really no such bondage. [The word kṛtānta should be understood thus:] that with respect to which a conclusion has been reached is kṛtānta, the same as siddhānta.

XVIII. 14

By adhiṣṭhāna is meant the object. By daiva is meant (karmic) merit and demerit earned earlier on (in previous lives). These five, adhiṣṭhāna etc., assembled together, are the causes in the case of all actions. Others have said, in a somewhat forced way, [that adhiṣṭhāna has to be interpreted thus:] that by which all action is presided over is adhiṣṭhāna, as described by the word karma yoga [and should be understood] as denoting the five-fold modifications which result when the buddhi takes on a disposition characterized by rajas, namely (1) firmness, (2) faith, (3) joy, (4) no desire to know and (5) the desire to know. The kariṇā or doer is the one who aims at the fruit and possesses the distinguishing characteristic of buddhi. Karanam or means are the mind, eye, etc.; (means internal) as well as external, such as a dagger etc. ājñā or motion is that of prāṇa, apāṇa, etc. (the various "winds"). By the word daiva or Fate are indicated Right (dharma) and Wrong (adharma) and by their use are indicated all the states arising in the buddhi from them. Others (erroneously) take adhiṣṭhāna to be God, on account of being of imperfect wisdom because of possessing an unsettled mind. He, however, who performs action with a firm rejection of the ego and as purified (in this attitude) in a hundred subtle ways as mentioned
earlier, does not become involved (with the fruit of action) on account of his perfect wisdom—this is what is meant.

XVIII. 18

Now the verse beginning jñānam jñeyam: [The expression karma-codanā is to be understood as:] inclination towards, desire for performing action; at that time [of engagement in action there is the predication of the distinction between] the knowledge (jñāna), the known (jñeya) and the knower (jñātā) as heard of in the scriptures, on account of being firmly fixed in ignorance only by those who wholeheartedly accept aiming at the fruit of action through an egocentric understanding that—‘I will enjoy this because the action has been performed by me’, at the time of (engaging in action). And at the time of the completion of action (only they) can be referred to in terms of (the distinction between) karana (means), karma (action) and kartā (the agent of action) because of the attachment (on their part to the fruit of action). Therefore there is no attachment on the part of the yogins, towards them the question of using expressions such as karana etc. does not arise but rather only that of jñānam etc. alone—this is what is meant.

XVIII. 19, 20

Now in order to show the distinction between these six briefly, on the basis of the distinction between the gunas (the Lord) says [the verse beginning with] jñānam karma ca. In the doctrines of Sāṅkhya, wherein a count of the gunas is made, knowledge (jñāna) etc. are spoken of as threefold—(O Arjuna, now) listen to that; this is the (syntactical) concordance (between the verb and what it sets out to describe). By the use of the word jñāna, two kinds of karana (means) are spoken of: [(1) the means involved] in the acquisition of knowledge and [(2) the action involved] in the performance of action. In a similar fashion [the use of the word] karma indicates jñeya (the object of knowledge) and kārya (the object of action) [and the word] kartā indicates jñātā (the knower) and kartā (the doer). Therein, in the set of three verses beginning with sarva-bhūteṣu etc., the triple forms of jñāna and karana (of knowledge and action) are spoken of. Hence the instrumental case in yena. To this extent is

1 Namely—(1) jñāna; (2) jñeya; (3) jñātā; (4) karana; (5) karma and (6) kartā, vide Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 18.

2 I.e. Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 20-22.

3 Sec Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 20.
the commonality between jñāna and karana spoken of. With the set of three verses beginning with niyamam,\textsuperscript{10} karma is of two kinds—in the form of jñeya (the object of knowledge) and kārya (the object of action). Through the three verses beginning with muktasaṅga\textsuperscript{11} etc., the nature of the two kinds of kartā (i.e. the jñātā and the kartā) has been briefly (portrayed) and in order to propound the distinction in the nature of karana (or action), chosen for special consideration, the three kinds of intellect are portrayed. By this means the threefoldness of items even apart from karana has also been indicated. Now because of the dependence of action\textsuperscript{12} on the performance of obligatory duties and notwithstanding the fivefoldness\textsuperscript{13} of the obligatory duties in the form of dhṛti etc.; śraddhā having been already spoken of and vividīśā and avividīśā being subsumed under dhṛti and sukhā, the threefoldness of dhṛti and sukhā is spoken of [through verses beginning with] dhṛtes ca etc.\textsuperscript{14} and sukham tv idānim\textsuperscript{15} etc. Thus is said [the verse beginning with] sarvabhūteṣu etc.

