

Gods and Heroes of the Bhagavad Gita

A Brief Description of the Mythology of Ancient India as Contained in the Bhagavad-Gita, Including Technical Terms and Explanations in the Light of Theosophy

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Foreword

Most Theosophists are aware of the fact that it was H. P. Blavatsky's especial wish that a selection from the *Bhagavad-Gita* should always be read at commemoration services held on the day of her passing, which she desired to have known as White Lotus Day. There must have been a potent reason for thus singling out this ancient work, and we have her words stating that the 'Gita' is an esoteric work. A clue to this is the fact that the very first word of the *Bhagavad-Gita* (in the Sanskrit text) is *Dharmakshetre*, meaning 'on the field of Dharma,' and indicating that what is about to be recounted occurs not only 'on the field of the Kurus' (i. e., *Kurukshetre* - the second word of the text), but on the field of moral law (*dharma*), and is to be interpreted in a cosmic sense.

W. Q. Judge's high regard for the book is well known, and an interpretation is suggested by him in his 'Antecedent Words' to his recension.

Readers of the *Bhagavad-Gita* have doubtless pondered upon the signification of the many Sanskrit words and names appearing in this philosophical work. Perhaps some, having been deeply impressed by the teachings inculcated, have commenced a study of the background of the work, and have thus acquired a knowledge of the main events in the great epic of India - the *Mahabharata* - in which the episode of the *Bhagavad-Gita* occurs. But the task of looking up all the characters mentioned, and finding a satisfactory meaning of the terms, is a difficult one. To meet this need the present book is offered, as a means of gaining a deeper understanding of the work.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* is pre-eminently an ethical treatise. It inculcates teachings applicable to daily life, suited to the time in which it was written. These are considered from the standpoint of two highly philosophical

systems of thought which were then prominent, namely, the Sankhya and the Yoga. Furthermore there is a philosophical and religious background which is not very prominent in the theme, yet is always present: this is the mythology of ancient India, a consideration of which is necessary for a complete understanding of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. It is information along this line that the present handbook supplies.

It would seem from a study of the mythology of Hindusthan that it may be divided into three main periods: (1) the Vedic period, containing the original exposition of the deities, etc., as found in the Vedas; (2) the post-Vedic period, consisting of *The Laws of Manu* and the two great epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*; (3) the post-Mahabharatan period, as found in the Puranas.

Pursuing this line of thought one finds that along with the modifications which the deities undergo during these three periods, there is a corresponding change in religious outlook. As religious ideas and beliefs do not change suddenly but arise slowly and only after considerable lapses of time, the conclusion naturally follows that great periods of time must have elapsed between the production of the Sanskrit works above enumerated; and the works themselves indicate the trend of thought of the time in which they were written.

The characters and terms used in the *Bhagavad-Gita* represent the religious outlook and mythology of the Mahabharatan-period. Nevertheless the information given in this handbook in regard to the deities comprises the three periods above outlined. This plan has been followed in order to give as complete an explanation as possible.

Although there are voluminous commentaries upon the ancient Sanskrit literature, written by Eastern sages, the keys to an interpretation of the mythology of India were not known in the West until Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (the founder of the modern Theosophical Movement) published her books. Such keys are not easily accessible, however, as they are scattered throughout her works. The effort in this handbook has been to place this information before students. Wherever possible the inner meanings which H. P. Blavatsky gave to terms or to deities have been included herein (with references subjoined). These esoteric explanations are of inestimable value, as they give a means of understanding the *Bhagavad-Gita* in a new light. Witness the following citation: the author is referring to the story about Vaivasvata-Manu as told both in the *Mahabharata* and the Puranas:

All this, which seems a jumble to the profane, is full of philosophical meaning to the Occultist. On the very face of the narrative a secret and sacred meaning is perceivable, all the details, however, being so purposely mixed up that the experienced eye of an Initiate alone can follow them and place the events in their proper order.

The story as told in the "Mahabharata" strikes the key-note, and yet it needs to be explained by the secret sense contained in the Bhagavad Gita. It is the *prologue to the drama* of our (Fifth) Humanity. - *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 139

The best information about the characters occurring in the *Bhagavad-Gita* is the *Mahabharata* itself, for the stories about the gods and heroes are therein told in detail. This epic was used for the background of the compilation. Verification was made by use of Monier-Williams's *Sanskrit Dictionary*, and the systemic spelling for the names and terms adopted; also the orthography. The labor of preparation has been materially aided by access to this standard authority. Further, material has been drawn from Dowson's *Classical Dictionary*. Due acknowledgment is given to these works, as well as to the Theosophical works of H. P. Blavatsky and G. de Purucker for the illumination and clarification which Theosophy brings to an understanding of the Sanskrit terms employed in its literature.

Root-meanings of Sanskrit words have been placed in parentheses at the conclusion of articles, because the root-meaning of a Sanskrit word provides the key to its correct understanding.

The names and terms in this book are those that appear in the recension of the *Bhagavad-Gita* made by William Q. Judge (the work principally known to Theosophists), and his latest edition (the sixth) was used in regard to pagination - which the 1939 Point Loma edition also follows.

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Abbreviations

adj. = adjective

B.G. = *Bhagavad-Gita* (W. Q. Judge's Recension). B.G. followed by a number has reference to the page in which the word first appears in W.Q.J.'s edition of 1896, and Point Loma edition of 1939

comp. = compound

dict. = dictionary form or 'crude form.' Sanskrit words when not used in sentences (i. e., when isolated without grammatical form) have a special form; this is the manner in which they appear in dictionaries (e.g. Atman - dict.; Atma - nominative case.)

lit. = literally - the literal meaning of the word

m. = meaning of the word itself

Manu = *The Laws of Manu* (*Manava-Dharma-Sastra*)

N.B.G. = *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* by Subba Row

nom. = nominative case

q.v. = quod vide ('which see')

S.D. = *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky

Theos. Gloss. = *The Theosophical Glossary* by H. P. Blavatsky

* (asterisk preceding a Sanskrit word) = derived from the verbal root

Favorite Quotations from The Bhagavad-Gita

(Recension of W. Q. Judge - in order of occurrence)

[Taken from *Gods and Heroes of the Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. 121, 124-127]

With the loss of virtue, vice and impiety overwhelm the whole of a race. p. 7

Those who are wise in spiritual things grieve neither for the dead nor for the living. p. 11

I myself never was not, nor thou, nor all the princes of the earth; nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be. p. 11

As the lord of this mortal frame experienceth therein infancy, youth, and old age, so in future incarnations will it meet the same. p. 11

He to whom pain and pleasure are the same, is fitted for immortality. p. 12

It (the Spirit) is not a thing of which a man may say, 'It hath been, it is about to be, or is to be hereafter'; for it is without birth and meeteth not death; it is ancient, constant, and eternal, and is not slain when this its mortal frame is destroyed. p. 12

As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, even so the dweller in the body, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth into others which are new. p. 13

Death is certain to all things which are born, and rebirth to all mortals; wherefore it doth not behoove thee to grieve about the inevitable. p. 13

Make pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, the same to thee. p. 15

Be free from the 'pairs of opposites' and constant in the quality of Sattwa. p. 16

Let, then, the motive for action be in the action itself, and not in the event. p. 16

Do not be incited to actions by the hope of their reward, nor let thy life be spent in inaction. p. 16

Equal-mindedness is called Yoga. p. 17

Yoga is skill in the performance of actions. p. 17

The man whose heart and mind are not at rest is without wisdom or the power of contemplation. p. 20

Do thou perform the proper actions: action is superior to inaction. p. 23

The man who doeth that which he hath to do, without attachment to the result, obtaineth the Supreme. p. 25

Whatever is practised by the most excellent men, that is also practised by others. The world follows whatever example they set. p. 25

It is better to do one's own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than to perform another's duty well. p. 27

It is better to perish in the performance of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger. p. 27

Both I and thou have passed through many births. Mine are known unto me, but thou knowest not of thine. p. 31

I produce myself among creatures, whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world. p. 31

In whatever way men approach me, in that way do I assist them; but whatever the path taken by mankind, that path is mine. p. 32

That man who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is wise among men. p. 33

There is no purifier in this world to be compared to spiritual knowledge. p. 36

The man of doubtful mind hath no happiness either in this world or in the next or in any other. p. 36

Renunciation of action and devotion through action are both means of final emancipation. p. 38

The devotee who is engaged in the right practice of his duties approacheth the Supreme Spirit in no long time. p. 39

Whoever in acting dedicates his actions to the Supreme Spirit and puts aside all selfish interest in their result is untouched by sin. pp. 39-40

The man who is devoted and not attached to the fruit of his actions obtains tranquillity. p. 40

He whose heart is not attached to objects of sense finds pleasure within himself. p. 42

Action is said to be the means by which the wise man who is desirous of mounting to meditation may reach thereto. p. 44

He who seeth me in all things and all things in me looseth not his hold on me and I forsake him not. p. 49

Never to an evil place goeth one who doeth good. p. 51

The man whose devotion has been broken off by death goeth to the regions of the righteous. p. 51

In whatever form a devotee desires with faith to worship, it is I alone who inspire him with constancy therein. p. 55

All worlds up to that of Brahman are subject to rebirth again and again. p. 60

There is that which upon the dissolution of all things else is not destroyed; it is indivisible, indestructible, and of another nature from the visible. p. 61

Light and darkness are the world's eternal ways. p. 62

All this universe is pervaded by me in my invisible form. p. 64

I accept and enjoy the offerings of the humble soul who in his worship with a pure heart offereth a leaf, a flower, or fruit, or water unto me. p. 68

I am the origin of all; all things proceed from me. p. 71

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* The asterisk preceding a Sanskrit word herein means 'derived from the verbal root.' (See 'Abbreviations,' and 'Pronunciation Key.')

Achyuta The unfallen, *i.e.*, the imperishable: a philosophical term about which H. P. Blavatsky writes: "Achyuta is an almost untranslatable term. It means that which is not subject to fall or change for the worse: the *Unfalling*; and it is the reverse of *chyuta*, 'the Fallen.' The Dhyanis who incarnate in the human forms of the Third Root-Race and endow them with intellect (Manas) are called the *chyuta*, for they fall into generation." (S.D. II, 47) Achyuta is applied to Vishnu, and to Krishna in his avataric aspect of Vishnu: not, however, as an individualized entity but in respect to the condition or state of essential Cosmic Being. (comp. *a*, not; *chyuta* from **chyu*, to move to and fro, to fall, to fade. B.G. 132)

Adhibhuta *lit.* 'Original Element,' *i.e.*, the primordial substratum or element of matter and all objects, in its cosmic aspect. (comp. *adhi* 'above,' therefore implying superiority; *bhuta*, a word frequently used for 'element.' B.G. 57)

Adhidaivata *lit.* The original or primordial divine, *i.e.*, the divine agent operating in and through beings and objects. A generalizing adjective applying to the divine part of any being from the hierarchical standpoint: applicable to Adhyatman (*q.v.*). (comp. *adhi* above, therefore implying superiority; *daivata*, divine. B.G. 57)

Adhiyajna *lit.* 'Primordial sacrifice.' Cosmologically this refers to the Cosmic Logos, which in the Esoteric Philosophy is represented as in a sense sacrificing itself for the benefit of the world; because due to its own coming into manifestation it enables the waiting hosts of monads to come into being. In the small, every Avatara repeats the sacrifice for the benefit of all that lives. The *Bhagavad-Gita* refers to this in the words "Adhiyajna is myself in this body," *i.e.*, Krishna the Avatara in a physical body. (comp. *adhi* upper, paramount; *yajna*, sacrifice. B.G. 58)

Adhyatman *lit.* 'The Supreme or Original Atman,' the highest of a hierarchy, equivalent to Paramatman. (comp. *adhi* above, therefore implying superiority; *atman*, Self. B.G. 57)

Adityas The twelve great gods of the Hindu pantheon, sometimes also reckoned as seven (as in early Vedic times, and named, Varuna, the chief, Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Daksha, Ansa, Surya): sons of boundless infinitude (Aditi). These great gods have been known under many names in different kalpas: they are the eternal sustainers of the divine life which exists in all things. "The wise call our fathers Vasus; our paternal grandfathers Rudras; our paternal great grandfathers, Adityas; agreeable to a text of the Vedas." (*Manu* iii, 284) Astronomically, the seven Adityas are the regents of the seven planets. (S.D. I, 99) (m. belonging or coming from Aditi. B.G. 73)

Agni The god of fire: one of the most important of the Vedic deities, to whom the greatest number of hymns are addressed, for he presides chiefly over the earth, and is regarded as the mediator between men and the gods, as protector of men and their homes, and as witness of all their actions. Fire is regarded in three phases: in heaven as the sun, in the air as lightning, and on earth as ordinary fire. Agni is represented as clothed in black, having smoke for his standard and head-piece, and carrying a flaming javelin; he has four hands and seven tongues, with which he licks up the butter used in sacrifices. His chariot is drawn by red horses; the seven winds form the wheels of his car, and he is followed by a ram. Esoterically Agni represents the divine essence present in every atom of the universe, the Celestial Fire; hence in its manifestations Agni is often used synonymously with the Adityas (*q.v.*) or our spiritual Pitris (*q.v.*). In this sense Fire is spoken of as the PRIMARY in the Stanzas of Dzyan: "The Spirit, beyond manifested Nature, is the fiery BREATH in its absolute Unity. In the manifested Universe, it is the Central Spiritual Sun, the electric Fire of all Life. In our System it is the visible Sun, the Spirit of Nature, the terrestrial god. And in, on, and around the Earth, the fiery Spirit thereof - air, fluidic fire; *water*, liquid fire; *Earth*, solid fire. All is fire - *ignis*, in its ultimate

constitution, ... the three Vedic chief gods are Agni (*ignis*), Vayu (*q.v.*), and Surya - Fire, Air, and the Sun, three occult degrees of fire." (*S.D.* II, 114) (*B.G.* 85)

Ahankara (or Ahamkara) Egoism, the sense of personality or 'I-am-I-ness': in its lower aspect in man it is the egoistical principle which produces the notion of the personal ego as being different from the Universal One-Self. Kosmically speaking, Ahankara is "that which first issues from 'Mahat' or divine mind; the first shadowy outline of Self-hood, for 'pure' Ahankara becomes 'passionate' and finally 'rudimental' (initial); . . ." (*S.D.* I, pp. 452-3). (comp. *aham*, I; *kara*, doer, maker; from **kri* to do. *B.G.* 53)

Airavata The elephant produced by the gods at the time of the churning of the ocean. (See *Ananta*.) He became the special charge of Indra and one of the eight Lokapalas. These latter are the cosmical spirits who preside over the eight points of the compass (Airavata guards the east), and are closely akin to the four Maharajas - the four 'Great Watchers.' Although the Lokapalas are represented as 'elephants,' H. P. Blavatsky remarks that "all of them have an occult significance." (*S.D.* I, 128) (m. produced from the ocean, from *iravat*, the ocean. *B.G.* 74)

Akasa The Fifth Kosmic Element: the spiritual Essence which pervades all space; in fact it may be called imbodyed universal Space - in this aspect known as Aditi. It is the substratum for the seven Prakritis (roots) of all in the universe; thus in one sense is Mulaprakriti (the Kosmical Root-Substance). The word itself, without its philosophical meaning, signifies the sky, the open space, hence it is often rendered 'ether' in translations from the Sanskrit works, but as H. P. Blavatsky pointed out, Akasa "is not that Ether of Science, not even the Ether of the Occultist, who defines the latter as one of the principles of Akasa only" (*S.D.* I, 296). In the Brahmanical scriptures the term is used in the same manner that Northern Buddhists employ Svabhavat - more mystically Adi-Buddhi. Some have associated the Astral Light with Akasa, but the former is but a reflection of the latter: "To put it plainly, ETHER is the Astral Light, and the Primordial Substance is AKASA, the *Upadhi* of DIVINE THOUGHT." (*S.D.* I, 326) (* *kas*, to shine, to appear. *B.G.* 53)

Amba The eldest daughter of the king of Kasi. Through the fault of Bhishma she was rejected by her suitor, whereupon she withdrew to the forest and after practising severe penances she ended her life on the funeral pyre, and was then reborn as Sikhandin (*q.v.*). The word in the text (last line of p. iii *B.G.*) should read Ambika (*q.v.*) - the second daughter of the king.

Ambalika The third daughter of the king of Kasi given by Bhishma in marriage to his half brother Vichitravirya. After the latter's death she was wedded to Vyasa, and became the mother of Pandu (*q.v.*). (*B.G.* p. iii)

Ambika The second daughter of the king of Kasi wedded to Vichitravirya. After his death she was married to Vyasa, and gave birth to Dhritarashtra (*q.v.*). (*B.G.* p. iii)

Amrita The nectar of the gods, by quaffing which immortality was attained; hence called the waters of immortality or the elixir of life. The amrita was produced when the gods used Ananta (*q.v.*) for churning the ocean. In the Vedas, amrita is applied to the mystical Soma (*q.v.*), which makes a new man of the Initiate. "Amrita is beyond any guna [quality], for it is UNCONDITIONED *per se*"; (*S.D.* I, 348). Mystically it is the drinking of the water of supernal wisdom and the spiritual bathing in its life-giving power. (comp. *a*, not; *mrita*, dying. *B.G.* 74)

Ananta The name of the serpent Sesha, represented as seven-headed and forming the couch of Vishnu (*q.v.*), on which he reclines during the pralayas. Sesha, is called Ananta (meaning the unending, the infinite) because he perdures through manvantaras as well as during the pralayas, *i.e.*, during the periods of activity and quiescence. Ananta is represented as carrying a plow and a pestle, for during the churning of the waters for the purpose of making Amrita (*q.v.*), the gods used Sesha as a great rope, twisting his tail around the mountain Mandara, and thus using it as a churn. Ananta is also the symbol of eternity, *i.e.*, a serpent in the form of a circle. In the Puranas Sesha is said to have a thousand heads - an expansion of the legend. The seven beads of the serpent "typifies the Seven principles throughout nature and man; the highest or middle head being the seventh." (*S.D.* I, 407) (comp. *an*, not; *anta*, ending. *B.G.* 74)

Ananta-Vijaya The name of the conch-shell of Yudhishtira. (m. eternally victorious. *B.G.* 4)

Arjuna The hero of the *Bhagavad-Gita* depicted as the disciple of Krishna is one of the most interesting and lovable characters in the *Mahabharata*. He is the third of the Pandava brothers, the son of Indra by Pritha (or Kunti) - hence referred to throughout the poem as the son of Pritha, or again as the son of Kunti (in Sanskrit Partha and Kaunteya). His individual exploits are related at great length in the epic, each one being of interest. As the warrior-hero par excellence, his achievements are foremost in the martial line; thus Arjuna is represented as the favorite pupil of Drona (*q.v.*), as being instructed in arms by the gods themselves (from whom he obtained celestial weapons as well as his remarkable bow, Gandiva, *q.v.*). By means of his prowess in arms he was chosen by Draupadi (*q.v.*) as husband at her svayamvara ('self-choice'). During a self-imposed exile, Arjuna traveled to Patala (the Antipodes, the name by which America was known in ancient Hindusthan) and there was wooed by the princess Ulupi who wedded him (see *S.D.* II, 214).

Arjuna is best known in his relationship with Krishna: the manner in which Krishna became Arjuna's charioteer is related as follows. When it became apparent that a war was to be waged between the Kurus and the Pandavas, both Duryodhana and Arjuna hastened to Krishna in order to obtain his aid. Duryodhana arrived first, but Krishna was in bed asleep: he was still reposing when Arjuna reached the palace, so he stationed himself at the foot of Krishna's bed, so that upon awaking his eyes rested on his brother-in-law (Arjuna was married to Krishna's sister, Subhadra). Immediately each hero implored Krishna to aid his cause: but the latter declared that he would not fight in the coming battle, that he would act solely as an advisor; and as each was entitled to his help, Krishna gave his petitioners the choice of his splendidly equipped army to the one side, and to the other himself as advisor. Duryodhana having arrived first was given first choice, and he chose the army, whereupon Arjuna was overjoyed to accept Krishna as his advisor, and the latter agreed to act as his charioteer in the battle. Because of this Arjuna was victorious.

Of especial interest is the fact that there is a second dialog between Krishna and Arjuna in the *Mahabharata*, known as the *Anu-gita*, which is even more philosophical and more occult than the first dialog, but as it is more difficult of comprehension and deals with more abstruse subjects it is not so well known. (See *S.D.* I, pp. 94-6.)

"Arjuna, who was called *Nara*, was intended to represent the human monad." (*N.B.G.* 11)

"Krishna is the seventh principle in man, and his gift of his sister in marriage to Arjuna typifies the union between the sixth and the fifth." (*N.B.G.* 9) (m. white, clear; cf. *rija* and **raj* or **ranj*, to redden, to glow, also illuminate. *B.G.* 2)

Arya A respectable, honorable, or faithful man; also an inhabitant of Aryavarta (or India). In later times the word is used as a title for the first three castes of ancient India. **ri* to rise, to tend upwards. *B.G.* p. iii)

Aryaman The chief of the Pitris (*q.v.*). Also the name of one of the Adityas (*q.v.*). (m. a bosom friend. *B.G.* 75)

Aryana (see *Aryaman*)

Asat Not-being, non-being: applied in Hindu philosophy to the manifested universe as being illusory, unreal, false, in contradistinction to Sat - Be-ness, Reality. In this sense Asat is "Nature, or the illusive shadow of its one true essence." (Theos. Gloss. 33) (comp. a, not; *sat*, being, be-ness. *B.G.* 119)

Asita One of the Vedic Rishis, a descendant of Kasyapa, closely associated with Devala (*q.v.*). (*B.G.* 72)

Asura Originally the word stood for the supreme spirit (being so used in the *Rig-Veda*), and equivalent to the Zoroastrian Ahura Mazda; then it became applied to deities, such as Indra, Agni and Varuna; later still it denoted a class of elemental beings evil in nature, and consequently Asuras are termed demons. The *Taittiriya-Brahmana* represents the Asuras as being created from the breath of Brahma-Prajapati likewise the *Laws of Manu*, but the Puranas indicate that they sprang from his thigh. "Esoterically, the *Asuras*, transformed subsequently into evil Spirits and lower gods, who are eternally at war with the *great* deities - are the gods of the Secret Wisdom. ... They are the sons of the primeval Creative Breath at the beginning of every new Mahakalpa, or Manvantara; ... Evidently they have been degraded in Space and Time into opposing powers or demons by the ceremonialists," (*S.D.* II, pp. 500-1). (**as*, to breathe. *B.G.* 65)

Asvattha The pippala, the sacred Indian fig-tree, *ficus religiosa*. In Buddhism called the Bodhi-tree - the tree under which the Buddha received full illumination. Mystically, the 'Tree of Life,' the great World Tree, symbolic both of the vital structure of the universe and of the cosmic hierarchies in all their various interrelations. The roots of the Asvattha "represent the Supreme Being, or First Cause, the Logos; but one has to go beyond those roots to *unite oneself with Krishna*, ... Its boughs are ... the highest Dhyana Chohans or Devas. The Vedas are its leaves. He only who goes *beyond* the roots shall never return, *i.e.*, shall reincarnate no more during this 'age' of Brahma." (*S.D.* I, pp. 406-7) (See *B.G.* 105.) (m. 'under which horses stand': *asva*, a horse; *ttha* from *stha*, to stand. *B.G.* 74)

Asvatthaman The son of Drona and Kripa (sister of Kripa, *q.v.*): one of the generals in the army of the Kauravas. He was one of the three surviving warriors at the end of the war, and was then made commander. (*B.G.* 3)

Asvins (or more correctly *Asvinau*, the word itself meaning 'the two horsemen'). Two Vedic deities represented as twin horsemen, harbingers of Ushas, the dawn. They appear in the sky in a chariot drawn by golden horses, or again by birds. Their attributes pertain to youth and beauty. They are regarded as the physicians of the gods, and avert from mankind sickness and misfortune; hence many Vedic hymns are addressed to them. Yaska, the celebrated commentator of the Vedas, referring to the 'twin horsemen' as precursors of light and the dawn, held that they represent the transition from darkness to light, and the intermingling of both produces that inseparable duality which is expressed by the twin nature of the Asvinau. H. P. Blavatsky remarks: " ... these *twins* are, in the esoteric philosophy, the *Kumara-Egos*, the reincarnating 'Principles' in this Manvantara." (*Theos. Gloss.* 41) (*B.G.* 78)

Bhagavad-Gita *lit.* Krishna's song (or divine song). The philosophical discourse between Arjuna and Krishna, the latter being represented as the Avatara of Vishnu, but acting as Arjuna's charioteer. It is cast in the traditional form of question and answer between disciple and teacher in verses of metrical prose termed slokas. The meter is called Anu-shtubh and consists of four padas or quarter verses of eight syllables each, or two lines of sixteen syllables each. The dialog is placed in the sixth book of the *Mahabharata* entitled the Bhishma-parva (the book of Bhishma) slokas 830-1532 thereof. "The work is pre-eminently occult or esoteric," writes H. P. Blavatsky in *Theosophical Glossary*, p. 56, and also states in *The Secret Doctrine* that there is a "secret sense contained in the *Bhagavad-Gita*." (II, 139)

"The main object of the Bhagavad Gita - which is one of the main sources of Hindu philosophy - is to explain the higher principles that operate in the cosmos, which are omnipresent and permanent and which are common to all the solar systems." (*N.B.G.* 108) (comp. *bhagavat*, holy, divine; also a name of Krishna; *gita*, song.)

Bharata The name of a great number of kings and heroes. The one referred to in the *Bhagavad-Gita* is of the Puru branch (or Pauravas) of the Chandravansa (Lunar Race), the son of Dushyanta and Sakuntala. The ninth king in descent from Bharata was Kuru, and the seventeenth from Kuru was Yudhishtira and his four brothers, *i.e.*, the Pandavas. (*B.G.* 11)

Bharata A descendant of Bharata: referable to either the Kauravas or the Pandavas, but most often applied solely to the latter. Arjuna is often referred to as 'son of Bharata' or 'best of the Bharatas.' (*B.G.* 11)

Bhima The second son of Kunti by the god of the wind, Vayu. All through the *Mahabharata* the remarkable achievements of Bhima provide entertaining reading: his feats of valor and strength are unsurpassable, especially those performed with his enormous club. He shared with Arjuna the honors of valorous exploits in the great conflict, in which the Pandavas were finally victorious. (m. the terrible. *B.G.* 3)

Bhishma The son of king Santanu and the river-goddess Ganga. Although the rightful heir to the throne of the Kurus, he relinquished the kingdom so that the children of his father's second wife, Satyawati might rule instead, but he remained the protector to the throne. Thus he was the ancestor of both the Kauravas and the Pandavas (referred to in the text as the grandsire of the Kurus). He was persuaded to side with the sons of Dhritarashtra and was made the commander-in-chief. He was mortally wounded on the tenth day of the

conflict, but as he had been granted the boon to terminate his life whenever he wished, Bhishma remained alive for 58 days and instructed Yudhishtira in the duties of a king. (m. the terrible. *B.G.* 2)

Bhrigu One of the most celebrated of the Vedic Rishis or Sages, regarded as the ancestor of the Bhargavas (in which race Parasu-Rama was born). He is known as one of the ten Prajapatis (or mind-born sons of Brahma - regarded as the fathers of the human race). He is also regarded as one of the nine great Rishis (in the *Vishnu-Purana*). The *Laws of Manu* were confided to Bhrigu, and Manu called him his son. Some hymns in the *Rig-Veda* are attributed to the Rishi. (*B.G.* 74)

Bhutas The decaying remnants of corpses in the astral world - the real part of man having dropped off these grossest portions of its former vehicle; hence phantoms or 'shells', the eidola or shades of the ancients. They are popularly believed to haunt burial places, etc., for these remnants, although in the astral world (and invisible), are still attracted to the localities of their former physical associations. *bhu, to become; *lit.* 'has-beens', *i.e.*, entities that formerly lived and have passed on. *B.G.* 68)

Brahma The first aspect of the Hindu Trimurti (or triad), the emanator or 'creator' - the other two being Vishnu, the 'preserver,' and Siva, the 'destroyer,' or rather the 'regenerator.' The idea of the Trimurti is not found in the Vedas, nor does the name Brahma occur; the active creator is therein known as Hiranyagarbha, or Prajapati: in later times the term Prajapati was bestowed on Brahma (meaning 'the Progenitor'). In *Manu* it is said that the supreme soul, the self-existent lord created the waters and deposited in them a seed, which seed became a golden egg (Hiranyagarbha) in which he himself was born as Brahma, the progenitor of all the worlds. The idea of the Trimurti is of course present in the epic poems: Brahma is represented as springing from the lotus which arose from the navel of Vishnu. From Brahma then rise the mind-born sons (the Prajapatis) who people the world. In the Puranas (especially in *Vishnu-Purana*), Vishnu becomes more prominent than Brahma: the latter is represented as being in its totality the aspect of Prakriti (*q.v.*), both evolved and unevolved (Mulaprakriti), and also the aspect of Spirit, and the aspect of Time.

Brahma is in fact the vehicle or sheath of Brahman: the spiritual evolving or developing energy-consciousness of a solar system, *i.e.*, the Logos, deriving from Brahman. It should be pointed out that the Sanskrit word Brahman is both masculine and neuter, and therefore has two meanings: in order to distinguish these, in Theosophical literature the masculine is spelled Brahma (the nominative form), whereas the neuter is spelled Brahman (*q.v.*).

"Brahma, as 'the germ of unknown Darkness,' is the material from which all evolves and develops 'as the web from the spider, as foam from the water,' etc. ... Brahma 'expands' and becomes the Universe woven out of his own substance." (*S.D.* I, 83). **brih*, to expand, to grow, also meaning to fructify.) (*B.G.* 56 - where it should be spelled *Brahman*. See *B.G.* 61.)

Brahmacharya Following a life of philosophic and religious training - usually applicable to the first stage in the life of a Brahmana of ancient times, signifying the state of an unmarried religious student of the Vedas. (comp. *Brahman*, the Cosmic Spirit - in some cases meaning 'spiritual wisdom'; *charya*, conduct). The person following this mode of life is called a *Brahmacharin*. (*B.G.* 46)

Brahman The impersonal and uncognisable Principle of the Universe, implying both the aspect of essential consciousness and that of substance: thus it represents the spiritual background of the Universe, the Cause of all Causes. "The student must distinguish between Brahma the neuter, and Brahma, the male creator of the Indian Pantheon. The former, Brahma or Brahman, is the impersonal, supreme and uncognizable Principle of the Universe from the essence of which all emanates, and into which all returns, which is incorporeal, immaterial, unborn, eternal, beginningless and endless. It is all-pervading, animating the highest god as well as the smallest mineral atom. Brahma, on the other hand, the male and the alleged Creator, exists periodically in his manifestation only, and then again goes into *pralaya*, *i.e.*, disappears and is *annihilated*." (*Theos. Gloss.*

Brahman is what is called in Theosophy the Unmanifest Logos: through and from It, therefore, arises Brahma (*q.v.*). (**brih*, to expand, to grow. *B.G.* 58)

Brahmana (often Anglicized as BRAHMAN or BRAHMIN) The highest of the four castes into which the social classes of Hindusthan were divided in post-Vedic times. Originally a Brahmana was one who had been twice-born (*i.e.*, a *dvija*, or an initiate), but in decadent times the term came to be used simply as a hereditary prerogative, and hence applied to the members of the priestly caste. (*B.G.* 127)

Brihaspati The deity who represents the worshiper of the gods: the suppliant and sacrificer, designated as the Purohita (family priest), because he intercedes with the gods on behalf of mankind, and likewise protects the righteous men from the wicked. He is often called the father of the gods because of his creative powers, and is named the shining one, the golden colored one. Brihaspati is also the regent of the planet Jupiter. The lengthy legend about his wife, Tara, being carried off by Soma, the moon, and the consequent war in heaven (the Tarakamaya) is related in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, pp. 498-9) and is there interpreted, H. P. Blavatsky. (comp. *brih*, as noun, 'prayer,' from **brih*, to grow great, to expand; *pati* lord. *B.G.* 74)

Brihat-Saman The name of the hymns in the *Sama-Veda*, written in the Brihati meter, *i.e.*, meters of 36 syllables (originally written 8-8-12-8). (comp. *Brihat*, the Brihati meter; *Saman*, a sacred verse to be sung. *B.G.* 76)

Buddhi The sixth principle in the Theosophical classification of man's component parts. As the vehicle for Universal Spirit, Buddhi is inseparably linked with Atman and regarded as its vehicle. It is the channel for the divine inspiration which streams from Atman, as well as the faculty of discrimination, and the knowledge of discrimination between good and evil, hence spiritual consciousness. When awakened in man the Buddhist principle evokes compassionate love for all, instant understanding, and intuition. A man so fully awakened is termed a Buddha.