XVIII. 21

Now the verse beginning prthaktvena: [Rajasa jñāna is characterised by] the feeling such as “Herein I love”, “Herein I hate”, among the (creatures) divided into separate categories on account of being different such as gods, men, etc.

XVIII. 22

[Tāmasa jñāna is characterized] by the adoption of hatred, love, etc. without reason, without due reflection on the cause, under the influence of the onrush of instinct. That is called tāmasa.

XVIII. 23

Niyata is that action which ought to be performed (even though) it may be pervaded by many troubles such as ignorance etc. Not saying “I am the doer” under the influence of infatuation, etc., having such an attitude, nature, and good conduct, one does not

\textsuperscript{10} I.e. Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 23-25. There should be no period in the Nīruyāsāgara text after shuktrayavē.

\textsuperscript{11} I.e. Bhagavadgītā XVIII 26.

\textsuperscript{12} Emend kārana to karana in the text.

\textsuperscript{13} See Abhinavagupta’s gloss on Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 14.

\textsuperscript{14} See Bhagavadgītā XVIII 29.

\textsuperscript{15} See Bhagavadgītā XVIII 36.
become egoistic. Only as an outward act, in order to fulfil (my obligations) I do it even though a yogin, this is indicated by the possessive suffix\(^\text{16}\) (in the word yogin) and thus such a use is not forbidden.

XVIII. 27

[He is not] seized by joy or sorrow in success or failure.

XVIII. 28

Nikṛti means pitilessness.

XVIII. 29

Now the verse beginning buddhi: Buddhi means resolution. Dhṛti means satisfaction. Everyone, having performed a good or evil act, in the end always reflects thus “that which was to be done, has that been achieved by this act”? Otherwise what reason could there be for the cessation of activities? Therefore everyone possesses dhṛti—this is the intended meaning. The meaning is well-known and indeed has been expounded.

XVIII. 31

Ayathāvat (“not as it should be”) means improper.

XVIII. 33

He carries on all activities of mind, prāṇas and the senses through yoga. As for example, thinking thus, “what have I to do with sense-enjoyments etc., I shall always revel in my own ātman”.

XVIII. 34

[The rājasika mentality desires the fruit of action but] on account of the context in which the action is performed and not so much on account of instinct [as is the case with tāmasa mentality].

XVIII. 35

The tāmasika (foul) type of mentality (dhṛti) is that by which satisfaction is found by being devoted to sleep, discord, etc.

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\(^{16}\) See Pāñini 5. 2, 115; also 6. 2, 79
XVIII. 37

At the time (of the practice) of repeated disciplining it feels like poison on account of the difficulty in abandoning attachment to the senses which has been practised over hundreds of lives. As has been said in the Vedas: "(The path) is rugged, hard to traverse, sharp like a razor", etc.\(^1\) When the Self is at peace, the buddhi becomes clear. Because of the absence of the need of anything else.

XVIII. 38

[That happiness is called rājasa which is] born of the mutual contact between the senses and sense-objects by itself (as) of the eye on account of contact with form.

XVIII. 39

That happiness which comes from sleep, sloth, wickedness and heedlessness, which has been explained earlier, is tāmasa sukha.

XVIII. 40

In this way, the capacity to produce a variety of the fruits (of action) on the part of actions (karmas) relating to kartā, karma, karana,\(^1\) buddhi, and sukha, which differ according to the differences of sattva (guna) etc., on account of the conjunction of their mutual correlation and the hindered-hinderer relation and the infinite differentiation (possible) through the combination, permutation and aggregation etc., (of all of these) has been logically demonstrated in detail, as also the mysteriousness of karma referred to aphoristically earlier. None of these creatures from the gods down to immovable ones are beyond contact with the three guṇas. As has been said: "From an insect right up to Brahmā none is really happy".\(^2\) Real happiness belongs to the mind which has gone beyond the guṇas and to none else — this is the intended meaning. Thus, to a degree, was the three-fold nature of the six, dhṛiti etc., propounded one by one. Among them he, in whom an abundance of Sattvika quality is present, has attained to divine attributes — he in this world is ready for jñāna. "You are such a one" — Arjuna is thus encouraged. Now this is said. If now you will engage in action with this enlightened under-

\(^1\) Katha Upanisad IV 2.14? The Katha text has mīrta in place of viśama.