"... the *Spiritual* Soul (*Buddhi*) ... conceals a mystery which is never given to any one, with the exception of irrevocably pledged *chelas*," (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 119-20). **budh*, to awaken, to enlighten. *B.G.* 28)

Chakra A word with a number of meanings: a wheel; a circle; a discus - the weapon of Vishnu (hence also a symbol of the deity); a cycle or period of time; also the physiological centers of pranic vitality in the human body. In Buddhism the chakra is a favorite symbol, especially associated with Gautama the Buddha, for he is represented as setting a new chakra in motion: his disciples, in broadcasting his message are often referred to as 'turning the wheel.' As the weapon of Vishnu, the chakra means "the whirling wheel of spiritual will and power." (W. Q. Judge, in footnote, *B.G.* 80.)

Chekitana An ally of the Pandavas: a son of Dhrishtaketu (or Kaikeya), the father-in-law of Krishna and Raja of the Kekayas, (one of the chief nations in the war of the *Mahabharata*). (*B.G.* 2)

Chitraratha The king of the Gandharvas (*q.v.*). (m. having a fine car. *B.G.* 74)

Daityas *lit.* Descendants of Diti - by the Rishi Kasyapa. The daityas are the titans (popularly called demons), constantly warring with the gods; at times they are the victors, at others the vanquished. "The first war happened in the night of time, between the gods [and] the (A)-*suras*, and lasted for the period of one 'divine year.' On this occasion the deities were defeated by the Daityas, under the leadership of Hrada. After that, owing to a device of Vishnu, to whom the conquered gods applied for help, the latter defeated the Asuras. In the Vishnu Purana no interval is found between the two wars. In the Esoteric Doctrine, one war takes place before the building of the Solar system; another, on earth, at the 'creation' of man;" (*S.D.* I, 419). The meaning of the wars is, therefore, that the Daityas represent the urgers of evolutionary progress in the cosmic scheme. (*B.G.* 75)

Dasra One of the twin sky deities, the Asvins (*q.v.*), father of Sahadeva - the fifth Pandava - by Madri. (The text is incorrectly spelled 'Darsa' - *B.G.* iv) (m. accomplishing wonderful deeds.)

Deva A divinity, a spiritual being. In the plural the reference is to the heavenly or shining ones called in the *Rig-Veda* (II, 3, 4) *visve devas* 'all the gods,' - often reckoned as 33 (figuring 11 for each of the 'three worlds'), or again as the 8 Vasus, the 11 Rudras, the 12 Adityas, and the 2 Asvins. This is also the enumeration in the *Mahabharata*. The three worlds are the "*three planes* above us." (*Theos. Gloss.* 98) The word is generally rendered 'god,' although incorrectly, as pointed out by Subba Row: "Do not make the mistake of thinking that the word Deva means a god, and that because we have thirty-three crores of *Devas*, we therefore worship thirty-three crores of gods. This is an unfortunate blunder generally committed by Europeans. *Deva* is a kind of spiritual being, and because the same word is used in ordinary parlance to mean god, it by no means follows that we have and worship thirty-three crores of gods. These beings, as may be naturally inferred, have a certain affinity with one of the three component *upadhis* [basic principles] into which we have divided man" (*N.B.G.* pp. 37-8) - *i.e.*, the upadhi of the Karana-sarira. (from *div*, the sky, the heaven. *B.G.* 74)

Devachan A Sanskrit-Tibetan compound word (*deva*, a divine being, deity; *chan*, region): the heaven-world. The state of the ego after death between earth-lives, when it rests in utter bliss and perfect repose. In this state all the spiritual aspirations and intellectual yearnings of the past life find fulfilment. Devachan is "an *absolute* oblivion of all that gave it pain or sorrow in the past incarnation, and even oblivion of the fact that such things as pain or sorrow exist at all. The *Devachanee* lives its intermediate cycle between two incarnations surrounded by everything it had aspired to in vain, and in the companionship of everyone it loved on earth. It has reached the fulfilment of all its soul-yearnings. And thus it lives throughout long centuries an existence of *unalloyed* happiness" (*The Key to Theosophy*, 148). (*B.G.* 51)

Devadatta The name of the conch-shell of Arjuna. This conch was given to Arjuna by his parent Indra, the deity of the sky, upon the successful conclusion of the expedition which he was requested to make against the daityas of the sea, who had been troubling the deities. They were vanquished by Arjuna. (m. god-given. *B.G.* 3)

Devala A Vedic Rishi descendant of Kasyapa: he is credited with having written some of the hymns of the Vedas, particularly *Rig-Veda* ix. (*B.G.* 72)

Deva-sthana *lit.* 'The place of a deity,' or any place in which a deity stays or has its abode. Equivalent to

Deva-loka (the word usually employed). (comp. deva, a divine being, a deity; *sthana*, a place, an abode. *B.G.* 67)

Dhananjaya (or *Dhanamjaya*) A name of Arjuna. (comp. *dhana*, prize, wealth, riches; *jaya*, winner, conqueror: hence 'winner of the prize' or 'conqueror of wealth.' *B.G.* 16)

Dhrishtadyumna The brother of Draupadi son of Drupada, the king of Panchala. He was made the commander-in-chief of the Pandava army, and accomplished the death of Drona, after losing his own father in the great conflict. (m. confident in strength. *B.G.* 4)

Dhrishtaketu An ally of the Pandavas: son of Sisupala, the king of the land of the Chedis living in the district of the modern Bundelkhand (or Bundelcund). The Chedis were renowned for their attachment to ancient laws and institutions. (m. confident in clearness. *B.G.* 2)

Dhritarashtra The eldest son of Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa and Arnbika (widow of Vichitravirya) being born blind. He was the father by Gandhari of Duryodhana (the eldest of 100 sons), to whom he relinquished the government of his kingdom at Hastinapura. Therefore he sided with the Kauravas (*i.e.*, the sons of Kuru, as Duryodhana and his followers were called) rather than with the Pandavas, the sons of his half-brother Pandu. Vyasa offered Dhritarashtra vision, but he refused the gift inasmuch as he could not bear the sight of the fratricide and slaughter in the oncoming battle at Kurukshetra; nevertheless, taking a keen interest in the proceedings, as the opening stanzas show, he has Sanjaya narrate every event that occurs. With the final victory of the Pandavas, Dhritarashtra enthrones Yudhishtira at Hastinapura, and with his wife, Gandhari and Kunti he retires to the forest, where all lose their lives in a conflagration.

W. Q. Judge suggests the interpretation that Dhritarashtra stands for man's physical body - viewing the story from the standpoint of the evolutionary development of man. (m. he whose empire stands firm. *B.G.* 1)

Doab (Hindustani) A region of land situated between two rivers. The particular reference is to the country between the Jumna and Sarasvati rivers, which in ancient times was the land of the Kurus. (Also written duab, from Persian, *du*, two; *ab*, water; from the Sanskrit, *dva*, two; *ap*, water. *B.G.* iii)

Draupadi The patronymic of Krishna, the daughter of Drupada, king of Panchala. At a svayamvara (a gathering for a display of feats of skill for the purpose of allowing a king's daughter to choose a bridegroom) Draupadi selected Arjuna as her bridegroom, but when he returned with his four brothers to his mother, Kunti and announced that they had made a great acquisition, she told them that they were obliged to share it. Because of this and also through the insistence of their ancestor, the sage Vyasa, it was decided that she should become the wife of the five brothers. The *Mahabharata* also relates that in a previous life Draupadi had received the boon that she should be wedded to five husbands. The Draupadeyas (*i.e.*, sons of Draupadi) referred to in the text, were the five sons of the Pandavas, by name: Prativindhya (by Yudhishtira), Sutasoma (by Bhima); Srutakirti (by Arjuna), Satanika (by Nakula); Srutasena (by Sahadeva).

Symbolically Draupadi represents 'the terrestrial life of the personality.' (*B.G.* 2)

Drona A Brahmana, son of Bharadvaja, who married Kripa, the half-sister of Bhishma, by whom he had a son, Asvatthaman. He was acharya (teacher of the military art) to the Kaurava princes as well as to the Pandavas. Although loving the princes equally, nevertheless because of his relationship to Bhishma, he sided with the Kauravas in the great conflict at Kurukshetra. The words spoken to the 'preceptor' in the second sloka (as narrated by Sanjaya - *B.G.* 2) were addressed by Duryodhana to his teacher, Drona. When Bhishma was mortally wounded on the field of battle, Drona became commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army. (*B.G.* 5)

Drupada The son of Prishata, king of Panchala (the region adjacent to the land of the Kurus), father of Dhrishtadyumna ('the clever son' referred to in the text). He was also the father of Draupadi (the wife of the Pandavas). His son was made commander-in-chief of the Pandava army. (*B.G.* 2)

Duryodhana The eldest son of Dhritarashtra and Gandhari leader of the Kurus (or Kauravas) in the conflict with the Pandavas at Kurukshetra. Because of his blindness, Dhritarashtra had intended to make his brother's virtuous son, Yudhishtira, the heir-apparent to his throne, but the Kurus under Duryodhana objected so strongly that instead he allowed his son to take charge of the government, and turned over a portion of his kingdom - that of Indraprastha - to the Pandavas. Owing to further machinations of the Kurus, Yudhishtira lost this kingdom in a game of dice, and Duryodhana forced the Pandavas into exile for thirteen years. When this period had elapsed, however, Duryodhana refused to give up the kingdom, and as a consequence the great conflict was waged, in which he lost his life. In the *Mahabharata* Duryodhana represents the forces of evil battling with the forces of light: one story represents him as doing wicked deeds in spite of himself, and realizing this he attempted to put an end to his life. He was prevented from doing this by the imps of darkness, so that he might continue embodied for their purposes.

Duryodhana is represented as an ambitious, malicious prince, the antithesis of the wise and righteous ruler. (m. difficult to conquer. *B.G.* 1)

Dvamdva A pair of opposites (*e.g.*, heat and cold, joy and sorrow, etc.). The dvamdva compound in the text has reference to a copulative compound, *i.e.*, two members of a compound which are in the same case and likewise may be connected with the conjunction and. (m. two and two: the word is the num. *adj.* dva, two, reduplicated. *B.G.* 75)

Dvipa A zone, region, land, or continent, commonly called 'island,' inasmuch as each dvipa is described as being surrounded by distinct concentric circumambient oceans centering about Mount Meru. Seven dvipas are enumerated as follows: Jambu, Plaksha, Salmali Kusa, Krauncha, Saka, and Pushkara. Esoterically the dvipas refer on the one hand to the seven globes of the Planetary Chain of this Earth, and on the other hand to the seven great continents which come successively into existence as the homes of the seven Root-Races. Jambudvipa corresponds to Globe D of the Chain, Mount Meru rising from its center. (*S.D.* II, 320). This dvipa was divided into nine parts termed *varshas* (*q.v.*). (*B.G.* ii)

Gandharvas The musicians and singers of the gods, represented as dwelling in the sky and preparing the heavenly soma-juice for the gods, as they are especially skilled in medicine. In the Vedas they are described as revealing the secrets of heaven and divine truths to men. The *Atharva-Veda* mentions that there are 6,333 Gandharvas. "*Cosmically* - the Gandharvas are the aggregate powers of the solar-fire, and constitute its Forces; *psychically* - the intelligence residing in the *Sushumna*, Solar ray, the highest of the *seven rays*; *mystically* - the occult force in the Soma (the moon, or lunar plant) and the drink made of it; *physically* - the phenomenal, and *spiritually* - the noumenal causes of *Sound* and the 'Voice of Nature.' Hence, they are called the 6,333 'heavenly Singers' and musicians of Indra's loka who personify (even in number) the various and

manifold sounds in Nature, both above and below." (S.D. I, 523) (B.G. 74)

Gandiva (or *Gandiva*) A remarkable bow which Arjuna received from the fire-god Agni in order that he might assist the deity in a battle with the god of the sky, Indra. At this time Arjuna also assisted Agni in the burning of the Khandava forest - an episode in the *Mahabharata*. The bow was originally given by Soma to the god Varuna, who in turn passed it on to Agni. It is likewise said to have belonged to Prajapati Brahma, and Siva. (B.G. 6)

Ganges (Ganga) The sacred river of India, represented in the Puranas as taking its rise in the heavens from the toe of Vishnu, and brought down to earth through the prayers of the sage Bhagiratha, in order to purify the ashes of the sixty thousand sons of king Sagara. (These sons had been destroyed by the angry glance of the sage Kapila.) Ganga intended to flood the earth (because of being obliged to descend from her heavenly abode), but the force of the fall was intercepted by the god Siva, who caught the river in his matted locks, and allowed it to descend from his brow in seven gentle streams upon the earth. Ganga is personified as a goddess, the daughter of Mena and Himavat (the personification of the Himalaya mountains). The goddess became the wife of king Santanu and gave birth to Bhishma. (B.G. 75)

Garuda The bearer of Vishnu (hence often called Vishnu-ratha): represented as having the body and limbs of a man but the head, wings, talons, and beak of an eagle; the face being white, the wings red, and the body golden. Garuda is regarded as the king of the birds and the great enemy of serpents: his parents were the Vedic sage Kasyapa and Vinata - one of the daughters of Daksha (one of the Prajapatis). The myths also relate that Garuda once took the Amrita (*q.v.*) from the gods in order to purchase the freedom of his mother from Kadru. Indra pursued Garuda and recovered the Amrita - although the god of the sky was worsted in the battle for it. Garuda is "the symbol esoterically of the great cycle," (S.D. II, 323), while his son, Jatayu "is, of course, the cycle of 60,000 years within the great cycle of GARUDA; hence he is represented as his son, or nephew," (S.D. II, 570). (B.G. 75)

Gayatri An ancient meter of 24 syllables (variously arranged, but generally as a triplet of 8 syllables each). The word is also applied specifically to a verse in the *Rig-Veda*, iii, 62, 10:

tat savitur varen am bhargo devasya dhimahi,
dhiyo yo nah prachodayat.

Literal translation: "Let us meditate on that excellent splendor of the divine Sun; may it illumine our hearts (minds)." (B.G. 76)

Govinda A name applied to Krishna. It refers to the time of his youth, for he was reared amongst the cowherds. (m. chief of cowherds: *go*, a cow. B.G. 11)

Gudakesa One of the names given to Arjuna. (m. thick-haired. B.G. 79)

Guru A Teacher, a Preceptor, especially one who imparts spiritual teachings to a disciple. (B.G. 86)

Gods and Heroes and Technical Terms: H - M

[A - G](#) | [N - S](#) | [T - Y](#)

* The asterisk preceding a Sanskrit word herein means 'derived from the verbal root.' (See 'Abbreviations,' and 'Pronunciation Key.')

Hanuman (nominative case: dictionary form or 'crude form'. Hanumat) The celebrated monkey-deity of the *Ramayana*, son of Pavana, the god of the wind, by Anjana. His exploits partake more of the superhuman than human, thus they are favorite topics among the Hindus from youth to old age. As instances: the epic relates that he jumped from India to Ceylon in one leap; he tore up trees by the roots; he flew to and from the Himalayas bringing healing herbs to the wounded. It is related that he and his monkey host were created by the gods in order to assist Rama in his battle against Ravana and the Rakshasas of Lanka (Ceylon). Among mental achievements Hanuman is credited with being a skilled grammarian, and no one could equal him in the sastras (scriptures) and in the art of explaining them.

Arjuna had adopted the traditional representation of Hanuman as his crest. (*B.G.* 4)

Hari Especially the name of Krishna as an Avatara of Vishnu; applied also to Vishnu and Siva. (*B.G.* 79)

Hastinapura The city founded by king Hastin (the great-great-grandfather of Kuru), which became the capital city of the kings of the Chandravansa (the 'Lunar Dynasty'), and the principal city of the Kurus. A great part of the main action of the *Mahabharata* centers about this city. It formed the main objective of the Pandavas in the great conflict at Kurukshetra (between the Kurus and the Pandavas), at the conclusion of which the victorious Yudhishtira was crowned king after a triumphal entry into the city. Hastinapura was situated about 57 miles north-east of the modern city of Delhi on the banks of an old channel of the Ganges river. (m. the city of the elephant – *hastin*, an elephant. *B.G.* p. i)

Himalaya The lofty range of mountains in central Asia. Also known as Himachala and Himadri and personified as Himavat, mythologically considered to be the husband of Mena and the father of Ganga (the Ganges river). (*B.G.* 74)

Hrishikesa A name applied to Krishna and to Vishnu. (m. lord of the senses. *B.G.* 84)

Ikshvaku The son of Vaivasvata-Manu, of whom it is related in mythology that he was born from the nostril of his father when the latter happened to sneeze! Ikshvaku was the founder of the Suryavansa (the 'solar dynasty'), reigning at Ayodhya at the commencement of the Treta-Yuga (the second Yuga). (*B.G.* 30)

Indra The god of the sky and atmosphere: in the Vedas, lord of the deities of the intermediate region (the sky), lord of rain and thunder, and leader of the storm-gods (Maruts, *q.v.*). He is represented as riding in a golden car drawn by two tawny horses, waging war upon the demons of darkness (especially Vritra, the demon of drought, whom he slays; hence he is called Vritrajit), and conquering them with his thunderbolt (vajra) and his bow and arrows. Originally Indra was not the chief of the gods, but because of the religious observances instituted necessitating the invocation of the deity of the atmosphere, he superseded the more spiritual Varuna: thus more Vedic hymns are addressed to Indra than to any other deity, except Agni (*q.v.*). In later mythology, however, the Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu, Siva) became most prominent, therefore Indra was relegated to a subservient position. In *Manu* he is the regent of Svarga (heaven) with particular watch over the east quarter, and is considered one of the twelve Adityas (*q.v.*). He is then represented as riding a white horse (Uchchaisravas, *q.v.*), or an elephant (Airavata, *q.v.*).