\(^2\) Read karuna as karuna vide B.O.R.I. manuscript

\(^3\) The quotation could also be rendered somewhat differently.
standing, then, on account of engaging in your own dharma and on account of being hallowed by jñāna, no karmic bondage shall be yours. If you do not accept this, then indeed that will come about on account of your natural inclination because a class of creatures abides in its inherent nature. Therefore everything is determined by its own nature; and if somehow their own individual natures are obscured on account of some flaw, then even if it is so for a while, when the obstructing element has disappeared the (individual) attains to his nature which now manifests itself. For such is the nature of the varnas.

XVIII. 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50

In karmic engagement which is bound to occur in this way, there will then be the apportionment of fruit; this is said [in the verse beginning with] brähmanaksatriya. The nature of the Brāhmaṇas, etc., indeed as portrayed in the delineation of the division of action, is bound to be transgressed. You have the nature of a kṣatriya, even though you do not wish it, your nature, called svabhāva, serves to compel you unfailingly, only one compelled by it has connection with spiritual merit and demerit. Therefore perform actions, keeping the proofs of experiential knowledge explained by me in the forefront. That being so, your bond will be snapped. The purpose of this great statement is to make him gird up his loins. The meaning of the intervening sentences is clear.

XVIII. 51

In brief the state of jñāna, already spoken of earlier, is now spoken of convincingly without verbiage [in the verse beginning with] buddhyā visuddhyā etc. All of this has almost been already explained so that is not done again.

XVIII. 61

This God, the supreme soul, must indeed be accepted as a refuge. In Him, the Presider, the Doer, the Knower, pervaded by His ātman, crystal-clear, karmas cannot dwell.20 The fickle-minded young of the deer, whose only strength consists of their ability to take to flight, do not, of their own accord, resort to the state of going about their business of rumination skilfully when the lion-cub sits in the cave

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20 Disregard period after vispaste in the text.
whose valiant lustre is made manifest by the multitudes of clusters of pearls, which have fallen from the temples of elephants in rut. torn apart by the extremely sharp ends of his claws.

XVIII. 62, 63

Having started (by saying) *tameva śaraṇaṁ gaccha* ("Take refuge in Him") the lord, making the supporting statement (in the line beginning with) *mat prasādāt* ("By my grace"), brings together in unity the *paramātman*, Īśvara and Vāsudeva: it is this knowledge which has been called even more esoteric than that of esoteric Vedānta;\(^{21}\) "not being thought over" it brings duality to light. Having thought over this and having considered in toto the intended message —this is what is meant. Although that intended meaning has been expressed by us as suited the occasion in a direct manner, even so that most excellent (meaning) is presented (here) clearly and with full consideration (of all points). The mind is never satisfied in either depicting it or hearing of it.

*NOTE:* *Matprasādāt* constitutes a significant difference between Abhinavagupta's text of the Gītā and the vulgate and critical versions, which have the form *tat-prasādāt*. The difference is so significant that most of Abhinavagupta's gloss turns on the use of *mat* in place of *tat* here.

XVIII. 65, 66

"What has been identified herein as the 'most esoteric' now listen to that knowledge" — hence are said [the lines beginning with] *iṣṭo' sī* and ending with *mā śucah. Mūnumā bhava* [occupy thy mind with me] herein among the scriptures it is offering to *brahman* which is primary — this is settled. It is said that the scripture is meaningful in the case of one who causes the offering to be made to *brahman*; and (the Lord) says *sarva-dharmān parityajya* [Having given up all dharmas]. In the matter of this adventitious killing of relations, etc., in the battle — I am the doer of all that, give up any sense of your own *dharma*; and banishing the thought from the mind that as the killing of ācāryas etc. is prohibited, *adharma* shall fall to my share; go to refuge in me who is One, the Doer of all, the supreme lord, and Independent, because I am the foundation of the inner nature of all. Thus is it that I, all-knowing, shall release thee from all sins. Do not grieve. Don't be confused about your duty.