"Fohat is the scientific aspect of both Vishnu and Indra, the latter older and more important in the Rig Veda than his sectarian successor" (*S.D.* I, 673). (*B.G.* 67)

Isvara 'Lord' (used in the same sense as is the term 'Father in heaven' in the Christian New Testament),

hence the Supreme Self or Hierarchy of a system, applicable to the great or to the small – to the universe or to man. In man it is the Divine Spirit, or the Divine-Spiritual Monad. Isvara is also used as a title for many of the gods, such as Vishnu and Siva.

"The *Logos*, or both the unmanifested and the manifested WORD, is called by the Hindus, Iswara, 'the Lord,' ... Iswara, say the Vedantins, is the highest consciousness in nature. 'This highest consciousness,' answer the Occultists, 'is only a *synthetic unit* in the world of the manifested Logos ... for it is the sum total of Dhyano-chohanic consciousnesses.' " (S.D. I, 573) *is, to rule, to be master. B.G. 130)

Janaka A king of the Mithila Dynasty who reigned at Videha, famed for his good works, knowledge, and sanctity: through his righteous life he became a Brahmana and one of the Rajarshis. He was the father of Sita, who sprang up from the earth from the furrow he had made with his plow. (B.G. 25)

Janardana In the Puranas the One Cosmic Intelligent Life, manifesting in the threefold aspect of Fashioner, Preserver, and Regenerator (*i.e.*, the Hindu Trimurti – Brahma, Vishnu, Siva). Applied to Krishna in his avataric manifestation of Vishnu. *jan, to be born, to come forth; *ard, to move: 'the ever-born.' B.G. 72)

Jayadratha A prince of the Chandravansa (Lunar Dynasty), son of Brihanmanas and king of the Sindhus and Sauviras (tribes living along the Indus river). Jayadratha married Duhsala, the daughter of Dhritarashtra, hence he became an ally of the Kurus in the war with the Pandavas, during which he was slain by Arjuna. (m. having victorious chariots. B.G. 83)

Jumna The modern Jamna: a river in the Northwest Provinces of India: it joins the Ganges at Allahabad. The strip of land lying between it and the Sarasvati river was the region of the Kurus in the *Mahabharata*. The Yadavas ruled over the country west of the Jumna. Vyasa was born on an island situated in this river. (B.G. iii)

Kalpa A period of time, a cycle: a generalizing term and therefore used for time-periods of different lengths; chronologers, however, compute a Kalpa by the Life of Brahma – minor kalpas are numerous. A Mahakalpa is often made the equivalent of a Manvantara. *klrip, to be in order. B.G. 65)

Kamadeva The god of love (*lit.* the god Kama). The first-born in the Vedas: "Him neither devas, nor pitris, nor men have equalled. Thou art superior to these and forever great," chants the *Atharva-Veda*; while the *Rig-Veda* sings: "Desire first arose in It, which was the primal germ of mind; and which sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects entity with non-entity" (x, 129). Kamadeva is the lord of the Apsarasas (the celestial nymphs, consorts of the Gandharvas, *q.v.*), and is represented as a handsome youth riding on a parrot, attended by the Apsarasas, one of whom bears his banner distinguished by the Makara (*q.v.*). His bow is made of sugar-cane, and his bow-string a line of bees, while each one of his arrows is tipped with a different flower. The *Taittiriya-Brahmana* has it that Kamadeva was the son of Dharma (moral religious duty, piety, justice) and of Sraddha (faith); in another hymn he is born from the heart of Brahma and therefore called the Self-Existent (Atma-bhu), or the Unborn (Aja).

Kamadeva is in the *Rig-Veda* "the personification of that feeling which leads and propels to creation. He was the *first movement* that stirred the ONE, after its manifestation from the purely abstract principle, to create," (S.D. II, 176).

"As Eros was connected in early Greek mythology with the world's creation, and only afterwards became the sexual Cupid, so was Kama in his original Vedic character," (*ibid.*). (B.G. 74 – mentioned as 'the god of love.')

Kamaduh (dict.: nom. Kamadhuk) The mythical cow belonging to the sage Vasishtha, produced by the gods at the churning of the cosmic ocean. (See *Ananta*.) She is supposed to grant all desires and hence is termed the 'cow of plenty.' The alternative form, Kamadhenu, gives the clue to this meaning: *kama*, desire, wish; *dhenu*, milch-cow. In interpretation of the above allegory: the reference is to the appearance of the Earth in space as the mother of all that later appears on it. (B.G. 23)

Kansa A king of the Yadava line of the Lunar Dynasty, ruler of the Bhojas, reigning at Mathura, who

deposed his own father, Ugrasena. Ugrasena was the brother of Devaka, the latter being the father of Devaki mother of Krishna. Kansa is usually called the uncle of Krishna; strictly speaking, however, he is a cousin. In spite of this relationship, he became the avowed enemy of Krishna because a prophecy had been foretold to him that a son of Devaki would cause his death. In order to prevent this from happening, Kansa imprisoned Devaki and Vasudeva in his palace and commanded that all infants born to them should be put to death. Six children were so slain, but a seventh, Balarama, was saved through the connivance of his parents. Then when Krishna was born, his parents escaped from the palace and fled from the city of Mathura, whereupon the enraged Kansa ordered all infant boys in the kingdom put to death; but the parents escaped from the realm with Krishna, and the child was brought up by cow-herds in seclusion. Kansa at length learned that Krishna had escaped destruction and made several attempts to bring about his death: as an instance, he sent Jarasandha, the king of Magadha, to battle with the young Krishna eighteen times, but that monarch was as many times defeated. Krishna finally slew Kansa, as was predicted, restored Ugrasena, but left Mathura and established his kingdom at Dvaraka. (B.G. 121)

Kapila One of the famous Rishis. There are many sages by the name of Kapila, the last being the founder of the Sankhya (*q.v.*) philosophy. A legend relates that while Kapila was engaged in meditation in Patala, he was menaced by the sixty thousand sons of Sagara, whereupon the sacred flame which darted from his person immediately reduced the sixty thousand sons to ashes. "That the story is an allegory is seen upon its very face: the 60,000 *Sons*, brutal, vicious, and impious, are the personification of the *human passions* that a 'mere glance of the sage' – the SELF who represents the highest state of purity that can be reached on earth – reduces to ashes." (S.D. II, 571)

"There are several well-known Kapilas in the Puranas. First the primeval sage, then Kapila, one of the three 'Secret' Kurnaras; and Kapila, son of Kasyapa and Kadru ... besides Kapila, the great sage and philosopher of the Kali Yuga." (S.D. II, 572) (B.G. 74)

Karma Briefly, the teaching of Karma in the *Bhagavad-Gita* (and for that matter throughout the whole of the *Mahabharata*) is, that man's actions set in motion causes which in due time react upon their producer, hence until he can "burst the bonds of Karma and rise above them" he is in fact chained thereby, and must return to the scene of his actions again and again, *i.e.*, he is reborn on Earth again and again until he is freed from the bonds of Karma. The means for freeing himself are inculcated, principally in chapters iii v, xiv, and xviii. **kri* to do, to act: dictionary form or 'crude form': *karman*, nominative case: *karma*. B.G. 15)

Karna The son of Pritha (or Kunti) by Surya, the god of the sun, through the instrumentality of a mantra granted to her by the sage Durvasas. This occurred before her marriage to Pandu, hence Karna was the half-brother of the Pandavas, although this was not known to them until after his death, which was accomplished by Arjuna during the battle at Kurukshetra. Karna had been abandoned by his mother while yet a child: he was found by the suta (Charioteer) of Dhritarashtra, named Adhiratha (or Nandana), and brought up as his own son. Although knowing his relationship to the Pandavas, Karna sided with the Kauravas, because Duryodhana had given him the kingdom of Anga. During the great conflict Karna was on the point of slaying Arjuna, of whom he was especially envious, but was prevented from doing so by Krishna. (B.G. 2)

Kasi (or Kasi) A country situated in the vicinity of modern Benares, whose king, Kasya, sided with the Pandavas. (B.G. 2)

Kauravas (see *Kurus*)

Kesava A name applied to Krishna, likewise to Vishnu. (m. having much or fine hair. B.G. 18)

Kesin A daitya (or 'demon') slain by Krishna when the prince was attacked by Kesin in the form of a horse. The daitya was believed to have been sent by Kansa (*q.v.*) in order to cause the death of Krishna. (B.G. 121)

Kripa The son of the sage Saradvat. With his sister Kripa he was adopted by king Santanu (the father of

Bhishma). Kripa was one of the privy councillors at Hasti napura, and was one of the three sole surviving warriors of the conflict on the side of the Kauravas (hence he is referred to in the text as ‘the conqueror in battle’). (*B.G.* 3)

Krishna The son of Devaki and Vasudeva (of the Yadava line of the Chandravansa – the Lunar Dynasty). (For particulars as to his birth see *Kansa*.) Krishna is represented as the eighth Avatara of Vishnu: in this aspect he is the spiritual teacher, the embodiment of wisdom; but as with other Saviors, stories and allegories have been woven around him in great abundance. In the *Mahabharata* his story is briefly sketched, yet all his exploits are enumerated: he appears throughout the work mostly as the advisor of the Pandavas. The life of Krishna is told in full in the *Harivansa* (a work regarded as an addition to the epic), also in great detail in the *Vishnu- and Bhagavata-Puranas*, and popularized for the multitude in the *Prem Sagar* (written in Hindi. The various stories and allegories woven around Krishna are still the most loved topic among the populace of India today, who revere him as a god. Nevertheless his teachings as outlined in the *Bhagavad-Gita* are as applicable today in the Occident as in the Orient – although couched in the metaphor and background of a people living thousands of years ago. The date of Krishna’s death is given as 3102 B.C., and this event marked the commencement of the Kali-yuga, the present ‘Iron Age.’ The *Bhagavad-Gita* itself best describes the avataric character of Krishna: it represents the teacher as the Logos, while Arjuna typifies man.

H. P. Blavatsky makes the following interesting comment regarding the successive incarnations of avatars of Vishnu (*i.e.*, the Narasinha Avatara, Rama, and Krishna) and the successive reincarnations of Daityas. Hiranyakasipu, the unrighteous but valiant monarch of the Daityas, because of his wickedness was slain by the Avatara Nara-sinha (Man-lion). "Then he was born as Ravana, the giant king of Lanka, and killed by Rama; after which he is reborn as Sisupala, the son of Raja-rishi (King Rishi) Damaghosha, when he is again killed by Krishna, the last incarnation of Vishnu. This parallel evolution of Vishnu (spirit) with a Daitya, as men, may seem meaningless, yet it gives us the key not only to the respective dates of Rama and Krishna but even to a certain psychological mystery." (*S.D.* II, 225)

(m. dark-colored, black, or blue-black. Krishna is represented as being very dark-skinned. *B.G.* 3)

Krishna Dvaipayana (see *Vyasa*). (*B.G.* p. iii)

Krishna-Yajur-Veda *lit.* ‘the Black Yajur-Veda’ – an alternative name for the Taittiriya-Samhita – one of the two divisions of this Veda, the other part being known as the White YajurVeda. It is called ‘black’ (krishna) because the Samhita and Brahmana portions of this Veda are confused and mixed together, whereas the part named ‘white’ (sukla) is free from this confusion and is arranged in an orderly manner. *Yajur-Veda* means ‘sacrificial Veda’: – it is a collection of sacred mantras which are practically identical with some of the mantras in the *Rig-Veda*; in fact it is simply a collection, cut up and rearranged for the priests as a sort of sacrificial prayer-book. The principal sacrifices are those to be performed at the new and full moon, and at the horse-sacrifice (asvamedha). (*B.G.* 31)

Kshatriya (or *Kshatriya*) The second of the four social classes in the Vedic period: generally called the warrior caste, but the term refers also to the world of officialdom, *i.e.*, kings, princes, administrators, etc. (see *B.G.* pp. 127-8). (*B.G.* 14)

Kshetra A sphere of action, a field, a vehicle. Referred to (in *B.G.*) as the compounded constitution of the knower, or of the conscious entity, *i.e.*, the body. (*B.G.* 93)

Kshetrajna The conscious ego: the cognising and recognising element in the human constitution – Buddhi-Manas (translated ‘soul’ in *B.G.*). (comp. *kshetra*, field, *i.e.*, body; *jna*, the knower. *B.G.* 93)

Kunti The patronymic of Pritha, the sister of Krishna’s father, Vasudeva, and daughter of a Yadava prince named Sura, who gave her to his childless cousin Kunti (or Kuntibhoja), by whom she was adopted – hence she was called Kunti. As a maiden she paid such respect and devotion to the sage Durvasas that he taught her a mantra whereby she was enabled to have a child by any god she chose to invoke. In order to test the efficacy of this she invoked the god of the sun, Surya, and Karna (*q.v.*) was born: but Kunti abandoned the child. She chose Pandu as her husband (at a svayamvara). With the aid of her mantra she invoked the god of justice, Dharma, by whom Yudhishtira was born by invoking Vayu, the god of the wind, Bhima was born; and by

supplication to Indra, the god of the sky, Kunti gave birth to Arjuna. In the *Mahabharata* Kunti is represented as the model of maternal affection and devotion, ever watching over the Pandavas, with whom she spent thirteen years in exile. After the great war she retired with Gandhari and Dhritarashtra into the forest, where she perished in a conflagration.

"As Aditi is called *Surarani* (the matrix or 'mother' of the *sura* gods), so Kunti the mother of the Pandavas, is called in Mahabharata Pandavarani – which term is already *physiologized*." (S.D. II, 527) (B.G. 4)

Kuntibhoja (or Kunti) King of the Kuntis (a people of ancient India). This Yadava prince adopted Pritha, the daughter of his cousin Sura, hence she was called Kunti (*q.v.*). (B.G. 2)

Kuru A king of the Paurava line of the Chandravansa (the Lunar Dynasty) reigning at Hastinapura. He was the son of Samvarana and Tapati and the ancestor of Dhritarashtra and Pandu by the fourteenth remove. Hence Arjuna is referred to as 'son of Kuru' (B.G. 51) or 'best of the Kurus' (B.G. 35).

Kurukshetra *lit.*, 'The field of the Kurus': a plain situated in the vicinity of modern Delhi on which was staged the great conflict which forms the principal theme of the *Mahabharata*. (comp. *Kuru*, and *kshetra*, field. B.G. 1)

Kurus (or Kauravas) An ancient people inhabiting the northwest of India, in the vicinity of the modern Delhi. In the *Mahabharata* they are divided into northern and southern Kurus: the northern occupying one of the four Mahadvipas (principal divisions of the known world), and regarded as a country beyond the most northern range of the Himalayas, often described as a country of everlasting happiness and considered to be the ancient home of the Aryan Race. The southern Kurus were those referred to in *the Bhagavad-Gita* reigning at Hastinapura.

In the text (of the B.G.), the reference to the Kurus is applicable to the sons of Dhritarashtra, although the sons of Pandu are equally 'Kurus.' And so Arjuna is referred to as 'the best of the Kurus,' for he was a descendant of Kuru by the fifteenth remove. (B.G. 4)

Kusa The sacred grass (*Poa cynosuroides*), used in India at certain religious ceremonies. H. P. Blavatsky remarks that it has certain occult properties. (*Theos. Gloss.*) (B.G. 46)

Kusumakara The season of Spring. (comp. *kusuma*, flower, blossom; *akara*, making a quantity of. B.G. 76)

Kutastha A philosophical term meaning 'holding the highest position,' hence the primordial divinity. As a noun it is often used as a synonym for Isvara, the Divine-Spiritual Monad. Kutastha is often used derivatively for Akasa (*q.v.*) and for Mulaprakriti. (comp. *kuta*, the highest, the summit; *stha*, standing. B.G. 108)

Madhu The name of an asura (*q.v.*), who was slain by Vishnu. Madhu and his companion Kaitabha sprang from the ear of Vishnu while the deity was resting at the end of a kalpa. These two asuras took advantage of the sleep of the god to approach Brahma, who was also resting, and were on the point of putting him to death but Vishnu awoke and frustrated them in their plot by immediately slaying the asuras. Because of this act Vishnu is known by the names of Madhusudana (slayer of Madhu) and Kaitabhajit (Causing the death of Kaitabha). W. Q. Judge suggests that Madhu represents the quality of passion in nature (B.G. 49). Krishna was also called Madhusudana. (B.G. 9)

Madhusudana A name applied to Krishna Vishnu (Krishna in the aspect of Vishnu). (comp. Madhu (*q.v.*); *sudana*, slayer. B.G. 9) Also the name of many Sanskrit authors. (B.G. 51)

Madri A sister of the king of the Madras, who became the second wife of Pandu. By means of the mantra given her by Kunti (*q.v.*), she became the mother of Nakula and Sahadeva by the twin Asvins (the sky-gods). At the death of Pandu, Madri ascended the funeral pyre with her husband's corpse. (B.G. p. iv)

Mahabharata *lit.* 'The great (war) of the Bharatas.' The great epic poem of Hindusthan, consisting of about 215,000 lines of metrical prose, which are divided into 18 parvas (books or sections). The main theme of the work is the recounting of the history of the later scions of the Chandravansa (Lunar Dynasty) dealing

especially with the exploits of the Kurus and the Pandavas, culminating in the great conflict which forms the major portion of the epic. Not only does it follow the achievements of its principal characters, for the ramifications of the narrative consider innumerable stories and allegories with a wealth of description and fancy unequalled in the realm of fiction; but every phase of the human emotions is dealt with, so that this epic has been the source of material for dramas and stories for succeeding generations. The mythological and religious aspect of the people of ancient times is set forth, as regards both the allegories of the deities and the priestly ceremonial observances; philosophical discourses abound (the *Bhagavad-Gita* being but a single instance); teachings in regard to Karman and Reincarnation are expounded as well as illustrated in story-form (see under Draupadi and Sikhandin); moral and ethical lessons are repeatedly inculcated, while the traditions and legends of the Bharatas are stressed at all times, featuring all the exploits of a war-like race. The tale of Rama (which forms the basis for the second great epic of India, the *Ramayana*) is told in full, as is also the story of Sakuntala (later dramatized by Kalidasa). Unquestionably the *Mahabharata* is a work intended for the populace, therefore it is written in a manner which would appeal to the people of that time, and deals principally with battles. Its compilation is attributed to Vyasa (*q.v.*). "No two Orientalists agree as to its date. But it is undeniably extremely ancient." (*Theos. Gloss.* 201)

"... from the first appearance of the Aryan race ... down to the final disappearance of Plato's small island of Atlantis, the Aryan races had never ceased to fight with the descendants of the first giant races. This war lasted till nearly the close of the age which preceded the Kali Yuga, and was the Mahabharatean war so famous in Indian History." (*S.D.* II, 395) (*B.G.* p. i)

Maharshi *lit.* 'Great Sage' (great Rishi): referring especially to the ten Maharshis who were the 'mind-born sons' of Prajapati (or Manu Svayambhuva) enumerated in *Manu* (I, 34) as: Marichi Atri Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Prachetas, Vasishtha, Bhrigu, Narada. They are also called the ten Prajapatis. Sometimes they are referred to as seven only – as in chapter x, sloka 6, rendered as "the seven great Sages," *B.G.* 71. (*See Rishi.*)

"Every nation has either the *seven* and *ten* Rishis-Manus and Prajapatis; ... One and all have been derived from the primitive Dhyana-Chohans of the Esoteric doctrine, or the 'Builders' of the Stanzas (Book I). From Manu, Thoth-Hermes, Oannes-Dagon, and Edris-Enoch, down to Plato and Panodorus, all tell us of seven divine Dynasties, of seven Lemurian, and seven Atlantean divisions of the Earth; of the seven primitive and dual gods who descend from their celestial abode and reign on Earth, teaching mankind Astronomy, Architecture, and all the other sciences that have come down to us. These Beings appear first as 'gods' and Creators; then they merge in nascent man, to finally emerge as 'divine-Kings and Rulers.'" (*S.D.* II, 365-6) (comp. *maha*, great; *rishi*, a Sage or Seer. *B.G.* 81)

Mahatman *lit.* 'Great Soul' or 'Great Self' compound of *maha*, great; atman, Self. In India today the word (Anglicized as Mahatma) is applied as a title to a man of outstanding achievement, although in ancient times it referred to a man of outstanding spiritual attainment, as mentioned in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. In Theosophical literature the word is employed technically for those beings farther advanced evolutionally than ordinary men, who are also referred to as the Masters of Wisdom, or the Sages and Seers. (*B.G.* 55)

Mahesvara *lit.* 'Great Lord,' a term applied to the 'spirit.' Also a title applied to Siva (the third member of the Hindu Trimurti). (comp. *maha*, great; *isvara*, lord, master. *B.G.* 96)

Mahusudana (should be *Madhusudana*, *q.v.* The name of many Sanskrit writers. *B.G.* 51)

Makara A sea-animal: the vehicle of Varuna (god of the ocean). It is variously described: as a fish, a shark, a dolphin, or a crocodile; however, in the legends it is depicted as having the head and forelegs of an antelope and the body and tail of a fish-very similar to Capricornus, and like it, allocated to the tenth sign of the Zodiac. Makara is "now the most sacred and mysterious of the signs of the Zodiac." (*S.D.* II, 268) (*B.G.* 75)

Manas The seat of mind and consciousness of egoity: the real man. In the Theosophical classification of man's principles, the fifth (Counting upwards): regarded as the child of Mahat, hence called *Manasaputra*.

"Manas is a 'principle,' and yet it is an 'Entity' an individuality or Ego. He is a 'God,' and yet he is doomed to an endless cycle of incarnations, ...

"... In its very essence it is THOUGHT, and is, therefore, called in its plurality *Manasa putra*, 'the Sons of the (Universal) mind.' " (*The Key to Theosophy*, 183-4)

"*Manas*, or the Thinker, is the reincarnating being, the immortal who carries the results and values of all the different lives lived on earth or elsewhere. Its nature becomes dual as soon as it is attached to a body." The reasoning faculty "is the lower aspect of the Thinker or *Manas*, ... Its other, and in theosophy higher, aspect is the intuitional, which knows, and does not depend on reason." (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, 54) (B.G. 53)

Manipushpaka The name of the conch-shell of Sahadeva. (m. jewel-flowered. B.G. 4)

Manu In the *Laws of Manu* it is stated that Manu was created by Viraj: he then produced the ten Prajapatis (*q.v.*), who in turn produced seven other Manus; each of these Manus again produced seven Manus. Fourteen Manus, however, are allocated to the seven globes of a planetary chain, two to each: one appears at the commencement of a Round (called the Root-Manu) and one at the conclusion (the Seed-Manu), the interval between the two Manus being termed a Manvantara. The Manu in charge of our present Fourth Round is named Vaivasvata-Manu (*q.v.*). The four Manus (mentioned on p. 71, B.G.) refer to the Manus of the four Rounds, the fourth Round being now in progress. (See *Maharshi* and *Rishi*.)

Esoterically Manu stands for the entities collectively which appear first at the beginning of manifestation: it is the spiritual 'Tree of Life' of any planetary chain of manifested being. "Manu declares himself created by Viraj, or Vaiswanara, (the Spirit of Humanity), which means that his Monad emanates from the never resting Principle in the beginning of every new Cosmic activity:" (*S.D.* II, 311).

"Notwithstanding the terrible, and evidently *purposed*, confusion of Manus, Rishis, and their progeny in the Puranas, one thing is made clear: there have been and there will be seven Rishis in every Root-Race (Called also *Manvantara* in the sacred books) as there are fourteen Manus in every Round, the 'presiding gods, the Rishis and Sons of the Manus' being identical. ... 'Six' Manvantaras are given, the Seventh being our own in the Vishnu Purana." (*S.D.* II, 614) (B.G. 30)

Margasirsha The name of the month in which the full moon enters Mrigasiras (generally applied to Capricornus in the signs of the Zodiac): the tenth or in later times the first month in the year. (B.G. 76)

Marichi One of the ten Prajapatis (progenitors) or mind-born sons of Brahma, from whom mankind is descended (according to *Manu*). He is also regarded as one of the seven great Rishis (*q.v.*), in the *Mahabharata*. He is the father of the Rishi Kasyapa – the Vedic sage, the most prolific of creators, who produced the Nagas (*q.v.*). Marichi is also represented as the chief of the Maruts (*q.v.*). In *Manu* the Pitris of the Gods are reborn as the sons of Marichi and his wife Sambhuti. These pitris are the Agnishvatta Pitris, while those called in *Manu* the 'Pitris of the Demons,' who are reborn as the sons of Atri are the Barhishad Pitris. (*S.D.* II, 89) (B.G. 73)

Maruts The storm gods, helpers of Indra: armed with lightning and thunderbolts, they ride on the whirlwind and direct storms. They are prominent in the Vedas, being called the sons of Rudra (the storm god), or again sons and brothers of Indra (god of the sky). In the Puranas it is related that the Maruts were born in the following manner: Did, the wife of Kasyapa, (one of the great Rishis) was about to give birth to a son, but the embryo was separated by Indra into seven portions, each portion when born being again separated into seven parts. Siva transformed these into boys, calling them Maruts. H. P. Blavatsky interprets this legend as follows: Diti "is the sixth principle of *metaphysical* nature, the *Buddhi* of Akasa. Diti the mother of the Maruts, is one of her terrestrial forms, made to represent, at one and the same time, the divine Soul in the ascetic, and the divine aspirations of mystic Humanity ..." Indra represents the cosmic principle Mahat, in man "*Manas* in its dual aspect: as connected with *Buddhi*; and as allowing himself to be dragged down by his *Kama*-principle (the body of passions and desires)." The babe allegorizes "the divine and steady will of the Yogi – determined to resist all such temptations, and thus destroy the passions within his earthly personality. Indra succeeds again, because flesh conquers spirit ... He divides the 'Embryo' (of new *divine* adeptship, begotten once more by the Ascetics of the Aryan Fifth Race), into *seven* portions a reference not alone to the *seven* sub-races of the new Root-Race, in each of which there will be a 'Manu,' but also to the seven degrees of adeptship – and then each portion into seven pieces – alluding to the Manu-Rishis of each Root-Race, and

even sub-race." (S.D. II, pp. 614-5)

"The Maruts represent (a) the *passions* that storm and rage within every candidate's breast, when preparing for an ascetic life – this *mystically*; (b) the occult potencies concealed in the manifold aspects of *Akasa's* lower principles her body, or *sthula sarira*, representing the terrestrial, lower, atmosphere of every inhabited globe – this *mystically* and *sidereally*; (c) actual conscious Existences, Beings of a cosmic and psychic nature. "At the same time, 'Maruts' is, in occult parlance, one of the names given to those EGOS of great Adepts who have passed away, and who are known also as *Nirmanakayas*;" (S.D. II, 615). (B.G. 73)

Maya As a philosophical term the word has come to be associated with the illusory aspect of man's thoughts and views as he considers life and his surroundings, endeavoring to interpret and understand things: therefore is Maya rendered 'illusion.' One of the traditional explanations of this term given in the Vedanta is: a man sees a coil of rope and believing it to be a serpent instinctively jumps away from it. On looking a second time he realizes that it is but a piece of rope: yet he thought he saw a serpent; therefore he decides that he was fooled by the illusory nature of things – maya.

"Maya or illusion is an element which enters into all finite things, for everything that exists has only a relative, not an absolute, reality, since the appearance which the hidden noumenon assumes for any observer depends upon his power of cognition." (S.D. I, 39)

Maya is often used as an equivalent for Avidya (ignorance), although properly it should be applied solely to Prakriti (*q.v.*). **ma*, to measure, with an acquired meaning of to form, to limit. B.G. 31)

Meru Mythologically, a mountain situated in the center of the earth, represented as the abode of the gods, compared to the seed-vessel of a lotus, the leaves of which are formed by the various island-continent (Dvipas); the river Ganges falls on its summit and flows therefrom to the world in four streams; the regents of the four quarters occupy corresponding faces of the mountain, which is resplendent with gold and gems. "Meru is *not* 'the fabulous mountain in the navel or centre of the earth,' but its roots and foundations are in that navel, though it is in the far north itself. This connects it with the 'central' land 'that never perishes';" (S.D. II, 401).

"It is the north pole, the country of 'Meru,' which is the seventh division, as it answers to the Seventh principle" (S.D. II, 403). (B.G. 74)

Muni An ascetic, monk, devotee, hermit (especially one who has taken a vow of silence. **man*, to think; hence one of the meanings of the word is 'a man who has attained union with his inner divinity.' B.G. 18)

Gods and Heroes and Technical Terms: N - S

[A - G](#) | [H - M](#) | [T - Y](#)

* The asterisk preceding a Sanskrit word herein means 'derived from the verbal root.' (See 'Abbreviations,' and 'Pronunciation Key.')

Naga The word means a snake, especially a cobra; but in the *Mahabharata* it refers to a race of beings inhabiting Patala, the daughter of whose king, Ulupi married Arjuna. "But as Patala means the *antipodes*, and was the name given to America by the ancients, who knew and visited that continent before Europe had ever heard of it, the term is probably akin to the Mexican *Nagals* the (now) sorcerers and medicine men." (*Theos. Gloss.* 222)

One myth relates that the Nagas were the offspring of the Rishi Kasyapa (the son of Marichi, *q.v.*). Regarding this H. P. Blavatsky wrote: "What is the *fable*, the genealogy and origin of Kasyapa, with his twelve wives, by whom he had a numerous and diversified progeny of *nagas* (serpents), reptiles, birds, and all kinds of living things, and who was thus the *father* of all kinds of animals, but a *veiled* record of the order of evolution in *this* round?" (*S.D.* II, 253)

Another tale represents the Nagas as a semi-divine race (the race of Kadru) inhabiting the waters, or the city of Bhogavati situated under the earth: they are fabled to possess a human face with serpent-like lower extremities. Ananta (*q.v.*) is king of the Nagas.

In *The Secret Doctrine* the word *Naga* stands for a Serpent of Wisdom, a full Initiate - the serpent has ever been used in Occultism as the symbol of immortality and wisdom. "In the *Secret Doctrine*, the first *Nagas* - beings wiser than Serpents - are the 'Sons of Will and Yoga,' " (*S.D.* II, 181).

"Some of the descendants of the primitive Nagas, the Serpents of Wisdom, peopled America, when its continent arose during the palmy days of the great Atlantis," (*S.D.* II, 182). (*B.G.* 75)

Nakula The son of Madri (the second wife of Pandu) and the twin gods of the sky, the Asvinau: the fourth of the Pandavas. Madri had been given by Kunti the use of her mantra for calling to her side a god, but she was clever enough to summon the twin sky-gods, hence she gave birth to two sons: Nakula and Sahadeva. Nakula excelled in the art of training and managing horses, which he learned from Drona. (*B.G.* 4)

Nara A man. In the *Mahabharata* and the Puranas, Nara is sometimes used as an equivalent for Cosmic Purusha (*q.v.*), 'Primordial Universal Man,' and associated with Narayana (the Logos). Arjuna is identified with Nara, and Krishna with Narayana - the difference in the human sphere suggesting the difference in the cosmic sphere. Thus, as Subba Row explains, Arjuna represents Nara or the human monad, whereas Krishna represents the Logos (*N.B.G.* 9). (*B.G.* p. viii)

Narada One of the ten great Rishis, or Prajapatis, known as the mind-born sons of Brahma. This Rishi is credited with the authorship of some of the hymns of the *Rig-Veda*. In the epic poems he is represented as the virgin-ascetic frustrating creative functions, nevertheless he is a helper of mankind and appears as the friend of Krishna. Then too Narada is the leader of the heavenly musicians (Gandharvas, *q.v.*), the inventor of the vina (lute); he also descends into Patala (the infernal regions). Narada is called "in Cis-Himalayan Occultism *Pesh-Hun*, the 'Messenger,' ... a kind of active and ever incarnating logos, who leads and guides human affairs from the beginning to the end of the Kalpa." (*S.D.* II, 48) (*B.G.* 72)

Nasatya One of the twin Asvins (*q.v.*), the sky deities. By Madri he became the father of Nakula - the fourth of the Pandava brothers. (m. the helpful one. *B.G.* p. iv)

Nirvana A super-spiritual status: the state of supreme bliss, of complete absorption of the consciousness in pure Kosmic Being: it is the state of those beings who have reached superhuman knowledge and spiritual

illumination and are enabled to live in their own spiritual essence, casting off the inferior parts of the pilgrim-monad's sheaths - such is the meaning of the word Jivanmukta (a 'freed monad'). To attain Nirvana one has to identify oneself with one's divine Parent (the 'Father in Heaven' - the divine Monad). (comp. *nir*, out or away; *vana*, past participle of *va*, to blow, hence 'blown out' - referring to man's *lower principles*, which are indeed discarded by the Jivanmukta.) (B.G. 21)

OM (or *AUM*) The syllable which has come to have a holy significance in India, particularly in Brahmanical literature. It has the meaning of benediction and affirmation, it opens and closes invocations or prayers (see B.G. 119), and is pronounced by Yogins during meditation.