\(^{21}\) Refer to guhyād guhyutrāram of Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 63.
XVIII. 67, 68

Now the verse beginning idam te: The concealment of this knowledge on the ground that it is not meant for all the people does not confer salvation. Having rent asunder the knots of sin through austerity (tapas) one inclines towards mature benign austerity. First (comes) austerity (tapas), from tapas comes faith (śraddhā); that is devotion (bhakti). Śraddhā, having arisen, sometimes does not grow, being seen in a momentary flash like lightning. Thereafter, after it has grown, the desire to hear (sacred scriptures) arises. This much too, in some cases, is in an atheistic subject such as the dry science of Sāṅkhya or in a theistic subject. With some it arises on account of desire for fruit (of action or devotion)—because putting the fruit alone in the forefront it uses God and the ātman as instruments—and on that account becomes contemptible. As has been said, “Man (is bound) because he desires action, and because in action he desires fruit”. In this way, from both sides there is enmity, disrespect towards God—this is the meaning.

XVIII. 68

Now the line beginning mad-bhakti. This is the expression of devotion towards me—(he) who shall declare this portrayal of mine among my devotees, among the devotees—face to face with them, shall broadcast it in the manner prescribed in the scriptures—he comes to my being, this is the proper method, not mere rhetoric. So elsewhere.

*NOTE*: Abhinavagupta emphasizes that the above verse should be read as constituting the vidhi for teaching the Gita and not merely as arthavāda.

XVIII. 73

Arjuna spoke. Herein, in this way, by saying “My delusion is destroyed etc.,” Arjuna’s readiness to engage in battle has come about but proper knowledge of brahman has not been attained—indicating this (sage Vyāsa) creates room for the Anugītā which is yet to come.

XVIII. 74, 75, 76, 77, 78

- Sañjaya said [the verse beginning with] ity aham. Concluding now the dialogue with the words of Sañjaya the mere recollection of it in the end is said to confer the experience of the para brahman—
who assumes (herein) a crystal-clear, transcendental and experiential formulation—because of its closely knit manner of argumentation and the absence of any other (thought) created by the succession of constant reflection (induced by it). In this way, by knowing the truth from the mere recollection of the dialogue between the Lord and Arjuna, come glory, victory and wealth.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

Having shattered a mind disturbed by qualities of sativa etc., and churning with the delusion caused by (discursive) knowledge; having obtained to Viṣṇu, who is beyond doubts, through the beauty of realization of one’s own ātman; one whose senses are buried only in their own transactions out of the fluency of his own nature, whatever he does playfully, all that now reaches to Śaṅkara.

Here ends the eighteenth chapter of the Gitārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva ācārya Abhinavagupta.

CONCLUDING VERSES

1. There was once Śrī Kātyāyana, like unto Varuruci, the satisfaction of those with flashing intellects; his lineage was adorned by the exceedingly learned scholar known as Saucuka, of firm intellect; after him was born his son the brāhmaṇa Bhūtirāja, a great soul, by whom all the worlds which had fallen into darkness were rescued, as by the sun.

2. Abhinavagupta, a bee hovering at his lotus-feet, composed this Bhagavadgitārthasaṅgraha, under the influence of the promptings of the pious twice-born Loṭaka.¹

3. This verse is not translated. It does not appear in the B.O.R.I. text and in the Nīrṇayaśāgara text it appears to be corrupt.

4. There is Śakti with an ever-new form (abhinava); god Śiva is protected by her (gupta); I thus worship the doubly flawless form of Abhinavagupta Śiva.

This Śrimadbhagavadgitārthasaṅgraha is now complete. This is the work of the ācārya Abhinavaguptapāda who achieved the realization

¹ Read saddvijalotaka- for saddvijaloka-.
of the ātman as pure consciousness as a result of meditating on the feet of Śiva.
May blessings be plentiful for the pious devotees by the grace of God.


Bhāgavata Purāṇa.


Pāṇini. Aṣṭādhyāyī.


Śaṅkara. Gitāhāsya. Srirangam: Śrīvānivilāsamudrāyantrālaya


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