"It is a compound of three letters *a, u, m*, which, in the popular belief, are typical of the three Vedas, also of three gods - A (Agni) V (Varuna) and M (Maruts) or Fire, Water and Air. In esoteric philosophy these are the three sacred fires, or the 'triple fire' in the Universe and Man, besides many other things." (*Theos. Gloss.* 240) (B.G. 1)

Oosana (see *Usanas*).

Panchajanya The name of Krishna's conch-shell, which he obtained in the following manner: Panchajana was an elemental of the sea, using the form of a conch-shell (*sankha*). He had seized the son of Sandipani (who had instructed Krishna in the use of arms), whereupon Krishna attacked and slew Panchajana, taking the shell for use as his conch.

It is significant and interesting that the word Panchajana itself means 'five classes,' having reference to the five lower classes of beings which in a general way were considered by the ancient Hindus to inhabit the universe. The name therefore could properly be applied to a head of any one such composite group of beings; and to speak of Panchajana as a 'demon,' as Orientalists often do, is to forget the fact that one of the Panchajanas or five classes of animate beings are men, who can hardly be called 'demons,' even in the Hindu mythological sense. (m. *lit.* descended from Panchajana. B.G. 3)

Pandu The son of Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa and Ambalika, half-brother of Dhritarashtra, and parent of the five hero princes Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva - who were known as the Pandavas (*i.e.*, sons of Pandu). When Pandu became of age, he was given the throne of Hastinapura by his regent-uncle Bhishma, because Dhritarashtra was considered unfit to rule the kingdom on account of his blindness. Pandu, however, relinquished the kingdom because of a curse pronounced upon him while hunting, and retired to the Himalayas, where he died. (B.G. 2)

Pandus (or Pandavas) The sons of Pandu, referring to the five brothers - Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva - who sought to regain their kingdom of Indraprastha, which had been taken from them by the Kauravas under the leadership of Duryodhana. This led to the great battle at Kurukshetra, in which the Pandavas were victorious. (B.G. 2)

Parabrahman *lit.* Beyond Brahman, *i.e.*, that which is beyond the summit of a manifested kosmic hierarchy; referred to in Vedic literature as TAT, THAT (the world of manifestation being Idam, This). Parabrahman is very closely connected with Mulaprakriti (Root-Substance) inasmuch as Mulaprakriti is the veil of Parabrahman (N.B.G. 62). Krishna speaks of Parabrahman as his Avyaktamurti because Parabrahman "is unknowable, and only becomes knowable when manifesting itself as the Logos" or Isvara (N.B.G. 62). Parabrahman "is the field of Absolute Consciousness, *i.e.*, that Essence which is out of all relation to conditioned existence, and of which conscious existence is a conditioned symbol." (S.D. I, 15) (comp. *para*, beyond; *Brahman*, 'Universal Spirit.' B.G. 71)

Paramatman The Supreme Self. In man Paramatman is the three highest principles, with especial emphasis upon the atman, hence the reference is to the root-base of man. The term may likewise apply to the Root-Base of a hierarchy, and cosmically, to the First or Unmanifest Logos of the Universe. (comp. *parama*, beyond; atman, Self: hence the SELF which is higher than the Self of the human ego. B.G. 96)

Paundra The name of the conch-shell of Bhima. (B.G. 4)

Pavaka A name applied to one of the eight Vasus (*q.v.*), the Vasu fire. Also applied to the god of fire, Agni (*q.v.*). (m. bright, shining. B.G. 74)

Pavana An alternative name for the god of the wind, Vayu (*q.v.*). (B.G. 75)

Pimpala (more correctly Pippala) The sacred Indian fig-tree, *ficus religiosa*, called in Buddhism the Bo-tree. Mystically the Cosmic World-Tree, or Tree of Life, the Asvattha (*q.v.*). (B.G. 74)

Pitris *lit.* Fathers: referring to (a) the deceased father, grandfathers, and great grandfathers of a person, and (b), the Progenitors of the human race. To both classes rites are performed (Sradhdhas) and oblations presented (Pindas) - to which the text refers. The Progenitors are of seven groups or classes: the three higher classes are called Arupa-Pitris - commonly Solar Pitris or Agnishvatta-Pitris, *i.e.*, those who have no physical 'creative fire' albeit the enlighteners of the mind of man (the Minasaputras of *The Secret Doctrine*); the four lower classes are called Barhishads - commonly Lunar Pitris who fashion mankind's vehicle, *i.e.*, the Monads undergoing evolution in the Lunar Chain who, transfer their energies to the Earth-chain at the time of its reimpodiment. (See *Marichi*.)

"The Progenitors of Man, called in India 'Fathers, Pitaras or Pitris, are the creators of our bodies and lower principles. They are ourselves, as the *first personalities*, and *we are they*. ... they were 'lunar Beings.'" (S.D. II, 88) (B.G. 68)

Prahlada The son of Hiranyakasipu of the Daitya race (*i.e.*, Titans), who waged wars with the gods, in one of which they overcame Indra and took possession of Svarga (heaven). Prahlada, however, as a boy, instead of following the Daitya practice, became an ardent worshiper of Vishnu. This was told his father who in anger ordered that his son be killed. But no Daitya weapon could cause his death, nor even the flames of fire, whereupon Prahlada was sent back to his preceptor and he continued his adoration of Vishnu. Because of Prahlada's persecution, Vishnu took on incarnation as the Narasinha ('man-lion') Avatara, slaying Hiranyakasipu and expelling the Daityas from heaven. (See under *Krishna*.) They took up their abode in Patala under the rule of Prahlada. At his death Prahlada attained union with Vishnu. The *Padma-Purana* narrates that in a previous birth, as a Brahmana named Sornasarman, he was desirous of uniting himself with Vishnu, but was distracted in his meditations by the Daityas, and so was born again as one of them, (B.G. 75)

Prajapati *lit.* 'Lord of progeny,' or lord of creation: a title applied originally to several of the Vedic gods, as divinities presiding over the production of worlds and men; later applied to the Hindu Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu, Siva) especially to Brahma as the chief progenitor, evolver, and producer (as in *Manu*). Likewise Manu Svayambhuva is termed a Prajapati as the son of Brahma, and as the secondary creator of the ten Rishis - the mind-born sons of Brahma from whom mankind is descended, hence termed Prajapatis. These are enumerated as: Marichi Atri Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasishtha, Prachetas (or Daksha), Bhrigu, Narada. Occasionally only the first seven are enumerated, and they are made equivalent to the seven great Rishis (*q.v.*). The Prajapatis "are neither gods, nor supernatural Beings, but advanced Spirits from another and lower planet, reborn on this one, and giving birth in their turn in the present Round to present Humanity." (S.D. II, 611)

"What are all the myths and endless genealogies of the seven Prajapatis, and their sons, the seven Rishis or Manus, and of their wives, sons and progeny, but a vast detailed account of the progressive development and evolution of animal creation, one species after the other?" (S.D. II, 253) **pra-jan*, to give birth to; *pati* lord. B.G. 85)

Prakriti Broadly speaking equivalent to Nature - in the sense of the great producer of beings. Through Nature acts the ever-moving Spirit - Brahma or Purusha. Thus Purusha is Spirit and Prakriti is its productive veil or sheath. Although Prakriti is commonly rendered 'matter,' matter is rather the productions that Prakriti brings about (*i.e.*, the Vikritis) through the excitation or influence of Purusha. Some Hindu schools use Prakriti in the sense of Sakti or Maya (Illusion), the Vedantins, however, teach that every particle of Prakriti contains Jiva (divine life) and is the sarira (body) of that Jiva which it contains. (comp. *pra*, forwards, progression; **kri* to do, to make; hence *lit.* production, bringing forth. B.G. 65)

Pritha The name of the daughter of Sura, a Yadava prince, who gave her to his childless cousin Kunti (or Kuntibhoja) by whom he was adopted - hence she was called Kunti (*q.v.*). She is the mother of the Pandavas. Throughout the text Arjuna is referred to as the son of Pritha (in Sanskrit, *Partha*). (*B.G.* 20)

Purujiit A hero on the side of the Pandavas, brother of Kuntibhoja (*q.v.*). (m. conquering many. *B.G.* 2)

Purusha *lit.* 'Man': used in the sense of the Ideal Man (*i.e.*, the Primordial Entity of Space), likewise for the Spiritual Man in each human being - equivalent to Spiritual Self. Purusha also sometimes stands as an interchangeable term with Brahma, the Evolver or 'Creator.' In another aspect Purusha (Spirit) is equivalent to the energetic force in the universe of which Prakriti (Matter) is the other pole. Purusha and Prakriti are but the two primeval aspects of the One and Secondless. They produce all things, but they are essentially one and not two. (*S.D.* I, 281) (*B.G.* 59, see also 96.)

Rajas In Hindu philosophy, one of the three gunas (qualities) running through the web or fabric of Nature: the quality of longing, activity, passion. (See *B.G.* chapters xiv, xviii.) (*B.G.* 28)

Rajarshi comp. of *rajan*, 'king'; rishi 'sage': a kingly or royal sage, *i.e.*, kings and princes who follow the path of illumination and initiation. The Rajarshis in India were the same as the King-Hierophants of ancient Egypt.

"There were three classes of Rishis in India, who were the earliest adepts known; the royal, or Rajarshis, kings and princes, who adopted the ascetic life; the Devarshis, divine, or the sons of Dharma or Yoga; and Brahmarshis, descendants of those Rishis who were the founders of *gotras* of Brahmans, or caste-races." (*S.D.* II, pp. 501-2) (*B.G.* 30)

Rakshasas Popularly regarded as demons (evil elemental beings) residing in the sixth of the material spheres (Rakshasa-loka); in the scriptures, however, they are grouped into three distinct classes: (1) elemental beings not necessarily evil; (2) giants engaged in warfare with the gods; (3) fiends and demons haunting cemeteries, etc., disturbing sacrifices, and afflicting mankind in various ways. In the epic poems 'Rakshasa' is rather loosely applied to any pre-Aryan people - such as the inhabitants of Lanka under the leadership of Ravana - ultimately defeated by the Aryans. "The *Rakshasas*, regarded in Indian popular theology as demons, are called the 'Preservers' beyond the Himalayas. This double and contradictory meaning has its origin in a philosophical allegory," (*S.D.* II, 165). **raksh*, to protect. *B.G.* 65)

Rama Three heroes are known by the name of Rama: Parasu-rama, Rama-chandra, and Bala-rama (see *Kansa*). The second is the one to whom the name is especially applied, for he is the hero of the *Ramayana*, wherein his exploits are fully recounted. Rama was the eldest son of king Dasaratha of the Suryavansa (the Solar Dynasty) reigning at Ayodhya; he is represented as the seventh Avatara of Vishnu, incarnating at the end of the Treta-yuga (the second 'Great Age') for the especial purpose of delivering mankind and the gods from the iniquities caused by Ravana, the Rakshasa king of Lanka (Ceylon). Rama was known as the mightiest of those who carry arms, inasmuch as he was the only one able to bend the mighty bow of the god Siva. To him who could bend this bow, Janaka (*q.v.*) offered the hand of his daughter, Sita, in marriage; thus she became the bride of Rama. With the help of Hanuman (*q.v.*), Rama accomplished the purpose of the gods.

The *Ramayana* "is the mystic narrative in epic form of the struggle between Rama - the first king of the *divine* dynasty of the early Aryans - and Ravana, the symbolical personation of the Atlantean (Lanka) race. The former were the incarnations of the Solar Gods; the latter, of the lunar Devas. This was the great battle between Good and Evil, between white and black magic, for the supremacy of the divine forces, or of the lower terrestrial, or cosmic powers. ... The *Ramayana* - every line of which has to be read esoterically - discloses in magnificent symbolism and allegory the tribulations of both man and soul." (*S.D.* II, 495-6) (*B.G.* 75)

Rik (or *Rich*) A verse, especially a sacred verse recited in praise of a deity - one of the four kinds of Vedic composition. (*B.G.* 66)

Rishi An adept, a seer, an inspired person. In Vedic literature the term is employed as referring to the seers through whom the various mantras or hymns of the Veda were revealed. *The Satapatha-Brahmana*

enumerates seven as: Gotama, Bharadvaja, Visvamitra, Jamadagni Vasishtha, Kasyapa, and Atri. In later times (in the epic poems and Puranas) the Rishis are regarded as a particular class of beings, distinct from gods and men, the patriarchs or 'creators' (see under *Makarshi*). *The Mahabharata* enumerates the seven Rishis of the first manvantara as: Marichi Atri Angiras, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulastya, Vasishtha. These are also called the seven great Rishis (Saptarshis) especially associated with the Great Bear - being, in fact, seven Planetary Regents. The above-named Rishis are also called in most of the texts the seven Rishis "of the Third Manvantara; the latter referring both to the Third Round and also to the third Root-Race and its branch-Races in the Fourth Round. These are all the creators of the various beings on this Earth, the Prajapatis, and at the same time they appear as divers reincarnations in the early Manvantaras or races." (*S.D.* II, 78) (*B.G.* 80)

Rudras An alternative name for the stormgods or Maruts (*q.v.*), who are under the leadership of Rudra or Siva. "These deities are only another *aspect*, or a development of the Kumaras, who are *Rudras* in their patronymic, like many others." (*S.D.* II, 613) (m. howlers, or roarers. *B.G.* 73)

Sadhya A class of divine beings: in the Vedas represented as dwelling in regions superior to the gods - in later works they are placed in Bhuvar-loka (between heaven and earth). In *Manu* the Sadhyas are stated to be the offspring of the Soma-sads from Viraj, *i.e.*, children of the Ancestors from the Moon - the Pitris (*q.v.*). The Sadhyas are termed 'divine sacrificers,' "the most occult of all" the classes of the Pitris (in *S.D.* II 605) - the reference being to the Manasaputras. **sadh*, to be fulfilled, completed, attained. *B.G.* 81)

Sahadeva The son of Madri (the second wife of Pandu) and the twin sky-gods, the Asvinau: brother of Nakula (*q.v.*). Regarded as the youngest of the five Pandava princes. Sahadeva excelled in the science of astronomy, which he studied under Drona (*q.v.*). He was also very proficient in the management of cattle. (*B.G.* 4)

Saibya The king of the Sibis (an ancient people of India): an ally of the Pandavas. (*B.G.* 2)

Saman A metrical hymn, or song of praise; especially a sacred verse which is to be sung, rather than recited or muttered - one of the four kinds of Vedic composition. (*B.G.* 66)

Sanjaya A suta (*i.e.*, a charioteer, as well as a royal bard who recounted the heroic actions of the king, etc.) of the monarch Dhritarashtra, also an ambassador of that king, bearing the family-name Gavalgani. He was granted by Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa the divine sight of seeing everything in minutest detail, so that he might thus recount all that he saw in regard to the conflict at Kurukshetra to the blind monarch Dhritarashtra. Therefore, as the opening stanzas tell, Sanjaya relates the preliminaries of the battle, at which time the dialog between Krishna and Arjuna occurs - this dialog being known as the *Bhagavad-Gita*. (m. completely victorious. *B.G.* 1)

Sankalpa (or Samkalpa) Conception or idea formed in the mind or heart; hence the word has the further meaning of will, volition, desire. **sam-klrip*, to be brought about, to come into existence. *B.G.* 31)

Sankara (or Samkara) *lit.* 'The auspicious': a name of Siva (*q.v.*), in his aspect of chief of the Rudras (or Maruts, *q.v.*). Also and especially in his auspicious or beneficent character: that of regenerator, hence popularly regarded as the creator. (*B.G.* 73)

Sankhya (or Samkhya) The name of the third of the six Darśanas or Hindu schools of philosophy, which may be rendered 'the school of reckoners.' It was so called because this school divided or 'reckoned' the universe (and likewise man, as a child of the universe) into 25 elementary principles (Tattvas) - 24 of which formed the vehicles or bodies in which the true self (Purusha) works. This school was founded by Kapila (*q.v.*). H. P. Blavatsky states that the system was established by the first Kapila (as stated in the Puranas) and written down by the last Kapila, the sage and philosopher of the Kali-yuga period. (*S.D.* II, 572) There were several sages of the name of Kapila. **khya+sam*, m. to reckon, to enumerate. *B.G.* 15)

Sannyasa Renunciation of the world and material affairs and the taking up of the path leading to mystic knowledge. (comp. *sam*, with; **ni-as*, to reject, to resign worldly life.) One who practises Sannyasa is called a Sannyasin. (*B.G.* 44)

Santanu (or Samtanu) The son of Pratipa (of the Lunar Dynasty), a king of the Kurus, and younger brother of Devapi who became a hermit when Santanu usurped his throne. He married Ganga, who gave birth to Bhishma (*q.v.*). He later wedded Satyavati by whom he had two sons, Chitrangada and Vichitravirya (*q.v.*). Santanu was the fourteenth descendant of Kuru and was remarkable for his devotion, charity, modesty, constancy, and resolution. It was further related of him that every decrepit man whom he touched became young again. (*B.G.* p. iii)

Sat Being, or rather *Be-ness* - the state of existence. The term is used as the Real (true being), in contradistinction to Asat (the illusory world). In the Vedanta it is equivalent to the self-existent or Universal Spirit (Brahman). "*Sat* is in itself neither the 'existent,' nor 'being.' SAT is the immutable, the ever present, changeless and eternal root, from and through which all proceeds. But it is far more than the potential force in the seed, which propels onward the process of development, or what is now called evolution. It is the ever becoming, though the never manifesting." (*S.D.* II, 449) (present participle of **as*, to be. *B.G.* 119)

Sattva (or Sattwa) The quality of truth, goodness, purity: one of the three qualities (Trigunas) running through the web or fabric of Nature. (See *B.G.* chs. xiv and xviii.) (*sat*, being; *tva* - a noun-suffix, hence: 'true essence.' *B.G.* 16)

Satyaki A member of the Vrishni family, kinsman of Krishna, and acting as his charioteer. He also lent his aid to the Pandavas in the battle to regain their kingdom. (*B.G.* 4)

Satyavati The daughter of Uparichara, a king of Chedi and Adrika, about whom it is related that although an Apsaras ('celestial nymph'), she was doomed to live on earth in the form of a fish. Satyavati was the mother of Vyasa by the Rishi Parasara, giving birth to him on an island (dvipa) - hence he was called Dvaipayana. Later Satyavati wedded king Santanu (king of the Kurus) giving birth to Chitrafigada and Vichitravirya (*q.v.*). (*B.G.* iii)

Siddhas A class of semi-divine beings of great purity and perfection, represented as possessing the eight supernatural faculties (the Siddhis), and inhabiting Bhuvar-loka (the region between earth and heaven). In later mythology they are often confused with the Sadhyas (*q.v.*). "According to the Occult teachings, however, Siddhas are the *Nirmanakayas* or the 'spirits' (in the sense of an individual, or *conscious* spirit) of great sages from spheres on a higher plane than our own, who voluntarily incarnate in mortal bodies in order to help the human race in its upward progress. Hence their innate knowledge, wisdom and powers." (*S.D.* II, 636) **sidh*, to attain; hence 'the perfected ones.' *B.G.* 81)

Sikhandin A son of Drupada, king of Panchala, who accomplished the death of Bhishma in the great conflict. The story regarding Sikhandin, is one of the specific instances portraying reincarnation, with which the *Mahabharata* is studded. The epic relates that the eldest daughter of the king of Kasi Amba (*q.v.*), was rejected by her betrothed through the fault of Bhishma, whereupon she retired into the forest and by severe penances and sacrifices obtained a boon from Siva promising her immediate rebirth as a man in order to mete out judgment upon her wrongdoer, Bhishma. She thereupon ascended her funeral pyre and was forthwith reborn as Sikhandin. (*B.G.* 4)

Siva The third aspect of the Hindu Trimurti commonly called the destroyer, but with the idea intimately associated therewith of regeneration, hence also the regenerator. The name Siva does not appear in the Vedas, nor does the concept of the Trimurti; but the deity Rudra does occur (associated in the Vedas with Agni the fire god), and in later times Siva is known under the name of Rudra, hence the association of the two has been made. Rudra is hailed in the *Rig-Veda* as the lord of songs and sacrifices, the lord of nourishment, he who drives away diseases and removes sin - the beneficent aspect of Siva. In the *Mahabharata*, Siva's place in the Trimurti is maintained, although he is not quite as prominent as Vishnu (the preserver), nevertheless the deity comes in for his share of reverence.

Siva is described as the beautiful white deity with a blue throat - blue because of the poisons he drinks in order to preserve mankind thereby; his hair is of a reddish color and piled on his head in matted locks - for Siva is the patron deity of ascetics. He is depicted with three eyes, one placed in the center of his forehead, representing the eye of wisdom (Called by Occultists the eye of Siva or the third eye): the three eyes represent

Time, present, past, and future. A crescent moon above his forehead indicates Time measured by the phases of the moon, while a serpent around his neck indicates the measure of Time by cycles: a second necklace (of human skulls) refers to the races of men which Siva continuously destroys in order to regenerate new races. The serpents which surround him represent the deity as king of the Nagas (*q.v.*), standing also for symbols of spiritual immortality. Siva is often represented with five faces - representing the five manifested elements.

In many of the Puranas Siva is regarded as the greatest of deities, hence he is called Mahadeva (the great god). He is also spoken of as the patron deity of Esotericists and as the divine protector of the mystic Occultists. For Siva is "the howling and terrific *destroyer of human passions and physical senses*, which are ever in the way of the development of the higher spiritual perceptions and the growth of the *inner eternal man* - mystically," (*S.D.* I, 459).

Siva, although the destroying deity, is Evolution and Progress personified, he "is the *regenerator* at the same time; who destroys things under one form but to recall them to life under another more perfect type." (*S.D.* II, 182)

In the *Bhagavad-Gita* Siva is referred to under his alternative name of Sankara (*B.G.* 73).

Skanda The name of the god of war, also known as Karttikeya (so called because he was reared by the six Pleiades, Krittikas), hence he is described as six-headed. For the purpose of destroying the Daitya Taraka, who had become a potential source of trouble to the deities because of the austerities he had performed and his strict religious observances, Skanda was produced, springing from the seed of Siva which had been cast into the fire and then carried to Ganga (the Ganges river). He is represented as riding the peacock, Paravani holding a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other.

Skanda is also the regent of the planet Mars. (*B.G.* 74)

Sloka A stanza, especially a particular kind of epic meter, also called the Anushtubh, which consists of 4 padas (quarter verses) of 8 syllables each; or it may be 2 lines each containing 16 syllables. The syllables of each line may be altered as desired except for the 5th, 13th, 14th, and 15th syllables which have a fixed method for composition. The following indicates this:

.....|.....-.,.

The dots represent syllables which may be either long or short. The 6th and 7th syllables should be long; but if the 6th is a short syllable then the 7th is short also. As an example the first sloka of the *Bhagavad-Gita* is given illustrating this (although the 14th syllable is short in both lines):

dharmakshetre kurukshetre samaveta yuyutsavah,

,,, /,,, |,,, - /,,,

mamakah pandavaschaiva kimakurvata sanjaya.

-, - / -, -, |,,,,, /,,,

The *Ramayana* relates that the first sloka was composed by Valmiki who was moved to such sorrow by seeing the mate of a bird killed by a hunter during the wooing of the pair, that in his grief he developed the spirit of poesy. The word *sloka* means sound, or noise; in the *Rig-Veda* it means a hymn of praise. (cf. **sru*, to hear. *B.G.* p. i)

Soma Astronomically, the Moon - an occult mystery, for the moon as a symbol stands for both good and evil. "Soma is the mystery god and presides over the mystic and occult nature in man and the Universe" (*S.D.* II, 45).

In mystical phraseology Soma is a sacred and mystic beverage which was drunk by Brahmanas and Initiates, during their mysteries and sacrificial rites, producing mystic visions. "The partaker of *Soma* finds himself both linked to his external body, and yet away from it in his spiritual form. The latter, freed from the former, soars for the time being in the ethereal higher regions, becoming virtually 'as one of the gods,' and yet preserving in his physical brain the memory of what he sees and learns." (*S.D.* II, 499).

"The Soma-drink known to Europeans is not the *genuine* beverage, but its substitute; for the initiated priests alone can taste of the real Soma; and even kings and Rajas, when sacrificing, receive the substitute." (*Theos. Gloss.* 304) (*B.G.* 67)

Somadatta A favorite name in ancient times: many kings bore this appellation. The son of one so named sided with the Kurus. (m. gift of Soma. *B.G.* 3)

Subhadra The daughter of Vasudeva: a younger sister of Krishna, wife of Arjuna, and mother of Abhimanyu (*the son* referred to in the text of *B.G.* 2). Subba Row suggests that the gift of Krishna's sister to Arjuna typifies the union between the sixth and fifth principles in man's constitution, *i.e.*, Buddhi and Manas. (*N.B.G.* 9) (m. very auspicious. *B.G.* 2)

Sudra The fourth and lowest of the four castes of Vedic India, whose duty consisted in serving the three higher classes. (*B.G.* 69)

Sughosha The name of the conch-shell of Nakula. (m. making a loud noise. *B.G.* 4)

Sura A king of the Yadava line of the Lunar Dynasty, who ruled over the Surasenas at Mathura. He was the father of Vasudeva and Kunti (*q.v.*), hence the grandfather of Krishna. (*B.G.* p. iv)

Sursooty The modern name of the ancient Sarasvati river: although small it was held very sacred by the Hindus. In ancient times it marked with the Drishadvati river one of the boundaries of the region Aryadesa and of the sacred district called Brahmavarta (*Manu*, ii, 17). The river joins the Ganges and Jumna at Allahabad. (*B.G.* iii)

Svasti An interjection: well, happily: hence a salutation meaning, may it be well with thee! hail! so be it! (As a noun the word means success, prosperity. *B.G.* 81)

Gods and Heroes and Technical Terms: T - Y

[A - G](#) | [H - M](#) | [N - S](#)

* The asterisk preceding a Sanskrit word herein means 'derived from the verbal root.' (See 'Abbreviations,' and 'Pronunciation Key.')

Tamas One of the three gunas – essential attributes or characteristics of manifested beings and things: the quality of darkness, illusion, ignorance. In a different sense Tamas also means passivity, repose, inertia. (See *B.G.* chs. xiv and xviii.) (*B.G.* 41)

Tat (also Tad) The word used by Vedic sages to represent that which is beyond expression, the unnameable principle – rendered THAT – in contradistinction to the manifested world, *Idam* (This). (The neuter form of a pronominal particle used as a noun. *B.G.* 119)

Uchchaisravas The white horse produced by the gods at the churning of the ocean (see *Ananta*). He became the steed of Indra (*q.v.*), and is regarded as the model horse, ‘the king of horses.’ (m. neighing aloud. *B.G.* 74)

Uragas A class of semi-divine serpents, usually associated with the Nagas (*q.v.*) and represented as a serpent with a human face. W. Q. Judge comments "it must refer to the great Masters of Wisdom, who were often called Serpents." (*B.G.* 80) (m. breast-going, *i.e.*, a serpent.)

Usanas An ancient sage and prophet-seer, descendant of the Kavyas or Kavyas. (Also the name of the planet Venus and its regent.) (*B.G.* 76)

Ushmapas A class of semi-divine beings, associated with the Pitris (*q.v.*). (from *ushma*, heat, vapor, steam. *B.G.* 81)

Uttamaujas A warrior on the side of the Pandavas. (m. of excellent valor. *B.G.* 2)

Vaisya *lit.* ‘A man who settles on the soil’ thus a peasant or working-man. The third of the four social classes or castes into which society was divided in Hindusthan. It also referred to one whose occupation was that of trade as well as of agriculture. (*B.G.* 69)

Vaivasvata-Manu The name of the seventh Manu (*q.v.*) who presides over the present Manvantara: *lit.* the sun-born Manu, also called Satya-vrata because of his piety. He is sometimes described as one of the 12 Adityas (*q.v.*), and is regarded as the progenitor of the present race of living beings. In the *Mahabharata* Vaivasvata is the hero of the deluge. As the story runs, while he was observing his devotions by the side of the river, he was interrupted in his worship by a small fish who entreated the monarch to shield him from the larger fish who was about to seize his victim. Being moved by compassion, Vaivasvata placed the little fish in a vase, but was very soon astonished to find that the receptacle could no longer contain it. Whereupon the fish was placed in a larger vessel. But the fish kept on growing, so that in time no tank was large enough to hold him, therefore the river became his abode. Still the fish grew so much in girth, that he had to be transferred to the ocean. Then the fish commanded Vaivasvata to build a ship and place himself and the 7 Rishis on it, and fasten the prow to his horn, for a deluge would soon overwhelm the earth. Having done as he was bid, upon entering the vessel, Vaivasvata and the Rishis were towed off by the fish and were thus saved from the flood. Finally they were brought to Himavat (the Himalayas), where Vaivasvata landed and thereafter repopled the earth.

"In the *Satapatha Brahmana*, Manu finds that ‘the Flood had swept away all living creatures, and he alone was left’ – *i.e.*, the seed of life alone remained from the previous dissolution of the *Universe*, or *Mahapralaya*, after a ‘Day of Brahma’; and the *Mahabharata* refers simply to the geological cataclysm which swept away nearly all the Fourth Race to make room for the Fifth. Therefore is Vaivasvata Manu shown under three distinct attributes in our esoteric Cosmogony: (a) as the ‘Root-Manu’ on Globe A in the First

Round; (b) as the 'seed of life' on Globe D in the Fourth Round; and (c) as the 'Seed of Man' at the beginning of every Root-Race – in our Fifth Race especially." (S.D. II, 146-7) (from *vivasvat*, the sun. B.G. 30)

Varna-sankara (or *-samkara*) Confusion or mixture of castes through intermarriage. (comp. *varna*, a caste – referring especially to the four castes as enumerated in the *Bhagavad-Gita*; *samkara*, mixing or blending together. B.G. 7)

Varsha A district. The geography of the *Mahabharata* depicts seven *dvipas* (*q.v.*), the central one, Jambudvīpa, corresponding to our earth (Globe D). This *dvīpa* is divided into nine parts termed *varshas* as follows: (1) Bharata, or India, situated south of the Himalayas, the southernmost division; (2) Kimpurusha; (3) Harivarsha; (4) Ila-vrita, the central *varsha* containing Mount Meru; (5) Ramyaka; (6) Hi-ran-maya; (7) Uttara-Kuru; (8) Bhadrasha, east of Ila-vrita; (9) Ketu-mala, west of the central *varsha*. Uttara-Kuru was the *varsha* of the northern Kurus, described as a country of eternal beatitude. (B.G. p. ii)

Varaha-Upanishad The name of a text of the Varaha School of the Krishna-Yajur-Veda (*q.v.*): not one of the Vedic Upanishads. (B.G. 31)

Varuna One of the most ancient deities of the Vedas, regarded therein as the personification of the all-embracing sky, maker and upholder of heaven and earth: the king of the universe, king of gods and earth and possessor of illimitable knowledge, ruling principally, however, over the night while Mitra reigned over the day. In later times Varuna was regarded as chief of the Adityas (*q.v.*); later still he was allocated to the waters as god of the sea and rivers, riding upon the Makara (*q.v.*). In the Vedas Varuna is connected with the 'element of water' and the 'waters of space,' but with descending cycles the original spiritual idea associated with the deities of the ancients being lost sight of in the effort to attach material significance to the gods, Varuna – in common with other deities – became associated with the visible fluids. Varuna is made the regent of the Western quarter. A moral character is also associated with the deity: he is represented as binding all guilty mortals with a noose (*i.e.*, the mortal was bound in the net of his own actions). "Varuna, 'without whom no creature can even wink,' was degraded like Uranos [Ouranos], and, like him, *he fell into generation*, his functions, ... having been lowered down from heaven to earth by exoteric anthropomorphism." (S.D. II, 268) (B.G. 75)

Vasava A name applied to Indra (*q.v.*), especially in his character of leader of the Vasus (*q.v.*). (B.G. 73)

Vasudeva *lit.* 'Son of Vasudeva' – a name applied to Krishna, because of his birth in the family of Vasudeva and Devaki. The *Mahabharata* also explains that Krishna is thus called from his dwelling (*vasanat*) in all beings, from his issuing as a Vasu from a divine womb. (B.G. 55)

Vasuki The king of the Nagas (*q.v.*) in Patala. He is sometimes made the same as the serpent of Vishnu, Sesa or Ananta. (*q.v.*); again he is distinct (as in the text of B.G. 74).

Vasus A particular class of deities, eight in number, associated with Indra: they form one of the nine Ganas (classes of deities) mentioned in the Vedas. The Vasus are named: Apa (water), Dhruva (the pole-star), Soma (the Moon), Dhara or Dhava (the Earth), Anila (wind), Pavaka or Anala (fire), Prabhasa (dawn), Pratyusha (light). The *Ramayana* regards them as children of Aditi. A verse in *Manu* says: "The wise call our fathers Vasus" (iii, 284). (B.G. 74)

Vayu The god of the wind, also called Pavana. In the Vedas he is associated with Indra, and rides in the golden chariot of the god of the sky. One hymn calls him the son-in-law of Tvashti (the artificer of the gods), while another gives his origin as arising from the breath of Purusha (*q.v.*). His particular regency is the northwest quarter of the heavens. In the *Mahabharata* the god of the wind is represented as the father of Bhima, and also the father of Hanuman. The *Vishnu-Purana* makes Vayu the king of the Gandharvas (*q.v.*). The ancient meaning attaching to 'air' was "one of the five states of matter, namely the *gaseous*; one of the five elements, called, as wind, *Vata*. ... The trinity of the mystic gods in Kosmos closely related to each other, are 'Agni (fire) whose place is on earth; Vayu (air, or one of the forms of Indra), whose place is in the air; and Surya (the sun) whose place is in the air.' (*Nirukta*.) In esoteric interpretation, these three cosmic principles, correspond with the three human principles, Kama, Kama-Manas and Manas, the sun of the intellect." (*Theos*.

Vedanta *lit.* 'End of the Veda,' *i.e.*, complete knowledge of the Veda. The name is particularly associated with the Uttara-mimansa school (the third of the six Hindu systems of philosophy), as this school especially studied the latter portion of the Veda. The reputed founder of the Vedanta is Vyasa (*q.v.*), but its chief exponent was Sankaracharya, who especially taught the Advaita ('non-dual') aspect, hence his followers are called Advaita-Vedantins. In brief: the Advaita system teaches that nothing real exists but the One Self, or Soul of the Universe, called Brahman or Paramatman, and that the Jivatman (individual human soul or monad), and in fact all phenomenal manifestations of nature, are really identical with Paramatman; their apparent separate existence is due to Ajnana (nescience, 'non-wisdom'). A proper understanding of the Vedanta removes this Ajnana. "The Vedas are, and will remain for ever, in the esotericism of the Vedanta and the Upanishads, 'the mirror of the eternal Wisdom.' " (*S.D.* II, 484) The nearest exponent of the Esoteric philosophy "is the Vedanta as expounded by the Advaita Vedantists," (*S.D.* I, 55). (*B.G.* 108)

Vedas The ancient sacred literature of the Hindus. There are four Vedas known as the *Rig-Veda*, the *Yajur-Veda*, the *Sama-Veda*, and the *Atharva-Veda*. Their origin is ascribed to divine revelation (*sruti*), and Hindus as well as Theosophical students place their period at many thousands of years before the Christian era. They state that the Vedas were taught orally for thousands of years and then finally were compiled on the shores of the sacred lake Manasa-Sarovara by Veda-Vyasa (about 3100 B.C.). It is quite apparent that the original authorship is not by one person, inasmuch as various hymns are attributed to various Vedic Sages. They are written in a style of Sanskrit different from any other literary works.

The Vedas are divided into two main portions: the mantra part (hymns in verse), and the Brahmana part consisting of liturgical, ritualistic and mystic treatises in prose. With the latter are closely connected the Aranyakas and Upanishads. "Between the Vedas and the Puranas there is an abyss of which, both are the poles, like the seventh (*atmic*) and the first or lowest principle (the physical body) in the Septenary constitution of man. The primitive, purely spiritual language of the Vedas, conceived many decades of millenniums earlier, had found its purely human expression for the purpose of describing events taking place 5,000 years ago, the date of Krishna's death (from which day the Kali Yuga, or Black-Age, began for mankind)." (*S.D.* II, 527) **vid*, to know. *B.G.* 15)

Vichitravirya The younger son of Santanu (*q.v.*) and Satyavati who became king of the Kurus when his elder brother Chitrangada (an arrogant and proud man) was killed as a young man in a battle with a Gandharva of the same name. Vichitravirya married Ambika and Ambalika, the two daughters of the king of Kasi but died childless. (*B.G.* p. iii)

Vikarna One of the hundred sons of Dhritarashtra, following the lead of his elder brother, Duryodhana. (*B.G.* 3)

Virata The raja of Virata (a country in the midland or northwest districts of India – in about the position of the modern province of Berar). It was at the court of this king that the Pandavas spent the last year of their exile in disguise – as imposed upon them by Duryodhana. Because of the many services rendered to him by the Pandavas, Virata lent his aid to the sons of Pandu. (*B.G.* 2)

Vishnu The second aspect of the Hindu Trimurti (Brahma being the first and Siva the third): the most prominent of deities, especially in his character of Sustainer and Preserver of all manifestation – equivalent to the Logos. In the Vedas, however, the conception of the Trimurti is not present: Vishnu is mentioned with the other gods as the personification of the sun and light, he is described as striding across the heavens in three paces, explained as the three manifestations of light – fire, lightning, and the sun. It is in the epic poems and Puranas that Vishnu becomes the most worshiped deity, riding on Garuda (*q.v.*), or again resting on Ananta (*q.v.*). Brahma ('the creator') is represented as springing from a lotus arising from Vishnu's navel, while the latter slept on the waters of space; while Siva ('the destroyer') sprang from his forehead. In his character of the preserver, Vishnu manifests in the world in the form of Avatars, ten principal ones being enumerated, the seventh and eighth being Rama and Krishna. (See *B.G.* pp. 30-31) "Vishnu is, as well as Adam Kadmon, the expression of the universe itself; and ... his incarnations are but concrete and various embodiments of the manifestations of this 'Stupendous Whole.'" (*I.U.* II, 277) **vis*, to enter, to pervade. *B.G.* 73)

Visvas (also *Visve-devas*) A class of deities: according to the Puranas represented as the sons of Visva (the daughter of Daksha), and named: Vasu, Satya, Kratu, Daksha, Kala, Kama, Dhriti Kuru, Pururavas, Madravas, Rochaka (or Lochana), Dhvani. They are particularly worshiped at Sraddhas – a ceremony of reverential homage unto deceased relatives performed by the offering of water daily (as recommended by *Manu*); and supplicated at Pinda services – balls of rice and meal offered at regular intervals (see *B.G.* 7). (m. all-pervading. *B.G.* 81)

Vitessa *lit.* ‘Lord of wealth,’ the name of Kuvera (or Kubera), the god of wealth. In the Vedas, Kuvera is represented as the chief of the evil beings or spirits of darkness (having the name Vaisravana, *i.e.*, the son of Visravas by Idavida). In later times Kuvera is represented as the lord of riches and wealth, the chief of the Yakshas, and the regent of the northern quarter, thus answering to one of the four great Guardians (Maharajas). In the *Ramayana*, Kuvera was the possessor of Lanka, but he was expelled therefrom by his half-brother, Ravana; whereupon he performed such austerities that he was granted the regency of the domain of wealth, and named guardian of the northern quarter. He is described as a white man greatly deformed in body, having three legs and only eight teeth. (*B.G.* 73)

Vivasvat *lit.* ‘The brilliant one’ – a name of the Sun. In epic poetry (and also in the *Rig-Veda*) regarded as the father of Vaivasvata-Manu (*q.v.*), the seventh or present Manu. **vi-vas*, to shine forth. *B.G.* 30)

Vrishni A descendant of Yadu, the first of the Yadava line, which became extinct with Krishna. Krishna was therefore called Varshneya, ‘descendant of Vrishni.’ Yadu was also the half-brother of Puru (the ancestor of the Kurus and founder of the Paurava line). (*B.G.* 27)

Vyasa The celebrated sage and author, regarded as the original compiler and arranger of the Vedas and Vedanta-sutras (hence called Veda-vyasa – *vyasa* meaning an arranger, a compiler). In the *Mahabharata* it is related that Vyasa was the half brother of Vichitravirya and Bhishma, his parents being the Rishi Parasara and Satyavati. Because of his dark complexion he was called Krishna, and on account of being born on a dvipa (island) in the Jumna, he received the name Dvaipayana. Although he had retired into the wilderness in order to become a hermit, his mother implored him to wed the childless widowed wives (Ambika and Ambalika) of Vichitravirya, and he thus became the father of Dhritarashtra and Pandu – parents of the Kurus and Pandavas respectively, by whom the great conflict was waged. Vyasa is also regarded as the compiler of the *Mahabharata*, the narrator of the *Bhagavata-Purana*, and author of other Puranas. The Puranas mention 28 Vyasas – represented as incarnations of Brahma or Vishnu, descending upon earth for the purpose of arranging and promulgating the Vedas and other sastras.

‘Vyasa’ is indeed a term applied to the highest gurus in India, "for that which he explains, interprets and amplifies is *a mystery* to the profane. ... There were many Vyasas in Aryavarta; one was the compiler and arranger of the *Vedas*; another, the author of the *Mahabharata* – the *twenty-eighth Vyasa* or *revealer in the order of succession* – and the last one of note was the author of *Uttara Mimansa*, the sixth school or system of Indian philosophy. He was also the founder of the Vedanta system." (*Theos. Gloss.* 367) (*B.G.* p iii and 72)

Yadu The ruler of the country west of the Jumna river, whose father was Yayati and mother, Devayani. His half brother, Puru, was the founder of the Paurava line of the Chandravansa (Lunar Dynasty), to which the Kurus and Pandus belonged. Yadu inaugurated the Yadava branch of this dynasty to which Vasudeva and Krishna belonged, hence Krishna is referred to as ‘son of Yadu.’ But the Yadava line became extinct with Krishna. (*B.G.* 85)

Yajur (or *Yajus*) A sacrificial prayer or formula: also a technical term for mantras to be muttered in a particular manner at a sacrifice, generally written in prose and hence distinguished from the Rik (*q.v.*) and Saman (*q.v.*). Also the name of the second of the four Vedas. (*B.G.* 66)

Yakshas A class of celestial beings generally associated with Kuvera, the god of wealth, and stationed in the seventh of the eight lokas of material existence (Yaksha-loka). They are considered to be beneficent to humanity and are therefore called Punya-janas (‘good people’) in the scriptures. In the popular folk-lore of India, however, they are regarded as evil demons, obsessing men at times, etc. H. P. Blavatsky gives the following explanation: "In esoteric science they are simply evil (elemental) influences, who in the sight of

seers and clairvoyants descend on men, when open to the reception of such influences, like a fiery comet or a shooting star." (*Theos. Gloss. 375*) (*B.G. 73*)

Yama The god of the Underworld. In the Vedas Yama is represented as the son of the Sun, Vivasvat: he it is who first died and first departed to the celestial world. The interpretation of this is, that "Yama is the embodiment of the race which was the first to be endowed with *consciousness* (Manas), without which there is neither Heaven nor Hades." (*Theos. Gloss. 375*) In the epic poems Yama is the son of Sanjna (Conscience) by Vivasvat and brother of Manu. His office is to judge the dead: seated on his throne of judgment (Vicharabhu) in his palace (Kalichi). The soul of a departed mortal enters the regions of the dead (Yamapura) and appears before Yama, while the recorder, Chitrugupta, reads out his record from the great register (Agra-sandhani). In the sentence which follows, the deceased is assigned to the abode of the Pitris (Devachan) if guilty he must go to one of the 21 hells according to the degree of his guilt; or he is sent to be born again on earth in another form. Because of his judging, Yama is also called the god of justice, Dharma. He is represented as riding upon a buffalo armed with mace and noose, with which he secures those about to go to his realms. Yama had a twin sister, Yami who, according to an ancient hymn, is ever urging him to take her as his wife. The Esoteric teaching is "that Yama-Yami is the symbol of the *dual Manas*, in one of its mystical meanings. For instance, Yama-Yami is always represented of a *green* colour and clothed with *red*, and as dwelling in a palace of *copper* and *iron*." (*Theos. Gloss. 376*)

"The Hindu *Chitra-Gupta* who reads out the account of every Soul's life from his register, called Agra-Sandhani; the 'Assessors' who read theirs from the heart of the defunct, which becomes an open book before (whether) Yama, Minos, Osiris, or Karma – are all so many copies of, and variants from the Lipika, and their Astral Records." (*S.D. I, 105*) (*B.G. 75*)

Yoga The word lit. means a union, a joining together. It is the name of one of the six Schools of Philosophy or systems of Hindu thought (Darsanas), being so called because it sought the attainment of union or at-oneness with the divine-spiritual essence within a man, this being virtually identical with the spiritual essence or Logos of the universe. This school was founded by Patanjali and his teachings are extant in a work written by him known as *Yoga Aphorisms*. However, even before his time a far grander and more inclusive system had been inculcated for ages, an ancient sage, Yajnavalkya, having outlined the same tenets. There are many systems based on Yoga, all derivative from the original system and hence all using the name yoga, thus: Jnana-Yoga, Raja-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Karma-Yoga, etc. Each of these stresses one particular aspect of the teaching. The *Bhagavad-Gita* itself is a text-book of the highest system of Yoga. (**yuj*, to join, to yoke. *B.G. 15*)

Yogi (nom.: dict. Yogin) A devotee: one who practises the Yoga-system. In ancient times such devotees practised the highest ethics without recourse to the prescribed religious observances and sacrifices: in modern times, however, the word is often applied to any devotee in India, whether practising Yoga or not. (*B.G. 44*)

Yudhamanyu A warrior on the side of the Pandavas. (m. having a warlike spirit. *B.G. 2*)

Yudhishtira The eldest son of Kunti and the god of justice, Dharma. In the *Mahabharata* Yudhishtira is not represented as a valorous warrior but is portrayed as excelling in the kingly virtues of justice and wise sovereignty over his kingdom of Indraprastha, which was given to him by Dhritarashtra and was adjacent to Hastinapura. Through the scheming of the Kauravas under Duryodhana, Yudhishtira lost his kingdom (as it was made the stake at a game of dice), and as the result of a second game he and his four brothers were compelled to exile themselves for 13 years. At the end of the period of exile Yudhishtira commenced negotiations for a peaceful restoration of his kingdom, in which Krishna assisted. He was unsuccessful and a conflict was imminent. Yudhishtira was dissuaded from withdrawing from the battle by Krishna, who assured him of victory. At the end of the war he was enthroned at Indraprastha, as well as at Hastinapura by Dhritarashtra, and his eminence was later assured through the performance of the Asvamedha sacrifice. After the death of Krishna, the Pandavas decided to abandon the world, and the closing book of the epic describes their journey and their death, one by one, except that of Yudhishtira. He descends into hell and then ascends to heaven (Svarga) but renounces it because his faithful dog was refused entrance with him; because of his compassion, he is readmitted, however, by his parent, the god Dharma.

"Yudhishtira – the first King of the *Sacea*, who opens the Kali Yuga era, which has to last 432,000 years – ‘an actual King and man who lived 3102 years B.C.,’ applies also, name and all, to the great Deluge at the time of the first sinking of Atlantis. He is the ‘Yudhishtira born on the mountain of the hundred peaks at the extremity of the world *beyond which nobody can go*’ and ‘immediately after the flood.’ " (*S.D.* I, pp. 369-70)

Symbolically Yudhishtira represents the Higher Ego in man. (m. firm or steady in battle. *B.G.* 4)

Yuga An age or period, referring especially to an age of the world, of which there are four enumerated in Hindu chronology as follows: (1) Krita-yuga or Satya-yuga, fit. ‘golden age’ – the age of purity and innocence when virtue reigns and there is no injustice in the world, lasting for a period of 4,000 years of the gods; (2) Treta-yuga, ‘age of triads,’ or the ‘age of the three sacred fires,’ *i.e.*, three of the four sacred fires being worshiped – the Silver Age, lasting for 3,000 years of the gods; (3) Dvaparayuga, ‘age of the number two,’ – all sacred things are halved, the Bronze Age, of 2,000 years of the gods; (4) Kali-yuga, age of darkness, or the Black Age, when strife prevails, the Iron Age, whose duration is 1,000 years of the gods. Each yuga is preceded by a period called a Sandhya (twilight – or a transition period, or dawn), which is followed by a period named Sandhyansa (‘a portion of a twilight’): each of these two periods is equivalent in length to a tenth of its accompanying year of the gods. As a year of the gods is figured as 360 days of the mortals, and adding the Sandhyas and Sandhyansas, the yugas are:

Krita-yuga 1,728,000 years

Treta-yuga 1,296,000 years
